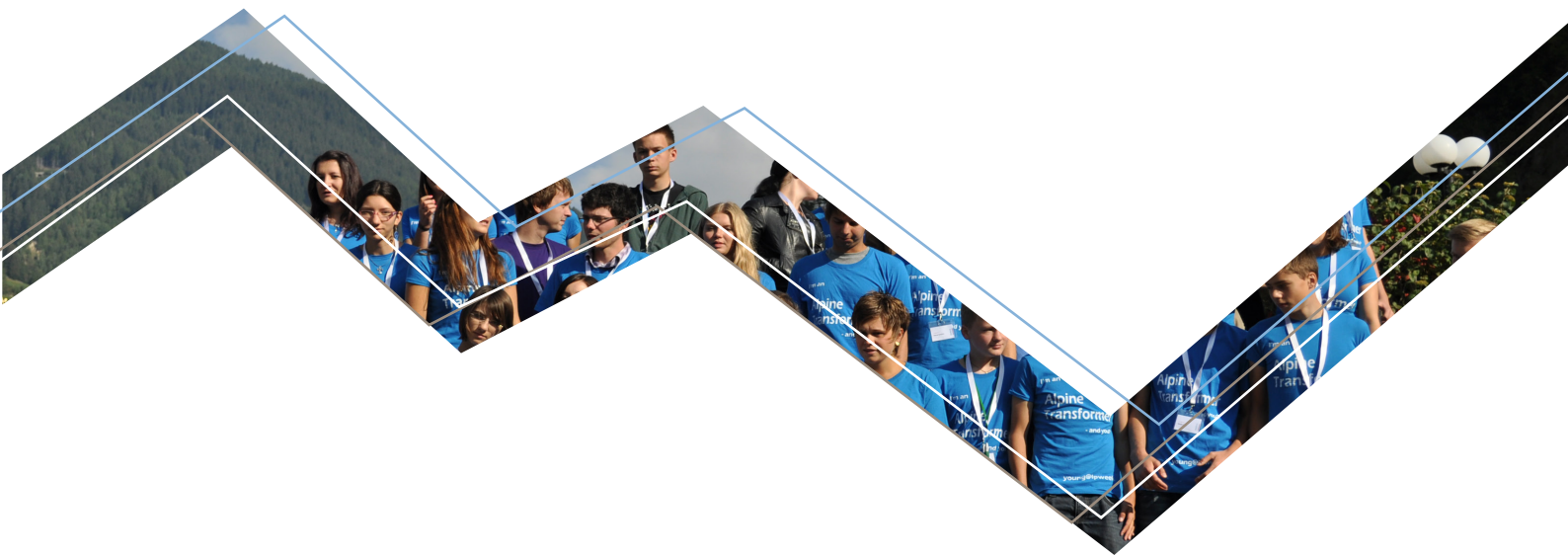


2013

YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN THE ALPS

A REPORT OF CIPRA



CIPRA





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INTRODUCTION

With the project young@lpweek CIPRA brought the youth to the forefront of the alpine scene, giving them a voice and a face within the “AlpWeek”, the most important alpine event in 2012.

About youth participation a lot about is said and often very different meanings are attached to these terms.

Between the opportunity to express their opinion and the opportunity to participate in decisions, assuming responsibility, there is a long way. The adults often require the opinion of young people on specific projects, rarely involve them in the process of co-decision. Young people themselves often do not want to be “too” involved and to take the responsibility to actively participate. A living democracy needs the active participation of all citizens.

CIPRA, which has been dealing for more than 60 years with the protection and sustainable development of the Alps, recognizes young people as the key to a sustainable future. They are the citizen and politicians of tomorrow. The aim of CIPRA is to strengthen youth participation in the Alps in order to give a contribution in forming active citizens for the future of the Alps and creating a network for youth participation and environmental education all over the Alps.

This brochure sets a look on the multiple facets of the issue of youth participation in the seven countries of the Alpine region, analyzing the legal framework, the associations, the difficulties, the existing forms of participatory processes. Some useful links and contacts complete this journey.

Young people are not a homogeneous group, just as the Alps are not a homogenous territory. Participation is not an one-time event, but a learning process. Experience shows that the success experienced in a project increases the desire in young people to participate again.

The situation is very different from country to country: Austria, Liechtenstein and Switzerland are bringing very structured and good experiences in the field of youth participation; Germany has many good practice examples, but very few implemented initiatives within the alpine part of the country. France has a structure for youth participation, but faces the challenge of bringing together local authorities and associations. Italy and Slovenia are showing some vividness, but also a lot of mistrust in political engagement.

The path is long, and we are at the beginning. There is a lot to do to animate young people to be active in their environment, to give them the tools to stay engaged in the Alps and to open doors for them.

That is why CIPRA wants to foster youth participation and to bring it in the alpine political agenda at different levels.



CIPRA'S DEMANDS ON YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Our vision

Young people living in the Alps are active and responsible citizens, they reflect critically, make informed decisions and contribute in designing the alpine future.

Decision makers consult and involve them and take them seriously. The involvement of present and future generations is on the political agenda at the local, national and European level.

CIPRA wants to strengthen the role and importance of young people in policy-making processes. By raising awareness regarding the characteristics of the Alpine region, a stronger identity and responsibility should be developed with respect to this habitat. In this way should also be developed a sensibilisation for environment and sustainable development. New spaces and possibilities to get involved and participate must be opened.

How can this vision become reality?

Central is that the young people do not feel alone and that communication with the same-aged who live in other countries in the Alps is enabled. CIPRA has set the goal of building up an alpine-wide network with national CIPRAs and the national youth organizations and environmental education institutions.

CIPRA helps to overcome cultural, technical and linguistic boundaries. It enables the implementation of specific activities on site. CIPRA raises the issue of youth participation on the political agenda in the municipalities, Alpine countries, with the bodies of the Alpine Convention and at European level. CIPRA raises the issue in the public and makes people understand the importance and value of a democratic participation. CIPRA acts as Alpine-wide network on the topic.

CIPRA contributes to:

- Strengthening the youth participation culture in the Alps.
- Coaching young adults in order to give young people competent mentors
- Informing and raising awareness of youth participation for alpine issues.
- Creating open spaces where participation is possible and requested.



- Facilitating the exchange between institutions and organizations interested in youth participation and environmental education institution.
- Offering a competent coaching.
- Directly involving young people in own activities and creating own structures (Cipra Youth Council).

CIPRA demands

Alpine municipalities set a good example

Most of the alpine municipalities are involving youth only regarding specific projects, for a short time. Youth participation should be fostered in a stable way, as an important part of a democratic culture, for example informing about the importance of youth participation and supporting the creation of officially acknowledged youth municipality councils.

Involve young people in alpine policies

For school pupils there are already some initiatives, like, for example the partnership between the Alpine Convention and the YPAC (Youth Parliament to the Alpine Convention). For young adults there is no framework or platform to stay involved and engage themselves in the sustainable development of the Alps. It would be important to initiate a participated process together with them to define this framework.

Youth organizations and environmental education institutions set up a network

Many young people in the Alps are spending their spare time as members of youth associations. After family and schools, associations are surely the most important non-formal education place for the future adults of the Alps. A stable alpine-wide network of youth associations must be set up in order to enable young people to include alpine perspective in their being active citizen of the Alps.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN ALPINE COUNTRIES

3.1

FRANCE

Legal frame for youth participation

In France two different levels of youth participation exist:

- Participation in consultation groups, supported by local authorities: In this case there is no legal obligation for youth participation. The public institutions can put in place arrangements to sensitize the population concerning the democratic functioning or to ask its opinion about specific political issues. These youth counsels often don't have formal existence, and the decision or notes they can take are just consultative ones. In some cases they inspire new projects for youth.
- Participation of youth in different associations, created by the law of 1901: Until age 16, youth which are involved in an association can participate, join or even be elected for the management board but not for a position of authority as president, secretary or treasurer. Youth over 16 years are allowed, since July 2011 (article 45 of the law n°2011-893), to create or manage an association.

Youth participation networks

Two networks exist:

- A national network for youth participation in local authorities: **ANACEJ** (Association Nationale des Conseils d'Enfants et de Jeunes) brings together different local authorities with youth management boards, but also stakeholders and federations for civic education. This association aims to bring together different stakeholders to promote the youth participation and to give greater consideration to youth in general.
- A network in the French Alps for youth participation in association activities: **REEMA** (Réseau d'Education à l'Environnement Montagnard Alpin) brings together the alpine stakeholders in the field of environmental education and regional development. At present, this network is aiming to constitute a youth group to help managing the youth strategy of the association by making proposals and decisions.



Youth parliaments or similar structures

There are many different youth councils in the Alps. The following are the most prominent:

- On the level of Conseils généraux (department councils):
Conseil général jeune de Savoie
Conseil général jeune des Alpes de Haute-Provence
- On the intercommunal level:
Youth council of the Communauté de communes de Yenne
Youth council of Haute-Tarentaise
- On the municipal level:
Youth municipal council of Albertville

Ongoing participation processes where youths are involved

The Rhône-Alpes region organised a participatory approach, “Montagne 2040”, between January 2012 and June 2013 to define the issues of the region’s mountain policy which will be relevant for youth in the coming decades.

For this, the youth and mountain services worked together to organize meetings during which, using innovative moderation techniques, youth were able to discuss various issues with experts, such as the future of ski resorts, transportation and urban development in the mountain areas, natural resources and biodiversity.

The output is a guide with different scenarios on which basis the Rhône-Alpes region can develop its policy of the mountain area.

State of the Art

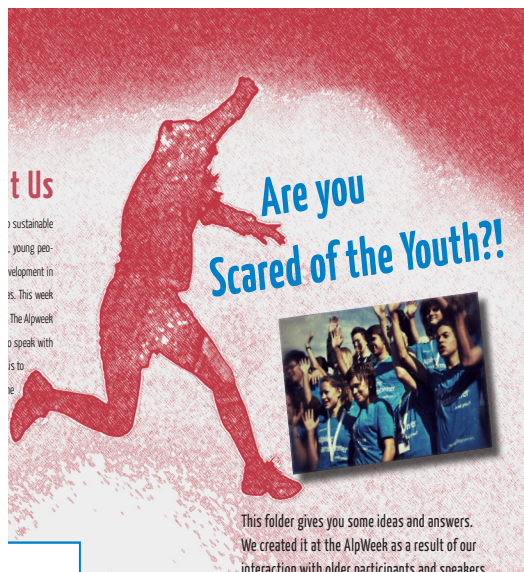
The issue of youth participation is emerging at all levels of public actions. In addition to the approach “Montagne 2040” in the Alps, the Comité de Massif (Committee of the Massif – inter-regional body, which defines and implements policies in the Alpine Massif) is becoming interested in youth participation. In 2013, it created a “Comité Technique Jeunes” with many specialists. The Comité de Massif would like to organise consultation meetings. These meetings will take place in 2014 (first seminary planned on January 31st).

Another important point is to identify the different experiences which already exist in the French Alps. The association REEMA’ project leader, makes a regular update of these experiences online http://www.reema.fr/wakka.php?wiki=JeuneS/download&file=REEMA_DynamiquesEE-JeunesAlpes_mai2013.pdf.

Challenges of youth participation in the French Alpine region

- For association dynamics, we have to ensure the sustainability (financial and structural) of the organisations that provide young people with the opportunity to get involved in the Alps and regional development in general.
- Regulatory and legal frameworks become a real obstacle to the discov-





ery and participation of young people in the mountains.

Concerning the local authorities, there is a need:

- To remove the legal uncertainty regarding the structures, which have to be implemented, if we want to integrate young people into the policy process.
- To find levers to motivate young people to participate in the participatory structures.
- To give credit to the voice of young people –politicians and managers over 50 years in particular are not taking people under 30 serious.
- To help young people to be confident in their projects ('believe in them so that they believe in themselves').

Further national action/initiatives/projects

Voluntary services in associations, legal bodies, public authorities:

The voluntary service is a device created in 2010 to give young people (between age 16 and 25) the possibility to gain important experiences and to participate in actions which are useful for society and themselves. This is furthermore a good combination of first work experience, civil participation and sustainable development.

Examples in national parks: The agency for voluntary services has an agreement with the French national parks so that young people can live their experience with a small salary within these structures and can make a contribution to the nature conservation.

SWITZERLAND

Legal frame for youth participation

In 1978 the Swiss Federal Council introduced a Federal Commission for Children and Youth Affairs (EKKJ- Eidgenössische Kommission für Kinder- und Jugendfragen) and since 1989 there has been a Youth Promotion Law, which was approved in a completely revised form in 2011. For this purpose, a regulation on the responsibilities, processes and procedures provides information on financial issues.

A Conference of Cantonal Representatives for Children and Youth Development (KKJF) has been initiated in order to coordinate the efforts among the cantons, which have their own legal provisions (partly in laws for social institutions, or regarding the promotion of culture etc.).

Youth participation networks

In addition to formal institutions, associations and foundations, confederations are also very active:

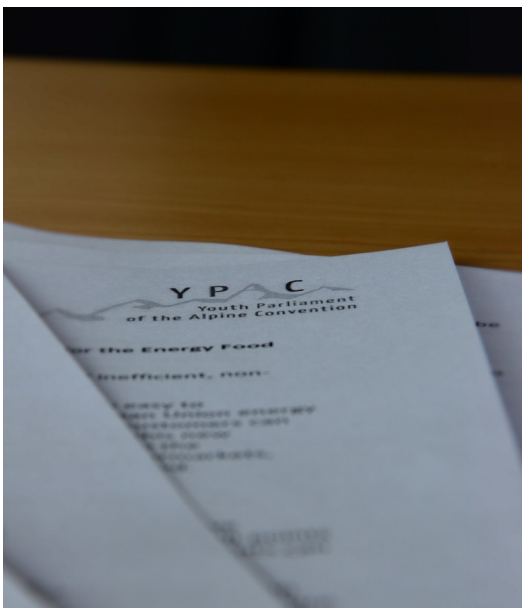
The **Schweizerische Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Jugendverbände** (SAJV-Swiss National Youth Council) is the umbrella organization of about 65 youth organizations in Switzerland and represents their interests in the public scene. The SAJV offers services to its members and ensures a transfer of knowledge. The core issue is youth policy. They work for the interests of the young generation both on the national and international level, also through projects in fields such as politics, volunteering, health and integration.

The **Dachverband Schweizer Jugendparlamente** (DSJ- Swiss Federation of Youth Parliaments) is a roof organization of Cantonal Youth Councils and local youth parliaments. The federation is supported and funded by the federal government and the cantons and has the purpose of increasing the efficiency of the Youth Council and the support of their governing bodies, as well as the creation of new youth parliaments in Switzerland.

The implementation of civic education and the creation of a general awareness on the importance of youth participation in the institutions also fall within the scope of the FSPG, which - among other events - organizes the Conference of Youth Parliamentarians once a year, a discussion platform that brings together more than 1,500 young people.

Since 2011, the Federation has implemented the national project “easyvote”. “Easyvote” informs in a simple and politically neutral way about cantonal and national elections and votes. The team from “easyvote” consists out of young people and in the Italian speaking part of Switzerland it is quite dedicated. It is so dedicated that the Council of the State of Ticino has granted its patronage to the Swiss-Italian team to demonstrate the importance of youth policy and youth participation in society.

The **Dachverband offene Jugendarbeit Schweiz (DOJ)** is an umbrella organization of open youth work (DOJ); it promotes and coordinates socio-cultural activities for young people in Switzerland.



Kinder- und Jugendförderung Schweiz (Association for Child and Youth Development) is the direct, fast and competent answer to all questions of children and young people who want to make a difference and need support to realize their ideas. It provides easy to understand information and specific assistance for all areas of life of children, adolescents and their caregivers. This service is used by nearly 150,000 people (70,000 queries in 2012) and about 500 youth projects and youth initiatives every year.

Youth parliaments or similar structures

There are about 60 Youth Parliaments in Switzerland. All of them can be found at <http://www.jugendparlamente.ch>.

One of the Cantonal Youth Councils is the Youth Parliament of Ticino and consists of an assembly of young people living in Ticino and a committee. It is a dedicated organ of the state and is recognized and regulated by Article 11 of the Children Act. The aims of the Cantonal Youth Council are to promote the exchange of ideas among young people and encourage the active participation of young people in the political life of the Canton Ticino.

Ongoing participation processes where youths are involved

Especially at municipality level youth parliaments and similar commissions are involved in participation processes in various ways, in terms of the mode as well as the way and level of involvement. Anyhow young people have the full right to participate in decisions only through election rights.

State of the Art

In the canton Bern there are ten young people associations. Most of them work on specific youth topics and projects (e.g. night bus, a youth club, etc.). Other activities are less prominent. The young people are by no means apolitical, but they often don't want to commit themselves to any party directly, which is also one reason why they are more project-based engaged. It means there is a chance!

Youth parliaments often become experienced in arguing, debating, etc. used to practice behaviors (arguing, debating, etc.). The step from participation in meetings to a socially and politically active people will often be taken in the future.

Challenges of youth participation in the Swiss Alpine region

- Ensuring a bottom up process
- Motivating young people to participate in international projects, which face competition from many other leisure activities und projects
- Dealing with rapid turn-over of participants



National facts or data concerning implemented youth projects

In a huge bouquet of opportunities for leisure activities, it is difficult to keep young people involved. They are interested, but often not willing to become engaged deeply and for a long time.



Legal frame for youth participation

According to the UN-Convention of children's rights, all children have the rights to participation, freedom of association and freedom of assembly as well as the right to freedom of opinion and the right to information. Besides these universal rights, there are two laws for youth representation in Austria: the SchülerInnenvertretungsgesetz (SchVG), a law which sets the framework for the representation of our students in student councils at school, federal state and national level and the Bundesjugendvertretungsgesetz (BJVG), which regulates the legal representation of the interest group of all children and youth.



Youth participation networks

Bundesjugendvertretung	www.jugendvertretung.at	Legal
Bundesschülervertretung	www.bsv.at	Legal
Österreichische HochschülerInnenschaft	www.oeh.ac.at	Legal
Bundesweites Netzwerk für offene Jugendarbeit	www.boja.at	Independent organisation
Koordinatium für offene Jugendarbeit und Entwicklung	www.koje.at	Independent organisation
ARGE Partizipation	www.jugendbeteiligung.cc	Independent organisation
aktivwerden.at	www.aktivwerden.at/	Independent organisation

These are the independent nation-wide or legal organisations. The **Bundesjugendvertretung** is the legal youth representation regulated by the BJVG, the **Bundesschülervertretung** is the legal student representation regulated by the SchVG, and the **Österreichische HochschülerInnenschaft** is the legal representation of university students.

The **Bundesweite Netzwerk für offene Jugendarbeit (BOJA)** is a network for work with young people in the fields of education, social work, culture and health related subjects. It tries to position certain topics and to meet the needs of the youth, who use the service of the network.

ARGE Partizipation is a working group consisting of the department Youth Work of Southern Tyrol, the department Youth Politics of the Ministry and all Austrian state youth representatives. The aim of the ARGE Partizipation is to establish youth participation in the working fields of youth politics and youth work, to optimize the quality and standards of participation, to organise events for further education and networking and to collect best practice examples of participation.

The platform **aktivwerden.at** gives young people the opportunity to find a NGO or NPO, where they can participate, do something meaningful and help the organisation with lots of energy.

Youth parliaments or similar structures

Student parliaments are held in some schools at least once in every federal state. There is a national student council and there are city-student parliaments in some cities. The children parliament from 8 to 14 years old takes place twice a year in the federal state which has the presidency of

the State council. There are several youth councils and parliaments in different states or cities of Austria.

Ongoing participation processes where youths are involved

As the student representation is a legal council with political influence, a constant participation process is part of the educational system in Austria. There are many individual projects for the planning of whole cities, parks or single buildings in which youth are involved.

The Akademisches Gymnasium of Innsbruck is also the initiator of the YPAC, Youth Parliament to the Alpine Convention.

State of the Art

There are different kinds of youth participation projects in Austria.

Examples include:

- Consultations/discussions with mayors
- Youth discussions
- Youth forum
- Youth survey
- Interactive youth homepages
- Youth council
- Youth delegation
- Youth parliament

Examples of ongoing projects are to be found at:

www.jugendbeteiligung.cc

www.partizipation.at/praxisbeispiele.html

Challenges of youth participation in the Austrian Alpine region

Youth participation is already very strong in individual projects in our alpine regions. However, a stronger network between individual organizations would be very beneficial: strengthen the youth participation in the Alps could be achieved by offering networking opportunities and a national conference for alpine organizations. Also, the range of alpine projects is often rather small, as it is difficult to reach youth who are not already involved in an organization, so increasing advertising resources would definitely increase the number of youth that can be reached.

There are many good ideas and dedicated people who wish to start projects with youth in the alpine region, but it is very difficult to get financial resources for projects like these.



Legal frame for youth participation

The Constitution guarantees constitutional norms for young people. Article 1 and 2 of the Grundgesetz (GG) guarantees the fundamental rights of children and young people and their ability.

- Children and Youth Services Act:
www.kindex.de/pro/index~mode~gesetze~value~kjhg.aspx
§ 8 Participation of children and young people: children and young people according to their level of development in all relevant decisions to involve the public youth welfare...
- The National Action Plan for a child-friendly Germany sees as a key focus to strengthen the involvement of children and young people in our society.

Youth participation networks

- Bayrischer Jugendring (Bavarian Youth Council-BJR):
- Decision of the Board: "More participation and political education in Bavaria": www.bjr.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Hauptausschuss/141/2012-10-22_Beschluss_Partizipation_u_Politische_Bildung.pdf
- Municipal federations and the Federal Youth Council BJR-(Bayerische Jugendring) discuss participation opportunities for young people in their communities: www.bjr.de/presse/pressemitteilungen/detailansicht/article/Beteiligte-Jugend-lebendiges-Gemeinwesen.html
- International Project: "Future Workshop - Demographic change and migration in Bavaria and Tyrol": www.lj-bayern.de/cm
- In the National Coalition (NC) 110 organizations and initiatives have come together with the goal of making the UN Children's Rights Convention in Germany known and to advance their implementation in Germany: www.national-coalition.de
- Service provider for youth engagement and youth participation: www.servicestelle-jugendbeteiligung.de
- There is a Bavarian Youth Council based on the decision of the Bavarian Government: www.bjr.de

There is a Bavarian federation of youth parliaments at municipality level. In the perimeter of the Alpine Convention two youth parliaments exist: http://jupa2.pafnet.de/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=43&Itemid=73

- Youth parliament of the city of Sonthofen
www.sonthofen.de/Stadtpolitik/Jugendparlament.aspx
- Youth council of the municipality of Prien:
www.prien.de/de/main/jugendrat_2.htm

Ongoing participation processes where youths are involved

The Bavarian Parliament decided in its plenary session on 18.06.2009 the establishment of a commission to carry out the needs of the children.



Sources:

www.bayern.landtag.de/images/content/Abschlussbericht_2spaltig_internet.pdf

www.bayern.landtag.de/www/bestsys/KiKo.pdf

State of the Art

- In the Bavarian Alps the topic of youth participation still has potential to be improved (only 2 youth parliaments!). The previous (“conventional”) approaches to young people do not seem to be successful. It is time to catch young people at their major interests: on the street, in folklore societies, in shooting clubs, in the volunteer fire brigades, in sports clubs etc. and at the same time to work out topics of burning issues like school education, off-the-job training, employment.

- Some issues are played on internet platforms, e.g. biodiversity: <http://go4biodiv.org>

The International Youth Forum Go4BioDiv gives young adults between 18 and 29 the possibility to engage in the Conferences of the Parties of the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD-COP). Initiated by the German development cooperation (GIZ) and the German National Park of the Bavarian Forest, Go4BioDiv has been carried out three times so far, in 2008, 2010 and in 2012.

Challenges of youth participation in the German Alpine region

There has to be an open, flexible framework for participation. At the same time, it is necessary to establish a substantive and temporal continuity of participation. Together with teenager goals should be formulated. New approaches towards young people need to get in action.

Further national initiatives

The Rural Network (DVS) supports policy implementation amongst others regarding youth participation in rural development areas. This network published an information booklet regarding Youth and Regional Development: www.netzwerk-laendlicher-raum.de/service/publikationen/landinform-spezial/jugend



Legal frame for youth participation

Article 3 “Rights of children and youths” of the Children and Youth Act (Kinder- und Jugendgesetz KJG) says: “Children and youths ... have the right to take part, contribute and participate in social, political and cultural matters that particularly concerns them, as well as to participate in the social life in an age-appropriate way.”

Source: https://www.gesetze.li/get_pdf.jsp?PDF=2009029.pdf

The implementation of the law is limited, though. There are a lot of clubs and associations for recreational purposes. The inclusion in political decisions is very small. The permission to vote comes at the legal age which is, analogous to the other Alpine countries, at 18.

There are, however, possibilities for youths to get involved.

Youth participation networks

The **AHA Centre** is surely the most important network and the biggest player in youth participation in Liechtenstein. It is a multifunctional platform for youth, which informs, initiates projects and is also headquarters of the national agency for the European program “Youth in Action”. Projects cover all the youth topics: education, work life, communication, relationships/family, health, rights, leisure time, environment, sports, culture, foreign countries/exchange programs.

JUBEL, short for JÜgendBEteiligung Liechtenstein (Youth Participation Liechtenstein) is a countrywide school-based platform, initiated by and belonging to AHA, which connects teenagers from different classes, schools and municipalities with each other and with political and economic decision makers in a participatory process. This process goes much further than a school-project, because young people are working on it in their spare time and in mixed groups, being coached and trained. JUBEL empowers teenage students to shape actively their surroundings.

Two important networks came out of the JUBEL Process:

- The association **Jugend Energy** (Youth Energy), which consists of teenagers and mentors. Their goal is to include youths in fostering renewable energy in the region.
- The **Jugendrat Liechtenstein** (Youth Council Liechtenstein) is an association of young people who live in Liechtenstein. They are teenagers and young adults who want to be politically involved but stay independent.

Furthermore there are:

The **Pfadfinder und Pfadfinderinnen Liechtensteins** (Scouts) include about 800 members in 9 sections. They are involved in social projects at community level. Other main parts are outdoor activities and scout camps. They also participate in international activities.

Youth section of the **Liechtenstein Alpenverein** (Alpine Association). Their programme includes mainly outdoor activities but they also focus on environmental education.





The **Verein Liechtensteiner Jugendorganisationen VLJ** (Association of Liechtenstein Youth Organizations) is the coordinator of Youth Centres in Liechtenstein. It also offers services for associations, such as the youth magazine “Flash”, leader classes or networking.

The **Verein Symbiose** (association Symbiose) wants to contribute to a connected sustainable community in the Rhine Valley. In particular its project “Future Workshop” (“Zukunftswerkstatt”) gives people of all ages a platform to commit themselves to different types of actions, on a municipal level as well as internationally.

Liechtenstein is also participating in the **International Bodensee Konferenz** (IBK-International Conference of the Lake of Constance). This is a cooperative association of countries and cantons adjacent to the Lake of Constance, which is also running a Youth Dialogue about sustainable development of the Lake of Constance Region. The dialogue consists of different activities like Youth Forum (2004), Youth Ideas Competition (2012) and a Youth Meeting with the politicians of different countries about strategies for the future (2013).

Since 2000 the European Program Youth in Action has been funding many different youth projects (including projects like Jugend Energy, Verein Symbiose), contributing in this way to a wide development of networks for youth participation.

Youth parliaments or similar structures

At the moment there is no Youth Parliament in Liechtenstein. The last one was ended in 2001 due to a lack of interest; it was also not a completely neutral parliament.

The general Assembly of JUBEL is not a parliament, but it’s the place where ideas young people have developed can be presented to the politicians. Traditional school participation thus goes public and has a voice in politics at the national level.

Jugendkommission (youth commission): The youth commission consists of six members appointed by the municipal council and works with the youth department on issues of youth care. There is one in each of the municipalities of Triesen, Balzers, Planken and Vaduz.

Ongoing participation processes where youths are involved

- Ombudsstelle für Kinder und Jugendliche (OSKJ - Agency for Children and Youth Rights)

The OSKJ is a neutral advice and complaints agency. Children and adolescents as well as adults can turn to the Ombudsman’s office with their questions and concerns in relation to children and youth matters to obtain information or to get help. The OSKJ offers child rights workshops for children, clarifies issues related to the UN Children’s Convention with groups, organizations and bodies in Liechtenstein concerned with children and youth issues, and shall review the implementation of this.

- Kinder- und Jugendbeirat KIJB

The Child and Youth Advisory Committee advise the government on all fundamental issues of youth care, protection of minors and youth services. In addition it is responsible for the independent execution. The Children and Youth Advisory Board consists of ten members and is elected for a term of two years by the Plenary Assembly.

In addition, the Liechtenstein Association for Environmental Protection (Liechtensteinische Gesellschaft für Umweltschutz LGU) and CIPRA Liechtenstein are partners in the project “Youth Alpine Dialogue” of CIPRA International which focuses on strengthening effective youth participation in the Alps.

The Liechtensteinische Gymnasium of Vaduz also participates in the YPAC, the Youth Parliament to the Alpine Convention.

State of the Art

Participation is actually not strongly enshrined in the law of Liechtenstein. Yet there are more and more young people who are enthusiastic and willing to get involved. They are often willing to speak, but not always willing to get into the deeper levels of participation and be directly involved in decisions. The culture of participation in Liechtenstein was grafted on an existing political system. This sometimes has the effect that participation does not fit the general framework but has to be adapted to it.

“Young people don’t get particularly involved and have no special importance in public life. It is also part of the culture that “normal” youth don’t get involved in discussions. They are just not being asked.” (E. K., age 25, FL)

Looking at the results of the Jugendstudie Liechtenstein (Study about Youth) written in 2006, young people put very much trust in the government, schools and official institutions. Most of them are involved in activities of sports association.

Challenges of youth participation in the Liechtenstein Alpine region

For a start, involve youth in discussions. Make on-going projects more public and highlight them regularly in the media. Start acting, having and seeing direct impact (e.g. Jugend Energy) in order to keep motivation. The biggest challenge is to empower young people and make them participate in things that matter to them. For example, schools should be an institution that help that development, but the way they work now is rather disempowering. Before a question is asked the result is already known. In addition, the need and the urgency to teach about sustainable development seem hardly to be understood.



Legal frame for youth participation

The article 118 of the Italian Constitution, after the 2001 reform of the last paragraph, introduces the principle of horizontal subsidiarity. „Furthermore the state, regions, metropolitan cities, provinces and municipalities shall promote the autonomous initiatives of citizens, individually and in combination, for the performance of activities of general interest, on the basis of the principle of subsidiarity.”

The reference info-portal for participation and public administrations is <http://partecipazione.formez.it>

In Italy there is no law specifically dealing with youth. The Ministry of Youth was created in 2006. At present it is affiliated to the Ministry of Integration. This Ministry elaborated a National Youth Plan (2007) and the related guidelines (2008) and the so-called Operative National Youth Plan (2007/2013).

The most important instrument regarding youth participation is the National Youth Plan and related guidelines, which delegates the implementation to the provinces.

The **Area Youth Plans** ensure the implementation at the provincial level of the National Youth Plan. They offer privileged spaces for youth policy: they bring together youth organizations, high school and university students, informal groups, local actors and political, social, economic entities. They provide possibilities for a dialogue, for getting to know each other, for understanding and evaluating other points of view. Young people have the opportunity of participating actively in the construction of youth policies.

Several projects concerning various issues have been executed. One of the most important concerns the environment and sustainable development.

In Italy there are three regional laws about participation but they don't specifically concern youth and alpine areas.

What is done for the involvement of young people in decision-making is definitely not enough for a country in the third millennium. Reasons may be the negative image that politics have acquired in recent years or because of the difficulty in creating motivation and the lack of adequate support structures.

In general, it is necessary to distinguish between youth activities conducted by NGOs, such as those involved in the environmental sector, and youth participation in decision-making, or at least involvement of youth at the initiative of institutional bodies (national or local). In the first case the activity is aimed at young people of different age groups ranging from volunteer camps to environmental education. It caters mostly to young people in metropolitan areas (including young people from other countries). The two major environmental NGOs engaged in this are Legambiente and WWF.



Focus on the Province of Trento

The autonomous Province of Trento delegates the competence for youth to the Department of Social and Health Policies.

The Provincial Council Resolution of the Province of Trento n.1836 of August 2010 establishes the provincial platform for coordination and action on Climate Change and the Climate Observatory Trentino. These coordinate the technical/scientific institutions in Trentino doing research and monitoring of climate variables, as well as those engaged in scientific information, information campaigns and environmental education.

Youth participation networks

At the national level there is the **National Youth Forum**, a platform of Italian youth organizations which are members of the European Youth Forum. Participating associations range from those for student and professional groups to those linked to parties, sports, scouting and religion (there is little or no presence of environmental organizations).

An important role is played by the networks of information services (informagiovani) for young people that refer to **ANCI** (Association of Italian Municipalities). The operational headquarters are mostly in the cities and regional capitals. Access to these information networks is easier for young people living in urban and metropolitan areas; in the alpine areas, especially rural ones, the opportunities for young people are much lower.

Young UNCEM is a new network of under 35s, founded in Turin in 2012, sixty years after the founding of the Union of Mountain Municipalities, Communities and Authorities. All participants are studying or working. Some are administrators, counselors or advisors. Others are in contact with the government of the small towns where they live or are involved in associations in mountain areas. They all have one certainty: there is no mountain development without new generations. Young UNCEM promotes the development of social projects, or projects dealing with energy, environment and education. It works with local authorities to mobilize new ideas and resources, promotes public meetings and conferences, systems, communication networks.

Democracy biennale in Turin

Since 2009, an organized international event focusing on the promotion of a culture of democracy is organized every two years. It is a permanent public workshop, with meetings and workshops in schools and at grass-roots. This then results in five days of great events for all citizens: lectures, debates, forums, seminars and different ways of involvement. The latest biennale was held in April 2013. A youth and school session is also organized.

Italian Climate Network

The Italian Climate Network is an association of citizens, enterprises, NGOs engaged in solving the climate issue and ensure a sustainable future for Italy.

It has a youth section whose purpose is to promote a movement of young



people, students and others over the whole country using the “training the trainer” model, so that they can in turn sensitize their fellow citizens on environmental issues and climate.

The association **Acmos** was founded in 1999 by a group of young people from different experiences of volunteering and social engagement, united by the desire to explore paths of justice and solidarity, participation and responsibility. Aiming especially at young people it promotes and supports democratic inclusion through projects, education in values and practices that underpin the culture of active citizenship. It operates mainly in Turin Province and has over 100 members, plus a vast network of partnerships in Piedmont and in the rest of Italy that offer start up training and permanent involvement of more than 500 people.

Youth parliaments or similar structures

Some Italian regions, like Puglia and Tuscany, have set up a Regional Youth Parliament. In the Alpine area there are no youth Parliaments. The Region of Valle d’Aosta has allowed the participation of young people from the region in the Youth Parliament of the French Community of Belgium (Parlement Jeunesse de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles).

As part of the European Eco-Citizen in 2010 in Turin (European Youth Capital 2010), the Eco Youth Parliament was held, in which young Italians and Slovenians met to discuss the environmental policies of the two countries. Local initiatives are organized occasionally as a result of collaboration between municipalities and secondary schools (eg. the Municipality of Laives in South Tyrol).

Two high schools from Bassano del Grappa and Merano are also involved in the YPAC (Youth Parliament to the Alpine Convention).

Ongoing participation processes where youths are involved

Participatory processes that involve young people are rather limited. However, since 2007, some areas, with the help of municipalities and provinces, have developed a planning linked to the “Local Youth Plan”. This development agreement was signed between local institutions, the entrepreneurial and the educational sector. The first experiences are those of the Network Iter and the Province of Trento.

For example, in 2013, within the Youth Plan “Bassa Val di Non 2012: A Matter of Style: Towards a Sustainable Future” a group of involved young people expressed the will and the desire to continue along the path of studying, sharing and engaging themselves in the community. The focus was on environmental issues and health, in the hope of contributing to the sustainable development of the municipalities of the valley. The outcome was the creation of the “Osservatorio SOSTenibile”.

The implementation of the Area Youth Plan 2012 “Paths in the Parks” also resulted in the project of the association “Tassobarbasso”, concerned with environmental and intercultural issues, particularly with sustainable tourism.



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Additionally there are sporadic and occasional initiatives related to environment topics and implemented by local authorities (provinces, municipalities), on occasions such as the World Environment Day, or special events organized by the Province of Turin with the Youth Parliament for Water (school year 2003-2004, not repeated).

Many activities of the “Pro Loco” associations for the promotion of culture and local area involve young people; however, there is no real network connection between all the Pro Locos in the Alpine region. At the local level there is often mutual aid between associations of adjacent municipalities.

State of the Art

In all regions and provinces there are operational structures able of working directly in the field, interacting with young people and enabling them to participate actively in social life, but there is a lack of such services in remote and rural areas, such as most of the Alpine region.

The issues and topics are unfortunately quite limited. Young people are seldom given the opportunity to intervene in policy choices although they almost always affect their future. Environmental and ecological issues are rarely treated and occasions to involve young people in Alpine topics are not available. Youth participation in the Italian Alps has a high development potential.

Challenges of youth participation in the Italian Alpine region

Within environmental groups and associations, participation needs to be enhanced and the aim of their activities needs to be adjusted to the Alpine regions (involvement of young people living in the Alps).

Within the various youth networks, besides giving a boost to environmental issues, a new concept of the mountains/Alps has to be developed. The Alps have to be a place of life and not just a place of recreation. It is also essential for this purpose to involve young people.

The motivation of young people could also be created through the schools and their participation in decision-making processes stimulated by a new image of politics, which today is very negative.

Creating possibilities of exchange and comparison with other Alpine countries could be the key to stimulating youth participation. The problem of finding the necessary financial resources must not be neglected.

National facts or data concerning implemented youth projects

Some young graduates and undergraduates resident in a mountainous area have created, along with the international centre for mountain research **CirMont**, a working group to discuss and propose ideas for the development of the mountain with a research-oriented approach.

Founded in 1992 in Turin, “**Avventura urbana**” is a collective has been committed since more than twenty years in Italy and in Europe accompanying public and private administrations that want to activate processes of public communication, participatory democracy and mediation of local



conflicts. They are active in Piedmont, Aosta Valley, Lombardy, Trentino and South Tyrol.

Centri Educazione Ambientale CEA Legambiente

The Centers for Environmental Education of Legambiente are committed to improve the environmental quality and cultural territories. They consist of residential centre within protected natural areas, or positioned in places of natural, historical and cultural value. They are offering educational, natural, historical and cultural tourism and children and young people to acknowledge the importance of our territories.



Legal frame for youth participation

Among other regulations there are different Acts that involve the participation of youths:

- Public Interest in the Youth Sector Act: government council for youth, co-financing of youth organizations
- Youth Councils Act: official bodies have to inform youth councils before making new regulations which influence youth
- Student Communities Act: determines student cooperation in public decisions, which involves students
- Structures in higher education: government council for student questions, government council for higher education, student organizations at universities and higher education, student councils at universities and higher education establishments
- Gymnasium (high school) and Occupational and Professional Education Acts: student communities

24.10.2013: The National Programme for Youth 2013-2022 Resolution has been adopted.

Youth participation networks

There are several youth participation networks in Slovenia, for example the Planinska zveza Slovenije (Alpine association of Slovenia) or the Zveza študentskih klubov Slovenije (Association of students club of Slovenia). Many young people are members of different cultural and sport clubs. Cultural clubs aim to revive cultural traditions.

Youth parliaments or similar structures

Youth parliament in primary school: organised once per year on a certain topic. It starts at school level (school parliament) and goes via youth parliaments in communities and regional youth parliaments to the state youth parliament, which is held in the hall of National Assembly. It is informal.

Youth parliament in secondary/high school: It is formally organized in the high school student organization and is the highest body of this organization. Youth parliament is officially structured, with representatives/deputies of high schools.

Youth parliament at university level: student organizations have a formally organized assembly as their highest body; it has a similar function as parliament.

There are also certain informal youth parliaments on the local level as part of some projects.

There is a network of debating clubs within primary and secondary schools and universities. Debating clubs don't have as much influence as youth parliaments but involve youth in a process of participation in society and enable them to express their ideas.



Every year students from Kamnik and Maribor participate in the YPAC-Youth Parliament of the Alpine Convention, where the students discuss a certain topic with politicians and students from other alpine towns.

Ongoing participation processes where youths are involved

Fields and processes are very diverse. The main body involved is the Mladinski svet Slovenije (National Youth Council of Slovenia) which takes part in the decision making processes, which directly or indirectly influence youths. It cooperates with local youth structures on certain topics. At the local level there is no common structure. It depends on local willingness of decision makers how much they include youth and on the quality and motivation of youth organizations to influence.

There are plenty of projects in primary schools and secondary/high schools which involve youths in the thematic areas relating to the Alps (environment, biodiversity, energy, etc.). Projects are executed and managed within schools. Some of the projects are national and coordinated at the national level, some are local. Generally there are no involvements in for example urban planning processes if there is no link to the youth problematic.

State of the Art

Youths are not interested in conventional political participation and/or they have strong negative attitude towards representatives of political power, political parties and public policies. Youths are more interested in unconventional types of participation (protests, web actions etc.). These are the outcomes of a 2010 research project on youth in Slovenia.

There is a lack of formal participation of youth; mostly they participate in leisure-time activities.

Today's lifestyle is bombarding youths with information and a diversity of offers that makes youths more apathetic and indecisive.

Challenges of youth participation in the Slovenian Alpine region

The promotion of information on options that youths have to actively participate in society. The most common obstacles/challenges in Slovenia are:

- Social aversion towards identifying ideologies and certain types of organizational structures
- The voice of youth is not included in public decisions
- Manipulation of youth
- Weak participation on local level
- Unawareness and little information about possible participation
- Unawareness and the lack of understanding of decision makers about the importance of youth participation



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