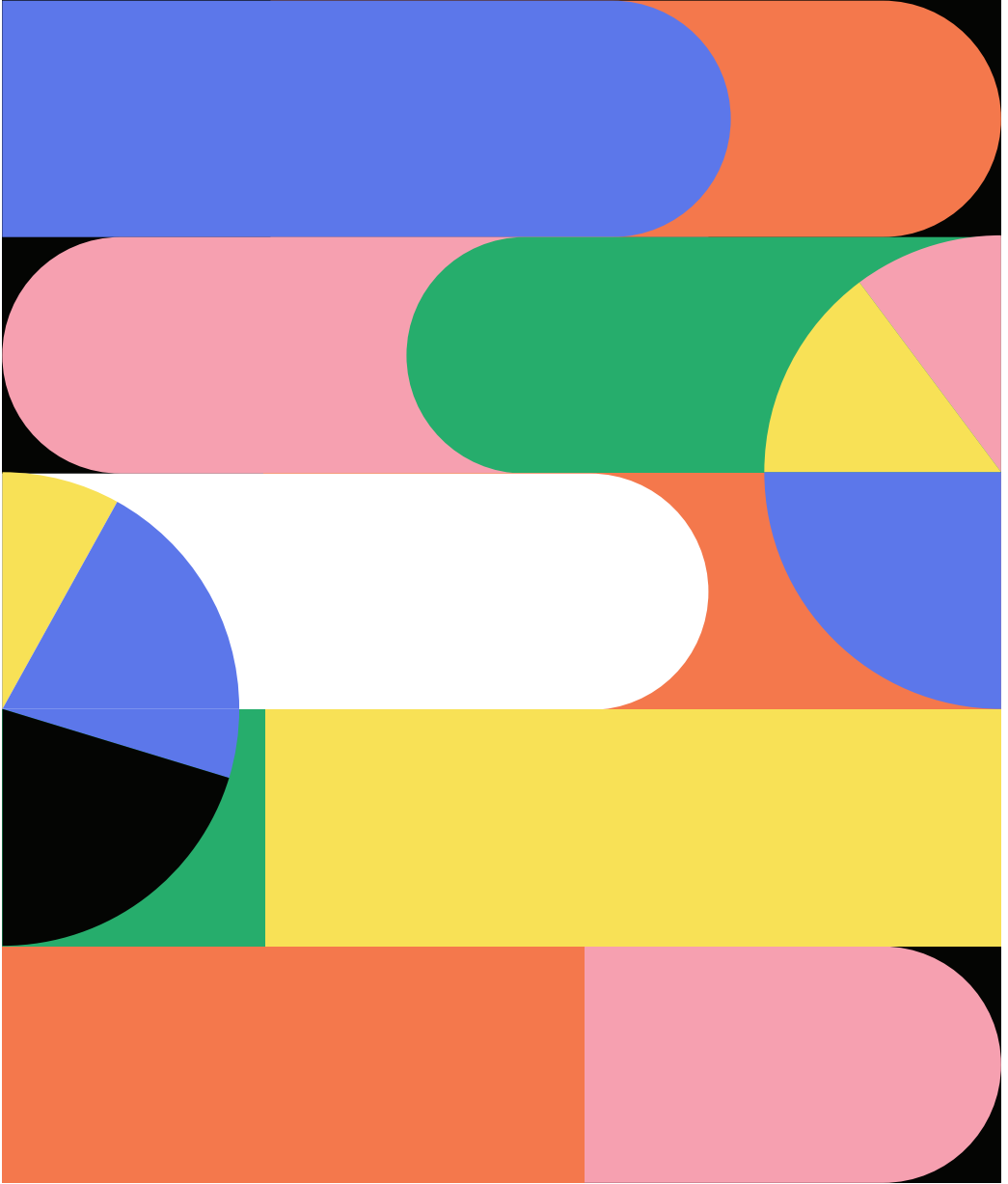




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ALTERNATIVE REPORT
on the position and needs of
youth in the republic of Serbia

2024

NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL OF SERBIA

**ALTERNATIVE REPORT ON THE
POSITION AND NEEDS OF YOUTH
IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA - 2024**

Belgrade
2024

ALTERNATIVE REPORT ON THE POSITION AND NEEDS OF YOUTH IN
THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA - 2024.

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The background is a vibrant, abstract composition of geometric shapes. At the top, there's a large yellow circle on the right, partially overlapping a pink area. To its left, a large orange shape with a pointed bottom edge overlaps a green triangle. The middle section is a solid pink background. The bottom section features a black horizontal bar, a large green circle on the left, a large blue triangle on the right, and a yellow horizontal band at the very bottom.

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Introduction

01



About the National Youth Council of Serbia

National Youth Council of Serbia¹ (KOMS), founded on 12 March 2011, is an association of 109 youth and for youth organizations. KOMS, the highest independent youth body representative in Serbia, is on a mission to develop national youth policies through youth advocacy, fostering partnerships with institutions, promoting cross-sectoral and international cooperation, as well as encouraging active youth participation and nurturing the organizational development of its members.

In accordance with Article 14 of the Law on Youth, on July 21st 2020, the National Youth Council of Serbia was recognized as an umbrella organization, thereby obtaining legal status to represent and advocate for the interests of its members, propose candidates to the Youth Council, and participate in the process of developing and implementing strategies and other documents related to youth policies.

KOMS mission is implemented through advocating for the development of mechanisms for youth participation in decision-making processes and proposing practical policies in areas of relevance to young people. KOMS also encourages, supports, and promotes youth participation, youth organizing and networking. It also strengthens the capacity-building and organizational sustainability of youth associations and organizations. KOMS is a full member of the European Youth Forum (YFJ)²

¹ National Youth Council of Serbia. <http://koms.rs/>. Accessed on June 24, 2024.

² European Youth Forum. <https://www.youthforum.org/>. Accessed on June 24, 2024.

KOMS roles are the following:

- Identifying the needs of youth and advocating for them,
- Serving as a platform for dialogue and cooperation, providing a forum for exchanging information, experiences and perspectives among its member organizations,
- Promoting, encouraging and supporting youth organizing,
- Fostering cooperation between institutions and young people and participating in decision-making processes that are relevant to youth following the principle of co-management,
- Analyzing public policies (laws, strategies, budgets, etc.) and providing amendments to them,
- Collaborating with related international organizations and representing young people from Serbia in the domain of international cooperation,
- Engaging in public advocacy at the national level
- Contributing to organizational capacity building of its member organizations.

KOMS mission

KOMS is an advocacy platform that represents youth interests, ensures active participation, and develops systemic solutions to improve the position of young people in Serbia. This is achieved through fostering strategic partnerships, and cross-sectoral and international cooperation, as well as strengthening the capacities of its member organizations and other stakeholders in youth policy.

KOMS vision

An encouraging environment where young people advocate for their interests and actively participate in the development of society.

For more information about KOMS, its current projects and activities, please visit the official KOMS website at www.koms.rs.



Research Methodology

02

The research was conducted from April to May 2024. According to the methodological approach and data collection methods, the research is both qualitative and quantitative, meaning that both research methods and data collection techniques were applied.

The research included several data collection techniques:

1. Desk analysis - the research utilized desk research to analyze the institutional and normative framework, as well as all thematic areas that determine the position of young people. Data for the study were collected through various sources, including available reports and data from institutions, the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, the National Employment Service, and other relevant institutions. Unstructured data and analysis of existing research related to youth and relevant topics were also included. Where indirect/secondary research was used, it was explicitly mentioned in the text. The database for the desk analysis was compiled from previous Alternative reports from 2017 to 2023. In certain areas, the most important data were presented again, supplemented with new data. For those interested in exploring the topics covered in previous reports, please access earlier Reports on the KOMS website (www.koms.rs).

This year, the desk analysis included data supplementation in some areas for the second half of 2023 and the first half of 2024.

2. Interview as a method of qualitative research - this method aims to explore several particularly important topics in more detail. This year, the main goals of this research method were to closely inspect the "Youth Guarantee" program with representatives of the National Employment Service, and conduct interviews with Jasmina Šantić, head of the department for the development of relations with employers, and Biljana Jelenković-Pastor, head of the department for mediation, employment and career planning.

3. Online questionnaire for young people aged 15 to 30 residing on the territory of the Republic of Serbia. The sampling method used was intentional/purposive, targeting the youth population as a subset of the general population within the age range of 15 to 30. Within this

primary sample, the sample was randomized and stratified based on age, gender, and region of residence. The questionnaire consisted of five question groups:

1. Basic information (12 questions); 2. Participation in social and political life (20); 3. Youth values (20); 4. Education, employment, and mobility (28); 5. Youth safety and help (12); The respondents were given a total of 92 questions consisting of close-ended (multiple-choice and scale-based answers) and semi-open questions.

None of the questions were mandatory for respondents. The questionnaire was completed by a total of 1,210 young respondents from the territory of the Republic of Serbia.

In the analysis of the collected data, tests for differences in responses were conducted based on gender, age, and region of residence. Additional tests were performed in specific segments of the research, as explicitly stated in the text. The analysis involved typical descriptive analyses, including frequencies and cross-tabulations, as well as statistical tests (such as Independent Samples t Test, One-Way ANOVA, etc.) with significance levels denoted as *** = $p < 0,001$; ** = $p < 0,01$ i * = $p < 0,05$.

Table 1. Research methodology

Research instrument: questionnaire	Sample size: 1,210
Research technique - data collection technique: online survey	Research period: 10. April - 17. April 2024
Target population: young people aged 15 to 30 years	Margin of error with 95% probability: +/- 1,227 for an incidence of 5%; +/- 1,689 for an incidence of 10%; +/- 2,816 for an incidence of 50%.
Sample type: random, stratified based on age, gender and place of residence	Data processing program: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)

The margin of error is a deviation or percentage range within which lies a response that we would have received if we were able to survey the entire population instead of just a sample. The margin of error for this sample is minimal.

Sample description:

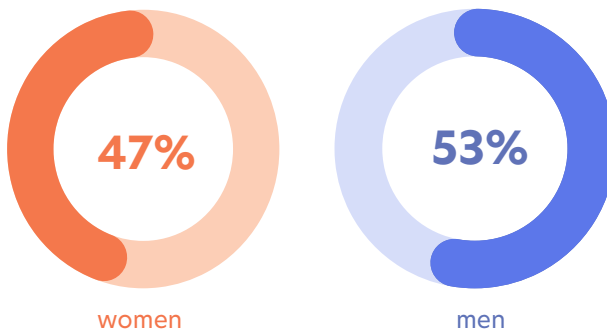
The questionnaire was completed by young people of all age groups. For easier representation, young participants are divided into three age groups, and the percentages of respondents correspond to the percentages in the population.

Table 2. Sample stratified by age

Group:	Range of Age	Participation rate (%)
Group 1	Youth from 15 to 19 years of age	33,3
Group 2.	Youth from 20 to 24 years of age	33,6
Group 3.	Youth from 25 to 30 years of age	33,1

The questionnaire was completed by 47% of young women and 53% of young men.

Graph 1. Sample by Gender of Participants



Based on the type of settlement in which the participants live, the sample is as follows:

Table 3. Sample with regards to the type of Participants' Settlement

Type of settlement:	Percentage of participants (%):
A city with more than 100,000 inhabitants	51,4
A settlement with a population ranging from 30,000 to 100,000 inhabitants	25,4
A settlement with a population of up to 30,000 inhabitants	23,2

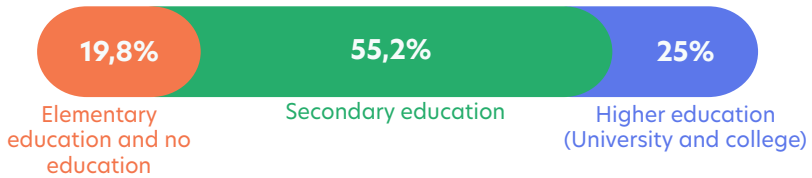
With regards to the region they live in, the respondents are from:

Table 4. Sample with regards to the Region in which the Participants live

Region	Percentage of participants (%)
Belgrade region	29,7
Vojvodina region	26,4
West and Central Serbia	21,4
East and South Serbia	22,5

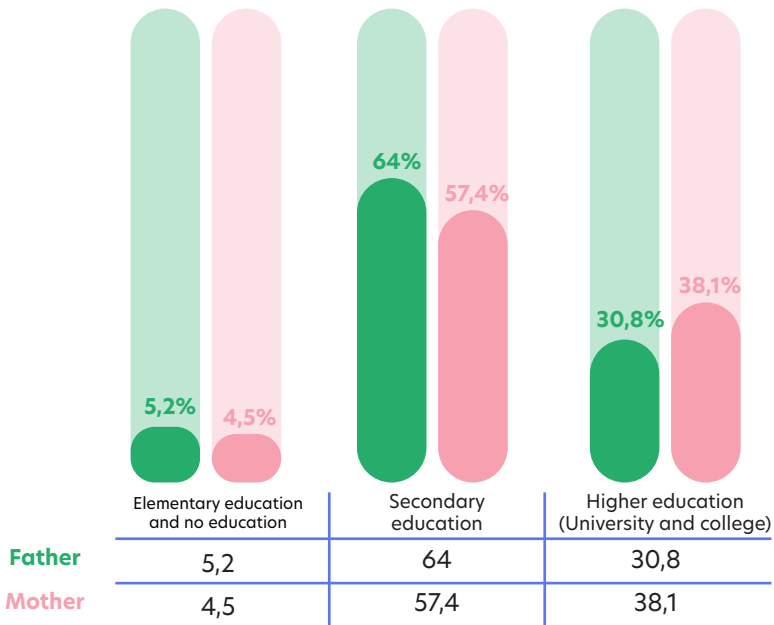
According to the level of education acquired, participants were divided into the following categories:

Graph 2. Sample with regards to Education Acquired



The education of the respondents' parents is as follows:

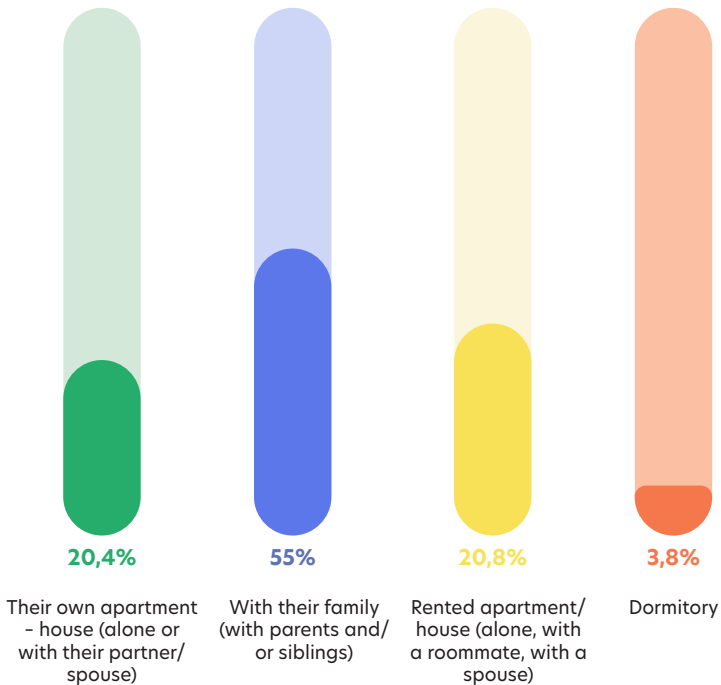
Graph 3. Sample by Parents' Education



According to the housing type, participants live in:

Graph 4. Sample by housing type

The respondents live in:



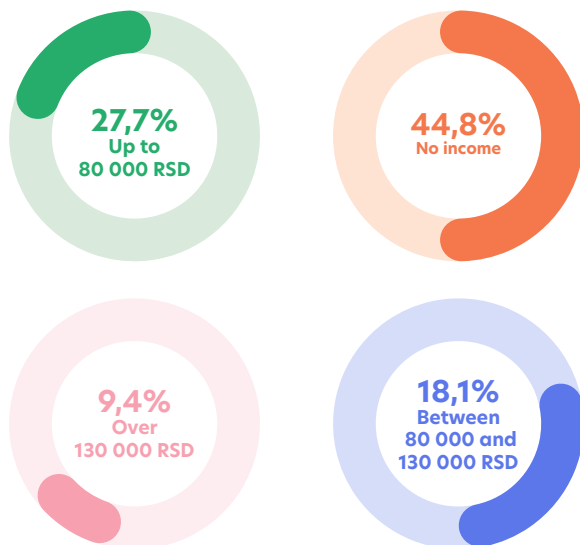
The research shows that only 20,4% of young people lives in their own apartment while the majority, 55% of them, rents their apartment. This fact grossly impacts the way young people gain independence and create families, which is why youth housing must be one of the focal points of youth policy to be dealt with at the state level. The housing question is in direct correlation with the brain drain phenomenon, one of the biggest challenges Serbia as a society faces. Policies aimed at encouraging earlier independence would certainly curb the youth's desire to leave the country.

When it comes to young people living with their parents, more than half of them (51,3%) are still attending school or university (and/or are still minors), whereas nearly a quarter of them (22,3%) still lives with their parents since they can not afford their own living space (neither to buy nor to rent). Just under one-fifth (17,2%) of the respondents lives with their parents because they find it more convenient and they have no urgent need for independence. The remaining 9,2% of young people listed other reasons for still living in their family home.

In terms of monthly income, the respondents are divided into the following categories:

Graph 5. The sample by Monthly Income in percentages

Monthly income of the respondents



Based on our research, 27.7% of young people earns up to 80 000 RSD, 18.1% earns between 80 000 and 130 000 while 9.4% earns over 130 000 RSD. In addition, 44.9% of young people has no income (they are either in school/university or unem ployed). Low income, or no income, directly contributes to delayed youth independence which greatly affects young peo-ple’s quality of life in Serbia.

Regarding the presence of disabilities, the research indicates that 1.7% of young people have some form of disability.

Table 5. Sample by the Presence of Disability

Disability	Percentage of participants (%)
Yes	1,7
No	98,3

ROCKS

Normative framework

03

3.1. Law on Youth

The Law on Youth³ was adopted in 2011. This law regulates the measures and activities taken by the Republic of Serbia, autonomous provinces, and local self-government units to improve the social status of young people and create conditions for fulfilling the needs and interests of young people in all areas relevant to them.

The amendment process of the Law on Youth has not been successfully completed despite numerous attempts. The first working group for drafting the Draft Law on Amendments and Supplements to the Law on Youth was active from 2015 to 2017, while the second working group was active from 2021 to 2022 within the former Ministry of Youth and Sports. However, none of the procedures reached the stage of sending the draft law to the parliamentary procedure.

The new Ministry of Tourism and Youth (MTO) announced on February 27, 2023, the beginning of drafting a new Law on Youth.⁴ The Working Group for the preparation of the new Law on Youth was formed on February 13, with a deadline to complete the task by December 1st, 2023. MTO published a Report on the conducted e-consultation regarding the initiation of work on the preparation of the Draft of Law on Youth on April 6, 2023.⁵

³ Law on Youth, Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia No 50/2011, http://www.paragraf.rs/proj-isi/zakon_o_mladima.html

⁴ „The first meeting of the working group for drafting the Youth Law has been held”. The Ministry of Tourism and Youth, <https://mto.gov.rs/vest/1907/odrzan-prvi-sastanak-radne-grupe-za-izradu-na-crta-zakona-o-mladima-.php>, Accessed on July 1, 2023.

⁵ The Ministry of Tourism and Youth. E-consultation report. 2023, <https://mto.gov.rs/vest/2115/iz-vestaj-o-sprovedenoj-ekonsultaciji.php>. Accessed on July 1, 2023.

After the consultations, the initial plan was to submit the Law for Parliamentary procedure in September 2023,⁶ however, upon the completion of e-consultations in April 2023, the process was suspended indefinitely. In the meantime, the parliament was dissolved from November 2023 to February 2024 due to the holding of extraordinary parliamentary elections. In the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan 2023-2026 (section 4.5), the new law on youth is expected to be adopted by 2025.

3.2. The Youth Strategy for the Republic of Serbia 2023-2030

On January 26, 2023, the Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted the Youth Strategy for the Republic of Serbia for the period from 2023. to 2030.⁷

The new Youth Strategy outlines six principles for working with and for young people:

- Respect for human and minority rights, equality, and prohibition of discrimination,
- Support for personal and social empowerment of young people,
- Equal opportunities for all,
- Intersectoral cooperation and coordination at all levels of decision-making,
- Active youth participation and collaboration,
- Social responsibility and solidarity.

⁶ „New Youth Law: Where are we now and what is to come?” National Youth Council of Serbia, June 1, 2023. <https://koms.rs/2023/06/01/novi-zakon-o-mladima-dokle-smo-stigli-i-sta-nas-ceka/>. Accessed on July 1, 2023.

⁷ The 28th session of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, January 26, 2023. Government of the Republic of Serbia, <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/prikaz/680130>. Accessed on July 1, 2023.

The **general objective** of the Strategy is **to increase the quality of life of young people**. The Strategy outlines **five specific objectives** and a larger number of measures to achieve them. For each specific objective, a specific set of indicators of fulfilment is envisaged. In comparison to the National Youth Strategy 2015-2025, the Youth Strategy 2023-2030 places greater emphasis on youth work and the implementation of youth policy at the level of local self-government units. Both strategies focus on areas such as active youth participation, acquiring qualifications, safety, and health. However, the new strategy does not include the areas of youth information and participation in creating cultural content, which were mentioned in the previous one.

3.3. Action plan for the period from 2023 to 2025 for the implementation of the Youth Strategy for the period from 2023. to 2030.

Action plans for the previous National Youth Strategy were adopted for the periods 2015.-2017. and 2018.-2020. For the following three years, there was no valid action plan for the implementation of the Strategy.

After the adoption of the new Youth Strategy for the period from 2023 to 2030, the Ministry of Tourism and Youth formed a Working Group to draft the Action Plan for its implementation from 2023 to 2025.⁸ The first meeting of the Working Group was held on March 17th, and public consultations regarding the drafting of the Action Plan took place from March 31 to April 10. The Action plan was adopted with a delay (the legal deadline is 90 days from the adoption of the Strategy) at the session of the Government of the Republic of Serbia on July 6, 2023. At the time of writing this report, the preparation of the Annual Report

⁶ "The Announcement of the commencement of drafting the Action Plan for the implementation of the Youth Strategy in the Republic of Serbia 2023-2030", Ministry of Tourism and Youth, March 20, 2023, <https://mto.gov.rs/vest/1949/obavestjenje-o-pocetku-izrade-nacrta-akcionog-plana-za-sprovođenje-strategije-za-mlade-u-republici-srbiji-za-period-od-2023-do-2030-godine-u-periodu-od-2023-do-2025-godine.php>. Accessed on July 1, 2023.

on the implementation of the Action Plan for 2023 has commenced: an expert has been hired to write the Annual report and a preliminary analysis of the data has been presented. In addition, the Ministry of Tourism and Youth formed a Working Group for monitoring and implementing the Strategy for Youth in the Republic of Serbia 2023-2030, however, to date, the working group has met once.

In 2023, a Working Group was formed for the development of a complex Youth Well-being Index of the Ministry of Tourism and Youth. This index will enable comprehensive annual monitoring of progress in the implementation of the goals and measures of the Youth Strategy 2023-2030. at all levels.

The development of the Index is being done in cooperation with the UN Population Fund and the experts provided by Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation. On May 16 and 17, 2024, a two-day workshop was held with representatives of local self-government units and youth offices where the measurement of the local Youth Well-being Index will be introduced first. The publication of the Youth Well-being Index is planned for December 2024.⁹

3.4. Strategy on Economic Migrations of the Republic of Serbia 2021-2027 and Action Plan 2021-2023

Strategy on Economic Migrations of the Republic of Serbia 2021-2027 was adopted by the Government of the Republic of Serbia at the beginning of 2020. The general objective of the strategy, as stated in this document, is to create an economic and social environment that slows down the emigration of the working-age population, strengthens ties with the diaspora, promotes return and circular migrations, and attracts foreigners with various educational backgrounds.

⁹ "Developing the Youth Well-being Index at the Local Level." Foundation "Ana and Vlade Divac", May 17, 2024, <https://www.divac.com/Vesti/3601/Razvijanje-Indeksa-blagostanja-mladih-na-loka-lnom.shtml>. Accessed on June 24, 2024.

The Government also adopted the Action Plan 2021-2023 on September 9, 2021.¹⁰ The Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs is responsible for the coordination of implementation and reporting. Within the six objectives mentioned above, 20 measures are planned for the period 2021-2023. The annual report on the implementation of the Action Plan for 2021 was published on the Ministry's website,¹¹ although it does not contain cumulative data on the achievement of individual objectives, but only individual activities. According to this report, in 2019 there were 950,485 persons born in Serbia residing abroad.

3.5. The Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan

The Youth Guarantee is a program which aims to tackle youth unemployment through the cooperation of various sectors and social partners and ensures that young people, under 30, receive a quality work offer, continued education or internship within four months of entering the unemployment or dropout status, i.e. completion of formal education.

The Youth Guarantee implementation plan was adopted by the Government of the Republic of Serbia in December 2023 and launched in January 2024 on the territory of a total of 28 local governments (within the branches of the National Employment Service in Nis, Kragujevac and Sremska Mitrovica). The implementation plan at the "piloting" level covers the period from 2023 to 2026.

Planned reforms and interventions are grouped into four phases of the Youth Guarantee: I) mapping and early intervention; II) outreach;

¹⁰ The 78th session of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, September 9, 2021. Government of the Republic of Serbia, <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/prikaz/573550>. Accessed on July 1, 2023.

¹¹ Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans, and Social Affairs. Annual Report on the Implementation of the Action Plan for the Youth Strategy of the Republic of Serbia for 2021. <https://www.minrzs.gov.rs/sr/dokumenti/ostalo/sektor-za-rad-i-zaposljavanje>. Accessed on July 1, 2023.

III) preparation; and IV) offer (for continuing education, for employment and internship).¹²

“Transversal driving forces” required for the effective implementation of the Youth Guarantee consist of the mobilization of partnerships, data collection improvement, monitoring and evaluation, the optimal use of financial resources and the establishment of strong delivery mechanisms.

3.6. The Laws on Volunteering and Internships

The Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs was tasked with drafting the law on volunteering and the law on internships. Public consultations on drafts of these laws were conducted during previous reporting periods, but since then, these legislative proposals have not been submitted to the parliamentary procedure.

The discussion on the law on volunteering was held in late December 2021 and early January 2022. After the formation of the Government in October 2022, the draft law was returned to the Working Group for further discussion, followed by a series of meetings to address the feedback received. The last meeting of the Working Group took place on May 18, 2023, at the offices of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, after which there were no more meetings, nor was the Draft Law on Volunteering forwarded to the parliamentary procedure.

The last meeting of the Working Group for drafting the law on internships was held on May 16, 2023, at the offices of the Government of the Republic of Serbia. The public consultation took place from August 18 to September 17, 2023, with seven organizations participating.¹³ This is the latest available information on the status of the preparation of this law.

¹² Implementation Plan for the Youth Guarantee 2023-2026, Official Gazette of the RS, No. 120/23

¹³ “Public discussion on the Draft Law on Internships begins.” Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans, and Social Affairs, August 17, 2023. <https://www.minrzs.gov.rs/sr/aktuelnosti/vesti/pocela-javna-rasprava-o-nacrtu-zakona-radnoj-praksi>. Accessed on June 24, 2024.

3.7. Policy Statement of the Prime Minister

The Policy Statement of the new Prime Minister Miloš Vučević was presented in the National Assembly on May 1st 2024. The government was elected and sworn in on May 2nd, 2024.

The Policy Statement included a special section dedicated to youth, and Prime Minister Vučević listed the implementation of the Youth Guarantee as one of the goals of his government in the field of youth policy. He also mentioned investing in the renovation, equipping, and support of youth centers, clubs, and youth offices, with an allocation of 200 million RSD for 2024. Additionally, further work was announced on standardizing the profession of youth workers and the operation of youth offices.

Miloš Vučević also announced that he would “open a dialogue with young people to collectively find the best solutions for their future in our country.” His predecessor, Prime Minister Ana Brnabić, held four dialogues with young people during her term.

What Policy Statements of both former and current Prime Ministers of the Republic of Serbia have in common is the focus on the Youth Guarantee and the establishment of youth centers. However, Vučević’s Policy Statement omits objectives pertaining to the adoption of laws concerning youth—namely, the new law on youth, the law on internships, and the law on volunteering.

3.8. European Commission Progress Report on Youth in Serbia

In Chapter 19, the European Commission reiterated, as one of its priority recommendations, the need to ensure more systematic employment and social policies aimed at young people. It placed particular emphasis on the importance of taking steps to establish and implement the Youth Guarantee program through the development of a Youth Guarantee implementation plan.

Regarding Chapter 26: Education and Culture, the European Commission's report noted that in 2022, Serbia continued its active participation in the Erasmus+ program as an associate member for the period 2021–2027 and successfully participated in the DiscoverEU program. The report observed that the Youth Strategy until 2030 had been adopted. However, as was the case in the previous two years, it reiterated its assessment that youth policies and support mechanisms are unevenly developed at the local level and need further strengthening.

ROCK

Institutional framework

04

4.1. Ministry of Tourism and Youth (MTO)

For the first time after a long series of parliamentary elections, when choosing the new government of the Republic of Serbia in early May 2024, the Law on Ministries was not amended, with the latest version having been adopted in October 2022. Youth affairs remain under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Tourism and Youth, which continues to be presided over by Husein Memić in Miloš Vučević's government.

After the six-month term of the Acting Assistant Minister for Youth in the Ministry of Tourism and Youth, Ivana Antonijević, ended in July 2023, the Government of the Republic of Serbia appointed her to this position three times in succession for three-month terms, most recently on March 29, 2024.¹⁴ The opportunity to adopt KOMS recommendation, suggesting that the Assistant Minister for Youth should be appointed in a full capacity to overcome the limitations of the acting status, was once again missed.

The Ministry of Tourism and Youth includes the Youth Sector, the Tourism Sector, the Tourist Inspection Sector, as well as the Sector for International Cooperation and European Integration.

According to information from the Ministry of Tourism and Youth as of June 2024¹⁵, the Youth Sector had **12 employees out of a total of 17 planned positions**—an acting assistant minister and 11 civil servants with indefinite-term contracts. KOMS has recommended increasing the capacity of the Youth Sector in several reports, a recommendation that has been partially adopted over the years. In relation to the total number of planned positions in the ministry (227), the Youth Sector accounts for only about 7.5%.

¹⁴ The 113th session of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, March 29, 2024. Government of the Republic of Serbia, <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/prikaz/774060>. Accessed on June 24, 2024.

¹⁵ Ministry of Tourism and Youth. Work Report, May 9, 2024, <https://informator.poverenik.rs/informator?org=4piCkfbB4eadwajKs>. Accessed on June 24, 2024.

¹⁶ KOMS Inquiry sent to the Ministry of Tourism and Youth, June 12, 2024

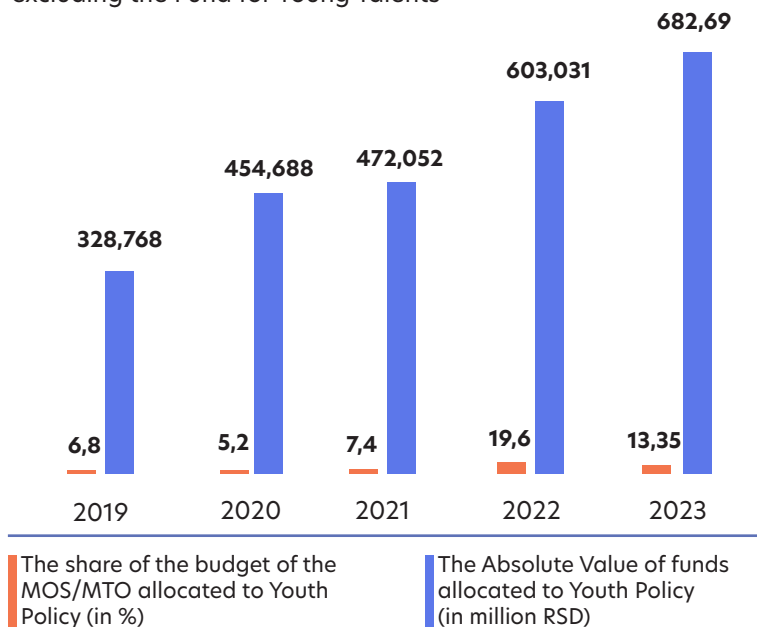
The Ministry finances programs and projects of public interest in the youth sector, carried out by youth associations, organizations for youth, and their umbrella organizations, through the publication of annual public calls for proposals. Annual public calls for proposals are based on the Law on Youth and the Rulebook on Financing and Cofinancing of Programs and Projects of Public Interest in the Youth Sector. One of the requirements for allocating funds to youth associations, organizations for youth, and umbrella organizations is that they must be registered in the Unified Registry of Youth Associations, Organizations for Youth, and their umbrella organizations, maintained by the Ministry of Tourism and Youth, in accordance with the Rulebook on the Content and Procedure for Maintaining the Unified Registry of Youth Associations, Organizations for Youth, and Their Federations.

The total budget for Youth Policy envisaged in the Budget Law for 2024 amounted to 682 690 000 RSD, which is an increase compared to 2023 when 603 031 000 was allocated.

If we consider the overall budget of the Ministry of Tourism and Youth, which amounts to 5,110,288.741 RSD, the percentage of the budget allocated to youth is 13.35%, which is a decrease compared to 2023 when it was 19.06%. The budget of the Ministry of Tourism and Youth has been significantly increased; however, there has not been a substantial increase in the budget allocated for youth, which has led to a reduction in its relative share.

The graph below indicates that the absolute value of the budget allocated for youth policy has increased over the years (excluding the Youth Talent Fund, when it was under the Ministry of Youth and Sports), while its share within the ministries has varied without any particular regularity.

Graph 6. The share of the budget of the Ministry of Youth and Sports / Ministry of Tourism and Youth allocated to Youth Policy, excluding the Fund for Young Talents



If we look at the total budget of the Republic of Serbia, the percentage of the budget allocated to Youth through the Ministry of Tourism and Youth (MTO) is 0.03% of the annual national budget.¹⁷ **These findings remain unchanged compared to the previous three years despite the increase in the absolute value of funds allocated to Youth. They represent the most reliable indicator of the absence of significant change.**

¹⁷ Law on the Budget of the Republic of Serbia for 2024, Official Gazette of the RS, No. 92/2023.

Graph 7. Budget for Youth within the Budget of the Republic of Serbia for 2024 (%)

99,97%

Remaining budget

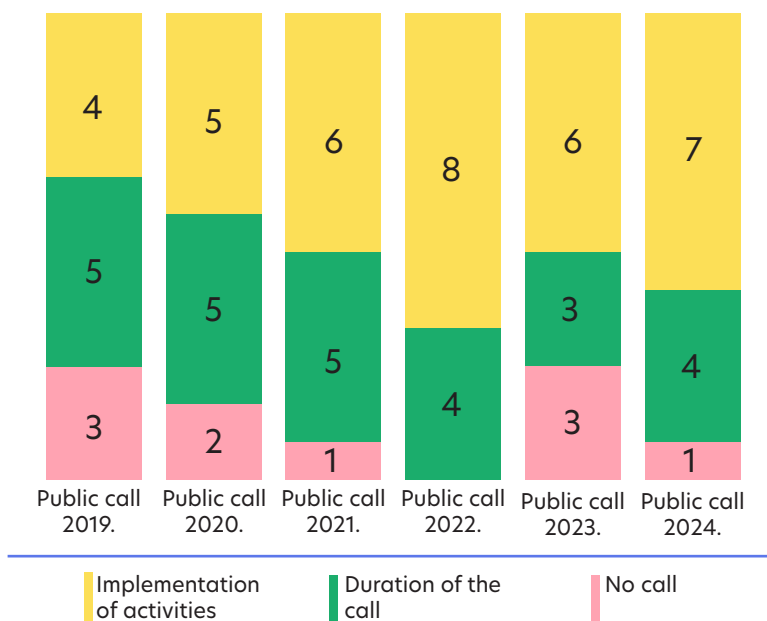
Budget of the Republic of
Serbia Youth budget

0,03%

Previous editions of the Alternative Report highlighted the dynamics of public calls in the field of Youth Policy by the Ministry. The main observed problem was that the Ministry lacked the capacity to timely announce and execute public calls, leading to a significant portion of the year being spent on announcing and awaiting the results of the calls, leaving a very short period for project implementation.

This situation slightly improved in 2021, and the positive trend continued in 2022, however, public calls were once again published late in 2023. In 2024, public calls were announced as early as late January, which represents an improvement. The only exception is the Public Call for the Development and Implementation of Youth Policy, which was published only at the end of April. The results of the calls, excluding the aforementioned call for the development and implementation of youth policy, were published by mid-June.

Graph 8. Project Implementation by MOS/MTO-2024.



Due to the close proximity of the publication of the public call results and the conclusion of the Alternative Report, it was impossible to analyze organizations that received funding this year. The analysis for 2023 was also published separately from the Alternative Report in September same year.¹⁸ The Public Call for the Implementation of the Goals of the Youth Strategy in the Republic of Serbia 2023-2030 and the "Youth are the Law" program, as well as the Public Call for Stimulating Various Forms of Youth Employment, Self-Employment, and Entrepreneurship, were analyzed in this report.

The analysis revealed that 119 organizations received funding, which represents a significant increase compared to 2022 (77). Of these, 52 (44%) are from Belgrade, 22 (18%) from Vojvodina, and 45 (38%) from the rest of Serbia: the Šumadija and Western Serbia region and the Eastern and Southern Serbia region. Regarding the funds, the Belgrade and Vojvodina regions together received 75% of the funds from the call for the implementation of the Youth Strategy goals. This is a slightly lower percentage of funds for these two regions compared to the previous year, when it was nearly 90%, which is a positive shift towards a more balanced distribution of funds.

The analysis of the calls for proposals indicates that out of the 119 organizations that received funding from the two public calls of the Ministry of Tourism and Youth, six of them a) existed for less than one year; b) have no online communication channels c) received more funding than their total budget amounted to the previous year.

¹⁸ National Youth Council of Serbia. "Analysis of the Ministry of Tourism and Youth Public Calls for 2023." Belgrade, 2023, <https://koms.rs/2023/09/saopstenje-povodom-analize-konkursa-ministarstva-turizma-i-omladine/>. Accessed on June 24, 2024.

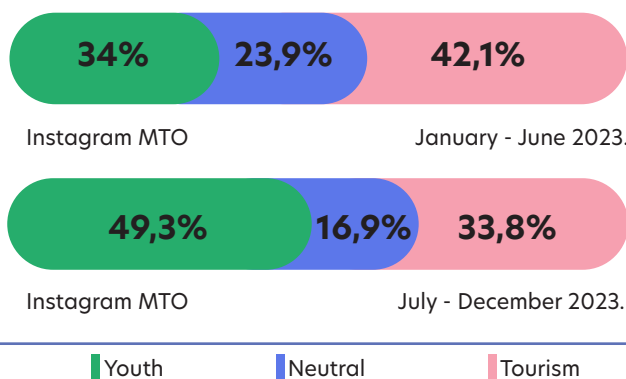
MTO Communication - Social media communication

In its previous five editions, the Alternative Report has been tracking the communication of the ministries responsible for youth—namely, the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Tourism and Youth. This year, the report also analyzed posts on the MTO's Instagram profile from July to December 2023.¹⁹

For the first time since the communication of ministries responsible for youth has been tracked in the Alternative Reports, **the youth topic has taken precedence over the ministry's other areas of responsibility** (such as sports or tourism) in a six-month period. This is certainly a positive development, as youth policy deserves at least equal representation in the ministry's communication alongside other areas of responsibility.

The period from January to June 2024 is not covered by this report, which was concluded before the end of the first half of the year. However, based on the analysis of the posts available up to the conclusion of the report, it is clear that the field of tourism has again taken precedence.

Graph 9. Topics on Social Media MOS/MTO



¹⁹ Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/mto.gov.rs/>

4.2. Youth Council

In accordance with the Law on Youth and the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Serbia²⁰, the Youth Council was established on January 24, 2014 and constituted at a meeting held on February 24, 2014. The primary task of the Council is to promote and coordinate activities related to the development, implementation, and enforcement of youth policy, propose measures for its improvement, and suggest measures for aligning and coordinating the activities of ministries and other bodies responsible for specific areas within the youth sector, as well as all other stakeholders in youth policy, in accordance with strategic and legal acts in this field.²¹

The Council, chaired by the Minister of Tourism and Youth Husein Memić, has a total of 44 members in its new composition as of 2023. The Youth Council operates based on the Rules of Procedure of the Youth Council.²²

In July 2023, at the request of youth representatives, an emergency meeting²³ of the Youth Council was held to discuss the safety and discouragement of activists. This issue was raised following a parliamentary session in which Minister Aleksandar Martinović publicly criticized activists Ivan Bjelić and Pavle Cicvarić, who were among the leaders of youth protests following the May 2023 tragedies. In addition to safeguarding the rights of young activists to express their views peacefully, the agenda included a review of the measures to improve the safety and mental health of young people.

²⁰ Decision on the Establishment of the Youth Council (Government of the RS, 05 Number: 02-559/2014-1)

²¹ Youth Council. The Ministry of Tourism and Youth, <https://mto.gov.rs/tekst/1172/savet-za-mlade.php>. Accessed on July 1, 2023.

²² The Ministry of Tourism and Youth. Rules of Procedure of the Youth Council. February 24, 2014, <https://mto.gov.rs/extfile/sr/1176/Poslovnik%20o%20radu%20Saveta.pdf>. Accessed on July 1, 2023.

²³ The minutes from the Youth Council meetings are adopted at the next session. Given that a new session has not been held, we received information about the emergency meeting from the representatives of the Umbrella Organization of Youth of Serbia, who are members of the Council.

Despite the official and timely request, the issue of protecting the rights of activists, initiated by youth representatives, was not included as a separate item in the proposed agenda but was discussed under "Other items." Furthermore, the chair of the Council, the Assistant Minister, promised to have the recommendations from the youth conveyed to the Government, however, there was no official feedback or follow-up meeting of the Council on this important topic.

Although the Youth Council did not have any additional meetings, its members held a meeting with representatives of the UN Human Rights Recommendations Monitoring Council on September 27, 2023.²⁴ The UN human rights mechanisms' recommendations related to youth were presented at the meeting, and closer forms of cooperation and coordination between the two councils in the areas of human rights and the status of young people were discussed. A few days after this informal meeting, on October 9, 2023, a joint session of the two councils was held, during which the framework for their work and collaboration was presented.

4.3. Provincial Secretariat for Sports and Youth (PSSO)

Following the snap provincial elections in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina in December 2023, the new provincial government was elected in May 2024. Dane Basta, who has held the position since 2020, remained as the Provincial Secretary for Sports and Youth. His deputy continued to be Tatjana Ječmenica Jevtić, while Vinko Burnać retained his role as the assistant responsible for youth affairs.

After four years of monitoring the work of the Provincial Secretariat for Sports and Youth, the section of the website with strategic

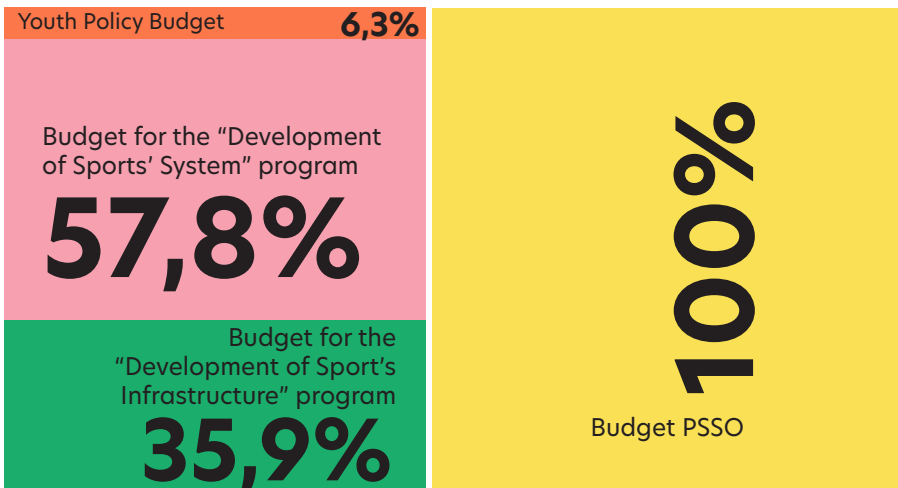
²⁴"Meeting of the Youth Council and the Council for Monitoring the Implementation of UN Human Rights Recommendations", National Youth Council of Serbia, September 28, 2023. <https://koms.rs/2023/09/odrzan-sastanak-saveta-za-mlade-i-saveta-za-pracenje-primene-preporuka-un-za-ljudska-prava/>. Accessed on June 24, 2024.

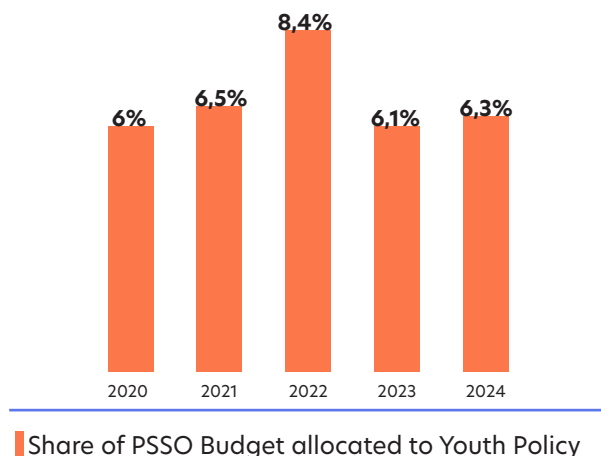
documents was updated, and **the Action Plan for Youth Policy in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina 2023-2025** was published. The Action plan, drafted in August 2023 and adopted by the APV Assembly in November of the same year, was approved by the European Youth Center Vojvodina from Novi Sad.

The Action Plan is divided into four thematic areas, which usually cover five specific objectives of the Youth Strategy of the Republic of Serbia (see Chapter on Normative Framework): youth work, youth spaces, active youth participation in society, and personal development (specific objectives 4 and 5 of the Strategy).

The total funds allocated for Youth Policy in the budget of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina (APV) for 2024 amount to 44 000 000 RSD, which represents an increase of 2 million RSD compared to 2023, and a 5 million increase compared to 2022. The share of Youth Policy in the overall budget of the Provincial Secretariat for Sports and Youth remains approximately the same - 6.3%. Additionally, the portion of funds allocated for youth policy in the overall budget of the APV remains 0.04%.

Graph 10. Budget for Youth Policy within the Budget of PSSO



Graph 11. Share of PSSO Budget allocated to Youth Policy

4.4. Local Youth Policy

In the newly adopted Youth Strategy of the Republic of Serbia 2023-2030, in the third part titled “Overview and analysis of the current state in the Field of Youth Policy,” it is stated that there are 140 Youth Offices and 78 Youth Councils established at the local level in the Republic of Serbia. There are currently 43 local youth Action Plans in force, and approximately 20 more are being developed.²⁵ These data were retrieved from the Ministry of Youth and Sports database as of December 31, 2021. Considering that these data significantly differ from the data provided by KOMS, which states that there are 39 local youth Action Plans and only 75 youth offices, we should at least

²⁵ Government of the Republic of Serbia. Youth Strategy of the Republic of Serbia 2023-2030, Official Gazette of the RS, No. 9, February 8, 2023. <https://pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SIGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/vlada/strategija/2023/9/1/reg>, Accessed on July 1, 2023, p. 41

consider the possibility that these data might not have been updated properly.

The Ministry of Tourism and Youth has concluded contracts with the city administrations of Niš, Subotica, Sombor, and Novi Pazar for the establishment of youth centers in these four cities with a total value of 180 million RSD. The primary goal of these centers is to create conditions that encourage young people to stay in their local communities and to enhance their knowledge and skills for a better quality of life in accordance with the National Youth Strategy (NSM). In Niš, Subotica, and Sombor, the plan is to adapt existing spaces into youth centers, while in Novi Pazar, the construction of a completely new center is planned.

4.5. Associations of youth, associations for youth, informal associations, and their alliances

All registered youth associations and organizations for youth can, for the purpose of achieving common goals and interests, form **umbrella organizations**, the objectives and areas of which are directed towards youth. An organization acquires the status of an **umbrella organization** if it consists of at least 60 registered organizations located in at least two-thirds of the administrative districts in the Republic of Serbia, and if it has been conducting youth activities for at least two years in multiple local self-government units, and if it gathers at least 2,000 individual, registered members, with at least two-thirds of them being young people. The umbrella organization represents and advocates for the interests of its members, proposes candidates to the Youth Council, and participates in the development and implementation of the Strategy and other documents in the field of youth policy.²⁶ The National Youth Council of Serbia (KOMS) achieved the umbrella organisation status in 2020, while the Scout Federation of Serbia obtained this status in 2022.

²⁶ Law on Youth, Art. 14.

According to the latest available database of registered organizations, with the most recent entry as of March 31, 2024, a total of **1,938 organizations and associations are listed in the unified registry. This includes 1,009 youth organizations, 900 organizations for youth, 27 associations, and two umbrella organizations.**²⁷

²⁷ Ministry of Tourism and Youth. Work Report, May 9, 2024. <https://informatior.poverenik.rs/informatior?org=4piCkfbB4eadwajKs&ch=gBYayvRa9kib2npWz&code=>, Accessed on June 24, 2024.

**Participation
in political
and social life**

05

5.1. Youth in Political Institutions

In the previous year, when the new parliamentary term was constituted, there were 14 young members of Parliament. Currently, there are only six young members of Parliament in the Assembly.

As was the case in the previous National Assembly terms, the Committee for Youth was not formed this.²⁸

In the current Government of the Republic of Serbia, none of the Ministers or members of the Government falls into the category of young adults.

5.2 Young people in the 2023 electoral campaign

In this section of the report, we will present the key findings from the KOMS 2023 election monitoring report on how election lists were addressing young people, as well as on the sponsorship of political content targeted at young people on social media.

Representatives of political parties who participated in the 2023 parliamentary elections addressed young people and discussed issues relevant to them a total of 115 times. The coalition "Srpska napredna stranka" communicated the most frequently, with 45 addresses, followed by the coalition "Srbija protiv nasilja" with 30 addresses, and the coalition "Nacionalno okupljanje - Dveri and Zavetnici" with 11 addresses.

²⁸ The Committees. The National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, <http://www.parlament.gov.rs/narodna-skupstina-/sastav/radna-tela/odbori.895.html>. Accessed on June 24, 2024.

5.3 Youth in political parties and youth political program

As part of this research, the statutes and programs of relevant participants of the 2023 parliamentary elections were analyzed. Political parties representing national minorities were not included in the analysis due to their specific characteristics.

Table 6. Youth organization within political parties

The party has an organized youth group	DS, Dveri, JS, Novi DSS, NS, NPS, PSG, SDPS, SNS, SPS, SSP, Zajedno, Zavetnici, ZLF (14)
The party (currently) does not have an organized youth group	DJB (inactive), POKS (inactive), SDS, SRCE (4)

Table 7. Youth's involvement in party programs

The program directly includes youth policy	Dveri, Novi DSS, NPS, SNS, Zajed-no, ZLF (6)
The program does not directly include youth policy	DJB, DS, JS, SDPS, SDS, SPS, SRCE, SSP, NS, POKS, PSG, Zavetnici (12)

Most of the parties included in the analysis have an organized youth branch within their party structure, but only one-third of them include youth policy as a separate component of their program.

5.4 Youth and Social and Political Activities

We asked young people what they see as the biggest challenges in the society they live in. For the past several years, unemployment has been recognized as the biggest issue impacting the lives of young people, however, this year, surprisingly, the education system was deemed as more problematic than both unemployment and the existing value system.

- Education system;
- Value system;
- Lack of democracy and justice.

Table 8. The greatest Challenges of Youth (in %)

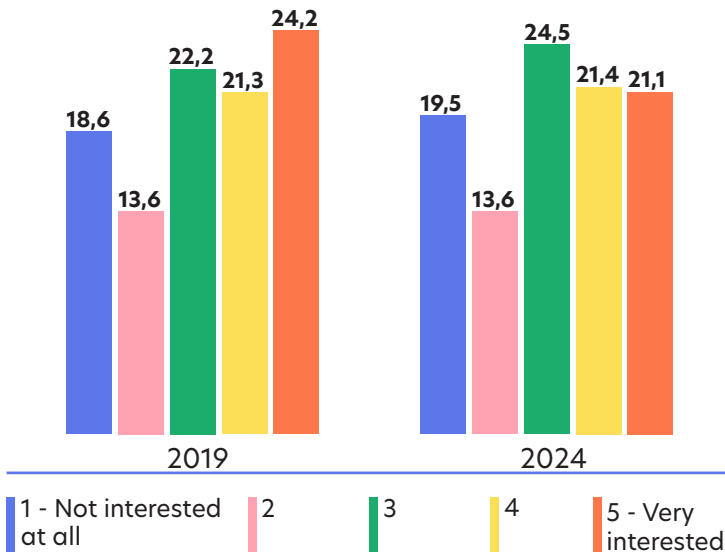
Challenge	2020.	2021.	2022.	2023.	2024.
Unemployment	80,3	74	73,8	43,4	42,4
Education system	69,1	71,6	72,6	64,1	67,6
Value system	75,5	73,9	70	57,9	62
Corruption	51,7	51,8	50,9	40,8	51,2
Limited influence on decision-making	55,1	56,7	57,4	44,6	40,9
Environmental standard	*	*	51,8	52,6	49
Lack of cultural events	43,8	43,4	41,3	29	30,3
Safety	26,8	31,8	37,4	29,9	29,1
Lack of social toerance	56,2	60,2	59,8	48,2	50,7
Insufficient freedom of expression in society	48,7	53,2	52,5	40,7	37,8
Healthcare system	*	*	39,4	34,9	37,8
Lack of democracy and justice	*	*	*	51,6	56,2

As we can see, the downward trend of youth unemployment continues: from 80.3% in 2020 and 73.8% in 2022, youth unemployment plummeted to 42.4% in 2024.

In 2024, the education system was voted the biggest challenge by 67.6% of young people, closely followed by the value system (62%) and lack of democracy and justice (56.2%)

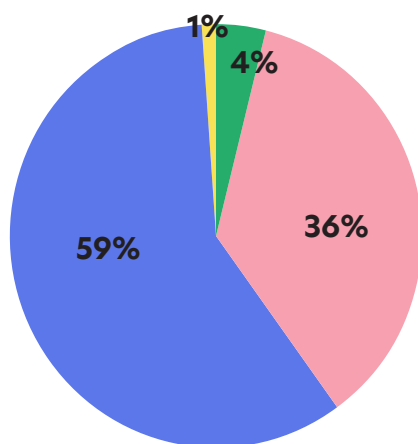
Our research showed that young people are **more** interested in politics and political events this year compared to the previous year (2.92). When asked "How interested are you in political events?" on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 - not interested at all, 5 - very interested), the average response was **3.11**.

Graph 12. Interest in Political Topics (%)



We asked young people about their main source of information. Young people primarily receive information through social media (63.6%), while they hardly ever reach for newspapers and television to get informed.

Graph 13. Sources of information



Social media

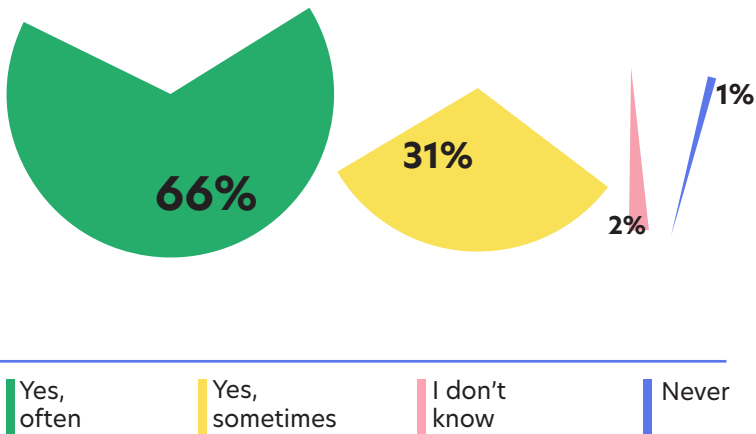
Web portals

Television

Newspaper

When asked how often they encounter fake news, two-thirds of young people encounter them frequently, while around 30% encounters them occasionally.

Graph 14. Fake news encounters



This year, we asked the respondents who follow political events which topics interest them the most, and the answers show that young people are most interested in lack of democracy (47.6%), followed by corruption and crime rate (46.9%), then national topics - Kosovo, the situation in the region, Serbia's foreign policy (41.4%), economic topics such as employment, investments, etc. (38.7%), and the environment with 35.1% (with a significant decrease from 53.4% compared to the previous year).

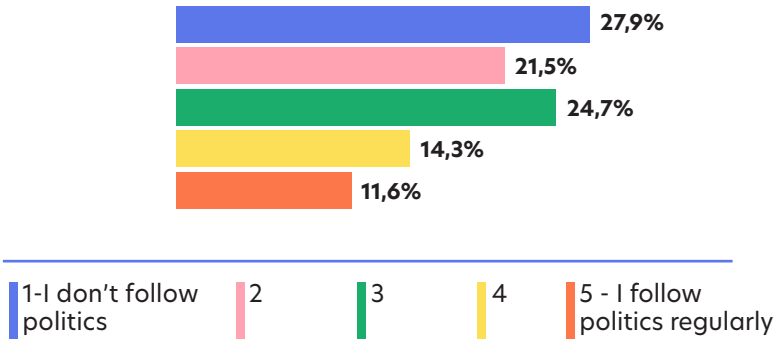
Table 9. Interest in Political Topics

Topics	2021.	2022.	2023.	2024.
National topics (Kosovo, situation in the region, Serbia's foreign policy)	45,6	45,9	41,7	41,4
Economic topics (employment, government economic policy, investments)	48,6	46,7	36,3	38,7
Corruption and crime rate	51	43,6	43,7	46,9
Functioning/non-functioning of democracy in Serbia	47,3	41	36,1	47,6
Safety	33	32,1	21,4	25,5
European integration	21,8	22,4	16,4	19,6
Youth policy	41,4	39,9	24,2	23,6
Environment	50,6	53,4	35,3	35,1
Dealing with the past (war crimes, reconciliation)	22,7	22,7	19,5	20,5
I don't follow politics	*	15,6	24,1	19,8

The topic of democracy (non)functioning in Serbia has seen the greatest increase in popularity compared to the previous year (by more than 10%). For all other responses, there are no significant differences. It is encouraging to note that the response 'I do not follow politics' has decreased by nearly 5% compared to the previous year.

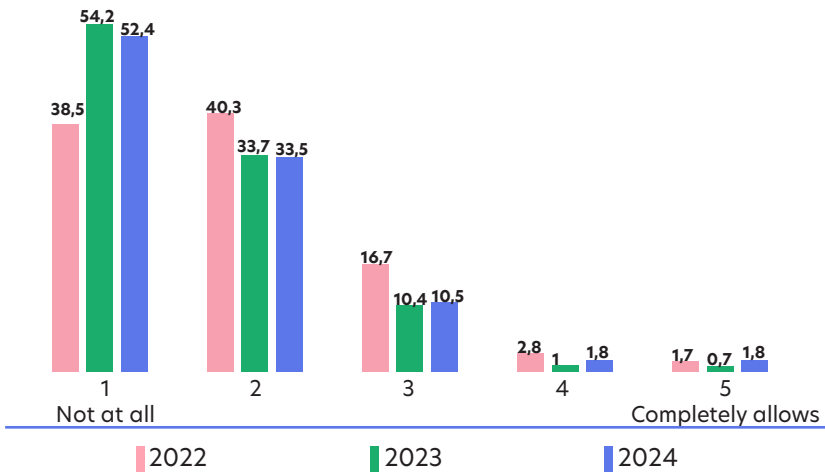
When asked whether they follow politics at the local (municipal/urban) level, nearly half of the young people does not follow local politics (ratings 1 and 2 out of 5), while only 11.6% responded that they follow it regularly (rating 5 out of 5).

Graph 15. Do you follow politics at the local level?



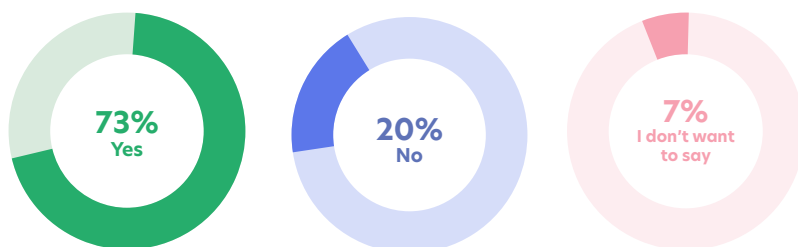
In response to the question “How much does the political system in Serbia allow young people to influence political processes and decisions?” on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 - Not at all; 5 - Completely allows), the average was 1.67 which is slightly higher than in 2023 (1.6).

Graph 16. Influence of young people on political processes and decisions (%)



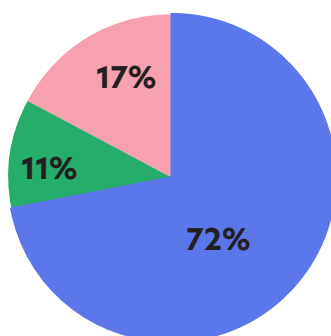
When asked whether they voted in the December 2023 elections, 17.3% of respondents answered that they do not have the right to vote. The weighted percentages of responses to this question are as follows:

Graph 17. Youth and voting in the 2023 elections



We asked young people who have voting rights if they would vote if the parliamentary elections were held next week and nearly a quarter responded affirmatively.

Graph 18. Youth and voting

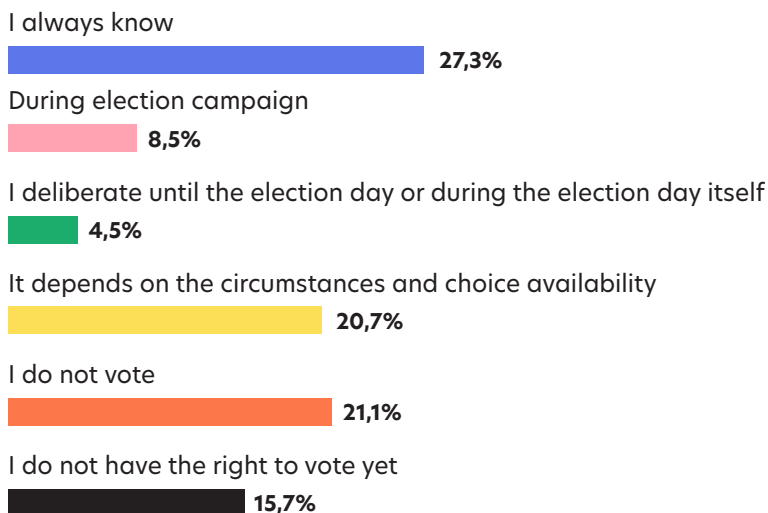


■ Yes ■ No ■ I'm not sure

In the 2023 KOMS survey we asked young people: "When do you decide whether to vote and for whom?" The largest number of respondents said they always knew who they were going to vote for (27.3%), while 20.7% said it depended on the circumstances and varied from election to election. Only 4.5% of young people said they would take their time thinking about it until election day, and 8.5% stated that they had decided during the election campaign.

Graph 19. Making voting decisions - timing
(Stojanović, Ivković, Kaličanin, 2023)²⁹

When do you decide whether to vote and for whom?



²⁹ Taken from: Boban Stojanović, Aleksandar Ivković, Boris Kaličanin. "Political parties and the youth". KOMS, Beograd, 2023.

In our 2023 study, we asked young people what they focus on when deciding which party or candidate to support. The highest average score for this question (on a scale from 1 - Not important at all; 5 - Very important) was given to the issues that the party most frequently addresses - 4.2. This was followed by the party's ideology - 4.19, the party's program - 4.05, the people in the party in general - 3.9, consistent policies - 3.95, party leader - 3.79, addressing young people - 3.7, youth presence in the party - 3.22, new faces in politics - 2.73, always voting for the opposition - 2.65, family voting patterns - 1.96, and always voting for the ruling party - 1.32.

Table 10. Characteristics impacting voting decision
(Stojanović, Ivković, Kaličanin, 2023) ³⁰

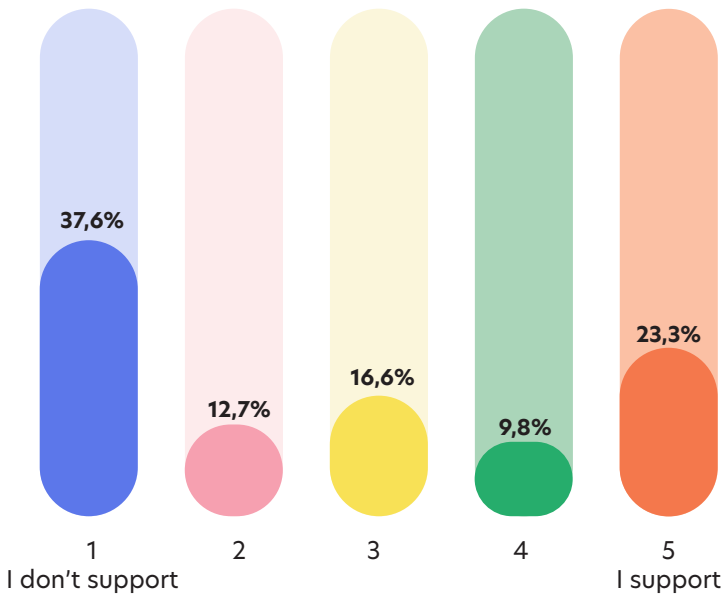
Characteristics impacting voting decisions	Average score (1-5)
Party's ideology	4,19
Party's program	4,05
Topics most frequently addressed by the party	4,2
Party leader	3,79
The people in the party in general	3,91
Youth presence in the party	3,22
Family voting patterns	1,96
Addressing young people	3,7
Consistent policies	3,85
New faces in politics	2,73
Always voting for the ruling party	1,32
Always voting for the opposition	2,65

³⁰ Taken from: Boban Stojanović, Aleksandar Ivković, Boris Kaličanin. "Political parties and the youth". KOMS, Beograd, 2023.

This year, we asked young people whether they support lowering the voting age to 16, and they expressed their scepticism towards this measure with an average score of 2.69.

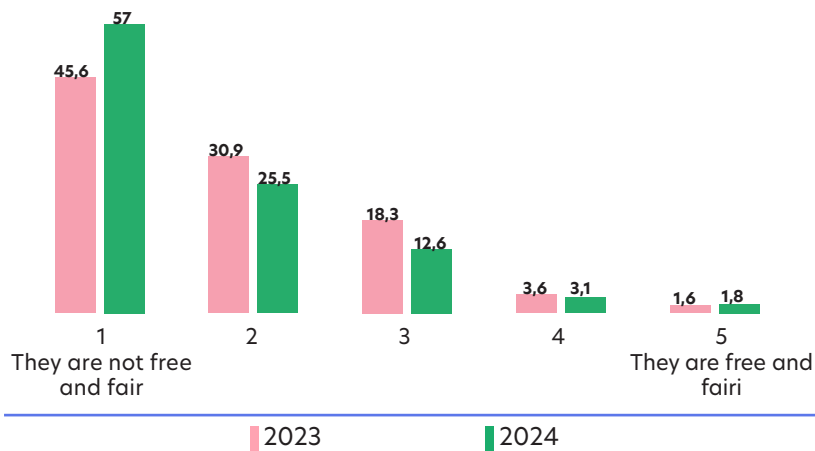
Graph 20. Youth's attitude towards lowering the voting age to 16

Voting at 16



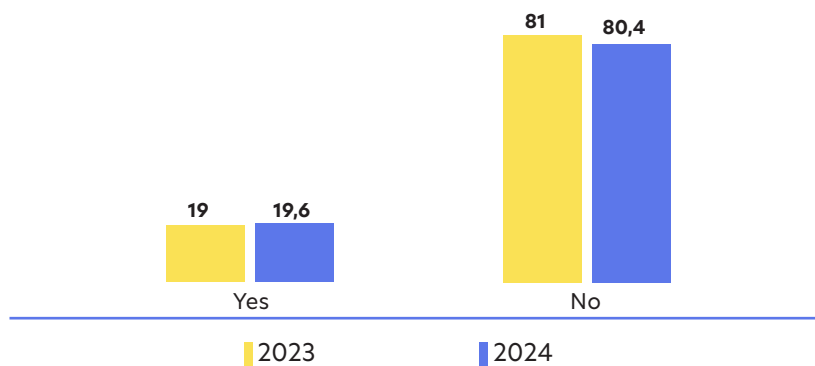
We asked young people to rate the degree to which elections in Serbia are free and fair, to which they responded by giving it 1.67, which is a lower score compared to last year (1.85).

Graph 21. Are elections in Serbia free and fair?



The overwhelming majority of young people in Serbia (nearly 4/5) does not trust any politician. When asked if there is a politician they trust, the responses were as follows:

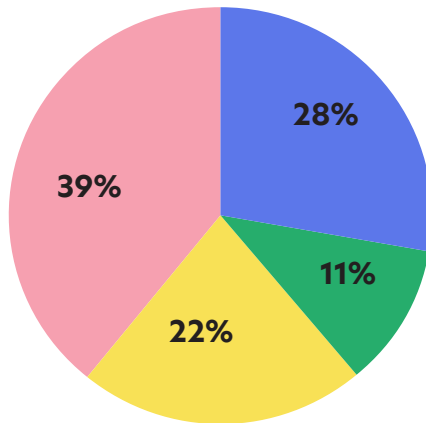
Graph 22. Is there a politician you trust?



This year, we asked young people: “Are you more likely to politically engage if there is a new face in politics who you can trust?”. The responses were the following:

Graph 23. Political engagement

Are you more likely to politically engage if there is a new face in politics who you can trust?



■ Yes

■ I don't know

■ Maybe

■ No

In the 2023 survey, we asked young people which candidate characteristics evoke trust and received the following feedback: the most important feature of a trustworthy candidate is his capability to govern the country (with an average rating of 4.64 on a scale from 1 - Not important at all, to 5 - Very important). The next most important factors were: presenting a quality program (4.47), supporting system change and being decent (4.38), fighting fiercely for their views (4.06),

having an untarnished reputation (3.96), addressing young people (3.94), being professionally accomplished (3.93), being a patriot (3.52), being a “man of the people” (3.21), being family-oriented person (3.09), and being a fresh face in politics (2.58).

Table 11. Importance of candidate characteristics (Stojanović, Ivković, Kaličanin, 2023)³¹

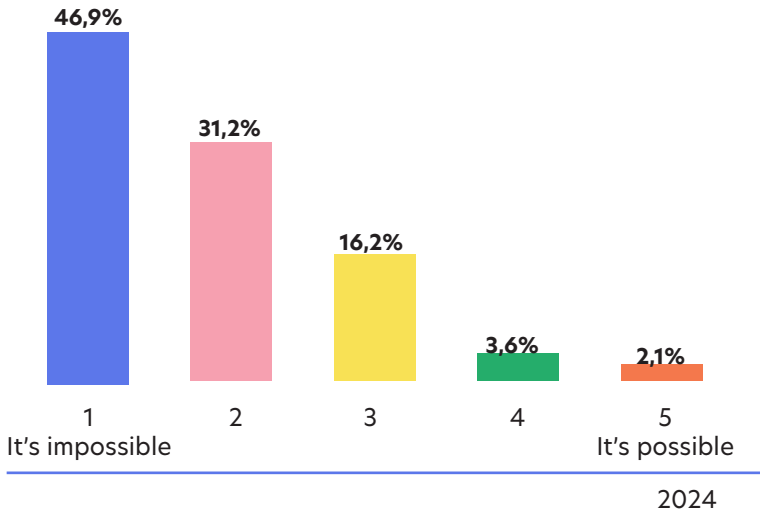
Characteristics	Average score
A fresh face in politics	2,58
Support system change	4,38
Presenting quality program	4,47
Address the young people	3,94
Decent	4,38
Untarnished reputation	3,96
Professionally accomplished	3,93
Capable of governing the country	4,64
A patriot	3,52
A family-oriented person	3,09
„A man/woman of the people“	3,21
Fight fiercely for their views	4,06

³¹ Taken from: Boban Stojanović, Aleksandar Ivković, Boris Kaličanin. “Political parties and the youth”. KOMS, Beograd, 2023.

Additionally, this year we asked young people the following question: "Is it possible to engage in social or political activities in Serbia without facing pressures, regardless of social or political orientation?". The average response was 1.83.

Graph 24. Activism and pressures

Is it possible to engage in activism without facing pressures?



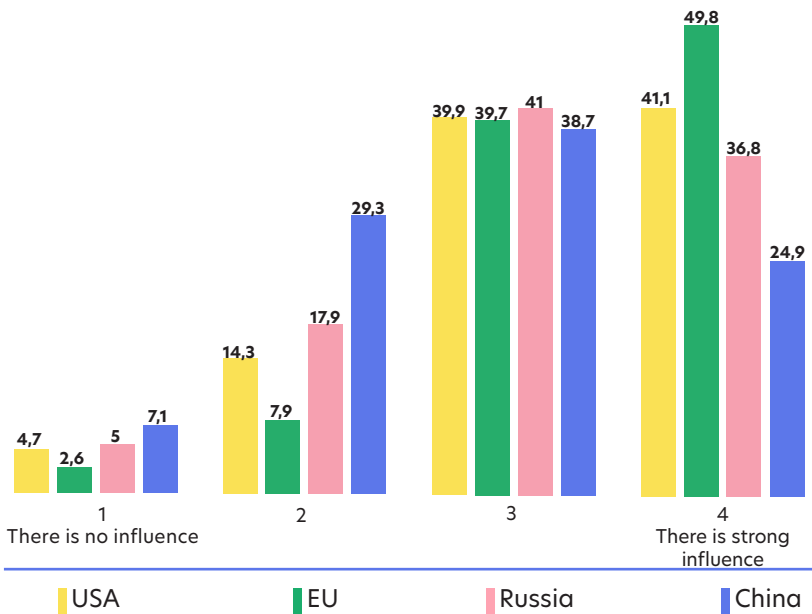
We also asked young people if they had participated in any political or social activities in the last two years.

Table 12. Participation in any Political or Social Activities in the last two years

Activity	% of youth who participated in 2023.	% 2024.
A protest organized by a political party	7,4%	16,5%
A protest organized by an association, a group of students, an informal group, or citizens	42,4%	48,7%
A protest organized by a trade union	4%	1,9%
Signing of a petition/citizens' initiative	46,1%	47,8%
Participation in panel discussions	19,4%	19,2%
Providing support to someone in elections (campaign involvement, signing support)	12,5%	15%
Participation in public debates/ consultations at the national or local level	/	4,6%

We asked young people about the impact of the EU, USA, Russia, and China's influence on politics in Serbia.

Graph 25. Foreign influence on Politics in Serbia (%)



In the previous year, we measured the influence of the EU and the US together (with a rating of 3.29 out of 4), however, this year we separated these two global actors. According to young people, the EU has the greatest influence (average rating of 3.37), followed by the US (3.17) and Russia (3.08), while China is perceived as having the least influence among the major global powers (2.81).

In the survey, we also examined the degree of youth's trust in certain public institutions. We asked them to rate their level of trust in these institutions on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 - No trust at all, 5 - High level of trust), and the average responses are as follows:

Tabela 13. Trust in public institutions

Public institution	2019.	2024.
The Military	2,9	2,82
The Police	2,4	1,76
The Media	1,5	1,55
Youth offices	2,5	2,16
The Ministry of Tourism and Youth ³²	2,2	1,86
The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development	1,95	1,59
The Ministry of Health	*	1,76
The Church	2,4	2,6
The Head of Municipality/Mayor	1,7	1,55
The National Assembly	1,6	1,41
The Government of the Republic of Serbia	1,6	1,40
The President	1,6	1,38
Political parties	1,4	1,37
Non-governmental organisations	*	2,39
Scientists and science	*	3,15

³² Two years ago, the youth sector was under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, however, according to the latest law on ministries, it has been transferred to the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Tourism and Youth.

The main conclusion is that young people have moderate trust only in teachers and science, while all other institutions have an average trust rating below 3.0. No institution has an average rating above 3, which is a clear indicator of young people feeling distrustful towards the institutions and feeling neglected by them. Compared to 2019, trust in all political institutions has decreased.

We also investigated young people's trust in individuals in positions of power in some of the key institutions. The average ratings are shown in the table below.

Table 14. The trust of young people in individuals

The Individual	2019.	2020.	2021.	2022.	2023.	2024.
Patriarch Porfirije	*	*	2,71	2,71	2,54	2,39
Miloš Vučević	*	*	*	*	*	1,33
Ana Brnabić	1,6	1,57	1,42	1,46	1,35	1,24
Aleksandar Vučić	1,6	1,56	1,46	1,59	1,50	1,36
Husein Memić	*	*	*	*	1,51	1,42

All individuals observed evoked less trust this year compared to the previous one, with the exception of Prime Minister Miloš Vučević, who was not on the list of individuals monitored in 2023.

When we compare the average ratings of institutions and the individuals presiding over them, we can observe minimal differences in trust levels expressed. The only instance in which this is not the case is the case of the Ministry of Tourism and Youth and its Minister, Husein Memić (Ministry of Tourism and Youth - 1.86; Minister of Tourism and Youth - 1.42), which was also noted last year.

KRWS

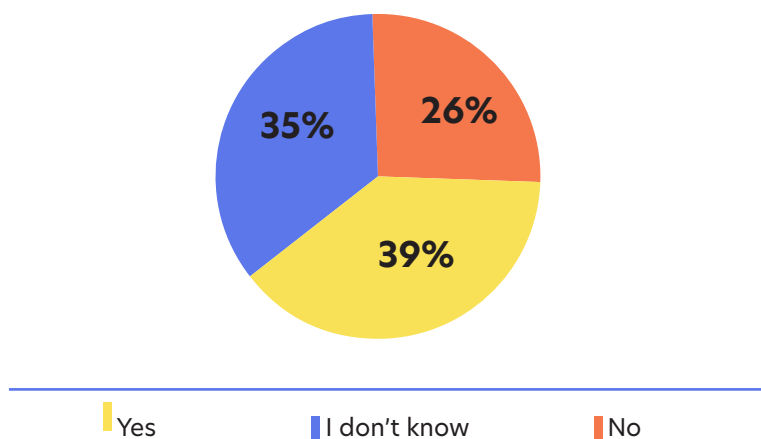
Youth values

06

We asked young people if they believe democracy to be the best form of political governance, with 39% of young people responding affirmatively, 26% responding negatively and 35% remaining unsure.

Graph 26. Attitude of Youth towards Democracy

Is democracy the best form of political governance?



We also asked young people if they believe that Serbia needs a strong leader, and the results are as follows.

Graph 27. Attitude of Youth towards Leadership and Leaders

Does Serbia need a strong leader?

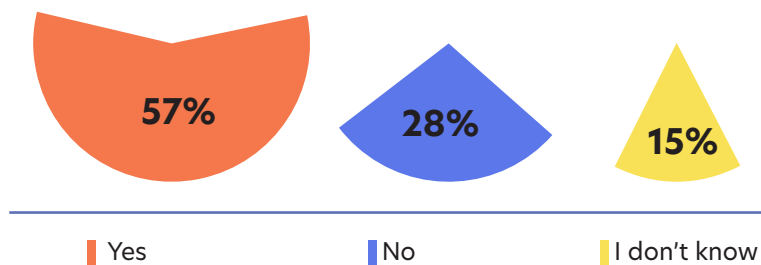


Table 15. Importance of Values in a Society

Values	Average score 2021.	Average score 2022.	Average score 2023.	Average score 2024.	Varation in responses ³³
Absence of corruption	4,38	4,27	4,07	4,21	(2)
Political pluralism	3,55	3,51	3,22	3,37	
Personal freedom	4,63	4,72	4,65	4,64	
Solidarity and providing support to the economically disadvantaged	4,30	4,45	4,31	4,35	(1)
Family and family values	4,03	4,25	4,16	4,12	(2)
Nation and nationality	3,29	3,49	3,33	3,34	
Religion and religious affiliation	2,71	2,95	2,9	2,9	(2)(3)
Environmental protection	4,55	4,57	4,47	4,47	(1)(2)
Inclusion and non discrimination	4,26	4,29	4,07	4,09	(1)
Gender equality	4,27	4,30	3,96	3,92	(1)(3)

As was the case in previous years, the highest ratings were given to values such as personal freedom, environmental protection, as well as solidarity and providing support to the economically disadvantaged.

³³(1) There is a statistically significant variation in responses between young men and women. (p<0,01)

(2) There is a statistically significant variation in responses between different age groups. (p<0,01)

(3) There is a statistically significant variation in responses between the regions the respondents come from. (p<0,01)

The lowest ratings were given to values related to religion and religious group affiliation, nationality and national affiliation, as well as political pluralism.

We also wanted to examine attitudes towards gender equality among young people through the following statements, rated on a scale from 1 - Strongly disagree to 5 - Strongly agree:

Table 16. Attitudes towards gender equality:

Statement	Average score:	Women	Men	Variation in responses ³⁴
Young women find it more challenging to find employment compared to young men.	2,98	3,72	2,31	(1) (2) (3)
Young women find it more difficult to engage in politics due to existing prejudices.	3,28	4,06	2,57	(1) (2) (3)
Household chores and childcare responsibilities are still not evenly distributed between women and men.	3,67	4,34	3,01	(1) (2) (3)
Women enjoy equal representation in the media as men.	3,32	3,62	2,98	(1) (3)
Gender-sensitive language is a positive practice and should be consistently implemented.	2,92	3,28	2,59	(1)
Sex and gender are the same.	3,59	3,32	3,83	(1) (2) (3)

³⁴1) There is a statistically significant variation in responses between young men and women. ($p < 0,01$)

(2) There is a statistically significant variation in responses between different age groups. ($p < 0,01$)

(3) There is a statistically significant variation in responses between the regions the respondents come from. ($p < 0,01$)

We have once again examined the attitudes of young people towards the position of LGBT+ individuals and their rights. We invited them to rate the following situations on a scale from 1 to 5, based on how they feel (1 - I would not mind; 5 - I would mind):

Table 17. Attitudes towards gender equality

Statement	Average score 2020.	Average score 2021.	Average score 2022.	Average score 2023.	Average score 2024.	Variation in responses ³⁵
LGBT+ individuals should appear more frequently in the media	2,64	2,48	2,50	2,95	2,89	(1)
My town/city should host a pride parade	3,05	2,93	2,87	3,08	2,99	(1) (3)
Same-sex marriages should be legalized.	2,74	3	2,49	2,82	2,86	(1)
Same-sex couples should be able to adopt children	2,98	3,12	2,64	2,9	2,97	(1)

This year's average scores do not differ significantly from last year's findings. As in previous years, there are statistically significant differences related to the respondents' gender: young agreed more with the mentioned statements compared to young men.

³⁵(1) There is a statistically significant variation in responses between young men and women. ($p < 0,01$)

(2) There is a statistically significant variation in responses between different age groups. ($p < 0,01$)

(3) There is a statistically significant variation in responses between the regions the respondents come from. ($p < 0,01$)

We also examined young people's attitudes towards members of different nationalities (this year's list also included Russian and Ukrainian nationalities). We asked young people to rate their feelings towards nationalities in Serbia and the surrounding region on a scale from 1 to 4, where a rating of 1 means "we have always had close and friendly relations with them," 2 means "a citizen like any other," 3 means "they don't bother me, but I wouldn't socialize with them," and 4 means "I don't like them."

Table 18. Attitude towards people of different nationalities

Nationality	Average score 2022.	Average score 2023.	Average score 2024.	Variation in responses (2024) ³⁶
Hungarian	1,94	1,96	2	(3)
Romanian	1,95	1,93	1,95	
Bulgarian	2,09	2,11	2,19	(1) (3)
Macedonian	1,75	1,79	1,82	(3)
Albanian	2,52	2,63	2,66	(1) (3)
Montenegrin	1,68	1,69	1,75	(2)
Bosnian	1,82	1,88	1,95	(1) (2)
Croatian	2,04	2,22	2,26	
Roma	-	2,19	2,22	(1) (3)
Russian	-	-	1,78	(2) (3)
Ukrainian	-	-	2,18	

³⁶ (1) There is a statistically significant variation in responses between young men and women. ($p < 0,01$)

(2) There is a statistically significant variation in responses between different age groups. ($p < 0,01$)

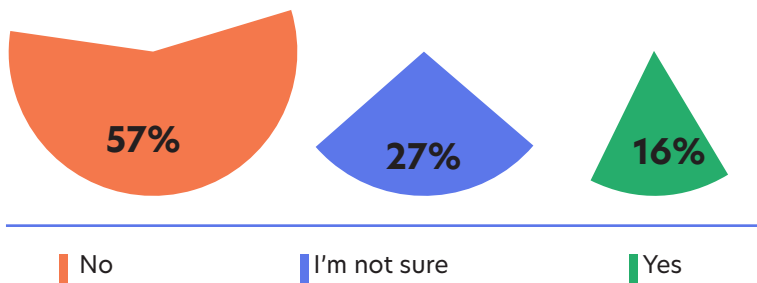
(3) There is a statistically significant variation in responses between the regions the respondents come from. ($p < 0,01$)

It can be observed that young people have the most positive attitude towards individuals of Montenegrin, Russian, and Macedonian nationalities, while the most negative attitude is expressed towards Albanians. The average rating for Ukrainian nationality is 2.18

This year, we also asked young people if they had heard of the UN Agenda: Youth, Peace and Security, and 15.9% responded affirmatively.

Graph 28. UN Agenda: Youth, Peace and Security

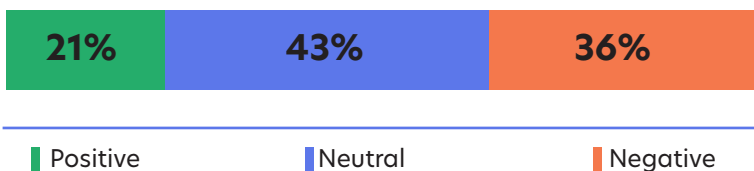
Have you heard about Youth, Peace and Security UN Agenda?



We asked young people to disclose their first reaction to the concept of the European Union, and the responses show that the most common reaction is neutral, at 43%, followed by negative at 36%, while positive ones are still the lowest, at 21%.

Graph 29. Youth attitudes towards EU

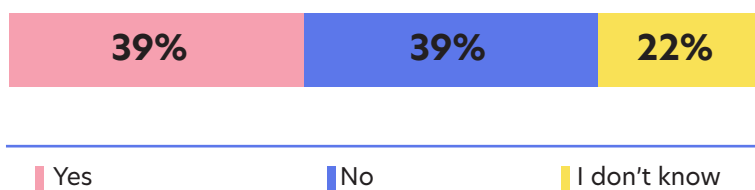
What is your initial reaction to the EU?



Last year, we observed all-time high negative attitudes towards the EU, whereas this year, young people expressed a somewhat more positive outlook on the EU.

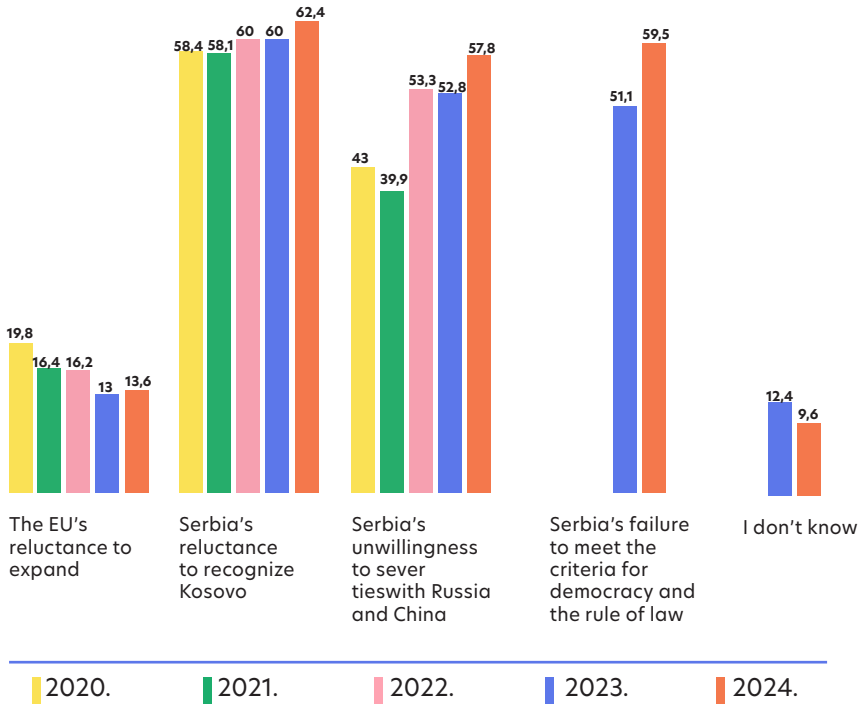
When asked if respondents support Serbia's accession to the EU, there was nearly an equal percentage of affirmative and negative responses.

Graph 30. Attitudes of Youth towards Serbia's accession to the EU



A slightly higher degree of support for EU membership is recorded this year compared to the previous year.

We asked young people why Serbia has not yet become a member of the EU. They believe it is primarily because of Serbia's unwillingness to recognize Kosovo (62.4% - almost unchanged from 2022 and 2023) because Serbia fails to meet all the criteria for EU membership (59.5% - slightly higher than the previous year), because Serbia does not want to give up good relations with Russia and China (57.8%), and because Serbia fails to meet the criteria for democracy and the rule of law (51.1%).

Graph 31. Why is Serbia still not a member of the EU?

We asked young people whether they agreed with the following statements about the EU, using a scale from 1 to 5 (1 - Strongly disagree, 5 - Strongly agree). The average responses from the participants are as follows:

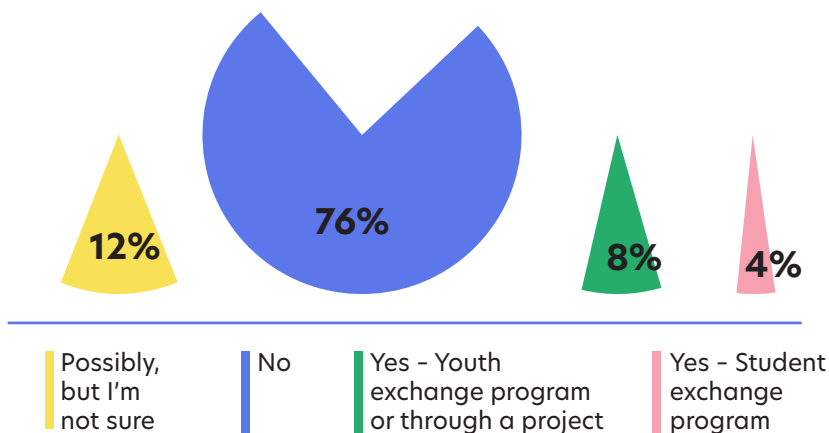
Table 19. Young people's attitudes towards the EU

Statement	2024.
The EU is the safe keeper of peace and stability for Serbia	2,16
Youth have a significantly better position in the EU (education, travel, etc.)	3,65
Accession to the EU results in the loss of national identity	2,67
The EU is falling apart and won't last long	2,97

We asked young people whether they had participated in any EU program such as Erasmus. Approximately 12% said that they had, 12% were unsure if they had participated, while 76% said they had not participated.

Graph 32. Participation in EU programs

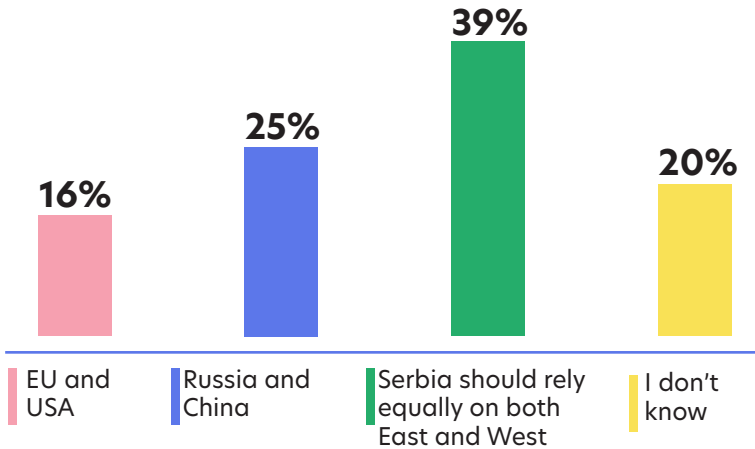
Have you participated in any EU programs?



When it comes to foreign policy, we asked young people whom Serbia should rely on the most, and the responses are as follows:

Graph 33. Attitudes of young people towards Serbia's Foreign Policy

In shaping its foreign policy, Serbia should relying mostly on...?

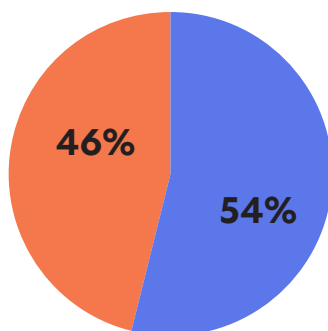


Young people mostly support the idea of equally relying on both East and West, which aligns with findings from previous editions of the Alternative Report.

We also wanted to assess young people's attitudes in a hypothetical situation where the policy of balancing was not available, i.e., where Serbia would have to choose between the East or the West. This year, as in previous years when this question was posed, young people are polarized, with a slight preference for the East.

Graph 34. Attitudes of young people towards choosing a side between East and West

If Serbia had to choose a side, which one would you prefer?

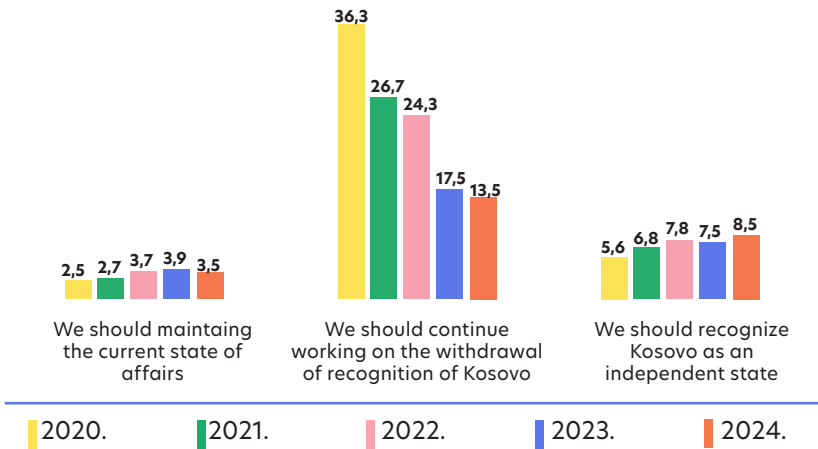


West

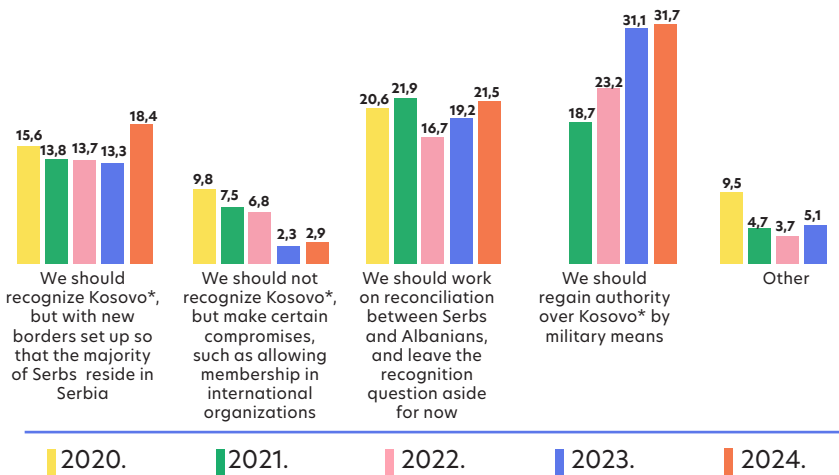
East

This year, we repeated the questions about Kosovo and NATO. We asked young people to disclose their opinion on the recognition of Kosovo and the responses are as follows:

Graph 35. Attitudes towards Kosovo (%) (pt 1)



Graph 35. Attitudes towards Kosovo (%) (pt 2)

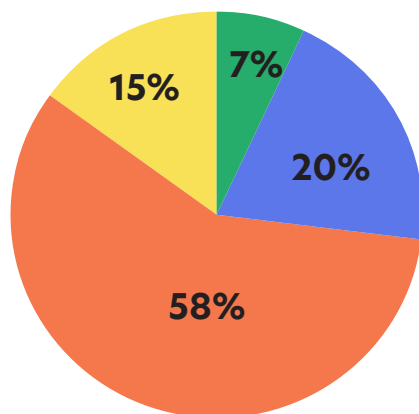


This year as well, the option that Serbia should restore full control over Kosovo by military means at an appropriate time receives the most support (31.7%). Meanwhile, 21.5% of young people believe that the status issue should be deferred and efforts should focus on reconciliation between Serbs and Albanians. Additionally, 18.4% support the recognition of Kosovo, but with a border adjustment so that the majority of the Serbian population remains within Serbia.

We also asked young people whether Serbia should join NATO, and the answers are as follows:

Graph 36. Attitudes of young people towards joining NATO

Should Serbia join NATO?



No, Serbia should not cooperate with NATO

No, but I support cooperation with NATO

Yes

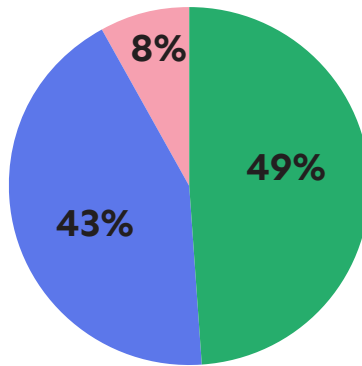
I don't know

The results are approximately the same as last year.

We once again asked young people about their views on the introduction of compulsory military service, and this year, for the first time, we included questions about mandatory military service for both genders. 49% of respondents is in favour of compulsory military service for men, while 43% is against it. In contrast, 68% of respondents opposes mandatory military service for women, and only 19% supports it.

Graph 37. Attitude towards the implementation of compulsory military service for men

Do you support the introduction of compulsory military service for men?



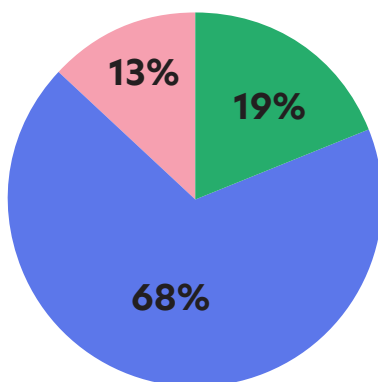
■ Yes

■ No

■ I don't know

Graph 38. Attitude towards the implementation of compulsory military service for women

Do you support the introduction of compulsory military service for women?



■ Yes ■ No ■ I don't know

**Employment,
education and
mobility**

07

This chapter addresses the employment status of young people, **One of the biggest issues young people face is unemployment.** According to the official data from the National Employment Service, **the number of unemployed young people in March 2024 was 72,269 (compared to 75,526 in May of the previous year), which represents a total of 18.63% (compared to 18.43% last year) of the total number of unemployed.** Almost one-fifth of all unemployed individuals in the Republic of Serbia are young people aged 15 to 30. **Compared to the previous year, youth unemployment has decreased by 3,257 individuals (compared to a decrease of 11,049 last year and 28,958 the year before), or by 4.41%. Since 2014, nearly 124,000 young people have successfully found employment.**

Table 20. Number of unemployed young people since 2014 by age structure

Year	Number of unemployed young people	Age 15-19	Age 20-24	Age 25-29
2014.	196.260	20.666	77.484	98.110
2015.	183.602	19.242	72.973	91.387
2016.	171.245	17.765	66.919	86.561
2017.	146.843	14.472	56.569	75.802
2018.	123.686	12.934	46.654	64.098
2019.	114.679	10.979	43.690	60.010
2020.	105.315	10.711	38.902	55.702
2021.	115.533	13.844	44.295	57.394
2022.	86.575	10.703	33.475	42.397
2023.	75.526	10.109	29.080	36.337
2024.	72.269	10.613	28.209	33.447

Source: National Employment Service

Table 21. Number of unemployed young people in March 2024 by gender and age

Total number of unemployed young people in March 2024 - 72.269	Age 15-19		Age 20-24		Age 25-29	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
	5.765	4.848	13.443	14.766	13.941	19.506

Source: National Employment Service

The data point to the fact that there are more unemployed young women than unemployed young men (39,120 young women and 33,149 young men). Additionally, the number of unemployed young women is significantly higher than that of young men in the age group of 25 to 29 years (a third more, with 19,506 unemployed young women compared to 13,941 unemployed young men).

Table 22. Number of unemployed young people by region and share of unemployed young people in the total number of unemployed in March 2024 (%)

Region	Number of unemployed young people (Age 15-30)	Percentage of unemployed young people in the total number of unemployed people by region
Belgrade region	5.595	13,05%
Vojvodina region	14.393	17,93%
Central and Western Serbia region	26.455	19,28%
Southern and Eastern Serbia Region	20.612	19,11%
Kosovo and Metohija region	5.214	26,52%
In total	72.269	

Source: National Employment Service

The highest percentage of young people among the unemployed in the region is in Kosovo and Metohija (over one-quarter of the unemployed are young people - 26.52%). In other regions, youth unemployment is close to the overall youth unemployment rate, with the exception of the Belgrade region, where young people represent 13.05% of the total unemployment rate in that region.

Eurostat data indicate that the NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) rate for young people in Serbia was 14% in the first quarter of 2023. This represents a 3.4% decrease compared to the previous year, 2022, and a 6% decrease compared to 2020. For the age group of 15–24, the employment rate was 23.4% (158,900 employed young people) whereas the unemployment rate was 24.9% (52,500 unemployed young people). The NEET rate for this age group was 11.4%.³⁷

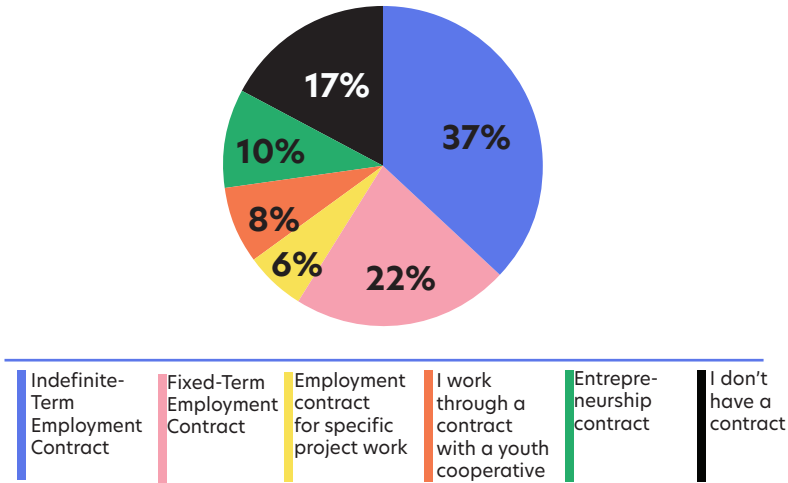
Table 23. NEET and (un)employed youth in Serbia in 2023, aged 15 to 24 years.

NEET rate	11,4%
Unemployed individuals	24,9%
Employed individuals	23,4%

³⁷ Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, Labour Force Survey, 1st Quarter 2023, June 9, 2023, <https://publikacije.stat.gov.rs/G2023/Pdf/G20231154.pdf>. Accessed on June 24, 2024.

This year, we asked young people about the type of employment contract they have signed. The results are the following.

Graph 39. Types of Contracts for Employed Youth



The data remain virtually the same compared to the previous year. The largest percentage of employed young people have permanent contracts (37%), but there is still concern about the significant number of young people working without any employment contract (17%).

We asked unemployed young individuals whether they are registered with the National Employment Service (NES). The results are as follows.

Graph 40. Registration of unemployed young individuals with the National Employment Service

Are you registered at NES?



Yes

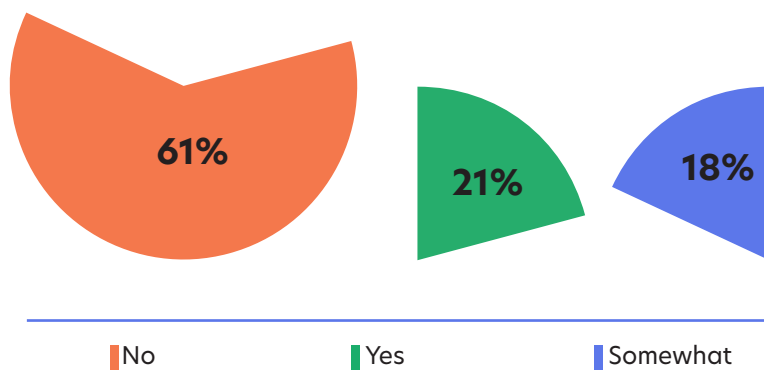
No

Just over one-quarter of unemployed young people reported being registered with the National Employment Service.

When asked whether they are employed in positions related to their field of study, 61% of young people responded that they are not, 18% are employed in positions somewhat related to their education, and **only 21% are working in positions for which they received appropriate education. This is slightly lower than last year.**

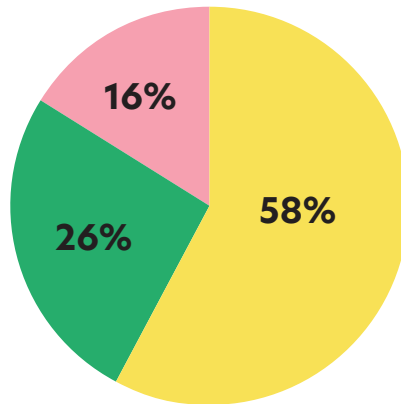
Graph 41. Employment in a position related to one's education

Are you currently working the job for which you have received appropriate education?



When asked how long they searched for employment in their field, the majority of young people (58%) reported that it took less than one year, while one-fifth needed more than three years. These figures have not significantly changed compared to the previous year.

Graph 42. How long did it take for you to find employment?



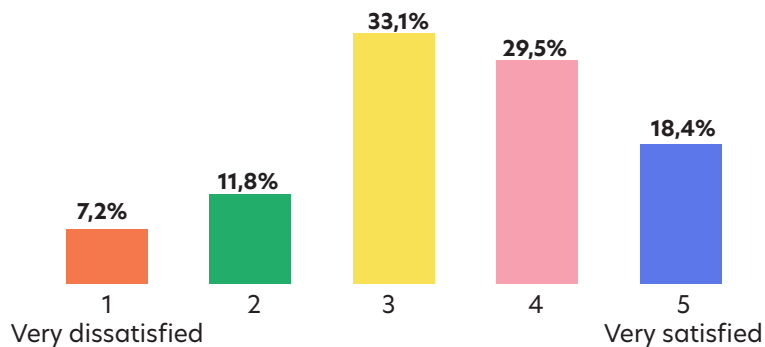
Less than a year

Between 1-3 years

More than 3 years

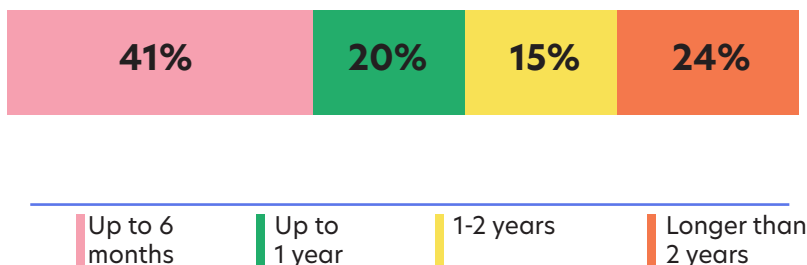
When asked how satisfied they are with their current job, young people gave an average rating of 3.4, which is higher than last year's rating of 3.29.

Graph 43. How satisfied are you with your current job?



We asked young people how long they have been unemployed, and the most common response was up to 6 months (41%). There is approximately one-fifth of young people who remain unemployed for longer than 2 years.

Graph 44. How long have you been unemployed?



We asked young people what is important to them when it comes to employment and they view salary as the most important aspect, rated with an average score of 4.63 (1 - Not important at all; 5 - Very important). All responses are presented in the table below.

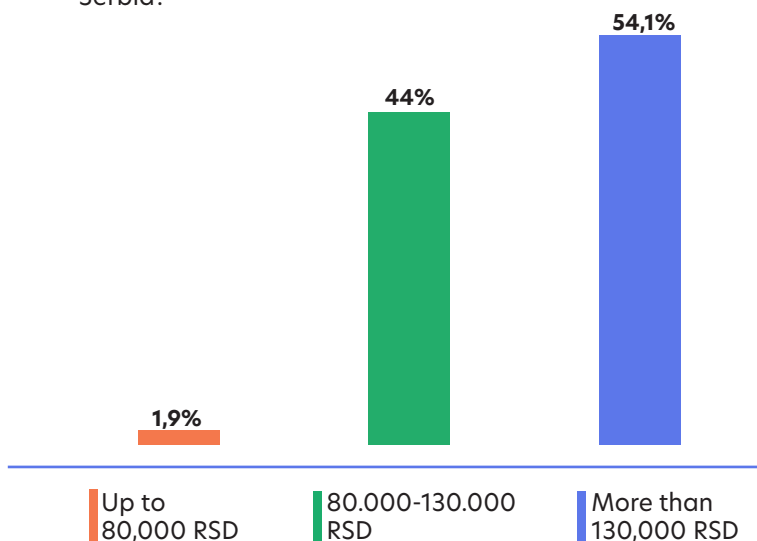
Table 24. What is important to you when it comes to employment?

Importance	Average score
Salary	4,58
Advancement opportunities	4,44
Working hours	4,42
Flexible working hours	4,19
Learning opportunities	4,24
Good relationship with superiors (management/bosses)	4,27
Good relationship with colleagues	4,34
Employer's care for the employees' well-being and mental health	4,38

Given that salary is, unsurprisingly, the most important factor, it is crucial to examine what salary young people consider sufficient for a decent life in Serbia. **The largest number of young people (54.1%) believes that a salary over 130,000 RSD is necessary for a decent life. Conversely, 44% of young people thinks that a salary between 80,000 and 130,000 RSD is required for a decent life. Only 1.9% of young people considers a salary up to 80,000 RSD sufficient for a**

decent life. However, the average net salary in Serbia for March 2023 was 85,485 RSD.³⁸ Essentially, most young people believe that the average salary is not adequate for a decent life. The disparity between young people's expectations and reality is a significant explanatory factor for their dissatisfaction with the standard of living in Serbia.

Grafikon 45. What salary is needed for a decent life in Serbia?



In March 2024, a global happiness report was released, which indicated that Serbia is the third happiest place to live for individuals under 30 years of age, according to self-reported data (World Happiness Report,³⁹ data for the period 2021-2023). The report shows that Serbia ranks 37th overall, but for young people, Serbia

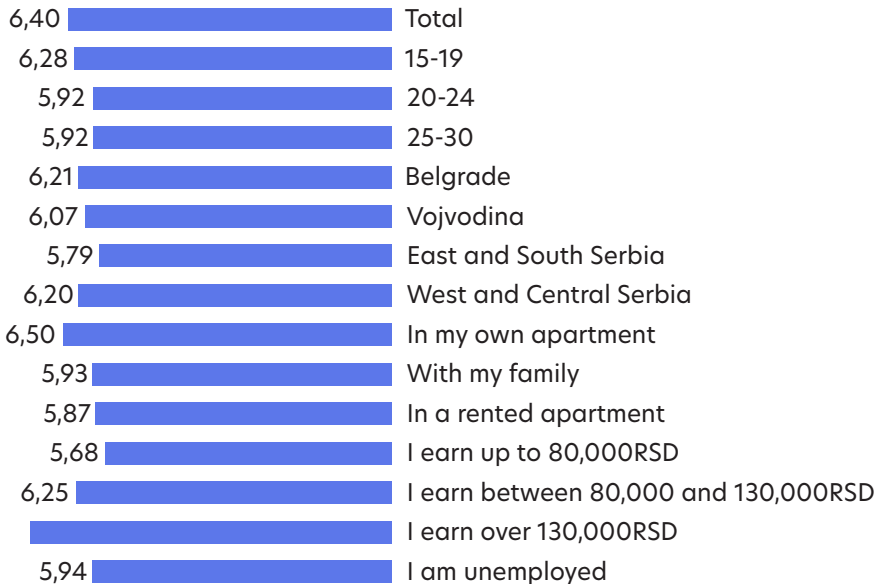
³⁸ Labor Market. Republic Statistical Office, May 25, 2023. <https://www.stat.gov.rs/sr-latn/vesti/statisticalrelease/?p=14002&a=24&s=2403?s=2403>, Accessed on July 1, 2023.

³⁹ World Happiness Report. World Happiness Report 2024. Oksford, 2024, <https://worldhappiness.report/>

ranks third. The average score for Serbia for the general population is 6.411, whereas for young people this score is 7.658.

To test this report in Serbia, we asked young people to imagine a scale from 0 at the bottom to 10 at the top, where the top of the scale represents the best possible life for them and the bottom represents the worst possible life. We then asked them: "Where on the scale are you positioned currently, based on your personal feelings?" The average response to this question was 6.04. While this is lower than the average life satisfaction score reported in the aforementioned global report, it is still an exceptionally high score.

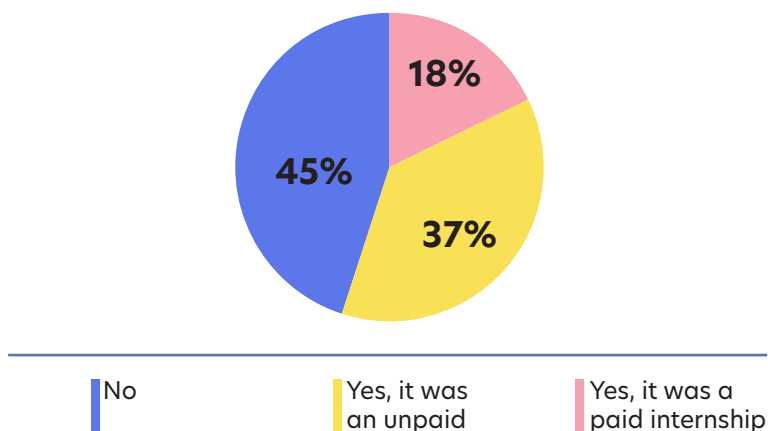
Graph 46. Young people's satisfaction with their current life in Serbia



In a series of questions regarding internships, we asked young people whether they had ever participated in any internships, to which more than half of them (56%) responded affirmatively.

Graph 47. Youth and Internships

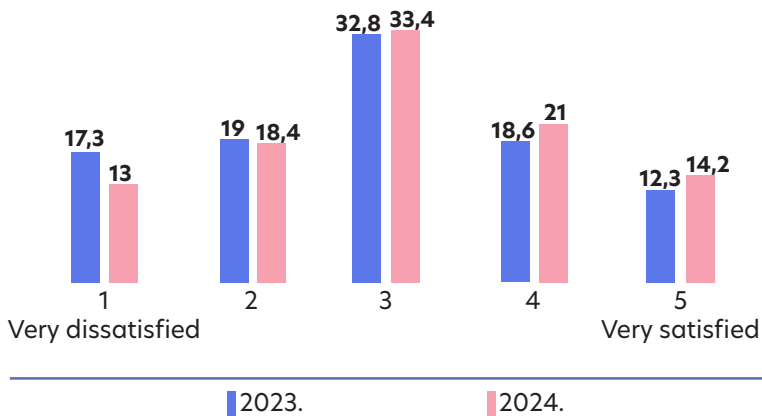
Have you partaken in an internship program?



Compared to last year, when approximately 13% of young people participated in paid internship programs, this year we can observe a slight increase amounting to 18%. The number of young people who participated in unpaid internships remains in a similar range as in previous years, indicating that the issue of unpaid internships persists.

We asked those who had participated in internships how satisfied they were with the experience. The average rating was 3.05 (on a scale of 1 - Not at all satisfied to 5 - Very satisfied).

Graph 48. Satisfaction with their Internship (%)



Young people's ratings of the quality of internships indicate that there has been an improvement in the quality of internships compared to the previous year (**over one-third of them** stated that they were satisfied with the internship program they attended).

We also asked young people how important they deem various elements needed for acquiring job security in Serbia, using a scale from 1 to 5 (1 - Not important at all, 5 - Very important). It is disheartening that **young people believe the most crucial factors for landing a job are personal and family connections, as well as membership and activism in a political party, rather than adequate formal education or previous work experience.**

Table 25. Important factors in acquiring jobs

How important is the factor?	2019.	2024.
Formal education A degree from high school/college/University	3,1	3,25
Previous work experience	*	3,81
Personal/family connections	4,3	4,27
Party membership and adequate political activism	4,1	3,96
Informal education	3,1	2,94
Volunteering experience and Civil sector activism	*	2,56

This chapter explored young people's attitudes regarding education, as well as statistics on completed studies and secondary schools. At the time of finalizing this report, statistical data for 2023 were not yet available.

In the calendar year 2023, a total of 38,132 students graduated from all higher education institutions and at all levels of study in the Republic of Serbia. Of the total number of graduates, 14,832 (38.9%) were men, and 23,300, (61.1%) were women. At public and private universities, a total of 29,123 students graduated—of these, 76.8% or 22,367 students graduated from public universities, while 23.2% or 6,756 students graduated from private faculties. At state academies/vocational colleges and private vocational colleges, 9,009 students graduated—of these, 84.3% graduated from public state vocational colleges and 15.7% from private state vocational colleges.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Graduated Students 2023. Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, June 26, 2024. <https://publikacije.stat.gov.rs/G2024/Html/G20241171.html>. Accessed on July 22, 2024.

Table 26. Number of Graduated Students by Gender from 2017 to 2020

Year	Total number of graduates	Men	Women
2017.	45.119	18.548	26.571
2018.	45.221	18.488	26.733
2019.	42.499	17.497	25.002
2020.	41.331	16.488	24.843
2021.	39.956	15.508	24.448
2022.	36.951	14.516	22.435
2023.	38.132	14.832	23.300

Source: Statistical office of the Republic of Serbia⁴¹

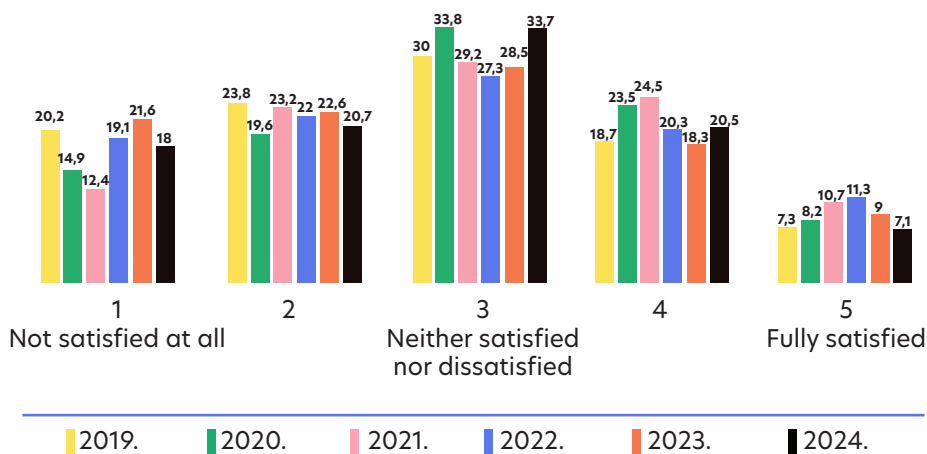
In the academic year 2023/24, a total of 249,626 students were enrolled in all higher education institutions and at all levels of study in the Republic of Serbia. Of the total number of enrolled students, 102,050 (40.9%) were male, and 147,576 (59.1%) were female.

This year's KOMS survey revealed that when asked whether young people are satisfied with the educational program they are currently enrolled in or have completed, on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 - Not at all satisfied with the program; 5 - Completely satisfied with the program), **the average rating was 2.78**. This represents a slight

⁴¹ Education. Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, <https://www.stat.gov.rs/oblasti/obrazovanje/>. Accessed on July 1, 2023.

increase compared to last year's average of 2.71. The percentage of those who are dissatisfied (ratings of 1 and 2) is 38.8%, which is lower than the previous year (44.2%). On the other hand, the percentage of those who are satisfied with their educational program (ratings of 4 and 5) has increased from 27.3% to 27.6%. **The general conclusion is that dissatisfaction with the educational program has slightly decreased.**

Graph 49. Satisfaction of young people with the educational program (%)



We asked young people who had discontinued their education (either after secondary school or university) to disclose their reasons for doing so. A significant number of them, amounting to one-fifth, could not afford to continue their education, despite their desire to do so.

Graph 50. Reasons behind young people discontinuing their education

Why did you drop out of school/university?

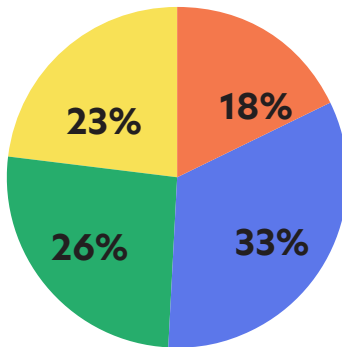


- | Financial reasons
- | I had to get a job to support myself/my family
- | I didn't want to pursue higher education
- | It's not necessary for my career goals

We also asked young people if they were working while studying (or if they had worked while studying). **Half of the young people** responded that they had worked (full-time or part-time) during their studies.

Graph 51. Employment during studies

If you are (or once were a student), have you ever worked while studying?



- | Yes, I worked full-time
- | Yes, I worked sometimes and only part-time
- | No
- | I didn't attend University/I don't attend university/ I am still in high school

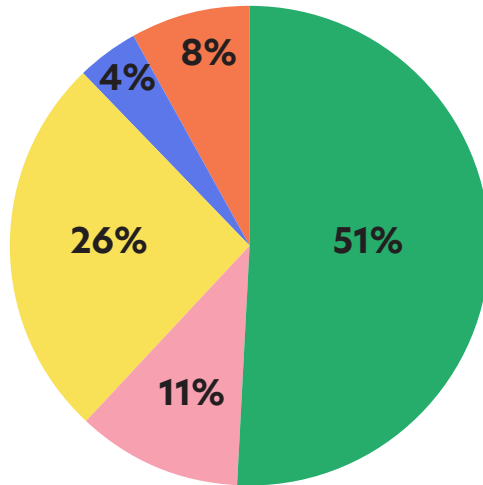
We asked young people which of these areas/skills they believe should be more focused on in the education system. The most common response was health and sexual education (64.3%) and interpersonal relationships (64%).

Table 27. Which areas/skills should be incorporated in the education system?

Area/Skill	2023.	2024.
Civic education	44,3%	44,2%
Health and sexual education	71,7%	64,3%
Critical thinking	58,8%	58,6%
Creativity	54,5%	52,6%
Practical economic knowledge	58,4%	56,4%
Contemporary digital technologies	55,9%	50,9%
Interpersonal relationships	69,6%	64,0%

We asked young people if they are willing to take other jobs while searching for a position in their field. In 2023 over 85% responded affirmatively, and this year **87.5% of young people declared their willingness to take on other jobs until they find a suitable one in their field** (26% of which would work because they have to, and 11% would not work for more than six months). Only 4% of young people would not work at a job unrelated to their field of study, and 8% are unsure if they would. This, as in previous reports, suggests that young people in Serbia are not selective about employment and would seize an opportunity if it presented itself.

Graph 52. Would you be willing to do jobs unrelated to your field?



Yes

Yes, but no longer than 6 months

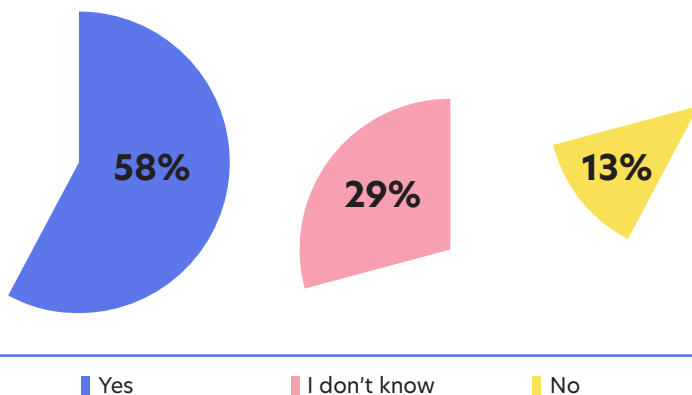
Yes, I have to

No

I don't know

We asked young people if they are willing to retrain if there is no demand for their educational profile in the labor market, and nearly three-fifths are prepared to do so. The impression that **young people are willing to adapt to market conditions—ranging from working outside their field to being open to retraining, waiting for a job, etc.**—remains unchanged.

Graph 53. Would you be willing to retrain if there is no demand for your educational profile in the job market?

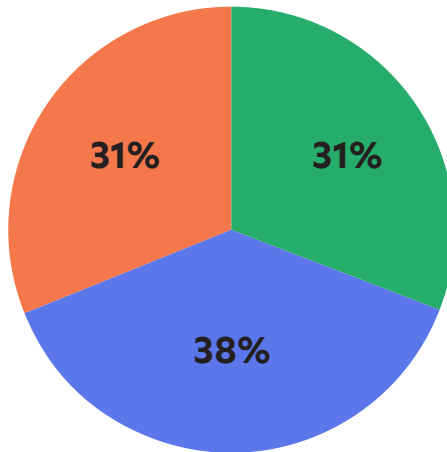


Mobility:

Considering that finding an apartment or a house is one of the main steps on the road to independence, we asked young people to estimate when they will be able to purchase their own living space. The most common response was that they hope to do so between the ages of 30 and 45. Just under one-third of young people believe they will be able to achieve this by the age of 30.

Graph 54. Purchasing a home

If you don't have your own place, when do you think you will be able to afford one?



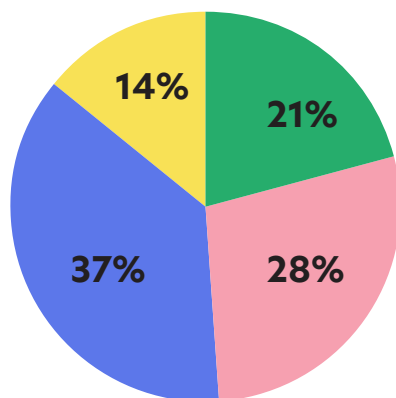
By the time I turn 30

After 30 but before 45

Never, only if I come into some inheritance

We asked young people if they plan to move abroad, and the results are similar to those recorded in previous years. Almost a third of the respondents (20.9%) indicated that they are already planning to do so, while 28.2% stated that they plan to move but have not yet started the planning process.

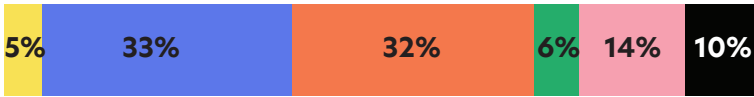
Graph 55. Do you intend to move abroad?



There is a statistically significant variation in responses based on gender* and education level of the respondents. A higher percentage of young men answered "no, I will not move" compared to young women. Additionally, highly educated young people were more likely to give this response compared to other categories of young people.

We asked young people why they would consider moving out of Serbia. The results are quite consistent with those from last year. A higher standard of living remains the primary reason (33.4%), closely followed by a more dignified life (31.8%). Third highest ranked response was the same as year: are better public services (14.1%).

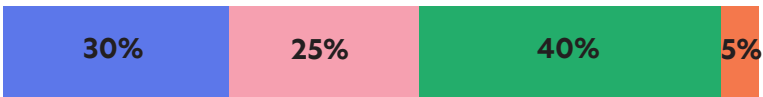
Graph 56. Why would you move abroad?



- More employment opportunities
- Higher living standard
- More dignified life
- Better conditions for raising a family
- Better public services
- More freedom

We asked young people why they would choose not to move abroad. The largest number of respondents cited family and friends as the main reason for staying (40.3%), while approximately a quarter of young people believe that it is possible to have a decent life in Serbia.

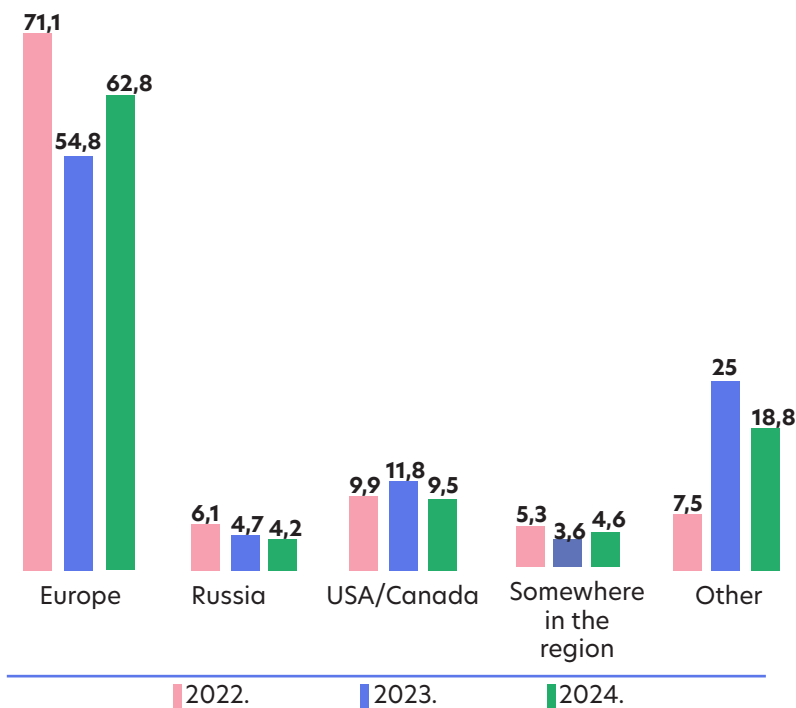
Graph 57. Reasons for remaining in Serbia



- I don't want to live abroad
- Life in Serbia is decent
- Family and friends
- Language barrier

When asked where they would like to move, Western European countries were the top choice for young people, mentioned by 62.8% of respondents.

Graph 58. Where would young people move to?



The percentage of responses categorized as “other” decreased from 25% to 18.8% this year (with most respondents choosing Western Europe as their desired destination).⁴²

This is the second time this year that we asked young people to express their attitude towards rural development and life in the countryside.

⁴² *In the 2022 questionnaire, the option “USA (excluding Canada)” was included.

We asked young people whether they agreed with the following statements about life in the countryside, with response options ranging from 1 to 5 (1 - Strongly disagree, 5 - Strongly agree). The average scores are presented in the table below:

Table 28. Young people and life in the countryside

Statement	Average score 2023.	Average score 2024.	Variation in responses
Quality education is accessible to young people in rural areas	2,15		(1) ⁴³
Living conditions in rural areas are good	2,37	2,55	(1)
Internet and telecommunication coverage is good in rural areas	2,56	2,69	(1)
Young people in rural areas have opportunities for quality jobs	2,13	2,31	(1)
I live in a rural area and plan to move to an urban area	2,63	2,69	(2) ⁴⁴

Compared to the previous year, the average ratings for all statements have slightly increased, but they remain below a rating of 3, indicating that living conditions in rural areas are still not satisfactory.

⁴³ Respondents from Belgrade provided lower average ratings compared to other regions on almost all statements.

⁴⁴ The oldest young people (aged 25-30) have a more negative perception of the quality of life in rural areas across all assessed aspects.

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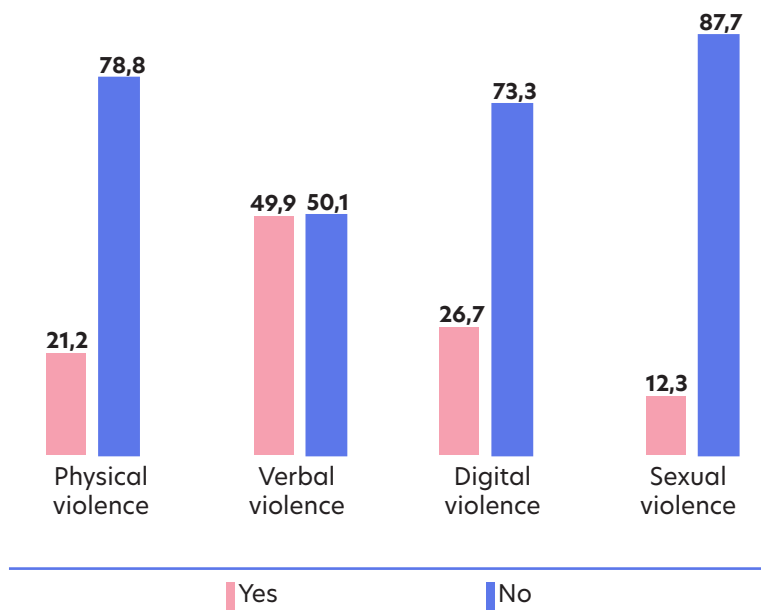
Youth health & safety

08

For the first time in several years of monitoring various forms of violence, a significant decrease in the number of young people who have experienced physical or verbal violence has been recorded.

In the questionnaire, we asked young people if they have been exposed to or have been perpetrators of any form of violence. The percentage of young people exposed to physical violence has significantly decreased from 49% to 21% compared to the previous year. A decrease was also observed in verbal violence (from 71% to 50%), while the percentage of young people exposed to digital violence increased from 47% to 50%. The percentage of young people exposed to sexual violence increased from 47% to 87%.

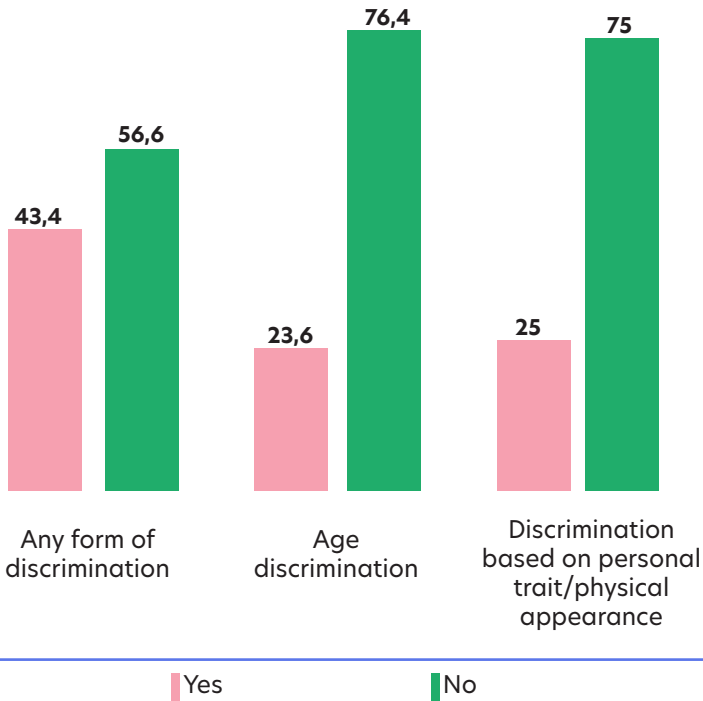
Graph 59. Youth exposure to various forms of violence



Young people were also asked if they had been exposed to any forms of discrimination, and 43% responded affirmatively (which represents a significant decrease compared to the previous year, when the percentage was 62%). A notable decline in age-based discrimination was also observed.

The decrease in the number of young people who have experienced any form of discrimination or violence is encouraging, however, for this positive trend to continue, it is necessary to put more effort into ensuring youth safety.

Graph 60. Youth exposure to discrimination



We asked young people to assess the causes of violence and rate them on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 - Not at all, 5 - Very much) the potential causes of youth violence.

Young people most commonly identify family relations as the primary cause of violence in Serbia (the same result was observed in 2022). On the other hand, the absence and deterioration of social values and poor penal policy have swapped places this year; the deterioration of social values is now rated as the second most common cause of violence, while poor penal policy is now in third place. The most common responses regarding the causes of violence are:

- Family relations
- Poor penal policy
- Absence of and/or deterioration of social values

Table 29. Average ratings of respondents regarding the causes of violence

Cause	Average score 2018.	Average score 2024.	Variation in responses ⁴⁵
Media coverage ⁴⁶	4,0	3,88	(2) ⁴⁷ (3) ⁴⁸
Family relations	4,4	4,25	(1) ⁴⁹
Poverty	3,9	3,94	(1)
Discrimination against vulnerable groups (LGBT, Roma, etc.)	3,9	3,72	(1) (2) (3)
Alcohol and drug consumption	3,8	3,66	(2)
Weapons	3,3	3,57	(1)
Poor penal policy towards perpetrators of violence	4,3	4,2	(1) (3)
Repression by the police	3,7	3,8	
Absence of and/or deterioration of social values	4,3	4,26	(2)
Sports club supporters and their groups	3,7	3,66	(3)
Traffic congestion	*	2,65	(1) (2)

⁴⁵ (1) There is a statistically significant variation in responses between young men and women.

(2) There is a statistically significant variation in responses between different age groups.

(3) There is a statistically significant variation in responses between the regions in which the respondents reside.

⁴⁶ Previously, this answer was labeled 'Promotion of Aggressors in the Media'.

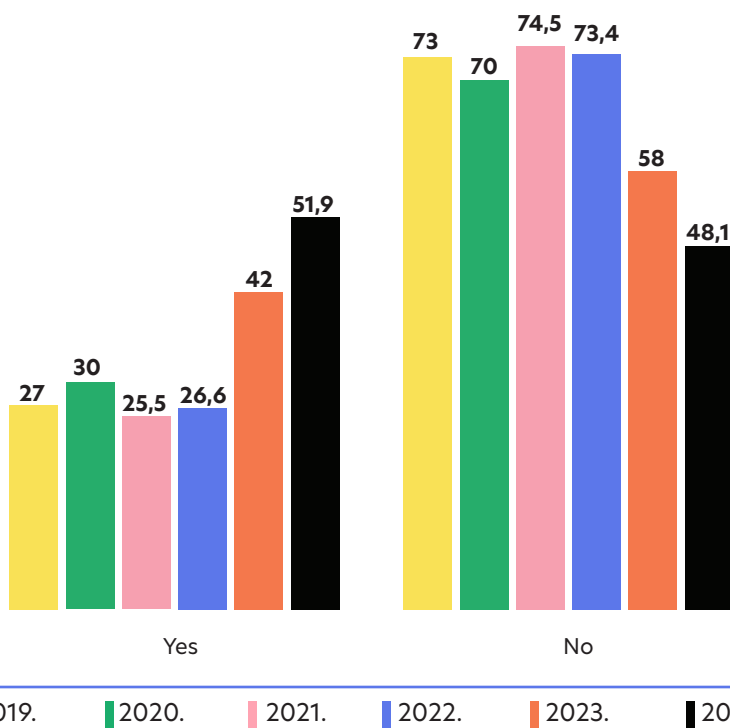
⁴⁷ Respondents from older age groups give higher ratings for the causes of violence wherever there are statistically significant differences. An exception, as in previous years, is discrimination against vulnerable groups, where the group aged 15 to 19 has a higher average rating.

⁴⁸ Young people from the Belgrade and Vojvodina regions give higher ratings for the following causes of violence: media coverage, discrimination against vulnerable groups, poor penal policy, and sports club supporters and their groups.

⁴⁹ Young women give higher average ratings for the following causes of violence: family relations, poverty, discrimination against vulnerable groups, weapons, poor penal policy, and traffic congestion.

We asked young people if violence can be justified: compared to last year, when 42% of young people said that violence could be justified, this year, we observed an increase in the number of respondents who responded affirmatively (52%).

Graph 61. Can violence be justifiable?



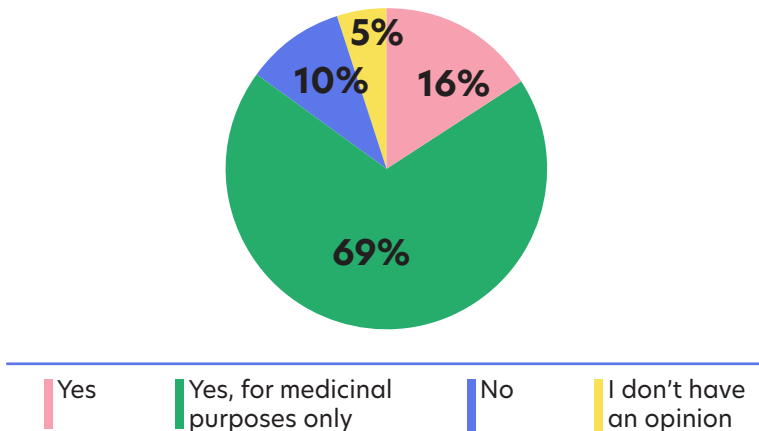
Considering that last year we observed a sudden increase in responses justifying violence, this year we wanted to find out in which cases young people believe violence to be justified. We received the following responses:

Table 30. Justification of violence

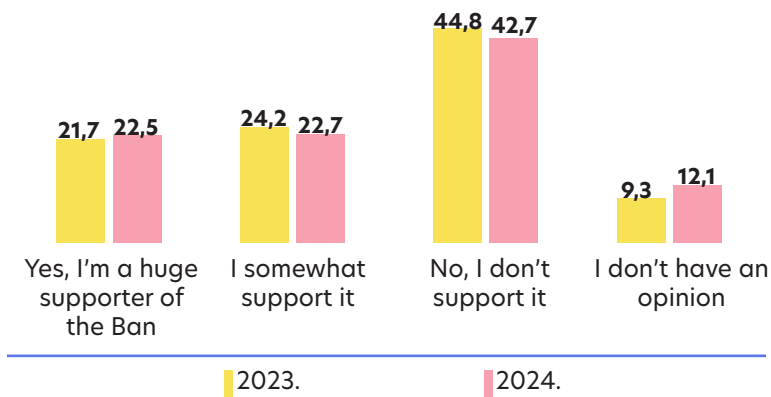
Violence is justified	Average score 2024.	Support expressed in % (ratings 4 and 5)
If the state/police is not doing their job	2,96	39%
In the case of revenge ("an eye for an eye")	2,34	17,7%
If used to punish the perpetrators of the most serious criminal offences	3,36	55%
If someone seriously threatens/insults me	2,51	25%
In a family unit (between parents/children, siblings)	1,57	6,2%
In relationships (partners/spouses)	1,31	3,4%
In traffic	1,63	4,8%

This year, we also asked several questions related to the health and habits of young people concerning the use of psychoactive substances. For example, we asked whether they support the legalization of marijuana/cannabis. Support for the legalization of marijuana has remained almost unchanged compared to last year.

Graph 62. Youth support for marijuana legalization



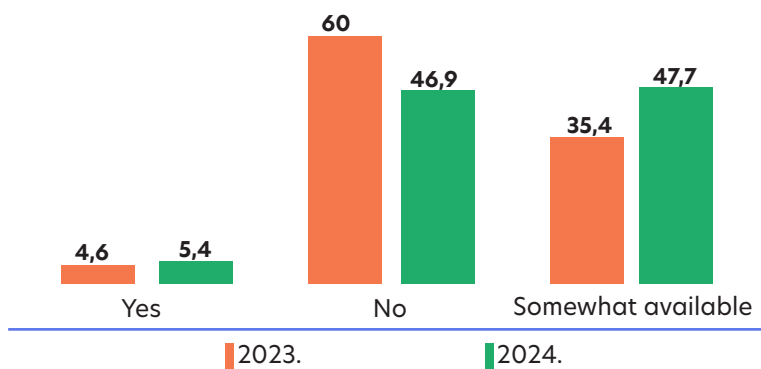
Graph 63. Attitude towards the Smoking Ban in Public Spaces



We received similar responses as last year. Young people are polarized on this issue: around 45% are either for or against (24.2% somewhat support), while 9% have no opinion.

We also asked young people several questions about mental health. The majority believe that professional help is insufficiently available in Serbia, although the number of responses claiming that there is no professional health available at all has decreased by 13%.

Graph 64. Availability of adequate mental health help



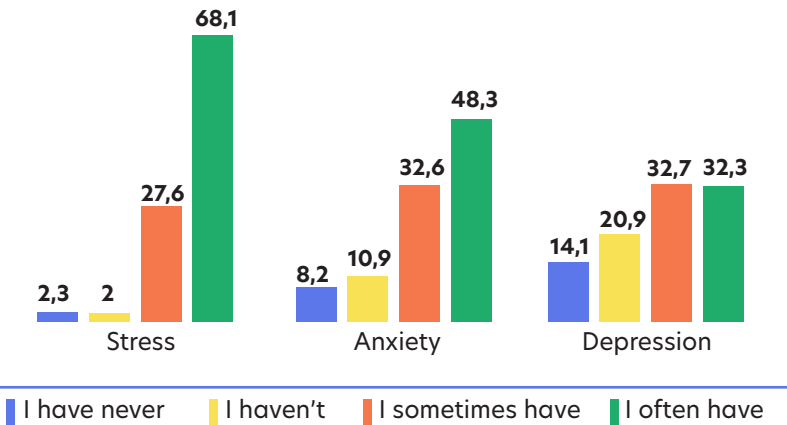
We then asked young people to identify which local institution they see as the most suitable place for providing mental health services. The majority believe that a private psychologist is the best option, while 18% think there is a more suitable institution which was not mentioned.

Table 31. Institutions providing mental health services

Institution	%
A department within a regular Health Center	4,6
Youth specialized counseling center within a regular Health Center	6,5
Youth center/club	3,8
Association of and for young people	3,6
Online counseling - SOS phones/mobile apps	2,8
Independent psychologist/psychiatrist	60,8
None of the above	17,9

When asked how often they battle stress, anxiety and/or depression, young people responded in the following manner:

Graph 65. Youth encounters with stress, anxiety, and/or depression



Each year, we monitor trending social issues, and this year we asked a question about the HPV vaccination of young people.

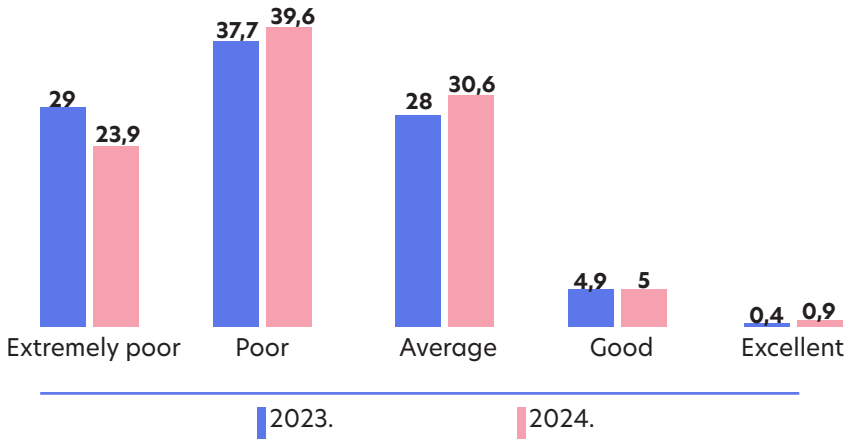
Table 32. Youth and HPV vaccine

Response	%
Yes	12,3
No, but I am going to	23,2
No, I wasn't informed	11
No, I don't see why it's important to do so	3,3
No, it's too expensive	2,4
No, I don't trust it	11,4
No, it won't protect me fully (there's no point)	4,5
I know nothing about HPV vaccine	28.4
Other	3.5

By the time this questionnaire was distributed (April 2024), only one in eight young people had been vaccinated against HPV. The responses reveal a significant level of misinformation among young people about the vaccine (about 50% reported that they either had no information, didn't trust it, or knew nothing about the HPV vaccine).

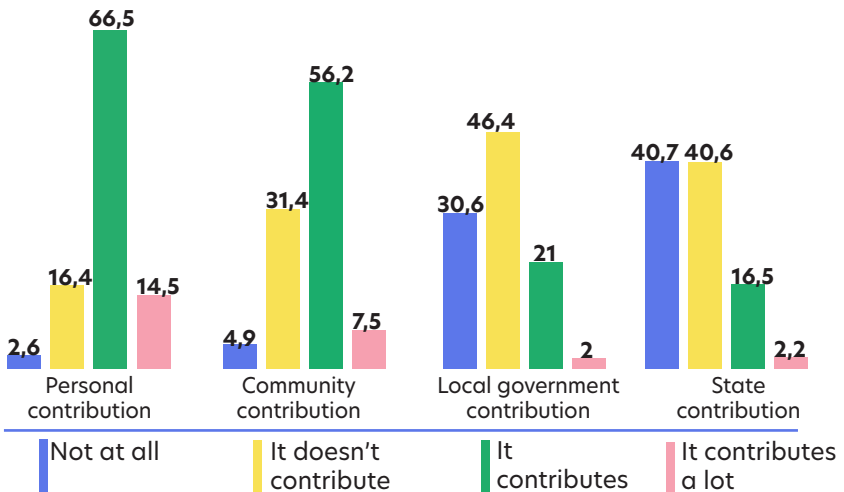
We asked young people to rate the quality of the environment in Serbia (on a scale from 1 - Very Poor to 5 - Excellent) and received an average rating of 2.19, a slight increase compared to 2023 (2.1).

Graph 66. Quality of the Environment



Then we asked how different actors contribute to environmental protection. The responses are as follows

Graph 67. Factors and their contributions to environmental protection



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