

**PUBLIC GOVERNANCE DIRECTORATE
PUBLIC GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

Youth Stocktaking Report

Engaging and empowering youth in OECD countries - How to bridge the "governance gap"

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The Stocktaking report delivers on the outputs under the PWB 2017-18 to improve open and inclusive policy-making and bridge the gap on the role of public governance for better “youth engagement and civic education.” Building on the accumulated evidence by the PGC and its sub-bodies as well as the RPC, and drawing on the findings of the work on open government, gender equality, public sector innovation, public budgeting, regulatory policy, and others, the report is the first of its kind to take stock of the public governance arrangements for effective and inclusive youth engagement and empowerment across OECD member countries.

The report builds on the five analytical parameters welcomed by the PGC on 23 November 2017: (1) whole-of-government approach to youth policy; (2) institutional frameworks and coordination; (3) governance tools to mainstream youth considerations in policy making and service delivery; (4) youth participation and representation in public life; and (5) legal frameworks and minimum age requirements.

It is prepared based on desk research and available information through existing OECD evidence and reports. The present document is a revised draft version which reflects the comments received from PGC delegates by 18 April 2018.

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Engaging and empowering youth in OECD countries - How to bridge the "governance gap"

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1. Context

1. Young men and women¹ are key drivers for inclusive growth and sustainable development. When young people are engaged and empowered, societies will be more cohesive and resilient and democracies more vibrant. This Stocktaking report therefore focuses on the role of governments to empower youth and strengthen their participation in public life.

2. OECD evidence illustrates that the exclusion of young people from a fair share of the economic progress has resulted in rising levels of income inequality and higher poverty rates among this group in several OECD countries.² In the aftermath of the global crisis an average of 15% of youth are still not in employment, education or training (NEET) in 2016.³ Many indicators used by the OECD to evaluate the quality of life show that today's generation of children, adolescents and young adults is worse-off than middle-aged adults.⁴ Despite unprecedented opportunities to access information, education and training, high unemployment rates and informal and insecure job arrangements risk slowing down youth's transition to full autonomy and adult life.

3. Youth are exposed to the increasingly complex global challenges of our times including climate change, rising inequality and high levels of public debts. In a context in which political positions are dominated by older age cohorts and existing channels for youth to shape policy outcomes perceived by many as outdated or inefficient (see Chapter 5), these challenges have raised questions about inter-generational justice and the future young people will be faced with.

4. OECD evidence shows that in 17 out of 35 OECD Member countries, youth express less trust in government than their parents (50+). The trust crisis and

¹ There is growing consensus among youth researchers that prevailing youth definitions and concepts are becoming increasingly unclear as a result of the de-standardisation of life trajectories. Particularly tangible is the observation that youth tend to start earlier and end later. The UN, for statistical consistency across regions, defines "youth" as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, without prejudice to other definitions by Member States. The World Bank typically employs the ages 15 to 24, but expresses mindfulness of the limitations of its definition of youth. In line with other international organisations, OECD defines that "youth" is a period towards adulthood which is characterised by various transitions in one person's life (e.g. from education to higher education and employment; from the parental home to renting/buying their own apartment, etc.). Where possible, for statistical consistency across countries, the OECD makes use of the United Nations age definition which refers to youth.

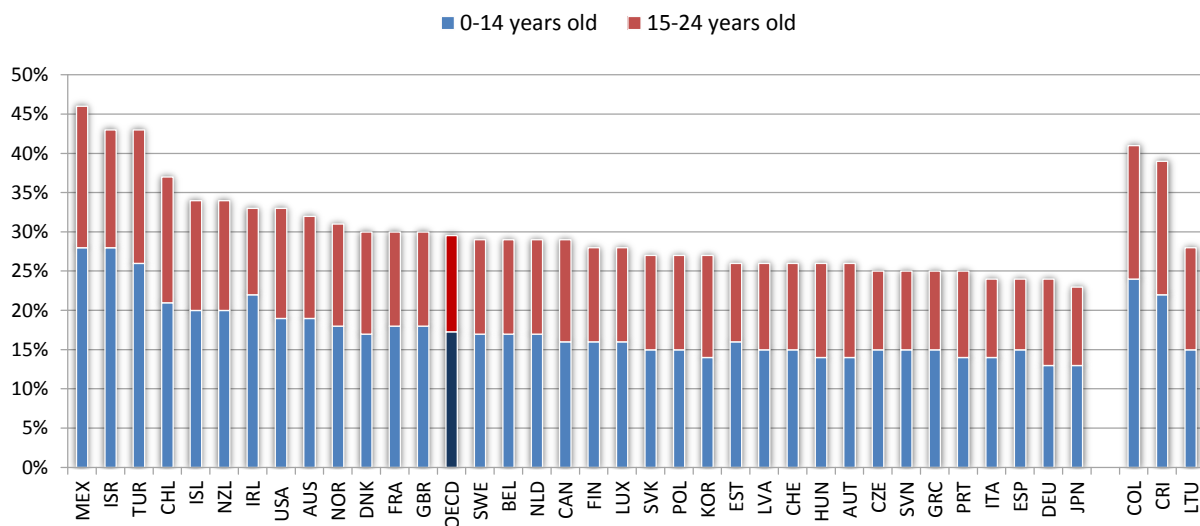
² OECD (2016), *Youth in the MENA Region: How to Bring Them In*, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264265721-en>

³ OECD data (2016), Youth inactivity, <https://data.oecd.org/youthinac/youth-not-in-education-or-employment-neet.htm>

⁴ OECD (2017), *How's Life? 2017: Measuring Well-being*, OECD Publishing, Paris. http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/how_life-2017-en

disengagement with traditional forms of participation signals frustration with the available channels to make their voices heard. The risk of a significant share of politically disengaged youth is vital as around 25% of 15-29 year-olds in OECD countries stress that they are “not at all interested” in politics⁵ – a statement that is also reaffirmed in the low voter turnout among youth in national and local elections. At the same time, youth demonstrate an unprecedented uptake of digital technologies (e.g. social media, blogs, online petitions) to initiate debates around social and political issues and mobilise peers. While the share of young people varies across OECD members and accession countries (see Figure 1.1), the new opportunities provided by the digital transformation as well as its implications for civic education curricular and existing participation channels are yet to be fully addressed by governments (see Chapter 5).

Figure 1.1. Share of young people as part of the total population, 2015



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2017). World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision, DVD Edition.

5. Policy makers increasingly acknowledge the need to reform governance arrangements to adequately address youth needs and aspirations. With the adoption of international commitments such as the 1995 UN World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY), the Lisbon Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes (1998), the 2014 Baku Commitment to Youth Policies and regional youth charters, national youth laws and integrated youth policies have mushroomed in OECD countries and globally in an effort to address the fragmented delivery of youth-related public services (see Chapters 2 and 6) and strengthen engagement with youth. Some countries are also applying tools to mainstream youth considerations in policy making, such as “youth checks” and youth-sensitive budgeting, and rethink the way in which public management processes and tools should operate to ensure that policy outcomes are responsive to youth concerns (i.e. regulatory policy, strategic planning, human resource management in the public sector, evidence-based policy making, monitoring and evaluation).

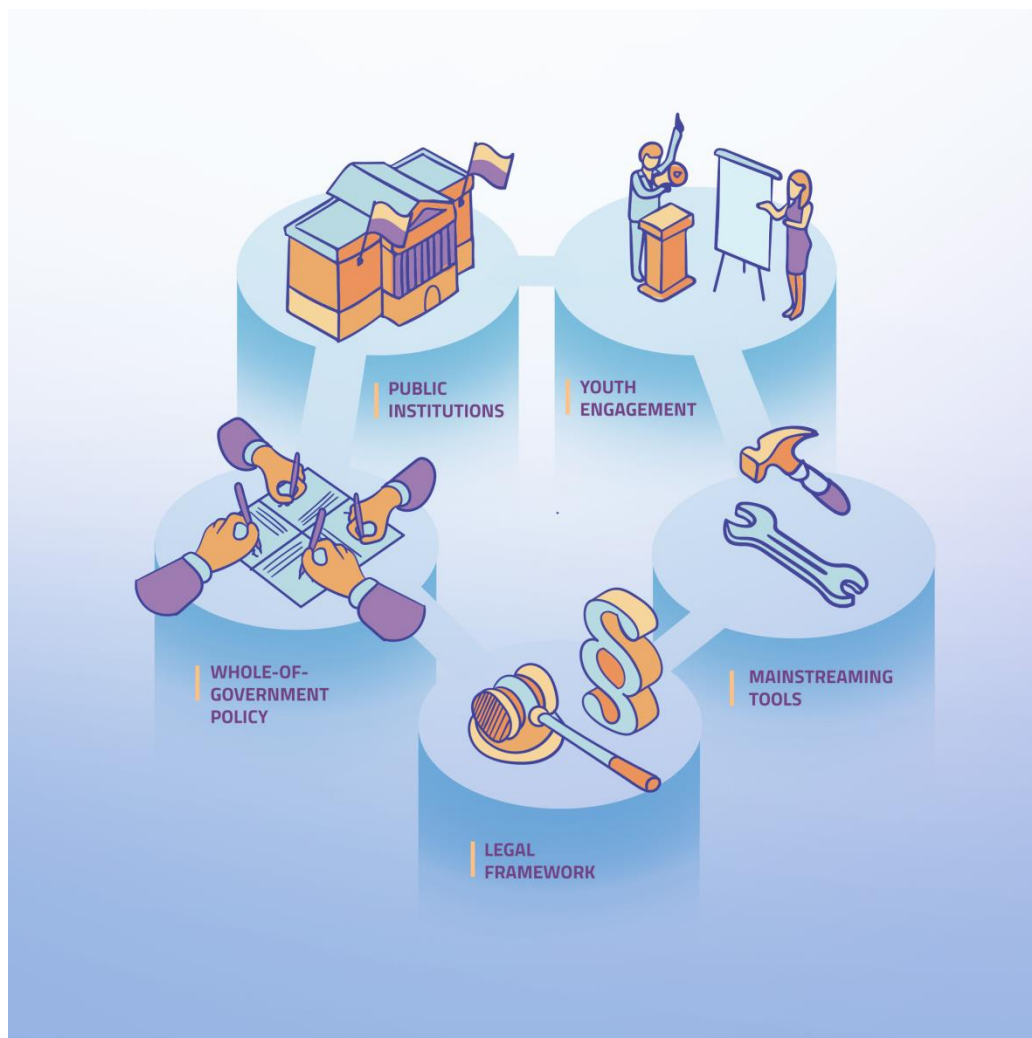
⁵ European Social Survey ESS6-2012, ESS7-2014 and World Values Survey Wave6: 2010-14.

6. However, despite these initiatives, international frameworks and national reform efforts often continue to be characterised by a lack of a holistic approach to redefine the relationship between government and youth. This stocktaking exercise emphasises the need to bridge what can be described as the “governance gap” for youth engagement and empowerment in public and economic life.⁶ It acknowledges that the way in which public institutions, policies, legal frameworks and public management processes and tools operate impact on the outcomes for young people. Essentially, it stresses that governance matters and that governments and non-governmental youth stakeholders need to think and act “youth” in order to translate political commitments into youth-responsive programmes, initiatives and services.

7. Delivering on the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2017-18 and the request by the Public Governance Committee (PGC) reaffirmed in its 56th session on 23 November 2017, this report takes stock of the governance arrangements for youth engagement and empowerment across OECD member countries. This Stocktaking report is prepared based on desk research and available information through existing OECD evidence and reports. Delegates are invited to discuss the preliminary findings of the report and complement them by providing additional context information. The report begins to showcase existing practices in a comparative perspective and points to shortages in available information and data and possible priority areas for future research and analysis along the governance parameters outlined in Figure 1.2. The report is structured through five thematic chapters mirroring the analytical parameters, as discussed by the PGC, which will be further explained in the introduction of each chapter.

⁶ Empowerment involves a process to change power relations. “On the one hand it aims to enable excluded people to take initiatives, make decisions and acquire more power over their lives. At the same time, it forces social, economic and political systems to relinquish some of that power and to enable excluded people and groups to enter into negotiation over decision-making processes, thereby playing a full role in society”. REF: Siurala, L. (2005): European framework of youth policy, Soto Hardiman, Paul et al. (2004): Youth and exclusion in disadvantaged urban areas, Council of Europe, Strasbourg.

Figure 1.2. Bridging the “governance gap” for youth engagement and empowerment



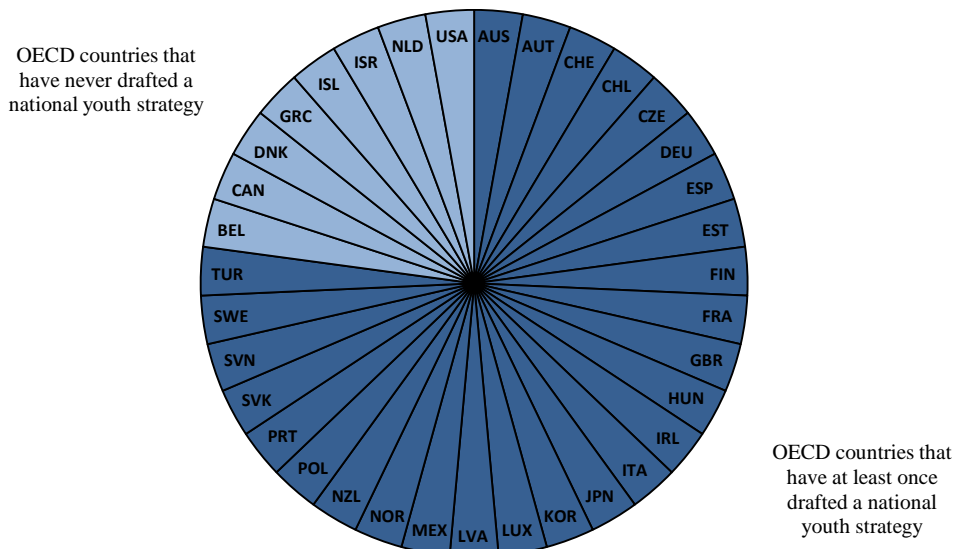
8. The Stocktaking report is based on the accumulated evidence by the Public Governance Committee and its sub-bodies, including Public Employment and Management (PEM) Network and the Working Party of Senior Public Integrity Officials (SPIO) as well as the Regulatory Policy Committee and draws on the findings of the work on open government, gender equality in public life, public sector innovation, human resource management, and others. It complements in-house work on young people’s social and economic inclusion (ELS, DEV), skills development (EDU, DAF, OECD Strategy) and OECD-wide frameworks (Action Plan for Youth).

2. A whole-of-government approach to youth policy

9. Empowering youth so that they are able to contribute to society and economy demands a clear and comprehensive vision that is supported by a sound strategy to achieve its objectives. A strategy can structure national priorities and guide the implementation of youth-related policies, services and programmes.

10. Youth as a public policy field cuts across many different policy areas including employment, education, health, justice and sports, among others. National youth policies have emerged as guiding frameworks to shape a vision for youth and to develop youth policies and deliver youth services in a coherent manner across administrative boundaries. Establishing a commonly agreed framework for youth policy enables OECD countries to foster a whole-of-government approach which engages and empowers young men and women and advances society-wide goals.⁷ The development of a comprehensive youth strategy has become a wide-spread practice across OECD countries. Available evidence suggests that 77% of all OECD countries have drafted a multi-year youth strategy at the national or federal level in the past (see Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1. OECD countries who drafted a national youth strategy in the past, 2018



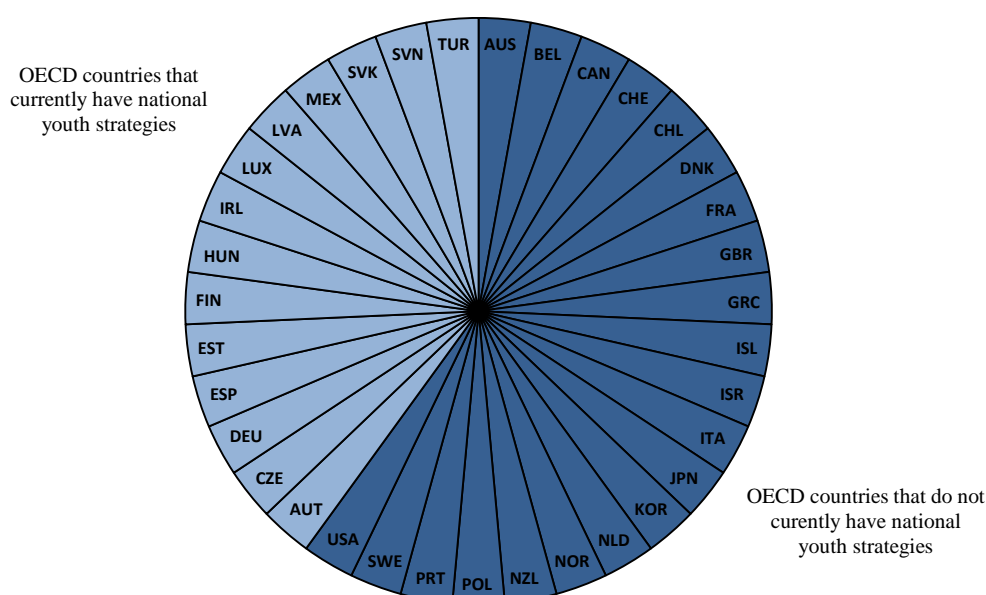
Note: Data refers to the presence of national youth policies recorded as of March 2018.

⁷ A whole-of-government approach “aims to ensure horizontal and vertical co-ordination of government activity in order to improve policy coherence, better use resources, promote and capitalise on synergies and innovation that arise from a multi-stakeholder perspective, and provide seamless service delivery to citizens and businesses. It requires government bodies, regardless of type or level, to work across the boundaries of portfolios to achieve shared goals and to provide integrated government responses” (OECD, 2011, Estonia: Towards a Single Government Approach, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264104860-en>).

Source: OECD calculations based on Youth Policy (database), Council of Europe (database), European Commission EACEA National Policies Platform (database), official websites of national administrations.

11. Yet, as of March 2018, it appears that only 40% of OECD countries have an operational national or federal multi-year youth strategies in place (see Figure 2.2). As Figure 1.1 points out, unitary states in which the central government assumes wide authority over relevant thematic areas linked to youth policy (e.g. education, employment, health) may be more likely to opt for a centralised approach to formulate youth strategies compared to highly federal states in which subnational governments assume responsibility for formulating and implementing youth policies. For instance, the Flemish community in Belgium and Quebec province in Canada currently have formulated their own youth strategies.⁸ On the other hand, despite a high degree of decentralised governance, both Germany and Switzerland formulated youth strategies at the federal level to deliver youth policies and services in a coherent manner.

Figure 2.2. OECD countries with an operational national youth strategy, 2018



Note: Data refers to the presence of national youth policies recorded as of March 2018. The national youth policy of Turkey does not foresee an expiry date but it mentions that the document will be reviewed and updated in periods of four years.

Source: OECD calculations based on Youth Policy (database), Council of Europe (database), European Commission EACEA National Policies Platform (database), official websites of national administrations.

12. A whole-of-government approach can unite different governmental and non-governmental stakeholders behind a joint vision and advance their agenda as recognised by international commitments, such as the Baku Commitment to Youth Policies. For instance, Slovak Republic's National Youth Strategy (2014-2020) provides a cross-sectorial approach and focuses on nine policy areas including education, employment,

⁸ Quebec Youth Strategy 2030: <https://www.jeunes.gouv.qc.ca/publications/documents/pqj-2030-en.pdf>; Flemish Youth Policy Plan (2015-2019): http://www.jkp.vlaanderen/assets/downloads/JKP_summary_digital_version.pdf (accessed on 1 March 2018).

participation, health, entrepreneurship, social inclusion and volunteering. The strategy underlines investment and empowerment as its key pillars, while placing an emphasis on labour migration of educated young Slovaks to other countries.⁹ In Chile, delivering on Chile's national gender equality priorities, the National Action Plan on Youth (2004) features commitments on the eradication of all forms of violence towards young women and men.¹⁰ A number of youth strategies across the OECD also include commitments to protect young people from unhealthy behaviour, social marginalisation, violence and exploitation.

13. Although no single, unified framework exists to guide policy makers in setting, implementing and monitoring youth policy, Bacalso and Farrow (2016) identify a set of eight principles to guide the development, implementation and performance evaluation of youth policies.¹¹ These principles resonate with those identified by the Baku Commitment to Youth Policies (2014) in the First Global Forum on Youth Policies in Azerbaijan. Under this framework, youth strategies should be rights-based; inclusive; participatory; gender-responsive; comprehensive; knowledge-based and evidence-informed; fully resourced; and accountable.¹² Standards developed by the European Youth Forum also reflect these principles and highlight the significance of political commitment and multi-level approach in youth strategies.¹³

14. Among these principles, the Stocktaking report will analyse national youth policies of OECD countries from two aspects: gender-responsiveness and accountability frameworks to monitor and evaluate their impact. The selection of these principles reflect the importance of the specific needs and challenges faced by sub-groups, such as young women, as well as the need to establish follow-up mechanisms to ensure effective implementation of national youth strategies.

15. Growing evidence demonstrates that young women and men raise specific needs and face distinct challenges in the access to education, employment, healthcare, justice and public life.¹⁴ For instance, girls and young women now outpace boys and young men

⁹ Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth 2014 – 2020: http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Slovakia_2014_Youth_Strategy.pdf (accessed on 28 February 2018).

¹⁰ National Action Plan on Youth, Chile (2004): http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Chile_2004_National_Youth_Action_Plan.pdf; <https://www.minmujeryeg.cl/agenda-de-genero/programa-de-gobierno/#1521555165785-f6eee0d4-4044>

¹¹ Bacalso, Cristina and Alex Farrow (2016), “Youth policies from around the world: International practices and country examples”, Youth Policy Working Paper, No 1, March 2016, www.youthpolicy.org/library/wp-content/uploads/library/Youth_Policy_Working_Paper_01_201603.pdf (accessed on 28 February 2018).

¹² Baku Commitment to Youth Policies (2014), http://www.youthpolicy.org/library/wpcontent/uploads/library/2014_Baku_Commitment_Youth_Policies_Eng.pdf (accessed on 1 March 2018).

¹³ European Youth Forum (2018), <http://tools.youthforum.org/8-standards/> (accessed on 1 March 2018).

¹⁴ OECD (2014), Women, Government and Policy Making in OECD Countries: Fostering Diversity for Inclusive Growth, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264210745-en>

in educational attainment, on average, in OECD countries. Yet, gender gaps in employment, entrepreneurship and public life persist with rather slow improvements for young women in recent years.¹⁵ Addressing gender gaps affecting both young women and men in youth policies is crucial to achieve inclusive policy-making and policy outcomes.

16. Moreover, no youth strategy or policy will be successful without effective accountability arrangements in place. OECD evidence suggests that an effective youth strategy should be adopted at the highest political level, contain explicit objectives and measurable targets and (performance) indicators, and be supported by clear accountability, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

2.1. Gender-responsiveness of youth policies

17. The 2015 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life highlights that the impacts of government action should be assessed against the specific needs of women and men from diverse backgrounds to ensure inclusive policy outcomes. Building on the 2015 OECD Gender Recommendation, this paper evaluates whether youth policies are gender-responsive based on three dimensions: (i) no explicit reference to gender equality (ii) availability of gender-disaggregated data; (iii) availability of gender-specific objectives (see Table 2.1).

18. According to the available evidence, 52% of national youth strategies provide gender-disaggregated data and 89% set gender-specific objectives. While a majority of OECD countries features gender-disaggregated and gender-specific objectives in their youth strategies, less than a third of OECD countries set indicators and measurable targets along with gender-specific objectives.

19. Among them, the United Kingdom's latest youth strategy "Positive for Youth" (2011) introduces a working group which includes representatives from government, the volunteering and community sector and the criminal justice sector to address violence against women and girls and female involvement in gangs (including in the context of child sexual exploitation).¹⁶ In Slovenia, the National Youth Programme (2013-2022) defines indicators to measure how many times the principle of non-discrimination on grounds of sex, maternity and parenthood was violated; the proportion of mothers and fathers who use part of the childcare/paternity leave to reconcile work, private and family life; and promote equal opportunities for women in the labour market.¹⁷ Spain's youth strategy (2017-2020) features a collaboration agreement with the University Of Santiago de Compostela to promote women entrepreneurship in technology and research.¹⁸

¹⁵ OECD (2017), *The Pursuit of Gender Equality: An Uphill Battle*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://www.oecd.org/publications/the-pursuit-of-gender-equality-9789264281318-en.htm>

¹⁶ UK Government (2011), *Positive for Youth*, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175496/DFE-00133-2011.pdf (accessed on 1 March 2018).

¹⁷ Slovenia, *National Youth Programme (2013-2022)*, http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Slovenia_Youth_Programme_2013_2022.pdf (accessed on 1 March 2018).

¹⁸ Spain, *Youth Strategy (2017-2020)*: <http://www.injuve.es/sites/default/files/2015/43/publicaciones/Estrategias%202020%20web%20C.pdf> (accessed on 1 March 2018).

Table 2.1. Gender-specific objectives in national youth strategies, 2018

	No explicit reference to gender	Gender-disaggregated data	Gender-specific objectives
Australia		●	●
Austria	●		
Chile		●	●
Czech Republic			●
Estonia			●
Finland			●
France		●	●
Germany	●		
Hungary		●	●
Ireland		●	●
Italy		●	●
Japan			●
Korea			●
Latvia			●
Luxembourg		●	●
Mexico		●	●
New Zealand			●
Norway		●	●
Poland		●	
Portugal		●	●
Slovak Republic		●	●
Slovenia			●
Spain		●	●
Sweden		●	●
Switzerland			●
Turkey			●
United Kingdom			●

Note: Data refers to the most recent national youth policies of OECD countries recorded as of March 2018. Among the 27 OECD member countries which have drafted a national youth strategy in the past, the table analyses the most recent. For instance, in the absence of an operational national youth strategy in France, the 2013 Youth Strategy is analysed. Dots refer to the presence of the above-mentioned indicators in youth strategies.

Source: OECD calculations based on official youth strategy documents.

2.2. Accountability frameworks of youth policies

20. One of the main challenges of implementing youth policies – like any government objective cutting across ministerial portfolios – is to allocate clear responsibilities across various stakeholders. Ensuring the effective implementation and co-ordination of youth initiatives requires the identification of clear roles and responsibilities across governmental and non-governmental stakeholders (see Chapter 3), supported by realistic targets and both medium- and long-term strategic horizons to support the sustainability of youth policy efforts. Effective monitoring and evaluation frameworks are crucial to

optimise policies' value for money, accountability and transparency, and therefore provide legitimacy for the use of public funds and resources. Policy monitoring builds on the systematic collection of data on specified indicators to assess the progress and achievement of objectives and use of allocated funds while policy evaluation refers to the systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed policy, its design, implementation and results.¹⁹ For the purpose of this Scoping report, youth policies are analysed along three dimensions: (i) no reference to monitoring and evaluation; (ii) reference to monitoring and evaluation without concrete mechanisms mentioned; (iii) reference to monitoring and evaluation with information on concrete mechanisms. "Concrete mechanisms" are those which explain the body responsible for conducting monitoring and evaluation or provide information on the process (who reports to whom) and means and frequency of monitoring and evaluation.

21. As illustrated in Figure 2.3, according to the available evidence, the majority of national youth strategies in OECD countries (67%) provide information on concrete monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to measure progress vis-à-vis set targets. Yet, 19% of youth strategies in OECD countries do not include any reference to monitoring and evaluation and a further 15%²⁰ do not include specific information on how it will be done in practice.

Youth strategies of Czech Republic, Estonia and UK establish a concrete monitoring mechanism with detailed information on the process to report on the progress made in achieving the set objectives. In Czech Republic, indicators and data from European Commission's youth reports are taken into account in the mid-term and final evaluation of the youth strategy.²¹ In Slovak Republic, the youth strategy shall be monitored and evaluated through consultations at the national and the regional level with the participation of young people together with representatives of the state administration, regional government and non-governmental organisations. For instance, to protect and enhance young people's health, the Strategy stresses that a national platform composed of key sector representatives and youth representatives shall be created to monitor progress.²² Young people are also involved in monitoring and evaluating youth strategies in Ireland and United Kingdom. In particular, the United Kingdom's youth strategy highlights that data to measure progress should be disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, disability and socio-economic background.²³

22. Monitoring and evaluation helps assess the effectiveness of policy implementation through tracking progress over time; reveals potential bottlenecks and encourages policy makers to respond appropriately. Nonetheless, it should be noted that a reference to concrete monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in the national youth

¹⁹ Scoping Paper of the OECD Survey on Policy Monitoring and Evaluation, GOV/PGC(2017)29.

²⁰ Among 27 OECD member countries which have drafted a national youth strategy in the past.

²¹ Czech Republic, National Youth Strategy (2014 – 2020), <http://www.msmt.cz/areas-of-work/sport-and-youth/youth-strategy-2014-2020?lang=2> (accessed on 1 March 2018).

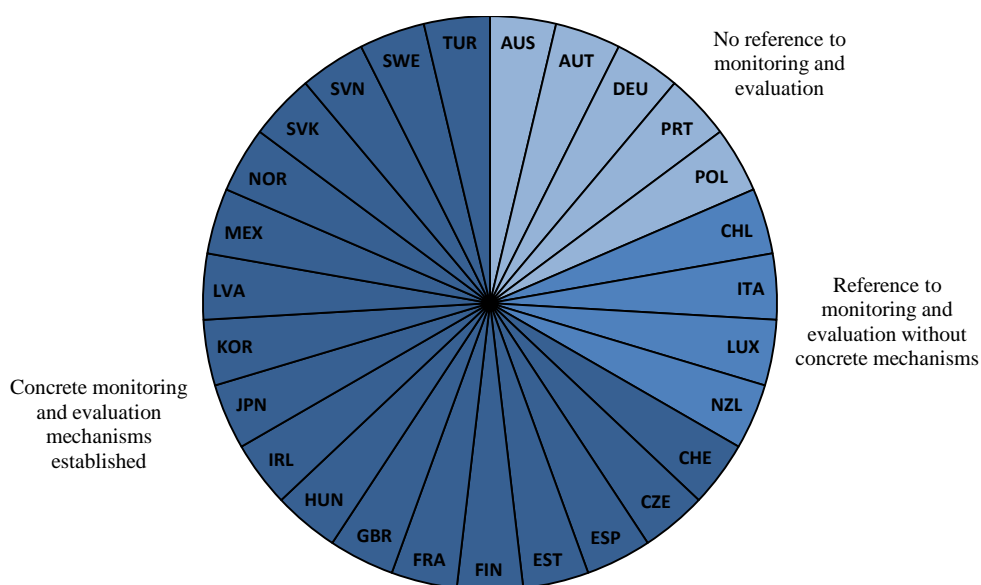
²² Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth 2014 – 2020: http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Slovakia_2014_Youth_Strategy.pdf (accessed on 28 February 2018).

²³ UK Government (2011), Positive for Youth, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175496/DFE-00133-2011.pdf (accessed on 1 March 2018).

strategy does not necessarily mean successful implementation of national youth strategies.

23. Collecting disaggregated information on the situation of young people and the challenges they are facing is crucial to establish effective monitoring and evaluation systems. In France for example, even in the absence of an operational youth strategy, a “*Youth Barometer*”²⁴ is run by the National Institute for Youth and Non-formal Education in partnership with the Department for Youth, Non-formal Education and Voluntary Organisation (DJEPVA) and the National Institute of Youth and Popular Education (INJEP) and the Research Centre for the Study and Development of Living Conditions (CRÉDOC). The barometer provides public authorities, CSOs, and other youth stakeholders with recurrent indicators on the living conditions, life styles, aspirations and expectations of young people in France.

Figure 2.3. More than two-thirds of OECD countries have concrete monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in their youth strategies, 2018



Note: Data refers to the most recent national youth policies of OECD countries recorded as of March 2018. Among the 27 OECD member countries which have drafted a national youth strategy in the past, the table analyses most recent national youth policy of each country vis-à-vis accountability indicators.

Source: OECD calculations based on official youth strategy documents.

24. While it is beyond the scope of this analysis to assess the overall impact of national youth policies across OECD countries, the good practices showcased above indicate the potential for a more comprehensive analysis and evaluation of national youth strategies across OECD countries.

²⁴ <http://www.injep.fr/boutique/rapport-detude-en-ligne/barometre-djepva-sur-la-jeunesse-2017/500.html>

3. Public Institutions

25. Youth concerns are often linked to education portraying young people as pupils or students while often neglecting that there are many other social, economic and political dimensions which determine their well-being. Young people are not only demanders of government services but also right holders and as such should be able to hold their representatives accountable to safeguard access to social, economic, political and cultural opportunities. Indeed, youth express demands that are specific to this age group in diverse policy fields such as housing, health, mobility, access to digital technologies and many others.

26. Youth policy is, by nature, cutting across different policy fields and administrative silos which cannot and should not be dealt with by one single government entity. Effective horizontal and vertical coordination across the multitude of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders involved in delivering youth-related services and programmes is hence essential.²⁵ In most OECD countries, formal responsibility for managing and coordinating youth affairs across government is endowed with or within a Ministry. However, OECD countries vary significantly in the resources provided to the entity with the formal mandate to coordinate youth policy and its link to the centre of government (CoG)²⁶.

27. This section analyses the institutional arrangements applied by OECD countries for managing youth affairs and coordinating youth policy. It explores the allocated financial and human resources to the entity with the formal responsibility for youth affairs, its links to the centre of government and ultimately the set of youth-related services beyond education provided to ensure their well-being (e.g. access to mental health and legal counsel).

²⁵ European Youth Forum (2016), 8 standards for a quality youth policy, <http://www.youthforum.org/8-standards/> (accessed on 8 February 2018)

²⁶ The term “centre of government” refers to the administrative structure that serves the Executive (President or Prime minister, and the Cabinet collectively). It has a great variety of names across countries, such as General secretariat, Cabinet Office, Chancellery, Office/ministry of the Presidency, Council of ministers Office, etc. in many countries the CoG is made up of more than one unit, fulfilling different functions. a unit that is shared by virtually all centres of government is the unit that serves specifically the head of the government. This too has a variety of names, such as the Cabinet of the Prime minister or the Private Office. OECD (2017), Government at a Glance 2017, OECD Publishing, Paris. http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/gov_glance-2017-en

3.1. Entity with formal responsibility to coordinate youth policy

28. The approach chosen by OECD countries to manage youth affairs varies significantly. According to context, every country has consequently developed its own practice to deliver on the needs and aspirations of young people.

29. The government entity with formal responsibility for youth affairs is typically mandated to draft, coordinate and monitor specific thematic aspects of youth policy. This can include the preparation of regulations and measures for the youth sector, support provided for other authorities on youth-specific questions, data collection, the (financial) support of youth organisations and programmes and international cooperation. Key elements of youth policy may also be located outside this body and fall under the responsibility of the Ministries of Education, Health, Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, among others. As will be shown further below, in many countries, youth affairs are organised as part of a combined portfolio within these very ministries. In terms of its thematic priorities, the “responsibility centre” for youth usually addresses issues related to youth participation and representation, volunteering, development and recognition of non-formal education, youth work, skills development, active citizenship and others.

30. Practices to assign formal authority for youth affairs vary significantly across OECD countries and can be grouped broadly into four categories: 1) Youth affairs are organised at the very centre of government (i.e. Prime Minister’s Office); 2) in a dedicated Ministry (i.e. Ministry of Youth); 3) in a department within a Ministry in charge of combined portfolios (i.e. Ministry of Education); or 4) through a mainstreamed approach.

3.1.1. Youth affairs at the centre of government

31. Table 3.1 lists the four OECD countries in which youth affairs are organised directly at the centre of government. In Canada, for instance, the Prime Minister and Head of Government is also the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Youth. The Head of Government is supported by the Prime Minister’s Youth Council (PMYC) which serves as advisory body on matters pertaining Canada’s youth, creating strong links between youth representatives and the highest level of government. The PMYC meets regularly in different regions and encourages non-members to engage with its work. Youth affairs in Austria are covered by the Federal Ministry on Youth within the Federal Chancellery, the executive office of the Chancellor. In addition, each of the nine federal governments features dedicated departments for youth affairs and youth welfare. In Italy, youth affairs are chiefly dealt with by the Department of Youth and National Civic Service within the Prime Minister’s Office while in Japan, youth policy is covered by the Director General for Policy Planning for Policies on Cohesive Society within the Cabinet Office.

Table 3.1. Formal responsibility for youth affairs is organised at the CoG

OECD COUNTRY	FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUTH AFFAIRS
AUSTRIA	Federal level: Federal Ministry on Women, Families and Youth within the Federal Chancellery State level (Länder): Departments for youth affairs and youth welfare in each federal government
CANADA	Federal level: Prime Minister is also Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs and Youth Provincial/territorial level: Departments and ministries relating specifically to youth exist at the provincial and municipal levels (e.g. Ministry of Children and Youth Services in Ontario; Children and Youth Department within the Ministry of Families and Children in New Brunswick; and Minister responsible for Youth in Nova Scotia. In Quebec, the Premier is also the Minister responsible for youth issues.
ITALY	Prime Minister's Office, the Department of Youth and National Civic Service
JAPAN	Cabinet Office - DG for Policy planning for policies on cohesive society covers policy of Youth Affairs

Source: OECD's work based on available information on Youth Wiki of the European Commission (<https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/youthwiki>), Youth Department of the Council of Europe (<https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth>) and Youthpolicy (<http://www.youthpolicy.org/>).

3.1.2. Youth affairs organised within a Ministry of Youth

32. Six OECD countries organise and coordinate youth affairs through a Ministry for Youth with combined portfolios (i.e. education, youth, sports, family affairs, senior citizens, women, and children). New Zealand is the only OECD country with a ministry that addresses youth issues exclusively in the form of the Ministry for Youth Development (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2. Formal responsibility for youth affairs is organised within a Ministry of Youth (or combined portfolios)

OECD COUNTRY	FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUTH AFFAIRS
CZECH REPUBLIC	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
GERMANY	Federal level: Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth State level (Länder): ministries in charge of youth affairs and the youth offices
IRELAND	Department of Children and Youth Affairs with Minister for Children and Youth Affairs
LUXEMBOURG	Ministry of Education, Children and Youth
NEW ZEALAND	Ministry of Youth Development
TURKEY	Ministry of Youth and Sports

Source: OECD's work based on available information on Youth Wiki of the European Commission (<https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/youthwiki>), Youth Department of the Council of Europe (<https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth>) and Youthpolicy (<http://www.youthpolicy.org/>).

3.1.3. Department or office within a Ministry in charge of combined portfolios

33. In around half of OECD countries, formal responsibility for youth affairs is assigned to a department, office or similar structure within a Ministry. In ten out of 19 countries, the youth portfolio falls under the Ministry for Education (see Table 3.3). In the Republic of Korea, youth affairs are assigned to the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family whereas in Hungary the Ministry of Human Capacities and, in the Netherlands, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport host the youth portfolio. In Norway and the United States youth issues are being addressed together with children and family affairs.

34. A special practice can be found in Chile, Mexico and Spain, in which a National Youth Institute operates under an assigned line ministry on the coordination of institutional efforts, implementation of (elements of) the national youth policy and empowering young people. In the case of Spain, decision-making power is shared between the National Youth Institute (*Instituto de la Juventud*, INJUVE) and the Youth Inter-Ministerial Commission.

Table 3.3. Formal responsibility for youth affairs is organised within a department or office inside a ministry

OECD COUNTRY	FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUTH AFFAIRS
CHILE	National Institute for Youth (INJUV) – a governmental body within the Ministry of Social Development
ESTONIA	Youth Affairs Department – Ministry of Education and Research
FINLAND	Department for Youth and Sport Policy – Ministry of Education and Culture
FRANCE	Department for Youth, Non-formal Education and Voluntary Organisation – Ministry of Education
GREECE	General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning Youth – Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Education & Religious Affairs
HUNGARY	State Secretariat for Family and Youth Affairs, General Youth Department – Ministry of Human Capacities
ISRAEL	Social and Youth Administration – Ministry of Education
KOREA	Youth Policy Bureau within the Youth and Family Office – Ministry of Gender Equality and Family
LATVIA	Youth Department – Ministry of Education and Science
MEXICO	Mexican Institute of Youth (IMJUVE) – federal government agency
NETHERLANDS	Department of Youth - Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport
NORWAY	Norwegian Directorate of Childhood, Youth and Family Affairs – Ministry of Children and Equality
PORTUGAL	Secretary of State on Youth and Sports – Ministry of Education
SLOVAK REPUBLIC	Department for Youth – Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport
SLOVENIA	Office for Youth – Ministry of Education, Science and Sport
SPAIN	Spanish Youth Institute (INJUVE) – Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality
SWEDEN	Division for Youth Policy – Ministry of Education and Research
SWITZERLAND	Section for Children and Youth Affairs within the Federal Social Insurance Office
UNITED STATES	Administration on children, youth and families within the Office for Children and Families – U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Source: OECD's work based on available information on Youth Wiki of the European Commission (<https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/youthwiki>), Youth Department of the Council of Europe (<https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth>) and Youthpolicy (<http://www.youthpolicy.org/>).

3.1.4. No single national authority responsible for youth affairs

35. Seven OECD countries neither have a Ministry of Youth nor a department or office dedicated to youth issues within a Ministry. Instead, different ministries address specific aspects of youth policy without a central coordination mechanism in place. Each line ministry therefore assumes responsibility for youth-related services and programmes within the limits of its thematic portfolio. In the absence of a “responsibility centre” within government, strong coordination mechanisms and checks must be in place to avoid implementation gaps and ensure sufficient ownership.

36. In Australia, Belgium, Iceland and the United Kingdom, youth policy making is largely decentralised and therefore chiefly addressed by authorities at state, community and local level (see Table 3.4). For example, in Australia five states/territories have a Minister for Youth. In Belgium, each community has a Minister responsible for youth. Youth affairs in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales (UK) fall under different authorities. None of these countries has an overarching national youth policy or strategy in place.

3.2. Human and financial resources allocated for youth affairs

37. Sufficient human and financial resources are critical for public authorities to develop, implement and evaluate government youth programmes and services. It is useful to have information on the workforce and budgets allocated to both the body responsible for coordinating youth affairs and that allocated to youth-related policies and services more generally. However, in some countries, information is only available in relation to one of these aspects and in other countries information is incomplete or out of date. This makes it very difficult to compare resources allocated to youth policies across OECD countries and, in turn, difficult for stakeholders to hold the government to account for the human and financial resources it allocates to youth affairs.

38. Focussed efforts on improving the information available on budgets allocated to bodies responsible for youth affairs as well as budgets allocated to youth-related policies and services more generally would facilitate comparisons of youth resourcing across OECD countries and help bolster accountability in this policy area

3.3. Horizontal and vertical coordination of youth affairs

39. Silo-based approaches to youth policy risk fragmented delivery of youth policy and programmes and restricting young people’s access to important services for a smooth transition to adult life. Strong coordination mechanisms between all governmental and non-governmental stakeholders involved in translating political commitments into concrete youth programming and services are essential. This is relevant both for horizontal (inter-ministerial) and vertical (across different levels of government) coordination.

40. In terms of horizontal coordination, strong links between the body with formal responsibility for youth affairs and the CoG or the Council of Ministers are important to secure the political buy-in and place youth concerns at the centre of government attention.

Proper budgeting of youth programmes and services underlines the critical role of the Ministry of Finance. Moreover, collaboration across different line ministries involved at a particular transition period in young people's life is crucial. In light of debates on the skills mismatch, for instance, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour need to align programming such as to address the gap between the knowledge and competencies acquired by young graduates and the demands of the labour market. Horizontal coordination ultimately concerns also the wider group of stakeholders such as youth associations, youth-representative bodies (e.g. national youth councils), and the non-organised youth to safeguard their interests in the decision making process.

41. Research indicates that at least around half of OECD countries have a dedicated coordination mechanism for youth matters in place. In some cases, these mechanisms integrate vertical coordination aspects by including stakeholders from the subnational levels of government to ensure coherence in youth programming and implementation (see Table 3.6). For instance, in the Czech Republic, the Youth Chamber is an inter-ministerial body which is composed of selected line ministries and regions, representatives from NGOs, school leisure facilities, and experts in children and youth issues. It works as advisory body and is responsible for drafting, implementing and evaluating cross-sectoral youth policies of the Czech Republic. Another group of countries has opted for organising inter-ministerial coordination through particular initiatives, such as through the Youth Guarantee²⁷ in Estonia, or by using ad hoc forms of coordination such as working group meetings, official correspondences and informal exchanges.

Table 3.4. Examples of horizontal coordination mechanisms for youth policy

OECD COUNTRIES	HORIZONTAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS
AUSTRIA	Working group on the National Youth Strategy composed of policy makers and representatives of youth organisations, open youth work, youth information and youth research to discuss the new developments for the Youth Strategy
BELGIUM	<p><u>French speaking community:</u> Annual Permanent Inter-ministerial Conference for Youth Network of youth-correspondents: brings together people from different departments who are tasked to be sensitive to youth-related aspects in their sector. The network shares information concerning youth in the respective fields and develops mechanisms for youth participation.</p> <p><u>German speaking community:</u> Cross-sectorial steering group to elaborate the youth strategy: gathers all cabinets of the government, the youth ministry, the youth council, youth information centres and the youth office gather to elaborate the youth strategy plan and related actions.</p>
CANADA	<u>Nova Scotia, Canada:</u>

²⁷ The Youth Guarantee is a commitment by all EU Member States to ensure that all young people under the age of 25 years receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeships or traineeships within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education (<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079>).

	Youth Secretariat: an agency responsible for coordinating youth interventions across different sectors.
CZECH REPUBLIC	Youth Chamber: an inter-ministerial body consisting of representatives of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), school leisure facilities, selected ministries and regions, as well as experts in children and youth issues.
FINLAND	Network of liaison officers: composed of officials in the key ministries for the growth and living conditions of young people, used to coordinate youth affairs in the state administration. The tasks of the network are coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Culture.
FRANCE	Ministerial Committee for Youth chaired by inter-ministerial Delegate for Youth Affairs
GERMANY	'Action for a Youth-Oriented Society' (Koordinierungsstelle „Handeln für eine jugendgerechte Gesellschaft“) , coordination body that supports the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth in implementing the youth strategy.
HUNGARY	National Youth Expert Forum , fosters cross-sectorial cooperation with the aim to harmonise activities related to youth policy in different departments and monitor the implementation of the National Youth Strategy.
ICELAND	Interdisciplinary committee on youth affairs between line ministries
LUXEMBOURG	Inter-departmental Committee , composed of representatives of the Ministers responsible for Children and Youth, Children, Children's Rights, Foreign Affairs, Local Affairs, Culture, Cooperation and Development, Education, Equal Opportunities, Family, Justice, Housing, Police, Employment, Health and Sport.
PORTUGAL	Inter-ministerial Commission , ensures coordination at the political level, monitoring and evaluation of youth policies.
SLOVAK REPUBLIC	Two expert groups: the Inter-ministerial working group for state policy in the field of youth (coordinated by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport), and the Committee for Children and Youth (coordinated by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family)
SLOVENIA	Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth (URSM) , composed of 20 members (i.e. 10 youth representatives and 10 representatives of different ministries) and meets at least twice per year. Council members are divided in four different working groups to discuss the most relevant topics for the development of youth policy. Youth Focal Points – each Ministry assigns one person within the Ministry to facilitate coordination with the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth and other Ministries. They can but must not be members of the URSM.
SPAIN	Youth Inter-ministerial Commission , decision-making and coordination structure for youth affairs.
SWITZERLAND	The Section for Children and Youth Affairs within the Federal Social Insurance Office coordinates the measures taken on the

	federal level in the field of youth policy and ensures an ongoing exchange of information and experience between different federal services. An inter-ministerial coordination group facilitates horizontal coordination on youth policy.
UNITED KINGDOM	<p><u>Scotland:</u> National Performance Framework (NPF) sets out the Scottish Government's purpose and strategic objectives and can provide a structure for coordination of policy. It means that the whole of the public sector is aligned and works in partnership to achieve the Government's objectives.</p> <p><u>Northern Ireland:</u> Two Ministerial Sub-Committees: on Poverty and Social Inclusion and on Children and Young People.</p>
UNITED STATES	Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs: supports coordinated federal activities focused on improving outcomes for youth.

Source: OECD's work based on available information on Youth Wiki of the European Commission (<https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/youthwiki>), Youth Department of the Council of Europe (<https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth>) and Youthpolicy (<http://www.youthpolicy.org/>).

3.3.1. Practices of organising horizontal coordination

42. Practices from the OECD member countries show that horizontal coordination mechanisms often take the form of:

- **Inter-ministerial or inter-departmental coordination bodies** in which all ministries responsible for implementing aspects of the national youth policy participate. The ministry with formal responsibility to coordinate youth affairs is always part of these inter-ministerial structures and usually coordinates and prepares its meetings.
- **Working groups** which are oftentimes established on an ad hoc basis and assume responsibility for specific topics (e.g. National Youth Strategy, social inclusion). In principle, only ministries with corresponding portfolios are involved in the respective thematic working group. Inter-ministerial coordination bodies may be complemented by working groups in which line ministries may take the lead in coordinating its activities.
- **Focal points** which may be appointed in ministries delivering youth-specific policies or services or across the whole cabinet to oversee the work on youth affairs within the ministry and coordinate with other line ministries as needed.

In France, for instance, the Director of the Department for Youth, Non-formal Education and Voluntary Organisation which is located inside the Ministry of Education also holds the position of Inter-Ministerial Delegate for Youth Affairs. He chairs the meetings of the inter-ministerial committee for youth which is responsible for coordination and building partnerships with other ministries. According to the description of his responsibilities, young people's access to information and their rights is given special attention. In the United States, the Department of Health and Human Services chairs the Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs with the main function to support coordinated federal

activities. The Working Group is comprised of staff from twelve federal departments and seven federal agencies supporting youth-related activities.

3.3.2. *Practices of organising vertical coordination*

43. The governance of youth policy across levels of government differs significantly across OECD countries. By nature, the mechanisms used to coordinate the relationship between the central and subnational levels is shaped by the general organisation and distribution of competencies for public affairs (e.g. federal vs. unitary), population size and other factors. For instance, countries with a highly federalised system, in which subnational government entities enjoy strong or exclusive autonomy in specific policy fields, such as education, will chose a mechanism that is distinct from countries in which these matters are dealt with primarily by the central level.

44. OECD countries have hence identified different ways of translating the strategic priorities identified in youth laws (see Chapter 6) and national youth policy or strategy (see Chapter 1) into programmes and services. For instance, the Spanish Inter-regional Youth Council (*Consejo Interterritorial de Juventud*) aims to strengthen cooperation between the Autonomous Regions and the State, as well as among Autonomous Regions, concerning all matters related to youth policies. Attached to the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality, the Council is composed of the Director-General of the Youth Institute and directors (or similar level) representing youth bodies in the Autonomous Regions and a representative from the Spanish Federation of Provinces and Municipalities (FEMP).²⁸ In Austria, the heads of provincial youth departments and representatives of the Federal Chancellery meet annually at the conference of provincial youth departments to coordinate youth-related interventions. In Finland, the youth law clarifies that the Ministry of Education must adopt performance targets together with provincial state offices or the delivery of youth services at the level of provinces. The youth law in Estonia stipulates the specific functions of country governors and rural municipality and city councils. It outlines that county governorates shall co-ordinate the implementation of national youth work programmes and analyse youth work and its organisation in the county, and monitor the purposeful use of funds allocated for youth work from the state budget. Rural municipalities and city councils are mandated to determine the priorities of youth work in their administrative territories. In Switzerland, the Federal Social Insurance Office has the mandate to strengthen both horizontal and vertical coordination across all Swiss cantons to ensure the delivery of youth policies and services in a coherent manner.

45. Similar to the involvement of non-governmental stakeholders in horizontal coordination arrangements, vertical coordination mechanisms can involve a wide range of (youth-led) advocacy and interest groups. In Slovenia, the National Consultations of the Slovenian Youth Sector provide an annual occasion for youth organisations, youth workers and all other parties involved in the co-creation of policies and programmes for young people across central and local levels to engage in a dialogue. The outcomes of the National Consultations serve as recommendations to guide public authorities at national and local level in designing programmes and activities.²⁹ Similar arrangements exist in

²⁸ <http://www.injuve.es/prensa/agenda/reunion-del-consejo-interterritorial-de-juventud-gjion>

²⁹ <http://mss.si/nacionalni-posvet-mladinskega-sektorja-2017/>

Finland and Estonia, among others, where national and subnational authorities are mandated and required to co-operate with youth councils upon planning, implementation and assessment of youth work (Estonia) and co-operate with youth clubs and youth organisations to support young people in pursuing spare time activities (Finland).

46. It must be noted that there is limited evidence as to how effective the mechanisms used to coordinate youth affairs across ministerial portfolios and levels of government are. Further analysis is needed to assess how effective the mechanisms are that are used to coordinate youth affairs across ministerial portfolios and levels of government. Future research could also explore to what extent young people and their representatives are integrated in such coordination mechanisms to give them a voice in shaping policy making and outcomes.

3.4. Youth service centres

47. While a holistic mapping of services and service providing institutions for young people is beyond the scope of this paper, their relevance should be acknowledged here.

48. The thematic scope of these services is as diverse as the practical needs and concerns of young men and women. They can include free-of-charge after-school events such as cultural, leisure and sports activities or take the form of targeted support for vulnerable young people (e.g. support for homeless youth, prevention of drug misuse, access to justice and health counselling, etc.).³⁰ Public authorities can support the access to and the quality of these services, for instance by providing facilities or (co)-funding voluntary or private organisations. In fact, service delivery is indeed often outsourced to national or local voluntary and sometimes private organisations and communities. At least 21 OECD countries have created Youth Information Centres – both online and/or offline – to better inform young people about the available services.³¹ These Centres figure as a one-stop shop for information on a wide range of issues, for instance with regard to opportunities to study, apply for internships, seek employment, find housing, access health services, and on social issues, free time and volunteering, among others.³² Other OECD countries may not have online information centres or platforms but provide similar offline arrangements or services under a different name.

49. In Sweden, Youth Guidance Centres provide services for young people between 12 and 25 years focusing on promoting sexual health, strengthening identity, personality development as well as prevention and early detection of mental health issues. The centres, which are located nearly across all municipalities, collaborate with the child and adolescent psychiatry, adult psychiatry, maternal health care, schools and other municipal actors in the youth field. In addition, the website Youmo.se, which is available in different languages, provides information about health, gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights. Online youth guidance is targeting young migrants

³⁰ House of Commons, Education Committee (2011), Services for young people, <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmeduc/744/744i.pdf> (accessed on 14 February 2018).

³¹ Add source

³² Examples include Italy (Informagiovani-italia.com), Canada (www.canada.ca/en/services/youth.html), and sub-national entities (South Australia, www.whenithitsthefan.com.au).

between 13 and 20 years.³³ In New Zealand, Youth Service, initiated by the government, aims to improve young people's access to education, training and work-based learning. It collaborates with community-based providers to facilitate their access to the labour market and offers guidance and practical support to enhance skills.³⁴ In Israel, the Afikim Programme, established in 2007 by the Young Adult Services Department of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services aims at integrating NEETs aged 18-27 into the job market. Funded jointly by the government and local authorities, each participant is involved in an 18-months individualised coaching programme to acquire a vocation and find a job.³⁵ To combat bullying, the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport created a 24-hour hotline. Young people affected by bullying can call anonymously and will be assisted by experts in psychology, social workers, lawyers and sociologists in a confidential way without being charged.³⁶ In France, the Legal Protection of Young People Programme (*Protection Judiciaire de la Jeunesse*) protects and educates minors in danger or under legal control.³⁷

50. While not exhaustive, these examples provide an indication of the variety of services and stakeholders involved in delivering on concrete demands expressed by young people. Future research in this area could help identify potential gaps in young people's access to certain services and identify good practices to improve their impact for youth from various socio-economic backgrounds.

3.5. Ombudsperson in charge of children and youth

51. A children or youth ombudsperson³⁸ is a public authority charged with the protection and promotion of the rights of children and young people. Endowed with the mandate to protect and promote the rights of children and youth, a wealth of evidence on the challenges faced by young people and independence from the Government, it can play a crucial role in mainstreaming youth rights and concerns in policy making and service delivery across government institutions and stakeholders.

52. The primary objective of the children or youth ombudsperson is to incorporate and implement the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC) into all areas of society as stipulated in Article 4. Since the establishment of the first children's Ombudsman in Norway in 1981, there has been growing awareness and recommendations issued by the United Nations and the Council of Europe, among others,

³³ European Commission, Youth Wiki (2017), <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/content/youthwiki/77-making-health-facilities-more-youth-friendly-sweden> (accessed on 14 February 2018)

³⁴ <http://www.youthservice.govt.nz/>

³⁵ Ministry of Social Affairs and Services, Best Practices of Social Services in State of Israel 2015, http://www.molsa.gov.il/Units/Wings/agafSpecialJobs/Documents/shirutim%20mitavim_eng.pdf

³⁶ <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/content/youthwiki/46-access-quality-services-spain>

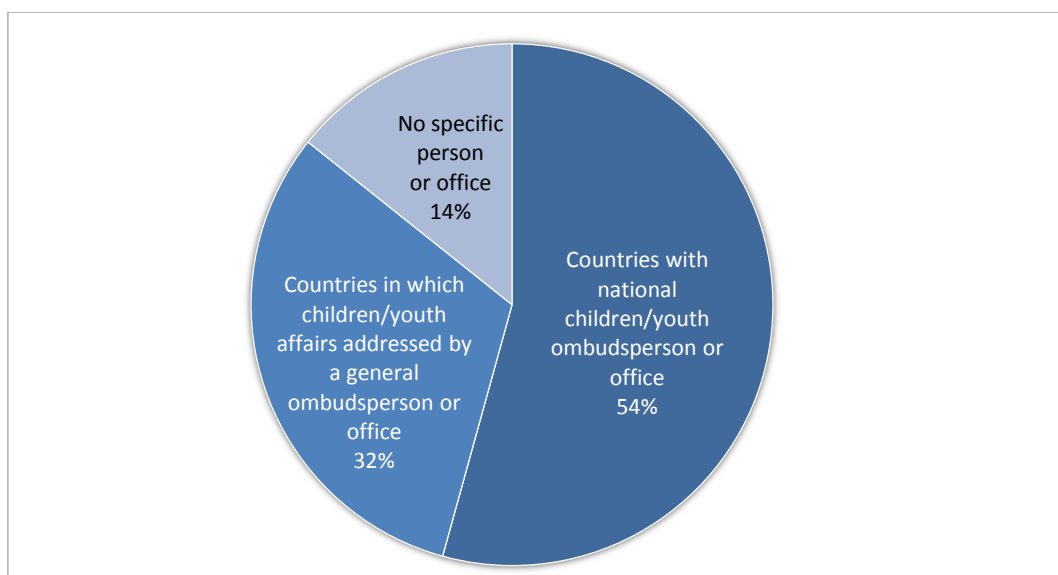
³⁷ <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/content/youthwiki/47-youth-work-foster-social-inclusion-france>

³⁸ 'Children's commissioner', 'youth commissioner', 'child advocate', 'children's commission', 'youth ombudsman' are used somewhat interchangeably by OECD countries to refer to the function of the ombudsperson in charge of children and youth.

for countries to create an institution to protect and promote their rights. Children and youth ombudspeople have developed in Europe, the majority of institutions belonging to the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC), with some being established very recently (e.g. for Slovak Republic and Slovenia in 2016).

53. Evidence suggests that nearly all OECD countries have put in place a person or office serving the function of children/youth ombudspeople (see Figure 3.1). According to preliminary evidence, 19 OECD countries have created a specific ombudspeople for youth at regional or national/federal level and 11 have created a dedicated office within the national ombudspeople office, or included youth affairs as part of its mandate. In Japan, ombudspeople for children exist in some cities. Some general ombudspeople offices have undertaken efforts to make their services more responsive to different groups in society, including young people, and engage more directly with constituencies such as youth organisations.

Figure 3.1. Ombudspeople for children and youth



Note: The term “General ombudspeople/office” refers to both national and regional offices.

Source: OECD calculation based on information available of the websites of national ombudspeople/offices and national children/youth ombudspeople/offices.

54. The services offered can vary greatly across youth ombudspeople in OECD countries and regions. Usually, children and youth are provided with an anonymous advice or toll free telephone line, in some countries, the services provided involve policy advice, advocacy, mediation as well as fully-fledged independent investigations and complaint mechanism. For instance, in the Netherlands, the Ombudsman for Children (*de Kinderombudsman*) embedded in the National Ombudsman Office can investigate complaints and conduct investigations on its own initiative and monitor how complaints by children or their representatives are dealt with by the relevant bodies. In addition to hearing individual complaints, *de Kinderombudsman* conducts research and engages in advocacy activities to promote children's rights in public policy, law and practice. All ombudspeople for children and youth seek to promote their rights in the public and private spheres by providing advice and information. Some offices also offer advice to

the government and parliament on legislation and policy that can impact the rights of the child; a minority investigates complaints and/or conducts investigations.

55. As per the definition of “children” enshrined in the UN CRC, the target group comprises all young people below 18. However, definitions per country may vary and increasingly tend towards extending coverage beyond majority age to young people aged up to 21 or 25 years. For example, in 2015, Ireland was discussing whether the maximum age to access services provided by the Ombudsperson for Children should be increased from 18 to 21 for disabled young people and youth who have been in the care of state.³⁹

56. Children and youth ombudsperson are independent entities with a legislative mandate and report annually to Parliament, and/or the government. For instance, in Luxembourg, the Ombudscommittee (*Ombuds Comité pour les droits des enfants*) reports annually to the Government and to the Chamber of Deputies on the situation of children’s rights as well as on its own activities. In Belgium, The Child Rights Commission reports to the Flemish Parliament and the Commissioner for Child Rights of the French Community reports to the Parliament of the French Community. As independent bodies, they usually enjoy a significant degree of independence from the Executive. In fact, their independence is the cornerstone of delivering on their mandate to effectively promote and protect children and youth rights.

³⁹ Report of the Ombudsman for Children to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on the occasion of the examination of Ireland's consolidated Third and Fourth Report to the Committee, April 2015, https://www.oco.ie/app/uploads/2017/09/OCO_AltReportUNCRC_2015.pdf.

4. Mainstreaming a youth perspective in policy making

57. Youth mainstreaming is a concept that requires taking into account the needs and aspirations of young people into policy and decision making processes across all policy areas. Drawing on the UN definition of gender mainstreaming, youth mainstreaming could be defined as

“the process of assessing the implications for young people of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making youth concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that inequality is not perpetuated.”⁴⁰

58. Effective youth participation and engagement, with genuine opportunities for youth to shape policy outcomes, is an integral part of youth mainstreaming. While youth mainstreaming has not yet gained the same attention by decision makers as gender mainstreaming, the latter provides for a wealth of experiences and tested tools which can ultimately help identify mechanisms that work and avoid possible pitfalls.

59. In light of the above, OECD countries have only recently started to apply mainstreaming tools and mechanisms focused on the policy outcomes for young men and women. This section will present a comparative analysis of the mechanisms put in place.

4.1. Youth checks: Assessing the regulatory impact on young people

60. Regulatory Impact Analysis (RIA) is a systemic approach to critically assess the positive and negative effects of proposed and existing regulations and non-regulatory alternatives. It is an important element of an evidence-based approach to policy making. As OECD analysis has shown, conducting RIA within an appropriate systematic framework can underpin the capacity of governments to identify the best solution to address policy problems and to ensure that regulations are efficient and effective. At the same time, RIA documents evidence and thus increases the accountability of policy decisions.⁴¹

61. The OECD has explored the use of RIA for inclusive growth objectives focusing, among others, on the impacts on specific social groups and distribution. Based on data from the *2014 Regulatory Indicators Survey* and the *2008 OECD survey of Indicators of Regulatory Management Systems* it finds that in 17 countries impacts on specific social groups must be assessed in all RIA (2014), compared with 14 in 2008. However, a review of RIA practices suggests that the assessment of impacts on specific social groups in RIA remains relatively rare. The working paper finds similar results for assessing

⁴⁰ <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/GMS.PDF>

⁴¹ OECD (2015), *OECD Regulatory Policy Outlook 2015*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

distributional impacts as part of the RIA process. While 22 countries require regulators to identify the likely distributional impacts of regulatory proposals, and a further 19 countries identify impacts on specific social group of all regulatory proposals, detailed analyses of the distributional impacts on specific population subgroups are the exception. The Canadian RIA on the *Regulations Amending the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations*, for instance, monetises the costs imposed by the regulatory proposal on students and workers who reside in Canada under a temporary student permit or a worker permit. RIA considering impacts on disadvantaged groups and existing inequalities are less common.⁴²

62. More recently, some OECD countries have developed “youth checks” to assess the anticipated impact of new regulations on young men and women and hence broaden the default “adult”-perspective in regulatory policy making. Drawing on inspiration from the Child Regulatory Impact Assessment (CRIA)⁴³, youth checks provide a tool to tailor policy outcomes to youth concerns, anticipate possible negative implications and hence reduce the risk of unwanted effects and ultimately foster more youth-friendly societies and economies. The availability of age-disaggregated evidence is a necessary condition for policy makers to fully understand the consequences of their action and make informed decisions. Furthermore, in principle, youth checks can encourage a cross-sectoral approach to youth policy and, in case its results are published, serve as accountability tool for non-governmental youth stakeholders.

63. Youth impact assessments should be embedded into the overall impact assessment practices to take into account the cumulative and synergy effects of different impacts and anticipate the overall net benefits (and costs) for different groups in society. The OECD Recommendation on Regulatory Policy and Governance stresses that “ex ante impact assessment practices [should] consider the welfare impacts of regulation taking into account economic, social and environmental impacts“ (Principle 4.1).⁴⁴ In-depth analyses of youth impacts for those regulations where the impact is considered particularly tangible can usefully complement existing RIA practices.

64. A clear definition of the scope and the criteria is needed to trigger the use of youth impact assessments. This report proposes three dimensions:

- 1) *Scope of application*: a sound definition of the legislative/policy/budget proposals which qualify for a “youth check”. For instance, in Ireland, the Youth Check is triggered with any new policy or legislation while in Flanders, Belgium, the youth impact assessment (JoKER) is required only for legislative proposals initiated by the Flemish Government;

⁴² Deighton-Smith, R., A. Erbacci and C. Kauffmann (2016), “Promoting inclusive growth through better regulation: The role of regulatory impact assessment”, OECD Regulatory Policy Working Papers, No. 3, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5jm3tqwqp1vj-en>.

⁴³ A child impact assessment involves examining existing and proposed policies, legislation and changes in administrative services to determine their impact on children and whether they effectively protect and implement the rights expressed in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, 2014, Factsheet: Implementation guidelines for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, https://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Implementation_guidelines.pdf).

⁴⁴ <http://www.oecd.org/governance/regulatory-policy/49990817.pdf>.

- 2) *Age group considered*: the age group to which impact assessment applies. Youth checks might encompass children and young people (e.g. Austria, Flanders in Belgium, Ireland and New Zealand) or focus on adolescents and young adults (e.g. France, Germany). Where impact assessments are aligned with the national youth strategy (Ireland, Germany, Austria) age limits correspond to those defined by the national youth strategy.
- 3) *Criteria/threshold of application*: As part of a proportionate approach to impact assessment (see Principle 4.1 of the OECD Recommendation on Regulatory Policy and Governance), government may define specific thresholds or criteria for applying youth checks or impact assessments. Youth checks might be applied only when young people are identified as direct target of new regulation (e.g. Flanders: “direct influence”), or alternatively, in case they may be concerned indirectly (e.g. Austria and Germany: “potential consequences/impact”). In Ireland, the formulation chosen is “relevant to young people”. In France, two tracks were established. If youth is directly targeted, the youth check is applied; otherwise, the general impact assessment featuring a section to assess the expected impact on youth is used. Moreover, in Austria, youth checks are only applied if at least 10,000 children and young people are affected. Both the targeted assessment of direct impacts on youth as well as the integrated assessment of youth impacts into the broader RIA framework can be complementary depending also on the magnitude of the anticipated impacts for youth. Individually, both approaches come with specific advantages and shortcomings (e.g. comprehensive but “light” assessments vs. detailed but possibly incomplete approach).

65. For instance, in Flanders, based on the initiative of the Flemish Government (*material scope*), a child and youth impact report (JoKER) must accompany all legislative proposals with a direct impact on the interests of (*criteria of application*) of persons under the age of 25 (*personal scope*).

66. Youth checks are currently being applied by five OECD member countries (see Table 4.1). In other countries, they are not yet (systematically) used. In New Zealand, for example, the Ministry for Social Development recommends using best practice guidelines which were prepared within the Ministry but their application is not mandatory. At the EU level, the European Commission published the Better regulation toolbox, which, in Tool 26, provides a set of advisory questions for policy makers to assess the impact of new regulations on youth (i.e. Is there an impact on social inclusion and integration of youth? Is there an impact on learning opportunities in respect to youth? Is there an impact on labour market, continuity of transition between education and professional performance in respect to youth?).⁴⁵

⁴⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/guidelines/docs/br_toolbox_en.pdf.

Table 4.1. "Youth Checks" in OECD Countries

COUNTRY	MATERIAL SCOPE	PERSONAL SCOPE	CRITERIA OF APPLICATION	LEGAL BASIS
AUSTRIA JUGENDCHECK	All new legislative and regulatory proposals	Children, adolescents and young adults (0-30)	"The potential consequences they could have" "Only if at least 10,000 children are affected"	Entered into force with the new budget law (2013)
FLANDERS, BELGIUM JOKER	Draft decrees initiated by the Flemish Government	Individuals under the age of 25	"Directly influences the interests of young"	Decree establishing the child impact report and the scrutiny of government policy on its respect for the rights of the child, 15 July 1997. Decree on conducting a Flemish youth and children's rights policy, 18 July 2008
FRANCE LA CLAUSE D'IMPACT JEUNESSE	Draft laws and regulations	Young people between 16-25 years	When the draft text: <u>is not specifically aimed at young people</u> : use of general impact sheet, to which a section dedicated to the impact on youth was added. <u>specifically targets youth</u> : use "Impact sheet of a draft regulation on young people"	Organic Law 2009-403 of April 15 th (2009) on the general impact assessment Circular from 2 May 2016 on the impact assessment focused on youth
GERMANY JUGENDCHECK	Draft regulations of all federal ministries	Young people between 12-27 years	"Potential impact of planned legislation" 10-15 guiding questions (e.g. Does the action increase or alter the participation of young people to	

IRELAND	Any new policy or legislation	Children and young people up to the age of 24	social benefits?) “Relevant to children and young people”
NEW ZEALAND CHILD IMPACT ASSESSMENT: BEST PRACTICES GUIDELINES	Not applicable	Children and young people (no age limits)	Application is not obligatory but recommended by the Ministry for Social Development and Office of the Children’s Commissioner

Source: Austria: <https://www.bjv.at/requirements/bjv-zum-jugendcheck/>; Flanders, Belgium: <https://www.keki.be/sites/default/files/JoKER%20-%20Presentatie%201.pdf>; France: http://jeunes.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/ClauseImpactJeunesse2016_v5.pdf; Germany: <https://www.jugend-check.de/>; New Zealand: <https://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/monitoring/uncroc/uncroc-guideline-a3-.pdf>.

67. Practice across the five countries differs also in terms of the entity responsible for conducting the youth check. In Austria, any ministry proposing new legislation needs to answer the question “What is the impact of the proposed legislation on young people?” if the new legislation is expected to affect a group of at least 10,000 young people (0-30 years). The Federal Ministry on Women, Families and Youth oversees implementation. In Flanders and France, responsibility for conducting the assessment also lies within each line ministry. In Germany, all assessments are undertaken by the Competence Centre Jugend-Check which operates under the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. There is little information available as to whether non-governmental youth stakeholders have an active say at any stage of a “youth check”. In Austria, the National Youth Council and other youth stakeholders can submit comments on draft regulation in written form.

68. Youth checks are still not widely used across OECD countries. Some countries like Sweden, Scotland in UK and provinces such as New Brunswick in Canada apply Child Regulatory Impact Assessments (CRIA) covering children up to 18 years. However, while useful to assess the impact of draft regulation on the youngest in a society, they do not cover a significant share of adolescents and young adults whose life situations will be significantly different in various ways. For this reason, Flanders in Belgium decided to extend CRIA to the age of 25 years. Preliminary evidence from the countries with a youth check in place suggests that further efforts are necessary to fully roll out the concept and its application across the public administration.⁴⁶

69. As experiences with youth checks are still relatively new in nearly all countries, it is too early to draw conclusions as to whether they are effective in mainstreaming youth concerns in policy making. Moreover, the scope, criteria of application, process of assessment, support and control will inevitably impact on the outcomes and impact. The 2015 Regulatory Policy Outlook finds that the establishment of effective oversight over the RIA process is one of the key ingredients to bridge the gap between formal

⁴⁶ European Youth Forum (2017), Internal Working Document on Youth Check in Austria.

requirements and their actual implementation in practice.⁴⁷ For instance, the 2012 Recommendation advises that countries establish a body that is tasked with “quality control through the review of the quality of impact assessments and returning proposed rules for which impact assessments are inadequate” and recommends governments to assign a body responsible for providing training and guidance on impact assessments (Principle 3.3). In defining the governance of youth checks, governments should be mindful of the available human and technical resources and be explicit to avoid important new legislations with potentially far-reaching consequences for young people will not be tracked. Common standards are equally important to ensure that the decision to conduct assessments and the assessment itself will be based on objective criteria.

4.2. Youth-sensitive public budgeting

70. Budgeting can be a powerful tool to align the broader economic and social objectives of government with the interests and expectations of young people. The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Budgetary Governance characterises the public budget as the central policy document unfolding how government objectives will be prioritised and achieved. Borrowing from the pioneering work undertaken in the field of gender-sensitive budgeting⁴⁸, youth-sensitive budgeting could be describes as a process to:

integrate a clear youth perspective within the overall context of the budget process, through the use of special processes and analytical tools, with a view to promoting youth-responsive policies.

71. Youth-sensitive budgets could ensure that the needs and interests of young people are addressed in government expenditure and revenue policies and decisions. While there is no evidence of youth-sensitive budgeting practices in the national budget cycle in any OECD country until now, member countries’ experiences with conducting “Child-sensitive budgeting” and “Gender-sensitive budgeting” can be a valuable source of inspiration and lessons from these practices can help identify success factors (e.g. political will, capacity and skills issues, availability of age-disaggregated data, civil society engagement, scope). Moreover, recent evidence from Canada demonstrates that youth-specific objectives can be advanced in the framework of gender budgeting.

72. Canada applies Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) to assess the impact of policies and programmes on diverse social groups acknowledging intersecting identity factors beyond biological (sex) and socio-cultural (gender) differences, such as age, race, ethnicity, religion, and mental or physical disability. Since 2017, Canada has taken steps to apply GBA+ also to its federal budget.⁴⁹ For instance, the Gender Results Framework which is introduced as part of Budget 2018 features youth-specific goals, such as to reduce gender gaps in reading and numeracy skills among youth, including indigenous youth.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ OECD (2015), *OECD Regulatory Policy Outlook 2015*, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264238770-en>.

⁴⁸ <http://www.oecd.org/gov/budgeting/gender-budgeting.htm>

⁴⁹ OECD (forthcoming), Gender Governance Review of Canada.

⁵⁰ Budget 2018's Gender Results Framework, <https://www.budget.gc.ca/2018/docs/plan/chap-05-en.html>.

73. A useful foundation for youth-sensitive budgeting is provided in countries where budget information is published in a youth-friendly way, there is there is comprehensive information on youth-related government expenditures or where youth are engaged in participatory budgeting schemes (observed at subnational levels of government).

4.2.1. Youth-friendly budget information

74. OECD countries have recently started to publish Citizens Budgets to communicate budget priorities and disseminate key public finance indicators in an effort to increase transparency and increase citizen participation in the public budget process. For instance, Australia designed the website “Your budget 2017-18” to present the federal budget with opportunities to navigate easily across policy fields and programmes (e.g. education, skills and training, health, housing, etc.).⁵¹ Slovenia presented the national budget for 2017 in form of infographics including information on public expenditures in the fields of education, science and sport.⁵² In Ireland, “Budget 2018” on the Citizens Information website allows citizens to follow the evolution of the budget from the previous year.⁵³ Based on this information, the National Youth Council in Ireland extracted relevant information for young people and disseminated it through their own communication channels, including social media, to increase outreach to young people. The Irish example illustrates the potential for innovative partnerships between government and youth representatives in this area.

75. Transparency helps build trust between government and citizens and access to budget information can help empower young people to engage with the institutions of government on how money directed towards them is spent. The publication of information by government in a user -friendly way can facilitate this and may involve the use of youth-friendly language and visualisations so that information is communicated through channels young people prefer to use.

76. Like any other group in society, it is legitimate for young people to have an interest in understanding the share of government expenditures in areas affecting their lives. For example, in Hong Kong, a comic book introduces youth to the world of public budgets and finance in a playful manner.⁵⁴ The comic book can be downloaded and is complemented by “budget highlights” which inform young people about the overall budget costs in regards to budget decisions which are likely to be of interest to youth (e.g. “provide a \$1,000 allowance to students receiving student financial assistance. This will cost \$570 million”).⁵⁵

⁵¹ Australian Government, Your budget 2017-2018, www.budget.gov.au/2017-18/filter-results.htm?filter= (accessed on 17 February 2018)

⁵² Proračun Republike Slovenije za leto 2017, www.vlada.si/fileadmin/dokumenti/si/projekti/2016/proracun17/Infografika_PRORACUN_2017_KONCNA.pdf (accessed on 17 February 2018)

⁵³ Citizens information, www.citizensinformation.ie/en/money_and_tax/budget_2018.html (accessed on 17 February 2018)

⁵⁴ Government of Hong Kong (2010), www.budget.gov.hk/2010/chi/flip/main.pdf (accessed on 17 February 2018)

⁵⁵ OECD (2016), Youth in the MENA Region: How to Bring Them In, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264265721-en>

4.2.2. Public investments for young people

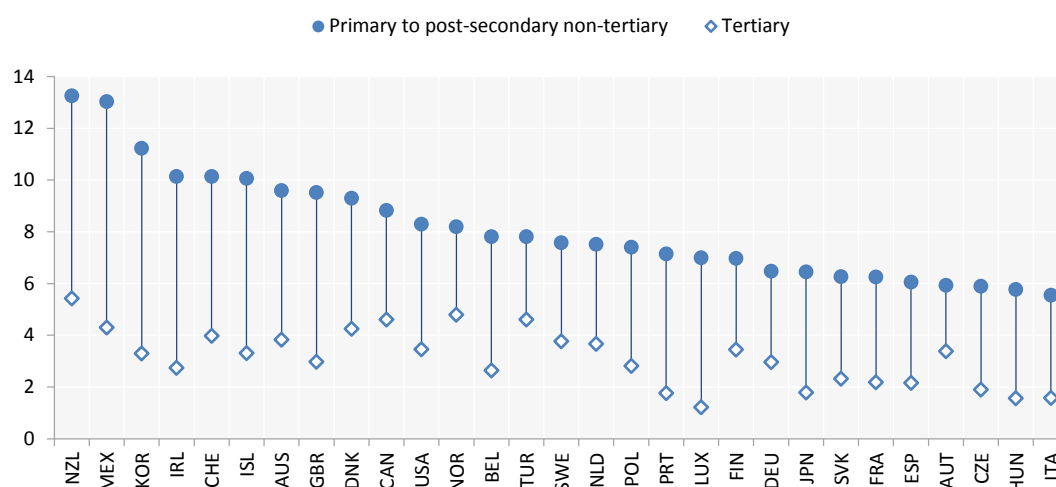
77. Information on public investments on young people, or youth-related public expenditures, can be a powerful instrument for advocacy, increasing transparency and accountability and ultimately improved alignment of public resources with youth priorities. It can provide insights into the extent to which political commitments are translated into actions for young people, including marginalised sub-groups. However, due to limitations in available data and the way in which public budgets are drafted, estimates of the “youth share” of annual expenditures are challenging. Governments tend to present expenditures by sectors, functional areas or programmes, and so estimates of spending per age group are not immediately obvious. In addition, there is no universal definition for “youth-related” expenditures. For example, public expenditures spent on secondary and higher education is exclusively youth-focused while disability allowances and other social policy expenditures do not exclusively target youth but there are young recipients.⁵⁶

78. The OECD Family Database identifies 70 cross-national indicators on family outcomes and family policies across OECD countries which are structured around four dimensions including dimension 3 “Public policies for families and children” featuring indicators on “Public spending on family benefits”⁵⁷ and “Public spending on education”. It features a sub-indicator on public spending on children by age group calculated based on the use of data on public spending on education, social expenditure data, benefit rules and enrolment rates, however, it only covers children and adolescents below 18 (i.e. disaggregated for early childhood: 0-5 years; middle childhood: 6-11 years; and late childhood: 12-17 years).

79. In the absence of clear indicators, a first approximation for youth expenditure could be public education expenditure across OECD countries (see Figure 4.1). The data shows that New Zealand (13.2%) and Mexico (13.0%) invest the highest percentage of public spending in primary to post-secondary non tertiary education (2014). With regard to tertiary education, Norway, Chile and New Zealand invest the highest share across OECD countries.

⁵⁶ UNICEF (2016), Office of the SG’s Envoy on Youth, Investing in Children and Youth, <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Investing-in-Children-and-Youth-UNICEF-and-Envoy-on-Youth-IATF-Issue-Brief.pdf>

⁵⁷ The indicators covers, among others, child-related cash transfers to families with children, public spending on services for families for children, financial support for families provided through the tax system and public spending by age of children (OECD Family Database, <http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm>).

Figure 4.1. Percentage of public spending on education across OECD countries, 2014

Note: Primary to post-secondary non-tertiary / Tertiary, % of public spending, 2014.

Source: OECD (2018), Public spending on education (indicator). doi: 10.1787/f99b45d0-en.

80. In the context of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, child-sensitive budgeting practices are observed. Work in this area benefits from a strong legal foundation and fewer conceptual challenges relative to youth budgeting. Among OECD member and accession countries, Mexico and Colombia have applied child-focused public expenditure measures (C-PEM).⁵⁸

81. In Mexico, the National Congress of Mexico approved a law in 2013 introducing “child spending markers” requiring all ministries to report child-centred expenditure to the Ministry of Finance. With the support of a national think tank and UNICEF, a methodology was developed to assist ministries in preparing the reports based on children rights (i.e. development, participation, protection and survival), thematic areas (i.e. education, health, food and nutrition, information, mass media, etc.) and categories of expenditures (i.e. direct, agent, expanded or expenditure on public goods). Notably, once expenditures were tracked, total public investment in children increased by 4% between 2014 and 2015.⁵⁹ In Wales, United Kingdom, the National Assembly issues the report “Children’s Budgeting in Wales” which reports on child-focused expenditure. Since 2005, the scope was expanded to cover estimations on the public expenditure by age groups (i.e. 0-17, 18-25, 26-64, 65+). The results showed that in 2007-08, an estimated 8% of Welsh Assembly Government and Local Authority expenditures were attributed to 18-25 year olds.

⁵⁸ C-PEM is defined as the identification and routine reporting of child-focused public expenditure by government stakeholders. A C-PEM initiative is thus characterised by two essential features: (i) the use of a methodology that explicitly measures “child-specific” spending; and (ii) government ownership. It is important to note that both criteria must be satisfied in order for an initiative to qualify as C-PEM (UNICEF, 2016, Child-focused Public Expenditure Measurement: A Compendium of Country Initiatives).

⁵⁹ UNICEF (2016), Office of the SG’s Envoy on Youth, Investing in Children and Youth, http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Investing-in-Children-and-Youth_UNICEF-and-Envoy-on-Youth_IATF-Issue-Brief.pdf

82. Examples of child-sensitive budgeting serve as interesting examples for the development of a methodology for estimating youth-focused public expenditure that could ultimately help OECD countries in their efforts to strengthen government transparency and apply youth mainstreaming in decision and policy-making.

4.2.3. Youth participatory budgeting

83. Participatory budgeting is a method to seek the views of citizens and incorporate these in the allocation of public resources. It can target all citizens or specific sub-groups. Participatory budgeting schemes specifically targeting youth can be employed to make budgets more responsive to their needs, in particular when the process is transparent and youth are involved in the whole process of designing, selecting and implementing these projects. Giving youth a say in the allocation of public resources can encourage greater interest in a process that may otherwise be perceived as a rather technical exercise and hence increase young people's ownership, transparency and accountability.

84. One of the first examples of youth participatory budgeting is the initiative "Youth lead the Change" that was implemented in Boston, United States, which has sparked similar initiatives across the United States and in Europe. In Boston, young people (aged 12-25) every year (now fifth in a row) are invited to decide on the allocation of 1 million USD of the city's budget and participate in the collection of ideas, the selection of the projects to be funded and project implementation and development. In Seattle, participatory budgeting started with the initiative "Youth Voice, Youth Choice" through which youth decided on the allocation of 700,000 USD. In New York City, participatory budgeting is open for all citizens of New York from the age of 10, giving an opportunity to younger generations to express their preferences and needs.

85. Examples of youth participatory budgeting are also provided by schools where students have the opportunity to engage in drafting and monitoring school budgets. Student's involvement in the process is of intrinsic value; it helps put young people's civil and political rights into practice thus encouraging youth participation in civil and political life. Such practices can be found across the United States (e.g. San Jose, Phoenix, San Antonio) as well as in Vancouver, Canada, and Scotland with North Ayrshire Council's online participatory budgeting exercise designed exclusively for young people. The initiative is called "Young Scot's" and invites those aged 11-25 years old to allocate approximately 60,000 GBP for youth projects in their local area through a participatory process.

86. Portugal developed the first government initiative of this sort at national level, called "Orçamento Participativo Jovem Portugal". Young people aged 14 to 30 were able to present proposals and vote on the finalists in the first year of implementation (2017). This could be done online through a special webpage or at "face-to-face meetings" taking place all across Portugal. Young people allocated 300,000 Euros across a variety of areas: inclusive sport, social innovation, education for the sciences and environmental sustainability. Each project could receive maximum amount of 75,000 Euros.

87. Other examples of participatory budgeting schemes across OECD countries are not designed for youth specifically but are open to young people under the age of 18. In some cases, a special budget line is reserved for youth projects only.

5. Youth participation and representation in public life

5.1. Enabling environment

88. OECD evidence shows that stakeholder participation in public life is a pillar of good governance and inclusive growth.⁶⁰ The recently adopted [OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government](#)⁶¹ (hereafter “the Recommendation”) recognises that stakeholder participation in the policy cycle “increases government accountability, broadens citizens’ empowerment and influence on decisions, builds civic capacity, improves the evidence base for policy-making, reduces implementation costs, and taps wider networks for innovation in policy-making and service delivery”. With young people below 25 years old representing 29.5% of the population on average in OECD countries, strengthening the participation of young men and women in the policy cycle is crucial.

89. This Stocktaking report acknowledges the critical role young people can play in the policy cycle. In addition, it recognises that young people’s participation and its objectives are diverse and subject to constant evolutions. In line with Brodie et al (2009)⁶², youth participation can be identified along three classifications: public, social and individual. In the public sphere, which shall be the main focus of this report, youth participation refers to the active involvement of youth in structures within existing decision-making structures and processes such as in youth or school councils, youth parliaments or political participation through voting and standing for elections, among others.⁶³

⁶⁰ OECD (2016), The Governance of Inclusive Growth, <http://www.oecd.org/governance/ministerial/the-governance-of-inclusive-growth.pdf>

⁶¹

<https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/Instruments/ShowInstrumentView.aspx?InstrumentID=359&InstrumentPID=483&Lang=en&Book=False>

⁶² Brodie, E., Cowling, E., Nissen, N., et al., 2009, Understanding participation: a literature review, Pathways through Participation.

⁶³ In contrast, social participation refers to both formal and informal structures created outside formal political or organisational structures, for instance young people’s involvement in civil society organisations, social movements and social media, grassroots campaigns, faith groups and identity or interest groups. Individual participation differs from public and social participation as it directly impacts an individual’s choices, decisions and interactions, for instance in the form of judicial proceedings, personal morals, religious beliefs and consumer choices (Children, young people and participation, Youth Policy Working Paper, July 2016, http://www.youthpolicy.org/library/wp-content/uploads/library/Youth_Policy_Working_Paper_03_201607.pdf).

90. The opportunities for young people to participate in public life are shaped by the broader ecosystem of rules, laws, institutions, policies and practices which together form the environment in which citizen participation in general, and that of youth in particular, can be encouraged. The broader ecosystem is not limited to the executive but includes the legislature and judiciary as recognised by the concept of an Open State, introduced by the Recommendation. This report thus emphasises that all state institutions should be responsive to youth concerns and provide opportunities for them to engage.

91. As a starting ground for participation, young people's basic civil rights and liberties, such as their access to information, freedom of speech and expression, association and assembly, must be guaranteed. While a detailed assessment of the state of civil rights and liberties and the extent of a culture of openness goes beyond the scope of this paper, Table 5.1 lists selected indicators to evaluate to what extent political rights and civil liberties and the preconditions for effective and inclusive youth engagement are ensured by OECD countries.⁶⁴

Table 5.1. Selected indicators to assess the enabling environment for youth engagement

OECD country	Access to information law	Political rights and civil liberties*	Civil liberties*	Voice and accountability*
Australia	●	98	9.09	1.30
Austria	●	94	8.42	1.29
Belgium	●	95	7.78	1.35
Canada	●	99	9.15	1.38
Chile	●	94	7.84	1.00
Czech Republic	●	93	7.62	1.05
Denmark	●	97	9.22	1.47
Estonia	●	94	7.79	1.20
Finland	●	100	9.03	1.49
France	●	90	7.80	1.08
Germany	●	94	8.61	1.33
Greece	●	85	7.29	0.65
Hungary	●	72	6.64	0.37
Iceland	●	95	9.58	1.34
Ireland	●	96	9.15	1.29
Israel	●	79	7.79	0.77
Italy	●	89	7.98	1.04
Japan	●	96	7.88	1.00
Korea	●	84	8.00	0.63
Latvia	●	87	7.25	0.87
Luxembourg	●	98	8.81	1.44
Mexico	●	62	6.41	-0.09
Netherlands	●	99	8.89	1.48
New Zealand	●	98	9.26	1.44

⁶⁴ It should be noted that the indicators chosen are based on different methodologies and address specific aspects of what is defined for the purpose of this report as the “enabling environment” for youth participation in public life (see note for additional information).

Norway	●	100	9.87	1.58
Poland	●	85	6.67	0.84
Portugal	●	97	7.84	1.17
Slovak Republic	●	89	7.16	0.94
Slovenia	●	93	7.50	1.00
Spain	●	94	8.08	n.a.
Sweden	●	100	9.39	1.50
Switzerland	●	96	9.03	1.46
Turkey	●	32	4.88	-0.63
United Kingdom	●	94	n.a.	1.24
United States	●	86	7.98	1.10

Note: Freedom House (“Political rights and civil liberties”): Aggregate Score Explanation (0 = least free, 100 = most free); Democracy Index Economist Intelligence Unit (“Civil liberties”): Countries are rated on a 0 to 10 scale, a higher number indicates a higher level of civil liberties; World Bank (“Voice and accountability”): Reflects perceptions of the extent to which a country's citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media. Estimate of governance (ranges from approximately -2.5 [weak] to 2.5 [strong] governance performance).

Source: OECD (2016), Open Government: The Global Context and the Way Forward, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264268104-en> (“Access to information laws”); Freedom House (2018), Freedom in the World 2018, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2018>; Democracy Index Economist Intelligence Unit (2017), Democracy Index 2017; World Bank, The Worldwide Governance Indicators (2016), <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/#home>.

5.2. Youth literacy

92. Studies in the United States, Canada and Australia show that civic education has a positive impact on increased political knowledge, civic participation and voter turnout among young people.⁶⁵

93. Civic education can thus play an important role in ensuring that young people have the needed knowledge to participate in public life and gain a sound understanding of how political institutions and the political system work. The Working Party of Senior Public Integrity Officials (SPIO) also points out that youth require the necessary skills and knowledge to become an active part in a whole-of-society approach for creating a culture of integrity. It is also recognised by the 2017 OECD Recommendation which stresses that a whole-of-society culture of public integrity requires raising awareness in society for the benefits of public integrity and “carrying out, where appropriate, campaigns to promote civic education on public integrity, among individuals and particularly in schools”.⁶⁶ Findings from the OECD report (2018) “Education for Integrity: Teaching on anti-corruption, values and the rule of law” support the argument that educating children and youth about integrity and anti-corruption will likely have a positive influence on future civic behaviour.

⁶⁵ Canada's Democracy Week, www.democracy-democrat.ca/content.asp?section=res&dir=rsrch/icevt&document=icevt&lang=e (accessed on 19 February 2018)

⁶⁶ <http://www.oecd.org/gov/ethics/OECD-Recommendation-Public-Integrity.pdf>.

94. It is increasingly recognised that civic education should be complemented by a citizenship perspective which, among others, places the focus on the ability of young people to understand and exercise their rights and duties, embrace democratic values, attitudes and acquire the necessary skills for active citizenship.⁶⁷ This Stocktaking report will refer to the combination of civic and citizenship education as “Youth literacy” as it acknowledges the holistic knowledge and skills needed for young people to participate in public life. While the organisation and curriculum of civic and citizenship education varies across countries, such courses can include modules on the ability to organise, communicate and engage in critical thinking and decision-making, among others.⁶⁸

95. Civic and citizenship education should not be merely a theoretical exercise and limited to discussions in classrooms. The participation of students in school governance and community service and in extra-curricular activities provided by schools and through non-formal learning arrangements provide a space to apply theoretical knowledge in practice (e.g. initiatives with an international focus include National Model United Nations and the European Youth Parliament, among others).⁶⁹ According to the Eurydice report “Citizenship Education at School in Europe” (2017), “citizenship education activities which take place beyond the classroom are widely recognised to have a high impact on learners, and it is important to ensure access for learners to a range of opportunities at all levels.”⁷⁰

96. Civic and citizenship education should hence not be seen as a narrow set of modules on the functioning of public institutions but rather as a process to equip youth with the competencies and skills needed to participate meaningfully. The Recommendation on Open Government also underlines the importance of open government literacy, which should be promoted among stakeholders⁷¹ (provision 3). Indeed, ensuring that young people have the needed awareness, knowledge, and skills to engage successfully in Open Government strategies and initiatives is crucial (see section 5.2).

97. Today’s digital transformation of all aspects of life, including the sphere of participation in public life, is providing new opportunities while, at the same time,

⁶⁷ According to the OECD (2011) *How's Life? Measuring Well-Being* report “[c]ivic education focuses on people’s knowledge and understanding of formal institutions and the processes of civic life (such as voting in elections), while *citizenship education* focuses on knowledge and understanding of opportunities for participation and engagement in both civics and civil society (e.g. ethical consumption), which are important for democracies.”

⁶⁸ OECD (2016), *Trends Shaping Education 2016*, OECD Publishing, www.oecd.org/education/cei/Spotlight-13-Citizens-with-a-say.pdf (accessed on 19 February 2018)

⁶⁹ European Youth Forum (2017), *Inspiring! Youth organisations' contribution to citizenship education*, www.youthforum.org/assets/2014/04/2017-Youth-Citizenship-Update_V01.pdf (accessed on 19 February 2018)

⁷⁰ Eurydice (2017), *Citizenship Education at School in Europe*, www.webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfs/mwikis/eurydice/images/9/97/Citizenship_Study_EN_2017.pdf (accessed on 19 February 2018)

⁷¹ The Recommendation defines “stakeholders as: “any interested and/or affected party, including: individuals, regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, religious and political affiliations; and institutions and organisations, whether governmental or non-governmental, from civil society, academia, the media or the private sector”

challenging established models of civic and citizenship education. The increasing interconnectedness through new technologies requires schools and teachers to equip young people with a totally new set of skills to navigate and participate both online and offline as active and informed citizens and new skills in the fields of media literacy, enabling youth to critically assess information. In the same vein, it highlights that public officials need to acquire new skills to effectively communicate and interact with the generation of digital natives.

5.3. Youth participation in public life

5.3.1. Youth participation in the policy cycle

98. The Recommendation on Open Government defines stakeholder participation as “all the ways in which stakeholders can be involved in the policy cycle and in service design and delivery, including information [...], consultation [...] and engagement [...]”⁷². It calls upon countries to grant stakeholders⁷³ equal and fair opportunities to be informed and consulted and actively engage them in all phases of the policy-cycle and service design and delivery (provision 8). This includes identifying policy priorities; drafting the actual policy document; policy implementation; and monitoring implementation and evaluation of the policy’s impacts.

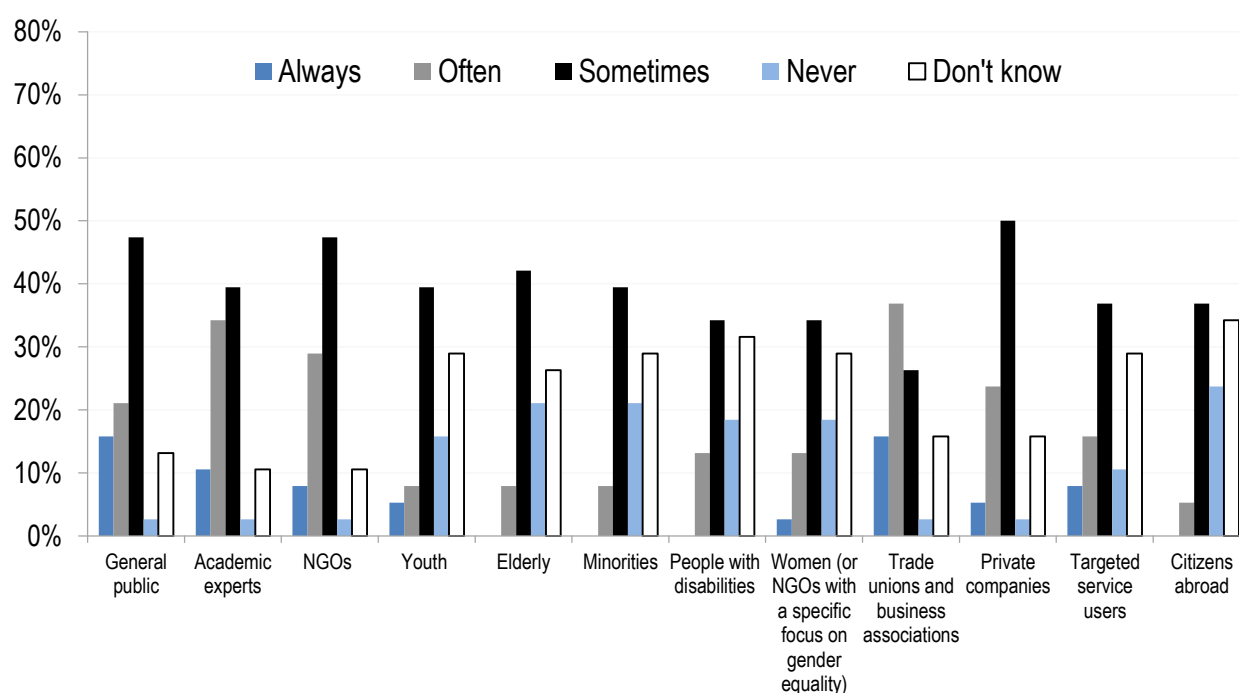
99. Findings from the OECD report “Open Government: The Global Context and the Way Forward” suggest that citizen participation primarily occurs in the phase of policy drafting and in the form of providing feedback on the performance of public service delivery.

100. Evidence on participation practices applied by Ministries of Finance and Health across OECD countries demonstrates that youth occasionally participate in the policy cycle (see Figure 5.1 for participation practices in Ministries of Finance). Compared to academic experts and NGOs, youth and other specific social groups such as elderly, women, minorities and people with disabilities appear to be involved less systematically. Some countries such as France have created dedicated bodies to involve youth more systematically in the policy cycle. The Conseil d’Orientation des Politiques de la Jeunesse (COJ), created in 2016, may be consulted on legislative proposals of relevance to young people and can examine any question of general interest in the field of youth policy. Composed of government stakeholders from central and subnational level, youth associations, experts working on youth integration and social partners, the Council can also present proposals to the government in order to improve the situation of young people.

⁷² The three layers of participation are further defined in the Recommendation.

⁷³ The Recommendation defines “stakeholders as: “any interested and/or affected party, including: individuals, regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, religious and political affiliations; and institutions and organisations, whether governmental or non-governmental, from civil society, academia, the media or the private sector”

Figure 5.1. Participation with different actors throughout the policy cycle in Ministries of Finance



Note: n= 37 all countries' finance ministries (OECD 31). Slovakia's Ministry of Finance did not provide an answer to this question.

Source: OECD (2016), Open Government: The Global Context and the Way Forward, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264268104-en>.

101. In order to effectively engage youth, governments should consider their interests and preferred means of communication and engagement. Participation mechanisms should be adapted to youth, for example by taking advantage of their presence on social media and blogs while not neglecting those who are offline. Intermediaries, such as national youth councils, youth associations and activists can support governments in reaching out to a wider youth public and tailor such formats to their specific expectations.

102. Evidence from the report suggests that, from the perspective of public officials, insufficient financial and human resources, the lack of or insufficient citizens' interest and the lack of information about possibilities to participate figure among the key obstacles to effective citizen participation. While these challenges equally impact on youth, future analysis could provide a more targeted investigation into the participation of youth along the three layers of participation identified by the Recommendation and point to potential obstacles and success factors for their increased participation. Such data collection could include more direct forms of democracy and the specific opportunities and challenges for youth.

5.3.2. Open data and youth

103. The Recommendation further underlines the need to “proactively make available clear, complete, timely, reliable and relevant public sector data and information that is free of cost, available in an open and non-proprietary machine-readable format, easy to

find, understand, use and reuse, and disseminated through a multi-channel approach, to be prioritised in consultation with stakeholders” (provision 8), a provision that mirrors the requirements set by the OECD Recommendation on Digital Government Strategies (principle 3 on data-driven public sector). Young people across OECD countries are indeed making use of open government data to further their aspirations and to voice out their needs and concerns. In France, for example, young people have explored the use of open data to develop projects aimed at improving citizens’ access to information and associative life. Candidates selected to take part in the Open Data Youth Camp in 2015 created electronic platforms to facilitate the creation of enterprises, enable users to find job opportunities in their neighbourhood, and help cyclists identify the best biking routes in their city.⁷⁴ But there is more than that, as French youngsters have been provided incentives for innovative cases in the re-use of Open Data to improve access to public services, for example by granting them prizes through the national competition DataConnexion which runs annually.

104. The use of open government data by young people is being implemented as part of OECD countries’ Open Government strategies and initiatives, as well as within the framework of the OECD Recommendation on Digital Government Strategies which supports specific country reviews, and work to assess governments’ efforts to implement Open Data such as the OECD OURData Index.⁷⁵ The example from France demonstrates that youth-led start-ups were among the first to make use of open government data and its potential to achieve inclusive growth objectives. Open data also forms key opportunities to strengthen youth participation and ensure that their voices are heard. However, comparative evidence on the potential of open government data to engage and empower youth in social, economic and public life is still limited.

5.3.3. Youth-specific commitments in national open government action plans

105. Open Government principles and initiatives are progressively changing the relationship between public officials and citizens where they are applied. They can be particularly useful in terms of engaging with youth, given their impact on making this interaction more dynamic, mutually beneficial and based on reciprocal trust.

106. Open Government National Action plans which countries are developing as part of their membership to the Open Government Partnership (OGP)⁷⁶ can be platforms for youth participation and for advancing youth-specific commitments. As of March 2018, 26 OECD countries are members to the Open Government Partnership (OGP). Some countries use their OGP National Action Plans as a platform to anchor youth-related commitments and, given their cross-sectorial scope and ambition, expose youth concerns to government-wide and international attention.

⁷⁴ <https://www.etalab.gouv.fr/les-jeunes-et-lopen-data>.

⁷⁵ <http://www.oecd.org/gov/digital-government/open-government-data.htm>.

⁷⁶ The OGP is a multilateral initiative launched in 2011 that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. Member countries commit to deliver a country action plan developed with public consultation, and commit to independent reporting on their progress. Currently, the Partnership holds 75 participating countries and thousands of civil society organizations. For more information: <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/>

107. The nature of Open Government objectives targeting young people fluctuates greatly across OGP countries and spans from access to information, digital education and citizen engagement, to corporate governance and employment. In Estonia, the OGP Action Plan seeks to increase youth interest and competences in information technology (IT) through digital education in schools. The commitment was launched as a response to studies on the users of e-services which found that Estonian youth were more passive than youth in other countries to exercise their civic rights and duties online.

108. In Finland and some non-member countries (i.e. Romania and Tunisia), the respective commitments aim at improving youth participation in public consultations and strengthen engagement between public authorities, young people and organisations working with youth. Indonesia's action plan focuses on ensuring that the youth has access to information and infrastructure to build capacity for entrepreneurship. Other OGP countries identify youth as one of many target groups in their commitment (e.g. United States).

109. In a number of OGP countries, the ambitious youth objectives are tracked through concrete targets, actions and mechanisms detailing expected outcomes, responsible stakeholders and precise timelines. In line with its OGP digital competence targets, Estonia has committed to update its syllabi of social subjects by 2019. Moreover, the study materials necessary for studying and teaching is set to be made available through a digital study resources portal by the end of the same year. In outlining measurable milestones to fulfil its commitment, Finland has identified five phases between 2015 and 2017 with specific start and end dates, including joint participation camps for the elderly, youth and children, government staff trainings and youth consultations in domestic law drafting. Between 2016 and 2017 Romania split its activities into three concrete actions with verifiable deliverables and completion dates (e.g. public consultations, the setting up of 83 local consultative councils for young people, and the selection of at least 1000 beneficiaries of MTS youth projects). In all countries, the lead implementing agency comprises of the equivalent of a Ministry of Education (Estonia, Finland, Indonesia) or a Ministry of Youth and Sports (Romania).

110. These examples demonstrate that by integrating youth-specific commitments in OG National Action Plans, countries can make young people a partner in open government. These examples resonate with the OECD report (2016) which finds that 15 OECD countries implement open government initiatives in the field of youth.⁷⁷ The Open Government Toolkit which is currently being elaborated by the Secretariat could feature practical advice for countries to further increase youth participation and integrate youth-specific commitments as part of their national open government agenda.

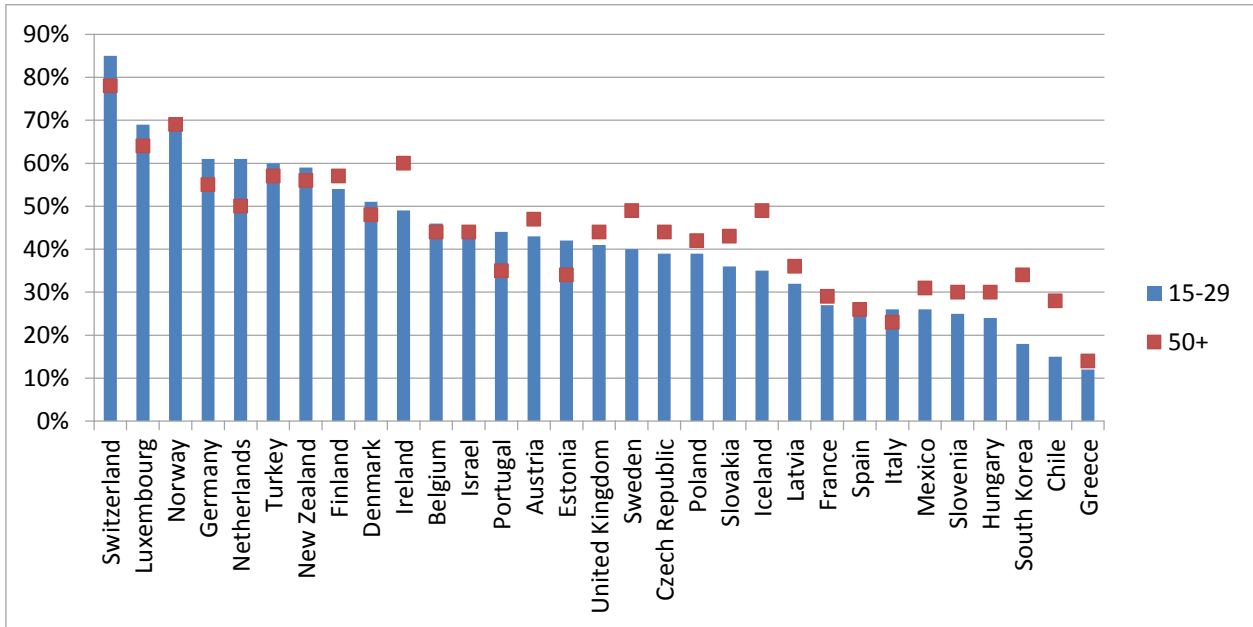
5.3.4. Participation in political life

111. Young men and women are often excluded from the political arena due to their age, limited opportunities and presumed lack of experience. Traditional stereotypes continue to shape the perception of many young candidates and even office holders to be "too young to run and govern". In addition to the gap in the representation of young men and women in state institutions (see Section 5.4), young people are under-represented in formal political institutions and processes shown, among others, by the indicators of trust in government, interest in politics, political party adherence and voter turnout.

⁷⁷ OECD (2016), Open Government: The Global Context and the Way Forward, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264268104-en>.

112. OECD evidence shows that in 17 OECD countries, young people express less trust than their parents (age group 50+). This trust gap is particularly pronounced in countries in which the overall trust of citizens in government is lower.

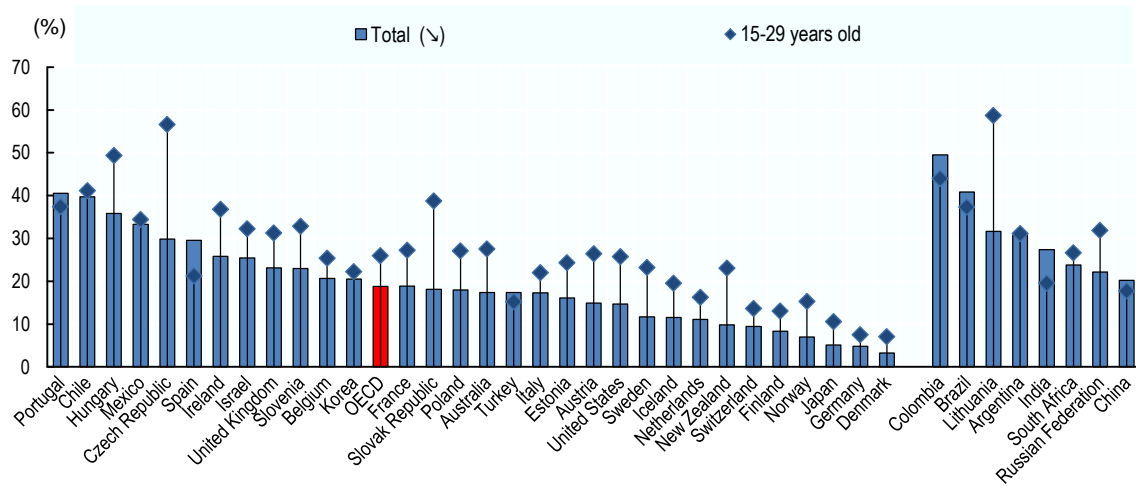
Figure 5.2. Young people’s trust in government across OECD countries, 2016



Note: % of "yes" answers to the question "Do you have confidence in national government?" Results for OECD countries by age group, 2016 or latest available (Finland and Iceland: 2015; Italy and Spain: 2017).
Source: Gallup World Poll

113. Interest in politics is an important factor for social cohesion and for young people to become engaged politically. However, Figure 5.2 shows that, on average, one in four young people aged 15-29 across OECD countries reports to be “not at all interested” in politics, compared to one in five in the total population.

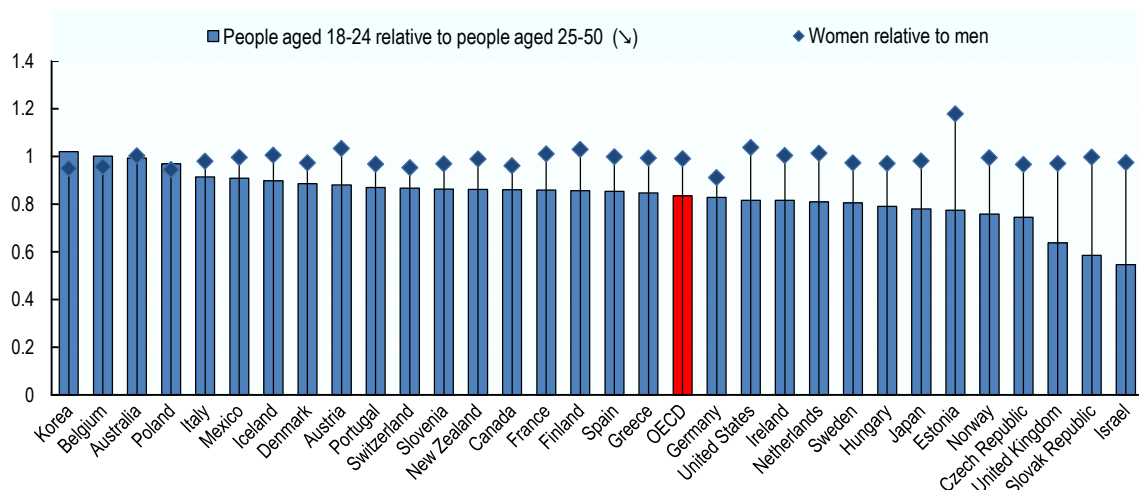
Figure 5.3. Share of young people reporting to be not at all interested in politics, by age group, 2012-2014



Note: Data for Canada, Greece, Latvia and Luxembourg are not available.
 Source: European Social Survey ESS6-2012, ESS7-2014 and World Values Survey Wave 6: 2010-2016.

114. Young citizens are also less likely to cast their vote than the electorate in general. As Figure 5.4 illustrates, voter turnout among 18 to 24 year-olds across OECD countries is 17 percentage points lower on average than for adults aged 25 to 50. For instance, in Norway, Czech Republic, United Kingdom, Slovak Republic and Israel, the gap in the participation rates between young and middle-age voters reaches between 20 and 30 percentage points. Only in Belgium and Korea, young voters are more likely to cast their vote than middle-age individuals.

Figure 5.4. Voter turnout ratios for different population groups, around 2012/13



Note: Data for Chile, Latvia, Luxembourg and Turkey are not available.
 Source: Module 4 of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES 2011-2016) and 2012 European Social Survey for other countries.

115. These findings are reaffirmed by more recent data on self-reported turnout across OECD countries presented in the OECD report "How's Life? 2017 - Measuring Well-Being". When asked whether they had cast a vote in the last national election, young people aged 18-29 were less likely to respond positively than persons aged 30-49 across all countries for which data exists. Interestingly, the same report finds that the age group of 16-24 year olds, on average, tends to agree slightly more with the statement that they have influence on what the government does than persons aged 25-44. However, significant differences exist between countries and while this trend is particularly pronounced in some countries, an inverse pattern can be observed in other OECD countries where youth are less likely to think they have an impact on government action compared to middle-age adults.⁷⁸

116. Through their youth wings, run by young members, political parties offer an important avenue for young people to participate in political life, access decision-making procedures and start their career in politics. While there is a significant lack of age-disaggregated data on party membership among youth, in most countries for which information exists, the appeal of political parties for young people appears to be low. The World Values Survey finds that with the exception of the United States in which 44% of youth aged 15-29 report to adhere to a party, in only three of the remaining 14 countries youth party membership exceeds 10% (i.e. Mexico: 18%; New Zealand: 16% and Sweden: 12%).⁷⁹

117. Low rates of young people's interest in political participation through conventional forms and channels is sometimes brought forward as an argument to attest today's youth a general lack of interest in politics. Yet, overwhelming evidence demonstrates that young men and women are not apathetic. On the contrary, innovative youth-led forms of engagement through digital technologies and in the form of social movements have mushroomed in many OECD countries in recent years. In line with similar trends in non-member countries, it is therefore more appropriate to postulate a crisis of participation in formal institutional politics among youth, not of young people's political participation per se.⁸⁰ A high share of young people expressing disinterest in politics and low levels of trust in government hence likely signals frustration with the performance of public institutions and government initiatives to deliver on youth concerns. On the other side, targeted government initiatives should also reach out to those youth who, for different reasons, have turned their back to government action.

118. Beyond the classical channels and processes for political participation, young people are exploring new and informal ways to make their voices heard. For instance, in the Occupy Movement led by young people across capital cities around the world and the "Nuit debout" movement in France, young people's demands for social reform quickly turned into a more fundamental debate about the functioning of democracy and the representation of vulnerable groups in society in formal decision-making processes.

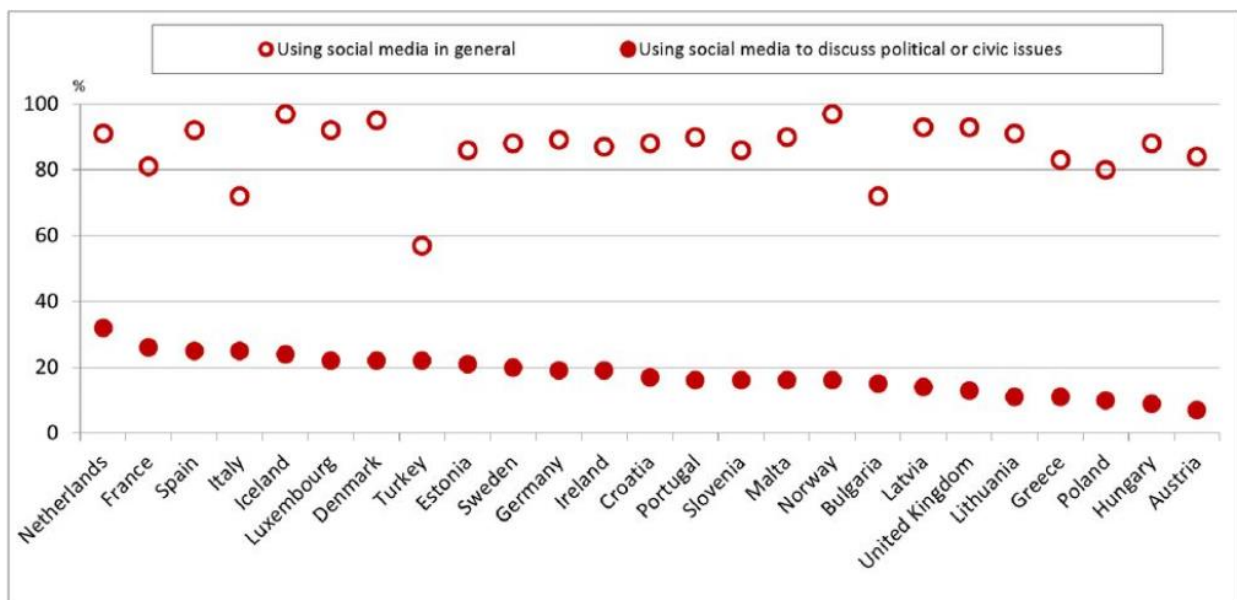
⁷⁸ OECD (2017), *How's Life? 2017: Measuring Well-being*, OECD Publishing, Paris. http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/how_life-2017-en.

⁷⁹ World Values Survey, Wave 6 (2010-2014), <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSDocumentationWV6.jsp>.

⁸⁰ OECD (2016), *Youth in the MENA Region: How to Bring Them In*, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264265721-en>.

119. In 2013, 30% of the world's youth and, among OECD countries, between 99.6% and 43.3% of young people aged 15-24 in OECD countries were considered “digital natives”⁸¹. Through social media, apps, smart mobile devices, online classes and games, today's generation of children, adolescents and young adults is the most connected in the history of humankind which provides unprecedented opportunities for political activism and the mobilisation of peers around a common cause beyond national borders. However, OECD evidence from 2013 also suggests that uptake of social media across youth does not automatically translate into higher engagement with governments. As of 2013, only 40% of young Europeans were using online services to interact with public authorities during the last year (see Figure 5.3). Large variations between individual countries suggest that countries with ICT-skilled public officials and capacities to design youth-tailored content are more successful in reaching out to them.

Figure 5.5. Youth social media use: General vs. political/civic issues, 2013



Source: Mickoleit, A. (2014), "Social Media Use by Governments: A Policy Primer to Discuss Trends, Identify Policy Opportunities and Guide Decision Makers", OECD Working Papers on Public Governance, No. 26, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5jxrcmghmk0s-en>.

120. Young people's participation patterns suggest an increasing trend towards “issue-based” participation. Therefore, if governments want to leverage the increasing penetration of social media among youth to increase their public engagement on civic issues they need to provide relevant opportunities and content for the young generation to engage with their government. These efforts should be part of, and supported by, a Digital Government Strategy aiming to bring more value to all segments of the population, including different age groups.

⁸¹ A "digital native" is defined by the International Telecommunication Union as a youth, aged 15-24, with at least five years of experience using the Internet. https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/publications/mis2013/MIS2013_without_Annex_4.pdf.

5.3.5. National youth councils

121. National youth councils (NYCs) can serve as a consolidated voice of young people through their networks of youth member organisations. A national representation structure eases the consultation and information gathering process for governmental institutions, while also uniting local and regional youth organisations in advocating for youth related issues.⁸² Available evidence suggests that 27 OECD countries have active National youth councils.⁸³

122. The main responsibilities of NYCs include consultations with governmental bodies, as well as nationwide representation, advocacy and lobby work on issues that concern young people. However, most NYCs in OECD countries also provide a wide array of capacity building tools for its member organisations. Additionally, National Youth Councils often identify new topics and areas of work that affect young people, and as such help member organisations and governmental institutions to be more responsive to changes affecting youth. A majority of NYCs also act as bridge between local and regional youth organisations from their countries and those from abroad, consequently providing support in developing international cooperation through regional and international alliances or in collaboration with international organisations.

Table 5.2. Functions of national youth councils

Functions	Consultation (commenting draft legislation)	Representation, advocacy and lobby work	International cooperation	Material support	Capacity building	Raising awareness and introducing new topics
Number of NYCs	25	26	21	12	23	24

Source: OECD's work based on available information on the websites of national youth councils.

123. Most national youth councils feature coordination structures on the national level which facilitate cooperation with government on youth issues. The framework of cooperation differs significantly across the OECD. In the majority of OECD countries, NYCs operate as independent bodies from the government and primarily channel youth voices and exercise advocacy. For instance, the Swedish Youth Council is involved in the policy process as an independent consultation provider, rather than a part of a formal structure. The Netherlands is a similar case where the state recognises the Dutch Youth Council as the main national partner on youth in the country, but does not build co-management structures. Periodically, a number of national youth councils are

⁸² European Youth Forum. "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About National Youth Councils But Were Afraid To Ask." doi:<http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2014/11/YFJ-NationalYouthCouncils-WEB-2P.pdf>.

⁸³ Australia, Canada, Chile, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Turkey and the United States do not have National Youth Councils at the moment. The Italian National Youth Forum (an umbrella organization including over 75 youth groups) was recently terminated, but the National University Council, which fulfils similar functions, was counted in this study instead.

simultaneously involved in thematic working groups that identify youth as a target group, such as education, sports and health. In only two countries, NYCs operate as a part of the formal governmental structure. By example, Israel's National Student and Youth Council works directly under the Ministry of Education. The council is mandated to participate in decision-making in a range of ministries and bodies dealing with youth matters, including the Knesset (the legislative branch of the Israeli government), the Ministry of Education, and the Israeli Police.

Table 5.3. Cooperative framework between NYCs and governments

Coordination structure	Part of a formal governmental structure	Independent advisory/ consultative relationship	Currently participation in government groups	report in working groups
Number of NYCs	2	24	3	

Source: OECD's work based on available information on the websites of national youth councils.

124. By far the largest source of funding for national youth councils come from government bodies or allocations of state controlled funds. In many cases funding is provided through the Ministry of Youth or similar bodies responsible for youth issues. Other main sources of funding include membership fees and funds from international institutions. Some OECD countries have also chosen to allocate a part of taxes and profits made from lotteries and legal gambling towards the funding of National Youth Councils (e.g. Denmark, Sweden and Finland). In recent years, some youth councils have also been looking into possibilities to cooperate with the business sector under the schemes of corporate social responsibility.

5.3.6. Volunteering

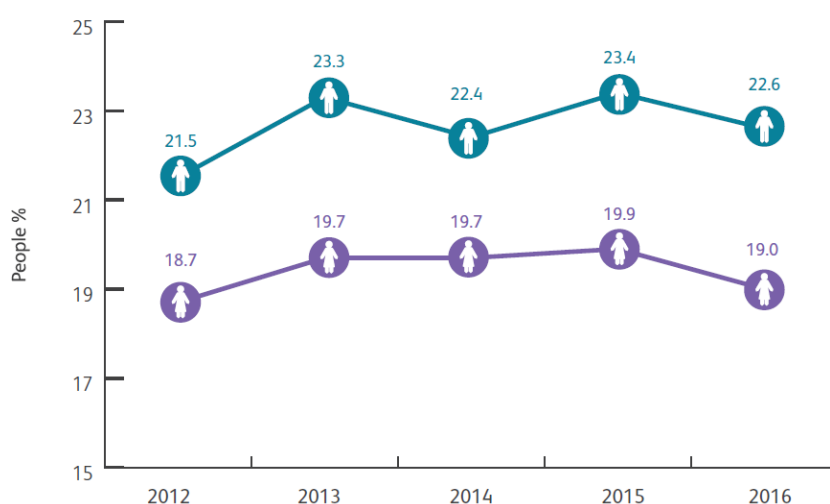
125. Practical experiences across OECD countries have shown the positive impact youth volunteering can have for young people and society as a whole. Youth volunteering is associated with informal and non-formal learning opportunities and the development of personality, skills and competencies among young people to successfully master challenges they will encounter at different stages in their lives. Youth volunteering can make an important contribution to addressing the root causes of marginalisation and foster social cohesion and networking. Investment in youth volunteering is hence an investment in society's development. Volunteer work is also a sizeable part of the labour force in most countries and makes a significant economic contribution. In the United Kingdom for example, volunteering produces twice as much value as the agriculture sector and about the same amount as the telecoms sector.⁸⁴ The potential of youth organisations in encouraging volunteering among youth has been recognised, among others, by a study conducted by the European Commission, highlighting its positive

⁸⁴ OECD, Women are catching up to men in volunteering, and they engage in more altruistic voluntary activities, <http://www.oecd.org/gender/data/women-are-catching-up-to-men-in-volunteering-and-they-engage-in-more-altruistic-voluntary-activities.htm>.

effects on promoting active citizenship, social inclusion and transmitting values of democracy, human rights and solidarity.⁸⁵

126. However, the shadow report on youth policy, published by the European Youth Forum in 2015 indicates that 64 % of national youth councils involved in the survey stressed that “their government is not putting enough efforts and resources in promoting volunteering amongst young people”.⁸⁶ According to World Giving Index 2017 (see Figure 5.6), the level of participation in volunteering activities among young people has remained fairly stable since 2013.

Figure 5.6. Global participation in volunteering time, by age



Note: Data represents one-year scores for each year from 2012 to 2016. Each one-year score is derived from the average of all the countries surveyed in that year. Data relate to participation in volunteering time during one month prior to interview.

Source: CAF World Giving Index 2017, A global view of giving trends, https://www.cafonline.org/docs/default-source/about-us-publications/cafworldgivingindex2017_2167a_web_210917.pdf?sfvrsn=ed1dac40_10.

13 OECD countries have adopted “volunteering acts” with the objective to ensure a rights-based approach to volunteering and regulate the status of volunteers. At least seven countries have established laws which do not address volunteering exclusively but cover it as part of a more general legal framework, such as an “Associations Act”, adopted by Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Italy, Norway and Turkey, or the civic service law in the case of France which regulates volunteers’ social security, pension rights and remuneration, among others. Through the Associations Act, youth organisations are enabled to organise voluntary activities and receive grants from the government to support voluntary programmes and activities. Estonia and Australia developed a national strategy on youth

⁸⁵ EAC-EA (2010), Volunteering in the European Union, http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/doc1018_en.pdf (accessed on 17 February 2018).

⁸⁶ European Youth Forum (2015), Shadow Report on Youth Policy, <http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2015/10/Shadow-Report-on-Youth-Policy.pdf> (accessed on 18 February 2018)

volunteering to support, encourage and officially recognise volunteering in society. Moreover, countries with an operational national youth strategies usually embed volunteering aspects.

127. Many youth organisations rely on volunteers to operate. In turn, youth organisations are an important source of offering volunteering opportunities to both members and non-members. As Table 5.4 illustrates, the share of young people aged 15-29 who are members of a voluntary organisation of some sort (e.g. church/religious, sports/recreation, art/music/education, political party, humanitarian/charitable, environment and other), varies considerably across OECD countries. Moreover, significant variations exist in the thematic preference in each country, varying from youth predominantly organised in church or religious organisations, sports or recreational activities or youth organised in trade unions.

128. It should be noted that these figures do not differentiate between active and passive membership. According to data from the same survey for instance, member of church or religious organisations and trade unions often consider themselves passive members.⁸⁷ Adolescents and young adults are slightly less likely to volunteer, however, differences between age groups are small in most countries and do not seem to change much with age. On the other hand, evidence from the 2012 European Social Surveys suggests that significant differences exist between countries in the proportion of people involved in work for voluntary or charitable organisations.⁸⁸

Table 5.4. Proportion (%) of young people who are members of organisations by type of group, around 2012

OECD COUNTRIES	CHURCH OR RELIGIOUS	SPORTS OR RECREATION	ART, MUSIC, EDUCATION	TRADE UNION	POLITICAL PARTY	HUMANITARIAN OR CHARITABLE	ENVIRONMENTAL	OTHER
AUSTRALIA	41	52	31	22	10	32	15	10
CHILE	39	28	18	13	10	13	8	12
ESTONIA	14	18	15	7	6	5	2	7
GERMANY	48	37	15	12	7	13	7	--
JAPAN	12	22	12	10	5	3	3	11
KOREA	44	29	25	8	6	11	9	23
MEXICO	67	32	23	14	18	20	15	9
NETHERLANDS	30	46	21	19	6	16	11	8
NEW ZEALAND	45	58	40	19	16	37	20	30
POLAND	27	12	11	11	4	8	5	5

⁸⁷ World Values Survey, Wave 6 (2010-2014), <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSDocumentationWV6.jsp>.

⁸⁸ European Social Surveys, 2012, <http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org>

SLOVENIA	20	30	16	17	7	16	7	14
SPAIN	17	14	8	6	4	7	2	3
SWEDEN	43	34	22	49	12	29	11	26
TURKEY	2	4	3	2	5	3	2	1
US	63	27	24	16	44	30	18	16

Source: World Values Survey, Wave 6 (2010-2014), <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSDocumentationWV6.jsp>; OECD Family Database (2015), <https://www.oecd.org/els/family/CO4.1-Participation-voluntary-work.pdf> (both accessed on 18 February 2018).

129. As new forms of youth participation are emerging in response to social, economic and political challenges, future research could analyse the evolution of young people's membership in organisations and less organised forms, such as social movements.

5.4. Youth representation in state institutions

130. Just as any group in society, young people should be fairly represented in state institutions including in the parliament, cabinet and public administration. Opportunities for youth to participate in formal decision making procedures through somewhat external structures, such as youth councils, typically leave it at the discretion of (political) decision makers to determine whether their concerns are taken on board. Taking young people's participation in political life seriously hence means to acknowledge that youth participation requires access to power and resources.

131. Young people can face various obstacles in running a campaign for political office. Running a campaign is costly and may disadvantage young candidates to present themselves. Moreover, traditional stereotypes often portray youth as newcomers who lack the necessary experience for taking political decisions and continue to dominate the political and media landscape. Indeed, the recent formation of new governments in some OECD countries has been accompanied by a debate about whether successful candidates indeed had the necessary skills and experience. Young campaigners also often lack the access to formal and informal networks in which leadership positions are nominated.

132. This section will compare the share of young people in the parliament, cabinet and the public administration across 35 OECD countries. It is important to note that findings should not mistakenly lead to the conclusion that "younger" state institutions perform better or automatically deliver more youth-responsive policy outcomes. However, the findings, which point to significant gaps in the representation of young people across all state institutions analysed here may indicate why many young people express their frustration with formal politics.

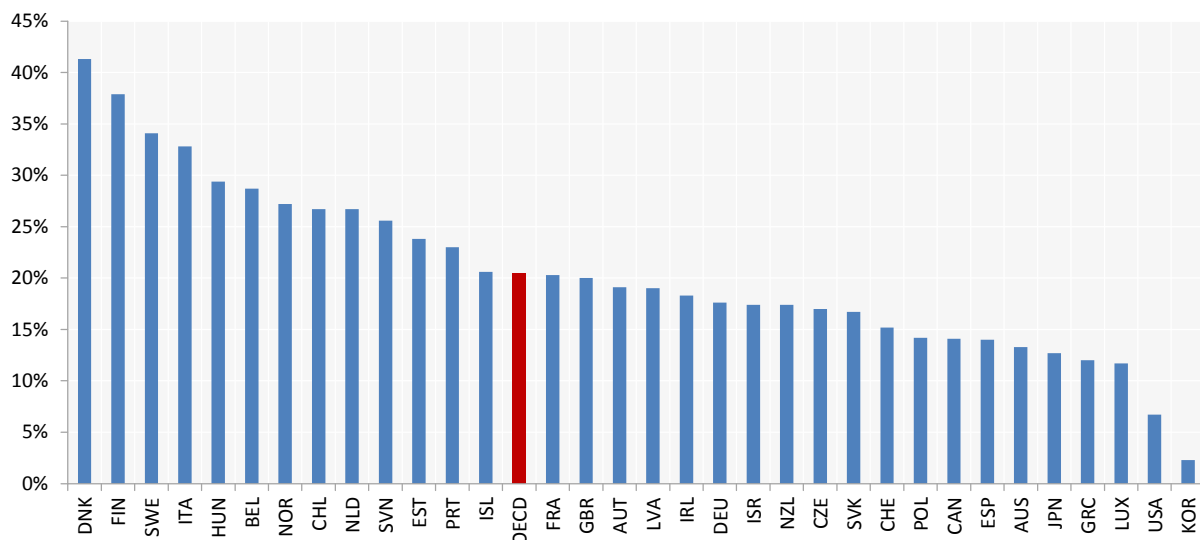
5.4.1. Share of young people in national parliament

133. While the global youth population is at its highest level, young people continue to be under-represented in most national parliaments throughout the world. Indeed, evidence from the International Parliamentary Union for 2016 shows that out of 45,000 parliamentarians in the world, only 1.9% were aged below 30. More than 80% of the world's upper houses of Parliament have no member of parliament (MP) aged under 30. While people between the age of 20 and 44 make up 57% of the world's voting age

population, they represent only 26% of the world’s MPs.⁸⁹ A number of structural and practical challenges continue to challenge young people to present themselves as candidates in elections. For instance, the minimum age required to run for office is a major reason for the very low rates of young people in the upper houses of parliament. However, evidence from countries in which minimum ages are considerably lower (respectively 21, 24 and 30 years old), also shows that young Senators are severely underrepresented.

134. In 2016, the average of parliamentarians below 40 years in OECD countries’ single or lower houses stood at 20.5% (see Figure 5.7). Three of the four countries in which the share of members of parliament (MPs) below 40 years represent more than 30% of lower house MPs are located in Nordic countries (i.e. Sweden, Finland and Denmark). However, recent elections in some OECD countries suggest that this trend is reversible. For instance, in France, the 2017 parliamentary elections resulted in the successful election of 22 MPs below 30 years old (compared to one single representative in the previous legislature) and 95 MPs between 30 and 40 years (17 in previous legislature).⁹⁰ Evidence suggests that countries with a higher youth population do not necessarily have a higher youth representation in national parliaments.

Figure 5.7. Percentage of Single/Lower House Parliamentarians under 40 years in OECD member countries, 2016



Note: Data for France is from the 2017 legislative elections. No data was available for Mexico and Turkey.

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (2016), “Youth Participation in National Parliaments” report, <http://archive.ipu.org/pdf/publications/youthrep-e.pdf>.

135. According to 2016 data from the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Sweden is the only OECD country that applies a quota to guarantee a minimum share for young candidates on party lists (25% for candidates under 35). Furthermore, in an effort to improve the

⁸⁹ Inter-Parliamentary Union (2016), “Youth Participation in National Parliaments” report, <http://archive.ipu.org/pdf/publications/youthrep-e.pdf>

⁹⁰ <http://www2.assemblee-nationale.fr/deputes/liste/ages>

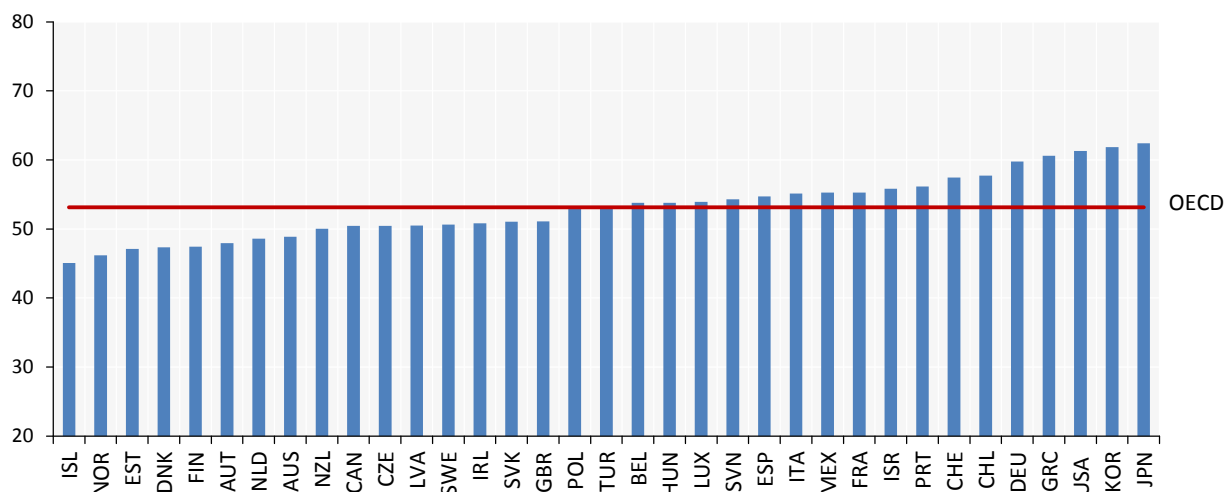
conditions for young elected representatives at the local level, Sweden has initiated trials.⁹¹ Other quotas for youth, such as reserved seats in parliament exist only in four non-member countries (i.e. Rwanda, Morocco, Kenya and Uganda).

136. Factors that usually exclude youth from Parliaments seem to be related to the ones that prevent women from a stronger political participation in legislatures as higher rates of women tend to coincide with larger youth representation.⁹²

5.4.2. Share of young people in the national cabinet

137. Young people are significantly underrepresented in the government leadership. As illustrated in Figure 5.8, the average age of cabinet members varies between 45 years and 62.4 years. Four of the five youngest cabinets across the OECD countries are located in Nordic countries. As of February 2018, only 51 of the incumbent cabinet members were younger than 40 years (8%) and only 20 were 35 years or younger (3%). In 13 OECD countries, there is no minister or Head of State or Government below 40 years.

Figure 5.8. Average age of cabinet members across OECD countries



Note: Data for one cabinet member in Canada and three members of cabinet in Mexico could not be found. Representatives were selected based on the Members of Cabinet listed on the official government websites.
Source: OECD's calculation based on available information on government websites.

138. The recent election of a new generation of young politicians has prompted some to postulate a “new wave” of young political leaders. Indeed, Austria, New Zealand, Estonia and Ireland (below 40) as well as France, Iceland, Belgium and Greece (below 45) have been taken as examples to state a trend towards a more youthful leadership in politics. However, off the media attention, the average age of Heads of Government/State stands at 53.5 years as of February 2018.

⁹¹ <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/content/youthwiki/52-youth-participation-representative-democracy-sweden>.

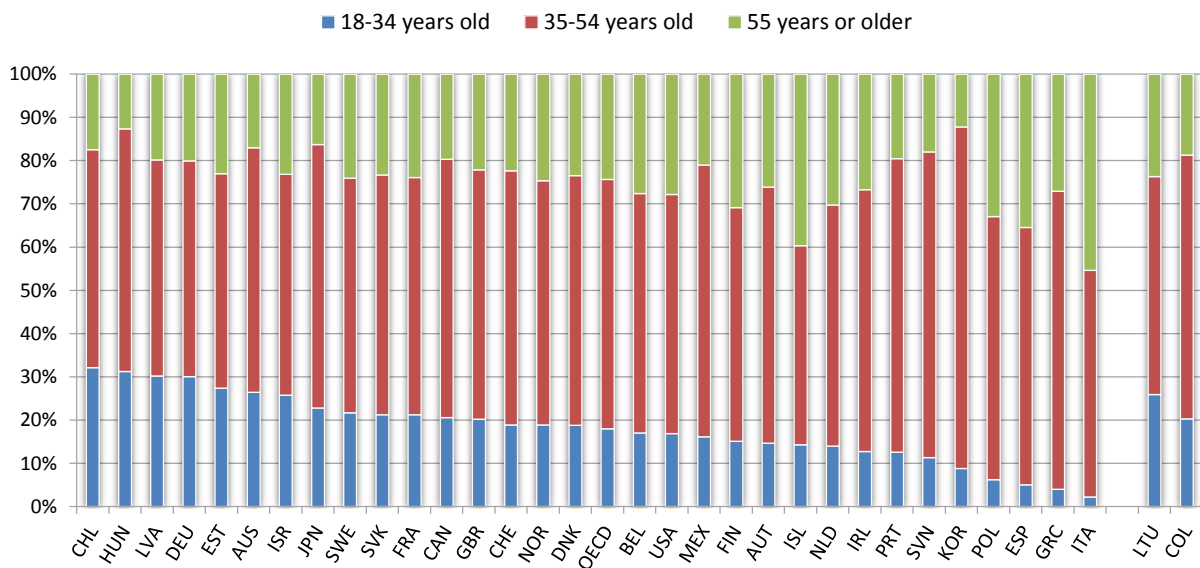
⁹² Inter-Parliamentary Union (2016), “Youth Participation in National Parliaments” report, <http://archive.ipu.org/pdf/publications/youthrep-e.pdf>.

5.4.3. Share of young people employed in the central government

139. An ageing workforce and a small share of young employees is a risk factor associated with limited capacity for administrations to create opportunities for renewal.⁹³ A low share of young employees may also be a sign of low attractiveness of the public sector as an employer. While proper workforce planning is required to avoid the loss of knowledge and experience, the departure of staff can also provide an opportunity to restructure the workforce.

140. Central public administrations in OECD countries for which data is available have on average more workers over 55 years old than below 34 years old (24% and 18% respectively). Figure 5.9 illustrates that the group of employees aged 18-34 make up for the lowest share. Significant differences exist in the overall age structure across OECD countries. In five OECD countries, less than every tenth civil servant is below the age of 35. In only four countries, nearly every third civil servant can be considered “young” according to this classification.

Figure 5.9. Share of people employed in the Central Government by age group, 2015



Source: OECD (2016) Survey on the Composition of the workforce in Central/federal Governments. Information on data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.

141. It must be noted that countries with a lower than average representation of young people in the public administration are not necessarily less successful in offering an appealing work place. The over-representation of older age cohorts may, to some degree, be influenced by decisions to stop hiring new staff in order to decrease the public wage bill. However, preliminary evidence suggests that the public sector increasingly competes for talents with private sector organisations and international employers. In this context, some countries have issued their concerns over a potential brain drain of young talents from public sector work.

⁹³ OECD (2017), Government at a Glance 2017, OECD Publishing, Paris. http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/gov_glance-2017-en

142. These findings underline that the public sector needs to present itself as an attractive employer for the next generation of job seekers and embrace their innovative potential to deliver on citizens' needs and remain dynamic. The OECD report "Skills for a High Performing Civil Service" points to development programmes established by different OECD countries to attract talents to pursue a career in the public sector.⁹⁴ For instance, in response to the growing number of staff born in the 1980s shaping the workforce, the Canadian government has strengthened post-secondary recruitment through a more co-ordinated and targeted annual campaign. A new web presence along with a high-flyer programme to attract top talents has strengthened the public service brand. The United Kingdom, Estonia and the Flemish public service, among others, are running fast stream programmes for talented graduates from universities to start their career in the public service and assume leadership positions. In the United States, exceptional young men and women can gain first-hand experience working at the highest levels of the federal government through the White House Fellows programme since 1965.

143. With the continuous change in work environments and technological progress, today's generation of young people has expressed new expectations which occasionally challenge existing workplace patterns in the public sector. For instance, against the background of a generational gap between leadership and entry level positions and a rather hierarchical organisation of work, young people have expressed their preference for digital work spaces and increasingly tend towards purpose-driven employment without putting back career considerations. A modern workplace is perceived by an increasing number of young professionals as a space which provides for sufficient flexibility to allow for the combination of private/family and professional life through targeted offers (e.g. flexible working hours, home office, day care facilities, and part-time work arrangements) and flatter hierarchies between supervisors and employees, among others.

⁹⁴ OECD (2017), Skills for a High Performing Civil Service, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264280724-en>

6. Legal frameworks

6.1. National youth laws

144. A youth law or youth act⁹⁵ is the most general and comprehensive legislative framework that identifies main stakeholders and fields of action both for state institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working with and for young people. It commonly defines youth and youth institutions, youth age limits, actions to be taken by the state, in particular the executive branch, and to whom they are targeted, as well as financial and budgetary considerations.⁹⁶

145. Among the OECD countries, it appears that Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Korea and Switzerland have a general youth law. The absence of a general law on youth hence does not in itself indicate less attention to youth issues by governments. Countries have political rationales for regulating youth issues in distinct ways and in several OECD countries without a general youth law, youth policy is laid out through a wealth of sectoral youth legislation and specific commitments to deliver on youth concerns. Such commitments can be integrated in legislations related to social services, health care, employment acts and education, criminal justice (e.g. laws on youth offenders) among others. For instance, the Netherlands does not have a youth law. However, there are numerous acts that address specific aspects of youth empowerment. The Youth Care Act, introduced in 2005, is the legal framework of youth care services for youth at risk and their families. Child day care is organised in a different law. This is also the case for education, the juvenile justice system, working conditions for young people and many other issues. In the case of France, the law equality-citizenship of January 27, 2017, includes relevant provisions for the participation of youth such as concerning the establishment of local youth councils in Article 55.⁹⁷ Other countries, like Norway, do not have a specific youth law as there appears to be no legal classification of youth; however, the rights of youth are largely maintained through laws related to children and social care.

146. The majority of the youth laws reviewed came into force between 2000 and 2010, suggesting a legislative boom vis-à-vis youth in the last two decades in OECD countries. This increase in binding documents on the national level has occurred in parallel to an acceleration of international commitments targeting youth at the turn of the millennium. On one side, these international commitments afforded the non-governmental sector with

⁹⁵ Given the absence of a clear delineation between the terms “youth acts” and “youth laws”, which are employed interchangeably in many of the countries assessed, the two terms will be addressed jointly as ‘youth laws’.

⁹⁶ Youth Forum working group Youth Work 2011 – 2012. “Everything You Always Wanted to Know about National Youth Councils but Where Afraid to Ask.” European Youth Forum AISBL, 2014, p. 38., <http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2014/11/YFJ-NationalYouthCouncils-WEB-2P.pdf>.

⁹⁷ Loi égalité-citoyenneté du 27 janvier 2017.

standards to legitimise rights-based advocacy on the national level. On the other, their provisions helped form a blueprint for legal commitments and (cross-sectoral) youth policy.

147. Most notably, the United Nation's World Program of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (WPAY), adopted in 1995, urged all governments to formulate and adopt an integrated national youth policy as a means of addressing youth-related concerns. Many countries have since established youth policies cutting across ministerial portfolios and agencies using the World Programme of Action for Youth as a guide (see Chapter 2). Additionally, building on the WPAY, in 1998 the first World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth adopted the Lisbon Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes, placing youth concerns at the centre of government attention. The role of civil society in bringing youth objectives onto the national policy agenda in this time period also deserves mention such as the 1998 World Youth Forum that preceded the Ministerial Conference.

148. The heightened importance of and attention dedicated to youth empowerment and protection on the national level have further been encouraged by regional initiatives, charters and declarations. The African Youth Charter, the European Charter, Pacific Youth Charter Declaration of Medellin on Youth and Democratic Values and Declaration of Indigenous Peoples Youth on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life provide viable examples of such regional documents. Given its continuous waves of deeper and wider regional integration, European countries have been at the forefront of adopting commitments to youth across national boundaries. The responsibility of the European Union and its regional partners (e.g. the Council of Europe) for youth affairs has intensified and as a result laws, strategies and action plans have advanced considerably in EU member countries in recent years hence providing a solid legal framework for volunteer work, youth participation and the operation of youth organisations. The review process of the EU Structured Dialogue⁹⁸ has played an important role in this respect, as a national consultation of young people and youth organisations is conducted in every EU country during each 18-month work cycle.

149. As of today, there is no international legal framework on "youth" that is binding on states. The most relevant legislation covering children and adolescents continues to be the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, stipulating protective measures for young people up to the age of 18.⁹⁹ Additionally, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights outlines the rights to health and information, which has in turn established a basis for the support of sexual and reproductive health services for young people.¹⁰⁰ While these documents can be viewed as a legal basis to empower and protect youth and foster their development, they are not themselves limited to the young generation.

⁹⁸ The EU Structured Dialogue is a means of mutual communication between young people and decision-makers in order to implement the priorities of European youth policy cooperation and to make young people's voice heard in the European policy-shaping process. It is a consultative process, implemented by the European Commission that aims to increase cooperation with civil society and get first hand input from young people. It is made up of one main event, the EU Youth Conference organised by the EU country currently holding the EU presidency.

⁹⁹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Convention on the Rights of the Child, www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx.

¹⁰⁰ United Nations, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html.

6.1.1. Defining youth

150. The conceptual uncertainty of defining “youth” (see Chapter 1) is in turn reflected in the fluctuation of youth definitions in youth laws. The lower age limit in OECD countries varies from 7 in Estonia to 15 in Slovenia. However, there are also youth laws where the lower bound remains unspecified and taken to indicate from birth (Finland: “those under 29 years of age”) or where the notion of ‘young people’ incorporates childhood, or the two are associated (Iceland, Switzerland, Luxembourg). Contrarily, the Slovenia Youth Sector Act (2010) employs the terminology “young people and young adults” and accordingly places its lower limit as high as 15 and an upper limit at a completed 29 years of age.

151. As detailed in Table 6.1, the upper limit also goes on a wide range, but generally falls between 25-30. The Korean youth law (2008) has the lowest upper limit with the definition of youth delineated as 9-24 years.

Table 6.1. Age brackets identified by the youth laws to define “youth”

Estonia’s Youth Work Act (2010)	7-26 years of age
Finland’s Youth Act (2006)	0-29 years of age
Iceland’s Youth Act (2007)	6-25 years of age
Latvia’s Youth Act (2008)	13-25 years of age
Luxembourg’s Youth Law (2008)	12-30 years of age
Slovenia’s Youth Sector Act (2010)	15-29 years of age
Korea’s Youth Law (2008)	9-24 years of age
Switzerland’s Youth Law (2011)	kindergarten age- 25 years of age

Source: OECD’s work based on available information in national youth laws.

152. Despite these great variations, the majority of the youth laws refer to these age ranges without providing a clear rationale. Considering that the age range effectively defines the group of persons entitled to specific support, rights and measures of protection, the definition of age brackets has important political weight. The Luxembourg youth law stands out in this regard by splitting its definition into three sub-groups: children below the age of 12 years, adolescents between the ages of 12 and 18 and young adults, ultimately recognising the distinctive position of youth who have passed the threshold to full legal capacity (18-30). Luxembourg is also the only country to employ age sub-groups to acknowledge the different phases of transitioning to adulthood.

153. Most of the youth laws do not make a clear distinction between youth below and above majority age (generally set at 18 years). The age of majority is the threshold of legal adulthood, entailing that youth can subsequently enter into contracts, bring forward court cases, and perform other legal acts independently which brings about a whole new set of youth concerns in accordance with their evolving capacities and responsibilities.

154. While age distinctions are the prevailing approach in defining youth across OECD member countries, it is increasingly viewed as an insufficient indication to characterise a young person's transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence. As rising levels of unemployment and the cost of starting independent households place many young people in a prolonged period of dependency, factors related to social class and life situations, conceivably, also play a critical role. In many frameworks it might thus be instructive to think of youth as a fluid category rather than a fixed age-group. None of the reviewed laws recognises youth as a heterogeneous group.

6.1.2. Objectives identified by youth laws

155. The policy objectives and values promoted by youth laws reflect an overall vision on the role and status of young people in social and political life. Numerous OECD youth laws focus heavily on youth autonomy and political participation objectives to support young people's independence and active citizenship. This approach is particularly pronounced in the youth laws of Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Switzerland and Luxembourg.

156. Other countries rely more on a rights-based approach to youth policy integrating the norms, standards and principles of the international human rights system into the development, implementation and evaluation of youth policy. For instance, the youth laws in Slovenia and Latvia most explicitly employ rights-based references by emphasising principles like equal opportunity, democracy, plurality, integrity, intergenerational solidarity, equality, non-discrimination and justice in delineating lawful claims of youth. However, most of the countries to some extent incorporate rights-based references. By example, Sweden takes a rights-based approach specifically vis-à-vis the management of youth living conditions, stressing that young people must have real welfare benefits.

157. In contrast to many of the above OECD countries, Korea has opted for a more protective approach, emphasising the importance of safeguarding youth from "harmful environments". This approach outlining the protective functions of the state may be linked to the fact that the age definition of youth (referred to as "juveniles" in the legislation) is set particularly low, from 9-24, hence chiefly incorporating persons under the age of majority.

6.1.3. Thematic fields covered by youth laws

158. All OECD youth laws cover stipulations regarding the distribution of responsibilities and functions across state and non-state actors and identify a body with formal responsibility inside the government in charge of coordinating youth policy across ministerial portfolios (see Chapter 3).

159. The bulk of the OECD youth laws reviewed include regulations outlining the conditions and procedures for youth NGOs to receiving funds from the state budget. State subsidies remain a contentious issue amongst youth NGOs as many perceive a reliance on state funds as a potential compromise of the organisations' overall independence. Confronted with this dilemma, Luxembourg stipulates in its Youth Law that the government must respect the organisations' self-determination. Recipients of state subsidies outlined in the reviewed youth laws broadly fall into three general categories:

1. Organisations, foundations or associations receiving funding for projects with the objective to promote youth empowerment objectives

2. Local governments receiving support for projects which are oriented towards youth work
3. Youth organisations receiving funding for operational support of their activity.

Table 6.2. State subsidies for youth stakeholders

Youth Law	Project Funding¹⁰¹	Youth Organisations¹⁰²	Local Governments
Estonia	Obtainable	Obtainable	Obtainable
Finland	Obtainable	Obtainable	Obtainable
Iceland	Not outlined in Youth Law	Obtainable	Not outlined in Youth Law
Latvia	Obtainable	Obtainable	Obtainable
Korea	Obtainable	Obtainable	Obtainable
Slovenia	Obtainable	Obtainable	Not outlined in Youth Law
Switzerland	Obtainable	Obtainable	Obtainable

Source: OECD's work based on available information in national youth laws.

160. Some countries outline circumstances for ad-hoc funding for youth organisations through invitations to tenders and public calls (Slovenia). Other countries have opted for tax exemptions for youth organisations' membership fees and lucrative activities (Iceland, Slovenia, Korea). A number of OECD youth laws guarantee more stable sources of funding through provisions instructing that annual appropriations from the state budget shall be allocated as general subsidies to national youth organisations that fit a set of criteria (Estonia, Finland, Iceland).

161. All OECD youth laws reviewed include stipulations on young people's representation and participation in policy-making, instructing that youth must have access to political power and outlining the necessity of political consultations with youth councils specifically. The level of detail in regulating the concrete mechanisms for youth participation, however, fluctuates.

162. The Slovenian government appoints the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth, a consulting body for youth led by a President which is appointed by the Government among the Ministers, while Finland has an Advisory Council for Youth Affairs, operating within a similar mandate. The Icelandic youth law provides the politically independent Youth Council with the mandate to advise the national authorities and municipalities on youth affairs. In Switzerland, the Federal Council appoints a Federal Commission for Child and Youth Affairs (EKKJ), which aims to have at least one third of its members below the age of 30. Delegated representatives of youth organisations are required to account for at least half of the Youth Advisory Board

¹⁰¹ To receive project funding, the objective and nature of the specific project must primarily benefit youth. Such project funding can be granted to an organisation that does not focus exclusively on youth in its day to day operations, so long as the project at hand has youth as its main beneficiaries.

¹⁰² To receive funding as a youth organization an organization must fulfil a set of criteria as to the general structure and functions of the organization (e.g. membership criteria, non-profit alignment, the primary beneficiaries of the organization's activities being youth).

in Latvia. Korea's youth law sets up an annual Juvenile Ad Hoc Meeting to bring together both youth and experts to discuss ways to develop and implement youth policy. In Iceland, the Minister of Education, Science and Culture assigns nine members to the Youth Council. Five representatives are appointed according to recommendations made by youth organisations and two representatives are appointed by the Association of Municipal Authorities in Iceland. The council is responsible for identifying important procedures for the advancement of youth work and advise the central authorities on youth policy making.

163. The Estonian youth law instructs that upon the request of the youth council, the rural municipality or city council must forward the drafts of their hearing agendas and draft legislations regarding young people before municipality and city council hearings. Luxembourg's youth law is particularly detailed, establishing a body in charge of monitoring youth issues (*Observatoire de la jeunesse*) with the mission to prepare, coordinate and initiate surveys, recommendations, analyses, studies, and reports on the different aspects of the situation of young people in Luxembourg (Art. 13), while simultaneously instituting a National Assembly of Young People (*Assemblée nationale des jeunes*) with the mission to give young people and youth organisations the possibility to participate in the examination of all issues related to youth policy at the national and European level (Art. 14).

164. Moreover, close to all OECD countries feature provisions on the status and attributions of the National Youth Council (NYC) in their youth laws (see Chapter 5) specifying, for instance, membership conditions and the responsibility of the state authorities vis-à-vis the NYC. Unlike the NYCs, the consulting bodies introduced above are attached to the government.

165. In the area of volunteering (see Chapter 5), most of the reviewed youth laws specify the potential benefits (e.g. development of skills, non-formal education) and obligations of state bodies (i.e. protection from exploitation) to foster volunteering activities among young people. However, only a small number of documents consulted include stipulations on youth workers. The existing stipulations are broadly split into two legal conditions: the educational qualifications of such workers (e.g. a degree in social sciences/ professional experience/ special training for work with young people in the case of Iceland); and the absence of previous criminal convictions (e.g. Estonia).

166. National governments also strengthen their commitments to thematic areas such as health and education through specific stipulations in the youth laws. In a few countries, informal learning and training is highlighted to increase the competences of youth (Finland, Luxembourg, and Iceland). In Estonia, the educational activities of youth camps are closely monitored in line with national legislation on education. Considering that youth policy typically falls under the portfolio of the Ministry of Education, it is perhaps not surprising that many youth laws reflect this through an emphasis on educational objectives. A few of the laws also refer to health, healthcare and healthy lifestyles (Finland, Slovenia). Notably, these thematic issues are only sparsely addressed in the youth laws as they are commonly supplemented by sectoral legislation on health and medical assistance. This also appears to be the case for youth employment which is hardly cited in the legal documents examined.

167. It appears instructive to highlight a few themes that the reviewed youth laws are leaving more or less unregulated. For one, with the exception of Iceland, references to youth research are generally left out the youth laws. Moreover, against the background that general youth laws are typically accompanied by other sectoral laws (e.g. Education

Acts, Criminal Codes, Employment and Protection on Work Acts, Health Insurance Acts, Juvenile Sanctions Acts, Acts on Volunteering, etc.), it is critical to point out that potential overlaps are seldom addressed in the youth laws, such as the array of youth definitions operating simultaneously within several countries' policy frameworks. Whether youth were consulted in the elaboration of the national youth laws or not also remains entirely unaddressed in the documents.

168. Despite these limitations, the legislative boom surrounding youth laws and youth policy in the last two decades in OECD countries supports the notion that young people are increasingly finding their rightful place on the national as well as the international policy agenda.

6.2. Addressing age-based legal discrimination

169. This Scoping paper has primarily analysed the situation of adolescents and young adults who have passed majority age. All OECD member countries except for Korea (19 years), New Zealand and Japan (both 20 years) set that age at 18.¹⁰³ However, the definition of "youth" chosen in this paper also covers adolescents and children below majority age. It is therefore critical to point out governance challenges that concern this age group in particular.

170. Minimum ages confined by national law have gained increasing attention as a potential source for age-based discrimination. Setting a minimum age directly impacts on the lives of children, adolescents and youth and their opportunities to apply their rights, make decisions, access services and rely on protection provided by government. Among others, minimum ages can determine the opportunities for youth to vote and stand as candidate in elections, access financial credit, receive information on reproductive health issues and be heard in judicial proceedings and tried in adult courts, among others. In certain areas, minimum ages may in fact undermine a young person's access to public services and autonomy, for instance in the case of granting access to the judicial system and independent complaint mechanisms due to the lack of full legal status or the access to sexual and reproductive health services.

171. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which is ratified by all OECD countries but the United States, sets out an international framework to guide countries in identifying minimum ages and remove them where they are likely to undermine youth engagement and empowerment objectives. However, except for setting concrete a minimum age for capital punishment and life imprisonment, the convention leaves it to the discretion of states to determine the minimum age on a range of issues (e.g. admission to employment, penal law, end of compulsory education, etc.). Legal minimum age legislation is therefore often contentious, contextual and sometimes contradictory.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, there is an increasing recognition that a person's capacity to

¹⁰³ The definition of majority age in Scotland (16 years) and sub-national entities in some OECD member countries can vary (i.e. in some Canadian provinces it is set at 19; in some states in the US at 19 or 21).

¹⁰⁴ Youthpolicy, November 2016, Age Matters! Exploring age-related legislation affecting children, adolescents and youth, Youth Policy Working Paper, November 2016, http://www.youthpolicy.org/library/wp-content/uploads/library/2016_YPL_Working_Paper_4_Age_Matters_Eng.pdf

make decisions should not only depend on the age criteria but a range of factors including experience, ability and context such as the availability of information.

172. The most prominent debate across OECD countries in this aspect concerns the minimum age required to vote (see Chapter 5). Table 6.3 provides an overview of OECD countries which have chosen to lower the voting age below 18.

Table 6.3. OECD countries in which voting age is below 18

	Over-16s	Over-17s
National level	Austria	Greece
Local level	Austria Estonia Germany (only some local and state elections) Scotland (only in local and Scottish Parliament elections) Slovenia (only if employed)	Greece Israel (only in local elections)

Source: CRIN, 30 January 2018, The right to vote: Countries where under-18s can vote, <https://www.crin.org/en/library/publications/right-vote-countries-where-under-18s-can-vote>.