National strategy(ies)

In Macedonia, there is no special strategy that only applies to the sport and physical activity of young people. At the beginning of 2018, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia announced the adoption of the ten-year National Strategy for Sport, but it has not yet been adopted or has any data on the process of its preparation.[1]

Sport is covered as a thematic area within the framework of the National Youth Strategy 2016-2025. National Youth Strategy[1] developed and endorsed in 2016 for the period 2016-2025 is based on the fundamental values of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the European Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the European Convention on the Protection of Fundamental Human Freedoms and Rights, the European Social Charter, the European Cultural Convention, the UN, European Union and Council of Europe policies in the sphere of youth-related issues.

National Youth Strategy defines sports as ‘any form of physical activity undertaken, either occasionally or in organized participatory manner, with the aim of expressing and improving physical fitness and mental wellbeing, and of establishing social links or achieving results in competitions at all levels’[2].

In the thematic area sport, it envisages investigation of the existing conditions in which young people can practice sports and access to objects, with foreseen inclusion of 70% youth. Measures include
preparation and analysis of the use of facilities for sport in the ownership of Republic of Macedonia and ownership of local self-government, analysis of the program of the national sports federations for realization of mass sports activities and a survey of students in secondary schools in relation to their attitudes, interests and need for sports. A program has been prepared for sport-recreational activities of young categories 13-18 (middle school students), 19-23 (embedded in high education and who did not continue) and 24-29 (young, unemployed and employed).

Aimed at comprehensive cooperation among all institutions in the country that contribute to sports and promotion of “Sport for All”, necessary regulatory documents have been prepared for cooperation at the local level, with defined set of indicators for preparation of programs for inclusion and examination of needs through public debates, meetings of municipal councils and regional cooperation for capacity building.


**Promoting and supporting sport and physical activity among young people**

The Agency of Youth and Sports has the main role at the national level, for the promotion of sport and sports activities among young people. On a continuous level, the Agency implements projects and initiatives aimed at creating healthy and physically active youth.

This year (2018), the Agency for Youth and Sports was the bearer of the European Commission project "European Sports Week", which took place in the period from 23 to 30 September in the territory of whole Europe, as well as in our country.

The European Week of Sports titled #BeActive contributed to the development of sport in terms of active involvement of citizens, individual and institutional improvement, and promotion of styles for taking care of a healthy life of every individual.

In order to attract more and more young people to the sport (professional or recreational), the state, through the Agency of Youth and Sports [3], opened a number of open-air fitness zones as well as gyms in several municipalities throughout the country, organized and sponsored various sporting events and athletics racing and the like.

For the purpose of inclusion of young people with disabilities (aged 15-29 years), the National Federation of Sport and Recreation of the Disabled of Macedonia [4] last year promoted and started implementing the Change Your Mindset-Sport4Everyone project within the Erasmus + sports program, which aims to
promote the need for sports and physical activity for people with disabilities.

Recently, women’s sport has been increasingly promoted in Macedonia. Thus, in October 2017, the civil sports organization TACT, with the support of the Embassy of the Netherlands in Macedonia and the Agency of Youth and Sports, promoted a sport video aimed at promoting women's sport and the numerous benefits of sports. The video shows prominent athletes from eight different sports that are recognized in the Macedonian public by their results.

**Physical education in schools**

In primary schools, the time for physical and medical education is three-hour time-lag (progress in relation to the previous two hours). Each program and plan is based on expressed needs and interests of the students. There is a possibility for establishment of sports clubs within the school itself.

In secondary schools, physical and health education is represented by 2 + 1 (2 hours of physical + 1 hour sports activity). In the part of the secondary school there are also fitness clubs that students can use, including compulsory elective programs for music and fine arts. Sports and sports activities are defined in curricula with elective character. Sports and sports activities are aimed to allow students to express their skills and competences in the field of fitness, swimming, hiking, skiing, cycling, table tennis, sports day etc.

In the first-year secondary vocational education, sports education and sports activities are mandatory elective subject aimed to satisfy the needs of the students for securing and applying the acquired psychomotor knowledge of basic education in the field of sports in the function of maintaining and improving health, physical and working abilities, to help students to recognize the values of sport and sports activities, their positive influence on the organism, the cultural and spiritual enrichment of the person; to create habits for regular sports, maintaining the physical, health and working skills that will be used for active rest in everyday life and his future occupation; to acquire a culture of cheerleading and positive development of psycho-social-communication relations before, during and after the sporting competition.

The purpose of sport and sports activities in the second year is to acquire habits for regular sports. The volleyball is listed as a dominant discipline, to be in the function of an active holiday. The other disciplines are athletics, gymnastics, fitness, basketball, tennis, dancing, sports games, swimming and hiking activities.

In the curricula of the sports gymnasium, physical activity is represented by 4 sports: football, basketball, handball and tennis. In the first year, it includes development of psychomotorical skills, the theoretical basis of all sports and training of various sports (the goal of all trainings is to improve the physical abilities, acquire new meanings and skills from the various sports for the purpose of achieving high sports results.

In gymnasium education sport and sports activities for the third and the fourth year are 3 hours per week and for the first and second 2 classes and 1 for project tasks.

In vocational schools, sports education and sports activities as mandatory elective subject are 2 hours per week and 72 hours per year.
In the sport gymnasium, the first year include development of psychomotoric skills with 72 classes and theoretical basics of different sports with 28 classes. Practical training include 650 classes per year. General and specific physical preparation includes 150 classes, development of technical-tactical skills in attack – 250 classes, development of technical-tactical assault in defense – 250 classes and 34 classes for psychological preparation.

**Collaboration and partnerships**

The main stakeholders supporting the collaboration and formation of partnerships between schools are line ministries of health and education and science, within their mandates to regulate health and educational sectors. Relevant entities in sport include: Agency of Youth and Sports, Faculty of Physical Education, Sport and Health, Institute of Sport, Sport Federations, Units of local self-government, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Bureau for Development of Education, Institute of Public Health, primary and secondary schools, Federation for School Sport and civil society organizations.

Financial support is secured through the Agency of Youth and Sport annual budget, through block-donations to state institutions and a competitive process of publishing open calls for proposals for CSO sector.