

UPR Youth Coalition Serbia



Beogradski centar
za ljudska prava



- The position of youth from Serbia first time in the UPR!
- Only one of the recommendations made by Moldova to the Republic of Serbia could be linked to youth.
- Historic moment for youth in Serbia.

CHALLENGES

Youth are recognized as hard to employ, and even when they find a job, their labor rights are often compromised. The existing active employment policies are not respecting all labor rights. Most youth jobs are insecure, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation and ineligible for unemployment benefits.

IMPACTS

- Every second young person in Serbia wants to leave the country.
- Every sixth young person is in the NEET category.
- Young people who've done traineeships say that they weren't given a contract or paid for their work.
- Lack of quality career opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION: Youth rights to work

- Redesign all the existing active employment policy programs within the next 12 months to ensure that youth beneficiaries can exercise their right to just conditions of work, including equal pay for work of equal value, full social insurance, and the right to join a trade union.

CHALLENGES

Young people in Serbia do not trust politicians, and institutions and do not believe that their voice is heard. The civil sector has been advocating for years to encourage young people to participate in decision-making processes, but the main obstacle is not enough money allocated to the sector of youth. Short-term funding doesn't do much for youth policy in the long run.

IMPACTS

- Over 77% of young people do not trust any politician.
- 71.9% think that the elections are not fair and free.
- Almost 79% (78.8%) believe they don't influence decision-making processes.
- The project method of financing civil CSOs makes it hard to develop the programs and produce lasting results.
- 59% of youth think that civic education should be mandatory subject.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Decision-making processes

- Implementation of the program for financing youth organizations through changes in the Law on Youth and Rulebook on financing and co-financing programs and projects of public interest in the youth sector until the end of 2024.
- Establish continuous youth participation and civic education in schools and universities during the 4th Cycle.

CHALLENGES

Serbia has only five mental health centers, even though the National Mental Health Protection Program (2019-2026) Action Plan said they were supposed to open five more centers in 2020, five more in 2021, and five more in 2022. Many young people can't afford to see a counselor in private, and there aren't enough support services to help them.

IMPACTS

- Two out of three young people (68.5%) have anxiety.
- More than half of young people (51.9%) have symptoms of depression.
- There aren't enough mental health experts, especially in smaller communities.
- In total, there are 4 to 5 psychologists available per 100.000 citizens.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Access to healthcare

- Take urgent measures to expand the community support network by opening youth centers offering free counseling.
- Establish a nationwide register of psychosocial support service providers within the next 12 months.
- Amend school curricula within the next school year, so they must include programs equipping children and youth with techniques for maintaining and improving mental health, as noted in the National Mental Health Protection Program.