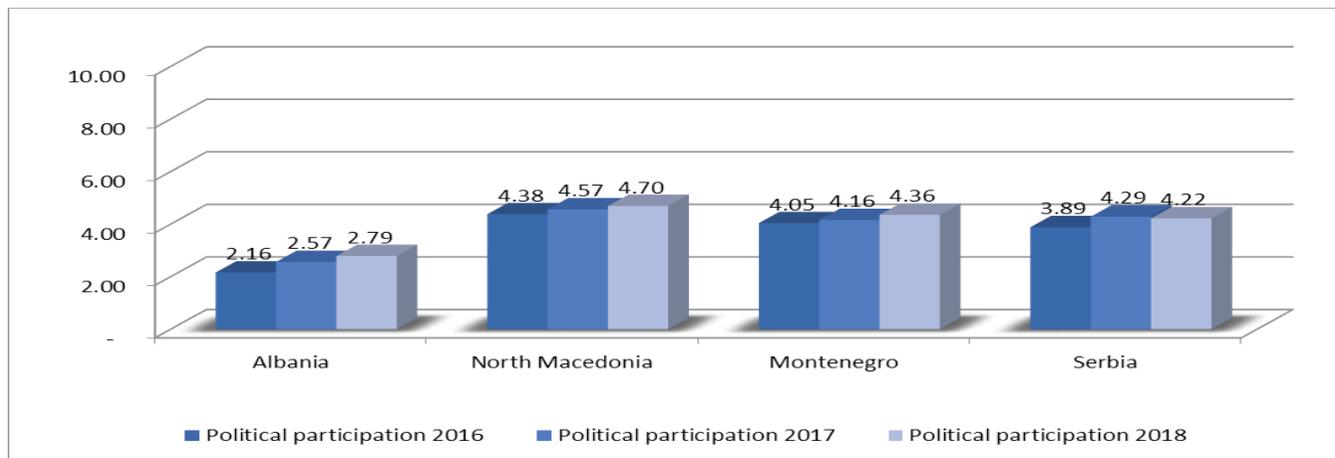


## Overview of the situation

In order to monitor over the participation of young people and advocate for it, Youth Balkan Hub for Western Balkan and Turkey created Youth Participation Index in 2016 - a unique method for measuring the level of opportunity of young people to be involved in decision-making process. Youth Participation Index shows the big discrepancy between the real state in the observed countries and the set targeted value based on the EU 2020 Strategy. The score of the Western Balkan countries varies from 8 to 10, whereas the targeted value is 85.6, which clearly indicates that those countries should work hard to reach at least the half of the targeted score. During the three year monitoring period of the position of youth in political, economic and social dimension, each participating country has not shown significant improvement. Nevertheless the majority of countries are gradually noting positive trend year by year.

## Political Participation of Youth<sup>1</sup>



Albania, North Macedonia and Montenegro have recorded slight upward trend in political participation, unlike Serbia where certain decrease can be observed from 2017 to 2018. The change was mostly influenced by the increase or decrease of the existence of youth networks (councils/parliaments/unions/offices) for youth participation at local levels and the development of on-line tools for information and participation in decision-making of municipalities.

North Macedonia has the highest score of the political participation of youth as a result of the existence of the youth structures in local levels in the majority of municipalities, as well as online tools in national and local levels.

<sup>1</sup> Political participation shows the level of involvement of young people in government bodies, their opportunity to access information and appeal to government bodies, and the existence of youth institutions in local and national bodies.

## KEY POINT

*No young government ministers in the Western Balkans countries and Turkey since 2016*

*Alarming data regarding young people in prisons*

*Long-term unemployment rate is slightly dropping in all countries*

## Social Participation of Youth

Social Participation dimension still presents the main obstacle in the calculation of the YPI, since most countries do not have available statistics collected using the same methodology. Thus, the YPI indicates that there are no public data regarding vulnerable groups of young people in most country such as: youth at risk of poverty, and young people in the social welfare system.

Having this in mind, the data regarding social dimension could be shown only separately.

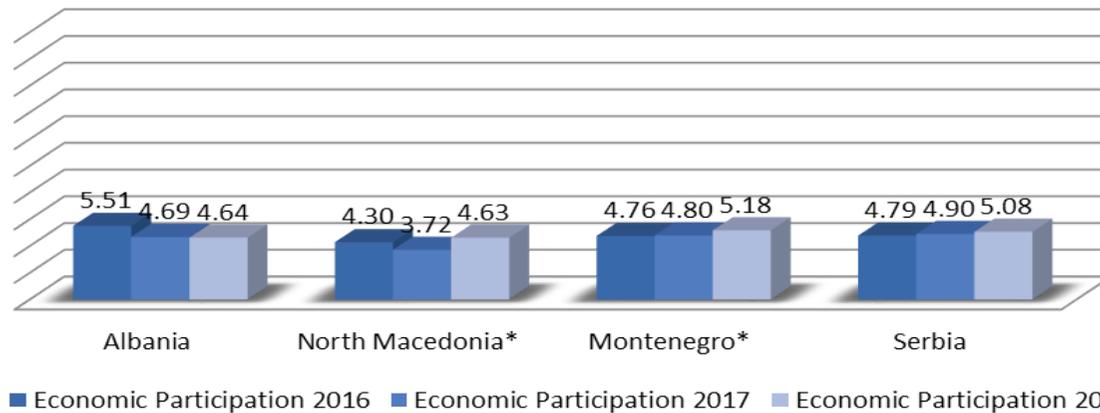
Social Participation dimension for 2018		Young people at risk of poverty	Young people in prisons (out of all prisoners)	Young people part of social welfare system	Dropout from secondary education	Young people enrolled in tertiary education	Young people graduated from tertiary education
Albania	DATA		47.7%		3.2*%	53.9%**	26%
	YEAR		2018		2017-2018	2017-2018	2017-2018
North Macedonia	DATA		31.4%		1.4%	14.5%	16.5%
	YEAR		2018		2017-2018	2017-2018	2017-2018
Montenegro	DATA		52.2%		4.6%	33%	14.59%
	YEAR		2018		2017-2018	2017-2018	2017-2018
Serbia	DATA	26.6%	26.5%	18.1%	1.4%	54.7%	18.10%
	YEAR	2018	2018	2018	2018	2018	2018
Turkey	DATA	22.2%				45.6%	9.57%
	YEAR	2018				2018	2018

Montenegro has the highest percentage of young people who dropped out of secondary education (4.6% in 2018), while the lowest dropout rate of young people from secondary education is in Serbia and North Macedonia (1.4%). In Albania, the majority of young people are involved in tertiary education (85%). In Serbia, on the other hand, this number has been stable over the years – around 50%. It should be noted that the highest rate of young people graduating from tertiary education is in Albania – 25.19% while this rate is the lowest in Montenegro – 14.6% and North Macedonia – 16.5%.

The most alarming data in this dimension that we were able to collect is the data regarding young people in prison. There is a significant increase in the number of young people in prison in Montenegro (from 33.2% in 2017 to 52% in 2018) and North Macedonia – up to 31.4%. Albania also has a high youth rate in prisons (47.7% in 2018). A great number of young people in prison indicates serious issues in society. The lowest rate of young people in prison is in Serbia, 26.5% in 2018.

## Economic Participation of Youth<sup>2</sup>

### Economic Participation - comparison per country



\*The data presented in the graph are shown without the data for one indicator for North Macedonia and one for Montenegro as regards the comparison, while there is no data for Turkey. Only data from Albania and Serbia can be compared.

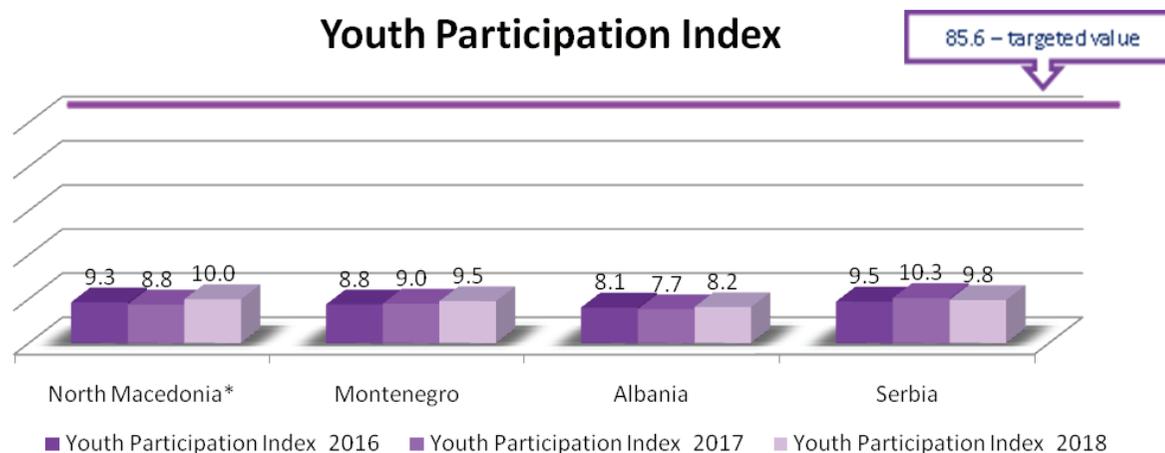
When it comes to economic parameters, each country shows a different trend. Albania notes gradual decrease in the field of economic participation, unlike Serbia and Montenegro which note positive trend and gradual increase of economic participation. North Macedonia notes a slight decrease in 2017 and thereupon the increase in 2018 which is mainly the result of the lack of the state financial support to young people who started their own business during 2017.

Even though there is a downward trend in the unemployment rate of young people in North Macedonia in the observed period, it is still the highest in the region (37% in 2018), while the lowest is in Turkey (20.3% in 2018). The long-term unemployment rate has dropped slightly in the observed period in Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia but it is still very high.

<sup>2</sup> Economic participation shows the level of economic independence of young people. This dimension measures youth unemployment rate, labor force participation rate, NEET rate, the number of self-employed young people, etc.

## Youth Participation Index

### Youth Participation Index



\*The data presented in the graph are shown without the data for one indicator in economic participation for North Macedonia and one for Montenegro as regards the comparison. Only data from Albania and Serbia can be compared.

Since tracking of data is only useful if we have a desired outcome or a comparable result, this graph shows the targeted value which is calculated in relation to the EU2020 Strategy and based on the results of the most developed countries.

When it comes to the scores from those four countries, there is a big discrepancy between the actual situation in each country and the targeted value. Most countries are noting positive trends year by year. Only Serbian Index has slightly decreased in 2018, mostly because of the fact that political participation, the number of mayors and youth structures at local level decreased.

# Youth Participation Index

## WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

Results for all three dimensions show great discrepancies in relation to the targeted values defined by the Europe 2020 Strategy. Bearing all this in mind, the next steps should be advocacy activities with the focus on improving two main issues: **lack of data** and **low level of youth participation**.

### I Lack of data

1. **The institutions should start collecting youth sensible data** in the field of economic, social and political participation for the category of youth as legally defined.
2. Initiate **advocacy campaign to the governments to open negotiating Chapter 18** – Statistics in the enlargement processes as soon as possible and initiate and implement legislative and institutional reforms in accordance with the Progress Report in the countries where it has not yet been opened.
3. Initiate **advocacy campaign to collect and monitor the data of young people in social welfare system**

### II Low level of youth participation

1. Working on **improvement of the transparency of information and the establishment of better communication** between the state institutions and young people at the national and local levels
2. **Establishment of youth institutional network (councils/parliaments/unions)** which ensures the participation of young people in the decision-making process
3. **Developing new support measures for specific vulnerable groups of young people.**
4. **Increasing participation of young people at local level using the Youth Bank Hub model**

# Youth Bank Hub

## HOW CAN WE DO THIS?

It is necessary to change the paradigm that young people are a big concern in this region. Instead, we should create enabling environments where youth are a part of the solution. Youth participation in local development processes encourages young people to recognize community issues and engage in their resolution and reduce their vulnerability to economic, political and social problems.

There are a number of successful models to foster youth participation and activism at local level. Members of the YBH4WBT Network recognize YouthBank model as one of the most effective models of youth participation at the local level, a unique program that empowers young people to identify the key issues that affect their lives and inspires them to make changes. Youth banks are local organizations of young people who design and run their own projects but also support other youth local initiatives in fundraising, project managing and promotion of their projects.

YouthBanks are funds run by young people to support youth-led grass root projects that address community issues that matter to them:

- ◇ Involve young people in projects that they design and run for themselves. We believe it is the most potent way of engaging young people in their community.
- ◇ Involve young people in grant-making because we know that this makes them more aware of the needs and aspirations of their local community and HOW to make a difference.
- ◇ Encourage involvement in voluntary action where the issues are more closely matched to young people's own concerns. Creating dynamics where trustful, inclusive, empowering, respectful relationships can thrive and where positive change is created, encouraging the involvement of young people who are currently disengaged or disempowered, can be inspiring so they give back to others and their communities.
- ◇ Devolves responsibility and accountability by placing decision making about small scale resource allocation into the hands of young people who act philanthropically, bridge divisions, take leadership roles, and stimulate entrepreneurial spirit and opportunities. The YouthBank model provides clear evidence of the positive impact that young people can have on communities. This allows each YouthBank to be more effective in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and bring young people's perspectives to the national and international public policy debate.