Youth Policy Review – Europe and Central Asia

Environmental Scan related to UNFPA Core Programme Areas

Background Study prepared by Yael Ohana, Ditta Dolejsiova and Christopher Grollman

for the
UNFPA Country Technical Services Team, Bratislava.

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Yael Ohana
Senior Consultant
UNFPA "Counting on Youth"
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Part I
Young People and the UNFPA Programming Context

INTRODUCTION – YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE UNFPA MANDATE

The different United Nations agencies should respond supportively but differentially within a common United Nations programme to the needs of young people at national level, as these relate to the core mandates of those agencies. UN agency programming, including that of UNFPA, should, therefore, facilitate the development and implementation of population, social and family policies, which take into account young people in all their diversity.

In a discussion paper, the UNFPA Country Technical Services Team for Europe and Central Asia in Bratislava, Slovakia, (henceforth, CST Bratislava), observed that the prime strategic goal of UNFPA in relation to young people is the

> *"Attainment of the highest standard of health, development and equality, free of discrimination, coercion and violence for all young people in Europe and Central Asia …"*[1]

In practise, for UNFPA this means making complementary youth friendly interventions in specific and local contexts that

- seek to reduce poverty
- provide health care and preventative education on health related risks, specifically in relation to sexuality and reproduction
- support comprehensive sexuality education through a variety of formal and non-formal methodologies
- help prevent gender based violence and other obstacles to gender equality and women's empowerment
- and enhance youth participation through the process.

To be able to support such interventions to the best effect and in a timely manner, UNFPA and its national and local operational partners, need to better understand the needs of young people in the context of UNFPA programming and in terms of the benefits of investment in young people, as well as in youth policy development. UNFPA must be in a position to advise and assist on questions related to youth policy development in relation to its own core mandate, focusing as it does on complementary measures to build the capacity of national and local authorities in countries where it is active concerning issues of population, gender equality and sexual and reproductive health.

As a first step in a broader process, with the aim of assisting UNFPA and potentially other United Nations agencies to contribute constructively to future youth policy development and appropriate youth programming, a background study of youth realities and policy provisions in 14 countries and Kosovo (under the remit of CST Bratislava) has been commissioned. Further steps have included the convening of a first youth policy expert meeting in 2006 and a second in 2007 to interpret and supplement the findings of the two phases of the study and the preparation of a policy paper that could guide the improvement of youth friendly programming and advocacy by UNFPA and other United Nations agency in-country offices.

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[1] Robert Thomson, "Comprehensive Attention to Young People – Situation Analysis and Direction Setting for further UNFPA contribution to Adolescent and Youth Health and Development in the countries of Europe and Central Asia", Internal Working Document for the Workshop on Social and Population Policies – Youth and Population Policies, Bratislava, 27 December 2005.

WHY YOUTH POLICY NOW?

The challenge of contributing constructively to the development of appropriate youth programming is being actively explored in several United Nations agencies, including UNFPA and other international organisations, notably, the Council of Europe, the European Union and the World Bank. In the context of the European Union, European neighbourhood policy, pre-accession requirements and accession criteria are pushing reform along, including in the youth field. Such efforts contribute to the longer-term process of standard setting for youth policy development. There are several arguments for why interest in the better integration of youth policy development expertise into country level programming has grown throughout the UN system in recent years, and specifically in UNFPA. These arguments range from normative and ethical considerations to emerging trends in demographic and socio-economic development.

Demographic and Socio-Economic Considerations

Many aspects of the relationship between national policies and demographic trends are either disputed or not well understood. It remains difficult to disentangle the effects of specific policy initiatives from the effects of broader social, political and economic conditions. Nevertheless, ongoing demographic developments in Europe and Central Asia (and globally)[2]have highlighted the specific and often vulnerable position of young people in relation to UNFPA issues (especially, with regard to their sexual and reproductive health and rights).

European fertility rates have been on the decline since the 1960s. In Central Asia, the trend may have begun a little later but it is well established by now. Some countries in Europe and Central Asia have recently entered the category of "lowest-low fertility" countries, with the fertility rate having fallen dramatically to well under the replacement rate of 2.1 children per woman. While the reasons underlying this trend remain disputed, government policy has tended to focus on pro-natalist policies, if only for political reasons. There is growing consensus, however, that low fertility among today's and tomorrow's parents, in other words, young people, cannot be tackled through pro-natalist policies exclusively. And there is growing concern among experts and practitioners that, in some cases, human rights in relation to reproduction are being put into question[3].

Factors commonly agreed to underlie the continuing decline in fertility, including among young people, seem not to be primarily bio-medical in nature. While environmental and lifestyle risks may have increased, clinical infertility seems to have remained stable at 10 to 12 percent of the European population. And, while it is forecasted that infertility may increase, that increase is projected to be marginal.[4]

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[2] For example, the development of youth bulges in the poorest developing countries at the same time as the decline in overall population size and its concomitant ageing in Europe and several middle income countries.

[3] Jane Gauthier, "Human Rights Considerations in Addressing Low Fertility", in Entre Nous – The European Magazine for Sexual and Reproductive Health, no. 63, WHO Regional Office for Europe, pp. 8-9.

[4] Karl G. Nygren and Gunta Lazdane, "Current Trends of Fertility and Infertility in Europe", pp. 10-11 and Hans-Peter Kohler, "Determinants of Low Fertility in Europe", pp. 12-13, both in Entre Nous – The European Magazine for Sexual and Reproductive Health, no. 63, WHO Regional Office for Europe.

In many low fertility countries, including in Europe and Central Asia, first births are taking place with significant delay. According to Hans-Peter Kohler, Professor of Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania in the United States,

> *"Very low fertility in Europe is … caused by the combination of several factors: (a) Socio-economic incentives to delay childbearing that make postponed fertility a* ***rational response*** (emphasis added) *to high economic uncertainty in early adulthood, increased returns to education, shortages in the labour market and similar factors; (b) Social feedback effects on the timing of fertility that reinforce the adjustment of the individual's desired fertility to socio-economic changes and (c) Institutional settings, characterised by labour market rigidities, insufficient child-care support and a prevalence of relatively traditional gender roles".* [5]

Hence, socio-economic factors and institutional arrangements that are not conducive to combining work and childcare, as well as resistance to traditionally established social roles for the different genders, seem to be a strong motive for young people, young women in particular, to delay making decisions about family formation, generally, and when to become parents, in particular. Hans-Peter Kohler, further remarks that

> *"… the reasons underlying the postponement of childbearing are often a rational response to the specific situation of young adults that is characterised by a high level of uncertainty due to high unemployment, uncertain labour market prospects and rapid socio-economic change. Young adults thus face an incentive to delay decisions that imply long-term commitments, such as the decision to have children, and prefer to invest in education, human capital and labour market experience".*[6]

Clearly, then, it is not only a matter of how many babies are born but also when. Young women in Europe are having their first babies later and later and more women than ever before are choosing to remain childless. According to Nikolai Botev, Population and Development Adviser at CST Bratislava,

> *"… most researchers interpret this as part of the general trend towards postponement of choices that are irreversible or hardly reversible, usually associated with the ideational and other changes called 'second demographic transition'. Again in line with the predictions of the second demographic transition theory about the importance of individual autonomy and self-expression, the differences between individuals within a population in the timing of parenthood are also increasing".*[7]

Furthermore, the size of the youth population in this region, while shrinking, is anything but insignificant. Indeed, recent research indicates that while fertility is shrinking, fertility rates in the countries of Europe and Central Asia covered by UNFPA remain higher than in all parts of

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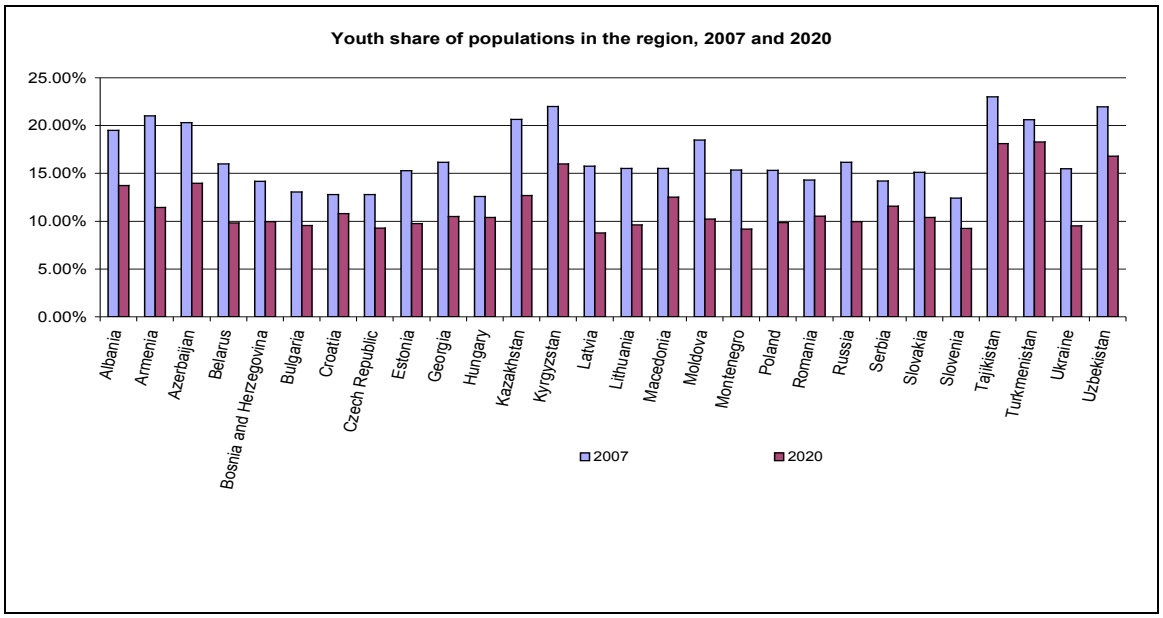
[5] Hans-Peter Kohler, "Determinants of Low Fertility in Europe", in Entre Nous – The European Magazine for Sexual and Reproductive Health, no. 63, WHO Regional Office for Europe, pp. 12-13, *op cit.*

[6] *Op cit.*

[7] Nikolai Botev, "Is Europe Trapped in / by Low Fertility?", in Entre Nous – The European Magazine for Sexual and Reproductive Health, no. 63, WHO Regional Office for Europe, pp. 3-7.

Europe[8]. The following table provides indicative figures based on census data for the number of young people aged 15 to 24.



As can be seen from the above graph, the size and proportion of the youth population varies greatly across the region (for example, while there are more than 23 million young Russians, there are proportionately fewer young people in the overall populations of Bulgaria and Bosnia & Herzegovina). Such figures do not take into account the fact that there are an estimated one million "youth migrants" who have left these countries, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, to find better life conditions and opportunities in the European Union or Russia, for example.[9]

Notwithstanding the still significant human capital represented by young people in the region today, governments in various parts of Europe, not least in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, have become increasingly concerned about below replacement levels of fertility and the increasing instance and lengthening of childbearing postponement. In fact, population decline has generated something of a moral panic in Europe. How to ensure health and pension coverage for growing numbers of elderly people, at the same time as the active tax-paying workforce shrinks has become an emotive political issue. Parties and governments on the right have tended to see increased fertility as the only solution to this multifaceted problem, although research indicates that both immigration and social welfare reforms represent durable

[8] The countries of Europe and Central Asia involved in UNFPA activities include: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Country list taken from: www.unfpa.org/europe_asia/. Accessed on 15 November 2006.

[9] Robert Thomson, "Comprehensive Attention to Young People – Situation Analysis and Direction Setting for further UNFPA contribution to Adolescent and Youth Health and Development in the countries of Europe and Central Asia", Internal Working Document for the Bratislava Workshop on Social and Population Policies – Youth and Population Policies, 27 December 2005, *op cit*.

alternatives for addressing the problem of a shrinking labour force[10]. Of course, political parties also respond to the thinking of their voters and it is indicative that "progressive" positions on issues like immigration, labour market reform and fertility do not usually win large numbers of votes.

A closer look at the socio-economic situations that condition the choices that young people make in relation to family formation and parenthood, and which underlie the above trends in Europe is, therefore, certainly warranted. The overriding socio-economic condition of young people in this region, national differences notwithstanding, is characterised by risk and vulnerability with young people demonstrating frailty of lifestyles, social support networks and coping skills. It is widely acknowledged that this has to do with continuing political and economic transitions affecting the countries. Indeed, there has been an increase in youth mortality and a decrease in life expectancy in the region (0.5 million young people died of all causes in the region in the decade from 1989 to 1999). There is also evidence that a large number of young people lack good health and engage in risk behaviour. Disturbing increases in girls under-18 giving birth have been recorded in several countries of the former Soviet Union. There has been little positive change in the areas of female education and employment practises. Adolescent fertility has nevertheless decreased in line with overall fertility in the region since the mid-1990s.

Nevertheless, young people in this region are the best-educated and most mobile generation ever. In every sense, young people are driving growth in the region's economies both through economic activity at home and through remittances from work abroad. In this region, young people have to assume financial responsibility for unemployed and unemployable parents and grandparents. Therefore, finding a job, any job, is a primary concern and many have no choice but to resort to the grey economy in order to make ends meet.

In many of the countries covered by this study economic and political transition remains to be fully completed and democracy remains at best to be consolidated and at worst embryonic. Government capacity to respond to the economic and social challenges of declining fertility in a youth friendly manner is far from developed in many parts of Europe. This is often significantly exacerbated by gaps in financial and human resources and by the precedence of other priorities. But, legitimate constraints notwithstanding, the commonly negative image of young people as risk taking, irresponsible and ungrateful, combined with ideological or religious approaches to the question of low fertility, can lead governments to choose hard-line pro-natalist policies, potentially threatening to fundamental human rights.

Further complicating this picture of youth realities is the ongoing process of globalisation that is affecting all countries in manifold ways, not least socio-economically. Globalisation has ambivalent effects on the lives of young people. While many, if not most, are well able to take advantage of the opportunities it offers, given their great technological awareness, curiosity, sense of adventure and willingness to be mobile, a significant proportion of young people are not only missing out on these opportunities but are suffering adverse consequences of the process of globalisation. Globalisation poses significant threats to young people in the fragile period of transition, including the threat of being trafficked, the threat of being infected by HIV,

[10] RAND Europe, "Population Implosion? Low Fertility and Policy Responses in the European Union", RAND Europe Research Brief, RAND 2005 and David E. Bloom and David Canning in "Europe's Looming Population Bust", in "Entre Nous – The European Magazine for Sexual and Reproductive Health", no. 63, WHO Regional Office for Europe, pp. 14 - 16.

the threat of not being able to find legal and adequately protected work but having to work to support elders or a young family, the threat of being caught in a conflict, the threat of falling into chronic poverty. The list is endless.

It stands to reason, therefore, that if the motivation of young women and men to postpone childbearing is socio-economic, then addressing those concerns might make young people more amenable to becoming parents. Research also shows that young people continue to enter into the stage of independent family formation in their twenties, even if this is not legitimated by marriage (religious or secular), and that most would like to have children eventually.

A study of European Union countries with declining fertility rates and other work on effective policies for addressing the demographic decline in Europe have shown that a mixed approach in government policy making can slow fertility decline over the long term[11]. In particular, such research underlines that better social support to offset the socio-economic problems of young people, including being more likely to be unemployed or once employed not to be able to afford child care, can be crucial. While the jury is still out on the extent to which such policies are effective because the results do not become manifest immediately, evidence from France and the Nordic countries suggests that policies that favour family formation in combination with support to parents to continue working (adequate access to affordable childcare), take a progressive approach to gender roles (including providing for paternity leave) at the same time as increasing financial support for families to have more than one child do help to stop, and in some cases have even reversed, the decline in fertility rates.

The level of economic development of a given country, its general instance of poverty, its general level of political development, the extent to which the political and economic transition has been completed and to which democratic institutions and the market economy have been consolidated and other such factors all determine what is considered a priority in government policy. Government policy, even social and family policies, can, nonetheless, be ambivalent towards young people. For the moment, most of the countries addressed by this study seem to be very worried about low fertility and the shrinking size of the working age population and this has had the positive side effect of stimulating interest in the life chances of young people. But, recognition for the legitimate challenges that continue to impede young people from engaging in childbearing remains patchy at best and absent at worst. International agencies such as UNFPA have begun a process of awareness raising by recognising the vulnerability of young people to such ambivalence and by recognising that low fertility and childbearing postponement has strong roots in economic and social factors often largely independent of fertility and infertility.

Normative and Ethical Considerations

While evidence of pressing demographic and socio-economic trends has served to rekindle interest in young people, several other arguments also exist for why it is in the interest of both governments and institutions to take the specific needs of young people into account in the development of social and family policies, and even better, to develop youth specific policies. These are normative or ethical arguments.

First and foremost is the human rights argument. Young people should have access to development and especially adequate and correctly adapted sexual and reproductive health

[11] RAND Europe, "Population Implosion? Low Fertility and Policy Responses in the European Union", RAND Europe Research Brief, RAND 2005, *op cit.*

information and services, because it is their human right according to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This implies that governments are duty bound to put resources behind their policies and young people should get their fair share of attention and relevant policy resources and support in the framework of the programme of action to implement the recommendations of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).[12]

The second is the participation argument. Young people should be considered, consulted and take an active part in the determination of policies that affect them directly. It is commonly accepted today that participative policy making is more effective and leads to more efficient use of scarce resources.

The implication of such arguments is that "being young" is something that all young people should have the opportunity to enjoy in full health and without fear or oppression. Young people should be guaranteed the means to remain "youthful", to develop confidence that they have a present as young people and not just a future as adults, and to complete their transitions without experiencing the adverse effects of the vulnerability that transition implies.

The recently published World Bank World Development Report on Young People puts the complexity of this vulnerability into sharp focus. It describes five distinct "life transitions" that take place in the youth phase, although notably, they do not have to take place at the same time. These are: learning after primary school age, starting a productive work life, adopting a healthy lifestyle, forming a family and exercising citizenship. The report states that

> *"… The transitions overlap … Some young people have uncomplicated lives and only undergo one or two of these transitions at a time. Others may already be budding multi-taskers: they are in school, working part-time, married, driving fast, and participating in their local council"*[13].

It goes on to further elaborate the interdependence of the transitions, underlining the importance of a holistic policy approach, stating that

> *"… Because basic skills in schools are learned early, failure to invest in education can greatly increase the costs of pursuing healthy lifestyles and of working. By the same token, risky behaviours leading to a young man's premature death or a girl's unexpected early pregnancy can significantly lower the returns to schooling. Prolonged unemployment can lead to disinterest in investing in further schooling, possible mental distress, delayed family formation, and negative manifestations of citizenship".*[14]

It is also noteworthy that these transitions can take significantly different trajectories according to gender, and that the vulnerability of girls and young women needs special care and attention, being markedly distinct from that of boys.

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[12] For more information consult the following website: http://www.unfpa.org/icpd/icpd_poa.htm.

[13] International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / World Bank, World Development Report 2007 – Development and the Next Generation, Washington DC, September 2006, pp. 9-10.

[14] International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / World Bank, World Development Report 2007 – Development and the Next Generation, Washington DC, September 2006, *op cit*, p. 10.

Such normative arguments have become something of a standard discourse in manifold policy declarations made by the United Nations and other international institutions, notably in European institutions (e.g. the Council of Europe and the European Union). The United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth and the Millennium Development Goals are two such key UN documents. Within the context of the Council of Europe, government and civil society experience is evolving towards the elaboration of a framework convention on youth policy. The European Commission has published a White Paper on Youth. These processes are equally driven by an acceptance that young people should be subjects, not only objectives, of policies affecting them and that these policies must be grounded in a profound respect for human rights.

THE EMERGENCE OF A SHARPER POLICY FOCUS

At the international, national and local levels, the policy focus on youth seems to be becoming sharper. As a result of the strategic positioning exercise undertaken by the UNFPA Adolescent and Youth Cluster in 2005 to 2006, in which CST Bratislava took part, UNFPA is actively contributing to the emergence of a clearer policy direction in relation to youth and its place in UN programming. This is in fact a process for assessing the implications for young women and men of legislation, policies and programmes. This exercise asks if youth concerns and experiences are integrated dimensions of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes and if so, whether young people and older people benefit equally. In this respect, it is an exercise to assess the visibility and support UNFPA gives to young people and to predict the results in terms of health benefits, social and personal improvements. There is an evident parallel with similar deliberate attention given to women, the disabled and indigenous peoples. While it appears that UNFPA programmes in Europe and Central Asia assume that youth will benefit equally from policies and programmes, thus ignoring the differential impact on age groups, there is, nevertheless, growing recognition at the level of Country Offices that youth-specificity in social, economic and health planning is potentially advantageous for overall human development.

Several key sources of policy in UNFPA have been influential in the initiation of this strategic repositioning exercise and have pushed forward the development of awareness for the need to develop the capacity of this key actor for the delivery of youth friendly policy, including the Cairo Youth Declaration and the ICPD Programme of Action, The UNFPA Framework for Action on Adolescents and Youth and "The Case for Investing in Young People as part of a National Poverty Reduction Strategy – Reference Notes on Population and Poverty Reduction".[15] The latter points to the extensive potential advantages and benefits for overall development, if the youth dimension is sufficiently taken into account in the elaboration of specific development tools, particularly National Poverty Reduction Strategies. It is notable because its starting point and basic assumption is that young people are a positive force in society and that with support they can determine the course of development for the better. It marks a change in attitude to previous policy approaches in institutions at global, European and national levels that see young people as the recipients of development rather than as its actors.[16]

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[15] An exemplary case for this has been made in the one or two Human Development Reports that focus on youth, for example Croatia in 2004 and Kosovo in 2006. See also Review of aspects of missions undertaken in 2005 to countries of Europe and Central Asia by CST Bratislava, Robert Thomson, 24 March 2006, *op cit*.

[16] The full text of the documents may be found as follows: The Cairo Youth Declaration (http://youth.unesco.or.kr/youth/english/resources/sub1.asp?no=75&id=2#img) and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)

Given all the above considerations, it would appear that the time is ripe for making concrete the already implied relationship between youth policy and population and development strategies with a view to the integration of family, social and youth policies. This will be a cutting edge contribution to the advancement of youth rights as well as the capacity of international institutions and their implementation agencies, such as the United Nations, to enhance their capacity to deliver appropriate and supportive youth programmes in their core mandate areas.

THE STUDIES

Objectives

Considering the above context, the objectives of the two phases of the youth policy review and, therefore, this resulting study were to:

- conduct an environmental scan of existing social and youth specific policies in 14 countries and the province of Kosovo covered by UNFPA in Europe and Central Asia;
- describe the situation of young people in the seven countries with a view to better understanding their needs in relation to UNFPA core programme areas (particularly, sexual and reproductive health);
- assess the extent to which UN in-country programming is providing complementary responses to such needs, taking into account existing government provision;
- provide a basis of information on which experts in the area of youth policy development may be consulted on possible approaches to the improvement of UN in-country programming.

Contents

In view of these objectives, CST Bratislava was particularly concerned to find out more about the situation of young people in the countries concerned, in relation to the following key aspects:

Youth demography
- the changing share of the youth population in the *demographic compositions* of the countries;
- trends in the *mobility* of young people, distinguishing as necessary such trends from migration.

Socio-economic conditions of youth
- the *influence of economic development* and concomitant changes in education and in youth culture (especially, in relation to the situation of girls and young women);
- trends in *family social support* structures that affect the current generation of youth;

(http://www.unfpa.org/icpd/icpd_poa.htm), The UNFPA Framework for Action on Adolescents and Youth (http://www.unfpa.org/publications/detail.cfm?ID=341), "The Case for Investing in Young People As Part of a National Poverty Reduction Strategy", Reference notes on population and poverty reduction, Paper commissioned by the United Nations Population Fund, New York and prepared by Mr. Richard Curtain (http://www.unfpa.org/upload/lib_pub_file/424_filename_Investing.pdf). See also UNFPA and the Alan Guttmacher Institute, "Adding It Up – The Benefits of Investing in Sexual and Reproductive Health Care", Washington and New York, 2003, available at http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/addingitup.pdf.

- trends in the *level of youth unemployment*, measures taken in response to the impact of globalisation on the youth employment situation and strategies to create decent and productive work for young people;
- key efforts in designing *mechanisms for youth access to the labour, education and training markets*;
- the *profile and localisation of young people experiencing poverty*;
- key efforts in developing and implementing *sustainable human capital development approaches* (solidarity between the generations) and *socio-economic promotion of youth*.

Youth lifestyles, sexuality, union formation

- trends related to *values and lifestyles*, including the age of initiation of sex, trends in obesity, nutrition and eating disorders, alcohol, tobacco and other substance use;
- key efforts to ensure *sexual and reproductive health and human rights from a youth perspective*, both for young parents, as well as for their children, covering but not restricted to identity development, transactional sex, psychological issues around fertility postponement, desire for children and perception of parenthood, assisted fertility, sexuality (for example, homophobia);
- trends in *union formation, childbearing and postponement of marriage* among young people.

Youth participation

- key efforts in building and sustaining a culture of *youth political and social participation;*
- youth *involvement in knowledge management* within participation structures;
- efforts in building and sustaining *adult-youth partnerships* including adolescents, youth leaders, educators, the public health system, community groups and local leadership.

United Nations programming on youth

- varying kinds and levels of UN *presence* in different countries
- varying nature of UN *assistance* at regional, sub-regional and country levels
- *examples* of regional and national programming

Youth policies

- evidence of *national governmental policies* on selected specific youth-related issues deemed relevant from the above list;
- the state of development of national youth policies by government.

Methodology

The research underpinning this study has been elaborated in two phases. The first covering seven countries, was undertaken in 2006 and treated Armenia, Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. It relied entirely on secondary source material gathered from a variety of sources, in particular governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental agencies dealing specifically with youth issues, youth policy development, social policy, family policy, demography and issues related to fertility, at both national and international levels.

The second phase, covering seven further countries, and the province of Kosovo, was undertaken in 2007 and treated Estonia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Poland, Romania Serbia and the province of Kosovo. It relied on the same approach in desk research as for round one, but benefited enormously from field visits to each of the countries, which where possible, included both the capital and smaller towns. During the field visits, the senior consultant and the researcher that developed the draft report had meetings and held consultation discussions about

their findings with the full spectrum of youth policy actors active on national and local level, including national and local governmental authorities responsible for youth and other youth relevant social policy areas, non-governmental organisations specialised in sexual and reproductive health, youth, human rights and other related fields of activism, academics and researchers active in areas of special interest or concern for the country concerned and international and UN agencies actively implementing programmes of benefit to young people.

A synthetic rather than country by country approach to the presentation of the relevant information concerning young people and their treatment in policy has been chosen for the elaboration of this study. Nevertheless, the starting point for the synthesis was the preparation of country reports summarising observable trends in relation to young people's life situations and social policy coverage of young people in each country. The country reports from each round of the study process are presented in two separate annexes to this study and provide a more in depth treatment of the country specific issues facing young people and policy makers seeking to deal with them.

Several models of youth and social policy assessment have also been consulted to establish a basis for making situation assessments in relation to each of the countries considered and in relation to UNFPA programming efforts targeted at young people in the seven countries. In particular, the study assesses from the point of view of the "adequacy" of policy and programme delivery mechanisms, diversity and sophistication of policy and programme interventions, philosophical compliance with "standards" in youth policy development, assumptions of universal effectiveness vs. "policy gaps" as well as the so-called "5-C's" (Coverage, Capacity, Competence, Co-ordination and Cost) model for youth policy assessment, developed in the context of the National Youth Policy Review Process of the Council of Europe's Directorate of Youth and Sport[17]. Such models provide a kind of map, by which data collection can be oriented and assessments can be checked against benchmarks established by experts from all the sectors concerned with youth policy making. The generic nature of such models notwithstanding, they provide a useful set of guidelines to researchers who seek comprehensive frameworks for their macro level comparative work.

At the same time it is clear that local conditions, national and regional traditions, historical and political situations and a variety of actors all play a role in determining the situation in a given country. Whatever the methodological approach chosen, as a variety of models for analysis might just as well serve the same purpose, it is important to acknowledge that the model is only as useful as its flexibility to take into account such local circumstances.

The broad based selection of sources of information consulted in this study notwithstanding, the availability of relevant data about young people and their life situations, as well as about policies targeting young people, remains significantly limited. It should be noted that statistical information and policy analyses are rarely directly comparable and their results are often not disaggregated by sex or by age. Where relevant information is available, it is very often only available in local languages, further complicating the data collection process.

Due to the absence of fully comparable data and up to date sources, the quantitative and qualitative data presented and their interpretation may not be complete or fully representative of specific national situations.

[17] Howard Williamson, "Youth Policy in Cyprus – The Conclusions of the Council of Europe's International Review", Council of Europe, Directorate of Youth and Sport, 2004.

Geographical Scope

In undertaking this environmental scan, it was hoped to represent the fullest diversity of national situations to be observed across the region covered by the CST Bratislava remit.

Bulgaria, Estonia, Poland and Romania all very recently joined the European Union. In the run up to accession, social policy development was almost exclusively conditioned by EU social inclusion directives designed to achieve *acquis communautaires*. Nevertheless, each of these countries has reached a different point in consolidating democracy and in the economic and social transition. The socio-economic conditions of transition directly affect life circumstances of the majority of young people in these countries. Young people in theses countries benefit from inclusion in EU and Council of Europe youth programmes.

Turkey is in the phase of pre-accession negotiations to the European Union, social policy development is predicated on the move towards the fulfilment of *acquis communautaires*. It has a large youth population and is, therefore, considered to have enormous human capital potential. However, Turkey's level of economic development is weak and large numbers of young people struggle for independent living. Turkish young people benefit from inclusion in EU and Council of Europe youth programmes. Freedom of association in Turkey is nevertheless limited. Such restrictions that exist and generally pervasive patriarchal attitudes, especially in certain regions of Turkey, tend to adversely affect minorities and women. It is notable that the age of becoming a full citizen with the right to be elected was only recently reduced to 25.

Albania and Bosnia & Herzegovina are countries in the Western Balkans participating in the European Union stabilisation and association process and both also have Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSPs), through which social and economic interventions are shaped under a World Bank-inspired Comprehensive Development Framework. Both countries benefit from inclusion in EU and Council of Europe youth programmes. Bosnia & Herzegovina remains a significantly divided society, even ten years after the Dayton agreements, and the memory of war is still vivid in the minds of many young people and to an extent conditions their assumptions about the future. Albania has a comparatively large youth population and higher fertility rates than in other parts of Eastern Europe. The country is riven by poverty, especially in rural areas, and young people have a sense of having diminished life chances.

Since 2001, when inter-ethnic tensions brought **Macedonia** to the edge of violent conflict, Macedonia has moved on in its transition efforts towards European integration. In 2004, Macedonia embarked on a straight path towards legislative, political and socio-economic reforms to guarantee the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms[18] and to continue to the process of democratic consolidation. To the greatest extent, the reform process is driven by the demands of the pre-accession procedure. Young people in Macedonia benefit from participation in EU and Council of Europe youth programmes. Furthermore, a national agency of the Youth in Action Programme of the European Commission is in the process of being opened in Skopje, which will enhance the capacity of young people in Macedonia to actively use the benefits of the programme.

[18] Analytical Report for the Opinion on the application from the Republic of Macedonia for EU membership, COM (2005) 562, p. 4.

Formerly, at the heart of Yugoslavia, **Serbia**'s recent history is marked by the complex events of the 1990s, its active participation in the Balkan Wars and the totalitarian regime of Slobodan Milosevic, which brought about isolation, economic decline[19] and NATO air strikes (1999). Civil society, including the student movement *Otpor* (Resistance), successfully ousted Milosevic in an attempt to redefine the future course of the country. Since then, the country has embarked on democratisation and modernisation and has expressed its desire for full Euro-atlantic integration, and especially European Union accession. Serbian policy making is also significantly influenced by the national Poverty Reduction Strategy. Nevertheless, with the secession of Montenegro (which became an independent state in 2006) and, at the time of writing, the still unclear future of the UN administrated province of Kosovo, Serbia continues to face the challenge of multiple transitions. Young people in Serbia can participate in the youth programmes of both the Council of Europe and the European Union. Nevertheless, Serbian youth still experience limited opportunities for international mobility.

Since 1999, **Kosovo** has been administered by the United Nations. Although formally under Serbian sovereignty, it is in practice governed by the UN mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the local provisional institutions of self-government secured by NATO led-force (KFOR). At the time of writing (late 2007) final status negotiations had not yet been completed to the satisfaction of all parties and there has been growing concern over the prospect of Kosovo unilaterally declaring independence[20]. Young people in Kosovo are isolated as a result of this situation. The largest part of governmental attention goes to the resolution of the status and independence. Despite the fact that formally young people from Kosovo have the right to participation in both the youth programmes of the Council of Europe and the EU, many have difficulty to do so due visa restrictions. A further problem is the Youth in Action programme is organised country by country (i.e. Serbia is a programme country) and there is no mechanism to take into account the special situation of Kosovo.

Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine benefit from the European Union neighbourhood policy, although eventual membership in the European Union remains a distant prospect.[21] All three countries have been active in conducting poverty reduction analysis in view of EU requirements. Russia also plays an extremely important, if ambivalent, in the reform process in these countries, given its foreign policy in its "near abroad". Young people in these countries benefit from inclusion in EU and Council of Europe youth programmes. Armenia, however, is an extremely isolated country, adversely affected by ongoing conflict and disagreement with its neighbours, Turkey and Azerbaijan. Young people in Armenia suffer this isolation in manifold ways, including less obvious psycho-social burdens such as diminished mobility, diminished awareness of the wider world beyond Armenia's domestic concerns and diminished horizons. With the Orange Revolution, Ukraine had an important democratic breakthrough. Young people were at the front line of people power. But, ongoing and chronic political instability in Ukrainian politics have caused many young people to become disillusioned in the face of what is perceived as backsliding on promises of reform and development.[22] Georgia is experiencing the growing pains of democratic consolidation, with President Saakashvili facing popular protest against his

[19] Serbia Human Development Index Report, 2006, p.19

[20] http://www.sme.sk/c/3528046/Kosovo-po-10-decembri-vyhlasi-vraj-nezavislost.html

[21] Ronald D. Asmus (Editor), "Next Steps in Forging a New Euroatlantic Strategy for the Wider Black Sea Region", German Marshall Fund of the United States, Washington DC, 2006.

[22] Taras Kuzio, 'Ukraine's 'Orange – Blue' Foreign Policy' in Ronald D. Asmus (Editor), "Next Steps in Forging a New Euroatlantic Strategy for the Wider Black Sea Region", German Marshall Fund of the United States, Washington DC, 2006.

style of governance and interaction with civil society in 2007. These protests led to the calling of early elections (January 2008).

Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan are countries at the crossroads of Europe and Asia. Historically, Uzbekistan was one of the wealthiest countries of Central Asia and today still benefits from great natural resource wealth, although this is very unevenly distributed across social groups in society. Notably, it is also the most populous of Central Asia. Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan are post-Soviet republics in the process of both social and economic transition. However, the regime in Uzbekistan has demonstrated its desire to maintain its power. The precarious position of civil society and international institutions working for human rights in the country at present is not an encouraging sign. Kyrgyzstan experienced a popular uprising against the increasingly authoritarian rule of Askar Akayeev called the "Tulip Revolution" and the opposition eventually took power in 2006 after elections. Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan benefit from Asian Development Bank support and from membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation whose principles guide social policies and economic planning to some extent. The Shanghai cooperation organisation held it 2007 summit in Bishkek. Young people in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan may only participate in Council of Europe and EU programmes for young people as third country participants, in other words, as partners to or invited guests at activities organised by youth organisations based in programme countries of either the EU or the Council of Europe. Uzbekistan, nonetheless, participates in the Central Asian Youth Network established by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), of which the seat is Tashkent.

These countries were chosen for treatment in this study because, in the first place, they demonstrate the diversity of social and political conditions affecting Europe and Central Asia and its young people. It is common for research to focus on sub-regions, although the diversity of country situations can make such sub-regional classifications artificial. The countries included represent the broadest possible range of levels of economic and political development and a wise geographical spread. It is also noteworthy that each country benefits from different opportunities according to the political and strategic alliances made and the forms of regional integration it participates in (with the EU and / or Russia or whether voluntarily or involuntarily)). This can also be seen as having an important long-term impact on the life chances of young people in the region. Finally, but necessarily importantly, these countries are also indicative of the "specificity" of the Europe and Central Asia region in terms of demographic development within the overall scope and coverage of UNFPA's Division of Arab States, Europe and Central Asia (DASECA).

Part II
Understanding Young People and Youth Policy

WHO ARE YOUNG PEOPLE? AGE-BASED AND SOCIOLOGICAL DEFINITIONS OF YOUTH

There are two commonly accepted approaches to defining "youth". The first, most commonly used by governments and international institutions alike, is the age based or statistical definition. The second, and that most commonly found to underpin research on young people and especially youth transition, is the sociological definition. These differ considerably and the preference given to one or other definition has important implications for youth policy development and its effectiveness.

Age based definitions of youth consider young people as those who belong to a particular age cohort. It assumes that the youth phase of life begins at a particular age when certain biological features of growing into adulthood begin. Usually puberty as initiation into adolescence is taken for the starting point and full independent adult life, often marked by leaving the family home to forms one's own, is usually considered as the end point. As there are commonly accepted statistical averages for the age when such changes happen in the life of a human being, it has become accepted practise to refer to the youth life phase in terms of an age range. Most governmental agencies and international organisations accept the United Nations age range of 15 to 24 for "youth", although this is by no means a universal standard[23].

Applying a sociological definition of youth means to define the life-phase by its social characteristics. In other words, it recognises that a young person's experience of affected by social realities and the ability of the person to interact with them. For example, there are generally applicable experiences of young people, in education, experimentation and development of independence and long-term perspectives. There vary greatly between young people, affect by gender, rural / urban, employment access / poverty / social situation. [24]

Most institutions of government responsible for youth and international institutions that have some form of youth targeted programming operate those programmes within the parameters of defined age groups differentiating between children, adolescents, youth and young adults. At the same time, practitioners, researchers and grassroots programme implementers have become increasingly vociferous about the fact that a purely statistical definition of the youth "stage" of life is inadequate to the aim of consistent, effective and youth friendly programming.

Key Terminology

Autonomy refers to the independence of will or freedom of action of the individual. In relation to young people, this concept is a counter point to static notions of youth as variably dependent on adults.

Wellbeing involves different aspects of young people's everyday lives – their physical, psychological and social comfort and satisfaction, or their lack thereof. As a result, well-being is often associated with health and prevention of risk-taking.

[23] In Council of Europe programmes, participants are accepted from approximately age 16 and can be up to 35 years of age, especially if they are engaged professionally in the field. In the European Union, programmes targeting the participation of young people are aimed at the age range 15 to 25, while age ranges used by governmental agencies and policies vary greatly.

[24] World Bank, "World Development Report 2007 – Development and the Next Generation", 2006, available at www.worldbank.org/wdr2007.

Key Terminology

"**Participation** is not an aim in itself, but an approach to becoming active in citizen participation as a means of taking an active role both in the development of one's own environment and in European co-operation" (European Steering Committee for Youth 1997:7). Participation can be understood as power based on the possibility of exerting influence on the economic and social aspects of life in the broad community.

Non-formal Learning is purposive but voluntary learning that takes place in a diverse range of environments and situations for which teaching/training and learning is not necessarily their sole or main activity. These environments and situations may be intermittent or transitory, and the activities that take place may be staffed by professional learning facilitators (such as youth trainers) or by volunteers (such as youth leaders). The activities are planned and have some form of curriculum, but seldom document or assess learning outcomes or achievements in conventional ways.

According to Howard Williamson, Professor of European Youth Policy at Glamorgan University in Wales and youth researcher,

> *"Sociologists have long argued that "youth" is socially constructed rather than biologically determined. Historically, there may have been a case to be made that socially constructed "youth" coincided largely with biologically and psychologically determined adolescence. By the latter part of the twentieth century, however, such a connection has largely been fractured, with increasing theoretical assertion that "youth" had become a prolonged stage in the life-course. It has become characterised by multiple contexts of transition (from earlier "childhood" to later "adulthood") and imbued with less certainty that such transitions would ever take a linear form (economic independence, independent living and separate family formation) and greater risk. In other words, "youth" as a concept embodied different issues and visions, not just in relation to the "age range" that it encapsulated, but also in terms of its character (a resource or a problem)".*[25]

A sociological perspective is useful because it implicitly accepts the idea that young people are not all the same, despite the fact that they may all have being young in common. This acceptance of the "heterogeneity of youth"[26] is a solid basis for providing differentiated policy responses to the needs of young people, even if they inhabit the same age group, and it can be helpful in understanding why and how certain groups of young people persistently respond in an adverse manner to programming conceived with their benefit in mind.

Considerations that markers in the transition from childhood to full adulthood are not necessarily a matter of a particular age, but of the achievement of certain life conditions, are important. Attendant to this are regional and national differences in economic and social development, as well as certain cultural considerations, such as the extent of religious and traditional norms along modernisation and secularisation. Therefore, by way of example, the fact that a young woman has her first child at the age of 16 rather than at the age of 20 may not be as significant for the completion of her transition to adulthood as whether or not she is in a stable relationship, has completed her education and / or has a means to support herself and her baby independently of the patronage available from husband, partner or parents.

[25] Howard Williamson, "Supporting Young People in Europe", Council of Europe publishing, 2002, p. 31.
[26] O*p cit*, p. 32.

A further issue of importance to consider in this relation is the notion of ***parallel youth modernities***. Based on evidence from the process of national youth policy reporting undertaken by the Council of Europe's Directorate of Youth and Sport, it has been established that

> *"[Some] young people … may display 'post-modern' characteristics in terms of their values and lifestyles. But … a significant minority of young people … were retreating (or being forced back) into 'pre-modernity'…".*[27]

This situation is particularly noticeable when making comparisons between areas with different levels of development and in different stages of political and economic transition at both national and regional level.

As well as using a more differentiated approach to the idea of "being young", taking a sociological perspective means giving positive value to that life stage as more than just a transit stop between being a child and being an adult, between being dependent and autonomous. It also means understanding the many processes that are intrinsic to that phase of life from the perspective of the personal development of the individual and their relationship to the specific risks that that phase of life presents for the young person. Effective policies for supporting adolescent sexual and reproductive health, therefore, have to take into account that experimentation is a key characteristic of youth phase and adapt programming so that it provides young people with effective tools for safe experimentation rather than criminalising behaviours deemed risky and unacceptable. Taking the sociological perspective seriously means allowing young people to "be young" for as long as they need to be and to be inclusive of individualised paths through transition.

While for the United Nations system 10 to 19 is considered adolescence and 15 to 24 is accepted as the range within which the "youth" stage of life takes place, this study accepts the sociological perspective. Hence, while any recommendations that may be derived from this youth policy review may be applied in practice to people aged between 15 and 24, that they may be applied to people under the age of 15 or over the age of 24 based on the life conditions of the person or group in question. Young people in a given country may become initiated into fully consensual sexual relations taking the necessary precautions to avoid unwanted consequences at a relatively early age, but it does not necessarily follow that they have completed their transition to adulthood on several other crucial fronts, such as entry into the labour market or family formation. As opposed to the experience of pervious generations, education often lasts longer and work begins early, with increasing overlap between the two. Traditional boundaries of age and life phase are becoming blurred and extended. Youth transitions have become more differentiated and overlap.[28]

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[27] Howard Williamson, "Supporting Young People in Europe", Council of Europe publishing, 2002, *op cit*, p. 33.

[28] World Bank, "World Development Report 2007 – Development and the Next Generation", Washington DC, September 2006, Figure 8, pp. 9 – 10.

WHAT IS YOUTH POLICY FOR?

According to a report prepared by six large-scale international youth organisations, entitled "National Youth Policies – A Working Document from the point of view of 'Non-Formal Education' Youth Organisations",

> *"… Young people need to develop themselves, to test their own potential abilities and to discover the world around them. They need to have access to knowledge and competence to understand the real world. They need to acquire an active and responsible role in social life, and through that role, a status and a stake in society"*[29].

Experts in Europe and elsewhere have several decades of experience in developing the conceptual basis for evidence-based, integrated and cross-sectoral approaches to the development of youth policy at national and regional level, taking into account life course theory and acceptance of youth as a socially constructed concept.

According to Lasse Siurala, Director of Youth for the city of Helsinki and youth researcher,

> *"A public policy has to be anchored in the conditions and aspirations of its target group and in the political objectives set by the respective public authorities. … Policy responses must differentiate according to the increasingly complex, unpredictable and vulnerable trajectories of young people today"*[30].

National and International Youth Policies

National and international youth policies need to be as comprehensive as possible, taking into account the overall needs of young people and recognising their diversity and their many facets and resources.

In particular, youth policies should:

- be anchored in universal values of pluralist democracy and human rights and pursue objectives such as justice, respect for identities, access to one's own culture, equal opportunities, including therein men and women, and social cohesion;
- have a cross-sectoral dimension as well as a local, regional and national dimension;
- integrate the educational dimension in a long term perspective, taking into consideration young people's aspirations; promote their access to autonomy as well as their sense of responsibility and commitment, through, notably, voluntary youth work;
- facilitate active participation of young people in decisions which concern them, and encourage them to commit themselves in their community life;
- facilitate the access of young people to the labour market, by means of appropriate projects and training schemes which are likely to increase their professional opportunities;
- facilitate the access of young people, notably from disadvantaged groups, to information which concerns them, and in particular, to the new communication technologies;

[29] The participating organisations included: World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations, World Young Women's Christian Association, World Organization of the Scout Movement, World Association of Girl Guides & Girl Scouts, International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies and The International Award Association. Document available at: http://www.icnyp.net/www/files/bigsix_nyp.pdf.

[30] Lasse Siurala, "A European Framework for Youth Policy", Directorate of Youth and Sport, Council of Europe Publishing, 2005.

- promote youth mobility by reducing administrative and financial obstacles and encouraging the development of quality projects;
- promote non-formal education/learning of young people as well as the development of appropriate forms of recognition of experiences and skills acquired notably within the framework of associations and other forms of voluntary involvement, at local, national and European levels;
- promote co-operation between Child, Family and Youth policies.

Source: 6th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, Thessaloniki, Greece, 2002.

If we acknowledge the "transitional" nature of the youth life stage, then the outcome of policies addressing the transition phase should be to enable young people to be active citizens socially as well as in work life. Becoming an active citizen is widely acknowledged to no longer be just a matter of formal rights, but of substantive means (in other words, youth policy provision). It requires the autonomy to develop and express one's ideas and identity. In Europe, youth policy has progressively come to be viewed as a vehicle for supporting young people in gaining the requisite autonomy and knowledge for active citizenship.[31]

The notion of autonomy implies agency on the part of the young person possessing it. Youth policies that conceptualise the effects of the emotional and psychological needs of young people for independence and then the need to develop the autonomy and agency of young people, necessarily imply differentiated approaches. They take into account individual and collective situations and a variety of conditions and can have an emancipatory function.

Making reference to the work of Howard Williamson, Lasse Siurala further points out that

> *"… there is a rationale for looking at youth transition as a broader and seamless process from childhood to post-adolescence. The policy challenge is to differentiate measures for 'children', 'early-adolescents', 'adolescents' and 'post-adolescents' and to ensure 'seamless transitions' between the phases. The potential of this approach is to create synergies across administrative sectors like the social, child, youth, education and employment fields. The threat is that the youth field gets 'squeezed out' or 'swallowed up' by the bigger social, education and employment sectors.*[32]

As mentioned earlier, there are pressing arguments – socio-economic and normative - for increased policy interest in the situation of young people in this region. Integrated youth policy can serve a number of useful purposes for a national government or for an international institution.

In the first place, investment in youth policy now can avoid major costs later. Better attention to young people and their specific needs, as manifest in a well resourced- and cross-sectoral youth policy can offset what are often considered typical "youth related" problems.[33]

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[31] Lasse Siurala, "A European Framework for Youth Policy", Directorate of Youth and Sport, Council of Europe Publishing, 2005, *op cit,* p. 8.

[32] *Op cit,* p. 9.

[33] Commonly referred to in the public sphere are school failure, adolescent pregnancy, juvenile delinquency and violence, long-term unemployment and welfare dependency and high risk behaviours associated with young people, including substance use or joy-riding, and their (adverse) consequences for adult life.

It is unrealistic to expect to prevent all risk-taking behaviour among young people. However, research notes that it is more expensive to treat the negative health outcomes of risks taken during youth than to provide resources early on to reduce risk taking and harmful behaviour in the first place. A good example of this is smoking.[34] Despite this budgets for prevention are often low compared to those for health care. In the second place, policies that stimulate autonomy and wellbeing promote human development and have the added value of making young people aware, more resilient and better protected from abuse. Non-formal educational approaches and opportunities, for example, help young people to develop essential life-skills and citizenship competencies. These can have spill over effects in the public sphere, in terms of active participation in public life and institutional politics and in terms of a responsible social role among peers. Despite the common misconception in youth policy making in some countries, youth policies should not be limited to young people's leisure time.

Governments may accept such arguments about the benefits of youth policy. Nevertheless, youth policy-making suffers from tension between its wish to prevent young people from behaviour with negative social consequences and its wish to promote their independent and self-determination. The "prevention driven" approach, which has a tendency to see all youth issues in terms of problems that have to be solved and which can have something of a stigmatising effect on young people, has also been traditionally referred to as the "paternalistic" approach to youth policy making. Tendencies towards paternalism are diametrically opposed to ensuring youth autonomy and agency and can have harmful side effects. This applies equally to social, family and fertility policies as applied to young people, which in many countries have tended towards pro-natalism. This includes the recasting of the role of adolescent girls and young women in terms of their "reproductive" function and of young men in traditional gender roles, to the exclusion of diversity and individual pathways to mature adult living and parenthood. Clearly, this cannot be considered an approach which respects of human rights.

ASSESSING YOUTH POLICY PROVISION

In recent years, several initiatives to develop standards for the assessment of youth policies at international level have been undertaken at the international level. Most noteworthy and developed among these is the Council of Europe's National Youth Policy Review system. Governments invite the Council of Europe to develop and international of review of their youth policy. In so doing, the government commissions a stock taking of youth policy in the country and submits it to the scrutiny of an international team of experts from a variety of sectors relevant to youth policy (including youth researchers, youth educators, governmental and non-governmental policy makers and representatives of youth organisations). This is followed by the public presentation and publication of the results of both the national and international work conducted. While the implementation of the recommendations of the international review team is voluntary, many of the governments that have chosen to conduct a review have used those recommendations as a basis for reforming their national youth policies. On the basis of the results of the national youth policy reviews so far conducted in Council of Europe member

[34] International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / World Bank, "World Development Report 2007 – Development and the Next Generation", Washington DC, pp. 9 – 10, September 2006, WHO, "The Reproductive Health of Adolescents: A Strategy for Action", A Joint WHO/UNFPA/UNICEF Statement. World Health Organization, Geneva, 1989 and See also UNFPA and the Alan Guttmacher Institute, "Adding It Up – The Benefits of Investing in Sexual and Reproductive Health Care", Washington and New York, 2003, available at http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/addingitup.pdf.

states, an international group of experts has elaborated a series of indicators for youth policy, that today can be used by governmental and non-governmental actors alike to benchmark quality and effectiveness in the policies they implement, even though in practice their use in youth policy making nationally is far from typical.[35] A similar initiative has been undertaken by an association called the International Council on National Youth Policy (ICNYP). This non-governmental association also conducts periodical reviews of national youth policies and compiles relevant material published by both international institutions and youth organisations on its website for public access and reference.[36]

Awareness of the need to elaborate quality standards in the youth policy making field has been raised by several global initiatives including: the United Nations' World Plan of Action for Youth and the review processes periodically undertaken (most recently in 2005, UN WPAY +10)[37]; the continuing publication of regular World Youth Reports by the Department for Economic and Social Affairs; and the youth-specific reporting undertaken by some countries as part of their Millennium Development Goal reporting. Much can still be improved in the area of inter-agency cooperation and synergy building in relation to the implementation of these initiatives.[38] In particular, the World Bank has begun to take heed of such processes and in recent years has begun to elaborate its own youth strategy building exercise in consultation with youth experts and representatives and in consideration of accepted quality standards.[39]

Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge several mitigating factors. First, at global level, truly participative processes of decision-making concerning UN and World Bank programming approaches in relation to youth are missing, even if there are several very interesting fledgling consultative initiatives in the process of being developed with differential results depending where they have been piloted.

A good example is the World Bank's "Youth Voices" initiative, through which young people are invited to have an opinion on World Bank programming. In the state of Pernabuco in Brazil this consultative mechanism has really taken off, and many thousands of young people have become involved with interesting results for programming. On the other hand, anecdotal evidence from the meeting with the "Youth Voices" group during the field visit in Georgia, suggests that it involves only an extremely limited number of young people and that while they are formally consulted about some aspects of the Bank's activities in Georgia, their opinions and feedback are not integrated into programming.[40]

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[35] For more information consult the website of the Council of Europe's Directorate of Youth and Sport (DYS) on www.coe.int/youth or contact Andre Jacques Dodin at the DYS for more information (c/o sylvie.fritsch@coe.int).

[36] For more information visit www.icnyp.net or contact the ICNYP secretariat at icnyp@jef.at.

[37] Another important policy document in this relation is the final declaration made by the ministers attending the first World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth (Braga, Portugal, 1998). For further information see: http://www.un.org/events/youth98/main.htm.

[38] For more information visit http://www.un.org/youth.

[39] For more information about the World Bank's Strategy on Children and Youth visit the following websites: http://www.worldbank.org/childrenandyouth and http://youthink.worldbank.org/.

[40] For more information concerning this programme and other youth initiatives of the world bank see http://www.worldbank.org/childrenandyouth. For specific information about the initiative in Pernabuco see: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDR2007/Resources/1489782-1137012196309/2112807-1150737884547/vozes_jovens_ingles.pdf.

Second, interagency cooperation and coordination remains less than adequate in relation to youth. In fact, one could even go as far as to say that competition is a common feature of what actually happens. There is certainly no common understanding among the agencies of the United Nations concerning the idea of mainstreaming youth policy development principles. These (non) relationships sometimes have adverse consequences for the supposed beneficiaries of policy, as when disagreement exists among international agencies it is not helpful or supportive of advocacy for change at the national level. Finally, one must not forget or underestimate the strength of global and European youth specific non-governmental organisations (often referred to as international non-governmental youth organisations or INGYOs). As the representatives of young people who have made a voluntary commitment to engage with their issue or cause, such organisations are active in voicing the concerns of young people. In the Council of Europe system, for example, they have the power to influence the institution's decision making concerning the priorities, types of activities and budgets allocated to young people, with equal rights as their governmental counterparts. This system is known as co-management and since its inception in the early 1970s, it has been emulated, replicated and adapted across Europe in very different contexts, from local youth service provision to national youth policy.[41]

The European Union has developed the Open Method of Coordination around its White Paper on Youth.[42] Even if in the early stages of its implementation the process was criticised for not being inclusive or participative enough, the Open Method of Coordination began a now ongoing process of consultation with all significant stakeholders in youth policy development and implementation, including the European Youth Forum and other important INGYOs, regarding the content of the EU's main policy documents concerning young people. In the initial stages of the development of its youth strategy, the World Bank held consultations with the so-called "big seven" youth organisations (i.e. those with global scale action, membership and large scale resources, such as the World Association of the Scout Movement [WOSM] and the World Association of the Girl Guides and Girl Scouts [WAGGGS])) and with European Institutions.

In the UN system, however, there has been a visible preference for "starting over", developing new organisational structures for young people's participation, rather than investing in support for existing structures at local and national level. In some specific areas, such as that of sexual and reproductive health, the creation of youth specific organisations (e.g. for the delivery of peer-education) has filled a clear gap. In other areas, the effectiveness of this approach cannot be adequately verified – despite significant financial investments, several of these new structures reach very few young people and their representativeness can be considered questionable at best.

[41] For a full definition of co-management refer to the glossary of youth policy terms in the appendices to this study as well as to the website of the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe (www.coe.int/youth). Further information about INGYOs active in Europe and globally and how they participate in youth policy making is also available on that website.

[42] The open method of coordination or OMC is a relatively new and intergovernmental means of governance in the European Union, based on the voluntary cooperation of its member states. It relies on soft law mechanisms such as guidelines and indicators, benchmarking and sharing of best practice for encouraging member states to improve policy. This means that there are no official sanctions for laggards. Rather, the method's effectiveness relies on a form of peer pressure and naming and shaming, as no member states wants to be seen as the worst in a given policy area
(Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_Method_of_Coordination).

TRADITIONS AND TENDENCIES IN YOUTH POLICY MAKING IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

Policy-making in each of the countries covered in the two rounds of this study relates to young people as objects (and subjects) in distinct ways. Youth policy experts believe that the attitude to youth enshrined in the social and political traditions of a country can offer insight into the collective conception of the future of that country. That conception, sometimes positive (youth as a resource to be developed), sometimes negative (youth as a problem to be contained), is significantly conditioned by the history and politics of the country. But, it is also conditioned by the existence or absence of a national tradition in the field of youth sociology.

It is impossible to speak about a single tradition of youth policy making across the countries of Europe and Central Asia for historical and contemporary reasons, including differing levels of involvement in regional or global integration processes – classifications as "region" can be somewhat artificial. Nevertheless, while one must be wary of over-generalisation, some countries having geographical proximity do demonstrate common characteristics.

In Central and Eastern Europe, state socialism meant that there could be no independent development of youth studies, although a tradition of Juventology did develop.[43] Successive state socialist governments were clearly interested in young people. In many of the countries of the former Soviet Bloc the "youth agenda" was instrumetalised by state socialist regimes, and youth participation was officially regulated and controlled through mass youth movements controlled by the ruling communist parties, with all the authoritarian conservatism of the system applying also to youth lifestyles and life experience.

In the wake of the collapse of state socialism in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989 and after, mass youth participation and any kind of youth "organising" was viewed with significant suspicion by the majority of young people and parents. Organisations, parties, trade unions and the whole concept of civil society were discredited, as was anyone not seen to have been in opposition to the system, (paradoxically, since it was civil society that to a large extent brought about the changes in the region).[44] The new governing elites had to start from scratch with the development of a radically different youth policy approach and they looked to the Council of Europe and the European Community for advice as to how to go about this. The post-Communist democracies of Central and Eastern Europe have had some success in reforming their youth sectors and policies, having embraced modern and often progressive concepts of youth policy based in principles of human rights, participation and autonomy. Nevertheless, in the years since the change and in practice, it has been difficult for many of these countries to implement the progressive, reformist and European-inspired policies they adopted due to a lack of both capacity and means. Many now struggle with authoritarian conservative tendencies and some of the countries have returned governments with extremely conservative attitudes to the youth agenda. Unfortunately, this is creating facts on the ground in education, social and family policies.

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[43] Mahler (1983) envisioned Juventology as an integrative youth theory aiming to reveal the extent to which young people have power over present and future conditions and the extent to which they are governed by the established social authority. Source: Mahler, F. 1983 'Introducere in Juventologie', Bucaresti (English summary in IBYR Newsletter No. 1/1984), Siyka Kovacheva, "Keys to Youth Participation in Eastern Europe", Council of Europe Publishing, 2001.

[44] Some consideration of this phenomenon is provided by Joerg Forbrig in "Civil Society: Theory and Practice in East-Central Europe", Doctoral Thesis presented to the European University Institute, Florence, 2004.

In South Eastern Europe, and in particular in the countries of the former Yugoslavia, young people were both the victims and perpetrators of a vicious ethnically motivated war that left many of them scarred physically, emotionally and morally for life and that has divided communities in an impenetrable manner. In the post-war period, young people were often the *avant-garde* of change, overthrowing their authoritarian leaders using non-violent methods, spurning the idea that people in the Balkans are somehow pre-disposed to bloody violence. In the post-authoritarian period, significant numbers of the young people who were involved in the civic movements that led to the change were brought into positions of power and authority, creating something of a "reform generation". Many of the countries concerned were keen to develop European-minded and progressive youth policies, aware that the business of reconstructing the social fibre of a cohesive community would depend greatly on the post-war generation and their ability to overcome hatred of the "other". While generalising across this region is difficult, it is nevertheless noteworthy that in the aftermath of revolution, a certain disillusionment and passivity set into the youth civic sector, as many of the promises were seen not to have been kept. Social and economic conditions for young people continued to worsen and ruling elites began to court nationalistic constituencies despised for their role in the war period. This political and civic paralysis has still not been overcome in the context of formal political participation, but new forms of participation seem to be popular among young people in South East Europe.

Turkey lies at the crossroads of Europe and Asia (in a region which is also referred to as the greater Middle East in certain circles[45]) and is something of an exception in all respects. Geographically Turkey has a foothold in Europe, but is culturally often considered not to be, and is politically made to feel uncertain about where its allegiance should lie, particularly since September 11, 2001. Further, it is a secular democracy with religious population. Nevertheless, its particular brand of democracy demands loyalty to the Ataturkian vision of the unitary Turkey and to a secularism that has been branded oppressive of religious freedom and to freedoms of association, conscience and expression. Turkey has a significant youth population and is a country in the throes of modernisation and development. This has created growing interest in youth policy development and awareness of the need to harness the human capital represented by its specific population dynamics. Furthermore, young people in Turkey are actively engaged in a broad variety of social, cultural and political activities (mainly focused on sports and leisure, but increasingly also including non-formal education). Significant advances have been made through Turkey's active participation in the youth programmes of the Council of Europe and the European Union.

The countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia experienced state governance for first time as republics of the Soviet Union. Their sovietisation was complete and has had deep and lasting effects on their social mores. And, while the Cold War experience of Central Asia can also be compared to that of all other Soviet Bloc countries under communist rule, the post-communist development of the region has been very different to that of its neighbours in East Central Europe. In Central Asia and the Caucasus, which are developing regions, despite some natural resource wealth, a political transition of sorts did take place with the collapse of communism. However, by virtue of state socialist elites remaining in power under a new system nominally entitled "democracy", little in the political context changed for citizens, young people among them. The ongoing authoritarianism of regimes in place in the region, state abuses of power and

[45] Ronald D. Asmus (Editor), "Next Steps in Forging a New Euroatlantic Strategy for the Wider Black Sea Region", German Marshall Fund of the United States, Washington DC, 2006.

endemic corruption, internal interethnic conflicts, threats to territorial integrity and interstate tensions and chronic poverty, have led to a paradoxical situation. The youth issue is either considered the last priority among many areas needing government attention and financial investment in a situation of resource penury, or a very high priority because the authoritarian state requires stabilisation through the cooptation of young loyal subjects. State building and nationalism go hand in hand with a certain kind of populist entreaty to youth populations, who in these countries form sizeable minorities, often the majority, and who most often are worst affected by poverty and social problems.

Western Europe has a long standing tradition developed over the entire 20th century along with modern social sciences, in particular psychology and sociology. In the late modern period, from the middle of the 20th century onwards, and in parallel with the development of the Western European welfare state, plenty of time and resources were devoted to youth affairs and to youth policy development, including the development of youth specific channels of political and social participation, especially in the aftermath of the 1968 youth protests, and a distinct field of youth research emerged. Under the guidance of Western European intergovernmental institutions, notably the Council of Europe, co-operation in the field of youth policy development began in the mid 1960s. Today, this long and well-developed tradition is often looked to as a model for progressive youth policy development and several regions and continents have sought to emulate it, despite growing criticism that the model is far too dependent on the availability of significant public resources and, therefore, is not economically viable.

Interest in youth issues in the different countries fluctuates, influenced by history, politics and current economic and social conditions. It is notable that in some countries covered by this study, contemporary interest in youth issues has been provoked by concern over tendencies among young people towards lower fertility and parenting postponement. While it is legitimate to question how growing numbers of old people can be taken care of financially if the working age population is shrinking, exhortations by political actors towards inter-generational solidarity need to be interpreted with caution. It is clear from historical experience that youth policy can be instrumentally conceptualised.

Today, and in light of the genuine concern of an increasing number of international agencies over the objective decline in population and its tendency not to be able to replenish itself in this region, it has become ever more important to be aware of what youth policy is for so that it is not allowed to become a vehicle for the instrumentalisation of young women and men and their reproductive functions. Irrespective of their importance in demographic and population trends, young people should receive an adequate share of attention and resources to ensure that they develop to the best of their potential as individuals and members of society and to in line with their feely chosen aspirations. Inter-generational solidarity can be developed, but only the basis of true dialogue, in the sense of a mutually negotiated communication process involving partners on an equal footing – in other words, as a youth-adult partnership. Despite the potential for youth policy to be used in bad faith, there seems to be a genuine growth of awareness and interest in the lives of young people among the governments of the countries covered by this study, which may provide entry point for interested regional and international agencies to make relevant contributions to youth development.

Part III
Trends in the Situations and Needs of Young People

TRENDS IN THE SITUATIONS AND NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

International research has provided empirical evidence of certain ongoing and emerging trends in the situations of young people worldwide. These relate, in particular, to the prospects young people have for finding work and their experiences once on the labour market, their access to education and their experience of it, their experiences of citizenship in all its four dimensions (political, social, economic and cultural) and their ability (or inability) to act autonomously and in a constructive manner for both the society in which they live and their own life chances. Such trends are inextricably linked to the effects of ongoing processes of globalisation on the lives of young people, which as mentioned above, have ambivalent consequences for the life realities and chances of young people.

According to the United Nations World Youth Report 2003,

> *" … the impact of globalisation [on the lives of young people] is still evolving and uncertain … The only certainty is that globalisation is characterised by increasing market power, and there is always the danger that such power will be abused … In this context, it is important to recognise what Doreen Massey has described as the 'power geometry' associated with globalisation. What benefits one group or country may create problems for another sector of the population … Although young people are not powerless, their economic position is such that they are more vulnerable than any other social group to the uncertainties and risks associated with economic and cultural globalisation."*[46]

Hence, the notion of vulnerability has come to be inextricably linked with the transition period of youth for a growing number of young people worldwide. According to "How Big Is Your World? – An Anthology", the final report of a large international event by the same title that brought together nearly four hundred participants, representing different fields of expertise within the youth field in May 2004 to analyse the ambivalent relationship between globalisation and young people,

> *"… Whether young people live in the developed world, where a lack of corporate responsibility and the need for government to deliver on economic growth, creates risks for young people's transitions from education to the world of work or whether they live in developing countries, where abject poverty, the lack of a functioning state or the presence of conflict threaten their daily existence, the condition of youth in the context of globalisation has become highly insecure."*[47]

Although it is not useful to over-generalise, the key conclusion of the event, confirmed by United Nations World Youth Reports published in both 2003 and 2005 and by the World Bank's World Development Report 2007 – "Development and the Next Generation" published in 2006 is that globalisation is an important challenge for youth policy making in four areas cutting across the life chances of young people, namely the areas of poverty and exclusion, rights and access, diversity and living together and political participation and governance. In relation to each of these areas, young people, irrespective of their geographical location, experience

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[46] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "World Youth Report 2003 – The Global Situation of Young People", United Nations Publication, 2004, pp. 303-304.

[47] Yael Ohana (Editor), "How Big Is Your World – An Anthology", Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, September 2005, p. 176.

opportunities and risks. In many cases, the existence of specific evidence based policies for addressing such issues can determine whether a young person is able to avert the risks by globalisation and take advantage of the opportunities it offers.

In relation to their socio-economic futures, young people legitimately fear falling into poverty and exclusion. In almost all countries of the world, young people remain disadvantaged in entry into the labour market, in terms of the availability of legal, correctly remunerated and protected work and once on it, in terms of differential wages and prospects. On the question of rights, young people legitimately feel disappointment because they see the shrinking of social and educational rights previously considered *acquis*. On the issue of diversity, young people are concerned by the tendency towards marginalisation of those considered "different" in some way and would prefer to live in societies acceptant of diversity. At the same time, they are also concerned for the sustainability of their cultural traditions. Finally, in relation to political participation and governance, young people legitimately feel disenfranchised from "traditional" political processes, not seeing their concerns represented in the public sphere and not finding ways to engage their motivation and political ideals.

While there are few up to date and comprehensive empirical studies of the life conditions of young people globally, those that have been carried out in recent years indicate that young people can fare far worse as a result of globalisation than their elders.[48] In addition, and while public policy making in the field of youth should be targeted at all young people, some young people may be legitimately considered as more in need of policy attention than others. According to the World Youth Report 2005, some global trends affect young people disproportionately negatively. Therefore, the situations of young people caught in conflict situations, of those affected by HIV/AIDS and of those who demonstrate a propensity to high-risk behaviour in the youth phase (substance use, unprotected sex, etc) are of extreme concern. The situation of young women and girls in general also needs special attention. In relation to the situation of even the most vulnerable young people, young women and girls tend to be disadvantaged.[49]

In relation some trends, Europe and Central Asia may occupy something of an ambivalent position. The region is characterised by significant differences in socio-economic conditions of young people and in terms of the potential course of political development. This notwithstanding, young people in the region are significantly vulnerable to the problems outlined above, even if it has been noted that young people have also been able to develop remarkable resilience to the challenges they face and to their own vulnerability.

The social and cultural development of the countries under consideration in this study, diversity notwithstanding, has been conditioned significantly by its political history of state socialism and authoritarianism and recent political and economic transitions. With the exception of Turkey, the countries covered in this environmental scan have all been subject to state socialist regimes – even if for differing lengths of time and with differing results. Turkey, for its part, has been grappling with its own history of authoritarianism and with its fears of present day terrorism.

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[48] For example, the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, World Youth Reports 2003 – "The Global Situation of Young People" and 2005 "Young People Today, and in 2015". For access to the publication see http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/index.html. At the time of writing (end 2007), the World Youth Report 2007 was still forthcoming.

[49] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "World Youth Report 2005 – Young People Today, and in 2015", United Nations Publication, October 2005, pp. 3-7.

The fields of gender and adolescent sexual and reproductive health are indicative. The official gender equality of the state-socialist period has not survived the transition, however, with values and attitudes relating to family formation, sex and reproductive practices continuing to be conditioned traditionalism and conservatism. The return of "official" religion has certainly had an important influence in consolidating conservatism. The authoritarianism evident in the political development of several of the countries considered is also taking its toll on the attitudinal development of young people. In the absence of independent media and alternative references for value formation, "official propaganda" can become truth.

On the other hand, young people are more than ever exposed to media images glorifying experimentation, risk-taking and promiscuity, even if individualisation in many of these countries is less widespread than in Western Europe. In the absence of adequate role models, youth friendly services and comprehensive sex education provision, vulnerability to risk is almost inevitable. Several of the countries considered have been subject to state failure or torn apart by conflict. Families and faith communities have had to take over the provision of welfare for ever larger groups of people, creating a strong social role and authority for such institutions and their values in transitional and post-conflict societies and once a functioning state has been re-established. While this can have positive effects, such societies also tend to be significantly intolerant towards "deviance" and young people demonstrating any sexual behaviour other than that officially acceptable or lifestyles that do not correspond to the majority understanding of normality. Such young people can easily become marginalised and demonised only adding to their vulnerability.

As explored in a previous section, a sociological understanding of young people means taking a differentiated approach to their needs and concerns. In other words, it means to consider the diversity that young people may represent, despite their common features of age and youthfulness. For policy and policy makers, this is highly challenging and demands that policies for young people take into account the diverse situations and needs that young people live. The above trends can provide insight into the situations and needs of young people at the same time as demonstrating the diversity of ways in which young people may experience their situations. Indeed, if anything, the trends outlined above can provide policy makers with a basis on which to better assess the ways in which young people's experiences of their situations may be determined by other factors, such as gender, sexual orientation or ethnicity, and not just age.

Part IV
The Condition of Youth in Europe and Central Asia

INTRODUCTION

In the following chapter, information concerning the situation and life conditions of young people in the countries considered is presented in an aggregated and synthetic manner, backed up with relevant illustrative examples from the countries covered by the review and country specific data regarding issues of special concern (i.e. population, fertility, unemployment, etc). The findings of the individual country reports have been compared to present a certain number of common trends and to identify special or exceptional cases, using five thematic categories, taking into account UNFPA information needs about young people and social, family and other relevant policies pertaining to their welfare and development:

1/ Population and fertility
2/ Socio-economic conditions
3/ Health
4/ Gender and the participation of young women
5/ Participation of young people

Each discussion shall address three categories of trends. In the first place, trends apparent in the situations and life conditions of young people in the countries concerned, which may be relevant for the region more broadly, are described. In the second place, an assessment of the policy "environment" in the countries under consideration in relation to the specific needs of young people for support and development is made. In the third place, observations concerning international programming will be made and best practices will be highlighted.

Throughout this chapter, reference is made to initiatives of a complementary nature to government policy undertaken by the United Nations, international and local NGOs and other youth policy and programming actors. Examples of good practice have ideally been undertaken in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders including government, but there are some cases where government involvement was missing. It is hoped that such examples, taken in conjunction with the assessments made in this chapter, will provide clues for the development of more broad based and effective youth friendly advocacy and programming in UNFPA core programme areas. The penultimate section of this chapter presents a more in-depth overview of UN programming related to young people as undertaken across the region with pilots in many of the countries covered by the study.

The concluding section of the chapter as a whole focuses on the presence or absence of specific youth policies in the countries concerned and tendencies in relation to youth policy making. It assesses the opportunity and potential for the elaboration of holistic, cross-sectoral policies pertaining to young people in the countries concerned and possibly in the region.

1/ YOUTH POPULATIONS AND FERTILITY

a/ Young people's share in the population

In line with European trends, the share of young people (variably defined by age range) living in the countries under consideration is gradually getting smaller, as a result of declining fertility and growing economic migration, even if the process of demographic decline has begun later and is taking place at a somewhat slower rate than elsewhere. Nevertheless young people represent a significant share of the population, often proportionately larger than in other regions or

countries of Europe (especially Western Europe). Such "youth bulges" could have significant development potential for the countries concerned.

Youthful Populations

Overall **Albania**, in comparison to other European countries, with an average age of 28,6 years[50], with 40% of the population being under 18 years old[51], and a GDP per capita of only 1,499 USD (data 2003)[52], can be considered the youngest and the poorest population in Europe. Out of the 17% of young people aged between 15 to 24 years (of the overall population), 20% are thought to have migrated in search for economic opportunities abroad.[53] Poverty, high unemployment, neighbouring conflicts, social insecurity, declining health and education indicators, as well as an increase in crime and gender discrimination accompany the current generation of young people, causing more and more of them to leave Albania, mainly to neighbouring Italy or Greece.

According to the Armenian Statistical Yearbook for 2005, published by the National Statistic Service of the **Republic of Armenia**, the number of people aged 16 to 30 is 840,200, which represents 26,1% of the general population[54]. According to the same document, the subjects of state youth policy are a) citizens of the Republic of Armenia aged 16 to 30, b) foreign citizens aged of 16 to 30, who do not have Armenian citizenship, but whose presence in the Republic of Armenia imposes certain responsibilities on state bodies, c) NGOs registered in the Republic of Armenia, in which the age of the members does not exceed 30 or NGOs that deal with the affairs of young people up to the age of 30 and d) young families, in which one of the parents is younger than 30 years of age[55].

In legislation young people in **Bosnia & Herzegovina** are defined as individuals between 14 and 29 years of age. It is estimated that there were 950,330 young people between the ages of 15 and 30 in Bosnia & Herzegovina in 2000 (24% of the country's total population). Total population is fairly consistently measured at about 3,9 million. Following the 1992 to 1995 war and subsequent hardships, there has been massive emigration of working-age people.[56] This is reflected in the widespread desire of young Bosnians to move abroad, in some cases permanently.[57] Estimates currently run at 62% of young people wishing to leave the country. Young people, however, still make up 20% of the entire electoral body[58]. The median age is 38.[59] Many young people, particularly men, died in the conflict or left as refugees (the population in 1990 was 4.3 million, roughly 10% higher than today[60]). GDP per capita is $6,029 PPP.[61] Between 2000 and 2025, the population aged 10 to 24 is expected to decline from 900,000 (24% of total) to 700,000 (18%).[62]

[50] Millennium Development Goals, Report Albania, p.64
[51] NSP Albania, 2004-2010, p.9.
[52] UNDP Albania Draft Country Programme, p.2.
[53] INSTAT, 2002, NSP Albania, 2004-2010, p.9.
[54] Armenian National Youth Policy Report, p. 19.
[55] *Op cit.*
[56] PRB-UNFPA Country Profile, 2005, p. 298.
[57] OIA Evaluation of youth policy in Bosnia & Herzegovina www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/wpaysubmissions/bosnia.pdf.
[58] Independent Evaluation of the Bosnia & Herzegovina National Youth Policy, p.2.
[59] PRB-UNFPA Country Profile, 2005, p. 298.
[60] *Op cit.*
[61] *Op cit*, p. 299.
[62] Population Reference Bureau, http://www.prb.org/TemplateTop.cfm?Section=PRB_Country_Profiles&template=/customsource/countryprofile/countryprofiledisplay.cfm&Country=500.

Youthful Populations

Bulgaria, with a population of 7,801,273 persons (2003), with 1,077,137 young people aged 15 – 25, and 1,697,274 young people aged 18 – 35 years[63], is considered one of the leading countries in the world in terms of low birth rate (9 per 1000) and negative natural population growth (population growth was –5.1 per 1000 in 2000)[64]. The population has decreased by over one million since the last population census prior to the period of transition – 8,948,649 (1985), and nearly by half a million since the first census after the beginning of the transition – 8,487,317 (1992) [65]. Bulgaria has also witnessed a trend towards an increase in young people's emigration among those aged 10 – 35 (especially in the period 1985 and 1992)[66], which mainly represented highly educated, well-prepared and competitive young people[67]. The proportion of urban population increased to 69 per cent, with prevalent migration from villages to towns. These trends lead to considerable qualitative and quantitative changes in the number of young people.

The population of **Estonia** at the beginning of 2007 was 1,342,400, of whom 207,300 (15.5%) were aged 15-24. The youth proportion of population will drop in the coming decades, with fewer than 10% of Estonians aged 5-14.[68] This may increase again in later years, as fertility has risen since 2000. Estonian law defines a young person as aged between 7 and 26 years, although the focus of this report is on the age group 15-24, in line with the standard definition of youth in the United Nations system.[69] A large additional group of Estonians (183,000 of all ages in 2005) are emigrants, working primarily in Russia, Finland and Sweden.[70]

The population of **Georgia** is about 4,400,000 people, of whom around 690,000 are aged 15-24 (15.7%).[71] The youth share of population is falling, with 550,000 people aged 5-14, and only 135,000 aged 0-4. Only Ukraine, with -1%, has a lower population growth rate than Georgia's -0.8%.[72] After peaking at 58% in 1995, the proportion of the population living in urban areas was around 52% in 2004;[73] there is a sizeable internally displaced population, currently between 220,000 and 240,000.[74]

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[63] Elitza Neshevska, Deputy Minister of Youth and Sports (responsible for youth affairs at the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Bulgaria), "Youth Policy in Bulgaria" in Forum 21, European Journal of Youth Policy, www.coe.int/youth/forum21.

[64] Lilia Raycheva, Katya Hristova, Dessislava Radomirova, Rossen Ginev, "YSPDB report about situation of young people in Bulgaria, youth NGOS and youth policy and relations with government", Youth Society for Peace and Development of the Balkans, Plovdiv, Bulgaria.

[65] Bulgaria: Childhood in Transition in Children Welfare in Ageing Europe, p. 3.

[66] Lilia Raycheva, Katya Hristova, Dessislava Radomirova, Rossen Ginev, "YSPDB report about situation of young people in Bulgaria, youth NGOS and youth policy and relations with government", Youth Society for Peace and Development of the Balkans, Plovdiv, Bulgaria, *op cit.*

[67] Elitza Neshevska, Deputy Minister of Youth and Sports (responsible for youth affairs at the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Bulgaria), "Youth Policy in Bulgaria" in Forum 21, European Journal of Youth Policy, www.coe.int/youth/forum21, *op cit.*

[68] Statistics Estonia, http://www.stat.ee/.

[69] Youth Work Act 1999, chapter 1, section 2.1.

[70] World Bank Development Prospects Group, Migration and Remittances in Estonia, 2005, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPROSPECTS/Resources/334934-1181678518183/Estonia.pdf.

[71] At 1st January 2006, Government of Georgia statistical office, http://www.statistics.ge/main.php?pform=47&plang=1.

[72] UNFPA State of World Population 2006, indicators p. 101.

[73] WHO Health for All database, http://data.euro.who.int/hfadb/.

[74] Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, September 2006, http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpCountries)/F62BE07C33DE4D19802570A7004C84A3?OpenDocument.

Youthful Populations

Over a half of **Kyrgyzstan**'s population is below 25 years of age[75]. Young people aged 10 – 24 years represent about 1,67 million[76]. The median age of the Kyrgyz population is 23 for men and 24 for women[77]. Although since 1995 a slow decrease in birth rate can be noticed, the youth share of the population continues to rise.

According to the 2002 population census, the overall population of **Macedonia** is 2,022,547 people[78], out of which around 23% are young people between 10 and 24 (2006 data)[79]. This amounts to approximately half a million young people[80]. Young people 0-19 represent 32.9% of the overall population[81]. The population is growing slowly, at a rate of 0,3%.

According to official government statistics, **Poland**'s population at the end of 2005 was around 38,157,000, of whom 6,185,000 were aged 15-24.[82] Other estimates are slightly higher, but the share of youth in the population is around 16%, among the largest in the European Union.[83] The youth share of population is falling, with the number of Poles aged 0-14 the same as aged 15-24.[84] At the same time, as people live longer (life expectancy in Poland is 79 for women and 71 for men), the old-age dependency ratio (the ratio of retired people to working-age people) will increase in the coming decades. After a high of 64% in 1995, around 62% of the population lived in urban areas in 2004.[85]

Romania has a population of around 21.6 million, of whom just over 23% (5 million) are aged between 15 and 29. Due to outward migration and a low birth rate, the population of Romania is projected to fall in the next twenty years (to 19.1m in 2025), while the proportion of young people will shrink even more dramatically (to 3.1m, or 16.2%).[86] According to EU statistics, 15.2% of Romanians are aged 15-24. This is projected to drop to 8.9% by 2050.[87]

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[75] http://www.unece.org/stats/profiles2007/kyrgyzstan.pdf

[76] National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic – Women and Men in the Kyrgyz Republic, Bishkek 2006, p.43

[77] UNECE

[78] http://www.stat.gov.mk/english/glavna_eng.asp

[79] World's Youth 2006 Data Sheet, Population Reference Bureau, p. 11
http://www.prb.org/pdf06/WorldsYouth2006DataSheet.pdf

[80] Ibid.

[81] In: SEER-South-East Europe Review for Labour and Social Affairs, 1/2002, p. 91
http://www.ceeol.com/aspx/getdocument.aspx?logid=5&id=91876fab-34d7-47d3-960b-732e8d7bf02c

[82] Government population statistics at http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/45_646_ENG_HTML.htm.

[83] 'Young Europeans Through Statistics', Eurostat news release 44/2007, 23rd March 2007, p. 2.

[84] 6,189,000 aged 0-14 and 6,185,000 aged 15-24: government population statistics at http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/45_646_ENG_HTML.htm.

[85] WHO Health for All database, http://data.euro.who.int/hfadb/. Government population statistics show that life expectancy is slightly higher for men in urban areas, and for women in rural areas.

[86] Statistics from 2005 National Youth Action Plan, p. 4 of 145, from a 2003 population survey. Other estimates of population are higher (at around 22.4m), though UNFPA gives a figure of 21.57m for April 2007, down 40,000 since January 2006 (http://www.unfpa.ro/?limba=En).

[87] Eurostat, Young Europeans Through Statistics, March 2007, http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/PGP_PRD_CAT_PREREL/PGE_CAT_PREREL_YEAR_2007/PGE_CAT_PREREL_YEAR_2007_MONTH_03/3-23032007-EN-AP.PDF.

Youthful Populations

The population of **Serbia**, according to the latest population census (2002), was 7,498,001 persons excluding Kosovo, out of which young people aged 15 to 29 represented 1,512,646 people (with 768,221 men and 744,425 women), representing about 20% of the overall population[88]. The most recent 2007 estimates report that Serbian population has grown to 10,150,265 persons (this figure includes the estimated population of Kosovo)[89].

Kosovo's population is estimated at between 1,9 and 2,1 million inhabitants.[90] According to official data, young Kosovars between the ages of 15 and 29 represent 60% of the total population, which makes Kosovo's population one of the youngest in Europe[91]. More specifically, 50% of young Kosovars are under the age of 25 years and 40% are children under 18 years of age[92]. Youth is, however, officially defined as the group between 15 and 24, which covers 21% of Kosovo's total population[93]. The so-called youth bulge is expected to grow even more, as overall population growth in the region is highest in Kosovo (which has a total fertility rate estimate of 2.9[94]). This is expected to remain the highest in the next 15 to 20 years.

In 2005, the population of **Turkey** was estimated at 73,2 million, with 13,5 million people aged 15 to 24 (or 18,4% of the overall population). The population aged 0 to 14 was 21,4 million (or 29% of the overall population).[95] However, in line with European trends, the share of the population aged 15 to 24 is dropping gradually, from 20% in 2000 to a projected 17% in 2015. This is in line with a general slowing down of the population growth rate, related primarily to dropping levels of fertility, although significant disparities between rural and urban contexts apply.[96] These figures demonstrate that approximately 50% of the Turkish population is young. Emigration patterns have changed, though, since the 1980s, when a significant percentage of young people left the country to work abroad.

The first national population census in **Ukraine** (2001) indicated that 5,312 000 adolescents aged 12 to 18 resided in Ukraine with overall population of more than 48 million. Young males constitute 51,1% of the youth population. and young females 48,9%. 69,9% of young people live in urban areas. According to the 2001 census, the share of adolescents among children and youth under 28 was 29,4%, which amounted to 11% of the overall population in Ukraine[97]. Ukraine as many other countries in Europe, has a negative natural population growth of –7,5 per 1000, and migration of -0.5 per 1000[98].

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[88] Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, Data - 2002 census: http://webrzs.statserb.sr.gov.yu/axd/en/drugastrana.php?Sifra=0013&izbor=tabela

[89] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serbia

[90] United Nations Development Programme Kosovo: KHDR 2006 – A New Generation for a New Kosovo, 2006, p. 24

[91] YVG Kosovo, World Bank Mission in Kosovo: Youth in Kosovo-Policy Paper, 2005, p.2

[92] http://www.unicef.org/kosovo/overview.html

[93] United Nations Development Programme Kosovo: KHDR 2006 – A New Generation for a New Kosovo, 2006, p.24

[94] http://www.unfpakos.org/demographicProfile.htm

[95] World Population Prospects, United Nations Populations Division, available at http://esa.un.org/unpp/index.asp?panel=2.

[96] *Op cit.*

[97] UNDP, Ministry of Health of Ukraine, Ukrainian Family Planning Association, "Reproductive and Sexual Health of Adolescents in Ukraine - Situational Analysis", 2004, p. 6.

[98] United States Central Intelligence Agency, General Statistical Information about Ukraine, available at https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/up.html.

Youthful Populations

Like in much of the Central Asia, youth matters are important for **Uzbekistan** where the median age is just 24 years of age[99] and approximately 60% of the country population consists of young people under the age of 25 and 36% cent is under the age of 15.[100] Most of the 26 million members of the population live in the rural areas (64%), while only 36% live in the cities. The birth rate still remains the major factor in the growth of the population, however, it continues to decrease from year to year and this tendency has become constant. After an insignificant increase in the number of births in 2004, the number of births in 2005 decreased again from 540.4 to 538 thousand. More than two thirds of the newborns (69,1%) were registered in rural areas. With intensive demographic growth and a significant proportion of families living on the poverty line, providing the new generation with decent work is becoming an important day to day challenge[101]. There are no clear indications on the extent of youth migration from Uzbekistan.

As has been explored in some depth in Part I of this study, European fertility rates have been on the decline since the 1960s. In Central Asia, the trend may have begun a little later but it is well established by now. Some countries in Europe and Central Asia have recently entered the category of "lowest-low fertility" countries, with the fertility rate having plummeted to well under the replacement rate of 2.1 children per woman. Nevertheless, while recent research indicates that fertility continues shrinking, fertility rates in most of the countries covered by this study in the Central Asian countries under the UNFPA remit remain higher than in other parts of Europe, especially if one takes intra-country differences into account.

Overview of Fertility

Albania demonstrates significantly lower fertility (21% decline in the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) between 1993 and 2002 according to the Ministry of Health) and changing attitudes towards marriage (Median age of first marriage is 21,9 and first live birth is 23,4) in comparison to the pre-transition period. [102]

Armenia has witnessed a net reduction in the absolute and relative number of marriages and births from 1990 to 1998, referred to as the "transition period". The total fertility rate is estimated at 1.33 children per woman (estimate for 2006).[103]

The total fertility rate in **Bosnia & Herzegovina** is around 1.5 for women 15 to 49.[104] This was already low (1.7) in 1990, especially considering that the Bosnian population fits a profile associated with higher than average birth rates (more than half rural, largely Muslim). One great problem is that statistics in general, including those on fertility, are not broken down by rural-urban category.

[99] http://www.unfpa.org/news/news.cfm?ID=869

[100] http://www.unfpa.uz/ca010101.html

[101] Eurasia Studies Program – Summary of a Conference hosted by The National Bureau of Asian Research in Washington, D.C. on March 2, 2006.

[102] Reproductive Health Survey, implemented in 2002 in cooperation of Institute of Public Health, Albanian Ministry of Health, Institute of Statistics, Division of Reproductive Health, Georgia, USA, USAID, UNFPA and UNICEF, Published in May 2005.

[103] Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Armenia accessed on 30.11.2006.

[104] PRB-UNFPA Country Profile, 2005, p. 298, available at http://www.prb.org/pdf06/2005UNFPA_CountryProfiles_EEuropeCAsia.pdf.

Overview of Fertility

Bulgarian family and fertility demography has been affected by postponement processes, characterised by a negative national birth rate increase to –5,6 per 1000. The recent studies indicate that a significant proportion, about 2,9 million of households (70,5%) is without children. Over the past ten years, there is a slight increase in the average age of first birth for Bulgarian women from 22 to 23,8 years. More and more women enter marriage at later ages, compared to the years before. However, while in the 80s approximately every tenth child was born out of marriage, in 2001 it is almost every second. The new tendency in Bulgaria is that 17,6% of the population aged 15 – 29 live together without being married[105].

Estonia was one of the earliest countries to enter the 'second demographic transition,' reaching below-replacement fertility levels in the 1920s. Estonia did not have a baby boom following the Second World War.[106] Thus prior to the communist period (during which fertility occasionally reached replacement level), Estonia had experience of low fertility. Following the end of communism, the fertility rate fell from over 2.2 lifetime births per woman to a low of 1.28 in 1998. Since then it has increased steadily, reaching 1.55 in 2006.[107] It is a key goal of Estonian family policy to increase the fertility rate to replacement level (2.1).[108]

According to UNECE statistics, the total fertility rate (TFR) in **Georgia** was 2.2 lifetime births per woman in 1990, but dropped to 1.4 by 1995 and has remained at that level.[109] The 2005 Reproductive Health Survey puts the rate slightly higher, at 1.6.[110]

In **Kyrgyzstan** total fertility is among the highest in the region, with estimations ranging between 2,4 and 2,6 children per women (UNECE and UNFPA data 2005)[111]. However, there is a slow tendency towards decreased fertility. The total fertility rate has decreased from 3,6 in 1990, to an estimated 2,4 in 2000 and has slightly increased again since to 2,6 in 2005[112]. UNFPA data indicates a slightly lower number of 2,4 children per women, which confirms this trend[113]. While there has been a slow sustainable growth in the birth rate in the 20-29 age group, which account for 65% of birth rate per year, according to the official data, there is a decreasing tendency in the birth rate of women aged 15-19[114]. The average age of mother at birth of the first child increased to 23,4 years in 2005[115].

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[105] Elena Koytcheva, "Contemporary union formation in Bulgaria: The emergence of cohabitation", paper prepared for presentation at the XXV International Population Conference of the International Union for the Scientific Study of the Population, Tours, France, July 18-23, 2005.

[106] K. Katus, A Purr, L Sakkeus, 'Transition to adulthood in Estonia' in Blossfeld et al (eds.) Globalization, Uncertainty and Youth in Society (Routledge: Abingdon, 2005), p. 243.

[107] Statistics Estonia, http://www.stat.ee/

[108] Ministry of Social Affairs, Family Benefits in Estonia, Factsheet January 2007, http://www.sm.ee/eng/pages/index.html (social security link), accessed October 16th 2007.

[109] UNECE on-line statistics, via http://w3.unece.org/pxweb/Dialog/statfile1_new.asp. Some estimates are even lower, at 1.1: http://www.unece.org/stats/trends2005/family.htm.

[110] It is noted that this estimate greatly exceeds government estimates, due to delayed registration of births (possibly due to fees for registration which have since been abolished). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Reproductive Health Survey of Georgia, 2005, ch. 4.

[111] UNECE

[112] National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic – Women and Men in the Kyrgyz Republic, Bishkek 2006, p.48

[113] http://www.unfpa.org/stronger_voices/kyrgystan.htm

[114] National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic – Women and Men in the Kyrgyz Republic, Bishkek 2006, p.49

[115] Ibid, p. 50

Overview of Fertility

According to UNECE statistics, the total fertility rate (TFR) in **Macedonia** has been decreasing from 2,1 lifetime births per woman in 1990 to approximately 1,5 in 2005[116]. Still according to other sources the age specific fertility rate (15-19) remains rather high with 26 lifetime births per 1000 women in the period of 2000-2005[117]. According to UNFPA (Macedonia) in 2007, the live birth rate is estimated at 13.33/1000. Abortions per 1000 live births were 315 (2001 figures).

In **Poland**, the fall in the youth share of population is due to a steady decrease in the fertility rate to a persistent level well below replacement, although estimates vary. The UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) gives a total fertility rate of 1.2 babies per woman over a lifetime, while the UNFPA profile for Poland gives a rate of 1.6 (1.4 in urban areas and 2.0 in rural areas).[118]

Following the legalisation of contraception and abortion after the end of the Ceaucescu regime, the fertility rate in **Romania** fell from 2.2 in 1989 to 1.3 in 1995, where it has remained ever since (although the rate is notably higher in rural areas). The reality of young motherhood has also changed significantly in the past seventeen years – birth rates in the 15-19 and 20-24 cohorts have fallen by 35-45%. The average age of the mother at first birth rose between 1996 and 2004, from 24 to 26 in urban areas and from 21.8 to 22.6 in rural areas.[119] In light of the low fertility rate, the ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family offers a financial incentive for child bearing.[120]

Serbia has a relatively low total fertility rate of 1.4 to 1.6 children (2000-2 estimate) and a low birth rate (10.7% in 2003). The fertility rates of adolescent women remain relatively high in comparison to the overall population. According to some estimates, every sixth girl from Belgrade who became sexually active during adolescence has experienced an unplanned pregnancy by the age of 19[121].

Kosovo has a total fertility rate estimate of 2.9.[122] Its population growth is highest in the SEE region and is expected to remain the highest for the next 15 to 20 years. It's population, which includes approximately one million young people, gives birth to approximately 35,000 children per year, is also characterised by the poorest maternal and child vital indicators in Europe. With infant mortality rates twice as high as in the neighbouring countries, Kosovo estimates are 49/1000 live births, and mortality under 5 years of age is estimated at 69/1000[123].

In **Turkey**, a general slowing down of the population growth rate has been observed. This is related primarily to dropping levels of fertility: from 3,1 lifetime births per woman in 1990, to 2,7 in 2005 (UNFPA;[124] the UN Population Division estimates 2.21 TFR by 2010-15[125]), although there are great regional disparities in fertility, with already 2,4 births per woman in urban areas against 3,1 in rural areas.[126]

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[116] UNECE Macedonia http://www.unece.org/stats/profiles2007/tfyr_macedonia.pdf

[117] Kacarska-Fotevska, Isidora, et.al., Qualitative research on KAP among Macedonian women, regarding Reproductive health, Osteoporosis & Menopauses issues, University of Rome "La Sapienza", Department of Public Health Sciences "G. Sanarelli", March 2005, p.3

[118] UNECE at http://w3.unece.org/pxweb/Dialog/statfile1_new.asp, and UNFPA at http://www.unfpa.org/profile/poland.cfm.

[119] Ibid, tables 2.11 and 2.12.

[120] Ministry for Labour, Social Solidarity and Family, http://www.mmssf.ro/website/en/index.jsp. For 2006 figures, see http://www.mmssf.ro/website/en/statistici/asistenta56.pdf.

[121] Ibid.

[122] http://www.unfpakos.org/demographicProfile.htm

[123] Ibid.

[124] UNFPA, http://www.unfpa.org/profile/turkey.cfm.

[125] World Population Prospects, *op. cit.*

[126] *Op cit.*

Overview of Fertility

The phenomenon of lowest-low fertility in **Ukraine**, where population growth is -1.1 one of the world's lowest. Although Ukraine has witnessed political and economic transformations in the past decade, it has maintained a young age at first birth and nearly universal childbearing. It seems that the persistence of traditional norms for childbearing and the roles of men and women, concerns about medical complications and infertility at a later age and the link between early fertility and early marriage still prevail[127].

In **Uzbekistan** the birth rate has decreased 1,7 times from 1991 to 19,8 per 1000 in 2002 and this tendency seems to be constant. In this period the annual population growth rate fell from 2.2% to 1.2%. More than two thirds of the newborns (69.1%) were registered in rural areas. It is interesting to note that with use of contraceptives, there was a drop of the abortion rate from 40 for every 1000 live births to 9 for 1000 births.[128]

It is noteworthy that war and violent conflict can contribute to falling fertility, both during and in the post-conflict period. Young people caught up in the throes of war can neither afford nor wish to bring children into the world. This has exacerbated the declining fertility rates of countries affected by war, such as in the countries of the Balkans and the Caucasus studied here.

b/ Sexual initiation, union formation, parenthood

Our study reveals mixed results as concerns the age of initiation into sex and the instance of pre-marital sex. From the available information, it is not possible to conclude that in general all the countries demonstrate trends in sexuality and sexual activity commensurate with other parts of Europe (e.g. Western Europe) or globally (e.g. the United States, etc). In other words, not all countries demonstrate a rise in the instance of pre-marital sex or a decrease in the age of initiation into sex, although arguably this could easily be the result of the lack of reliable data rather than any other factor. Nevertheless, it is possible to observe that in the countries considered deferral of marriage does not necessarily of deferral of first sexual experience. In other words, there is a trend towards an earlier age of initiation into sexual activity even where marriage is postponed. This can be considered commensurate with the global trend. While initiation into sex does not necessarily imply marriage, marriage usually implies sexual activity.

For example, in Albania one third of young adult women reported having had a sexual experience and 14%, or 42% of those with sexual experience, had had premarital sex and almost all (99%) reported it to have taken place with their fiancée or boyfriend. Among young adult males, 29% reported having had a sexual experience and 27%, or 91% of those with sexual experience, had had premarital sex. Most men with premarital sexual experience reported their first partner to be a girl friend (43%), a lover (19%) or a friend (14%). Only 1% reported that their first sexual encounter was with a prostitute. On the other hand, in Bosnia & Herzegovina, a recent study revealed that first sexual encounters take place between the ages of 16 and 20, which in comparison to other countries in Europe is not young. There is almost no data available concerning the sexuality of young people in Turkey. Pre-marital sex is widely considered taboo. It is, however, common knowledge that sexually active young people who can

[127] http://taylorandfrancis.metapress.com/(dkzj303300ozhb55kvh3yc2v)/app/home/contribution.asp?referrer=parent&backto=issue,5,10;journal,6,67;linkingpublicationresults,1:300383,1.

[128] http://www.unece.org/stats/trends2005/profiles/Uzbekistan.pdf.

afford to must frequent private clinics to acquire contraception as a result of the stigma attached to pre-marital sex. In a 2006 survey, half of Polish 18 year old women report that they had had sex. Deferral of marriage is also to be observed. On the other hand, the general trend towards co-habitation to be observed among young adults in other European Union countries cannot be observed in Poland. In Poland cohabitation only accounts for 2.2% of unions (2002 data) and of those only 12% are among couples under 25 years of age.[129] In Kyrgyzstan, commonly thought to be a "traditional society" the average age of initiation into sex is 14.[130]

The age of marriage or alternative union formation (such as, long-term partnership) on the other hand is definitely increasing, even in some of the more traditional societies, including Albania and Turkey, although one must be wary of the significant regional and urban-rural differences that exist in those countries. A more detailed discussion of counter tendencies, such as the under legal age marriage of girls, is undertaken in both the country reports for those countries and the section on Gender later in this chapter. A notable exception is Armenia, however, where the average age at first marriage for young women decreased slightly during the period 1990 to 1998 (referred to as the period of "transition"). This is attributed to the fact that young women have experienced a reduction in their educational and employment opportunities during the transition and, hence, get married younger. The trend is the opposite for young men, however, with evidence that their age at first marriage is increasing steadily.[131] It is noteworthy, that in some of the countries studied, legal provisions on the legal age for marriage exist but are not respected, examples of which are Kyrgyzstan and certain regions of Georgia where bride kidnapping is of particular concern. In addition, the regulation of the legal age for marriage is sometimes used as a proxy for the regulation of the legal age of initiation into sex due to the traditional association of sex and marriage, one which can no longer be considered as reflecting social realities. For example, in Romania there is a law on the age of marriage, but not a minimum age of sexual consent.

It is also becoming more common for young couples to defer becoming parents for the first time to a stage of life when socio-economic conditions are better and more secure. A more in-depth discussion of the reasons for this in general is outlined in Part I of the study. Concrete examples of this can be found in all the countries surveyed in this study. For example, in Estonia from 1994 to 2006 the mean age of the mother at the birth of the first child increased from 22.8 to 25.4.[132] In Kosovo, the fertility rate is 2.7 children per woman, with natural population growth of 23.3 per 1000 being among the highest in Europe. Nevertheless, there is a tendency among young people to postpone having children because of their difficult economic circumstances.[133] In Georgia, however, lesser postponement has been observed (rising one year from 1990 – 2002) although total fertility fell by half.[134] In Macedonia, because of a lack of perspectives for young women in the fields of education and employment, there is a tendency to still marry fairly young, but fertility rates are nevertheless constantly declining.[135]

In policy terms, several countries had pro-natalist policies under state socialism, with reproductive health services being significantly limited to mother and child services and services

[129] For more information refer to the country report on Poland, 2007.
[130] For more information refer to the country report on Kyrgyzstan, 2007.
[131] Armenian National Youth Policy Report, 2005.
[132] Statistics Estonia http://www.stat.ee/
[133] For more information refer to the report on Kosovo, 2007.
[134] For more information refer to the country report on Georgia, 2007.
[135] For more information refer to the country report on Macedonia, 2007.

for mothers to be, the notable example being Albania. Most of these countries legalised abortion and made it available through public health services, and in theory, family planning services have been legalised, although access to and information about such services can be problematic and unavailable for young potential clients. Often such services are provided by private clinics and are little known. On the other hand, improvements in legislation have not necessarily been accompanied by improvements in implementation or the quality of information and service in the field of family planning and the availability of contraception remains patchy. As a counter example, the disastrous effects on women's health of the complete prohibition of abortion and contraception during the Communist period has led to a situation today where abortion and contraception services are accepted and accessible for the vast majority of the population.

Traditional attitudes to family planning and strong moral pressure on young women to fulfil reproductive roles are common in the countries surveyed. Where government is not responsible for this pressure, through pro-natalist policies, then family, religious and social institutions are, with notable examples being Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey and Poland. In cases where government does pursue pro-natalist policies, this can often be linked to authoritarian political regimes and populist approaches to governance, with the fate of the "strong nation" being causally related to the ability of young women to produce bouncing national babies, a notable example of which is Uzbekistan. During one of the visits to Armenia undertaken in the context of the 2005-2006 Council of Europe International Youth Policy Review Expert Team, one representative of the Ministry of Health of Armenia stated that their objective is to "produce healthy mothers and soldiers". It is noteworthy that such attitudes in policy making run contrary to the widespread formal accession of the countries surveyed to international best practise, for example commitments made to implement the rights based International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action (ICPD). Nevertheless, pro-natalist policies do not have to be repressive, the best example of which is certainly France. Among the countries surveyed, Estonia demonstrates a good example of a progressive family policy, which, nevertheless, has pro-natalist aims.

d/ Key challenges and perspectives

The countries in question face several key challenges in relation to the position of young people in social policy directly influenced by population dynamics.

In the first place, the evidence base for adequately informed policy making is often not available, due to the fact that the instruments available to the countries in question for following population dynamics are not able to keep up with the rapidity of the changes taking place. Some common methods for gathering population information, such as household surveys, are also not well adapted to the changes taking place in the nature of social and family relations to be able to provide a timely and fully accurate evidence base to policy making in this field. In relation to young people, household surveys have the disadvantage of making young people invisible, because they do not adequately take into account the age of the household members and the changing nature of their positions in relation to family members of other age groups. Youth demography is also changing at such a rapid pace that the ten-year time frame for collection and analysis of census data in relation to population change is far too slow. By the time the data becomes available to policy makers, the trends have in fact already changed and policies taking into account the "evidence" will be obsolete.

A second challenge is that of who should be responsible for the collection of relevant population data. There is clearly a lack of experience and capacity (in terms of financial and human

resources and in terms of knowledge) at both local and national levels in the countries covered by our study in relation to how to conduct relevant and methodologically sound census and survey activities that take into account the youth dimension of population dynamics. A good example of UN support to the development of national capacity for addressing population transformations can be found in Romania, where UNFPA has supported the cross-sectoral development of a green paper on population and organised an international conference to bring together experts and policy makers to discuss Romania's population perspectives. Nevertheless, while UN agencies have a certain level of capacity in the field of population dynamics, they may not be sensitive enough to the need for specific youth related research to be integrated into the standard activities and their mandates are not always adapted to lending a hand in practise.

In relation to the question of low and ever decreasing fertility, it seems that young people consider primarily or at least to a very large extent their perspectives for the future, or lack thereof, in making decisions about whether and when to have children. In the first place, and particularly among traditional, rural and ethnic minority communities, young people, especially young women, who have little or no perspective of studying or finding a job, whether because of poor social perspectives or because of traditional female roles, continue to start families early, if compared to Western Europe or the United States. This is, to some extent, commensurate with the situation in other "developing" regions, where children are seen as the guarantee of economic and social security and where contraceptive use is either taboo or too expensive and where, therefore, one witnesses significant population growth. Nevertheless, if one looks at urban areas, the trend towards postponement of having children is visible. Young people indicate that they postpone decisions on becoming parents to a later stage of life because they feel their socio-economic situation is not conducive to having children at a younger age.

It can, therefore, be concluded that if young people had more confidence in their life chances, they would potentially be more amenable to having children sooner, although it is not possible to say if this would encourage them to have more children in the long run (because the ability to afford having children and the costs that go with it are certainly not the only factor). This also implies that limiting access to contraception and social constructions to keep young women in the home (e.g. not providing adequate services to support the combination of educational or professional activities with childrearing) may not have the desired effect of increasing fertility. In fact, there is evidence to suggest that limited access to contraception can have negative side effects, such as increasing the vulnerability of young people, young women in particular, to contracting STIs and increases in unwanted pregnancy and abortion.

One can, therefore, conclude that there is a significant need for the development of progressive family policies, that take into account evidence of the actual decision-making processes of young people in relation to founding a family, and which provide enhanced support to young parents, so that they feel confident enough that if they do bring more children into the world, they will be able to provide for them adequately. If combined with comprehensive sexual health and sexuality education, accessible and affordable childcare facilities and access to contraception, such policies could see young people making choices in favour of having more children sooner and a decrease in the instance of unwanted pregnancy terminated by abortion.

2/ SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

a/ Poverty and vulnerability

Political and economic transition has taken its toll on the socio-economic conditions of young people, particularly as regards their poverty and vulnerability.

In almost of all of the countries covered in this study an important proportion of young people live in relative poverty, often employed in the grey rather than the formal economy, if they have any access to the labour market at all, earning irregular or no income and partially responsible for making sure that their families (as young parents or as working children) manage to make ends meet. In some countries, like Serbia, Bosnia & Herzegovina and Macedonia, however, poverty is something of a new phenomenon, dating back to the economic decline of Yugoslavia and the effects of conflict. Young people find it most difficult to find and keep correctly paid and protected work, even when they are highly qualified, for example in Poland. Nevertheless, the picture is not homogenous. In Bulgaria, EU accession and deliberate investment by government in combating youth unemployment seems to be improving the position of young people. In Romania, recent economic growth has virtually eliminated youth unemployment in urban areas, even if some of the opportunities created have been in the informal economy (for example, in childcare).

In both Turkey and Armenia, lack of capacity and infrastructure to absorb such devastating shocks as earthquakes, have exacerbated problems of poverty for the whole population. Young people, as other vulnerable categories of the population, are disproportionately affected by the longer term effects of such natural disasters, including the isolation associated with the destruction of essential infrastructure and the disruption to the most basic social services, especially education.

Youth Poverty

In comparison to other European countries, **Albania**, with an average age of 28,6 years[136], with 40% of the population being under 18 years old[137], and a GDP per capita of only 1,499 USD (data 2003)[138], can be considered the youngest and the poorest population in Europe. Almost half the poor in Albania are under the age of 21.

In **Armenia**, almost 26,1% of the population is aged between 16 and 30, many of which live under the poverty line. According to the World Bank, population living under the poverty line still represents 40% of the overall population, the data however differs, and some sources refer to up to 80% of the population. Women and children are amongst the most vulnerable groups together with migrants and the disabled.

In **Bosnia & Herzegovina**, 40% of the overall population considers that it can barely meet its basic daily needs. Almost a 25% of the overall population of the country is aged between 15 and 30 and, therefore, considered young.

[136] Millennium Development Goals Report Albania, p.64.
[137] NSP Albania, 2004-2010, p.9.
[138] UNDP Albania Draft Country Programme, p.2.

Youth Poverty

The poverty line in **Bulgaria** has been rising in the past few years (to Euro 52.5 a month in 1999), whilst the percentage share of poor households has been declining. Overall, the poverty rates in EU candidate countries, member states, and Bulgaria do not differ significantly[139]. More specifically, Bulgarian poor are more likely to be found among the youth in rural areas (29.1 % in 2003 compared to 18.7 % in urban areas). Although only a fifth of the population lives in households with five or more members, they account for about 41 % of the poor. Furthermore, Roma households representing about 6 % of the population count for over a fifth of the poor. Finally, the risk of poverty is slightly higher in households headed by women, usually single parent households.

A World Bank assessment reported that in 2003, **Estonia** had the highest level of poverty among the new EU member states[140] (18%, a decrease from over 37% in 1997[141]). The National Institute for Health Development reported 25% of the population living below the absolute poverty line in 2004, including one third of children under sixteen.[142] The number of children living in poverty has decreased (from 47% in 1997 to 34% in 2002) due to the rise in incomes and the decreasing number of children in the family.[143] In 2001, 20% of 16-24 year-olds lived below poverty line.[144]

Poverty is widespread in **Georgia**, despite recent economic growth. Extreme poverty in rural areas has doubled in the last decade.[145] It is estimated that half of Georgian children live in families living below the poverty line.[146] Poverty is related closely with unemployment. A significant proportion of young people in Georgia are unemployed. It is also a major cause of migration among the older end of the youth population. The long-term and persistent absence of a well-educated youth generation is a significant challenge to economic development.[147]

Kyrgyzstan has seen increased poverty[148], which reached 26,3% households in 2005, out of which 6,4% are extremely poor[149]. In spite of constant economic growth, almost half of the largely young rural population live in poverty and extreme poverty.[150] Young people are especially vulnerable to social risks including involvement in crime, violence and substance abuse or engagement in radical religious organisations as a result of their lack of opportunity and social support. The most vulnerable include rural and migrant families with many children, the disabled, the unemployed with low levels of education, families headed by women, orphans and undocumented children[151].

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[139] Lilia Raycheva, Katya Hristova, Dessislava Radomirova, Rossen Ginev, "YSPDB report about situation of young people in Bulgaria, youth NGOS and youth policy and relations with government", Youth Society for Peace and Development of the Balkans, Plovdiv, Bulgaria, *op cit*.

[140] World Bank 2007, p. 7.

[141] UNDP, World Bank, http://www.un.lv/down/pover/povertyinEstonia.pdf, p. 1.

[142] National Institute for Health Development, 'Public health situation in Estonia,' http://www.tai.ee/?id=4073.

[143] Jüri Kõre, University of Tartu, FAFO seminar June 2005, http://www.fafo.no/Oestforum/Estland/juri_kore.pdf, p. 20.

[144] Jüri Kõre, 2005, p. 33.

[145] World Bank Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Program, Progress Report 2005, op cit, p.5.

[146] UN Association of Georgia, 2006 MDG Progress Report, p. 33, http://www.una.ge/eng/artdetail.php?id=69&group=documents.

[147] World Bank Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Program, Progress Report 2005, op cit, p. 4.

[148] UNDP New Stage of Development 2005 – p.13

[149] National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic – Women and Men in the Kyrgyz Republic, Bishkek 2006, p.14

[150] UNDP HDR 2005, p. 17

[151] MDG Progress report, 2003, p.14

Youth Poverty

Poverty has been on the increase in **Macedonia** since the tensions in 2001, rising from 4% to 22,3% in 2002. The majority of the poor are concentrated in rural areas. Young people and children living in households with few working adults in rural zones are especially vulnerable[152]. The incomes of the youth population are generally low. According to the Baseline Study, 53,1% of young people between 15-24 have a maximum monthly income of 15,000 MKD (at the time of writing, this represented approximately 250€) for their household[153]. Particularly worrying is the situation of young ethnic Roma, who have the worst indices in education, number of household members and opportunities to employment (and notably those are only in the informal sectors)[154].

In **Poland**, older age groups receive a relatively high share of social transfers to alleviate and prevent poverty, while the lowest share goes to transfers directed at children and youth. This results in a significantly higher risk of poverty among children and youth (and a relatively low risk of poverty for elderly people).[155] In 2003, 40% of those suffering extreme poverty were under 19.[156] Government analysis estimated that in 2003, 23% of 0-15 year-olds were at risk of poverty, accounting for one third of people living in poverty. Poverty risk rates among single-parent households and households with at least 3 children were 22% and 35% respectively.

In **Romania**, sustainable economic growth only began around 2000.[157] Transition led to serious increases in poverty and inequality, although poverty has fallen back from the high of over 40% in 2000.[158] But growth has not benefited all parts of Romanian society, with certain groups, such as Roma people, disabled people and the children and parents in single-parent families, notably worse off than the population at large.[159] Children and young people are the most at risk of poverty – particularly in families with three or more children, and for young people when unemployed following education.

During the 1990s, **Serbia** experienced economic isolation, stagnation in production and to increased poverty among the majority of the population, as a result of the conflict. According to the World Bank's research on Youth in South Eastern Europe, young people face multiple challenges in accessing adequate education, employment and their rights in relation to housing and a decent living. Among the most vulnerable are Roma, refugees, IDPs and rural youth[160].

According to 2006 data, young people in **Kosovo** comprise 57% of those living in extreme poverty (aged until 25), and 29% of the total number of unemployed people, reaching 94.000 by mid 2006 in absolute numbers.[161] The deteriorating education system, and the general lack of opportunities, contribute to youth seeking employment in the informal and shadow economies, and at times result in young people becoming engaged in criminal activities and illicit migration.

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[152] Poverty Situation in 2003 – WB Poverty reduction strategy, poverty assessment for 2002 – 2003, p. 9
[153] Baseline study, p.53
[154] Ibid.p.54
[155] National Report on Strategies for Social Protection, 2006-2008, p. 8 of 119.
[156] Polish National Action Plan on Social Inclusion, 2004-2006, pp. 9-10.
[157] European Commission, DG Economic and Financial Affairs, *The economies of Romania and Bulgaria*, http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/een/005/article_4326_en.htm.
[158] The poverty rate was 7% in 1989, between 22% and 39% in 1994, and 44% in 2000. UNDP Poverty in Romania report 2001, http://www.caspis.ro/downloads/poverty_in_romania1.pdf, p. 7.
[159] World Bank Romania Country Partnership Strategy 2006-2009, p. 8.
[160] UNDP Human Development Report, The Strength of Diversity, 2005, p.33
[161] 2006 HDRK Fact sheet, p.6

Youth Poverty

Almost 50% of the overall population of **Turkey** is aged under 25 years of age. Serious poverty is widespread with significantly large provinces in the East and South demonstrating incomes of just 7% of the EU average. Young people aged 30 or under, are significantly overrepresented among rural to urban migrants living in appalling conditions in urban and peri-urban temporary settlements that have become permanent.

Since 1988, when absolute poverty in **Ukraine** was 1,6%, the rates have been increasing. In 1999, the latest year for which data are available, 81,7% of the population lived on US$ 4.30 or less per day. According to an ILO/UNDP survey, 46,8% of the Ukrainian population identified themselves as "poor," and an additional 36,9% identified themselves as being "not well off"; out of these 42 percent of the poor are children and youth (0 to 24) compared to only 30 percent in the overall population. Starting from similar levels of poverty across locations in 1999, poverty incidence in rural areas in 2003 is more than twice that of large cities.

27.5% of **Uzbekistan**'s population (6,8 million people) can be classified as poor in 2001, based on the 2,100 calories poverty line. As in many developing countries, being poor in Uzbekistan is connected with a low level of living standards, directly related to the quality of access to health care, education services, basic public utilities, such as clean water and adequate sanitation. Most of the poor households are concentrated in rural and remote areas. About 70% of the whole population lives in rural areas and 30.5% of the poor are there, as compared to 22,5% in urban areas. A common characteristic of poor families is that the head of household is unemployed and there are many children (about 50% are in this situation).

Some more specific characteristics of poverty in these countries are clearly recognisable. In several of these countries, social welfare institutions and public welfare systems are very fragile. In others they have completely broken down. For example, in Georgia primary health care has been completely privatised without the provision of adequate support for certain groups, including the unemployed many of whom are young people. Unemployment benefit may exist in Georgia, but anecdotal evidence indicates that it is so small it is hardly worth taking the time to apply for it.[162] According to a World Bank survey of Kyrgyzstan, young people are not covered by state health provision. But, there are notable exceptions. Estonia's social welfare system has been reformed and provides some support to vulnerable young people. In Poland, public expenditure on welfare payments is extensive and young families in particular benefit.[163] In these circumstances, young people have little choice but to invent coping strategies for themselves or to rely on their families for assistance when they are in financial or social difficulty. A notable example is Serbia, where young people are highly dependent on family financial support well into their twenties.[164] Few young people can afford to leave the family home during their studies or even when they first to begin to work. Those without family support or lacking skills and competencies demanded by the labour market, clearly fall by the wayside.

In addition, the rural-urban divide is significant for tracking poverty among young people and internal migration from rural to urban and peri-urban areas is exacerbating youth poverty. In regions where agriculture is a predominant income generating activity, young people are faced with the fact that farming is not a viable means for maintaining a family and often go to the city in search of better opportunities. More often than not, those cities are equipped neither to provide them with employment nor with decent living conditions. Istanbul in Turkey represents

[162] Fore more information refer to the country report on Georgia, 2007.
[163] For more information refer to the country report on Poland, 2007.
[164] For more information refer to the country report on Serbia, 2007.

something of an exception, because the poverty experienced migrants from rural areas is not necessarily long term, as is the case of migrants to peri-urban areas in the rest of Turkey. The poor perspectives offered by farming notwithstanding, in Romania and Armenia, rural small holding and subsistence agriculture are defined as employment. A parallel can be found in Serbia, where 75% of agricultural labour is for subsistence. This excludes persons engaged in that activity from receiving unemployment benefit, no matter how small.

Some young people are more vulnerable than others, even among poor young people. Young women, young people from minority backgrounds (especially, Roma, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender [LGBT] and disabled young people) and young men outside of work and education systems are the most vulnerable, hardest hit and least able to pull themselves out of poverty once they have fallen into it. A notable and worrying development is that, in the face of fewer opportunities, young women are retreating into the family and being withdrawn from economic and public life. Notable also, is the situation of rural youth, especially young women, who more often than not are excluded and isolated from mainstream opportunities in education, employment, mobility and those resulting from technological advances (for example, the availability and affordability of information and communication technologies). Examples of such marginalisation can be found in almost all the countries reviewed, although certainly to varying degrees.

Armenia presents an interesting and notable example in relation of two specifically vulnerable groups of youth. As a result of the war, many young people have become disabled or are refugees. Both sets of young people are significantly vulnerable. In the first place, those young men injured into the war have had difficulty to reintegrate mainstream society and the government has not been able to provide them with significant opportunities to gain relevant skills or access to the labour market. Similarly, refugee young people have significant difficulties to integrate mainstream society, living in temporary accommodation and dependent on public assistance for survival. Both of these groups of young people have significant psycho-social problems, as a result of the trauma of war and of displacement, that impede their integration, similarly to all the countries covered by this study that have experienced violent conflict.

Roma young people and LGBT youth suffer not only from poverty but from extensive discrimination, often in the form of physical violence, making them even more likely to remain in poverty and even more socially vulnerable. Being a girl is also an important factor, usually a marker for more severe and longer lasting poverty. Nevertheless, young men outside of school and work are at particular risk of becoming involved in crime and high-risk behaviours including drug dealing, substance use and violence.

Of further concern is that many of the countries considered do not have modern, dedicated, juvenile justice systems that can protect young people from the notorious violence and abuse among offenders. Estonia will close its only dedicated youth prison as from 2008. The prison was criticised heavily in one report, but some youth prison workers are not convinced that the current plan to move young offenders to youth units within adult prisons will be effective.[165] It is noteworthy, that this is a particular problem in South Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, where young men are less likely to finish secondary school, more likely to be idle and unemployed, as well as more likely to become heroin addicts, commit suicide or to become victims of homicide. Social exclusion and disaffection of boys is directly linked to violence, which in ethnically divided

[165] For more information refer to the country report on Estonia, 2007.

societies can escalate and re-ignite conflict. In all of these cases, poverty, social, cultural and political exclusion interact to reinforce each other.

While most of the countries in question have policies that aim at alleviating poverty in general and most have poverty reduction strategies, implementation is a significant problem. Monitoring the progress and effectiveness of programmes that aim at addressing the root causes of poverty is also problematic. Legislation and policy formulation is, of course, a positive first step, but without concrete action to uphold such laws and resources to translate them into real practice, there will be no sustainable improvement in living conditions among the poor. In countries which have recently joined the European Union, a tendency to downplay the seriousness of the poverty issue, especially among those most vulnerable groups and young people, was observed. It is of notable concern that government officials in several countries which have recently joined the European Union consider their accession as proof of advanced development, the actual and often worrying instance of chronic poverty in parts of their countries, especially rural areas, notwithstanding. Anecdotal evidence from the field visits in 2007 suggest that such attitudes are fairly widespread.

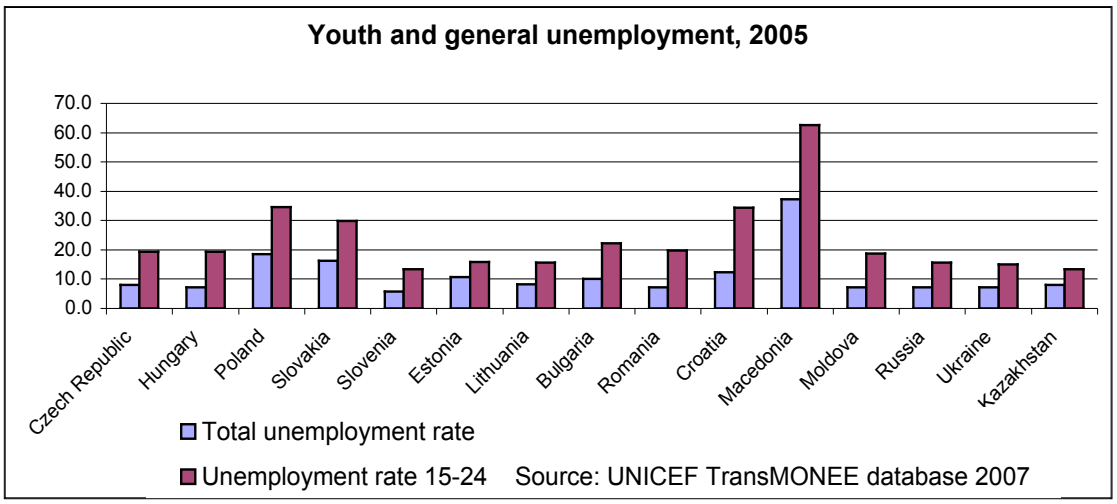
Despite the existence of dedicated poverty policies in all these countries, the absence of the focus and pressure provided by a strong UN presence contributes to a shift away from poverty reduction to narrower economic development goals, justified by arguments about the rising tide lifting all boats. The growing gap between rich and poor in all new member states of the European Union covered by this study is clearly not being adequately addressed by national governments, to the significant detriment of many young people's life chances. On the one hand, governments cite a lack of financial resources and human capacity to adequately cover the significant cost of alleviating widespread poverty and providing poor people with adequate services. Objectively, many of the countries have histories of endemic society-wide poverty, structural problems in the economy and poor economic growth and corruption. But, another, deeper, problem is that of political will and priorities. It is notable that none of the countries covered by this study are found to have specific cross-sectoral poverty prevention and alleviation programmes that address the structural nature of poverty among young people specifically, even if in some specific areas, like employment or education, there exist targeted programmes.

If the above discussion demonstrates one thing, it is that a significant proportion of young people are extremely vulnerable as a result of the socio-economic conditions they are forced to endure. That vulnerability is a complex phenomenon, resulting from a combination of long-term poverty, often inherited from poor parents, and passed on to poorer children. And, while most of the governments concerned have clearly accepted the necessity to treat the most negative consequences of chronic poverty in the whole population, not all have grasped the more profound problem of vulnerability that causes many young people to hover around the poverty line. The difference in approach may seem like a nuance. But, in a policy making context it can make the difference between the short term alleviation of the symptoms of poverty and the longer-term sustainability of a development strategy that takes into account the human rights of each young person, irrespective of the level of development of the country they live in.

b/ Unemployment

A considerable factor underlying the poverty and enduring vulnerability experienced by young people described above is the disproportionate manner in which young people are affected by

unemployment. Youth unemployment figures provide an overview of the gravity of the situation: young people are at least two times more likely to be unemployed than their elders.[166]



The notable exception to this general situation among the countries considered in this study is Romania, where urban youth unemployment has been largely eliminated by increases in the demand for labour driven by economic growth. Having said this, it is also worth noting, that for Romania (and Poland), recent decreases in youth unemployment can also be attributed to international labour migration within the European Union. According to the 2007 Eurobarometer on Youth, which surveys young people in the member states of young people on main areas of concern for the European Union, 38% of young adults consider the most important reason that they might be unable to find a job to be the lack of opportunities in their country. Interestingly, there is a difference between the responses from young people in the new member states (i.e. those which joined since 2004). Young people from new member states were more likely to indicate something related to themselves personally (such as, their lack of experience) as the most important reason they might not be able to find a job.[167] When confronted with unemployment, 33% of young people indicated they would accept a job if it met certain conditions (including job security and a good salary) and 10% indicated they would accept any job – without conditions.[168]

Youth Unemployment

While for the overall population of **Albania**, in 2001 employment is said to have reached 77% of the active population, for the age group 15 to 24 only 53% was considered to be actively employed. 4 out of 10 employed young people have "temporary" or "occasional" jobs.

[166] UNICEF TransMonee Database 2007.

[167] European Commission, "Young Europeans: Survey among young people aged between 15 – 30 in the European Union – Summary", Eurobaromter, February 2007, pp. 19 – 20.

[168] Op cit, p. 22.

Youth Unemployment

Official statistics in **Armenia** state that only 4% of young people are registered as unemployed (accounting for approximately 34,000 persons or 28% of the total number of registered unemployed). In a specially commissioned survey, however, it was found that 22% of those polled said they were without work. Considering the lack of incentive to register as unemployed (it does not provide any significant advantage) and the obvious existence of a grey economy, it is estimated that the actual level of youth unemployment is closer to 30%.[169]

In **Bosnia & Herzegovina**, it is estimated that between 45% and 60% of young people are unemployed, with the unemployment rate being the highest for the 21 to 25 age group. According to statistics for 2002, "unemployment is 2.6 times higher for 19 to 24 year olds than for 25 to 49 year olds and 3.6 times higher than for 50 to 60 year olds".[170]

According to the official data, youth unemployment in **Bulgaria** (aged up to 29) decreased in 2003, namely from 172,747 unemployed young people in 2002 to 134,285 in 2003. Unemployed young people represent 26.8% of all unemployed citizens[171]. Unemployment rates for men have been slightly higher than for women, and unemployment among younger people is about double the average rate.

Unemployment is relatively low in **Estonia**, at 5% in the second quarter of 2007 – less than half the rate in 2002.[172] The unemployment rate among youth tends to be about double that of the general population, and in 2006 was 12% (10% for males and 14.7% for females; 5.9% for the whole population).[173] UNECE statistics indicate that unemployment among 15-19 year-olds who are in the labour market is much higher (although the absolute number is small due to a low labour force participation rate).[174] It is reported that ethnic non-Estonians are slightly more likely to be long-term unemployed than ethnic Estonians.[175]

Recently, **Georgia** has experienced recovery with sustain GDP growth again being recorded. However, this has not yet led to a decrease in unemployment, which was equal in 2005 to the 1997 level. The youth unemployment rate was over 28% in 2005 (30.7% for females, 26.8% for males), up from 20% in 2000; this compares to 12-15% for the population as a whole (including youth).[176]

[169] Armenian National Youth Report, 2005, pp. 30 – 31.

[170] UNDP Youth Report p.17.

[171] Elitza Neshevska, Deputy Minister of Youth and Sports (responsible for youth affairs at the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Bulgaria), "Youth Policy in Bulgaria" in Forum 21, European Journal of Youth Policy, www.coe.int/youth/forum21, *op cit*.

[172] Statistics Estonia, http://www.stat.ee/index.aw/section=188546.

[173] Statistics Estonia, http://www.stat.ee/.

[174] UNECE on-line statistics, via http://w3.unece.org/pxweb/Dialog/.

[175] For more information refer to the country report on Estonia, 2007.

[176] UNECE on-line statistics, via http://w3.unece.org/pxweb/Dialog/statfile1_new.asp.

Youth Unemployment

In **Kyrgyzstan** the official unemployment rate has increased from 0,2% in 1993 to 9,3% among women and 8,0% among men in 2004[177]. However, UNESCO states that actual unemployment has increased considerably.[178] According to different sources, the official share of unemployed young people aged between 16 and 29 decreased in the past few years. However it still remains fairly high – between 22,3%[179] and 36,6%[180]. According to the official data, 16-19 year old men prevail among the officially registered unemployed compared to those in the 20-29 age group, the majority of whom are young women[181]. In addition, the average duration of youth unemployment is tending to become longer – from 9,5 months in 2000 to 10 months in 2002[182] and one year and more in 2005[183]. Young people and children are the most vulnerable when entering the labour market. Child labour is common practice at tobacco and cotton farms during harvest in the south and, is some regions, in mining.

In **Macedonia**, the overall unemployment rate (37,6%) and youth unemployment (up to 62,3%, 2005 data) in particular, are especially high[184]. According to the recent research two thirds of young people (15-24) are registered as unemployed. The most vulnerable are young people, and among them young women, with no work experience. About 60% of young people were looking for work or without a job for at least four years. According to the Baseline study, young people believe it is almost impossible to find a job and that finding one is absolutely dependent on the help of connections[185]. Nevertheless, a significant share of the employment, within it youth employment, is hidden in the grey economy (33-37% of GDP) and therefore employment / unemployment figures are difficult to interpret.[186]

In **Poland** youth unemployment is high, 36.9% in 2005 (38.3% for women, 35.7% for men, generally above 35% since 2000 for both sexes). This is over a quarter of all those seeking work in Poland, and has more than doubled since 1998.[187] The rate has tended to be 2-4% higher for young women than for young men.[188] The unemployment rate for those aged 20-24 is more than double that for 25-49-year-olds (37% to 15.8%; the 15-19-year-old rate is 35.7%).

[177] National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic – Women and Men in the Kyrgyz Republic, Bishkek 2006,p.81
[178] UNESCO Kyrgyzstan country report "Education System, Literacy and Life Long Learning", p.2
[179] UNDP HDR 2005, p.79
[180] UNESCO Kyrgyzstan country report "Education System, Literacy and Life Long Learning", p.2
[181] National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic – Women and Men in the Kyrgyz Republic, Bishkek 2006,p.96
[182] UNESCO Kyrgyzstan country report "Education System, Literacy and Life Long Learning", p.2
[183] National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic – Women and Men in the Kyrgyz Republic, Bishkek 2006,p.96
[184] UNECE Macedonia http://www.unece.org/stats/profiles2007/tfyr_macedonia.pdf
[185] Baseline Study on Youth Trends, p.36
[186] Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, ETF Country Plan 2007, p.2
[187] European Industrial Relations Observatory, March 2007, http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/2005/12/tfeature/pl0512102t.html.
[188] UNECE on-line statistics, via http://w3.unece.org/pxweb/Dialog/statfile1_new.asp. Without, available for and seeking work, aged 15-24.

Youth Unemployment

In **Romania**, since the mid-1990s, the greatest fall in employment among young people: 20-24 year-olds have seen their activity rate fall from 72.5% in 1990 to 47.3% in 2006; the drop is similar for men and women, although women have a lower (and falling) rate of labour market participation.[189] The youth unemployment situation is not clear: official statistics show that unemployment among Romanian youth is much higher than in other age groups, as is a common elsewhere – over 19% for young people, compared to 6.5% nationally, for the second quarter of 2007.[190] Opinion polls show that in the period 2002-4, finding a job was a difficult task for two thirds of young people.

The extent of joblessness among young people in **Serbia** is hard to assess, due to the lack of reliable data. According to data from 2002 provided by UNICEF, overall unemployment varied between 17-32%, while unemployment among economically active youth reached 64%[191]. The Ministry of Youth and Sports declared that the rate of unemployment among young people 15-29 in Serbia is around 34,5%, which means that about 300,000 young people are jobless[192], yet unofficial data estimate joblessness among youth at between 39-48%[193]. All calculations indicate that unemployment rates are higher for young women than for young men (official figures show 44,4% to 35,7%)[194].

In spite of recent macro-economic stabilisation in **Kosovo**, the overall unemployment rate is about 39,7% (60,7% among women), the highest in the Balkans.[195] Over 63% of young people between 15 ad 24 are unemployed (74%, of young women, and 56% of young men). Furthermore, based on official data[196], 85% of 15 to 19 year olds and recent graduates and school dropouts are unemployed.[197] Considering that one third of Kosovars are under the age of 14, the probability of an escalation in youth unemployment is relatively high.[198]

In **Turkey** the unemployment rate is 10,3% on average. But, for young people under 25 it runs at 19,6% and young people make up approximately 43% of all registered unemployed in the country.

The total unemployment rate in **Ukraine** in 2001 was 11.1%, keeping in mind that national rates are based on estimates of people available for and seeking employment and that countries have different definitions of labour force and unemployment. The percentage of young Ukrainians, 15–24 years of age, without work but available for (and seeking) employment was 24% in 2000 – the latest year for which data were available (ILO, 2005)[199].

[189] UNECE on-line statistics.
[190] National Institute for Statistics, Employment Statistics Second Quarter 2007, p. 2.
[191] UNIFEM, Report on Youth and Youth Policy in Serbia, p.6
[192] Ministry of Youth and Sports, Youth in Serbia, PTT, 2007, p.2
[193] Prof. Smiljka Tomanovi_, *Young people in Serbia: postponed adulthood*, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, PTT, p.3
[194] Labour Force Survey, 2006
[195] UNDP Kosovo: KHDR 2006 – A New Generation for a New Kosovo, 2006, p.61
[196] http://www.kosovo.undp.org
[197] http://www.kosovo.undp.org/?cid=2,19,62
[198] Ibid.
[199] http://www.euro.who.int/eprise/main/who/progs/chhukr/demographic/20050131_1

Youth Unemployment

In **Uzbekistan** youth unemployment seems to be gradually increasing at the same rate as overall unemployment[200]. The level of overall unemployment is high, especially in rural areas. However, no reliable statistical data is available. Officially, unemployment is 0,6% with 20% underemployment (2004 estimate)[201]. Many young people have difficulty finding work due to the limited opportunities as well as their lack of practical (entrepreneurial) skills.

Research reveals that there are several specific reasons why youth unemployment is endemic in most of the countries covered in this study. In the first place, the legacy of the breakdown of the state socialist economies of Central and South Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union is obvious. Widespread privatisation of state industries has led to significant layoffs, even as GDP has risen, and many state industries simply disappeared without being replaced by new industries. Market economies have in many ways benefited young people, who in principle are the best educated and most mobile generation ever. But, in the neo-liberal economic climate of competition, people are somewhat dispensable and the legal framework protecting young people from the vagaries of globalisation and downsizing has been weakened. The case of Estonia, however, is interesting. Despite far reaching neo-liberal reforms, through which Estonia has low taxes, low minimum wages and low unemployment benefits, employment protection remains strong.

Secondly, the market economy does not guarantee anyone that they will be able to find a job, only that they will have the opportunity to compete for one. Youth unemployment is structural in nature and cannot exclusively be tackled by improving employability. Young people need jobs to be created for them if they are to become employed. Poor economic growth and a lack of foreign investment in some of the countries have meant the labour market is not able to produce an adequate number of new jobs into which young people could be absorbed. At the same time, some essential professions are no longer attractive to young people as they offer few financial incentives (medicine, teaching, social work, etc) – so where there is a shortage of labour there is also a shortage of interest.

Thirdly, education tends not to be well adapted to the needs of the modern labour market. Essential skills including computing, communications and languages, as well as "soft" skills, may not being taught, or the qualifications of young people studying in these countries may not be recognised or valued at the same level as Western educational qualifications. In addition, and probably even more worrying, vocational training has almost completely broken down and remains so under-funded that it cannot offer appropriate or necessary training in demanded technical skills.

A problem affecting young people in almost all of the countries surveyed is that employers' demands are often unreasonable. Many young people cannot get a job because they have no work experience. But, they cannot get any work experience because they cannot get a job. At the same time, the value of young people's involvement in non-formal learning for their employability is not sufficiently recognised, representing a missed opportunity. Recognition of the skills that can be gained through non-formal learning, however, is on the rise in some

[200] http://www.unece.org/stats/trends2005/profiles/Uzbekistan.pdf

[201] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_Uzbekistan

countries, like Estonia, Romania, Serbia. Young people also have difficulty to develop their entrepreneurial skills, having in the first place little capital to establish a business and little leeway for experimentation, as any loan they may take in order to establish a business has to be paid back with interest. It is particularly difficult for young women to be taken seriously in the business world in societies where traditional gender roles remain entrenched in the local culture. Finally, conflicts in the Balkans and the Caucasus, while having differential effects, have caused significant disruption of the economy and its ability to provide employment for its citizens and the thousands of refugees the destruction often brings with it. The functionality of the economy is often further disrupted by the fact that highly qualified essential workers emigrate to escape war.

Although economic growth is generally accepted as being the most important precondition for increased youth employment, specific measures focusing on the structural nature of youth unemployment and aimed at the creation of jobs rather than at decreasing or alleviating unemployment are currently insufficient in most of the countries covered by the study, despite the rhetoric of governments which claim to take youth unemployment seriously. Notable examples are the Albanian National Strategy for Social and Economic Development which made significant commitments, although the government had neither capacity to implement nor has it monitored progress. Another example of a promising strategy insufficiently followed through is a PHARE study conducted in Bulgaria in cooperation with the European Commission entitled "Clearing the Path to Employment for Youths".[202] The study exhaustively covers the reasons for youth unemployment and even attitudes and willingness of employers to employ young people, but it is not clear if the project has gone beyond analysis. As part of its wider efforts to implement its Poverty Reduction Strategy, Serbia has undertaken the development of a National Youth Employment Strategy, under the auspices of the Ministry of Economics and Finance, but it seems that the initiative has not yet progressed beyond the planning stage. The Kosovo Youth Employment Action Plan 2007 – 2010, takes a holistic approach to alleviating youth unemployment and some funds have already been raised for its implementation, even if by the time of writing (end 2007) it was not possible to conclude that activities had already been undertaken. Both of these plans might turn out to be a promising counter examples. Unfortunately, in many of the countries, excellent strategies and pilot initiatives can be observed, but they lack sufficient financial resources to have significant and long-term impact.

It is noteworthy that young women, in general and, ethnic or other minorities (Roma, in particular) and young people living in rural settings are most marginalised from employment. For example, in rural areas of Turkey, adolescent girls are often used as unpaid workers in the home, thereby, not receiving any income or entering the formal labour market and not having the opportunity to become integrated into the social security system. Twice as many young city dwelling women in Turkey are unemployed as their male equivalents. Twice as many young women in Armenia are unemployed than their male equivalents. The Azeri community in Georgia demonstrates similar tendencies. In Armenia, laudable efforts to integrate young disabled people and refugees into society have not been able to mitigate the fact that they are still almost twice as likely to be unemployed as their able bodied or non-refugee equivalents. Women with only vocational or low level educational qualifications demonstrate the highest incidence of unemployment in Ukraine. On average, a woman's average wage is 69.3% of that of a man (data for 2002). In Bulgaria, Macedonia and Romania, Roma young people have great difficulty to find stable and properly paid work. This is often due to their inadequate and segregated schooling. In Bosnia & Herzegovina and Georgia, the problem of youth unemployment is exacerbated by the

[202] For more information about this project, visit http://www.mlsp.government.bg/en/projects/bg0202-01/.

fact that the labour market cannot absorb the available labour force. Many LGBT young people and young people who are HIV positive fear negative repercussions for their employment if their sexual orientation or HIV status is found out. In Romania, people have been required (not by law but in recruitment practice) to take HIV tests and, if found to be HIV positive, refused employment.

Flourishing shadow economies offer opportunities for young people to earn money, and many participate freely, making rational choices. For example, the majority of child care in Bucharest in Romania is provided in the informal economy. Particularly high levels of participation of young people in the grey economies of Macedonia and Serbia have been observed. But, participation in the informal economy can also subject young people to risks. Many young people are forced to take drastic decisions in order to find work, entering the sex industry or organised crime or being duped into doing so. Migration for economic reasons is a recurrent theme for young people from most of these countries. An indication of the scale of this phenomenon is that half a million educated young people migrated out of Serbia during the 1990s, even if not all this migration was for economic purposes, and one must remember that there was a war. There is a very high desire among young people in Macedonia to migrate, although this has been to date frustrated by the difficulties of the European Union visa regime. On the other hand, labour migration of young people from Poland and Romania Britain and Ireland and some other countries of the European Union has reached huge proportions, to the extent that these countries now face labour shortages and are considering how to import labour from further east (c.f. Ukrainians working in Poland). Faced with the choice between economic exclusion and unemployment at home and the possibility of work in another country many young people prefer to take their chances. In so doing, they risk being trafficked or being deported if they are caught by the authorities illegally entering a country. Internal migration from rural to urban areas in search of work is also hazardous and often ends in young people swapping one kind of poverty for another.

While certain sectors of the economy offer higher opportunity for young people to find employment (for example, trade, hotel services, health and education), young people are often unaware of such opportunities or do not have the knowledge or skills to take advantage of them, again increasing the risk that they end up trafficked. In rural areas, young people are over-represented among low skilled and low paid workers and do not necessarily have the relevant skills to access the jobs available in the above mentioned sectors. The business community also seems to have something of an ambivalent attitude towards youth employment, complaining that they are loath to hire young people because they do not demonstrate the necessary skills for functioning adequately in the modern business environment. Members of the business community in these countries do not necessarily demonstrate an awareness of the responsibility and special role they could have in dealing with youth unemployment. A notable counter example is Romania, where the market economy is flourishing, particularly in urban areas, and the demand for young labour is higher than the supply.

In terms of policy, all of the countries concerned have some active measures to alleviate the hardship of unemployment and some measures aimed at increasing employment among young people. It is noteworthy, however, that many of the social security measures are linked to prior participation in the formal labour market. For example, it is estimated that in Turkey up to one in six citizens is not covered by work related social security measures. This bias towards formal wage earners discriminates mostly against women and the never-employed, a substantial proportion of whom are young people. In Armenia, unemployment insurance is only available to

those who have already been employed for one year or more and in addition the procedures are so complicated that few people consider claiming the US$4 available per month.

Notable exceptions notwithstanding, there seems to be a certain lack of awareness on the part of government or an unwillingness to admit that youth unemployment is specific and structural in nature, requires another kind of policy measure, involving not just long-term economic growth, but especially the creation of new jobs, special efforts to adapt education and training to the needs of the labour market and efforts to make the labour market more flexible. In addition, long-standing and discriminatory attitudes on the part of the business community and public officials that undermine the confidence and self-esteem of young people need to be overcome. In this relation, the European Union is concerned with this issue and has recently introduced a promising initiative called Youth Pass[203], whereby any young person which has been involved in a non-formal educational activity as part of the Youth in Action programme may request certification of their work. While this initiative is timely, and it will be useful for young people seeking a job to receive recognition that they gained in the context of non-formal educational activities are relevant for their employability, the extent to which employers actively supporting this initiative and willing to accept the validity of Youth Pass certificates in lieu of employment experience, remains unclear.

Nevertheless, youth unemployment has recently gained both national and international attention. The instances of extreme violence witnessed in some European cities involving large numbers of unemployed, marginalised and disenfranchised young men have got world leaders to thinking that unemployment, idleness and a lack of future perspectives and violence must somehow be linked.[204] Fear of such violence has only been exacerbated by the so called "youth bulge" or "youth crisis" argument, which postulates a causal link between violence and a certain critical mass of young people in the population as a whole.[205] Of the countries surveyed in this study five are considered to have a "youth bulge" and all are dealing differentially with youth crisis. Responses range from outright repression to constructive confrontation of specific problems such as youth criminality.

International initiatives such as the United Nations and ILO supported "Youth Employment Network" (YEN), have certainly helped to put the issue of youth unemployment and employment back on the discussion table. In addition, for those countries participating in its first round of activities, YEN has been instrumental in providing capacity and expertise to countries usually lacking adequate data about the extent and penetration of the problem. This has helped to understand the situations on the ground better and to provide an evidence base on which to discuss viable policy strategies. Nevertheless, the pilot phase of YEN only covers some countries the extent to which it is receiving financial and moral support adequate to make it more than an interesting pilot project is not clear until now.

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[203] For more information on Youth Pass, see http://www.salto-youth.net/youthpass/.

[204] See Paris in November 2005. For several articles with interesting perspective on why these riots took place, please refer to the following blog: www.alanalentin.net.

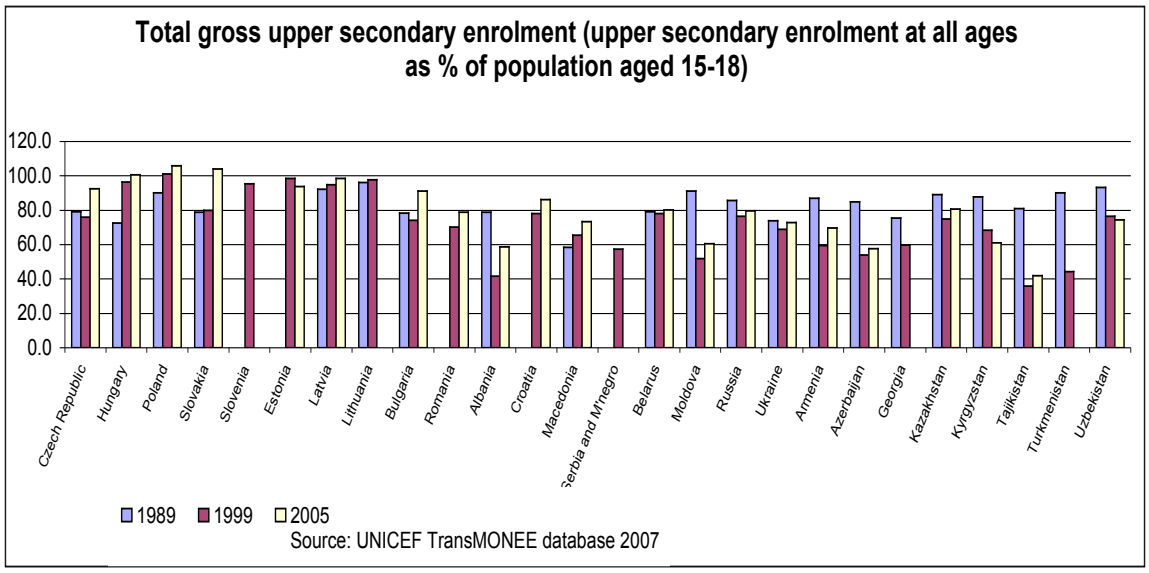
[205] See Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order", Robert D. Kaplan, "The Coming Anarchy", and Fareed Zakaria, "The Politics of Rage - Why do they hate us?" for in depth treatment of the youth bulge and youth crisis thesis.

c/ Education

Europe was one of the first regions in the world to have achieved almost universal primary school education, despite ongoing inequality in certain countries between boys and girls and the ongoing discrimination of children from minorities (notably Roma and disabled children). This was a field where few expected the results achieved to be rolled back.

It is noteworthy then, one might even say shocking, that the rate of basic school completion, almost universal in 1989, had fallen by 10 to 20 percentage points in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States by 1997. Other parts of Eastern Europe also show that significantly fewer children are completing basic education, with rates in Albania and Bulgaria in 1997 all below 80% of the overall school going population.

In the area of upper secondary enrolment, the countries of Central Europe have seen modest rises, overall. All countries have seen major falls (Figure 2). Central Asia has demonstrated constant and dramatic decline as demonstrated by the figures for Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. Uzbekistan also follows this trend. Kyrgyzstan also has a low level of upper secondary school enrolment.[206]



Kosovo and Kyrgyzstan have notably low tertiary educational participation[207]. While the availability of public education and its affordability in most of the countries surveyed remains high, young people complain that education is of low quality, highly bureaucratised, inefficient or even corrupt, and especially, that is not relevant. For example, in Bosnia & Herzegovina, both students and employers complain that education is not adapted to labour market realities and does not provide skills for the modern economy. This is also considered a significant problem in Turkey and although the government does have a five year plan to address it, the World Bank warned that relevant resources have not been allocated for the plan to be realised. This is also considered a problem in Romania. Anecdotal evidence from the field visit to Romania suggests that the interests of students and employers are secondary to the preferences of teaching staff in

[206] For more information refer to the country report on Kyrgyzstan, 2007.

[207] For more information refer to the reports on Kosovo and Kyrgyzstan, both 2007.

Romanian universities. In Armenia, where there are eighty universities and a very high instance of university graduation, the education is not related to labour market demands and vocational educational provision is absent altogether. In Ukraine, neither higher nor vocational education is considered as adequately preparing young people, especially young women, for labour market participation, despite that can be popular among young people, as was found to be the case for Kosovo.[208] In the Balkans and Romania young people complain of significant corruption in education, especially in relation to gaining access to university. Before the "Rose Revolution", this was also a significant problem in Georgia, but in recent years it has been successfully tackled.[209]

The economic transition in some countries and traditions of elite education in others have led to situations of inequality being perpetuated by current tertiary education conditions. In Bulgaria, Georgia and Turkey, for example, a "good quality" education, which euphemistically refers to a "Western" or more common again an "American", education, is only available to those who can pay significant fees (sometimes in the thousands of dollars per year) and, therefore, to very few young people whose families can afford to foot their education bill. The comodification of education is a problem across all the countries studied. In Armenia, approximately two thirds of registered universities are private institutions, which demand significant fees and yet offer an education which is not considered with the same respect as state tertiary education, which is commonly agreed to be of higher quality. In a society where such value is put on getting an education, students will take whatever they are offered, regardless of quality or whether it prepares them for the labour market. It is paradoxical that this comodification of education is taking place in countries which are also participating in the European Union Bologna Process of harmonisation of educational standards. In Poland and Estonia, socio-economic obstacles prevent equitable access to higher education, especially for those from rural areas. Only those who can afford to go to expensive fee paying secondary schools are well enough prepared to access places at prestigious state universities.

Another significant problem related to education across all the countries, is that young people have absolutely no guarantee of employment even if they have a high quality education and performed well in high school or at university. Not surprisingly, many young people do not see the point of studying to end up unemployed, underemployed or poorly paid. Other young people study with the aim of leaving the country and converting their "2nd class degree" into a better "Western" MA through higher studies in the West. This is the cause of significant brain drain, but is a legal, although disguised, form of economic migration, as few graduates come back.

In several of the countries considered there is widespread exclusion of young women from educational opportunity, progress and success. There are significant gender differences in access to education and educational participation. Whether in the area of basic enrolment, secondary completion or tertiary enrolment and completion Albania, Turkey and Uzbekistan demonstrate significantly lower figures for female educational participation than for male and in some cases, the disparities are increasing not declining. This is not the case, however, in Estonia or Poland, where young women are the majority of university students, even though they become employed in high level professorial positions despite excelling at their studies.

[208] For more information refer to the report Kosovo, 2007.

[209] For more information refer to the country report on Georgia, 2007.

Of further concern is discrimination and segregation of minorities, particularly Roma and the disabled, to infamously poor quality and poorly resourced special schools where abuse and neglect are common and where school failure is endemic. In the case of Roma children and adolescents this is particularly evident in Bulgaria (although efforts to address the problem seriously have been undertaken through international initiatives by the Open Society Institute, the Council of Europe and with support from the EU during the accession process). In Serbia, only 19% of Roma young people complete elementary education compared to 80% of the majority population[210] The Romanian authorities have finally acknowledged the obvious lack of Roma participation in tertiary education and a programme of affirmative action has now been put in place. However, the designated quota is not always filled, partly because young Roma do not wish to be perceived as benefiting of special measures. In addition, one must identify oneself as Roma in order to participate and many young Roma people are not willing to do so.

In the case of disabled young people, and while equal rights are in theory guaranteed, practice reveals discrimination, Turkey being one notable example. In Kosovo young disabled women are particularly excluded from education.[211] The exception to this trend is Armenia, which has succeeded in integrating the disabled of all age groups into mainstream education due to the fact that such a large proportion of people were seriously injured and rendered disabled during the war from 1988 to 1994 and in the earthquake of 1999. Nonetheless, this represents a sad manner for the taboo surrounding being disabled to be overcome. An obstacle of significance that remains, however, is the poor adaptation of buildings and public spaces to the needs of people with physical disabilities. It is noteworthy, that the sources consulted for the other countries rarely mention disabled people, if at all.

d/ Some issues that need particular attention in relation to the socio-economic condition of young people and their development

This brief survey of the socio-economic condition of young people raises four specific issues that any serious, progressive and needs based youth policy must take into account.

Human Trafficking

In the cases of Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Poland, Serbia and Ukraine (at least) human trafficking, especially of girls and young women for use as slaves in the sex industry, most often in Western Europe and tourist zones in Southern Europe and the Gulf Region, is a problem and in some cases has grown worryingly. The socio-economic condition of young women, often marginalised from mainstream education and employment opportunities, and not being sufficiently informed about the risk of being trafficked, leads many to be unwittingly tricked into leaving their home countries to supposedly become waitresses, maids or other service personnel in hotels. An illustrative example is Estonia, where young Russian speaking women have a higher desire to migrate than ethnic-Estonian young women, but are less well informed about the risks of being trafficked. Others voluntarily enter the informal economy in order to earn money and are involuntarily subjected to criminal activity, becoming embroiled in the seedy underworld, and eventually ending up in prostitution locally.

[210] For more information refer to the country report on Serbia, 2007.

[211] For more information refer to the report on Kosovo, 2007.

Juvenile Crime

In the cases of Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria and Ukraine there is very high instance of youth crime, foreseen to grow. However, the extent of actual juvenile crime in comparison to the social perception, is hard to assess. For example, in Georgia, idleness among young men can be easily seen on the streets of Tbilisi, with large groups of youths hanging around on the edge of the main highways drinking beer to be seen daily. Their actual involvement in criminality, however, is less well documented. However, it is acknowledged that idleness and a lack of opportunity for employment are major contributory factors to youth involvement in crime. Furthermore, the extent of organised crime in some societies and its importance for the local economy, a notable example of which is Kosovo, makes it likely for young people to get involved in illicit activities. Young people are both perpetrators and victims of crime. It is also noteworthy that young men, most often those with a history of school failure and unemployment, are disproportionately represented among perpetrators of juvenile crime. Armenia is an exception to this trend. Crime altogether is very low, and young people are not significantly disproportionately represented among either perpetrators or victims of crime. In the countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe young Roma men are likely to be overly represented among juvenile offenders and the incarcerated. The problem of Roma juvenile criminality, however, is made highly complex by the fact that they also suffer from significant scapegoating, discrimination and even abuses of their human rights at the hands of the justice system.

Migration

The international migration of young people, as in the cases of Albania, Armenia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Estonia, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Poland, has become a kind of "exit strategy" for getting away from what a lot of young people consider to be their "hopeless situation" or for accessing higher wages in Western Europe. However, this kind of economic migration, while often chosen, cannot be considered truly "voluntary". The vulnerability of migrants to trafficking, violence and fatal risks is well known, especially in the case of so-called "illegal" migration. A large proportion of such migrants are young people who would likely have stayed at home, got a job and founded a family, if they had the choice to do so. The root causes of youth migration in the countries of origin, rather than only the negative consequences in the countries of destination, need to be understood and taken into account. In addition, dealing with economic migration at source would strengthen local economies, by lessening brain drain, and break the vicious circle of only the least qualified and able remaining in the country of origin. In addition, many of these countries demonstrate important levels of rural to urban migration amongst young people seeking education and employment, further entrenching developmental disparities between regions. The notable examples are Turkey and Kyrgyzstan.

Vulnerable Groups

As mentioned above, it is evident that some groups of young people fare worse than others and, therefore, special attention and maybe even special measures to ensure that they enjoy human rights to the full are necessary. While from country to country such vulnerable groups may differ, and specific intra-national situations notwithstanding, it is possible to conclude that Roma young people, disabled young people, LGBT youth and refugee young people are particularly hard hit by the socio-economic conditions prevailing in these countries and are least able to compensate for the discrimination they face as a result of intolerance on the part of the general population and / or public authorities. It is also possible to observe disparities in the opportunities and perspectives available to young women compared to young men.

e/ Key challenges and perspectives

The challenges posed to social policy by the poor socio-economic conditions and the often even poorer socio-economic perspectives that affect a large proportion of young people in a disproportionately negative manner, are significant.

In the first place, there is a lack of recognition of the structural nature of the exclusion of young people. This is evidenced by a lack of specific policies for tackling young people's socio-economic disadvantage. It is also evidenced by the fact that the youth dimension is almost entirely ignored as an indicator in standard tools of poverty measurement. Often, young people's poverty is not studied as a category in its own right and, therefore, poverty statistics tend to be "blind" to the specificity of youth poverty.

Secondly, the structural exclusion of large numbers of young people from the labour market and from socio-economic opportunity is extremely worrying from the perspective of social cohesion. There is significant evidence of the growing gap between rich and poor in all the countries surveyed. The majority of the poor are drawn from the ranks of those unable to access or to maintain participation in the formal labour market, which puts young people, especially, young women, at the frontline.

Thirdly, education is seen as something of a panacea for correcting such disparities, but in all the countries surveyed the lack of available employment seems to be a more important underlying cause for the continuing marginalisation of young people from the labour market. Turning out ever larger numbers of highly qualified and mobile young people only exacerbates the problem of there not being enough correctly paid and protected jobs to go around. At the same time, the levelling effect of education is consistently being undermined by difference in enrolment and completion of girls in both primary and secondary education and by the generally lower quality of education available to inhabitants of rural areas, as well as by the comodification of education. The benefits of non-formal education, defined here as the development of social communication and citizenship skills rather than as second chance education, are not fully understood in the countries concerned. Although it is useful for the preparedness for the labour market of young people, it cannot help young people get jobs that do not exist and it should not be subordinated to employability logics exclusively.

Economic reform is needed to alleviate the current socio-economic deprivation that a large number of young people face and that is causing a significant proportion to migrate (legally or illegally). Special measures are needed in order to create employment for young people. Educational measures can complement such reform efforts, by seeing to it that young people get a relevant education for participation in the labour market and that young women leave education with a qualification. While economic growth is an important factor it does not guarantee employment. Significant numbers of young people are currently "employed" in the grey and black economies. Efforts to formalise these economies could also create new opportunities for young people's labour market participation and recognition.

The United Nations system has had a lot of success mainstreaming good practice concerning the socio-economic empowerment of women in their complementary programming at country level. Several elements of that good practise could be informative for the improvement of the situation of young people. The development of entrepreneurial skills, when combined with the availability of micro-credit for starting a business, has proven its worth in the case of poor women. It is a model of intervention that the United Nations could help governments concerned to develop

and implement and would fill a glaring gap. Providing assistance to relevant government bodies for the improvement of in-school career and employment orientation services could also constitute a relevant contribution.

3/ HEALTH

The health situation of young people in the region today is difficult to assess in black and white, good or bad, terms. For example, young people are in general strong, physically more capable than their elders and have not yet developed chronic health problems that will impede their professional or social activity, by simple virtue of their age. On the other hand, young people are more prone to certain health risks in the period of adolescence and youth exactly because that life phase is characterised by curiosity, experimentation and risk-taking.

a/ Sexual health

Sadly, and despite significant investment by international institutions in educational activities relating to HIV/AIDS prevention, unsafe sex among young people in these countries continues, either out of ignorance of the risk of not using a condom or as a result of deliberate risk-taking. Furthermore, the high level of attention paid to HIV/AIDS in education programmes is not matched by attention to broader sexual health issues, which are key to both the general health and well being of young people and to reinforcing HIV/AIDS prevention. In Estonia, for example, knowledge of how to prevent sexual transmission of HIV is not matched by knowledge of sexual transmission of other STIs. This is shown by the belief that non-condom contraceptives (oral pill, etc) can prevent transmission of STIs other than HIV.[212] Kyrgyzstan demonstrates similar tendencies.[213]

In countries, where injecting drug use has become endemic, like Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan, HIV infection has been accelerated significantly, as users are prone to sharing needles. Drug users also infect their partners and in most countries the majority of HIV infections now occur through sexual contact rather than injecting drug use. However, reporting and surveillance of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, is very poor. Macedonia is a notable example of this problem.[214]

In South Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, attitudes to sex and male machismo continues to create situations in which condom use is stigmatised. For example, in Bosnia & Herzegovina, research into the reproductive health situation demonstrates that various factors (pro-natalism, misperceptions of contraceptives and lack of access) mean contraceptive use is very low, and abortion is a favoured method of family planning, with 30% of all pregnancies ending in an abortion.[215] Similar situations can be observed in Kyrgyzstan and Macedonia.

In general, the instance of early pregnancy across the countries surveyed does not seem to be rising at an alarming rate, contrary to much of the rhetoric. Adolescent motherhood is not the chosen outcome of early pregnancy for the majority of those concerned. It seems that young women prefer to have an abortion. At the same time, contraceptive use is also rising. Such impressions are inconclusive, however, and this study has not been able to find sufficient data to

[212] For more information refer to the country report on Estonia, 2007.
[213] For more information refer to the country report on Kyrgyzstan, 2007.
[214] For more information refer to the country report on Macedonia, 2007.
[215] PRB-UNFPA Country Profile, 2005, p. 298.

support strong conclusions. However, the education of young people as regards contraception is a definite gap in public health provision and both abortion and early pregnancy could be significantly prevented with better government action in the field of comprehensive sexuality education.[216]

Research shows that only a minority of young people in South Eastern Europe engage in safe sex by using condoms and that, if used, they are associated with contraception rather than with the prevention of HIV or other STI transmission. Combined with trends in earlier initiation into sex and the postponement of the formation of stable and permanent family relationships, STIs are a growing threat to the health of young people in this region. After 1990, STI rates skyrocketed in the countries of the former Soviet Union. In many countries, they subsequently fell back, but remain at significantly higher levels than in most Western European countries.

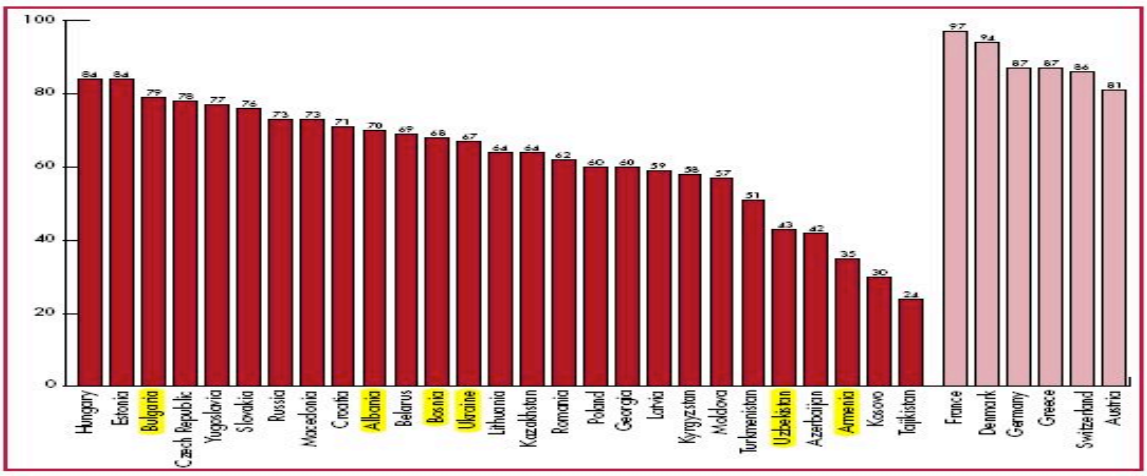
HIV and AIDS

An estimated 1.6 million people in Eastern Europe and Central Asia are living with HIV/AIDS at the end of 2007: almost four times the figure of 420 000 at the end of 1999.[217] Given the high levels of other sexually transmitted infections and the high rates of injecting drug use among young people, the epidemic looks set to grow considerably. Most HIV positive people are not aware that they are infected.

In those countries where traditional family and religious values determine public morality, such as for example Albania, Armenia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kyrgyzstan, Poland, Turkey and Uzbekistan and to a lesser extent Bulgaria, the threat posed by STI and HIV transmission is little discussed. Young people are often completely ignorant of basic reproductive and sexual health knowledge, because they are neither taught at home nor at school. Initiation into sex and higher levels of casual sexual activity among young people, however, lead to special vulnerability to becoming infected with STIs including HIV. Young men who have sex with men are often even more vulnerable, due to stigma and a lack of access to services. This is can also be a particularly delicate problem among rural young women who are married to men, who may have several other partners or who may engage in sex with other men. In addition, the religious or moral conservatism of both parents and public authorities often intimidate young people, women in particular, into keeping silent about sexual health, even if they are concerned that they may be infected with HIV or another STI.

[216] Charles F. Westoff, "Recent Trends in Abortion and Contraception in 12 Countries", DHS Analytical Studies, No.8, ORC Macro, Calverton, Maryland, 2005.
[217] UNAIDS, "Key Facts by Region, 2007", http://www.unaids.org/en/HIV_data/2007EpiUpdate/default.asp.

Incidence of knowledge of condom use as a means of preventing HIV by percent among adolescents (14-17 years):[218]



b/ Use of legal and illegal substances

Smoking and alcohol consumption are growing problems among young people. As elsewhere in Europe and the developed world, and despite restrictive regulations regarding smoking in public and the advertising of cigarettes and alcohol in some countries, both smoking and the consumption of alcohol are on the rise in most of the countries surveyed, especially among girls and young women. Excessive alcohol consumption and even juvenile alcoholism is becoming more common, leading young people in many of these societies to be branded as hooligans and drunkards and even leading to repressive measures. For example, in Macedonia, World Bank research suggests that 9% of 15-16 year olds are potential lifetime alcoholics.[219] The notable exceptions to this trend are Albania, Armenia, Romania and Turkey, where the instance of alcohol consumption and substance abuse is low and rising at a slower rate than in the other countries. This might be the result of certain religious and family values remaining important in the societies concerned. Smoking, on the other hand, is widespread, inexpensive and growing in most of the countries and is even becoming more widespread among young women, who traditionally did not engage in such behaviour.

Substance abuse, including injecting drug use (for a minority), is on the one hand common among some of the least privileged young people in the region and at the same time an elite phenomenon. For example, Roma young people, and especially street children, have access to other health damaging substances, especially solvents, alcohol and cigarettes. A growing minority of young people has become addicted to heroin and other "hard drugs", resorting to crime and prostitution to pay for their consumption. Finally, and again a growing minority of young people, has access to sufficient funds to feed cocaine and speed, ecstasy and other "designer drug" habits. For example, the countries of the former Soviet Union are notable in that drug use has escalated significantly, with the availability of drugs increasing greatly after independence. The

[218] UNICEF, Young Voices Survey, quoted in Marc Suhrcke, "Young People and HIV/AIDS: Awareness and Attitudes", in Common Health, Volume 11, Number 11, Spring 2005, available at: http://www.aiha.com/index.jsp?sid=1&id=9217&pid=4315.

[219] For more information refer to the country report on Macedonia, 2007.

lack of exposure to drugs during the Soviet period means that attitudes to dealing with drug problems remain rooted in a lack of knowledge concerning the differential effects of different drugs and conservatism. However, harm reduction programmes have been successful in many places, particularly on the local level, for example in Kyrgyzstan.[220] Among the countries of Central Europe there has been positive experience in Poland.

There is certainly also a link between drug abuse and violence and crime among young people, especially young men. The pervasive increase in violence in these countries, with the notable exception of Armenia, which demonstrates a relatively low instance of crime, and the ambivalent position of young people, especially young men as both perpetrators and victims of violence, is a very worrying development. Mortality among young people in these countries is on the rise. In an increasing number of cases, the cause of mortality is injury or violence. Although the perception of the extent of both the drug problem and youth violence or crime is often exaggerated, there is evidence to suggest that the phenomenon is growing and has led to increased mortality among some categories of young people. In Albania, migration has caused a rise in the instance of female headed families which is thought to have had negative effects on male youth discipline (absence of male role models). Such families are also vulnerable to violence from men outside their families. Recent experiences of militarization and war in several of the countries concerned has certainly also increased tendencies towards violence. Organised crime has taken significant advantage of this situation.

c/ Some issues concerning the health of young people that need special attention

This brief review of the health condition of young people raises two specific issues that need to be taken into account if sustainable youth friendly health services for young people are to be developed.

Risk taking and risk management

Young people in these countries, as young people everywhere, are likely to engage in de facto risky behaviour in the process of experimentation, which is natural to the youth phase. Despite investment in better and more information related to sexual and other health risks, young people are still prone to exposing themselves to unprotected sex, multiple partners, alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. The development of more liberal lifestyles, with the decline of both state and family control of behaviour, has not been accompanied by any significant spread of knowledge of how to be safe (in the case of sex) or to minimise dangers (in the case of drugs). Public health and education to help young people be safe is largely missing due to the ongoing tendency towards denial on the part of authorities.

Comprehensive sexual health and sexuality education

If in recent years, some form of reproductive health education has become more available in schools in some of these countries, comprehensive sexual health and sexuality education, which covers all aspects of sexual development, is lacking in almost all the countries surveyed. It is extremely worrying that in some cases young people are even being actively misinformed about sexual health. Such education is, however, essential to helping young people lessen their vulnerability. Despite the growth of interest in providing sexual health messages to young people, having appropriate knowledge does not necessarily lead to behaviour change among young people. To date programmes of behaviour change have not found a durable way to address this paradox. This might be a relevant direction for research.

[220] For more information refer to the country report on Kyrgyzstan, 2007.

d/ Key challenges and perspectives

It is important to acknowledge that young people's risk is often not within their control especially if the young person concerned does not benefit from constructive support from a family or a community. The discourse of risk-taking and prevention has the unfortunate tendency to stigmatise and even criminalise those concerned. It is an inherently paternalistic discourse in that it assumes that young people's behaviour should be changed.

It is important to acknowledge that the majority of young people do not engage in high-risk behaviour deliberately. To encourage healthy lifestyles among young people requires targeted and comprehensive sexual health and sexuality education, relevant youth specific sexual health services and adequate sexual health information delivered in an attractive, friendly and easily accessible setting. Those young people most vulnerable substance use, STIs and early pregnancy are often marginalised and require support mechanisms rather than criminalisation stigmatisation.

The United Nations, and especially UNFPA, has long standing experience of providing complementary capacity in this area, in particular at the level of health service and education delivery. Today, it is necessary to mainstream the youth dimension and youth sensitivity through its complementary programmes. For sustained effectiveness, governments must take an increased share of responsibility for the health (including the sexual health) of their young people, including through public health and education policies that consider the specific needs of youth and acknowledge risk-taking as an integral part of being youth.

In particular, good practice in the field of educational approaches to sensitive issues such as youth sexual health should be disseminated to youth policy, health and education professionals at international and national levels. It will also be a significant contribution if UN agencies would promote the necessity of a human rights based approach to young people's sexual health. Partnerships with religious organisations and communities can be a useful approach to this. A youth friendly approach to providing services in all areas of youth health should be a priority across UN programming and in capacity building for government, requiring significant coordination between relevant agencies.

4/ GENDER EQUALITY AND THE PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG WOMEN

The awareness of government and the public at large as regards the human rights of women has improved significantly over the past 20 years worldwide. However, the transition from state socialism to procedural democracy and the market economy in all the countries surveyed (with the exception of Turkey) has brought with it some decline in the position of women. While equality between the sexes was formally "guaranteed" under state socialism, real equality was not achieved. Nevertheless, the position of women relative to men, certainly in the economic realm, is today notably worse, even if this is the result of social attitudes toward gender relations being more accurately expressed than under state socialism.

a/ Gender inequality

In all of the countries surveyed, significant problems of gender inequality continue to exist and as mentioned already, young women are substantially more vulnerable overall, compared to young men at the same age. Patriarchy, paternalism and traditional religious and family values

tend to restrict the actions of all young people, but have particularly negative effects in determining the fates of young women, particularly those in rural areas. This is notably the case in Albania, Georgia, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Turkey and Uzbekistan, especially in rural communities. Culture in the Caucasus and Central Asia encourages young women to follow the "school – marriage – motherhood" route. In Uzbekistan, the practise of "paediatric gynaecology", a leftover from Soviet pro-natalism, is compulsorily practised by public health workers on adolescent girls, who have not benefited from any form of sexual education and who are not aware of the nature of the procedures they will undergo or the reasons for them. While the instance of such control and coercion may be lower in countries like Bulgaria or Ukraine it is nonetheless common, as it is to some degree in all countries.

Integration with European institutions (for example, the Council of Europe and the European Union) and the associated emphasis on human rights attendant to accession to these organisations has had a positive impact by raising awareness and pressure in most of the countries covered by this study for the issue of gender equality. Although it is not treated as seriously as it could be by the European Union, gender equality is one cross-cutting concern, and European institutional pressure has served as a primary means of promoting women's human rights in the phase before accession. Formal legal obstacles to gender equality, such as matters of property and land ownership, inheritance and the legal status of married individuals, have been or are in the process of being removed in those countries concerned by EU accession. Such moves by governments are the "easy" route to equality, and great inequalities still persist in the areas where reducing or eliminating them would require creative policy-making, the significant and sustained commitment of financial and human resources and efforts to change social mentalities, and attendant behaviour. Moreover, after accession has been achieved concern for gender equality has often been sidelined, as in the case of Poland and Estonia. Clearly, in the countries which are not concerned by EU accession, there are fewer incentives for governments to treat gender equality seriously, UN pressure notwithstanding.

In all countries, there are social expectations about the appropriate role of women in society. There tends to be lower value placed on women's labour market participation (and by extension, girls' education) and insufficient recognition of the unpaid work undertaken by women and girls, be it in caring for family members, managing the household or providing labour in agricultural settings. In the long run, such attitudes contribute to female poverty and, for young people, restrict the opportunities of young women to live the lives they wish. Moreover, it is felt that such arrangements are correct, and any attempt to change them meets with hostility and in some cases violence.

Such control and coercion of young women is particularly true when it comes to sexuality and reproductive rights. For example, research reveals that in Bosnia & Herzegovina young women's sexuality is on the one hand denied and is taboo. On the other hand, in practice, the ability of women to negotiate contraceptive use and independent decision making over sex is significantly limited by traditional gender roles and the resurgence of patriotic values. Parallels can be found in Georgia, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, and Poland.

b/ Education and employment

Undervaluing education for girls leads to lower female literacy rates (for example, this is the case in Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Turkey, Uzbekistan) and limits young women's potential for economic independence from men (at the same time as poor quality education limits the employment opportunities for young people and their potential for independence from their

families, in general). In cases where there are costs associated with education, particularly for poor families in rural settings, education for sons is often prioritised over that for daughters.

Most young women manage to gain education, only to face numerous obstacles to equality with men in employment and to gaining economic independence. Sex-segregation of employment by sector is common to all societies, but in the countries in this study, ideas of what is an appropriate job for a woman or a man are noticeably strong. Needless to say, "women's jobs" tend to be lower-status and less well paid.

Unemployment among young women is generally even higher than among young men, and young women are even more prone to temporary and insecure employment than their male counterparts. In times of economic instability, women and young people are the groups most likely to lose their jobs, making young women's positions especially precarious. Even in countries such as Estonia, Romania and Poland, where young women are better educated than young men, they are more likely to take low-status jobs. "Ethnicity" can also play a mitigating role in female participation in employment. An example of this is Macedonia, where only 11% of women of Albanian origin are engaged in the labour market. In Serbia, it remains common for young women to be questioned about their plans for having children in job interviews, a clearly discriminatory practice.[221] Nevertheless, social attitudes are changing. In Kosovo, where many families are now headed by women, as a result of the migration of working-age men, female participation in the labour market has increased naturally and is changing the status of women in society.[222]

c/ Gender-based violence

Violence against women takes many forms and exists to some extent (sometimes intensely) in all countries. This violence varies from the exceptional crime of honour killings in Turkey, through the more widespread trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation and domestic servitude (throughout the countries studied), to the universal problem of domestic violence, affecting the majority of women in some form, with up to one third of women estimated to suffer physical violence. While comparative data is largely not available, domestic violence was universally raised as a primary concern. Young women experience such violence at the hands of fathers and male relatives as well as lovers and husbands. Bride kidnapping exists in Georgia and is prevalent in Kyrgyzstan, with 70% of young women there fearing that they will be kidnapped. Further, sexual harassment in public and in the workplace is a widespread problem in most countries.

Children of both sexes are at risk of violence and sexual abuse by family members and others (a notable example is Albania), and child abuse and domestic violence have similarities in being areas of violence where laws and their implementation are weak and the issues suffer from being located within the "private" realm. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people are also substantially vulnerable to violence, physical and psychological, in the countries surveyed. Their invisibility in any form of reporting is remarkable and the absence of scientific research on this matter notwithstanding there is anecdotal evidence from the civic sector of a culture of violence and social, educational and employment discrimination against young people belonging to sexual minorities.

[221] For more information refer to the country report on Serbia, 2007.
[222] For more information refer to the report on Kosovo, 2007.

d/ Family planning

Levels of knowledge of contraceptive methods vary a great deal, as do rates of use, which are fairly high in Ukraine and very low in Bosnia & Herzegovina. This can be due to ignorance, lack of access, stigma, a lack of affordability and many other reasons. It is noteworthy that with the exception of Turkey, where the incidence of abortion is low, despite being legal and publicly available, all other countries demonstrate a tendency towards the use of abortion as an alternative to contraception. Some figures are indicative: It is estimated that approximately 30% of pregnancies in Bosnia & Herzegovina and in Albania end in abortion and rates are high in Bulgaria, Estonia, Kosovo and Macedonia. In Poland, the severe legal restrictions on abortion mean that official data on the actual number of abortions is unreliable, with unofficial estimates being remarkably high.[223]

Apart from Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey and Uzbekistan, all countries in this study exhibit very low fertility and birth rates, and several countries have explicitly pro-natalist policies, for example, Estonia and Poland. Pro-natalism can pose a significant threat to gender equality and women's empowerment and independence, for example through restrictions on family planning choices. Incentives for women to bear and raise children rather than engage in paid work, discouragement of contraceptive use and restrictions on access to safe abortion services, are all potential scenarios resulting from efforts to raise the birth rate, and in an environment where such efforts are being made, it must be a priority for UNFPA to ensures respect for human rights (for example, by encouraging the integration of work and family life, promoting male involvement in childcare and subsidising childcare services). Nevertheless, there are examples of pro-natalist policies which respect human rights among the countries surveyed, such as that of Estonia. As has been the experience in France and Sweden, successful pro-family policies are multi-dimensional, but fundamentally provide for parents to integrate family and working life. Such policies require long-term planning, political commitment and financial investments by governments.

e/ Participation

When it comes to participation in public and political life, young women face the double obstacles of being young and being women. While there are no legal restrictions on their participation as women, there may be restrictions as young people (such as minimum age for election). It is noteworthy that even where affirmative action exists, such as in Kosovo, young women's political participation has not necessarily increased.[224] However, more significant are the social restrictions: the widespread view that politics is a male domain, combined with the domestic demands made on women, make it more difficult for women to find the necessary support to enter the field and more difficult to be taken seriously as political actors, and it is more difficult for women to balance such activities with their home life. Kyrgyzstan is a good example. Young women's autonomy for participation of any kind is limited by the fact of being, first, the responsibility of their families and, then, the responsibility of their husbands upon marriage.[225] As well as being ends in themselves, measures to increase young women's participation in political life, such as quotas, training of candidates and the restructuring of

[223] There were 225 legal abortions in Poland in 2005, with no data collected on illegal abortions. Civil society organisations concerned with the issue have estimated that illegal abortions for that year may have reached up to 500,000. For more information, refer to the country report on Poland, 2007.
[224] For more information refer to the report on Kosovo, 2007.
[225] For more information refer to the country report on Kyrgyzstan, 2007.

political life to be more family-friendly, will help change social mindsets, which are sceptical toward such roles for women and youth.

There is some cause for optimism, however, as involvement in youth activism is one area where female and male participation rates are fairly close. In general, young people are more open to gender equality than older generations, in line with their greater propensity for liberal lifestyles and values. However, social norms and attitudes still make it easier for men to progress from youth activities into further roles in public life, especially if these are "political" rather than "socio-cultural". Most young people and young women are not involved in youth organisations. Nevertheless, more than 50% of participants in organised youth activities in Armenia are women and there are similar results for Albania. It is noteworthy that youth work has become something of a feminised profession across Europe. However, youth participation in political parties, remains the preserve of men. There are in some ways great overlaps between the concerns of youth activists and the concerns of women's activists: both groups face obstacles to participation in public life and the labour market in adult male dominated societies. Some techniques adopted by the women's movement (such as gender-responsive budgeting) might, therefore, be adaptable for advocacy by and for youth, and especially young women.

f/ Key challenges and perspectives

The issues that confront young women are in many cases not different from those confronting young men: both sexes are at risk of STIs through low levels of public knowledge and public health services and both suffer the consequences of poor quality education and preparation for working life. The aspirations of both sons and daughters, young citizens both male and female, are frustrated by sceptical and controlling attitudes among elders in positions of authority, prone to reinforcing rather than breaking down distinctions between generations.

While many interventions on behalf of youth will benefit both sexes, it must be remembered that men and women have different experiences of everything from poverty to sexual ill health. It is imperative, therefore, to disaggregate data by gender, as well as by age, in order to reveal the deep nature of gender inequality in what may seem like simple results. Some problems, such as violence, long-term economic dependence and exclusion from education, disproportionately affect women including and / or especially young women. Low levels of public participation and unacceptable levels of violence cut across the experiences of all the countries studied, even those in the European Union. It should be remembered that decisions to include gender concerns at the vital formative stage with which youth policy is concerned will have positive consequences throughout women's lives, for subsequent generations of young women and for both sexes in society as a whole. Programmes that already apply gender mainstreaming approaches, and many of the good practises developed by the UN in this respect, will benefit greatly from equal sensitivity to the sometimes very distinct concerns and aspirations of young women and young men.

5/ THE PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

a/ Values

This study revealed that in most of the countries surveyed young people place significant hope in the process of European integration. In other words, young people see the European project, and their country's prospects for joining the European Union as, in the first place, a comment on the "fitness" of their state and in the second place, as a comment on their level of

"civilisation". In addition, they invest a lot of hope in the prospects of economic development and freedom of movement considered inherent to the European integration process. This was the case of Bulgaria and Romania in the run up to accession in 2007, and is the case in Macedonia now in pre-accession. It is also visible in Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina and Serbia, which have stabilisation and association agreements. While Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine are not yet at the point of being invited to join, they have in different ways indicated their wish to do so or at least to become closer associated to the EU.

Nevertheless, and especially in the latter countries, it should be noted that there are dissenting voices, also among young people, and the fact remains that for each of these countries accession is a long way off. Young people are regularly disappointed by their treatment at EU embassies when they request a visa to attend a youth activity and become disillusioned when they are turned down. The debate on the EU accession of Turkey has taken an almost racist turn with that country's civilisational suitability for EU membership being openly called into question by prominent members of the French establishment. It is hardly surprising, therefore, if the response of many young people in Turkey and of Turkish origin living in the EU has been to retreat into nationalism or to take refuge in religion. For those countries who are not concerned by EU membership, such as those of Central Asia, Europe is a far away place that few young people will ever have the opportunity to visit. Russia plays a much more significant role in their lives. Russian is a lingua franca in the immediate region. Russian is the second language for most young people. Russia is a popular destination for migration, given high demand for labour, good wages and flexible mobility arrangements.

Another concern is that young people in several of these countries have to struggle with contradictions between traditional values present in their home lives and family homes and their attraction to modern life brought to their attention by the media and advances in information technology and international mobility. Many young people who come from a traditional family background do manage to construct an identity that allows them to respect the wishes and values of their parents at the same time as actively participating in modern social and cultural life. It is notable, however, that young women and men who belong to sexual minorities have a significantly harder time negotiating such identity issues. A notable example is certainly Poland, where until late 2007 when it was voted out of office, the right wing and conservative government took such a hard-line stance on homosexuality and abortion that rational debate on related issues, such as for example, sex education or gender equality became extremely difficult.

Equally, the collapse of state socialism and the rapid process of economic liberalisation that took place in those countries which made the transition to a democracy and the market economy in the early 1990s has widened the gap between rich and poor significantly. Anecdotal evidence from the field visits to Poland and Estonia suggests that this is a matter of concern to young people, who feel uncomfortable with the idea of their societies being driven by material values alone and who regret what the consider to be a loss of social solidarity.[226]

Unfortunately, there is often little space or opportunity for young people to explore their value orientations in a safe and protected environment. This is particularly the case in traditional societies or politically authoritarian settings, for example, Albania, Armenia, Turkey and Uzbekistan. It is notable that conscientious objection is not recognised in Turkey and Uzbekistan and it is even criminalised in Armenia. Patriotism has become an increasingly important value in Georgian society, with the current government taking steps to mainstream

[226] For more information refer to the reports on Estonia and Poland, 2007.

respect for national values through education, increased attention to national holidays and youth activities, such as the "Patrioti" youth camps. Young people's opinions in this relation are not researched.

It is noteworthy, however, that there is very little research being conducted in any of these countries about the value orientations and attitudes of young people. The notable exception in this regard was Kyrgyzstan, where in 2006 one NGO (the Youth Human Rights Group) conducted a survey of youth opinion and values and a study of youth policy. This absence of research into youth values in the countries is complemented by an almost complete absence of comparative research and cross country studies. An example of good practice in this relation is the periodical European Union "Eurobarometer Youth Survey". The most recent such study was published in 2007 and covers the following issues: being a citizen of the EU, meaning and future of Europe, leisure activities and membership in organisations, participation in society and employment and autonomy. Timely and relevant as this research may be for EU policy making in relation to youth, it provides information only about those specific value orientations considered relevant for the European Union and was only conducted in the member states of the EU.[227]

b/ Volunteering and associative life

In most of the countries, some form of volunteering is common among young people, but this does not imply ongoing membership in a youth or other form of civil society organisation – that still remains the preserve of only about 10% of young people in the world.[228] According to the Eurobarmoter youth survey 2007, less than one in five young people in the 27 member states of the European Union take part in voluntary activities, although three out of four consider such activities as an incentive for their greater participation in society.[229] In Estonia, youth membership of an organisation is estimated at just 4 to 5% by the National Youth Council of Estonia (ENL).[230] In Serbia, youth participation rose dramatically in the context of popular revolution but dropped dramatically in its aftermath and today it is estimated that young people have a lower level of participation than other age groups.[231] In Macedonia, youth participation is relatively low (6.5%) but higher than for other age groups. The ease with which NGOs can register and, therefore, their high number does not seem to be matched by sustainable activity.

Nevertheless, in the countries covered by this study, a significant proportion of young people at some time during their youth do get involved in some kind of voluntary activity. Most often, this volunteering is a form of community service or could be considered charity or social work and is conducted on the local level around issues of direct concern to the young people or through bodies or organisations that have a presence in their lives, for example, schools, sports clubs, religious groups or churches, and so on. The act of performing community service and volunteering is not always commonly understood or viewed as a strategy for youth and societal

[227] The results of the survey are available online at:
ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/pdf/youth/results-eurobarometer2007_en.pdf
ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_202_sum_en.pdf
[228] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "World Youth Report 2005 – Young People Today, and in 2015", United Nations Publication, October 2005.
[229] European Commission, "Looking Behind the Figures – Main Results of the Eurobarometer 2007 Survey on Youth", p.2, accessed online at:
ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/pdf/youth/results-eurobarometer2007_en.pdf.
[230] For more information refer to the country report on Estonia, 2007.
[231] For more information refer to the country report on Serbia, 2007.

development, however. Its "political" nature is often not understood by the young people participating in or running youth activities. Especially in the areas of socio-cultural work with young people, leisure time activities and non-formal educational activities, it is often the "animators" or "peer group leaders / educators" that refuse the potential for change represented by their activities and who do not want to be associated with "political activities".

Closely related to this and another factor common to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union studied here, is that young people are often sceptical of any form of associative action, as many have inherited the memory of having to go through the motions of "participation" in party controlled youth organisations and collectivistic Soviet-style rituals. Any form of activity that smacks of "propaganda" including lobbying, advocacy and civic activism is often viewed with suspicion as politically motivated or even worse as motivated by the desire of the individuals involved to enrich themselves. In Poland, civil society organisations who were not willing to "tow the party line" of the conservative right wing government that was voted out in elections in late 2007, were deliberately marginalised by changes to funding schemes and the rules government the registration of organisations and by smear campaigns in the media, weakening it civil society considerably. The counter example is Kyrgyzstan, where the government that took power after the Tulip Revolution is considered by NGOs themselves to be more open to involvement of non-governmental organisations and civil society in policy making.

In Turkey, which is probably something of an exceptional case, young people are significantly active on a grass roots basis despite the restriction of certain forms of association and some democratic freedoms (including that of expression). For Turkish young people associative activity has a tendency to be related to social or ecological issues and often takes place during student life. There seems to exist a kind of unspoken social pact concerning the place and role of young people in society that is in part related to the country's political history and "bad memories" of violent political unrest involving large numbers of young people. Young people are also taught and expected to respect their elders, authority and government. The harassment of minority organisations and human rights activists is a sad example of the ambivalent nature of democracy in Turkey in respect of associative life, although conditions for NGOs have improved recently with changes to the Law on Associations. In the past, such associations have been able operate only through the use of "front" organisations usually sports and leisure clubs.

A large number of young people, however, are simply not involved in any form of associative life and do not volunteer on a regular or irregular basis. There are certainly several objective reasons for such. Many young people are simply too busy making ends meet and getting an education in the countries concerned to have time or energy to get involved in anything voluntary. This was notably the case in Estonia.[232] Some young people, by virtue of physical or social isolation (rural youth, young women living in traditional homes, LGBT and disabled young people, for example) simply do not have access to such opportunities that may exist for their participation. A notable example of this is certainly Kosovo, where the political situation is such that young people formally have the right to participate in EU youth programmes, but de facto experience obstacles that are very difficult to overcome, such as visa restrictions and the absence of a structure in Kosovo that can manage the programme, which is organised by countries). And, some may simply not have the means (financial, transportation, educational, linguistic, etc) to get involved, even if opportunities for their participation are available. Even youth research often ignores the fact that active participation, volunteering and getting involved in youth activities or

[232] For more information refer to the country report on Estonia, 2007.

civil society is not only a matter of the availability of opportunities on an equal basis. Support mechanisms are also needed to make it possible for young people to use the opportunities that exist. The two notable examples of city governments which were taking local youth participation seriously were Tartu in Estonia and Krakow in Poland. Both these city governments have invested heavily in not only creating opportunities for the participation of young people, but also for helping those for whom opportunity may not be enough to get involved.[233] In Serbia efforts to develop the participation of young people at local level are being made by some forward looking municipalities, which are piloting the development of local youth action plans. It is too early, however, to be able to assess the effect on local youth participation.[234]

c/ Political decision making and processes and representation

It remains a fact that young people everywhere are likely to participate more in the implementation or consumption of youth policy than its design, even though policy development "good practice" consistently demonstrates that policies designed with the participation of their beneficiaries are more effective. None of the countries in this study have significant traditions of youth participation in decision or policy making and some openly discourage it or avoid the issue. The notable exception is Estonia, which has an explicit youth policy and co-managed youth policy making. Several other countries have made efforts to make youth policy making more participative. Albania has piloted a National Youth Parliament that has been instrumental in the development of a National Youth Strategy[235]. Armenia has redoubled its efforts to include youth representatives in its policy making activities, as a result of the International Review of Armenian Youth Policy that took place under the auspices of the Council of Europe Youth Policy Review Process in 2005 and 2006.[236] Serbia is in the process of developing a National Youth Strategy and several important youth civil society organisations are actively involved in the development of the policy document, contributing with research and expertise.[237]

Many of the countries considered in this study do not have a fully functioning National Youth Council, recognised by international bodies such as the European Youth Forum, and accepted by government as a legitimate partner for policy making and consultation on issues related to young people, or an equivalent, thereof. Where there is a functioning National Youth Council, youth policy development receives greater political attention and youth organisations have a communication platform with public authorities. Estonia is certainly exemplary among the countries covered by this study in that its young national youth council (ENL) is actively involved in all youth related policy making activities, , even if its representativeness of the youth organisational landscape in Estonia is not as extensive as it could be.[238] ENL has been delegated some important functions in this respect, such as the organisation of the election of youth organisation representatives to the National Youth Advisory Board from among its member organisations and the wider youth organisation community. The results of our review demonstrate, nevertheless, that there are significant deficiencies in the willingness of local and national authorities involve youth organisations and the representatives of young people on an equal footing in the development of youth related policies. In Poland and Georgia, the

[233] For more information refer to the country reports on Estonia and Poland, both 2007.
[234] For more information refer to the country report on Serbia, 2007.
[235] For more information refer to the country report on Albania, 2006.
[236] For more information refer to the country report on Armenia, 2006.
[237] For more information refer to the country report on Serbia, 2007.
[238] For more information refer to the country report on Estonia, 2007.

established National Youth Councils have been considerably weakened by the fact that government either ignores or deliberately marginalises them.[239]

International mechanisms exist to guide those who wish to develop partnership between young people, youth organisations and local authorities, for example, the "Revised Charter for the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life" – a policy document adopted by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe[240], but the initiative must come from below.

On the question of "formal" political participation of young people (i.e. participation in the formal political electoral process as voters and / or as candidates) and its supposed drop-off, youth researcher Siyka Kovacheva, Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Plovdiv, Bulgaria, had the following to say:

> *"While voting levels have started to decline in many European countries, this trend is not all-pervasive. When young people feel democratic development in their countries is threatened, they enter the ballot boxes in great numbers, as in Bulgaria in 1997 and in Slovakia in 1998. Youth participation is usually high when combined with two other forms of activities: unconventional and civic. Young people quickly mobilise around single issues, such as the spill from the Prestige oil tanker in Spain or the protests against the war in Iraq, which were particularly widespread in countries such as the United Kingdom and Spain, whose governments supported the war effort. Political self-expression through the arts and sport, voicing environmental concerns, human rights, gay and lesbian politics and consumer boycotts have spread to post-communist countries (Roberts and Jung, 1995; Ule et al. 2000)".*[241]

It is noteworthy, that Kovacheva's arguments have more recently been borne out during the popular uprising in Yugoslavia (now Serbia), during the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, during the Rose Revolution in Georgia and even during the failed attempt of youth civic movements in Belarus to ensure free and fair elections in March 2005.[242] In Ukraine, Georgia and Serbia, young people's organisations have become frustrated with the approach the "new regime" took to their participation in policy making in the aftermath of the revolution. On the one hand, many of the young people who were active in the revolution and change of regime were later co-opted into positions of authority in the new governments. On the other hand, many of the promises made during the revolution were not kept and those who were active in civil society during the revolution became disillusioned with their former colleagues now in power and with politics altogether.[243]

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[239] For more information refer to the country reports on Georgia and Poland, both 2007.

[240] For the full text of the Revised European Chart on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life visit the following website:
www.coe.int/t/e/cultural_co-operation/youth/TXT_charter_participation.pdf.

[241] Siyka Kovacheva, 'Will youth rejuvenate the patterns of political participation?', in Joerg Forbrig (Editor), "Revisiting Youth Political Participation – Challenges for Research and Democratic Practice in Europe", Council of Europe Publishing, March 2005, p. 25.

[242] Joerg Forbrig, David R. Marples and Pavol Demes, (Editors), "Prospects for Democracy in Belarus", German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2006.

[243] Pavol Demes, Joerg Forbrig and Robin Shepherd (Editors), "Civil Society and Electoral Change in Central and Eastern Europe", German Marshall Fund of the United States and Erste Foundation, 2007.

At the same time, the Eurobarometer Youth Survey 2007, indicates that the majority of young people in the European Union are either interested or very interested in politics and current affairs at local, regional, national and EU level (82% indicated they are interested in politics and current affairs in their own country)[244]. It further states that when asked which measures would help young people to encourage young people's active participation in society, 81% suggested consulting young people before any public decision concerning them is taken.[245]

In addition, the forms of political participation young people are involved in have significantly diversified over the last twenty years and it is commonly acknowledged that voting and membership of a political party are only one form of democratic political participation among many, some of which are not obvious or well known due to the fact that they take place in new and innovative public spaces, including the Internet[246].

While one should avoid sweeping statements about countries and contexts that are so different, it seems fair to state on the basis of our results that the governments in question do not fully accept the need for young people to be actively involved in the design of youth policy rather than only its consumption. It is possible to draw this conclusion because in all but Estonia and Albania, no formal mechanism for the consultation of young people or their legitimate representatives on issues and policies that are of direct concern to them were found, even if most of the governments concerned do regularly speak about the value of youth participation. It remains unfortunate that very many governments continue to have something of an instrumental approach to the value of youth participation in decision-making. On the one hand, for political parties it is considered as an interesting vote-getting platform or crowd-pleaser during election years, but rarely acting on promises made. On the other hand, once in power governments identify and court "loyal" youth organisations to prove that youth organisations are included in policy-making.

Even if there may be objective reasons for not being able "to put money where the mouth is", such as the cost of doing so to governments with bigger problems and more important priorities to worry about (pensions, employment, poverty, education), good practice in the youth participation field does indicates that a) youth participation does not have to be prohibitively expensive when piloted locally in cooperation with youth organisations and young people and b) that national and local budgets do exist for such purposes and are often simply not used.

Another objective problem is the lack of human capacity that governments display in relation to youth participation. Basic standards elaborated by international institutions such as the Council of Europe (of which all the countries except Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan are members) and the United Nations (of which all are members), such as the principle of co-management are often not known, not fully understood or not implemented at national and local level. Further, many functionaries at local level, the level at which youth policy budgetary allocations are supposed to be dispensed, give the impression of never having met or even been a young person themselves. Few local administrations have yet grasped the advantages of hiring young people to work on

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[244] European Commission, Eurobarometer, "Young Europeans: Survey among young people aged between 15 – 30 in the European Union", Eurobarometer, February 2007, p.19.
[245] *Op cit*, p.14.
[246] For further on this issue see Joerg Forbrig, (Editor), "Revisiting Youth Political Participation – Challenges for Research and Democratic Practice in Europe", Council of Europe Publishing, March 2005 and Philip C. Schmitter and Alexander H. Treschel, "The Future of Democracy – Trends, Analyses, Reforms", Council of Europe Publishing, 2004.

and with young people, notable exceptions such as Tartu and Krakow City Governments notwithstanding. There is also an issue of capacity within the youth civic community. Although in some cases, such as Armenia, Estonia and Ukraine, the respective National Youth Councils believe that they have instituted representative structures, their inclusiveness and actual representativeness can be questioned considering that significant organisations with dissenting voices or of important minorities are not included.

Finally, and probably most worryingly of all, some governments even actively discourage the active participation of young people in the public sphere and civic activism. In cases where young people are understood as a potential threat to the ruling elite or to the regime in power, basic human rights such as freedom of association and expression, while maybe not restricted by law, are undermined. Means and finances are not made available to ensure basic participation opportunities and young people are socialised into believing that it is not good to criticise or contradict elders or people in positions of authority. It is also notable that government and in-country development agencies have been known to selectively provide support to "aligned" youth organisations and exclude others. While none of the above represents an illegal act, they could be understood as "managing democracy" and they certainly undermine its spirit. This has been the case in Ukraine until the Orange Revolution, and continues to be a problem in Armenia, Poland, Georgia and Uzbekistan. In Turkey, certain causes receive unwarranted negative attention from the authorities, resulting in banning and repression in some cases. This is particularly the case for human rights groups, Kurdish and student groups and organisations of sexual minorities. The same can be said for Poland in relation to LGBT issues and organisations. Parallels can be found in Estonia with the youth organisations related to the Russian-speaking minority.

d/ Key challenges and perspectives

It would be alarmist to give the impression that young people are thoroughly disengaged from politics and the public sphere, even if young people are most definitely disenfranchised from decision-making processes on policies affecting them. In some countries the participation opportunities of young people are improving. European integration (in its widest sense) has consistently helped this process along. Efforts are being made to develop youth participation channels all the way up to global level and United Nations agencies including UNFPA are experimenting with youth activities with a participative dimension, rather than a representative one. However, inter-agency cooperation in this field is relatively weak and there is a lot of duplication, especially when it comes to the question of cooperation with representative youth platforms. It is notable that at the country and continental level there has been something of a tendency to create new structures rather than working with or trying to empower existing ones, for example, National Youth Councils or regional youth platforms that already exist and have difficulty to develop without support. Cooperation with the international non-governmental youth sector is also improving. But, it remains difficult that the tendency of UN and other international agencies is to work only with the biggest of the international non-governmental youth organisation (such as the Guides or Scouts or the Red Cross/Red Crescent Youth). While this is not a problem per se, there diversity of forms of youth participation goes far beyond the representativeness of such organisations.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that the act of consultation with some or even all youth organisations, while necessary and important, cannot claim to be participative in the true sense. Participative policy making would mean to invite representative organisations of young people concerned by specific policies to give their opinion and provide input to policy development and

would give them some power over the decision-making process concerning where money is supposed to go. Co-management, as established in the Council of Europe youth structures, is a good example of the ways in which institutions can ensure participative decision-making, even if it is far from perfect.

6/ UN PROGRAMMING ON YOUTH IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

The role of United Nations agencies in the countries covered by this study varies greatly. In several of the countries surveyed (e.g. in Central Asia, the Caucasus and Turkey) there is a notable UN presence which will continue for years to come; in the Western Balkans, UN agencies often operate alongside actors from the European Union, although their coordination has been questioned (for example, in Kosovo). In Estonia, there is no longer any UN presence, while in Romania and Poland, accession to the EU means that the presence of UN in-country assistance may only continue for the near future (even if regional technical services may remain important).

UN programming efforts have several sources of guidance: the Millennium Development Goals and the national targets existing to meet these affect agency work; several international declarations and programmes for action provide further sources of guidance – notable among these are the 1994 Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and its 5- and 10-year reviews; and the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women. In EU member states and states wishing to join the Union, the requirements for EU integration also provide a guideline for development programming. For these countries, the EU White Paper on Youth is also important.

In 1995, the UN adopted the World Programme of Action for Youth, which deals specifically with many issues central to the present review. Progress towards the goals set has been monitored through the World Youth Reports 2003, 2005 and 2007 (at the time of writing, forthcoming). However, the extent to which UN agencies have used the WPAY as a guide for their activities seems rather limited.

In form, UN development assistance ranges from the direct provision of services to consultation on national policy development. There is a particular emphasis on capacity-building, firstly for national governmental actors to gradually take over responsibility for areas where the UN assists, and secondly for civil society organisations providing complementary services and performing a distinct and necessary role in national governance. Ideally, UN projects are implemented with both governmental and non-governmental partners, although this is not always the practice.

Interagency Coordination
The UN country team in **Kyrgyzstan** has an Inter-agency Working Group on Youth, one of the first in the region. This structure has two main aims: to reflect on the contribution that UN interventions can make with regard to youth and develop adequate programming; and to involve and empower youth in defining and advocating for relevant youth policies. Its creation is a positive step, in a country where half the population is aged under 25, and it is to be hoped that this will provide an example which other country teams can learn from.

There is a UN Programme on Youth at UN headquarters in New York, under the Department for Economic and Social Affairs, which is tasked with enhancing awareness of the situations, rights and aspirations of young people, and advocating for youth policies and programmes of action at national level. However, there is relatively little evidence of cooperation between this unit and other UN

agencies, or support for activities at the national level – for example in the absence of reference to the Youth Unit by UN or youth policy-making partners in-country. The Programme on Youth has made a contribution to attention to and information on young people's situation through its promotion of high-level conferences, declarations and commitments on youth, and through its research, notably in the World Youth Reports.

Levels of emphasis on youth

Against this background, programming on, for and with young people takes various forms. In recent years, UN agencies and other international actors have increasingly recognised young people as a distinct target group for national development and policy programmes, both for socio-economic-demographic reasons and for normative reasons. There are levels of engagement with young people – from individual projects targeting youth, to inter-agency consideration of youth in programming, to support for national youth policy development.

a/ Individual projects targeting young people

Young people are the main or sole target group in many UN projects. The following is a selection:

- in the field of sexual and reproductive health, UNFPA and others predominantly target young people with efforts to increase knowledge and contraceptive prevalence and prevent STIs and HIV transmission;
- education interventions, by UNICEF, UNESCO and others, overwhelmingly affect young people, even if not always with their participation in programme development and governance;
- young people are also frequently targeted in projects promoting employment (ILO) and economic development (UNDP and the World Bank);
- the UN Office on Drugs and Crime has a Global Youth Network, the ILO has a Youth Employment Network, and the World Bank's Youth Voices programme has a presence in several countries (albeit with widely differing levels of capacity and activity).
- UNDP has run projects promoting Life Skills training among physically disabled young people in Poland, and providing information and counselling in HIV/AIDS for young people in Romania.

One important part of UNFPA activity in several countries surveyed is the Y-PEER network of peer educators, which supports young people in teaching their young peers about sexual and reproductive health and sexuality. The scale of activities varies, but Y-PEER most often works in the absence of alternative sources of effective education, meaning its contribution fills a gap. Through presence at events such as the Exit festival in Serbia, Y-PEER (and other similar initiatives, such as RHIYC in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan) can reach a larger audience.

There are also certain initiatives which address neglected aspects of young people's lives – the World Health Organisation has a comprehensive Child and Adolescent Health Strategy for Europe, and is beginning to develop one for Romania.

b/ Projects aimed at youth civil society and at increasing the participation of young people

In addition to activities, which target young people as beneficiaries in various technical areas, there are also good examples of UN programming to support growth of youth as a civic force within societies of the region.

- Activities such as UNICEF's Child-Friendly Cities initiative in Macedonia (also adopted in Tartu in Estonia) aim to include and focus on young people as a group more broadly. The goal is to better meet the needs of young populations, through the inclusion of young people in research and policy-making.

- UNDP and UNICEF in Kosovo have developed a long-term process of engaging with sectors of civil society, including youth, with a focus on the sustainability of youth organisations. However, the political priority for youth policy has been low, due to the overriding concern about Kosovo's status.

- Since 2002, UN Volunteers in Uzbekistan has supported a programme of youth volunteering in the area of information technology, for building the capacity of civil society organisations.

- The World Bank supported the Polish Youth Council toward consolidation of the youth sector in Poland, as well as funding activities such as youth parliaments.

- UNFPA and UNICEF both support the development of youth-friendly health services. Although these are not always developed in coordination with local youth centres and information services, UNFPA in Macedonia, for example, may play a role in helping local youth initiatives develop youth-friendly health services.

c/ Support for youth policy development

Support for youth policy development has been much less common. Where it exists, it has begun to happen fairly recently and in countries where there is an encouraging policy climate. Kyrgyzstan, with its interagency cooperation on youth affairs, represents an exciting example of potential for progress in the youth policy development field:

- The UN Volunteers (UNV) office in Kyrgyzstan ran a campaign on youth voluntary work, from 2004 to 2006, which led to a Green Paper on Youth Policy being developed.
    - In 2007, UNV joined with UNDP to create the UNV-UNDP Youth Programme. This programme aims to develop a White Paper on youth policy which will set clear recommendations for the government relating to implementation of the nascent state youth policy. This process will include the active involvement of young people, with a particular concern to involve young women.
    - The existence of the UN Country Team Working Group on Youth lends further hope to the idea that UN agencies will provide coordinated support to young people and their meaningful role in national development and governance.

Other examples encountered include:

- In 2007, UNIFEM conducted research on the status of youth and youth policy development in Serbia and Macedonia, as well as supporting implementation of the Youth Action Plan in Kosovo. The impetus for youth policy in that region offers a clear opportunity to ensure that concerns such as gender equality are included in policy development processes from the beginning,

- In Georgia in late 2005 and 2006, UNICEF was due to fund the activities of a multi-sectoral youth policy working group, which would have developed a Youth Strategy for the country, in cooperation with the Council of Europe. At the last minute, however, the government withdrew support for the process and nothing further happened.

c/ Key challenges and perspectives

United Nations agencies have many initiatives targeting young people in their areas of concern, meeting young people's needs and in some cases promoting youth participation through their inclusion in the programmes. However, notwithstanding exceptional cases, there is a tendency to approach youth programming from the perspective of the agency in question, rather than from the perspective of comprehensive youth policy development.

This might be explained by the fact that no agency has sole and exclusive responsibility for youth and that to date in the region few inter-agency theme groups on youth have been created. However, given the importance of young people in many populations and their critical role in future demographic trends, support to youth policy has great potential for positive effects in areas as diverse as political participation, fertility and health. Success, however, requires at least a coordinated approach across agencies and together with governmental partners, and in cooperation with other regional youth-related actors, such the National Agencies responsible for the implementation of the European Commission's Youth in Action programme or its local contact points. Synergies should be created with other initiatives being undertaken regionally by European institutions, such as the national youth policy review programme of the Council of Europe.

In addition to the interest UN agencies already have in young people, greater engagement with established youth organisations and representative platforms of young people in the societies where they work would benefit them in meeting their general aims. There is some legitimate concern at the lack of capacity among youth civil society organisations, which can tempt international agencies to create 'their own' parallel structures. But, this can have negative implications for sustainability, for the cohesion of the youth sector and for the relationship of civil society groups to governments. If UN agencies are to engage young people as a category of partner beyond the short term, investment in youth policy and the structures associated with it will pay off.

7/ CONCLUSION – SPECIFIC YOUTH POLICIES

Youth Policies

As mentioned in previous sections, countries have different approaches to youth policy, determined by many factors including political traditions and social conditions. This and the fact that youth policy concerns also cut across most other social policy areas notwithstanding, some

specific youth targeted policies are necessary to ensure coordination and effectiveness, as well as evidence based policy making. It goes without saying that this means that youth specific policies are also multidimensional, taking into account social issues, gender questions and problems affecting the whole population, such as conflict and ageing.

Our review reveals that most of the countries have what they explicitly refer to as their youth policy or national youth strategy (Armenia, Bulgaria, Estonia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Poland, Romania and Turkey) and two countries are in the process of elaborating one (Albania, Serbia). Kosovo represents something of a special case, in that it basically has its own youth policy, to a large extent the development of which has been driven by the international community, but due to the unresolved issue of its status implementation is problematic.

For the other countries it is not possible to conclude whether there is or is not a fully-fledged and integrated youth policy in place. In the case of Bosnia & Herzegovina the problem, as for other areas of social policy, continues to be the complex political structures of the state that are constantly subject to change. In Ukraine, although it is difficult to ascertain from the public information available, it seems that the government has some kind of youth strategy. The 2006 creation of the united National Youth Council was certainly a positive step, but the constant changes of government in that country make the negotiation of any kind of policy very difficult. For Uzbekistan, it is not possible to conclude due to a lack of information.

It is noteworthy that youth policy development in several countries has so far been almost entirely driven by external donor priorities and paid for by external funding. This has most certainly been the case for at least Armenia, Georgia, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan and Macedonia. While commendable that the donor community prioritises young people and their needs, this kind of donor driven policy development can also undermine the democratic nature of youth policy making and the credibility and sustainability of youth organisations. Efforts to create and sustain local ownership are, therefore, crucial.

In some specific and key areas of youth policy, the following trends are visible:

a/ Information

If one considers the general trends identified in the areas of health, education, employment, participation and human rights, it is clear that there is a general lack of good quality, up to date and easily accessible information targeting young people specifically. Modes of delivery are an issue, as where information services do exist they are neither attractive nor centrally located, and most often they simply do not exist. Another issue is human resources. Clearly, in the age of information and communication technologies, youth information services demand a certain level of skill and qualification to be adequately delivered. Qualified youth information professionals should staff youth information centres. Such qualified personnel being aged 30 or under can also be a factor in the extent to which such information services are used by young people. Such services should also, in principle, be public services and free of charge to make them accessible. Therefore, they should be established with the active participation of local authorities as one of the key stakeholders in the process of youth information, although there are many successful examples of NGO led and run information services. In the countries reviewed which have had experiences of establishing youth information services, outreach increased and the services concerned were used by a significant number of young people, indicating demand. Some examples of good practice at local level were observed, especially in Estonia and Poland, where

the cities of Tartu and Krakow have youth policies of which information forms an integral part. Further, Estonia is currently trying to develop an integrated youth information model.

b/ Youth specific and friendly services

The long term benefits of targeted youth specific services have yet to become clear to policy makers in the countries surveyed. This may be due to the long history of bureaucratised service delivery by poorly trained and even less motivated public servants, who would rather be anywhere but at work. In many of the countries concerned, there continues to be a generalised lack of service culture in public administration. A further problem and one more specifically related to youth policy making is that of the "image of youth" current in the policy making community concerned. As mentioned on previous occasions, paternalism and the idea that youth should be seen (especially during elections) and not heard (especially when it comes to financial resources) is still quite widespread. When one takes into account that young people are generally known to be at high risk when it comes to key service areas such as health, especially sexual health, or unemployment, it is unfortunate that even if any specific measures are in place to address their vulnerability, even fewer youth specialised services have been established to deliver them. Notable exceptions do exist, but needless to say, one pilot youth-targeted sexual health clinic in a capital city in one country, no matter how well resourced it is, cannot reach even a minority of young people at risk of being infected by HIV or requiring abortion counselling. Our study reveals that the location of youth specific services can be important for whether they are used or not. Locating youth friendly sexual health services in polyclinics or on university campuses makes sense, of course, but locating others in municipal youth clubs (and training youth workers in how to provide information or counselling) and in other places where young people meet, will also increase their attractiveness.

c/ Targeted youth research

It is simply amazing how little good quality, up to date, locally initiated and run research is available in the countries concerning the situation of young people, their values, attitudes and concerns and the place they occupy in social policy. Evidence based policy making is impossible without this. If research is initiated and conducted locally, it is most often conducted by NGOs and targeted to specific issues, which in principle is quite positive, although it is notable that the international development community, almost exclusively, determines the research agenda, because they pay for it. A good example is research into HIV/AIDS among young people, which is certainly important, but not as urgent in some countries as say research into child trafficking and adolescent prostitution, even if the problems are lined (for example, in South East Europe) or into the motivations for young people to postpone parenthood. Ideally, government commitments and the development of an active youth research sector to carry out all relevant and important research activities are needed.

The absence of a youth specific research agenda in a given country can be to do with the fact that few of the countries have a tradition of youth research and sociology. Estonia is a notable exception, having both a national youth research agenda embedded in the national university system and public financial support for it. It may also simply be a matter of a lack of awareness for the necessity of evidence to underpin policy making. It is notable that international cooperation and capacity can help to remedy such gaps. A good example is Armenia, where by requesting an international youth policy review by the Council of Europe in 2004 a national youth policy review was commissioned necessitating the establishment of an inter-disciplinary research group, partly financed by UNDP, involving the State University of Yerevan, a selection

of NGO representatives and some governmental experts. Nevertheless, it remains unclear at the end of the international review process if this research group has been made permanent and if so, if it will be allowed to maintain its independence from government. Kyrgyzstan and Serbia provide good examples of youth research agendas being driven by local NGOs. Coordination and synergy between such efforts in country are important for effective policy making.

Of course, the international community is also active in commissioning international research projects concerning young people across countries, involving external and international experts. Notable in this respect is the common focus on development issues as they relate to young people, the tendency for some development issues to get a lot of attention to the exclusion of other issues (for example, HIV / AIDS) and the lack of youth focused research per se. Nevertheless, it has to be admitted that this is improving with the growing interest that international institutions such as the UN and the World Bank demonstrate in young people. Of concern, however, remains the lack of longitudinal and cross-country studies (these are admittedly highly resource and time intensive), the tendency towards quantitative rather than qualitative research and the lack of comparability of the resulting data among the studies undertaken. This significantly complicates any form of trend analysis and the establishment of regional or international evidence based policies. In addition, when developing high quality youth focused research, it is important not to neglect other key indicators, primarily gender and minority status. Youth participation in the design and implementation of research also needs to be considered.

Finally, our survey reveals a need for the following issues to be researched in their own right or included in the development of comparative research projects regarding young people:

- community-based, non-formal education as a means for providing life and livelihood skills[247]
- income-generation opportunities aimed at linking young people to the workplace;
- joint development of national youth policies with national youth councils or groups;
- values and attitudes of young people in relation to key issues facing the world today
- the motivations of young people to postpone parenthood
- the developmental potential of young people's risk behaviour.

Key challenges and perspectives

One can infer a lot about the priority given to a public policy by the amount of resources dedicated to it in the state budget. In this respect, money most definitely talks. It remains unfortunate that often more money is spent on the subsidisation of raising cattle (within an agricultural policy) or on the purchase of weapons (within a defence policy) than is invested in young people's development. Provocative as this statement may seem, it is neither untrue nor uncommon. Neither do reports on investments in the development of youth policy usually make news or bring in the votes.

In the context of our study, it was not possible to make a significant analysis of the investments made by each of the countries in youth policy. The field visits to phase two countries left the impression that civil servants working in the ministry responsible for youth are not always aware

[247] The Partnership on Youth Research between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth has recently published the results of a study on the socio-economic scope of youth work in Europe. The results of the study can be found at:
http://www.youth-knowledge.net/INTEGRATION/EKC/Research/Socioeconomic_scope1.html.

of how much money is being spent from the national budget on youth related policy implementation overall, even if they can usually quote the proportion of that being covered by their ministry. Anecdotal evidence from the field visits further suggested that where there is significant investment in youth specific policies, this is because money has been allocated by international donors[248] for that purpose or because government favoured specific areas of intervention for political reasons.[249]

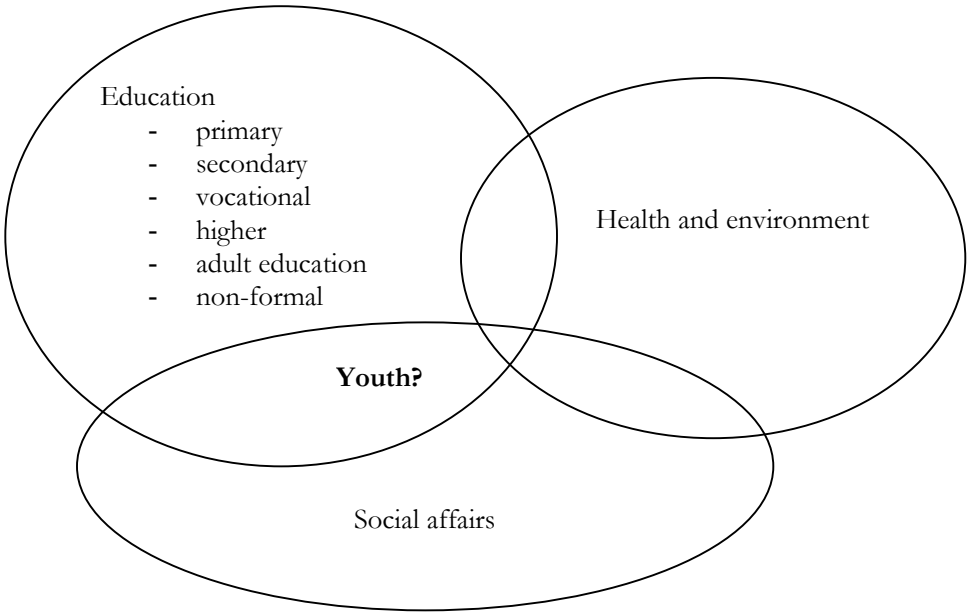
Two significant points should be made in relation to financial investments in youth policy. First, there is a cost to not investing in youth. In the long run, a youth generation that feels it has perspectives and that is motivated to participate in the constructive development of society can only have positive effects for that society. The opposite is also true. One might even question whether this is not more crucial to the health of a given society than the number of babies it produces. Second, government and public policy makers who want to work in the direction of the development of effective youth policies could learn a lot from the gender mainstreaming community. Gender sensitive budgeting, for example, has become an effective basis for the provision of adequate resources to an essential policy area and for raising the awareness of other policy sectors for the need to consider the gender dimension throughout the policy planning and implementation process. To date few governments, even those that have specific youth policies, have instigated processes of youth sensitive budgeting. UN agencies can contribute with capacity and experience to such a process.

In this respect it is important to clarify where the responsibility for a given policy issue lies. As explored in other parts of our study, youth policy is public policy and, hence, it should be reiterated that public institutions, in other words, government, is responsible for its development and implementation. Clearly, non-governmental and even intergovernmental actors are crucial to the process and must be accorded equality of participation and mandate in the process of designing policies, but it is nevertheless up to government, first to take the lead in kicking off the process and second, the responsibility for ensuring adequate resources are dedicated to implementation. In addition to clarity of responsibility comes the question of accountability. One responsible public actor must be tasked with coordinating youth policy making efforts, which more often than not take place in the intersection between different sectors of social policy rather than in just one.

[248] Kosovo and Macedonia are good examples of this.

[249] In Poland, the government that was in power until autumn 2007 had allocated a total of 1.84 million zlotys for the implementation of the national youth strategy (2007 figures). However, through their responsibility for the security in schools programme, the department for youth receive and additional 32 million zlotys. Half of this was made available for spending on youth work style projects.

The following simple graphic clearly demonstrates the problem.



Social institutions such as the family, religious bodies and civil society and intergovernmental and non-governmental actors most certainly have a role to play in advocating for change, in demanding that policy making initiatives be taken, in co-designing policy strategies, in implementing initiatives and documenting and disseminating good practice, but they can neither replace good government nor good governance at the national level in respect of youth policy.

The context of all the countries covered is one of social and economic and sometimes even political transition. Even if the transition is completed only to varying degrees in the different sectors and in the different countries, the experience of dynamic change and flux is common to all. But, the idea of transition is differentially understood. The question is transition from what to what? In Eastern Europe, Central Asia and Turkey there has been a lot of discussion about transition in terms of democratisation, when in fact the transition that has taken place has been more often than not on of economic liberalisation. Young people can be active agents of change within processes of transition, but our analysis shows that they are often structurally excluded or marginalised from economic participation. If the transition is so focused on economics, then the extent to which young people have adequate space for becoming active is questionable. Concomitant developments in democratisation, where they take place, do not automatically translate into a democratisation of governance and participation, clearly evidenced by the strange dynamics of youth mobilisation during "colour revolutions" and the subsequent fall off in participation and civil society vibrancy in the reform process that may or may not take off in their aftermath.

The above has significant implications for the future of youth policy making in the countries surveyed, as do other factors, including differing concepts and approaches to the place and role of young people in relation to (democratic) states. The history of youth policy making in Western Europe exemplifies this point. In France, where the underlying and pervasive image of young people is that of troublemakers, a "preventative" model of youth policy making has emerged. In the Anglo-Saxon tradition, young people are viewed as citizens of a liberal society,

and, therefore, the focus of youth policy has traditionally been on "autonomy" with young people understood as individuals who need to be developed. Young people are, therefore, left to their own devices, with the state intervening only in problem cases. It is assumed that equality opportunity is enough. In Germany, the post-war development of youth policy has focused on enshrining rights and responsibilities in legislation and on ensuring the rule of law (as in may other areas), so the focus has been on rights and services.

What will characterise the youth policy making approach of the countries surveyed in the future? Tendencies towards the institution of "intergenerational dialogue", as a euphemism for the replacement of the financial responsibility of the state for the social welfare of ever growing ageing populations by that of families and towards the instrumentalisation of youth work for the purposes of the employability of young people and a highly liberalised model, according to which equality of opportunity is guaranteed, but where the state has little or no responsibility for ensuring the human rights of young people are respected, are already visible. At the same time, in relation to "deviant" young people, tendencies towards prescriptive policy and control, including a strong focus on "prevention" are also visible. Increased policing of young people will certainly be a concern in some countries in the future. UNFPA and other concerned institutions can make a plausible contribution to ensuring that the human rights of young people are respected as youth policy is developed at national and international levels.

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Appendices

Glossary of Youth Policy Terms

Ability refers to capacities that someone can already demonstrate that s/he possesses, such as having the ability to speak a certain language.

Adolescence has been defined as including those aged between 10 and 19 (see below for youth and young people. As adolescence is a period of physical, psychological and social maturing from childhood to adulthood, it may fall within a broad age range.

(Active) Citizenship is active participation of citizens in economic, social, cultural and political fields of life. In the youth field much emphasis is on learning the necessary competences through voluntary activities. The aim is not only to improve the knowledge, but also motivation, skills and practical experience to be an active citizen.

Autonomy refers to the independence of will or freedom of action of the individual. In relation to young people, this concept is a counter point to static notions of youth as variably dependent on adults.

Civic Service is a voluntary service managed by the State - or on behalf of the State - e.g. in the social field or in civil protection.

Civil Society refers to the arena of unforced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. In principle, its institutional forms are distinct from those of the state, family and market. Often civil society is understood as a "third sector", while the state is "the second sector" and business "the first sector". In practice, the boundaries between state, civil society, family and market are often complex, blurred and negotiated. This makes the exact definition of civil society difficult: Is the integrity of civil society threatened by public or business subsidies to non-governmental organisations? Are all organisations "qualified" as civil society organisations: What is the status of skinheads, neo-Nazis, Animal Liberation Front, extremist political organisations etc? Should there be a commitment to values like pluralist democracy, human rights and rule of law to be qualified as a civil society organisation? To what extent a free and vigorous press is an essential element of civil society: is state monopoly or commercial ownership of the media good for a free civil society? The debate about civil society ultimately is about how culture, market and state relate to each other. Civil society actors include non-governmental organisations, citizen advocacy organizations, professional associations, faith-based organisations, and trade unions, which give voice to various sectors of society and enrich public participation in democracies. Sometimes less organised actions and activities like movements, community groups, protests and demonstrations may be seen as civil society actors. Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power).

Civilian Service is an alternative to compulsory military service in some countries, but not voluntary.

Co-management refers to a model of youth participation practiced in the Council of Europe Youth sector. Representatives of both government and young people decide together on priorities, main budget envelopes, implementation of the work priorities and on allocation of resources for youth activities of the Youth sector.

Competence is often used interchangeably with the term skill, but they do not really mean the same thing. Competence means the ability to apply knowledge, know-how and skills in a stable/recurring or changing situation. Two elements are crucial: applying what one knows and can do to a specific task or problem, and being able to transfer this ability between different situations.

Empowerment refers to helping people to help themselves. A concept used in many contexts: management ("The process of sharing information, training and allowing employees to manage their jobs in order to obtain optimum results"), community development ("action-oriented management training aimed at community members and their leaders, poverty reduction, gender strategy, facilitation, income generation, capacity development, community participation, social animation"), mobilisation ("Leading people to learn to lead themselves") virtual advocacy (Citizens Internet Empowerment Coalition, www.ciec.org) as well as helping women, sick people, minorities and youth to better manage their life.

Evaluation means to make a reasoned judgement about or to give a plausible account of something. It does not imply any specific purpose (such as grading individual performance), nor does it imply any particular method of evaluation (such as a written test), and nor does its outcomes automatically suggest that something is of greater value or importance than something else (such as Council of Europe activities in comparison with European Union activities).

Evidence-based youth policies are youth policies that are not only based on political and moral objectives, but also on accurate information on the social situation of young people across the society and their changing expectations, attitudes and life-styles. One important source of information is independent, objective and professional research and statistics. Furthermore, reliable empirical information on implementation of policies is needed to learn from experiences and further develop goal-setting, policy approaches and youth work methods and activities.

Formal Learning is purposive learning that takes place in a distinct and institutionalised environment specifically designed for teaching/training and learning, which is staffed by learning facilitators who are specifically qualified for the sector, level and subject concerned and which usually serves a specified category of learners (defined by age, level and specialist area of interest). Learning aims are almost always externally set, learning progress is usually monitored and assessed, and learning outcomes are usually recognised by certificates or diplomas. Much formal learning provision is compulsory (school education).

Formative evaluation or assessment refers to a dynamic process over time, which tries to capture the developmental dimensions of learning, performance and achievement. It records the pathways and the changes between two points in time, with the primary accent on what lies between those points and how the journey has unfolded.

Identity is the feeling or sense of belong of an individual to a group or culture. It can be formed through common habits, characteristics and ideas, which may be clear markers of a shared cultural identity, but essentially it is determined by difference: we feel we belong to a group, and a group defines itself as a group, by noticing and highlighting differences with other groups and cultures. Identity (or 'self') is very much a social construction: for example feminist studies argue that gender identities must be understood in relation to the (often male) expectations of women, girls, mothers and wives. It is further argued that today's (late modern) identities are often fragmented, overlapping and continuously under construction. This makes the task of

educational actors, like youth workers, whose objective it is to support young peoples' identity growth, increasingly challenging.

Informal Learning from the learner's standpoint at least, is non-purposive learning which takes place in everyday life contexts in the family, at work, during leisure and in the community. It does have outcomes, but these are seldom recorded, virtually never certified and are typically neither immediately visible for the learner nor do they count in themselves for education, training or employment purposes. Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning is one way in which the outcomes of such learning can be made more visible and hence open to greater recognition.

Intercultural Learning is a process of becoming more aware of and better understanding one's own culture and other cultures around the world. The aim of intercultural learning is to increase international and cross-cultural tolerance and understanding. The learning process itself is constant movement of cultural awareness – from the freedom and comfort of expecting others to be like oneself, to the shock and constraint of one's emotions and projections when they prove not to be. The Council of Europe pioneered intercultural learning as a pedagogical tool.

Juventization is a pro-active, problem-solving approach to youth participation perceiving it as the active involvement of young people in the social transformation of their societies.

Mahler (1983) envisioned **Juventology** as an integrative youth theory aiming to reveal the extent to which young people have power over present and future conditions and the extent to which they are governed by the established social authority.

Knowledge, in the everyday world, appears to have a self-evident meaning: it is what someone individually knows or the sum of what a given civilisation collectively knows. But what does it mean to know something? What is it that is known, how do we come to know it, why does it count as something worth knowing, and what do we do with it when we know it? In educational practice knowledge is what there is to learn, but it is not necessarily useful and worthwhile of its own accord. It has to be joined up with skills and competences (to become useful) on the one hand – and no less importantly, with principles and values (to become worthwhile) on the other hand.

Learning Outcomes are the results of a learning process, which may be expressed in a variety of ways. In fact, the outcomes that are recorded and measured at any one point in time are interim moments in a learning process, that is, a snapshot frame in a film (which could also run backwards).

Learning providers are organisations or a set of institutionalised arrangements that deliver learning, that is, that manage and monitor the provision of courses of some kind, whether formal or non-formal. Learning providers may also design and/or execute the courses they offer, and they may operate in either the public or the private sector. They may or may not be subject to some form of state or professional regulation to assure quality and standards.

Mentoring is a structured process for providing personal guidance and support to someone who is younger, less experienced or new to the game – whatever the context may be, but most commonly in education, training and employment contexts. Mentors act as critical but non-judgemental friends, provide a role model and a source of useful information and advice, and can take on a coaching task (helping to improve performance). They may be freely chosen, but

may also be allocated using a set of matching criteria. Formal mentoring programmes are likely to specify a given time-period for the mentoring relationship.

National Agencies are structures established by the national authorities in each country in order to assist with management and to assume responsibility for implementation of most of the youth programme.

National Youth Councils are umbrella organizations for youth NGOs and sometimes also other actors in youth work. National youth councils function primarily as a service organization to their members, but can also be a lobby and advocacy body. A similar role in international level is played by the European Youth Forum, where National youth councils play a strong role (see www.youthforum.org).

Non-formal Learning is purposive but voluntary learning that takes place in a diverse range of environments and situations for which teaching/training and learning is not necessarily their sole or main activity. These environments and situations may be intermittent or transitory, and the activities or courses that take place may be staffed by professional learning facilitators (such as youth trainers) or by volunteers (such as youth leaders). The activities and courses are planned, but are seldom structured by conventional rhythms or curriculum subjects. They usually address specific target groups, but rarely document or assess learning outcomes or achievements in conventionally visible ways.

The **Open Method of Coordination** is an intergovernmental means of governance in the European Union, based on the voluntary cooperation of its member states. It relies on soft law mechanisms such as guidelines and indicators, benchmarking and sharing of best practice for encouraging member states to improve policy. This means that there are no official sanctions for laggards. Rather, the method's effectiveness relies on a form of peer pressure and naming and shaming, as no member states wants to be seen as the worst in a given policy area. It applies to youth policy related initiatives of the European Union and has was used extensively in the development of the White Paper on Youth.

Open and Distance Learning combines two distinct categories of learning provision and participation which frequently occur together. Open learning is purposive learning that takes place where, when and how the learner chooses. It may also be self-directed learning, that is, the learner also voluntarily chooses what and why to learn. Open learning may be formal or non-formal in character. Distance learning covers the spectrum from correspondence learning ('by post') to eLearning (IT supported learning, whether as content, pedagogy or medium). It may or may not be designed as open learning, and can include highly formalised and closely assessed types of learning processes and outcomes.

*"***Participation** *is not an aim in itself, but an approach to becoming active in citizen participation as a means of taking an active role both in the development of one's own environment and in European co-operation"* (European Steering Committee for Youth 1997:7). Such an approach was accepted in the design of a study of youth experiments in European Union member states. The operational definition used accepts ample interpretation: *"power based on the possibility of exerting influence on the economic and social aspects of life in the broad community".*

Qualification can simply be a synonym for a certificate or diploma. In the world of formal education and training in Europe it is usually an official record or document testifying to the fact

that a person has successfully completed a given course or reached a given standard of achievement for a specified field, skill or competence.

Skill means having the knowledge and experience needed to perform a specific task or job – someone who has learned what to do (possesses the knowledge) and how to do it (can transfer the knowledge into real practice), which also means that someone else can observe the skill in action.

Social Capital consists of civil society norms and networks that enable citizens and their institutions to perform more productively. Without adequate supplies of social capital – that is, civic engagement, healthy community institutions, norms of mutual reciprocity, and trust –democracies and market economies may begin to falter. REF: 8

Social Recognition points to the status and esteem ('feel good factor') that individuals, organisations or sectors receive as a consequence of displaying certain characteristics, reaching certain achievements or engaging in certain activities – such as learning. It might also extend to material rewards, such as higher incomes for those with higher level qualifications.

Standards and Quality Standards are terms that can be used in several different ways. To say that an organisation uses standard methods of youth work might simply mean that it uses what the commentator judges to be the usual methods, that is, those used most commonly. The comment might well also convey the judgement that the methods in question are those generally recognised in the youth sector to be appropriate. This carries the suggestion that standard methods reflect professional norms, that is, they are seen to be good and valuable methods. At this point the term standards takes on a distinctive flavour, because it introduces the idea that some youth work methods are better than others (depending, of course, to some extent on the purpose and the participants). This raises the question of the bases for such quality judgements, which take the form of criteria, that is, attributes that should be present (or not present in some instances) if a particular youth work activity and its methods are to be seen as of good quality. The criteria that are applied are not necessarily the same for all cases, although some criteria may apply in all cases.

Teacher is the word traditionally used to refer to those who shape, guide and accompany learning processes in schools, colleges and – to some extent – higher education. They may teach vocational subjects, but it is not common to use the word 'teacher' for those who work in company-based contexts.

Validation refers to making visible and valuing the full range of qualifications and competences held by an individual, irrespective of where these have been acquired. The purpose of this validation may be formative (supporting an ongoing learning process) as well as summative (aiming at certification).

Values of Youth Sector refer to the European Convention on Human Rights, rule of law, free elections and pluralism, gender equality, social justice, minority protection, children and youth rights, access and inclusion.

Voluntary Activities are understood as comprising all kinds of voluntary engagement. They are characterised by the following aspects: open to all, unpaid, undertaken of own free will, educational (non-formal learning aspect), and added social value.

Voluntary Service is understood as being part of voluntary activities and is characterised by the following additional aspects: fixed period (no matter if short or long-term), clear objectives, contents and tasks, structure and framework, appropriate support, legal and social protection.

Wellbeing involves different aspects of young people's everyday lives – their physical, psychological and social comfort and satisfaction, or their lack thereof. As a result, well-being is often associated with health and prevention of risk-taking.

Young People are persons who are defined as young by national and international institutional policies. For the United Nations system young people are persons 10 – 24 years old. For European institutions, young people are 13 – 30 years old (this age is used both by the European Commission and Council of Europe for the purposes of European youth policies).

Young People with Fewer Opportunities are young people from a less-privileged cultural, geographical or socio-economic background, or with disabilities.

Youth as defined by the United Nations General Assembly are those persons falling between the ages of 15 and 24 years inclusive. This definition was made for International Youth Year, held around the world in 1985. All UN statistics on youth are based on this definition, as illustrated by the annual yearbooks of statistics published by the United Nations system on demography, education, employment and health. By that definition, therefore, children are those persons under the age of 14. It is, however, worth noting that Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines 'children' as persons up to the age of 18. This was intentional, as it was hoped that the Convention would provide protection and rights to as large an age-group as possible and because there was no similar United Nations Convention on the Rights of Youth. Many countries also draw a line on youth at the age at which a person is given equal treatment under the law – often referred to as the 'age of majority'. This age is 18 in many countries, and once a person passes this age, they are considered to be an adult. However, the operational definition and nuances of the term 'youth' often vary from country to country, depending on the specific socio-cultural, institutional, economic and political factors. Within the category of 'youth', it is also important to distinguish between teenagers (13 to 19) and young adults (20 to 24), since the sociological, psychological and health problems they face may differ.

The purpose of **Youth Policy** is to create conditions for learning, opportunity and experience which ensure and enable young people to develop the knowledge, skills and competences to be actors of democracy and to integrate into society, in particular playing active part in both civil society and the labour market. The key measures of youth policies are to promote citizenship learning and the integrated policy approach.

Youth Political Participation refers to groups of young people, who meet on a regular basis, with the aim of raising awareness, or challenging policies and/or practices, at a local, national or international level. Modern participation representative participation and direct participation with all their variants, such as NGO based structures, co-management, youth parliaments, school councils, youth hearings, demonstrations. Post modern or emergent and future forms of participation, various types of expressive, emotional, aesthetic, casual virtual and digital participation.

Youth Trainers are people who train others to work with young people, using non-formal methods, focusing on personal and social development and with an emphasis on fostering intercultural competence.

Youth Workers are people who work with young people in a wide variety of non-formal and informal contexts, typically focusing on personal and social development through one-to-one relationships and in group-based activities. Being learning facilitators may be their main task, but it is at least as likely that youth workers take a social pedagogic or directly social work based approach. In many cases, these roles and functions are combined with each other.