



NATIONAL STUDY: YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS AND DECISION-MAKING IN ALBANIA 2011-2015

FACT SHEET

The data collected and analysed for the purpose of this study have led to some **main findings**:

- Albania presents to some extent a positive image regarding the drafting of national policies for the youth, including their participation in politics and decision-making. However, **even though there have been improvements in the democratisation of the political environment in the country, these positive steps were not followed by legal initiatives to support the participation of the youth in politics.**

- Statutes and regulations of all political parties in Albania include specific roles, duties and responsibilities for their youth forums, even though some of these functions are limited or in some cases are decided based on certain quotas and proportions. **The role and importance of these youth organisations diminishes when it comes to assigning young people in decision-making positions within a party, or at a local or national level;**

- **The number of young people in the central and executive government is still low, only 7.1%** in the level of representation in the legislative (parliament). Representation at the local level, although most mayors continue to be over the age of 35, back in 2015 local elections marked a significant increase of young people under age 35 for members of the City Councils;

- **The rate of inclusion of the youth in the decision-making process within political parties is very small, as most of the political parties have not fully endorsed or sanctioned the right of youth to representation.** Thus, they are deprived of the opportunity to play a pro-active role in politics and influence legislation, policy and new programs, both at local and national level. At the same time, the gender component of that small group is disappointing and varies from party to party;

- **Financial dependency and lack of funds is a major issue of concern for all youth forums.** The lack of a dedicated budget hinders any boost in participation and representation of the youth in the decision-making process within a party;

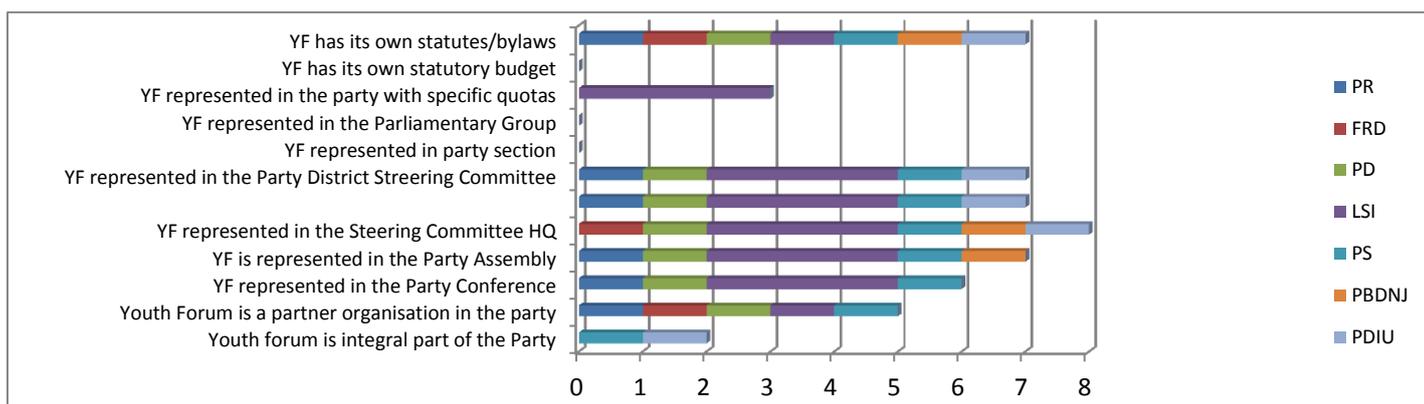
- **Problems related to the youth not always receive the necessary attention from policy-making and decision-taking institutions,** such as party leadership, parliament, government, and municipal councils and that is a major point of concern. On the other hand, *the commitment and the level of organisation of the youth to further their cause is poor*, on exchange of information, and coordinating actions on youth problems;

To improve the situation of the youth and to increase their participation at different levels of politics and decision-making, some of the **main recommendations** include:

- The need to approve new laws and improve legislation “on the Youth” and “Voluntarism”;
- Amendments of the Electoral Code, to allow for a minimum representation quota of 20 per cent for the youth;
- The parliament should pay much more attention to issues and problems related to the youth;
- The establishment of an Alliance of Young MPs;
- The allocation of the funds necessary to implement the National Action Plan for the Youth (PKVR) 2015-2020;
- The introduction of youth quotas for every leading and decision-making structure within a party;
- The adoption and implementation of new models of financing for the youth political organisations;
- Transforming of Youth Forums of Political Parties into empowering and motivational associations for the youth;
- The establishment of an association to amplify the youthful messages and needs of all FRPPs;
- The improvement of the political environment and discourse; etc.

Roles and responsibilities of Youth Forums in Political Parties in Albania

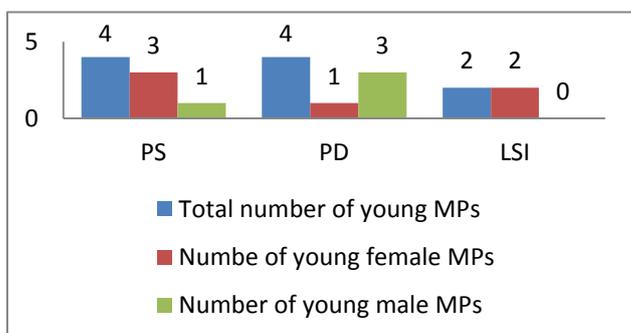
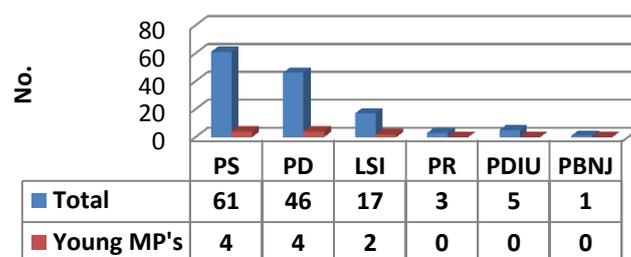
The following chart represents a ranking of political parties according to the importance assigned to their youth organisations, financing and regulations of Youth Forums.



Youth in the Parliament of Albania¹

In the June 2013 parliamentary elections, the Socialist Party, that won the largest number of representatives to parliament (61 MPs), included in its list only four young MPs (6.5 per cent), the Democratic Party with 46 MPs, also had only four young parliamentarians (8.6 per cent). By comparison, *the Socialist Movement for Integration has a larger per centage of young MPs in its parliamentary group* (two out of 17 MPs, or 11.7 per cent). Other parties have no young MPs at all (Chart 3). In conclusion, young people sitting in the Albanian parliament make up only 7.1 per cent of MPs.

Young MP's in the Albanian Parliament (2013-2015)

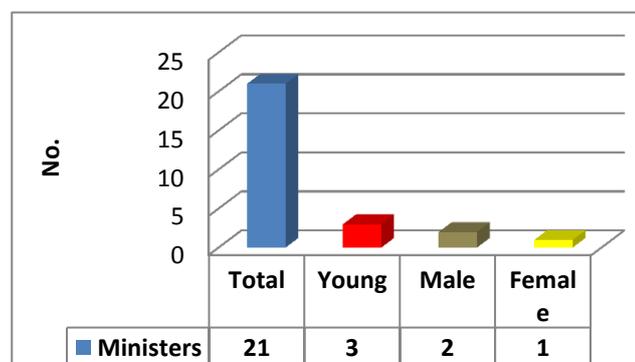


This chart presents an overview of young MPs according to gender and political party. There are 10 young MPs in the parliament (7.1% of the total number of MPs), six of them are female (60 per cent of young MPs) and 4 are male (40 per cent of young MPs).

Youth in the government of Albania

The new government, established in September 2013, has 21 ministers, and only three of them were younger than 35² years old, at the time of their appointments. This is a relatively low percentage, considering that almost half of the population of the country (45 per cent) is younger than 30.

The data shows that 14% of the Ministers of the Albanian Government are young people below 35 years old, while only 5% are females (1 female Minister below 35 years old).



¹ Young MPs in parliament after June 23, 2013 elections, updated after changes in the Assembly of Albania as of March 2015

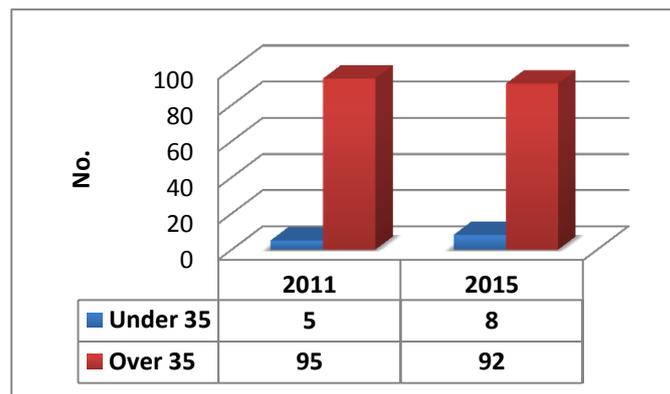
² Sajmir Tahiri, Minister of Interior Affairs (PS); Klajda Gjoshja, Minister e Integration (LSI); Erjon Veliaj, Minister of Social Welfare and Youth (PS).

Participation of youth in decision-making and politics at local level in Albania

a) Young people as mayors in Albania

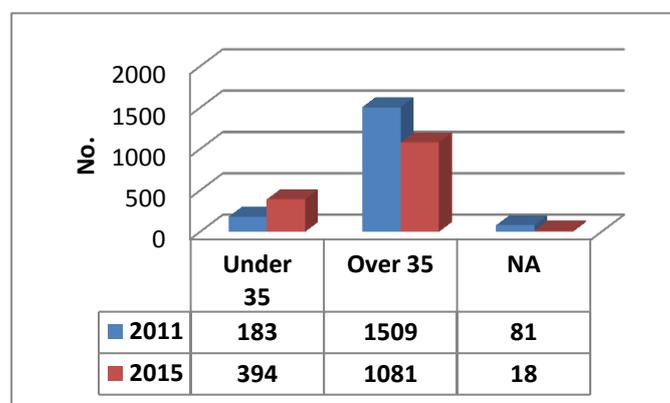
When we look into the data for Mayors, when we consider the local elections of 2011 we observe that there is total of 76 mayors, out of which only 4 were under 35 years old. None of those elected under the age of 35 was a woman. Three mayors represented the Socialist Party and one was from the Democratic Party.

While in the 2015 local elections, we seen a minor increase of 3% of Municipalities led by young people under the age of 35, while 92% of municipalities across the country continue to be headed by people over this age. Results of the local elections of 2015 also show that men under the age of 35 make up the majority of the 5 new mayors with only one female leading the Municipality of Prenjas. Data shows that the left wing parties have 4 young Mayors, while the right only 1 in Devoll municipality.



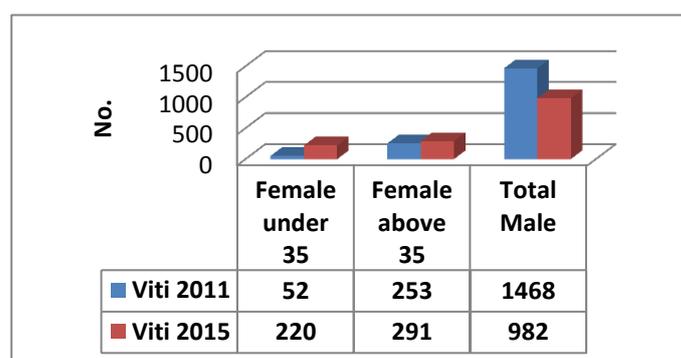
b) Youth representation in municipal councils across Albania

Data on City Councils in Albania, based on the results of the elections of year 2011, it shows that about 85% of City Councils members' were over 35 years old, while only 10% of them belonged to under 35's. While the results of the elections of 2015, bringing an almost entirely different picture where we note almost a tripling of youth representation across Municipal Councils. From 10% youth representation in 2011 at the end of elections of June 2015, young people make up 26.4% of all the members of City Councils, reducing quite substantially the representation of over 35s in municipal councils.

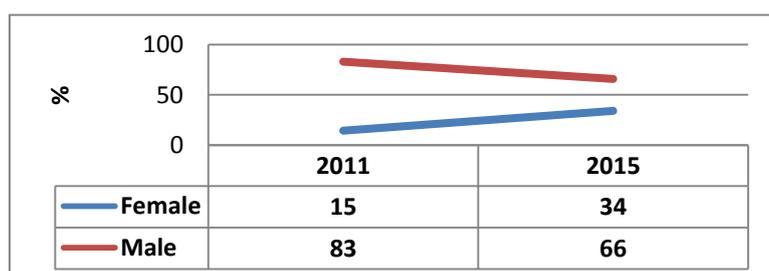


Regarding female councillors

As we can see in this chart girls and women account for only 34% of the members of the Councils in Albania, while men make up about 66% of them. However, as we can observe the increase in the representation of women and girls in City Councils has brought a reduction of about 17% of men or an increase of 19% of women in overall.



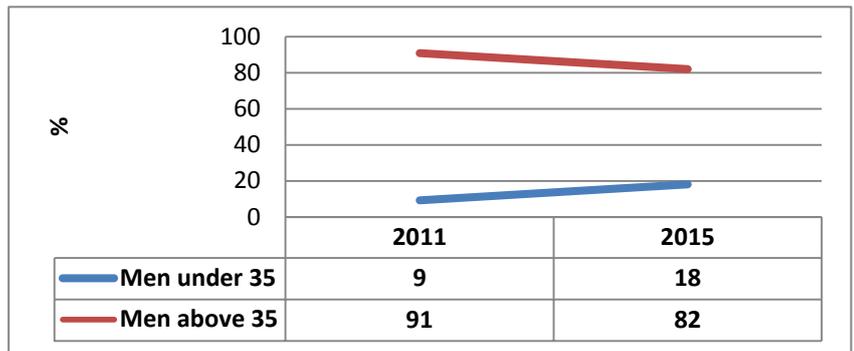
% of girls and women as members of City Councils in Albania versus male members



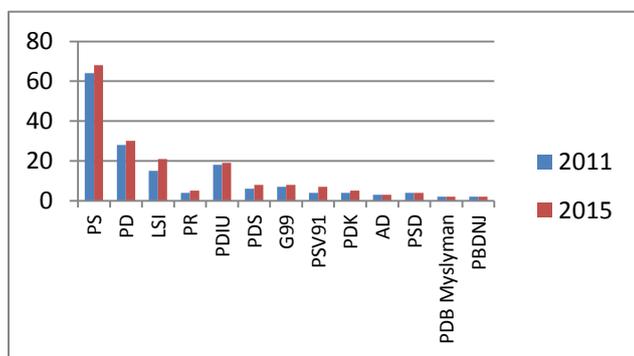
On the other hand, when we see how men under 35 years old are represented, compared with those over this age, we observe some interesting trends on how decision-making processes within political parties impacts the preparation of candidates lists' for members of municipal councils, when there is no quota set for male youth participation in local decision-making.

Age of male Councillors in City Councils in Albania 2011-2015 (in %)

As seen regardless of the election results of 2015 doubling the number and percentage of men under the age of 35 as members of the City Councils in Albania, yet their number is at least two times lower than that of girls and women of the same age. There is a significant difference between the percentages of men under 35 years old, whose representation in City Councils in 4 years grew from 9% to 18%, compared with the men over 35, who in 2011 accounted for 91% of all men in City Councils, while in 2015 they count around 82%. In short, we can say that the biggest losers of the Local Elections 2015 were men under the age of 35, which are largely under-represented in City Councils across Albania.



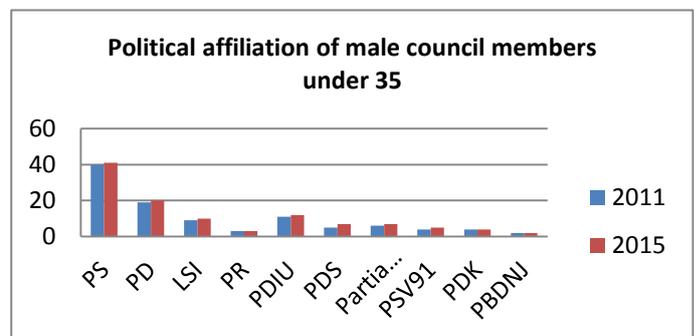
Political affiliations of City Council members under the age of 35



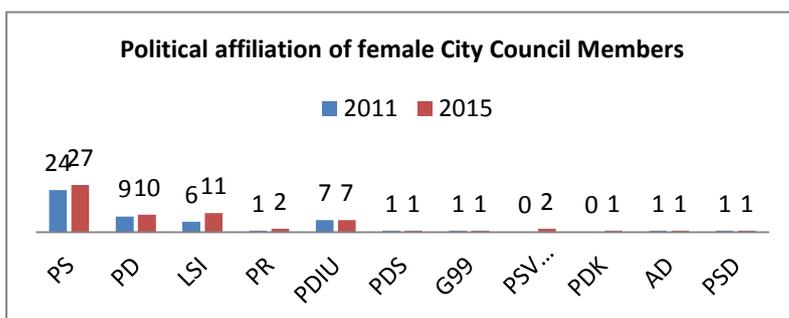
Local elections of June 2015 in overall produced positive results for youth participation in local decision-making, compared with the results of 2011. However, as shown in this Graph the main political parties continue to bear the brunt in this regard. In overall the results of Local Elections 2015, confirm that Socialist Party continues to top the list of Councillors under the age of 35, the Socialist Party with 68 council candidates nationally, followed by the DP with 30, 21 and PJIU LSI 19. Overall it can be said that every political force lists of what has come to promote youth, but larger parties have made the difference in having a higher number of members elected to municipal councils under the age of 35.

Political affiliation of male council members under 35 years old

The results of local elections of 2011 and 2015 did not produce any major changes in the representation of men under 35 for any of the political forces in Albania (Chart 14). As seen in the graph, the representation of young men from party to party, is almost negligent in percentages as well as in numbers. The data tells us that Socialist Party has the highest number of men counsellors under 35, followed by the DP, SMI, PJIU, G99, PR etc.



Political affiliations of female council members under 35



As seen from the chart the number of female councillors is lower than the number of men based on the results of local elections of 2011. The trend continued to be the same in 2015. Despite this fact, it is interesting to see the impact that had the establishment of a gender quota of 50% for both genders in increasing the representation of women and girls under 35 in city councils in 2015. The largest difference came again from the major parliamentary parties, such as SP, DP, SMI and

PJIU. While it is evident that small political parties continue to have issues with the representation of women and girls in the Municipal Council in Albania.