

**Protected by PDF Anti-Copy Free**

4<sup>th</sup> Regular Call, South Baltic, Programme 2014–2020

SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUPS NETWORK

STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17

(Upgrade to Pro Version to Remove the Watermark)

Gdańsk University of Technology, Klaipėda University



# Report on the Quantitative Research Results

Youth's needs on its civic participation in the  
South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network Project  
Partner countries

2020

## Introduction

(Upgrade to Pro Version to Remove the Watermark)

The Report regarding Institutionalisation of Youth civic participation is one of the results of WP3 - 3.3. Activity: Research implementation and a report (the SB YCGN project indicator: D3.1).



This report includes the description of the quantitative research assumptions, including full methodology, the organizational rules of survey implementation, the research tool – questionnaire pattern and the results of the research.

The quantitative studies of Youth were designed by a Polish-Lithuanian researchers team whose members were prof. dr hab. Krystyna Gomółka, dr Izabela Borucińska (Gdańsk University of Technology), prof. dr Ligita Šimanskienė and dr Jurgita Paužuolienė (Klaipėda University) and conducted under their control and with their support.

The aim of the quantitative study was to identify and assess the following main problems at local and cross-border level: the situation with regard to Youth civic participation in the municipalities investigated, with identification of the opportunities for and forms of Youth participation in the discussion on issues related to their immediate environment, including decision-making; the key barriers to increasing the youth civic engagement; the needs of young people aged 14–24 in respect of increasing their civic participation. The problem was highlighted from the perspective of young people from the Lithuanian municipality of Telšiai, Polish municipalities of Dzierzgoń, Elbląg, Gdynia, Iława and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, and the Swedish municipality of Hässleholm.

The growing importance of youth civic participation can be observed in the policies of many countries and international organizations for many years<sup>1</sup>. Also, this problem has been emphasised in a number of European Union documents from the Maastricht Treaty until the Treaty of Lisbon, European Commission White Paper, the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life, the European Pact for Youth and

<sup>1</sup> For example see: Youth civic participation: meeting community and youth development needs worldwide 2010, Innovation in Civic participation, <http://www.icicp.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Youth-Civic-Participation-Worldwide-.pdf>, (dostęp 16.07.2019); Youth Civic Engagement: Enabling Youth Participation in Political, Social and Economic Life. Expert Group Meeting 16-17 June 2014, UNESCO, Paris, <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/egms/docs/2013/YouthDevelopmentRights/FinalConceptNoteEGMYouthCivicEngagement.pdf>, (19.08.2019); Youth civic engagement, World Youth Report, United Nations 2016, [https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2018/12/un\\_world\\_youth\\_report\\_youth\\_civic\\_engagement.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2018/12/un_world_youth_report_youth_civic_engagement.pdf), (19.08.2019); Robert J. Chaskin, The University of Chicago, and Caroline McGregor and Bernadine Brady Supporting Youth Civic and Political Engagement: Supranational and National Policy Frameworks in Comparative Perspective, National University of Ireland Galway, APRIL 2018, [http://www.childandfamilyresearch.ie/media/unescochildandfamilyresearchcentre/J4445---58606-NUI-Engaging-Urban-Youth-Policy-Report\\_v6.pdf](http://www.childandfamilyresearch.ie/media/unescochildandfamilyresearchcentre/J4445---58606-NUI-Engaging-Urban-Youth-Policy-Report_v6.pdf), (17.07.2019).

**Protected by PDF Anti-Copy Free**

4<sup>th</sup> Regular Call, South Baltic, Programme 2014–2020

SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUPS NETWORK

STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17

the EU Strategy for Youth (Upgraded from a previous version and published from a new point of view), an interesting issue is the differences in youth civic participation between European countries that were economically and politically separated during the Cold War. Various social changes have been observed since its completion and the development of globalization processes as well as the creation and expansion of the European Union. They affect the civic participation of young people in these countries in the 21st century, but not in the same way<sup>2</sup>.

Young people are also the subject of many national documents: laws, ordinances and strategies of Sweden, Lithuania and Poland. However, neither the European Union policy nor the policies of Lithuania, Poland and Sweden concerning youth and its civic participation can ensure the desired level of youth engagement in decision-making concerning young people as citizens. International projects, particularly those co-financed by the European Union, have an important role to play in promoting young people's civic participation. They allow the exchange of knowledge and experience, the creation of new solutions to problems and their implementation at the grassroots level. This was the role of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network (SB YCGN) project implemented in the framework of the 2014–2020 Interreg V-A South Baltic Programme by a Polish-Lithuanian-Swedish partnership.

<sup>2</sup> P. Mirazchiyski, D. H. Caro, A. Sandoval-Hernández, Youth Future Civic Participation in Europe: Differences Between the East and the Rest, *Social Indicators Research* 2014, Vol. 115, p.1031–1055.

## The methodology of the quantitative research on Youth needs



The following research questions were developed for achieving the study's aim:

- What is the current and desirable level of youth civic participation in the Lithuanian municipality of Telšiai, the Polish municipalities of Dzierzgoń, Elbląg, Gdynia, Iława and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and the Swedish municipality of Hässleholm from the perspective of young people?
- What is the participation of young people in decision-making from the perspective of young people themselves?
- What are the barriers to youth civic participation according to young people opinions?
- What are the needs and expectations of young people in respect of intensification of dialogue and cooperation with institutions and stimulation of their civic participation at local and cross-border level?

### The research population: young people aged 14-24 from 7 partner municipalities:

Dzierzgoń, Elbląg, Gdynia, Iława, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, Telsiai, Hässleholm

### The sample size: 1001 respondents

The respondents were selected by the proportionate sampling method in accordance with the assumptions set out presented in Table 1 and 2.

Table 1. Research population – youth aged 14–24 in the partner municipalities of SB YCGN project

Partner	The total population of partner municipalities	The number of youth aged 14–17 in the total population	The number of youth aged 18–24 in the total population	% of youth aged 14–17 in the total municipality population	% of youth aged 18–24 in the total municipality population	% of youth aged 14–17 in the research population	% of youth aged 18–24 in the research population
Dzierzgoń	9397	239	497	2.54	5.29	0.39	0.80
Elbląg	121191	4573	9033	3.77	7.45	7.39	14.60
Gdynia	246991	8115	15702	3.29	6.36	13.12	25.38
Hässleholm	52121	2361	4102	4.53	7.87	3.82	6.63
Iława	33108	1190	2300	3.59	6.95	1.92	3.72
Nowe Miasto Lubawskie	19263	816	1799	4.24	9.34	1.32	2.91
Telsiai	22,068	3418	7725	15.49	35.01	5.52	12.49

Protected by PDF Anti-Copy Free

4<sup>th</sup> Regular Call, South Baltic, Programme 2014–2020

SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUPS NETWORK				STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17			
Total population	504,136	207,12	1,158	4,11	18,16	33.48	66.52
Total research population			61870				

Source: own elaboration based on statistical data provided by partners, retrieved from Statistics Lithuania, <https://www.stat.gov.lt/en/>, Statistics Poland, <https://stat.gov.pl/en/> and Statistics Sweden, <https://www.scb.se/en/> (accessed: 12.06.2019)



Table 2. Research sample structure

Partner	% of youth aged 14–17 in the research sample	% of youth aged 18–24 in the research sample	Total research sample
Dzierzgoń	4	8	12
Elbląg	74	146	220
Gdynia	131	254	385
Hässleholm	38	67	105
Ława	19	37	56
Nowe Miasto Lubawskie	13	29	42
Telsiai	56	125	181
Total	335	666	1001
% of youth aged 14–17 in the research sample	33.47	66.53	100

Source: own elaboration based on statistical data provided by partners, retrieved from Statistics Lithuania, <https://www.stat.gov.lt/en/>, Statistics Poland, <https://stat.gov.pl/en/> and Statistics Sweden, <https://www.scb.se/en/> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

Wherever possible, attempts were made to keep a proportion of 50% women, 50% men.

**Research method and tool:** the quantitative studies were based on the diagnostic survey method and the electronic survey technique on a sample of 1001 respondents aged 14–24 from seven Lithuanian, Polish and Swedish municipalities such as: Telsiai, Dzierzgoń, Elbląg, Gdynia, Ława and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and Hässleholm.

The survey was carried out online - using an Internet questionnaire – this is the link to an online form: <https://forms.zie.pg.gda.pl/sbycgn/youth/en/>

In order to construct the proper research tool, the questionnaire was subjected to extensive consultations with the project partners and tests in pilot surveys. The main research is based on the final version of the questionnaire for Youth.

### The description of the research implementation:

Each Partner has identified appropriate person aged 14-24 in its municipality, then sent to the person a link to the electronic questionnaire (<https://forms.zie.pg.gda.pl/sbycgn/youth/en/>) with a request to fill it and to click the "SEND FORM" button at the end of the questionnaire to submit it.

Protected by PDF Anti-Copy Free

4<sup>th</sup> Regular Call, South Baltic, Programme 2014–2020

SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUPS NETWORK

STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17

If a paper questionnaire was needed, researchers should be informed about it by e-mail. A paper version of the questionnaire was conditionally admissible - only in cases when it is not possible to conduct the survey via internet. The Project Partner responsible for the research implementation in his community should enter the answers from the paper questionnaire into the online questionnaire and click "Send form".

**Deadline for the research implementation: until March 31, 2019.** Due to the changes in the SBYCGN partnership the main quantitative surveys were finalized near the end of November 2019.

The research tool - questionnaire pattern that was tested in the pilot research

**Questionnaire concerning Youth civic participation - the perspective of young people**

Dear Youth,

The survey is conducted as a part of the (South Baltic Youth Core Group Network) project. The aim of this survey is to identify the local needs related to Youth civic participation\* in the opinion of young people aged 14-24 to increase the participation of young people in public life, including decision-making regarding the local social, economic, cultural, ecological and political environment. It will allow to compare the situation of young people and their opinions on a cross-border (international) scale in Denmark, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden. The survey was prepared by scientists from the Gdańsk University of Technology and the University of Klaipeda.

The research is anonymous, its results will be used only for scientific and practical purposes to increase the participation of young people in public life.

Your involvement and opinions can change the reality!

Thank you for participating in the survey.

*\*Citizen participation is the possibility to speak and participate in activities and decisions taken by authorities, organizations, schools, etc. that concern us as citizens*

**1. I'm interested in topics related to:**

please evaluate each statement on the scale: **1** – Not interested, **2** – Weakly interested, **3** - Average interested, **4** – Strongly interested, **5** – Very interested.

No.	Statement	Not interested	Weakly interested	Average interested	Strongly interested	Very interested
1.	My school / university/professional work	1	2	3	4	5
2.	My nearest neighbourhood	1	2	3	4	5
3.	My friends	1	2	3	4	5
4.	My town district	1	2	3	4	5
5.	My town/municipality	1	2	3	4	5
6.	My country	1	2	3	4	5
7.	The Baltic Sea Region (Poland, Denmark, Sweden, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Germany, Finland, selected regions of north-west Russia)	1	2	3	4	5

**2. Are you interested in influencing matters in your municipality?**

a) definitely yes      b) rather yes      c) neither yes nor no      d) rather not      e) definitely not

**3. Do you have the possibility to speak on matters regarding your school / university:** please evaluate each statement on the scale: **1** - I have the possibility and I speak out, **2** - I have the possibility, but I do not speak out, **3** - I do not have such a possibility and I do not speak out (*If you do not study then go to the next question*)

No.	Statement	I have the possibility and I speak out	I have the possibility, but I do not speak out	I do not have such a possibility and I do not speak out
1.	About classes, which I can additionally choose	1	2	3
2.	About the type of homework	1	2	3
3.	About the layout of the lesson plan	1	2	3
4.	About the assessment of the teacher's/ lecture's work	1	2	3
5.	About the school / university regulations	1	2	3
6.	About the food services at school /	1	2	3

Protected by PDF Anti-Copy Free

4<sup>th</sup> Regular Call, South Baltic, Programme 2014–2020

SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUPS NETWORK

STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17

	university	(Upgrade to Pro Version to Remove the Watermark)	
7.	About the appearance of the school/university building	1	2
8.	About the offer of spending free time	1	2

**4. What do you decide in your city/municipality?** Please evaluate each statement on the scale: **1** - I have the possibility and I speak out, **2** - I have the possibility but I do not speak out, **3** - I do not have such a possibility and I do not speak out

No.	Statement	I have the possibility and I speak out	I have the possibility, but I do not speak out	I do not have such a possibility and I do not speak out
1.	On the election of local authorities	1	2	3
2.	About the commune's development strategy	1	2	3
3.	About the distribution of funds in the commune budget	1	2	3
4.	About the spatial development of my commune	1	2	3
5.	About investments / renovations in my commune	1	2	3
6.	About cultural events in the commune	1	2	3
7.	About other issues such as.....	1	2	3

**5. What do you do if you want to influence decision in your school, city / municipality:**

please evaluate each statement on the scale: **1** – No, **2** – Rather no, **3** - Neither yes or no, **4** – Rather yes, **5** – Yes.

No.	Statement	No	Rather no	Neither yes or no	Rather yes	Yes
1.	I ask for help my Parents	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I ask for help my Teachers	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I ask for help a local government official/representative of the authorities	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I ask for help well-known politician	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I ask for help someone from a non-governmental organization	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I'm talking with my friends about a problem	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I write about a problem on the Internet or on a blog or Facebook	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I organize a group of young people who will work with me on the matter	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I act in the student government at the school or at the university	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I act in a youth organization	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I participate in the social public consultations					
12.	I contact with the local journalists	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Other, what kind .....	1	2	3	4	5

**Protected by PDF Anti-Copy Free**

4<sup>th</sup> Regular Call, South Baltic, Programme 2014–2020

SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUPS NETWORK

STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17

**6. In your opinion, what do limit the involvement of young people in public affairs?**

please evaluate each statement on the scale: **1** – Very weak impact, **2** – Weak impact, **3** - Medium impact, **4** – Strong impact, **5** – Very strong impact .

No.	Statement	Very weak impact	Weak impact	Medium impact	Strong impact	Very strong impact
1.	Lack of understanding of young people's needs by adults	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Lack of youth motivation to participate in decision making at school or organizations or local and central authorities	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Lack of information on how to get involved in making decisions at school or organizations or local and central authorities	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Lack of willingness of politicians to talk with young people	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Parents do not allow their children to engage in public matters	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Lack of adequate knowledge and skills of young people to participate more in decision-making in schools or organizations or local and central authorities	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Lack of adequate knowledge and skills of officials, representatives of schools and non-governmental organizations in increasing youth participation in decision-making	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Lack of Youth faith in implementing its ideas	1	2	3	4	5
9.	There are too few contacts between young people and local politicians and officials	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Lack of Youth's interest in participating in decision-making in schools or organizations or local and central authorities	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Other, what kind.....	1	2	3	4	5

**7. What would increase your engagement in shaping the local environment:**

please evaluate each statement on the scale: **1** – Very weak impact, **2** – Weak impact, **3** - Medium impact, **4** – Strong impact, **5** – Very strong impact.

No.	Statement	Very weak impact	Weak impact	Medium impact	Strong impact	Very strong impact
1.	Meetings with people who will tell how to get involved	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Meetings with people who actively work for the local environment	1	2	3	4	5
3.	The possibility of Youth participation in meetings of local authorities	1	2	3	4	5
4.	The possibility for young people to present their opinions to local authorities	1	2	3	4	5
5.	An activity of Youth Councils in municipalities which can influence local government decisions	1	2	3	4	5
6.	The opportunity for young people to present their opinions to the school authorities or non-governmental organizations	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Implementation of Youth proposals (for example by local authorities, by schools or non-governmental organizations)	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Creating the social projects for youth civic involvement	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Establish more local Youth organizations	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Creation of an international youth organization	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Building new model of relationship between Youth and public institutions and the non-governmental organizations	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Raising social awareness about the importance of Youth participation in public life	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Exchange of information between young people about their actions	1	2	3	4	5

**Protected by PDF Anti-Copy Free**

4<sup>th</sup> Regular Call, South Baltic, Programme 2014–2020

SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUPS NETWORK

STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17

	(self-promotion of projects)					
14.	Information in the mass media about examples of civic Youth participation	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Development of cooperation of youth organizations at the local level	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Development of cooperation of youth organizations at the international level	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Wider knowledge or skills of representatives of local authorities, schools, non-governmental organizations in the field of increasing civic participation of Youth	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Other, what kind .....	1	2	3	4	5

**8. What additional knowledge and skills would increase your engagement in public matters:**

please evaluate each statement on the scale: **1** – Very weak impact, **2** – Weak impact, **3** - Medium impact, **4** – Strong impact, **5** – Very strong impact

No.	Statement	Very weak impact	Weak impact	Medium impact	Strong impact	Very strong impact
1.	On how the decisions are made at school, university, commune / city office, company, non-governmental organization	1	2	3	4	5
2.	On the possibilities and ways of influencing decisions at school, university, commune / city office, company, non-governmental organization	1	2	3	4	5
3.	About the art of establishing and developing contacts with representatives of various public institutions, organizations and enterprises	1	2	3	4	5
4.	On the methods of discussing, arguing	1	2	3	4	5
5.	About the art of preparing official letters / applications	1	2	3	4	5
6.	About ways to motivate yourself and other people to act	1	2	3	4	5
7.	On the rules of organizing various events	1	2	3	4	5
8.	On the creation and financing of non-governmental organizations	1	2	3	4	5
9.	About politics	1	2	3	4	5
10.	About society functioning	1	2	3	4	5
11.	On social psychology	1	2	3	4	5
12.	About the economy	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Other, what kind.....	1	2	3	4	5

**9. Have you done any of the following activities in the last 12 months?**

mark the answers according to your experience on the scale: **1** – Yes, **2** – No.

No.	Statement	No	Yes
1.	Contacting a politician or city/municipality official	No	Yes
2.	Presentation of proposals (postulates) to local politicians or local authorities regarding residents issues	No	Yes
3.	Presenting applications (postulates) to school or university authorities or teachers related to student problems	No	Yes
4.	Participation in a demonstration	No	Yes
5.	Discussions on political topics in forums, blogs on the Internet	No	Yes
6.	Sharing posts on social/political matters on the Internet	No	Yes
7.	Participation in public meetings for the local community	No	Yes
8.	Participation in a youth organization	No	Yes
9.	Participation in a church/religious association	No	Yes

**Protected by PDF Anti-Copy Free**

4<sup>th</sup> Regular Call, South Baltic, Programme 2014–2020

SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUPS NETWORK

STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17

**10. Your status:** (Upgrade to Pro Version to Remove the Watermark)

- a) A Elementary School student
- b) A Junior high school student
- c) A High school student
- d) A Secondary vocational school student
- e) A University Student
- f) I do not go to a school and I do not work
- g) I work
- h) Other,



.....  
**11. Place of your residence:**

- a) Dzierzgoń
- b) Elbląg
- c) Gdynia
- d) Iława
- e) Nowe Miasto Lubawskie
- f) Telsiai
- g) Hässleholm

**12. Your age range:**

- a) 14- 17
- b) 18-24

**13. Your gender:**

- a) Female
- b) Male

Thank you for your time and opinion

## The results of the quantitative research on Youth' needs

The sample consisted of 1001 respondents, with people aged 14–17 representing 33.7% of the sample and those aged 18–24 representing more than 48.4% of the sample. Respondents aged 18–24 were the largest group in all the municipalities investigated to reflect the population structure. In terms of gender, female respondents accounted for 51.2% of the sample, which corresponds to the population structure in these municipalities<sup>3</sup>. As to the status of the respondents, a majority of the sample (58.3%) were secondary school pupils, followed by lower secondary school pupils (14.8%), university students (8.7%), vocational school pupils (7.2%), and primary school pupils (6.2%). Employed persons constituted 3% of the sample. The smallest groups were those of people working and studying – 1.3% and neither studying nor working – 0.5%. The structure of the sample is shown in Table 3. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics techniques, as well as one-way and two-way analysis of variance.

<sup>3</sup> Population. Size and Structure and Vital Statistics in Poland by Territorial Division in 2016 As of December 31, Statistical Information and Elaborations, Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2017, <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/ludnosc/ludnosc/ludnosc-stan-i-struktura-oraz-ruch-naturalny-w-przekroju-terytorialnym-stan-w-dniu-31-12-2016-r-,6,21.html>, (accessed: 20.05.2019).

SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUP NETWORK **STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17**

**Table 3 Structure of the sample representing young people in Lithuania, Poland and Sweden (frequency, % of sample responses)**

No.	Variable	Scale	Lithuania					Poland			Sweden	Σ (%)
			Telšiai	Dzierżgoń	Eniag	Gdynia	Hawa	Nowe Miasto Lubawskie	Hässleholm			
1.	Age	14–17	56 (5.6)	4 (0.4)	74(7.4)	131(13.1)	19(1.9)	13(1.3)	38(3.8)	337(33.7)		
		18-24	125 (12.5)	8 (0.8)	146(14.6)	254(25.4)	37(3.7)	29(2.9)	67(6.7)	664(66.3)		
2.	Gender	Female	91 (9.1)	6 (0.6)	143(14.3)	192(19.2)	25(2.5)	23(2.3)	73(7.3)	513(51.2)		
		Male	90 (9.0)	6(0.6)	77(7.7)	192(19.2)	31(3.1)	19(1.9)	32(3.2)	488(48.8)		
3.	Respondent's status	Primary school pupil	3 (0.3)	2(0.2)	4(0.4)	40(4.0)	2(0.2)	11(1.1)	0(0.0)	62(6.2)		
		Lower secondary school pupil	114 (11.4)	2(0.2)	2(0.2)	16(1.6)	6(0.6)	1(0.1)	7(0.7)	148(14.8)		
		Secondary school pupil	9 (0.9)	7(0.7)	193(19.3)	250(25.0)	37(3.7)	17(1.7)	70(7.0)	584(58.3)		
		Vocational school pupil	49 (4.9)	0(0.0)	1(0.1)	13(1.3)	5(0.5)	3(0.3)	1(0.1)	72(7.2)		
		University student	2 (0.2)	0(0.0)	15(1.5)	53(5.3)	2(0.2)	6(0.6)	9(0.9)	87(8.7)		
		Neither studying nor working	1 (0.1)	0(0.0)	1(0.1)	2(0.2)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(0.1)	5(0.5)		
		Employee	3 (0.3)	1(0.1)	3(0.3)	3(0.3)	3(0.3)	3(0.3)	14(1.4)	30(3.0)		
4.	Other – specify	0 (0.0)	0(0.0)	1(0.1)	7(0.7)	1(0.1)	1(0.1)	3(0.3)	13(1.3)			

Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network project between September 2018 and November 2019

## Young people's interest in influencing decisions taken at local level and forms of their civic participation



Changes taking place in trends and patterns of civic engagement and broader civic participation of young people determine the need for constant debate and new research as well as new approaches to identified problems. Social changes in the 21st century, including those related to loosening links with institutions and structures, particularly affect young people, including their transition to adulthood. Structural transformations at the macro- and micro-level can affect young people more than older generations and influence their civic engagement. For this reason, new forms of civic engagement are constantly emerging<sup>4</sup>.

In order to identify the potential for increased youth civic participation of young people, the selected determinants were included in the research of Lithuanian, Polish and Swedish municipalities. The distribution of the variable of the areas of youth interest is presented in Table 4. A majority of young people (48.5% of responses in the sample) were most interested in matters concerning their friends. This was also the most frequent response in most municipalities, with the exception of Telšiai (where the majority of respondents indicated strong interest) and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie (where the majority of respondents indicated moderate interest). Another category which generated strong interest in a large proportion of young people (33.9% of responses in the sample), was their country. Other issues raised a moderate interest among a majority of young people in the sample. However, some differences in the geographical distribution can be observed. The young people of Telšiai and Iława generally expressed a strong, and of Hässleholm – very strong interest in their school, university or work. The Swedish respondents were the least interested in their immediate neighbourhood. In Telšiai, Elbląg and Iława these matters were not regarded as highly important. However, the young people from Iława and Dzierzgoń were very much interested in the issues concerning their district. The issues of their town or municipality of residence were significant for the largest number of

<sup>4</sup> T. Lochocki, Trends, Causes and Patterns of Young People's Civic Engagement in Western Democracies. A Review of Literature, Centre for Research on Civil Society and Voluntary sector, Oslo/Bergen 2010, Vol 5, [https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/upload/kud/samfunn\\_og\\_frivillighet/rapporter/trends\\_causes\\_and\\_patterns\\_of\\_young\\_people-s\\_civic\\_engagement\\_in\\_western\\_democracies\\_vr\\_2010\\_5.pdf](https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/upload/kud/samfunn_og_frivillighet/rapporter/trends_causes_and_patterns_of_young_people-s_civic_engagement_in_western_democracies_vr_2010_5.pdf), (20.08.2019).

**Protected by PDF Anti-Copy Free**

SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUPS NETWORK

STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17

respondents from (Cyprus, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Latvia, and the Watermark) interest in the affairs of their country was expressed by a majority of those surveyed in four communes (except Elbląg, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and Iława), and in Gdynia, where the responses were distributed equally between strong and moderate interest. As to the the Baltic Sea Region, the respondents were generally moderately concerned with its issues, except Iława, whose representatives expressed a strong interest in that region.



SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUP NETWORK **STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17**

**Table 4 Level of interest of young people from Lithuania, Poland and Sweden on individual issues (frequency, % of response in the sample)**

No.	Statement	Scale	Lithuania			Poland			Sweden	Σ (%)
			Telšiai	Dzierzgoń	Elbląg	Gdynia	Ilawa	Nowe Miasto Lubawskie	Hässleholm	
1.	My school/university/work	Very low	8 (0.8)	2 (0.2)	8 (0.8)	20 (2.0)	1 (0.1)	2 (0.2)	37 (3.7)	78 (7.8)
		Low	6 (0.6)	0 (0.0)	17 (1.7)	56 (5.6)	3 (0.3)	5 (0.5)	7 (0.7)	94 (9.4)
		Medium	63 (6.3)	4 (0.4)	74 (7.4)	138 (13.8)	13 (1.3)	23 (2.3)	6 (0.6)	321 (32.1)
		High	76 (7.6)	4 (0.4)	71 (7.2)	108 (10.8)	25 (2.5)	10 (1.0)	16 (1.6)	310 (31.0)
		Very high	28 (2.8)	2 (0.2)	49 (4.9)	62 (6.3)	14 (1.4)	2 (0.2)	38 (3.8)	195 (19.5)
2.	My immediate neighbourhood	Very low	19 (1.9)	0 (0.0)	27 (2.7)	48 (4.8)	8 (0.8)	7 (0.7)	33 (3.3)	142 (14.2)
		Low	69 (6.9)	4 (0.4)	58 (5.8)	84 (8.5)	18 (1.8)	12 (1.2)	19 (1.9)	264 (26.4)
		Medium	63 (6.3)	6 (0.6)	79 (7.9)	124 (12.5)	13 (1.3)	21 (2.1)	11 (1.1)	317 (31.7)
		High	21 (2.1)	2 (0.2)	45 (4.5)	89 (8.9)	14 (1.4)	1 (0.1)	28 (2.8)	200 (20.0)
		Very high	9 (0.9)	0 (0.0)	10 (1.0)	39 (3.9)	3 (0.3)	1 (0.1)	13 (1.3)	75 (7.5)
3.	My friends	Very low	2 (0.2)	0 (0.0)	3 (0.3)	11 (1.1)	0 (0.0)	3 (0.3)	19 (1.9)	38 (3.8)
		Low	6 (0.6)	0 (0.0)	8 (0.8)	9 (0.9)	3 (0.3)	11 (1.1)	18 (1.8)	55 (5.5)
		Medium	34 (3.4)	3 (0.3)	22 (2.2)	13 (1.3)	9 (0.9)	14 (1.4)	10 (1.0)	130 (13.0)
		High	78 (7.9)	2 (0.2)	66 (6.6)	115 (11.6)	16 (1.6)	6 (0.6)	5 (0.5)	288 (28.8)
		Very high	60 (6.0)	7 (0.7)	120 (12.0)	210 (21.1)	28 (2.8)	8 (0.8)	52 (5.3)	485 (48.5)
4.	My district	Very low	7 (0.7)	0 (0.0)	17 (1.7)	35 (3.5)	5 (0.5)	3 (0.3)	24 (2.4)	91 (9.1)
		Low	19 (1.9)	2 (0.2)	48 (4.8)	69 (6.9)	14 (1.4)	8 (0.8)	14 (1.4)	174 (17.4)
		Medium	71 (7.1)	5 (0.5)	81 (8.3)	110 (11.0)	13 (1.3)	19 (1.9)	14 (1.4)	313 (31.3)
		High	61 (6.1)	5 (0.5)	51 (5.1)	106 (10.7)	18 (1.8)	10 (1.0)	25 (2.5)	273 (27.3)
		Very high	23 (2.3)	3 (0.3)	22 (2.2)	63 (6.3)	6 (0.6)	2 (0.2)	27 (2.7)	146 (14.6)
5.	My town/commune	Very low	7 (0.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	65 (6.5)
		Low	31 (3.4)	1 (0.1)	41 (4.4)	49 (5.3)	6 (0.7)	5 (0.5)	20 (2.2)	153 (15.3)
		Medium	60 (6.5)	6 (0.7)	91 (9.8)	119 (12.8)	14 (1.5)	17 (1.8)	20 (2.2)	327 (32.7)
		High	63 (6.8)	3 (0.3)	53 (5.7)	126 (13.6)	17 (1.8)	15 (1.6)	29 (3.1)	306 (30.6)
		Very high	20 (2.0)	2 (0.2)	19 (2.0)	70 (7.5)	16 (1.7)	3 (0.3)	12 (1.3)	142 (14.2)
6.	My country	Very low	6 (0.6)	0 (0.0)	7 (0.7)	23 (2.3)	1 (0.1)	1 (0.1)	16 (1.6)	54 (5.4)
		Low	9 (0.9)	1 (0.1)	30 (3)	45 (4.5)	5 (0.5)	4 (0.4)	17 (1.7)	111 (11.1)
		Medium	41 (4.1)	6 (0.6)	76 (7.7)	117 (11.7)	10 (1.0)	19 (1.9)	18 (1.8)	287 (28.7)
		High	80 (8.0)	3 (0.3)	73 (7.4)	117 (11.7)	25 (2.5)	12 (1.2)	29 (2.9)	339 (33.9)
		Very high	45 (4.6)	2 (0.2)	32 (3.2)	81 (8.1)	13 (1.3)	6 (0.6)	24 (2.4)	203 (20.3)
7.	The Baltic Sea region	Very low	10 (1.0)	1 (0.1)	41 (4.2)	60 (6.1)	7 (0.7)	0 (0.0)	20 (2.0)	139 (13.9)
		Low	22 (2.2)	4 (0.4)	44 (4.5)	99 (10.0)	13 (1.3)	13 (1.3)	20 (2.0)	215 (21.5)
		Medium	73 (7.4)	3 (0.3)	75 (7.6)	129 (13.0)	15 (1.5)	18 (1.8)	32 (3.2)	345 (34.5)
		High	59 (6.0)	3 (0.3)	31 (3.1)	68 (6.9)	19 (1.9)	5 (0.5)	18 (1.8)	203 (20.3)
		Very high	17 (1.7)	1 (0.1)	28 (2.8)	26 (2.6)	1 (0.1)	3 (0.3)	13 (1.3)	89 (8.9)

Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network project between September 2018 and November 2019

Most of the respondents from the three countries are moderately interested in their municipality, but at the same time a proportion of the sample (31.7% of the responses) declared that are rather willing to have an influence on the affairs of their municipality. This was also the attitude of a majority of respondents in five municipalities. The exceptions were Hässleholm, whose residents expressed a keen interest in influencing the issues concerning their municipality and Telsiai, whose representatives were largely hesitant in that respect. The distribution of the variable is shown in Table 5.

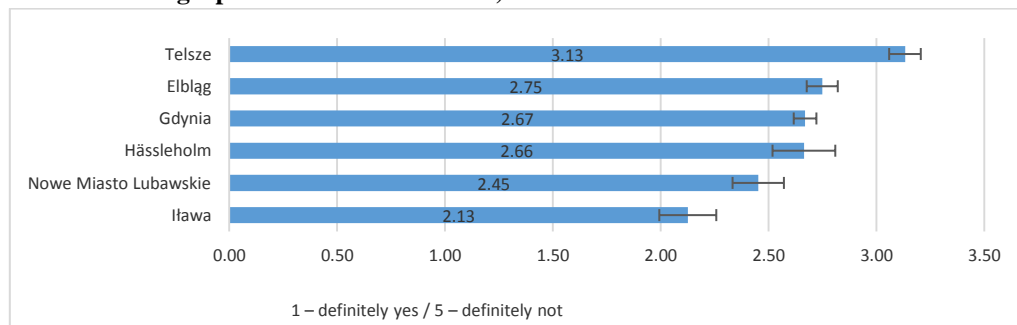
**Table 5 Young people’s interest in influencing the affairs of their municipalities in Lithuania, Poland and Sweden (frequency, % of sample response)**

No.	Scale	Lithuania	Poland					Sweden	Σ (%)
		Telšiai	Dzierzgoń	Elbląg	Gdynia	Iława	Nowe Miasto Lubawskie	Hässleholm	
1.	Definitely yes	9 (0.9)	3 (0.3)	27 (2.8)	44 (4.5)	17 (1.7)	3 (0.3)	30 (3.0)	133 (13.3)
	Rather yes	37 (3.8)	5 (0.5)	67 (6.9)	136 (13.9)	22 (2.3)	21 (2.1)	29 (3.0)	317 (31.7)
	Difficult to say	69 (7.0)	3 (0.3)	60 (6.1)	116 (11.8)	9 (0.9)	14 (1.4)	11 (1.1)	282 (28.2)
	Rather not	53 (5.4)	1 (0.1)	48 (4.9)	63 (6.4)	5 (0.5)	4 (0.4)	14 (1.4)	188 (18.8)
	Definitely not	13 (1.3)	0 (0.0)	10 (1.0)	18 (1.9)	1 (0.1)	0 (0.0)	20 (2.0)	62 (6.2)

Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network project between September 2018 and November 2019

The gender and age of the respondents did not differentiate the degree of their interest in civic participation in the municipality, as confirmed by Student’s t-test. The analysis revealed the absence of significant gender-related differences in that respect  $t(879) = -0.04$ ; ns; neither were there any significant differences between age groups,  $t(999) = 0.12$ ; ns. However, the differentiating factors were the place of residence and respondent status, as shown in Figures 1 and 2.

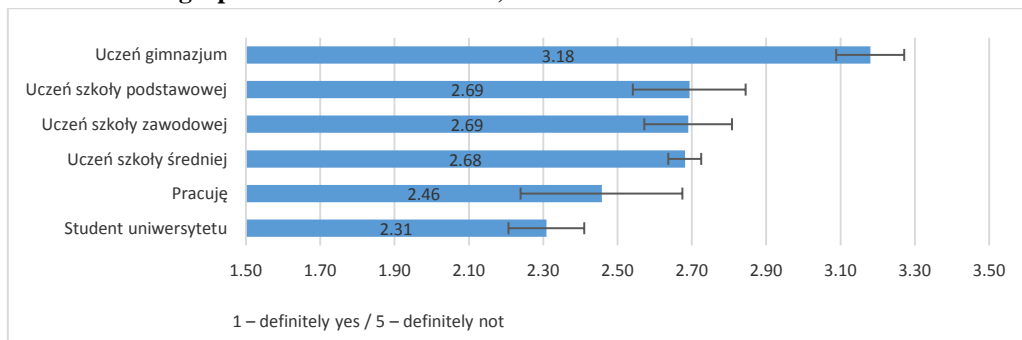
**Figure 1. Young people’s interest in influencing the affairs of their municipalities vs place of residence (the error bars in the graph show standard errors)**



Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network project between September 2018 and November 2019

A one-way analysis of variance revealed that the groups divided by place of residence showed significant differences ( $F(8, 83) = 9.53; p < 0.001$ ). The residents of the municipality of Telšiai were significantly more interested in having a say in the affairs of their commune than those of other municipalities. In contrast, the participants from Iława were considerably more interested in influencing the matters concerning their municipality than those from other municipalities, with the exception of Nowe Miasto Lubawskie.

**Figure 2. Young people’s interest in influencing the affairs of their municipalities vs respondent’s status (the error bars in the graph show standard errors)**



Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network project between September 2018 and November 2019

It was determined by one-way analysis of variance that the groups divided by status showed significant differences,  $F(5, 977) = 8.51; p < 0.001$ . Pupils of lower secondary schools were significantly less interested in influencing matters concerning their municipality than the respondents of a different status. In contrast, university students were significantly more interested in having such influence than primary school pupils.

Analysis of all of the results relating to youth’s level of interest in their municipality leads to the conclusion that young people’s willingness to participate in decision-making should be better utilised in order to increase their civic participation. Perhaps their moderate interest in municipal affairs could be increased more effectively by targeting them with information on what is happening in the municipality, what are the local government’s plans and how youth can influence the course of events and decisions of local authorities. When choosing the methods of reaching and mobilising young people, one should take into account the specific characteristics of the commune in question and the status of the learner or employee. Interestingly, it is not the respondents’ age that affects their views, but rather

**Protected by PDF Anti-Copy Free**

SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUPS NETWORK

**STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17**

the differences in the problems faced by pupils of primary schools, lower secondary schools, secondary schools, vocational schools, or students or employees.

The declared interest and willingness to engage in decision-making processes were contrasted with the actual actions taken by young people. Table 6 presents young people's opinions on the opportunity to speak on different matters and taking advantage of that opportunity.



**Table 6 Young people's opportunities to decide on matters concerning their municipalities in Lithuania, Poland and Sweden (frequency, % of sample responses)**

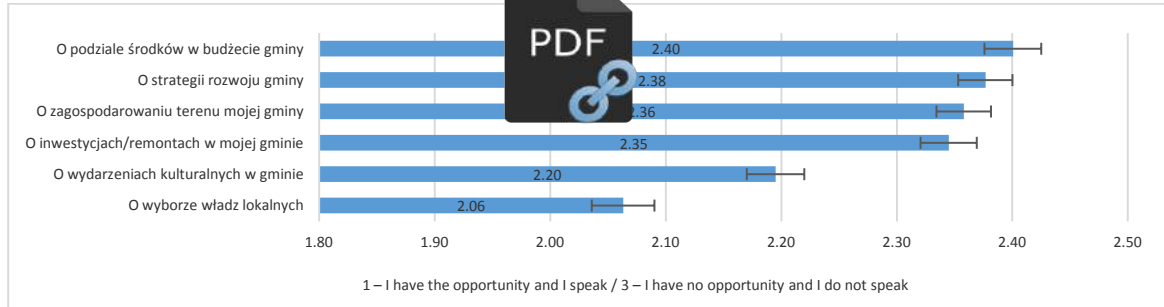
No.	Statement	Scale	Lithuania	Poland				Sweden	Σ (%)
			Telšiai	Dzierzgoń	Elbląg	Gdynia	Ilawa	Nowe Miasto Lubawskie	
1.	Election of local authorities	I have the opportunity and I speak	17 (1.7)	3 (0.3)	76 (7.6)	153 (15.4)	20 (2.0)	19 (1.9)	339 (33.9)
		I have the opportunity but do not speak	49 (4.9)	2 (0.2)	67 (6.8)	80 (8.0)	13 (1.3)	12 (1.2)	256 (25.6)
		I have no opportunity and I do not speak	115 (11.5)	7 (0.7)	75 (7.6)	150 (15.0)	23 (2.3)	11 (1.1)	402 (40.2)
2.	On municipal development strategy	I have the opportunity and I speak	13 (1.3)	2 (0.2)	24 (2.4)	61 (6.1)	13 (1.3)	2 (0.2)	159 (15.9)
		I have the opportunity but do not speak	54 (5.4)	3 (0.3)	81 (8.1)	106 (10.7)	17 (1.7)	5 (0.5)	304 (30.4)
		I have no opportunity and I do not speak	114 (11.4)	7 (0.7)	114 (11.4)	216 (21.7)	26 (2.6)	35 (3.5)	535 (53.5)
3.	On municipal budget allocation	I have the opportunity and I speak	7 (0.7)	2 (0.2)	33 (3.3)	89 (9.0)	12 (1.2)	1 (0.1)	183 (18.3)
		I have the opportunity but do not speak	31 (3.1)	3 (0.3)	67 (6.7)	80 (8.0)	10 (1.0)	2 (0.2)	231 (23.1)
		I have no opportunity and I do not speak	143 (14.4)	7 (0.7)	119 (12.0)	214 (21.5)	33 (3.3)	39 (3.9)	582 (58.2)
4.	On land development of my municipality	I have the opportunity and I speak	5 (0.5)	2 (0.2)	30 (3.0)	76 (7.6)	10 (1.0)	2 (0.2)	164 (16.4)
		I have the opportunity but do not speak	68 (6.8)	4 (0.4)	80 (8.0)	106 (10.7)	16 (1.6)	2 (0.2)	312 (31.2)
		I have no opportunity and I do not speak	108 (10.8)	6 (0.6)	108 (10.9)	202 (20.3)	29 (2.9)	38 (3.8)	521 (52.1)
5.	On investment/renovation projects in my municipality	I have the opportunity and I speak	11 (1.1)	1 (0.1)	34 (3.4)	78 (7.8)	11 (1.1)	3 (0.3)	184 (18.4)
		I have the opportunity but do not speak	49 (4.9)	3 (0.3)	75 (7.5)	114 (11.5)	9 (0.9)	3 (0.3)	285 (28.5)
		I have no opportunity and I do not speak	121 (12.2)	8 (0.8)	110 (11.0)	192 (19.3)	34 (3.4)	36 (3.6)	528 (52.8)
6.	On cultural events in my municipality	I have the opportunity and I speak	51 (5.1)	4 (0.4)	46 (4.6)	72 (7.3)	17 (1.7)	5 (0.5)	232 (23.2)
		I have the opportunity but do not speak	64 (6.4)	2 (0.2)	72 (7.3)	131 (13.2)	15 (1.5)	11 (1.1)	336 (33.6)
		I have no opportunity and I do not speak	66 (6.7)	6 (0.6)	101 (10.2)	178 (17.9)	24 (2.4)	26 (2.6)	426 (42.6)
7.	About other matters (specify)	I have the opportunity and I speak	0 (0)	2 (0.4)	20 (3.9)	42 (8.0)	5 (1.0)	3 (0.6)	99 (9.9)
		I have the opportunity but do not speak	0 (0)	3 (0.6)	30 (5.8)	34 (6.6)	6 (1.1)	1 (0.2)	105 (10.5)
		I have no opportunity and I do not speak	0 (0)	4 (0.8)	89 (17.1)	172 (33.1)	16 (3.1)	9 (1.7)	315 (31.5)

Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network project between September 2018 and November 2019

In all the matters examined, the majority of respondents stated that they had no decision-making power and did not speak on those issues. As regards the election of local authorities, it was the opinion of 40.2% of young respondents, the development strategy of the commune – 53.5%, the distribution of funds in the municipal budget – 58.2%, land development in the municipality – 52.1%, the investment/renovation projects in the municipality – 52.8%, cultural events – 42.6% and other matters - 31.5%. When analysing the distribution of responses with respect to the place of residence, one can see a significant difference between the opinions of young people in Poland or Lithuania and those in Sweden. The young people living in Hässleholm declared that they had the opportunity to speak on most issues and exercised that privilege. This applied to the election of local authorities, the development strategy of the municipality, the distribution of resources in the municipality's budget, land development and investment/renovation projects in the municipality. On the other hand, the Swedish youth stated that they had the decision-making power but did not use it with respect to cultural events and other matters in their municipality. Apart from the young people from Hässleholm, only a majority of respondents from Iława declared that they had the opportunity to co-decide on the election of local authorities. What is interesting, 40.2% of the respondents stated that they were unable to participate in the election of local authorities. This cannot be explained solely by the lack of voting rights for minors, as 66.3% of the sample were 18 to 24 years old. These opinions show limited knowledge of the opportunities for young people to influence local government decisions on various issues.

One-way analysis of variance demonstrated significant differences between the answers  $F(4, 3955)=57.86; p<0.001, \eta=0.06$ . The differences between the answers to the individual test questions were 6% in total. The respondents declared that they had some opportunities to speak when local authorities were elected, but they were unable to influence the decisions concerning the allocation of funds in the municipality's budget.

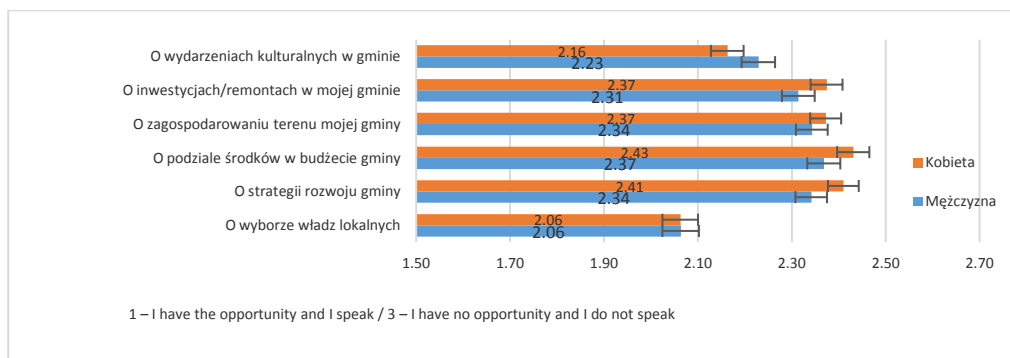
**Figure 3. Ability to influence the decisions and participate in decision-making on matters concerning the municipality (the error bars in the graph show standard errors)**



Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network project between September 2018 and November 2019

Gender is not a factor that differentiated the survey responses to that question. Two-way analysis of variance showed a significant (at a statistical trend level) effect of interaction between the two factors,  $F(4, 3948)=2.23$ ;  $p<0.1$ ,  $\eta=0.002$ , however, multiple comparisons analysis performed with the Bonferroni correction did not reveal any significant gender-related differences in the responses given to the individual test items. The interaction feature explains 0.2% of the variance of the dependent variable.

**Figure 4. Ability to influence the decisions and participate in decision-making on matters concerning the municipality vs respondents' gender (the error bars in the graph show standard errors)**

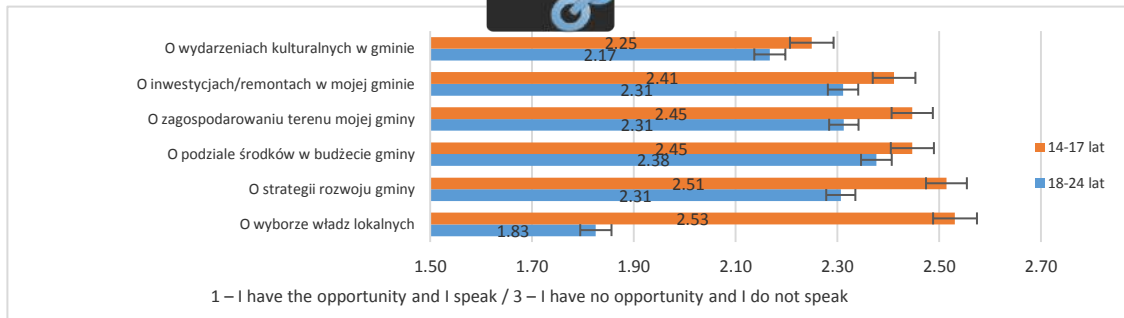


Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network project between September 2018 and November 2019

However, the respondents' age had an effect on their views. A two-way analysis of variance demonstrated a significant interaction effect between the two factors,  $F(4, 4143) = 45.95$ ;  $p<0.001$ ;  $\eta = 0.04$ . The interaction feature explains 4% of the variance of the dependent variable. This means that individuals aged 14–17 significantly more frequently stated their inability to speak on all the municipality-related matters mentioned above, with

the exception of (Upisania Pro Murawo to Remowc the Watermark) of funds in the municipality's budget.

**Figure 5. Ability to influence the decisions and participate in decision-making on matters concerning the municipality vs respondents' age (the error bars in the graph show standard errors)**



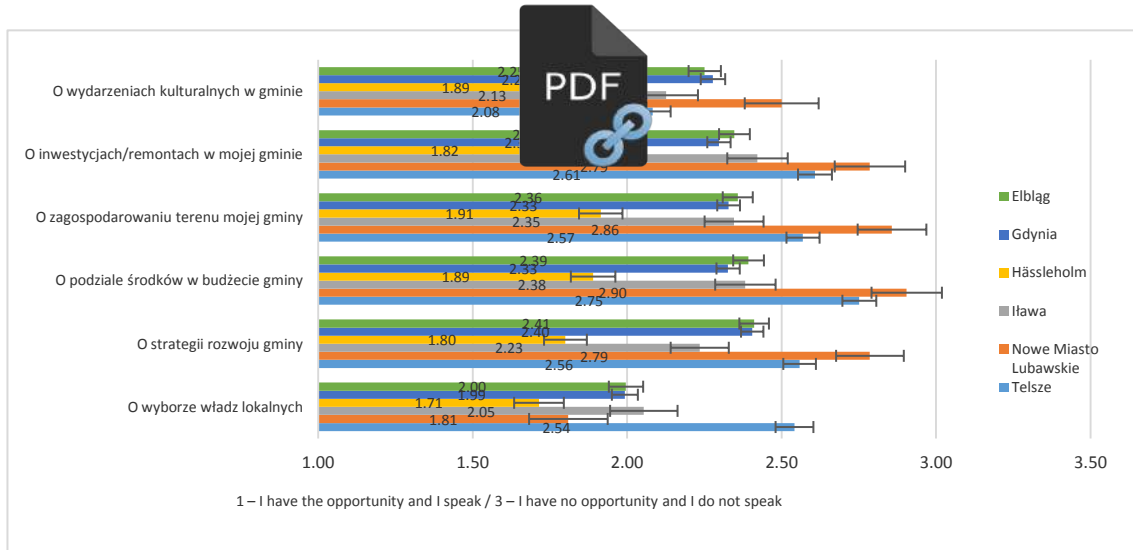
Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network project between September 2018 and November 2019

Another important factor differentiating the opinions of respondents was the place of residence. The results of two-way analysis of variance revealed a significant interaction effect,  $F(20, 3973) = 9.66$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $\eta = 0.05$ . The interaction feature explains 5% of the variance of the dependent variable.

In the individual areas, young people's level of participation in the decision-making process across the municipalities was as follows, arranged in increasing order:

- cultural events in the municipality – the lowest: Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, Gdynia, Elbląg, Iława and Telšiai, slightly higher: Hässleholm;
- investment/renovation projects in the municipality – the lowest: Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, Telšiai and Iława, slightly higher: Elbląg and Gdynia, and the highest: Hässleholm;
- land development in the municipality – the lowest: Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, Telšiai, slightly higher: Elbląg, Iława and Gdynia, and the highest: Hässleholm;
- municipal budget allocation – the lowest: Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and Telšiai, slightly higher: Elbląg, Iława and Gdynia, and the highest: Hässleholm;
- municipality development strategy – the lowest: Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and Telšiai, slightly higher: Elbląg, Iława and Gdynia, and the highest: Hässleholm;
- election of local authorities – the lowest: Telšiai, slightly higher: Iława, Elbląg, Gdynia, and the highest: Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and Hässleholm.

Figure 6. Ability to influence the decisions and participate in decision making in matters concerning the municipality vs respondents' place of residence (the error bars in the graph show standard errors)



Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network project between September 2018 and November 2019

SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUP NETWORK **STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17**

**Table 7 Young people's opportunities to speak on matters concerning school/university in Lithuania, Poland and Sweden (frequency, % of sample responses)**

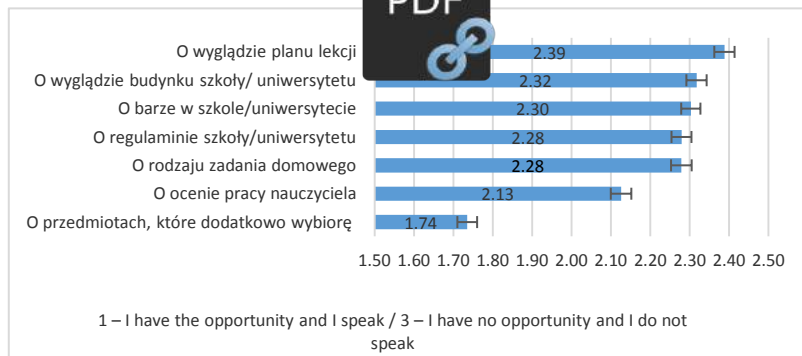
No.	Statement	Scale	Lithuania					Poland			Sweden	Σ (%)
			Telšiai	Dzierzgoń	Elbląg	Gdynia	Hawa	Nowe Miasto Lubawskie	Hässleholm			
1.	About the choice of extra subjects	I have the opportunity and I speak	75 (7.9)	4 (0.4)	120 (12.7)	158 (16.7)	24 (2.5)	25 (2.7)	37 (3.9)	463 (46.3)		
		I have the opportunity but do not speak	84 (8.9)	5 (0.5)	55 (5.8)	113 (12.0)	12 (1.3)	8 (0.9)	32 (3.4)	322 (32.2)		
		I have no opportunity and I do not speak	18 (1.9)	2 (0.2)	37 (3.9)	99 (10.5)	16 (1.7)	4 (0.4)	17 (1.8)	204 (20.4)		
2.	About the type of homework	I have the opportunity and I speak	76 (8.0)	2 (0.2)	27 (2.9)	63 (6.7)	11 (1.2)	4 (0.4)	33 (3.5)	236 (23.6)		
		I have the opportunity but do not speak	60 (6.3)	5 (0.5)	62 (6.6)	78 (8.3)	14 (1.5)	2 (0.2)	29 (3.0)	259 (25.9)		
		I have no opportunity and I do not speak	41 (4.3)	4 (0.4)	123 (13.0)	229 (24.2)	27 (2.9)	31 (3.3)	25 (2.6)	495 (49.5)		
3.	About the school timetable	I have the opportunity and I speak	61 (6.5)	1 (0.1)	23 (2.4)	56 (5.9)	17 (1.8)	2 (0.2)	27 (2.9)	200 (20.0)		
		I have the opportunity but do not speak	66 (7.0)	2 (0.2)	44 (4.7)	50 (5.3)	6 (0.6)	3 (0.3)	33 (3.5)	215 (21.5)		
		I have no opportunity and I do not speak	49 (5.2)	8 (0.8)	146 (15.5)	263 (27.8)	29 (3.0)	32 (3.4)	27 (2.9)	573 (57.3)		
4.	About the assessment of teacher's work	I have the opportunity and I speak	54 (5.7)	1 (0.1)	42 (4.4)	106 (11.2)	11 (1.2)	10 (1.0)	32 (3.4)	271 (27.1)		
		I have the opportunity but do not speak	83 (8.8)	5 (0.5)	78 (8.3)	97 (10.3)	14 (1.5)	5 (0.5)	32 (3.4)	329 (32.9)		
		I have no opportunity and I do not speak	40 (4.2)	5 (0.5)	93 (9.9)	167 (17.7)	26 (2.8)	21 (2.2)	23 (2.4)	389 (38.9)		
5.	About the school / university rules	I have the opportunity and I speak	76 (8.0)	1 (0.1)	27 (2.9)	51 (5.4)	11 (1.2)	5 (0.5)	25 (2.7)	210 (21.0)		
		I have the opportunity but do not speak	76 (8.0)	3 (0.3)	66 (7.0)	88 (9.3)	8 (0.9)	3 (0.3)	45 (4.8)	307 (30.7)		
		I have no opportunity and I do not speak	25 (2.6)	7 (0.7)	120 (12.7)	230 (24.3)	32 (3.4)	29 (3.1)	17 (1.8)	472 (47.2)		
6.	About the school/university canteen	I have the opportunity and I speak	50 (5.3)	1 (0.1)	23 (2.4)	51 (5.4)	11 (1.2)	5 (0.5)	29 (3.1)	188 (18.8)		
		I have the opportunity but do not speak	80 (8.5)	1 (0.1)	70 (7.4)	12 (11.9)	9 (1.0)	10 (1.1)	33 (3.5)	327 (32.7)		
		I have no opportunity and I do not speak	47 (5.0)	8 (0.9)	119 (12.7)	205 (21.8)	30 (3.2)	22 (2.3)	24 (2.6)	469 (46.9)		
7.	About the appearance of the school/university building	I have the opportunity and I speak	84 (8.9)	1 (0.1)	22 (2.3)	47 (5.0)	12 (1.3)	2 (0.2)	29 (3.1)	208 (20.8)		
		I have the opportunity but do not speak	74 (7.8)	1 (0.1)	51 (5.4)	76 (8.0)	6 (0.6)	8 (0.9)	35 (3.7)	268 (26.8)		
		I have no opportunity and I do not speak	19 (2.0)	9 (1.0)	139 (14.7)	246 (26.0)	34 (3.6)	27 (2.9)	23 (2.4)	513 (51.3)		
8.	About the leisure activities offered	I have the opportunity and I speak	0 (0)	6 (0.8)	61 (8.0)	120 (15.7)	20 (2.6)	14 (1.8)	28 (3.7)	269 (26.9)		
		I have the opportunity but do not speak	0 (0)	4 (0.5)	89 (11.6)	136 (17.8)	19 (2.5)	10 (1.3)	41 (5.3)	313 (31.3)		
		I have no opportunity and I do not speak	0 (0)	1 (0.1)	61 (8.0)	113 (14.8)	12 (1.6)	13 (1.7)	17 (2.2)	223 (22.3)		

Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network project between September 2018 and November 2019

In respect of most of the issues examined, the young people from the seven municipalities generally felt that they were not able to decide on the type of homework, the school timetable, the assessment of the teacher's work, the school/university rules, the school/university canteen or the appearance of school/university buildings. As to the leisure activities offered, 31.3% of respondents in the sample stated that while they had the opportunity to express their opinion on that matter, they did not exercise that privilege. This is further proof that the determinants of youth civic participation lie both on the side of the institutional environment and on the side of young people. In the opinion of the majority of respondents in the sample (46.3% of responses), they have the opportunity and speak only on one issue – concerning the choice of additional subjects.

One-way analysis of variance demonstrated significant differences between the answers  $F(5, 4561)=124.58$ ;  $p<0.001$ ,  $\eta=0.12$ . These differences across the individual test questions totalled 12%, as shown in Figure 7. A one-way analysis of variance demonstrated that respondents declared the ability to comment on the choice of extra subjects, but had no decision-making power with respect to the school timetable. These opinions indicate a relatively low awareness and initiative among young people in terms of the issues they may influence if they wish to do so. In addition, young people have the opportunity to influence the various decisions made by the school or university authorities through their representatives in pupil or student self-government. In particular, compared to secondary or primary schools, decision-making processes at universities are much more participatory, allowing young people to decide on many important issues not only for students, but also for academic staff and universities as a whole.

**Figure 7. Differences between respondents' answers relating to their assessment of the extent of young people's influence on the decisions taken on individual matters concerning school/university (the error bars in the chart show standard errors)**



Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network project between September 2018 and November 2019.

A two-way analysis of variance revealed no significant effect of interaction between respondents' opinion and age,  $F(5,4560) = 1,54$ ; ns. This means that young people's age does not differentiate their ability to speak about school/university issues and participate in decision-making processes. In this case, the situation is similar to that of young people's decision-making power in respect of municipal matters. The age of respondents did not differentiate their opinions, but their status did have an effect. The results of two-way analysis of variance demonstrated a significant interaction effect,  $F(20, 4634) = 9.51$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $\eta = 0.04$ . The interaction feature explains 4% of the variance of the dependent variable. The results of analysis are shown in Figure 8. Youth participation in decision-making varied according to their status as follows:

- the appearance of school/university building – the lowest level of participation was observed among primary school pupils, university students and secondary school pupils, and the highest level among lower secondary school and vocational school pupils;
- school/university canteen – the lowest level of participation was declared by primary school pupils, slightly higher by secondary school pupils and university students, and the highest level of participation – by lower secondary and vocational school pupils;
- school/university rules – the lowest level of participation was reported among primary school pupils, university students and secondary school pupils, slightly

Protected by PDF Anti-Copy Free

4<sup>th</sup> Regular Call, South Baltic, Programme 2014–2020

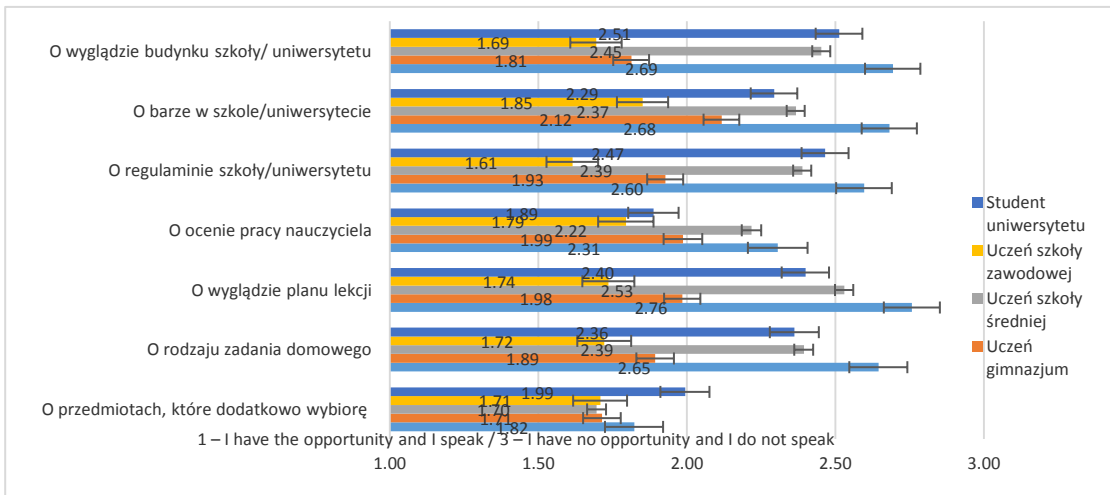
SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUPS NETWORK

STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17

higher among lower secondary school pupils and vocational school pupils;

- teacher's work assessment – the lowest level of participation among primary and secondary school pupils, and the highest among lower secondary school pupils, university students and vocational school pupils;
- school timetable – the lowest decision-making power was declared by primary and secondary school pupils, and university students, and the highest by lower secondary school students and vocational school students;
- type of homework – primary and secondary school pupils and university students had the least influence, while secondary and vocational school pupils had the largest impact on such decisions;
- the choice of additional subjects – the lowest level of participation was declared by university students, and slightly by primary, lower secondary, secondary and vocational school students.

Figure 8. Assessment of the extent of young people's influence on the decisions taken on the individual matters at school/university vs respondents' status (the error bars in the chart show standard errors)



Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network project between September 2018 and November 2019.

These results are surprising on at least a few points. In Poland, Lithuania and Sweden, university students can choose additional subjects to suit their individual interests. It is also difficult to explain the differences in the opinions of primary, lower secondary, vocational and secondary school pupils and university students on the other matters investigated. In addition, educational practices at universities and many lower-level schools

are used to develop (Upgrade to Pdf Version to Remove the Watermark) in public rights as aware citizens. In particular, learning within the local communities is a good way to shape youth civic participation<sup>5</sup>. These young persons suggest serious weaknesses in civic education.

Another factor that differentiates young people's opinions on participation in decision-making at school/university is the respondents' place of residence. The results of two-way analysis of variance revealed a significant interaction effect,  $F(25, 4620) = 9.95$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $\eta = 0.05$ . The interaction feature explains 5% of the variance of the dependent variable. The results of analysis are shown in Figure 9. Youth participation in decision-making varied depending on their status as follows:

- the appearance of the school/university building – the least involved in decision-making were the residents of Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, Elbląg, Gdynia and Iława, slightly more the young people from Hässleholm and the most involved were the respondents from Telšiai;
- school/university canteen – respondents living in the municipalities of Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, Elbląg, Gdynia and Iława had the least to say, while the youth from Hässleholm and Telšiai reported the highest level of participation in such decisions;
- school/university rules – the lowest level of participation in decision-making was declared by the residents of Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, Gdynia, Elbląg and Iława, and the highest by the respondents from Hässleholm and Telšiai;
- teachers' work assessment – the lowest level of participation in decision-making was reported by the residents of Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, Iława, Elbląg and Gdynia, slightly higher by the young people from Telšiai and the highest by the respondents from Hässleholm;
- school timetable – respondents living in the municipalities of Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, Elbląg and Gdynia had the least influence on the decisions, while the respondents from Hässleholm and Telšiai had the strongest impact;
- type of homework – the lowest level of participation in decision-making was declared by the residents of Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, Elbląg, Gdynia and Iława, and the highest by the respondents from Hässleholm and Telšiai;

<sup>5</sup> See more: Handbook of research on civic engagement in youth, L. R. Sherrod, J. Torney-Purta, C. A. Flanagan (Eds), John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken, NJ 2010, pp. 706; D. Watson, R. Hollister, S. E. Stroud, E. Babcock, The engaged university: international perspectives on civic engagement, Routledge, New York 2011, pp. 282.

Protected by PDF Anti-Copy Free

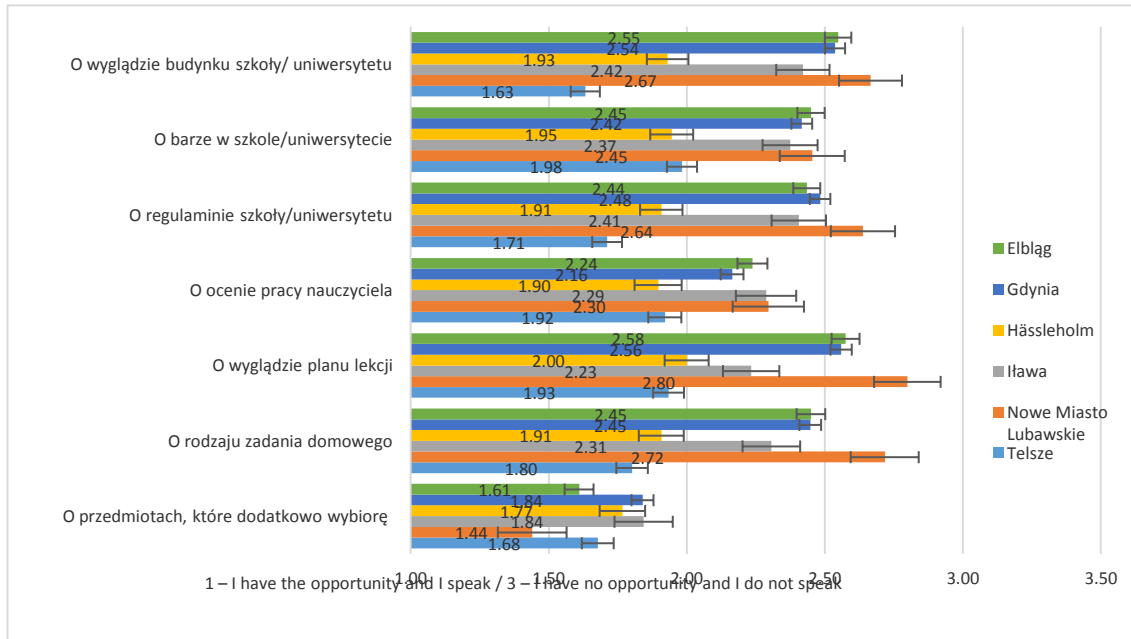
4<sup>th</sup> Regular Call, South Baltic, Programme 2014–2020

SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUPS NETWORK

STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17

- choice of additional subjects and the lowest level of participation in decision-making was reported by the residents of Iława, Gdynia, Hässleholm, Telsiai and Elbląg, and the highest by the respondents from Nowe Miasto Lubawskie.

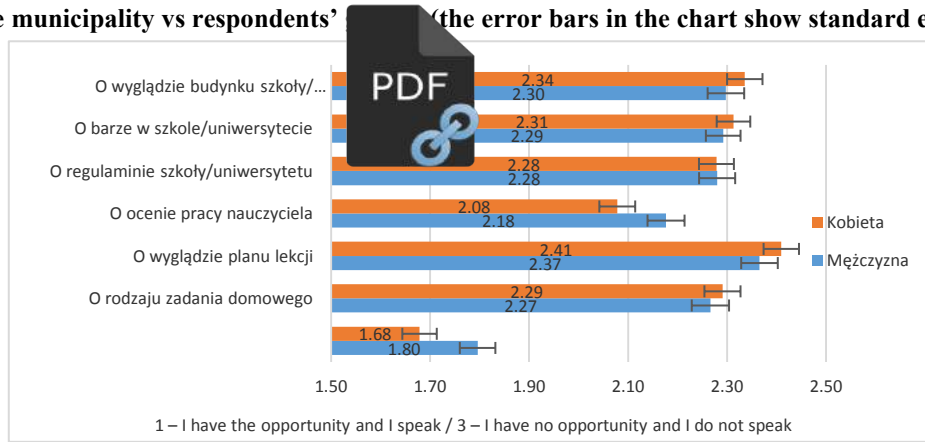
Figure 9. Assessment of the extent of young people's influence on the decisions taken on the individual matters at school/university vs respondents of residence (the error bars in the chart show standard errors)



Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network project between September 2018 and November 2019.

Certain gender-related differences in the answers to the individual test items were revealed by two-way analysis of variance. There was a significant interaction effect of the two factors,  $F(5, 4564) = 2.84$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ;  $\eta = 0.003$ . The interaction feature explained 0.3% of the variance of the dependent variable. Indeed, male respondents were more likely to declare that they had the opportunity to speak on issues relating to the evaluation of teacher's work ( $p < 0.1$ ) and on the choice of additional subjects ( $p < 0.05$ ). No other significant gender-related differences were observed with respect to the remaining test items. The results are shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10. Assessment of the extent of young people’s influence on the decisions taken on the individual matters in the municipality vs respondents’ (the error bars in the chart show standard errors)



Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network project between September 2018 and November 2019.

In view of the belief held by a majority of the young people surveyed of their inability to decide on different issues concerning them in the municipality or at school/university, it was intriguing to look at the efforts undertaken by young people in Lithuania, Poland and Sweden in order to influence matters in their school, town or municipality. The study included selected activities appropriate to the age of respondents and possible forms of civic participation. In a majority of the cases examined, a large proportion of respondents reported that they did not take steps such as requesting assistance from a local government official/representative (57.8% of responses), a known politician (67.5% of responses) or a NGO representative (57.6% of responses); organising a group of young people who would work together on a particular issue; acting in a pupil/student self-government at a school or university or in a youth organisation; participating in public consultations or contacting local journalists. Although the Internet is a particularly important area for youth activity today, including their civic activation<sup>6</sup>, most of the young respondents (46.8% responses) did not share their problems with other Internet users, e.g. on a blog or Facebook. The vast majority of respondents from seven municipalities talk about their problems with friends (“rather yes” – 32.2% of responses, “yes” – 32.1% of responses). A large proportion of the sample were undecided when responding to the questions about requesting assistance from parents (25.1% of responses) and teachers (23.6% of responses). The results are shown in Table 8.

<sup>6</sup> S. Banaji, D. Buckingham, Young people, the Internet, and civic participation: an overview of key findings from the CivicWeb Project, *International Journal of Learning and Media* 2010, No 2, p. 15-24.

The most frequent responses to the questions under consideration varied considerably between the municipalities, with the exception of the opinions of the respondents from Telšiai, which coincided with the prevailing responses throughout the sample. A very similar response structure was also observed in Elbląg, except that most of the respondents there denied asking for teachers' assistance. Teachers' support is not sought, either, by a majority of young people from Gdynia who wish to have an influence on the affairs of their school, city or municipality. In Dzierzgoń and Iława the variable distribution was balanced, with the same frequency of “no” and “difficult to say” responses. Similarly, a majority of respondents from Nowe Miasto Lubawskie failed to provide a definitive response. However, in this case, the opinions on requesting teacher assistance were equally divided between the neutral and “rather yes” responses. The young people from Hässleholm had relatively the greatest trust in teachers, with a majority of them stating that if they wanted to have a say in matters concerning their school/town/municipality, they usually asked their teacher parents for help. Meanwhile, a large proportion of respondents from Gdynia, Iława, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and Dzierzgoń definitely did not turn to their parents for assistance. Relations between young people and their family members are important and should not be underestimated in developing the capacity of young people to participate fully in citizenship<sup>7</sup>.

The majority of young people from six municipalities never requested assistance from a local government official/government representative in order to have a say in a decision; only in Nowe Miasto Lubawskie the prevailing response was “rather not” and in Hässleholm “difficult to say”. The Swedish respondents also opted for the neutral response as to requesting assistance from a well-known politician, while the young people from the other municipalities strongly denied using such a solution. A certain group of young people – from Hässleholm and Iława – said that to some extent they themselves in youth groups acting to promote their interests. A majority of respondents from Nowe Miasto Lubawskie were hesitant in this respect. Activities within a pupil/student self-government at school or university were used as a form of participation in the decision-making process only by the young people from Dzierzgoń. The Hässleholm respondents most frequently chose the

<sup>7</sup> See more: E. Muddiman, C. Taylor, S. Power, K. Moles, Young people, family relationships and civic participation, *Journal of Civil Society* 2019, Volume 15, Issue 1, p. 82-98.

answer “difficult (Upgrade to Pro Version to Remove the Watermark)”. The negative opinions of young people from the other municipalities can hardly be explained, since all schools in Poland, Sweden, Lithuania have self-governments which participate in decision-making processes to a greater or lesser extent. Activity in youth organisation which one can influence decisions in one’s school/town/municipality was the preferred answer only in Iława and Dzierzgoń. The Hässleholm respondents tended to choose the neutral response in this regard, as well as with respect to participating in public consultations and contacting local journalists. Talking to friends was the most common method of trying to influence the decisions concerning young people’s immediate environment.

The prevailing response in Gdynia, Iława and Dzierzgoń was “yes” – I talk to friends about the problem, and in the other municipalities “rather yes”. Based on the distribution of the opinions, it can be concluded that young people have more confidence in each other than in adult decision-makers representing public institutions and NGOs. Having said that, young people's discussions do not translate into concrete action. It is worrying that respondents were reluctant to provide their own answers on civic activity, which may suggest that such activity is not undertaken other forms, not covered by the survey.

SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUP NETWORK **STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17**

**Table 8 Steps taken by young people in Lithuania, Poland and Sweden to say in matters concerning their school/town/municipality (frequency, % of responses in the sample)**

No.	Statement	Scale	Lithuania	Poland					Sweden	Σ (%)
			Telšiai	Dzierzgoń	Elbląg	Gdynia	Ława	Nowe Miasto Lubawskie	Hässleholm	
1.	I ask my parents for help	No	17 (1.7)	4 (0.4)	55 (5.6)	107 (10.8)	17 (1.7)	11 (1.2)	25 (2.5)	236 (23.6)
		Rather not	40 (4.0)	1 (0.1)	37 (3.8)	68 (6.9)	8 (0.8)	9 (0.9)	13 (1.3)	176 (17.6)
		Difficult to say	78 (7.9)	3 (0.3)	52 (5.3)	78 (7.9)	11 (1.2)	10 (1.0)	19 (1.9)	251 (25.1)
		Rather yes	31 (3.1)	3 (0.3)	47 (4.8)	84 (8.5)	11 (1.2)	9 (0.9)	30 (3.0)	215 (21.5)
		Yes	15 (1.5)	1 (0.1)	26 (2.6)	47 (4.8)	9 (0.9)	3 (0.3)	18 (1.8)	119 (11.9)
2.	I ask my teachers for help	No	23 (2.3)	4 (0.4)	57 (5.8)	119 (12.0)	14 (1.4)	9 (0.9)	20 (2.0)	246 (24.6)
		Rather not	45 (4.5)	2 (0.2)	38 (3.9)	71 (7.2)	10 (1.0)	11 (1.1)	15 (1.5)	192 (19.2)
		Difficult to say	64 (6.5)	4 (0.4)	44 (4.5)	79 (8.0)	14 (1.4)	11 (1.1)	20 (2.0)	236 (23.6)
		Rather yes	40 (4.0)	1 (0.1)	54 (5.5)	90 (9.0)	13 (1.3)	8 (0.8)	28 (2.8)	234 (23.4)
		Yes	9 (0.9)	1 (0.1)	22 (2.2)	23 (2.3)	5 (0.5)	5 (0.5)	21 (2.1)	84 (8.4)
3.	I ask a local government official/representative of the authorities for help	No	117 (11.8)	6 (0.6)	103 (10.4)	230 (23.1)	20 (2.0)	10 (1.0)	22 (2.2)	508 (50.8)
		Rather not	35 (3.6)	1 (0.1)	39 (3.9)	54 (5.5)	12 (1.2)	16 (1.6)	10 (1.0)	167 (16.7)
		Difficult to say	23 (2.3)	3 (0.3)	39 (3.9)	55 (5.6)	6 (0.6)	10 (1.0)	32 (3.2)	168 (16.8)
		Rather yes	3 (0.3)	0 (0.0)	24 (2.4)	29 (2.9)	8 (0.8)	5 (0.5)	30 (3.0)	99 (9.9)
		Yes	3 (0.3)	2 (0.2)	11 (1.1)	15 (1.5)	9 (0.9)	1 (0.1)	11 (1.1)	52 (5.2)
4.	I ask a well-known politician for help	No	152 (15.3)	7 (0.7)	148 (14.9)	289 (29.1)	35 (3.5)	16 (1.6)	28 (2.8)	675 (67.5)
		Rather not	18 (1.8)	1 (0.1)	19 (1.9)	39 (4.0)	10 (1.0)	10 (1.0)	19 (1.9)	116 (11.6)
		Difficult to say	8 (0.8)	3 (0.3)	23 (2.3)	36 (3.7)	6 (0.6)	13 (1.3)	30 (3.0)	119 (11.9)
		Rather yes	2 (0.2)	0 (0.0)	14 (1.4)	13 (1.3)	3 (0.3)	1 (0.1)	22 (2.2)	55 (5.5)
		Yes	1 (0.1)	0 (0.0)	12 (1.2)	6 (0.6)	2 (0.2)	2 (0.2)	6 (0.6)	29 (2.9)
5.	I ask for help someone from a non-governmental organisation	No	127 (12.9)	6 (0.6)	124 (12.5)	260 (26.2)	19 (1.9)	14 (1.4)	26 (2.6)	576 (57.6)
		Rather not	28 (2.9)	0 (0.0)	33 (3.3)	39 (4.0)	9 (0.9)	11 (1.1)	25 (2.5)	145 (14.5)
		Difficult to say	18 (1.8)	3 (0.3)	27 (2.7)	43 (4.4)	11 (1.1)	10 (1.0)	24 (2.4)	136 (13.6)
		Rather yes	2 (0.2)	1 (0.1)	16 (1.6)	31 (3.1)	8 (0.8)	6 (0.6)	19 (1.9)	83 (8.3)
		Yes	6 (0.6)	2 (0.2)	16 (1.6)	10 (1.0)	7 (0.7)	1 (0.1)	11 (1.1)	53 (5.3)
6.	I talk to my friends about the problem	No	11 (1.1)	1 (0.1)	23 (2.3)	40 (4.0)	3 (0.3)	4 (0.4)	12 (1.2)	94 (9.4)
		Rather not	17 (1.7)	1 (0.1)	17 (1.7)	19 (1.9)	8 (0.8)	10 (1.0)	6 (0.6)	78 (7.8)
		Difficult to say	47 (4.7)	4 (0.4)	30 (3.0)	64 (6.5)	7 (0.7)	9 (0.9)	16 (1.6)	177 (17.7)
		Rather yes	61 (6.1)	1 (0.1)	74 (7.5)	122 (12.3)	14 (1.4)	15 (1.5)	35 (3.6)	322 (32.2)
		Yes	45 (4.6)	5 (0.5)	73 (7.4)	136 (13.7)	24 (2.4)	4 (0.4)	34 (3.5)	321 (32.1)
7.	I write about the problem online, on a blog or Facebook	No	100 (10.1)	6 (0.6)	107 (10.8)	191 (19.2)	22 (2.2)	14 (1.4)	28 (2.8)	468 (46.8)
		Rather not	43 (4.3)	0 (0.0)	34 (3.4)	66 (6.7)	6 (0.6)	11 (1.1)	19 (1.9)	174 (17.4)
		Difficult to say	20 (2.0)	5 (0.5)	41 (4.1)	61 (6.2)	18 (1.8)	10 (1.0)	14 (1.4)	174 (17.4)
		Rather yes	11 (1.1)	0 (0.0)	23 (2.3)	41 (4.1)	7 (0.7)	6 (0.6)	26 (2.6)	114 (11.4)
		Yes	7 (0.7)	1 (0.1)	12 (1.2)	25 (2.5)	1 (0.1)	1 (0.1)	18 (1.8)	65 (6.5)
8.	I organise a group of young people to work with me on the	No	102 (10.3)	4 (0.4)	93 (9.4)	199 (20.0)	15 (1.5)	15 (1.5)	24 (2.4)	452 (45.2)
		Rather not	40 (4.0)	1 (0.1)	38 (3.8)	57 (5.8)	8 (0.8)	6 (0.6)	8 (0.8)	158 (15.8)

SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUP NETWORK				STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17						
	matter	Difficult to say	24 (2.4)	4 (0.4)	38 (3.8)	63 (6.4)	12 (1.2)	16 (1.6)	29 (2.9)	186 (18.6)
		Rather yes	9 (0.9)	1 (0.1)	31 (3.1)	49 (5.0)	15 (1.5)	5 (0.5)	30 (3.0)	140 (14.0)
		Yes	6 (0.6)	2 (0.2)	16 (1.6)	14 (1.4)	6 (0.6)	0 (0.0)	14 (1.4)	58 (5.8)
9.	I take action through the student government at school or at university	No	109 (11.0)	4 (0.4)	118 (11.9)	257 (25.9)	24 (2.4)	21 (2.1)	23 (2.3)	556 (55.6)
		Rather not	28 (2.9)	0 (0.0)	28 (2.9)	40 (4.0)	5 (0.5)	11 (1.1)	17 (1.7)	129 (12.9)
		Difficult to say	18 (1.8)	3 (0.3)	25 (2.5)	42 (4.3)	8 (0.8)	6 (0.6)	28 (2.9)	130 (13.0)
		Rather yes	15 (1.5)	0 (0.0)	18 (1.8)	22 (2.2)	8 (0.8)	4 (0.4)	27 (2.7)	94 (9.4)
		Yes	11 (1.1)	5 (0.5)	27 (2.7)	22 (2.2)	9 (0.9)	0 (0.0)	9 (0.9)	83 (8.3)
10.	I take action through a youth organisation	No	79 (8.0)	3 (0.3)	110 (11.1)	257 (26.0)	17 (1.7)	22 (2.2)	23 (2.3)	511 (51.1)
		Rather not	34 (3.5)	0 (0.0)	27 (2.8)	34 (3.5)	3 (0.3)	7 (0.7)	18 (1.8)	123 (12.3)
		Difficult to say	28 (2.9)	3 (0.3)	31 (3.2)	45 (4.6)	10 (1.0)	6 (0.6)	30 (3.0)	153 (15.3)
		Rather yes	24 (2.4)	1 (0.1)	21 (2.1)	14 (1.4)	5 (0.5)	4 (0.4)	24 (2.4)	93 (9.3)
		Yes	16 (1.6)	5 (0.5)	26 (2.6)	30 (3.0)	19 (1.9)	3 (0.3)	10 (1.0)	109 (10.9)
11.	I participate in public social consultations	No	68 (6.9)	6 (0.6)	117 (11.8)	255 (25.7)	22 (2.2)	20 (2.0)	26 (2.6)	514 (51.4)
		Rather not	44 (4.5)	1 (0.1)	35 (3.5)	55 (5.6)	11 (1.1)	8 (0.8)	19 (1.9)	169 (16.9)
		Difficult to say	42 (4.3)	3 (0.3)	31 (3.1)	43 (4.4)	7 (0.7)	11 (1.1)	29 (2.9)	170 (17.0)
		Rather yes	20 (2.0)	1 (0.1)	19 (1.9)	18 (1.8)	9 (0.9)	1 (0.1)	24 (2.4)	92 (9.2)
		Yes	6 (0.6)	1 (0.1)	15 (1.5)	11 (1.1)	5 (0.5)	2 (0.2)	7 (0.7)	47 (4.7)
12.	I contact local journalists	No	146 (14.7)	9 (0.9)	145 (14.6)	292 (29.5)	36 (3.6)	24 (2.4)	23 (2.3)	675 (67.5)
		Rather not	17 (1.7)	1 (0.1)	25 (2.6)	40 (4.1)	4 (0.4)	14 (1.4)	17 (1.7)	118 (11.8)
		Difficult to say	11 (1.1)	2 (0.2)	24 (2.4)	35 (3.6)	8 (0.8)	4 (0.4)	28 (2.8)	112 (11.2)
		Rather yes	3 (0.3)	0 (0.0)	12 (1.2)	13 (1.3)	6 (0.6)	0 (0.0)	25 (2.5)	59 (5.9)
		Yes	3 (0.3)	0 (0.0)	10 (1.0)	3 (0.3)	2 (0.2)	0 (0.0)	10 (1.0)	28 (2.8)
13.	Other – specify:		1 (0.1) <sup>8</sup>	6 (1.4)	102 (24.1) <sup>9</sup>	207 (48.9) <sup>10</sup>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	316(31.6)

Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network project between September 2018 and November 2019

<sup>8</sup> “I read online how others solve similar problems” – 1 person.

<sup>9</sup> The respondents gave the following answers: “I act on my own” – 1 person,

<sup>10</sup> “I look for help online” – 1 person; “I write to the municipal office about that matter” – 1 person, “I vote in municipal elections” - 1 person.

The low level of youth civic participation in the partner municipalities of the SBYCGN project was confirmed by responses regarding the actions taken by the respondents in the year preceding the investigation. The vast majority denied having engaged in any of the forms of activity investigated during that period. A large proportion of respondents answered that they did not: submit their requests to local politicians or local authorities (82% of responses); participate in any demonstration (75% of responses); submit proposals or requests concerning pupils' students' problems to school authorities/university authorities/teachers (72.2% of responses); participate in public meetings for the local community (70.5% of responses); contact a politician or town/municipal official (68.9%); discuss political issues in forums or blogs on the Internet (64.4% of responses); exchange opinions on social/political issues online (58.6% of responses); act in any youth organisation (62.9% of responses) or work for any church or religious association (58.9% of responses).

Analysis of the distribution of responses across municipalities reveals differences as to the level of youth civic engagement and its preferred forms.

The only group regularly contacting politicians or town/municipality officials were the participants from Hässleholm. However, the minor difference between positive and negative responses makes it difficult to interpret this score clearly, as confirmed by the results shown in Table 9. Participation in youth organisations was preferred by the majority of young people from Dzierzgoń and Iława – the only groups active in formal youth structures among the population investigated. The young people from Dzierzgoń and Telšiai were the most likely to take part in church life or activities of religious organisations. A certain proportion of the young people from Dzierzgoń also exchanged opinions on social/political issues on the Internet and participated in public meetings for local communities. This leads to the conclusion that the youth from Dzierzgoń were relatively most active in public life, followed by the participants from Hässleholm and Telšiai, although in the case of the Lithuanian youth this included specific activity within religious communities.

**Table 9 Civic activities undertaken by young people in Lithuania, Poland and Sweden in the last 12 months (frequency, % of responses in the sample)**

No.	Statement	Scale	Lithuania	Poland					Sweden	Σ (%)
			Telšiai	Dzierzgoń	Elbląg	Gdynia	Łąwa	Nowe Miasto Lubawskie	Hässleholm	
1.	Contacting a politician or city/municipality official	Yes	35 (3.5)	5 (0.5)	67 (6.8)	100 (10.1)	24 (2.4)	16 (1.6)	53 (5.4)	300 (30.0)
		No	146 (14.7)	7 (0.7)	149 (15.1)	282 (28.5)	28 (2.8)	26 (2.6)	52 (5.3)	690 (68.9)
2.	Putting forward proposals (requests) concerning residents to municipal politicians or local authorities	Yes	20 (2.0)	3 (0.3)	32 (3.2)	60 (6.1)	15 (1.5)	3 (0.3)	32 (3.2)	165 (16.5)
		No	161 (16.3)	9 (0.9)	183 (18.6)	320 (32.5)	37 (3.8)	39 (4.0)	72 (7.3)	821 (82.0)
3.	Putting forward proposals (requests) concerning pupils'/students' problems to school authorities/university authorities/teachers	Yes	56 (5.7)	3 (0.3)	50 (5.1)	87 (8.8)	19 (1.9)	7 (0.7)	41 (4.2)	263 (26.3)
		No	125 (12.7)	9 (0.9)	165 (16.7)	292 (29.6)	33 (3.3)	35 (3.6)	64 (6.5)	723 (72.2)
4.	Participation in a demonstration	Yes	47 (4.8)	2 (0.2)	38 (3.8)	94 (9.5)	10 (1.0)	8 (0.8)	38 (3.8)	237 (23.7)
		No	134 (13.6)	10 (1.0)	178 (18.0)	287 (29.0)	42 (4.3)	34 (3.5)	66 (6.7)	751 (75.0)
5.	Political discussions online in forums or blogs	Yes	57 (5.8)	4 (0.4)	78 (7.9)	132 (13.3)	19 (1.9)	9 (0.9)	46 (4.7)	365 (36.5)
		No	124 (12.5)	8 (0.8)	139 (14.0)	249 (25.2)	33 (3.3)	33 (3.3)	59 (6.0)	645 (64.4)
6.	Exchange of views on social/political issues online	Yes	78 (7.9)	6 (0.6)	75 (7.6)	169 (17.0)	19 (1.9)	8 (0.8)	49 (5.0)	404 (40.4)
		No	103 (10.4)	6 (0.6)	142 (14.3)	213 (21.5)	33 (3.3)	34 (3.4)	56 (5.7)	587 (58.6)
7.	Participation in public meetings for the local community	Yes	64 (6.5)	6 (0.6)	59 (6.0)	95 (9.6)	18 (1.8)	5 (0.5)	35 (3.6)	282 (28.2)
		No	117 (11.8)	6 (0.6)	156 (15.8)	287 (29.0)	34 (3.4)	36 (3.7)	70 (7.1)	706 (70.5)
8.	Membership of a youth organization	Yes	95 (9.6)	7 (0.7)	70 (7.1)	106 (10.7)	27 (2.7)	7 (0.7)	45 (4.6)	357 (35.7)
		No	86 (8.7)	5 (0.5)	147 (14.9)	274 (27.8)	25 (2.5)	33 (3.4)	60 (6.1)	630 (62.9)
9.	Participation in church/religious association activities	Yes	98 (10.1)	6 (0.6)	69 (7.1)	129 (13.3)	20 (2.0)	11 (1.1)	50 (5.1)	383 (38.3)
		No	82 (8.4)	5 (0.5)	142 (14.6)	245 (25.2)	32 (3.3)	30 (3.1)	54 (5.5)	590 (58.9)

Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network project between September 2018 and November 2019

In conclusion, public affairs related to the immediate environment are not among the issues of greatest interest to young people. A majority of the respondents declared only moderate interest in them, except for local level issues, which are of high appeal to young people. School, university or work is the area of greatest interest among young people from Hässleholm and slightly less appealing to the respondents from Telšiai and Iława. The neighbourhood as part of the immediate environment was only of slight interest to young people in Telšiai, Elbląg and Iława and of least interest to the participants from Hässleholm. However, the issues of the respondent's local district respondents generated keen interest among the young people from Iława and Dzierzgoń. Meanwhile, the issues concerning the town or municipality were considered important by the young people from Gdynia, Telšiai, Hässleholm and Iława. The Baltic Sea region, an area seen as rather remote, was highly interesting only to young people from Iława. The identified areas of interest make it possible to see the potential for the development of various forms of civic participation, taking into account the differences between their target groups. For example, a large proportion of the respondents from the seven municipalities investigated were most interested in the affairs of their friends. If these individuals were involved in public affairs, it would be possible to reach other, still inactive groups of young people through them. Considering young people's interest in school, university, work, district, municipality or Baltic Sea issues, one can utilise them to design activities engaging young people in decision-making processes. The potential to increase civic participation also exists in young people's willingness to play a role in the shaping of reality. While a majority of the young respondents from the seven municipalities surveyed were moderately interested in their municipality, the greater part of them declared that they would rather like to have influence on the affairs of the municipality in which they live. The respondents from Hässleholm were strongly interested in having a say in the issues concerning their municipality and most of the participants in Telšiai were unable to clearly state their position in that respect.

That said, the actual impact of 14–24-year-olds on the decisions affecting their immediate environment like municipality or school is very limited relative to the existing opportunities. It is the belief of the majority of young people surveyed in the seven municipalities that they are unable to have a say in all the topics examined and therefore do not take part in any discussion. These opinions indicate lack of awareness of what citizens

aged 14–24 have a right to participate in the decision-making processes. These forms included the opportunity to elect local authorities (except for people below the voting age) as well as participation in decisions subject to mandatory or optional public consultation, e.g. concerning municipal development strategies; the allocation of funds in the municipal budget (where e.g. a so-called participatory budget has been provided); land use planning (e.g. in respect of renaming towns and geographical objects); investment/renovation projects in the commune; cultural events and other issues such as national and ethnic minorities, public benefit activities and voluntary activities. The respondents' opinions in that regard varied depending on their place of residence, among other things. A majority of young people from Poland and Lithuania claimed that they had no influence on decisions concerning their municipality. The exception here were the young people from Iława who, unlike the other respondents from the two countries, considered that they were entitled to take part in the election of local authorities and exercised that right. The participants from Hässleholm displayed the highest level of public awareness. They declared that they had a say in decisions on most issues and exercised that privilege. This applied to the election of local authorities, the development strategy of the municipality, the distribution of resources in the municipality's budget, land development and investment/renovation projects in the municipality. On the other hand, the Swedish youth stated that they had the decision-making power but did not use it with respect to cultural events and other matters in their municipality. The majority of young people from the seven municipalities expressed similar opinions as to their inability to participate in the decisions concerning their school/university. The greater part of them said that they were able to take part in the discussion only about the choice of additional subjects and took advantage of that opportunity. As to the choice of leisure activities, the majority of respondents acknowledged their right to co-decide but admitted that they did not exercise it. The relatively largest opportunities for participation in the decision-making at schools or universities were offered to the young people from Hässleholm and Telšiai.

The average level of young people's interest and involvement in public affairs is also illustrated by the fact that the respondents engaged in hardly any of the forms of activity examined, whether formal or informal. The main manifestation of youth civic participation in the seven municipalities turned out to be conversations with friends about specific

issues. In some municipalities, young people take advantage of membership of youth organisations – Iława and Dzierzgoń; contacts with politicians or town/municipality officials – Hässleholm; participation in religious association activities – Dzierzgoń and Telšiai; exchange of views on social issues on the Internet and participation in public meetings for the local community – Dzierzgoń.

The demonstrated average level of civic participation and very limited range of the forms of its exercise in the seven municipalities indicate that the existing potential is not fully exploited. Despite declaring interest and willingness to influence the matters concerning their environment, the majority of young people display low awareness of the opportunities for participation in decision-making and insufficient engagement. Moreover, young people's opinions on specific issues vary depending on their gender, age, status or place of residence, which factors that should be taken into account when seeking effective ways of strengthening young people's civic engagement not only at local or national level but also across borders in the Baltic Sea Region.

### **Barriers to youth civic participation**

The relatively low level of civic participation of young people in the five Polish municipalities, one Lithuanian and one Swedish municipality determines the need to identify the existing barriers and methods to overcome them, and to stimulate young people's participation in decision-making processes. The problem of barriers to youth civic participation is perceived somewhat differently by young people and by representatives of the institutional environment. However, there are also certain similarities in identification of the sources of problems of both populations under investigation.

Table 10 shows the distribution of young people's opinions on the different barriers to civic participation. The majority of young people in the sample identified two main barriers to their civic participation. According to 31% of young people from the seven municipalities surveyed, the chief impediment is the lack of belief among young people that their ideas can be implemented, while 29% think it is the lack of understanding of young people's needs by adults. The opinions of the respondents from Dzierzgoń, Elbląg, Gdynia and Iława corresponded to those of the majority of the sample. However, from the viewpoint of most participants from Hässleholm and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie,, adults'

incomprehension (if people do not understand the highly technical factor for civic participation whereas young people's lack of confidence in the implementation of their ideas is a moderate hindrance. A large number of the respondents from Telšiai rated the impact of both these problems as average. This leads to the conclusion that one major barrier is due to young people themselves and the other is on the side of adults. Any measures aimed at reducing or eliminating these barriers must be implemented with a different intensity and in a different scope in each of the municipalities.

A large group of respondents identified the following factors as major obstructions to youth participation in decision-making: lack of youth motivation to participate in decision-making at school or organisations or local and central authorities (29.4% of responses); lack of information on how to engage in decision-making at school, in organisations and local and central governments (29.2% of responses) and politicians' reluctance to engage in a discussion with young people (26.3% of responses). The low level of youth motivation can arise from the difficulty in finding out how they can participate in decision-making processes at schools and in the municipality and in respect of what issues, as well as from politicians' disinclination to cooperate with young people and to involve them in decision-making processes. This necessitates systemic solutions at national or municipal level to enhance youth civic participation: beginning from well-prepared and well-implemented civic education opportunities (extending beyond the school) schools, through various forms of civic participation, which are made easily accessible to young people the openness and engagement of adult decision makers, to involving young people in cooperation and co-decision on issues of importance for both sides as citizens. The negative effect of the lack of motivation for young people to participate in decision-making in schools, organisations and local and central governments was considered strong by the majority of those surveyed in Dzierzgoń, Elbląg, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and Hässleholm, and very strong by those in Gdynia and Iława. In Telšiai, these factors are of medium importance. In contrast, inadequate information on how young people can become involved in decision-making has a strong negative impact in Gdynia, Iława and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, and a moderate effect in the other municipalities. Politicians' reluctance to speak with young people was identified as a strongly limiting factor for youth civic participation in Gdynia, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and Hässleholm. Swedish youth, despite politicians' unwillingness to cooperate, communicate with them to influence the decisions

made in their municipalities. In Poland, the determination of these young people to exercise their civil rights. In Łąka, the responses were equally distributed between the medium and very strong in that factor, making interpretation difficult. However, referring to the research results presented above, it can be assumed that some young people have the opportunity to develop a good relationship with local politicians e.g. by acting in youth organisations or institutions such as youth town councils.

According to the majority of respondents in the three countries, factors of moderately limiting effect on youth civic engagement included young people's inadequate knowledge and skills to participate more in decision-making at school and in local and central organisations and authorities (31% of responses); lack of adequate knowledge and skills of officials, representatives of schools and non-governmental organisations in increasing youth participation in decision-making (36.7%); insufficient communication between young people and local politicians and officials (27.9% of responses) and young people's disinterest in participating in decision-making in schools or organisations or local and central authorities (28.3% of responses). Civic education is clearly failing in Lithuania, Poland and Sweden. The skills gaps on the part of young people and decision makers alike were identified as important barriers to civic participation. The repeatedly demonstrated low level of interest among young people in public affairs is also linked to this problem, as well as to young people's motivation to become involved in decision-making.

Young people's inadequate knowledge and skills to participate more in decision-making in schools, organisations and local and central authorities proved to be a more acute problem in Gdynia and Łąka than in other municipalities. However, inadequate knowledge and skills on the part of officials, school representatives and NGOs in respect of stimulating young people's participation in decision-making was assessed as a major barrier only in Łąka. Meanwhile, insufficient communication between young people and local politicians and officials was considered the most important barrier to youth civic engagement by the respondents from Dzierżoń, Gdynia and Łąka, and in Elbląg and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie was seen as a strongly restrictive factor. The young people from Elbląg, Gdynia and Łąka were the most likely to admit that the reason for not engaging in public affairs was the lack of interest in decision-making. Young Swedes declared that the above factor had a strong impact on their attitudes.

SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUP NETWORK **STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17**

**Table 10 Barriers to youth civic participation in Lithuania, Poland and Sweden – Frequency, % of responses in the sample**

No.	Statement	Scale	Lithuania		Poland				Sweden	Σ (%)
			Telšiai	Dziesiai	Elbląg	Gdynia	Ilawa	Nowe Miasto Lubawskie	Hässleholm	
1.	Lack of understanding of young people's needs by adults	Very low impact	16 (1.6)	2 (0.2)	11 (1.1)	34 (3.4)	3 (0.3)	1 (0.1)	30 (3.0)	97 (9.7)
		Low impact	14 (1.4)	1 (0.1)	12 (1.2)	30 (3.0)	2 (0.2)	9 (0.9)	18 (1.8)	86 (8.6)
		Medium impact	73 (7.4)	1 (0.1)	58 (5.9)	87 (8.8)	5 (0.5)	8 (0.8)	16 (1.6)	248 (24.8)
		Strong impact	50 (5.0)	3 (0.3)	59 (6.0)	92 (9.3)	19 (1.9)	19 (1.9)	30 (3.0)	272 (27.2)
		Very strong impact	28 (2.8)	5 (0.5)	75 (7.6)	139 (14.0)	27 (2.7)	5 (0.5)	11 (1.1)	290 (29.0)
2.	Lack of youth motivation to participate in decision-making at school or organisations or local and central authorities	Very low impact	10 (1.0)	1 (0.1)	9 (0.9)	31 (3.1)	1 (0.1)	2 (0.2)	23 (2.3)	77 (7.7)
		Low impact	23 (2.3)	2 (0.2)	17 (1.7)	41 (4.1)	7 (0.7)	6 (0.6)	23 (2.3)	119 (11.9)
		Medium impact	59 (6.0)	2 (0.2)	49 (4.9)	88 (8.9)	11 (1.1)	13 (1.3)	22 (2.2)	244 (24.4)
		Strong impact	51 (5.2)	5 (0.5)	72 (7.3)	111 (11.2)	12 (1.2)	16 (1.6)	27 (2.7)	294 (29.4)
		Very strong impact	38 (3.8)	2 (0.2)	68 (6.9)	112 (11.3)	25 (2.5)	5 (0.5)	9 (0.9)	259 (25.9)
3.	Lack of information on how to get involved in the decision-making at school or organisations or local and central authorities	Very low impact	14 (1.4)	1 (0.1)	10 (1.0)	32 (3.2)	0 (0.0)	3 (0.3)	19 (1.9)	79 (7.9)
		Low impact	21 (2.1)	4 (0.4)	21 (2.1)	47 (4.7)	9 (0.9)	3 (0.3)	15 (1.5)	120 (12.0)
		Medium impact	61 (6.2)	5 (0.5)	72 (7.3)	97 (9.8)	9 (0.9)	12 (1.2)	28 (2.8)	284 (28.4)
		Strong impact	51 (5.2)	0 (0.0)	59 (6.0)	122 (12.3)	19 (1.9)	18 (1.8)	23 (2.3)	292 (29.2)
		Very strong impact	34 (3.4)	2 (0.2)	55 (5.6)	85 (8.6)	19 (1.9)	5 (0.5)	17 (1.7)	217 (21.7)
4.	Politicians' unwillingness to talk with young people	Very low impact	10 (1.0)	1 (0.1)	22 (2.2)	38 (3.8)	2 (0.2)	3 (0.3)	21 (2.1)	97 (9.7)
		Low impact	31 (3.1)	2 (0.2)	25 (2.5)	47 (4.8)	4 (0.4)	4 (0.4)	19 (1.9)	132 (13.2)
		Medium impact	55 (5.6)	4 (0.4)	61 (6.2)	92 (9.3)	19 (1.9)	9 (0.9)	21 (2.1)	257 (25.7)
		Strong impact	43 (4.4)	2 (0.2)	60 (6.0)	93 (9.4)	15 (1.5)	17 (1.7)	29 (2.9)	263 (26.3)
		Very strong impact	42 (4.3)	3 (0.3)	49 (4.9)	112 (11.3)	19 (1.9)	9 (0.9)	13 (1.3)	243 (24.3)
5.	Parents do not allow their children to engage in public matters	Very low impact	94 (9.5)	3 (0.3)	48 (4.9)	98 (9.9)	8 (0.8)	9 (0.9)	21 (2.1)	281 (28.1)
		Low impact	49 (5.0)	3 (0.3)	62 (6.3)	79 (8.0)	12 (1.2)	7 (0.7)	22 (2.2)	234 (23.4)
		Medium impact	22 (2.2)	2 (0.2)	60 (6.1)	99 (10.0)	18 (1.8)	15 (1.5)	32 (3.3)	248 (24.8)
		Strong impact	6 (0.6)	1 (0.1)	21 (2.1)	62 (6.3)	7 (0.7)	7 (0.7)	16 (1.6)	120 (12.0)
		Very strong impact	9 (0.9)	3 (0.3)	23 (2.3)	44 (4.5)	11 (1.1)	4 (0.4)	12 (1.2)	106 (10.6)
6.	Young people's inadequate knowledge and skills of to participate more in the decision-making at schools or in organisations or local and central authorities	Very low impact	18 (1.8)	2 (0.2)	17 (1.7)	48 (4.9)	3 (0.3)	3 (0.3)	22 (2.2)	113 (11.3)
		Low impact	39 (4.0)	4 (0.4)	26 (2.6)	58 (5.9)	6 (0.6)	12 (1.2)	21 (2.1)	166 (16.6)
		Medium impact	77 (7.8)	3 (0.3)	76 (7.7)	103 (10.4)	7 (0.7)	18 (1.8)	26 (2.6)	310 (31.0)
		Strong impact	26 (2.6)	0 (0.0)	65 (6.6)	108 (10.9)	22 (2.2)	4 (0.4)	23 (2.3)	248 (24.8)
		Very strong impact	21 (2.1)	3 (0.3)	33 (3.3)	65 (6.6)	17 (1.7)	5 (0.5)	10 (1.0)	154 (15.4)
7.	Lack of adequate knowledge and skills of officials, representatives of schools and non-governmental organisations in increasing youth participation in decision-making	Very low impact	14 (1.4)	2 (0.2)	8 (0.8)	36 (3.7)	12 (1.2)	1 (0.1)	24 (2.5)	85 (8.5)
		Low impact	30 (3.0)	2 (0.2)	38 (3.9)	60 (6.0)	15 (1.5)	9 (0.9)	12 (1.2)	163 (16.3)
		Medium impact	89 (9.0)	5 (0.5)	77 (7.8)	117 (11.9)	0 (0.0)	23 (2.3)	31 (3.2)	367 (36.7)
		Strong impact	30 (3.0)	1 (0.1)	59 (6.0)	103 (10.5)	16 (1.6)	5 (0.5)	24 (2.4)	238 (23.8)
		Very strong impact	18 (1.8)	2 (0.2)	33 (3.4)	62 (6.3)	13 (1.3)	4 (0.4)	12 (1.2)	144 (14.4)
8.	Young people's doubt if their ideas would be implemented	Very low impact	12 (1.2)	1 (0.1)	12 (1.2)	36 (3.7)	2 (0.2)	3 (0.3)	17 (1.7)	83 (8.3)
		Low impact	21 (2.1)	1 (0.1)	16 (1.6)	36 (3.7)	4 (0.4)	6 (0.6)	16 (1.6)	100 (10.0)
		Medium impact	58 (5.9)	2 (0.2)	44 (4.5)	72 (7.3)	8 (0.8)	17 (1.7)	27 (2.8)	228 (22.8)
		Strong impact	49 (5.0)	3 (0.3)	67 (6.8)	106 (10.7)	12 (1.2)	7 (0.7)	23 (2.3)	267 (26.7)
		Very strong impact	40 (4.0)	5 (0.5)	76 (7.7)	130 (13.2)	30 (3.0)	9 (0.9)	20 (2.0)	310 (31.0)

**SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUP NETWORK**      **STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17**

9.	Inadequate communication between young people and local politicians and officials	Very low impact	11 (1.1)	1 (0.1)	16 (1.6)	43 (4.4)	4 (0.4)	0 (0.0)	18 (1.8)	93 (9.3)
		Low impact	17 (1.7)	2 (0.2)	28 (2.8)	40 (4.0)	4 (0.4)	4 (0.4)	19 (1.9)	114 (11.4)
		Medium impact	72 (7.3)	3 (0.3)	54 (5.4)	100 (10.1)	11 (1.1)	13 (1.3)	26 (2.6)	279 (27.9)
		Strong impact	51 (5.2)	2 (0.2)	64 (6.5)	80 (8.1)	17 (1.7)	18 (1.8)	25 (2.5)	257 (25.7)
10.	Young people's disinterest in participating in decision-making in schools or organisations or local and central authorities	Very low impact	8 (0.8)	1 (0.1)	16 (1.6)	40 (4.0)	3 (0.3)	4 (0.4)	14 (1.4)	86 (8.6)
		Low impact	22 (2.2)	1 (0.1)	30 (3.0)	43 (4.4)	4 (0.4)	7 (0.7)	22 (2.2)	129 (12.9)
		Medium impact	66 (6.7)	5 (0.5)	55 (5.6)	104 (10.5)	12 (1.2)	17 (1.7)	24 (2.4)	283 (28.3)
		Strong impact	49 (5.0)	3 (0.3)	56 (5.7)	84 (8.5)	17 (1.7)	8 (0.8)	28 (2.8)	245 (24.5)
11	Other – specify:		0 (0)	8(0.8)	92(9.2) <sup>11</sup>	62(6.2) <sup>12</sup>	19(1.9)	9(0.9)	80(8)	270(27)

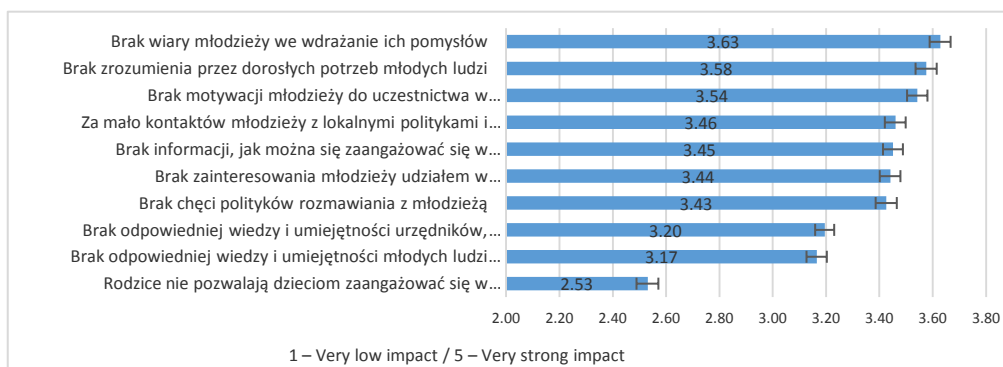
Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Group Network project between September 2018 and November 2019

<sup>11</sup> Participants' answers: "Shortage of time" – 1 person; "No adult support for young people's decision-making" – 1 person.

<sup>12</sup> Participants' answers: "Lack of confidence in their actions, young people are convinced that no one will respect their opinion" – 1 person; "Nobody wants to listen to the young and often we are not taken seriously" – 1 person; "Such matters seem complicated" – 1 person; "Being below the age limit" – 1 person; "Young people are shy" – 1 person; "Lack of knowledge among children and young people" – 1 person.

One-way analysis of variance confirmed that the factor having the most limiting effect on young people's involvement in public affairs is the lack of confidence among young people that their ideas can be implemented, while the lack of parental consent had the least effect. The significant differences between responses were  $F(8, 7831)=111.43$ ;  $p<0.001$ ,  $\eta=0.10$ , overall 10%. The results of analysis are shown in Figure 11.

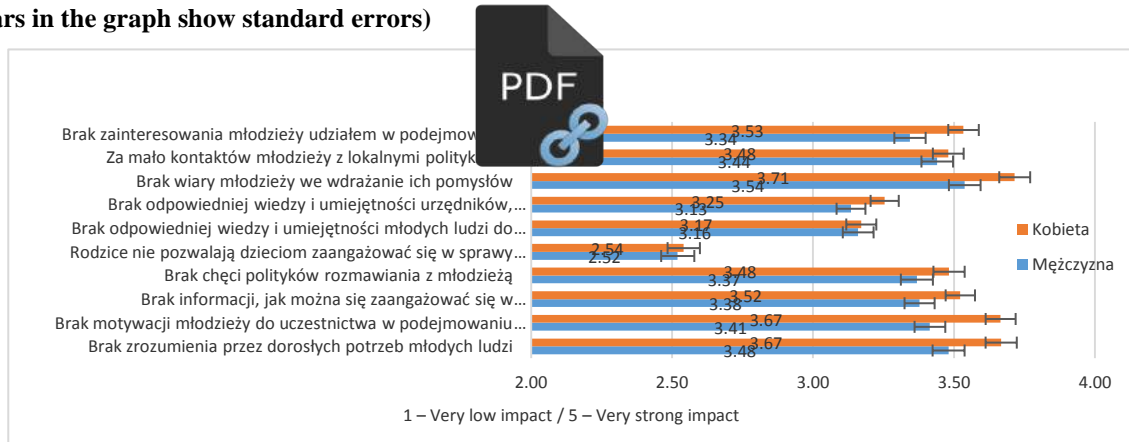
**Figure 11. Barriers to young people's involvement in public affairs (the error bars in the graph show standard errors)**



Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network project between September 2018 and November 2019

The perception of the importance of individual barriers varied depending on the gender, age, status and place of residence of the respondents, as demonstrated by a two-way analysis of variance. With respect to respondents' gender, it showed a significant (at a statistical trend level) interaction effect between both factors,  $F(8, 7826) = 1.74$ ;  $p<0.1$ ;  $\eta = 0.002$ . The interaction feature explains 0.02% of the variance of the dependent variable. Analysis revealed that, compared to male participants, female respondents rated the limiting impact of the following factors significantly higher: lack of understanding of young people's needs by adults,  $p<0.05$ ; lack of young people's motivation to participate in decision-making at school, in organisations and local and central authorities,  $p<0.1$ ; lack of information on how to engage in decision-making at school, in organisations and local and central authorities,  $p<0.1$ ; lack of young people's confidence that their ideas can be implemented,  $p<0.05$  and young people's disinterest in participation in decision-making at school, in organisations and local and central authorities,  $p<0.05$ . With regard to other factors limiting the involvement of young people in public affairs, no significant gender-related differences were observed. The results of analysis are shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12. Barriers to young people's involvement in public affairs vs respondents' gender (the error bars in the graph show standard errors)

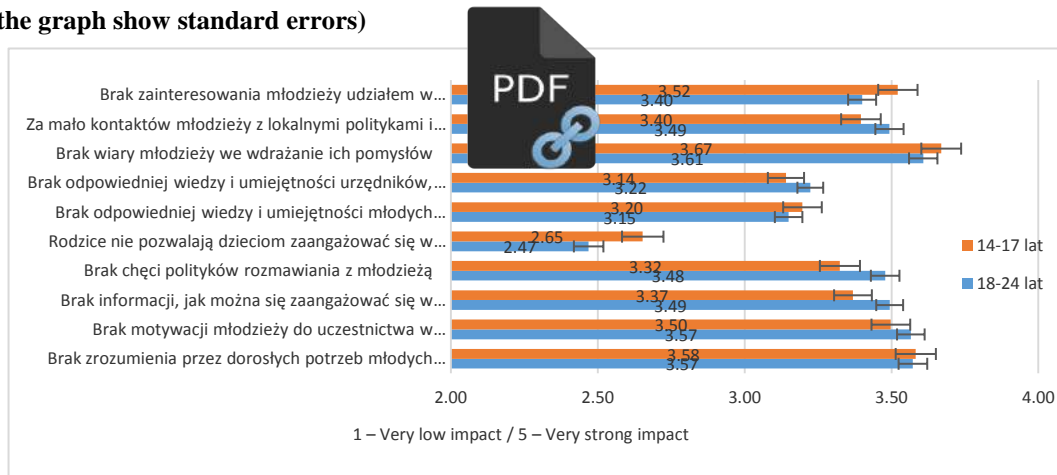


Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network project between September 2018 and November 2019.

With respect to the age of respondents, a two-way analysis of variance demonstrated a significant interaction effect of the two factors,  $F(8, 7836) = 3.05$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ;  $\eta = 0.003$ . The interaction feature explains 0.3% of the variance of the dependent variable. The participants aged 14–17 gave significantly higher ratings to the impact of the lack of parental consent for civic engagement,  $p < 0.05$ . Meanwhile, those aged 18–24 considered the impact of politicians' reluctance to engage in dialogue with young people to be significantly greater. As to other factors limiting the engagement of young people in public affairs, no significant differences were revealed between the respective age groups. The results of analysis are shown in Figure 13. The existing relationship between age and civic knowledge and civic participation should be better taken into account in the programming of youth policy at both national and local level<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> See more: D. Hart, R. Atkins, P. Markey, J. Youniss, Youth Bulges in Communities: The Effects of Age Structure on Adolescent Civic Knowledge and Civic Participation, *Psychological Science* 2004, Vol.15, issue 9, p. 591-597.

Figure 13. Barriers to young people's involvement in public affairs vs respondents' age (the error bars in the graph show standard errors)



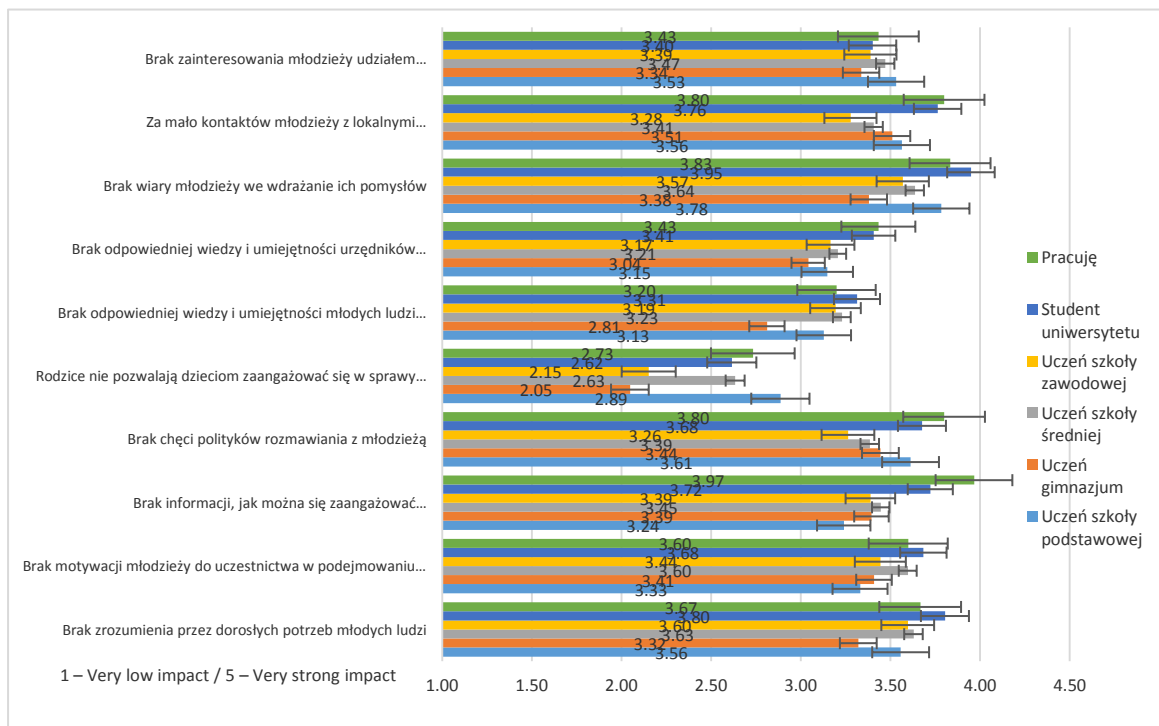
Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network project between September 2018 and November 2019.

The relationship between the respondents' opinions and status is illustrated by a significant interaction effect,  $F(39, 7702) = 2.23$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $\eta = 0.01$ . The interaction feature explains 1% of the variance of the dependent variable. The results of analysis are shown in Figure 14.

Young people's lack of confidence in implementing their ideas was seen as a stronger negative factor by university students, workers and primary school pupils, and as a less negative effect by secondary, vocational and lower secondary school pupils. University students, employees, and secondary, vocational and primary school pupils, gave slightly higher ratings than lower secondary school pupils to the limiting effect of adults' lack of understanding of young people's needs and young people's inadequate knowledge and skills to participate more in decision-making at school, in organisations and local and central governments. The negative impact of poor communication between youth and local politicians and officials on youth civic engagement was rated slightly greater by employees and secondary school pupils compared to primary, lower secondary and vocational school pupils. The limiting effect of the lack of information on how to engage in decision-making at school and in organisations or local and central authorities was seen as most serious by employees and university students, and as slightly less important by secondary, vocational, lower secondary and primary school pupils. Lack of parental consent for engaging in public affairs was seen as a greater impediment by primary school pupils, employees, secondary school pupils and university students than by vocational school and lower secondary school

pupils. In the areas (as graded in above, and reflected in the Watson) young youth civic participation should take into account the diversity of opinion linked to the specific conditions of the functioning of the groups concerned in the public domain. Respondents of different status made similar assessments in relation to the following barriers: young people's lack of motivation and interest in participation in decision-making at school, in organisations and local and central authorities; politicians' disinclination to speak with young people and the lack of adequate knowledge and skills among officials, school staff and NGO representatives to stimulate young people's participation in decision-making. Since the status of respondents did not have a key differentiating effect on their views on these issues, one can conclude that the corresponding barriers may be considered to be more widespread and should focus the attention of the relevant groups in a similar scope and to a similar degree.

Figure 14. Barriers to young people's involvement in public affairs vs respondents' status (the error bars in the graph show standard errors)



Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network project between September 2018 and November 2019

A two-way analysis of variance showed a significant interaction effect,  $F(40, 7818) = 4.67$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $\eta = 0.02$  between the opinions on the impact of the individual barriers and respondents' place of residence. The interaction feature explains 2% of the variance of the

Protected by PDF Anti-Copy Free

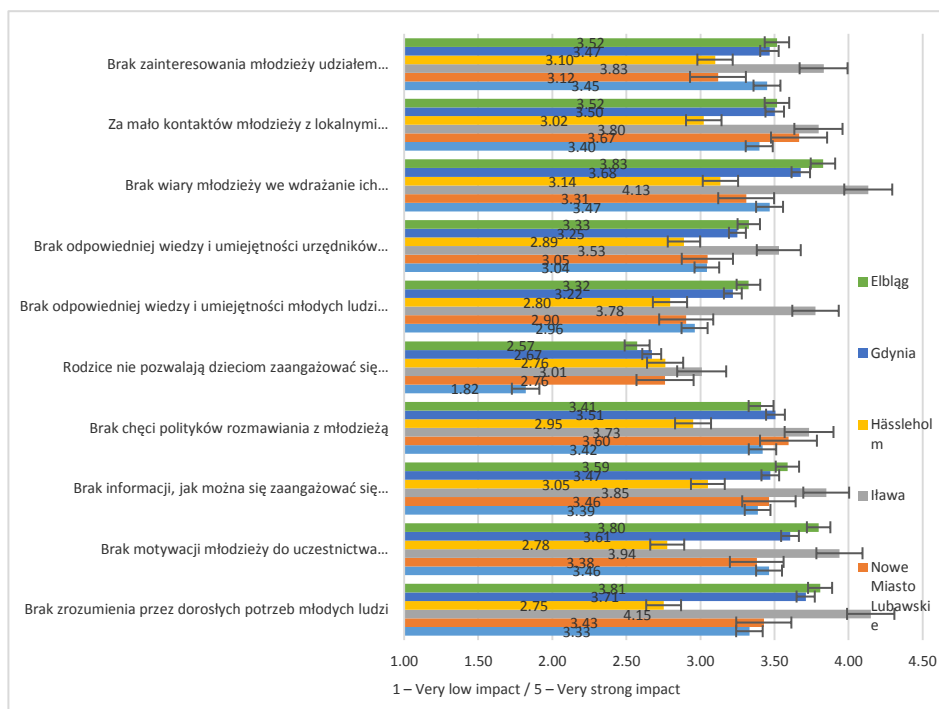
4<sup>th</sup> Regular Call, South Baltic, Programme 2014–2020

SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUPS NETWORK

STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17

dependent variable (Upgrade to Pro Version to Remove the Watermark) Doubts as to the implementation of young people’s ideas prompted the respondents from Iława, Elbląg and Gdynia to declare a greater reluctance to participate in public affairs compared to the young people from Telšiai, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and Hässleholm. Participants from these municipalities were similarly affected by the lack of adequate knowledge and skills among officials, representatives of schools and non-governmental organisations in increasing youth participation in decision-making (the highest ratings were given in Iława, Elbląg and Gdynia, and slightly lower in Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, Telšiai and Hässleholm).

Figure 15. Barriers to young people's involvement in public affairs vs respondents' place of residence (the error bars in the graph show standard errors)



Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network project between September 2018 and November 2019

The lack of understanding by adults of the needs of young people and the lack of information on how to get involved in the decision-making at school or organisations or local and central authorities were stronger limiting factors for young people from Iława, Elbląg, Gdynia, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and Telšiai than for youth from Hässleholm. Insufficient motivation for young people to participate in decision-making in schools, organisations and local and central authorities was also considered a stronger constraint on engagement by the participants from Iława, Elbląg, Gdynia, Telšiai and Nowe Miasto

Lubawskie than in Häsleholm. The opinions were similarly distributed regarding the negative impact of inadequate communication between young people and local politicians and officials (the highest ratings were given by the residents of Iława, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, Elbląg, Gdynia and Telšiai and the lowest by the participants from Häsleholm) and politicians' reluctance to engage in dialogue with young people (its negative impact was rated the highest by young people from Iława, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, Gdynia, Telšiai and Elbląg, and the lowest by the respondents from Häsleholm). Young people's disinterest in participating in decision-making in schools or organisations or local and central authorities proved to be a more serious problem in Iława, Elbląg, Gdynia and Telšiai than in Nowe Miasto Lubawskie or Häsleholm. Meanwhile, the lack of adequate knowledge and skills among young people to engage more in decision-making was seen as the most important limiting factor by young people in Iława, slightly less important by the participants from Elbląg and Gdynia, and the least important by the respondents from Telšiai, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and Häsleholm. Bans on involvement in public affairs imposed by parents had the strongest inhibiting effect on young people from Iława, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, Häsleholm, Gdynia and Elbląg, and at least on the youth from Telšiai.

In conclusion, the identified key barriers to civic participation in the seven municipalities are partly due to young people and partly to their environment. This means that the obstacles can be reduced or eliminated effectively only by joint effort of young people and decision makers representing their environment.

From the point of view of young people, the greatest obstacles to their civic engagement are young people's doubts that their ideas can be put into practice and the lack of understanding by adults of the needs of young people. Both these barriers are complex and require further examination. However, one can already assume at this point that adult decision makers should play an important role in overcoming young people's apprehension. Having identified and understood the needs of young people, they could more effectively encourage youth to engage in public affairs and decision-making processes.

A majority of respondents identified the following factors as major constraints to youth participation in decision-making: lack of youth motivation to participate in decision-making at school or organisations or local and central authorities; lack of information on how to engage in decision-making at school, in organisations and local and central

governments and officials reluctant to engage in a dialogue with young people. The problem of young people's poor motivation to participate in decision-making was the strongest in Polish municipalities and the least in Swedish municipality. The lack of information on how young people could become involved in decision-making was more problematic for young people from Gdynia, Iława and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie than those from the other municipalities. The lack of political will to engage in a dialogue with young people was a strong limiting factor for the civic participation of young people in Gdynia, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and Hässleholm. The young people from Elbląg, Gdynia, Hässleholm and Iława were the most likely to admit that the reason for not engaging in public affairs was the lack of interest in decision-making. One of the important barriers was the lack of adequate knowledge and skills to participate more in decision-making – among young people (mainly in Gdynia and Iława), and among officials and representatives of schools and NGOs (especially in Iława). The views of young people on the impact of the various barriers to their active citizenship varied depending on gender, age, status of respondents and their place of residence. They should therefore be taken into account in subsequent studies and practical efforts. Moreover, it might be worth taking into account the interplay between the barriers examined, as this determines the search for systemic solutions with strong and widely available civic education, and numerous and easily accessible forms of civic participation.

### **Effective actions to increase civic participation as seen by young people**

In connection with the clearly observing need to increase the civic involvement of young people and their civic participation in many societies, more and more diverse and innovative forms of involving them in public affairs are being implemented<sup>14</sup>. In addition to experience, a valuable source of information on the effectiveness of actions to strengthen civic participation are a dialogue with young people and primary quantitative and qualitative research.

The youth civic engagement situation in each of the municipalities surveyed was somewhat different in terms of scope, form and barriers to civic participation. The

<sup>14</sup> B. Steele, Youth civic engagement resource toolkit practical help for getting young people involved, Institute for Emerging Issues 2015, <https://iei.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/CERT-Youth-electronic-bls110415v2.pdf>, (18.08.2019).

differences in the perception of the impact of various factors by young people depending on the sex, age, status and place of residence of respondents should be taken into account when choosing effective ways of stimulating youth civic engagement. On the basis of the views of young people who, in the framework of the diagnostic survey carried out as part of the SB YCGN project, indicated the strength of impact of selected actions aiming to encourage greater involvement in public decision-making processes, the key determinants and the needs of young people related to their civic participation were identified.

None of the factors investigated was assessed as having a very weak or weak stimulating effect in respect of respondents' commitment to shaping their local environment.

In ten out of seventeen categories surveyed, the prevailing responses indicated strong or very strong impact on respondents' decisions concerning their civic engagement. The most important factor, in the opinion of the majority of respondents in the sample (30.6% of responses), is the implementation of young people's proposals (e.g. by local authorities, schools or NGOs). This constitutes proof that their voice is heard and taken into account in the decision-making process. In particular, young people from Gdynia, Elbląg and Iława were of this opinion. For the majority of those surveyed in Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and Dzierzgoń, this is a motivator with a strong influence on their involvement in public affairs, whereas for the majority of young people in Telšiai and Hässleholm this issue is of medium importance.

Among the actions that could effectively help increase youth civic participation, the majority of the respondents in the sample indicated eight. It is also worth noting that the individual issues were not equally assessed in terms of impact strength by respondents from different municipalities. These include:

- the opportunity for young people to present their views to local authorities (32.4% of the responses in the sample) – this opinion was expressed most frequently in Gdynia, Elbląg, Telšiai and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie; in Hässleholm, the same number of respondents rated it as having strong and medium impact, in Dzierzgoń a majority considered it of medium importance, while in Iława, the respondents tended to believe that such an opportunity would have a very significant impact on increasing the respondents' engagement in shaping their local environment;

- (Upgrade to Pro Version to Remove the Watermark)
- exchange of information between young people on their actions (51.3% of responses in the sample) – this opinion prevailed in Gdynia, Telšiai, Elbląg, Iława and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie; in Dzierzgoń the respondents shared their views equally between strong and medium impact of the factor, while in Hässleholm, most young people rated its importance as medium;
  - the possibility for young people to present their views to school authorities and NGOs (30% of responses in the sample) – the majority of respondents from Gdynia, Elbląg, Telšiai, Hässleholm and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie shared this opinion; in Dzierzgoń a majority of respondents considered that the factor had a medium impact and in Iława a majority believed it to be very important;
  - meetings with people who actively work for the local environment (29% of responses in the sample) – this course of action was preferred by the majority of young people from Gdynia, Telšiai and Elbląg; in Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and Dzierzgoń its impact was considered large and medium, respectively, and in Hässleholm mainly as medium;
  - establishment of more local youth organisations (28.9% of responses in the sample), selected by the majority of young people from Gdynia, Telšiai and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie; in Elbląg the same number of responses indicated strong and medium impact in Hässleholm and Dzierzgoń a majority considered it to be of medium importance and in Iława of great importance;
  - the possibility for young people to participate in meetings of local authorities (27.8% of responses in the sample) – this is a highly motivating factor for the majority of young people in Gdynia, Elbląg and Dzierzgoń, in Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and Hässleholm it has a moderate impact, and in Iława a very strong impact;
  - development of social projects for youth civic engagement (27.8% of responses in the sample) – the majority of young people from Gdynia and Hässleholm found it to have a strong impact on their activity, in Dzierzgoń the opinions were divided equally between strong and average impact, in Elbląg, Telšiai and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie the participants indicated an average importance of this factor and in Iława it was seen as very important;
  - meetings with people who tell youth how to get involved (27.2% of responses in the sample) – a strong need for this solution was expressed by the majority of the young people from Telšiai and Hässleholm; in Dzierzgoń and Iława, young people were very

interested in upgrading, but the respondents in the Wałbrzych and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie expressed only moderate interest in them.

As regards the importance of municipal Youth Councils, which may influence local authorities' decisions, respondents' opinions were too divergent to indicate a prevailing response. The same number of respondents (28% of responses) considered that factor to have a strong and average impact on the increase in youth involvement in shaping the local environment.

The remaining issues examined were assessed by the majority as having an average impact on increasing young people's civic participation. These included the following activities:

- improving the knowledge or skills of representatives of local authorities, schools, NGOs with respect to increasing the civic participation of young people (31.5% of responses in the sample) – only the young people in Iława indicated a very strong impact of this factor;
- establishment of an international youth organization (30.6% of the response in the sample) – only in Iława this action was seen by a majority as having a very strong impact;
- building a new model of relations between young people and public institutions or NGOs (30.6% of responses in the sample) – in Dzierzgoń and Iława, most of the people surveyed rated its impact as very strong and in Gdynia as strong;
- raising public awareness of the importance of youth participation in public life (29.2% of responses in the sample) – in Dzierzgoń and Iława prevailed the opinion of a very strong impact, and in Telšiai of a strong impact of this solution;
- information in the media showing examples of civic youth participation (29.9% of responses in the sample) – only the majority of respondents in Iława indicated a very strong impact of this action;
- development of cooperation between youth organizations at local level (29.1% of responses in the sample) – only in Iława it was seen as having a very strong impact, in Dzierzgoń the opinions were balanced between a very strong and medium impact, whereas a large proportion of respondents in Gdynia, Telšiai, Elbląg and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie considered such cooperation to be very important.

SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUP NETWORK STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17

Table 11 Actions to increase youth civic participation in Lithuania, Poland and Sweden (frequency, % of responses in the sample)

No.	Statement	Scale	Lithuania	Poland					Sweden	Σ (%)
			Telšiai	Elbląg	Gdynia	Ilawa	Nowe Miasto Lubawskie	Hässelholm		
1.	Meetings with people who tell youth how to engage	Very low impact	9 (0.9)	0 (0.0)	24 (2.4)	37 (3.7)	2 (0.2)	1 (0.1)	26 (2.6)	99 (9.9)
		Low impact	22 (2.2)	2 (0.2)	31 (3.1)	46 (4.6)	3 (0.3)	10 (1.0)	17 (1.7)	131 (13.1)
		Medium impact	55 (5.5)	3 (0.3)	56 (5.7)	107 (10.8)	13 (1.3)	16 (1.6)	20 (2.0)	270 (27.0)
		Strong impact	61 (6.2)	3 (0.3)	51 (5.1)	104 (10.5)	13 (1.3)	11 (1.1)	29 (2.9)	272 (27.2)
		Very strong impact	34 (3.4)	4 (0.4)	55 (5.5)	88 (8.9)	25 (2.5)	4 (0.4)	13 (1.3)	223 (22.3)
2.	Meetings with people who actively work for the local environment	Very low impact	8 (0.8)	0 (0.0)	16 (1.6)	26 (2.6)	2 (0.2)	1 (0.1)	21 (2.1)	74 (7.4)
		Low impact	22 (2.2)	1 (0.1)	36 (3.6)	57 (5.8)	5 (0.5)	8 (0.8)	23 (2.3)	152 (15.2)
		Medium impact	53 (5.3)	4 (0.4)	56 (5.7)	98 (9.9)	11 (1.1)	13 (1.3)	28 (2.8)	263 (26.3)
		Strong impact	59 (6.0)	4 (0.4)	57 (5.8)	124 (12.5)	11 (1.1)	13 (1.3)	22 (2.2)	290 (29.0)
		Very strong impact	39 (3.9)	3 (0.3)	51 (5.1)	77 (7.8)	27 (2.7)	7 (0.7)	10 (1.0)	214 (21.4)
3.	Possibility for young people to participate in meetings of local authorities	Very low impact	11 (1.1)	0 (0.0)	20 (2.0)	29 (2.9)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.1)	20 (2.0)	81 (8.1)
		Low impact	26 (2.6)	2 (0.2)	38 (3.8)	58 (5.9)	3 (0.3)	8 (0.8)	23 (2.3)	158 (15.8)
		Medium impact	60 (6.1)	3 (0.3)	48 (4.9)	107 (10.8)	11 (1.1)	18 (1.8)	28 (2.8)	275 (27.5)
		Strong impact	43 (4.3)	4 (0.4)	64 (6.5)	117 (11.8)	14 (1.4)	11 (1.1)	25 (2.5)	278 (27.8)
		Very strong impact	41 (4.1)	3 (0.3)	46 (4.6)	70 (7.1)	28 (2.8)	4 (0.4)	9 (0.9)	201 (20.1)
4.	Opportunity for young people to present their views to local authorities	Very low impact	8 (0.8)	0 (0.0)	15 (1.5)	22 (2.2)	2 (0.2)	2 (0.2)	18 (1.8)	67 (6.7)
		Low impact	26 (2.6)	1 (0.1)	21 (2.1)	39 (3.9)	2 (0.2)	2 (0.2)	20 (2.0)	111 (11.1)
		Medium impact	42 (4.2)	5 (0.5)	51 (5.2)	81 (8.1)	11 (1.1)	7 (0.7)	28 (2.8)	225 (22.5)
		Strong impact	66 (6.7)	2 (0.2)	73 (7.4)	120 (12.1)	14 (1.4)	21 (2.1)	28 (2.8)	324 (32.4)
		Very strong impact	39 (4.0)	4 (0.4)	56 (5.7)	118 (11.9)	27 (2.7)	10 (1.0)	11 (1.1)	265 (26.5)
5.	Municipal Youth Councils, which may influence local authorities' decisions	Very low impact	13 (1.3)	1 (0.1)	21 (2.1)	30 (3.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.1)	17 (1.7)	83 (8.3)
		Low impact	27 (2.7)	1 (0.1)	24 (2.4)	52 (5.3)	4 (0.4)	3 (0.3)	25 (2.5)	136 (13.6)
		Medium impact	59 (6.0)	7 (0.7)	56 (5.7)	106 (10.7)	11 (1.1)	14 (1.4)	27 (2.7)	280 (28.0)
		Strong impact	48 (4.8)	1 (0.1)	56 (5.7)	117 (11.8)	14 (1.4)	19 (1.9)	25 (2.5)	280 (28.0)
		Very strong impact	34 (3.4)	2 (0.2)	59 (6.0)	77 (7.8)	26 (2.6)	5 (0.5)	10 (1.0)	213 (21.3)
6.	Opportunity for young people to present their views to school authorities and non-governmental organisations	Very low impact	11 (1.1)	0 (0.0)	18 (1.8)	23 (2.3)	1 (0.1)	1 (0.1)	19 (1.9)	73 (7.3)
		Low impact	26 (2.6)	2 (0.2)	21 (2.1)	41 (4.1)	3 (0.3)	1 (0.1)	23 (2.3)	117 (11.7)
		Medium impact	49 (4.9)	4 (0.4)	57 (5.8)	99 (10.0)	12 (1.2)	15 (1.5)	21 (2.1)	257 (25.7)
		Strong impact	58 (5.9)	3 (0.3)	66 (6.7)	115 (11.6)	11 (1.1)	19 (1.9)	28 (2.8)	300 (30.0)
		Very strong impact	36 (3.6)	3 (0.3)	55 (5.6)	104 (10.5)	27 (2.7)	6 (0.6)	12 (1.2)	243 (24.3)
7.	Implementation of young people's proposals (e.g. by local authorities, schools or NGOs)	Very low impact	11 (1.1)	1 (0.1)	13 (1.3)	25 (2.5)	1 (0.1)	0 (0.0)	20 (2.0)	71 (7.1)
		Low impact	22 (2.2)	4 (0.4)	12 (1.2)	30 (3.0)	4 (0.4)	1 (0.1)	21 (2.1)	90 (9.0)
		Medium impact	64 (6.5)	0 (0.0)	54 (5.4)	87 (8.8)	12 (1.2)	12 (1.2)	26 (2.6)	259 (25.9)
		Strong impact	46 (4.7)	5 (0.5)	55 (5.6)	107 (10.8)	10 (1.0)	22 (2.2)	22 (2.2)	267 (26.7)
		Very strong impact	38 (3.8)	2 (0.2)	83 (8.4)	132 (13.3)	28 (2.8)	7 (0.7)	16 (1.6)	306 (30.6)
8.	Development of social projects for youth civic engagement	Very low impact	11 (1.1)	1 (0.1)	26 (2.6)	24 (2.4)	2 (0.2)	0 (0.0)	22 (2.2)	86 (8.6)
		Low impact	23 (2.3)	1 (0.1)	25 (2.5)	49 (5.0)	2 (0.2)	4 (0.4)	18 (1.8)	122 (12.2)
		Medium impact	56 (5.7)	4 (0.4)	63 (6.4)	98 (9.9)	12 (1.2)	20 (2.0)	24 (2.4)	277 (27.7)
		Strong impact	52 (5.3)	4 (0.4)	50 (5.0)	116 (11.7)	11 (1.1)	14 (1.4)	31 (3.1)	278 (27.8)
		Very strong impact	39 (3.9)	2 (0.2)	53 (5.3)	95 (9.6)	27 (2.7)	4 (0.4)	10 (1.0)	230 (23.0)
9.	Establishment of more local youth organisations	Very low impact	9 (0.9)	0 (0.0)	24 (2.4)	40 (4.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	18 (1.8)	91 (9.1)
		Low impact	19 (1.9)	3 (0.3)	32 (3.2)	57 (5.8)	5 (0.5)	4 (0.4)	17 (1.7)	137 (13.7)

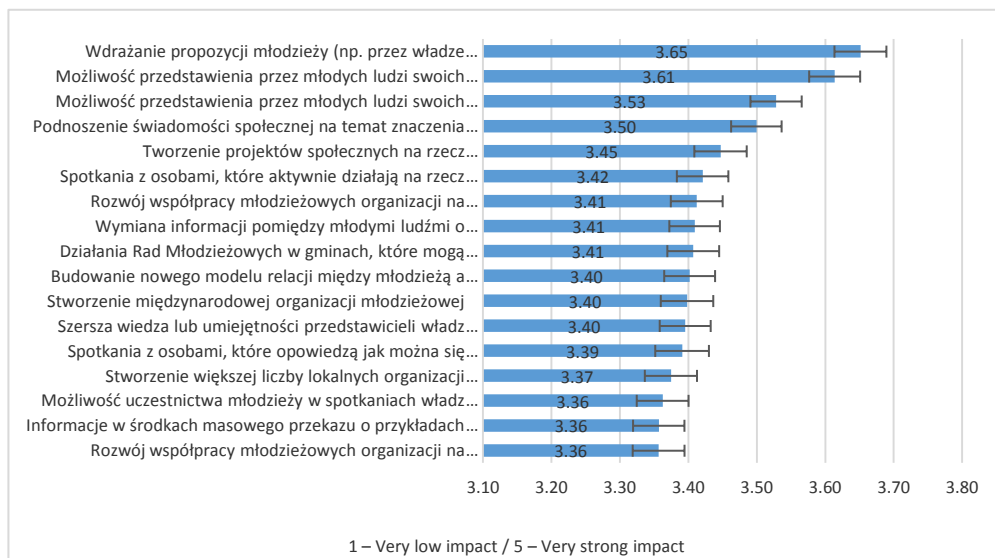
**SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUPS NETWORK**      **STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17**

		Medium impact	50 (5.0)	57 (5.8)	106 (10.7)	11 (1.1)	13 (1.3)	34 (3.4)	275 (27.5)	
		Strong impact	61 (6.2)	57 (5.8)	107 (10.8)	16 (1.6)	20 (2.0)	25 (2.5)	289 (28.9)	
		Very strong impact	42 (4.2)	47 (4.7)	71 (7.2)	23 (2.3)	5 (0.5)	11 (1.1)	201 (20.1)	
10.	Establishment of an international youth organisation	Very low impact	6 (0.6)	24 (2.4)	37 (3.8)	1 (0.1)	0 (0.0)	18 (1.8)	86 (8.6)	
		Low impact	25 (2.5)	24 (2.4)	52 (5.3)	6 (0.6)	6 (0.6)	16 (1.6)	130 (13.0)	
		Medium impact	57 (5.8)	5 (0.5)	66 (6.7)	106 (10.7)	11 (1.1)	21 (2.1)	40 (4.1)	306 (30.6)
		Strong impact	50 (5.1)	2 (0.2)	47 (4.8)	95 (9.6)	12 (1.2)	9 (0.9)	20 (2.0)	235 (23.5)
		Very strong impact	42 (4.2)	3 (0.3)	55 (5.6)	90 (9.1)	25 (2.5)	5 (0.5)	10 (1.0)	230 (23.0)
11.	Building a new model of relations between young people and public institutions/NGOs	Very low impact	6 (0.6)	20 (2.0)	34 (3.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	13 (1.3)	75 (7.5)	
		Low impact	27 (2.7)	1 (0.1)	23 (2.3)	54 (5.5)	3 (0.3)	7 (0.7)	25 (2.5)	140 (14.0)
		Medium impact	69 (7.0)	3 (0.3)	66 (6.7)	100 (10.1)	13 (1.3)	20 (2.0)	33 (3.3)	306 (30.6)
		Strong impact	51 (5.2)	3 (0.3)	54 (5.5)	104 (10.5)	17 (1.7)	9 (0.9)	20 (2.0)	258 (25.8)
		Very strong impact	28 (2.8)	5 (0.5)	52 (5.3)	89 (9.0)	22 (2.2)	6 (0.6)	13 (1.3)	213 (21.3)
12.	Raising public awareness of the importance of youth participation in public life	Very low impact	4 (0.4)	15 (1.5)	29 (2.9)	2 (0.2)	1 (0.1)	12 (1.2)	64 (6.4)	
		Low impact	31 (3.1)	1 (0.1)	18 (1.8)	48 (4.8)	4 (0.4)	4 (0.4)	20 (2.0)	126 (12.6)
		Medium impact	55 (5.6)	3 (0.3)	67 (6.8)	106 (10.7)	9 (0.9)	21 (2.1)	31 (3.1)	292 (29.2)
		Strong impact	56 (5.7)	2 (0.2)	60 (6.1)	101 (10.2)	13 (1.3)	12 (1.2)	28 (2.8)	272 (27.2)
		Very strong impact	35 (3.5)	5 (0.5)	57 (5.8)	97 (9.8)	27 (2.7)	4 (0.4)	14 (1.4)	239 (23.9)
13.	Exchange of information between young people about their activities (self-promotion of young people)	Very low impact	8 (0.8)	23 (2.3)	36 (3.6)	2 (0.2)	1 (0.1)	13 (1.3)	83 (8.3)	
		Low impact	22 (2.2)	1 (0.1)	27 (2.7)	46 (4.6)	2 (0.2)	7 (0.7)	18 (1.8)	123 (12.3)
		Medium impact	57 (5.8)	4 (0.4)	54 (5.5)	108 (10.9)	10 (1.0)	14 (1.4)	35 (3.5)	282 (28.2)
		Strong impact	64 (6.5)	4 (0.4)	61 (6.2)	123 (12.4)	21 (2.1)	15 (1.5)	25 (2.5)	313 (31.3)
		Very strong impact	30 (3.0)	3 (0.3)	52 (5.3)	68 (6.9)	20 (2.0)	5 (0.5)	13 (1.3)	191 (19.1)
14.	Information in the media showing examples of civic participation of young people	Very low impact	11 (1.1)	23 (2.3)	30 (3.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.1)	14 (1.4)	79 (7.9)	
		Low impact	27 (2.7)	2 (0.2)	34 (3.4)	59 (6.0)	5 (0.5)	6 (0.6)	19 (1.9)	152 (15.2)
		Medium impact	58 (5.9)	4 (0.4)	56 (5.7)	112 (11.3)	14 (1.4)	18 (1.8)	37 (3.7)	299 (29.9)
		Strong impact	54 (5.5)	3 (0.3)	53 (5.4)	107 (10.8)	12 (1.2)	11 (1.1)	20 (2.0)	260 (26.0)
		Very strong impact	31 (3.1)	3 (0.3)	50 (5.0)	73 (7.4)	24 (2.4)	6 (0.6)	15 (1.5)	202 (20.2)
15.	Development of cooperation between youth organisations at local level	Very low impact	7 (0.7)	22 (2.2)	41 (4.2)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.1)	20 (2.0)	92 (9.2)	
		Low impact	25 (2.5)	0 (0.0)	27 (2.7)	38 (3.9)	6 (0.6)	1 (0.1)	15 (1.5)	112 (11.2)
		Medium impact	57 (5.8)	4 (0.4)	54 (5.5)	110 (11.2)	9 (0.9)	14 (1.4)	39 (4.0)	291 (29.1)
		Strong impact	63 (6.4)	2 (0.2)	58 (5.9)	112 (11.4)	13 (1.3)	21 (2.1)	16 (1.6)	281 (28.1)
		Very strong impact	29 (2.9)	4 (0.4)	55 (5.6)	79 (8.0)	17 (1.7)	5 (0.5)	12 (1.2)	211 (21.1)
16.	Development of cooperation between youth organisations at international level	Very low impact	9 (0.9)	20 (2.0)	42 (4.3)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.1)	18 (1.8)	90 (9.0)	
		Low impact	23 (2.3)	2 (0.2)	31 (3.1)	47 (4.8)	6 (0.6)	4 (0.4)	12 (1.2)	125 (12.5)
		Medium impact	70 (7.1)	5 (0.5)	67 (6.8)	116 (11.8)	10 (1.0)	19 (1.9)	37 (3.8)	324 (32.4)
		Strong impact	45 (4.6)	1 (0.1)	53 (5.4)	86 (8.7)	15 (1.5)	12 (1.2)	27 (2.7)	239 (23.9)
		Very strong impact	32 (3.3)	4 (0.4)	46 (4.7)	87 (8.8)	24 (2.4)	6 (0.6)	10 (1.0)	209 (20.9)
17.	Improved knowledge or skills of representatives of local authorities, schools, NGOs with respect to increasing the civic participation of young people	Very low impact	7 (0.7)	22 (2.3)	32 (3.3)	2 (0.2)	2 (0.2)	18 (1.8)	84 (8.4)	
		Low impact	28 (2.9)	0 (0.0)	28 (2.9)	41 (4.2)	1 (0.1)	6 (0.6)	13 (1.3)	117 (11.7)
		Medium impact	63 (6.4)	8 (0.8)	61 (6.2)	116 (11.8)	11 (1.1)	16 (1.6)	40 (4.1)	315 (31.5)
		Strong impact	49 (5.0)	1 (0.1)	54 (5.5)	101 (10.3)	18 (1.8)	12 (1.2)	22 (2.2)	257 (25.7)
		Very strong impact	34 (3.5)	2 (0.2)	49 (5.0)	83 (8.5)	23 (2.4)	6 (0.6)	11 (1.1)	208 (20.8)

Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network project between September 2018 and November 2019

The results of a one-way analysis of variance serve to confirm the above conclusions. The analysis demonstrated that, according to those surveyed, the action having the greatest impact on the respondents' engagement in shaping the local environment would be the implementation of youth proposals, for example by local authorities, schools or organisations, whereas the development of cooperation between youth organisations at international level would have the least impact. One-way analysis of variance demonstrated significant differences between the answers  $F(13, 12960)=12.94$ ;  $p<0.001$ ,  $\eta=0.01$ . The differences between the answers to the individual test questions were 1% in total. The results are shown in Figure 16.

**Figure 16. Assessment of the impact of measures likely to encourage increased civic participation of young people in Lithuania, Poland and Sweden (the error bars in the graph show standard errors)**



Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network project between September 2018 and November 2019

A two-way analysis of variance revealed that the respondents' opinions on what would increase their involvement in local environment decisions varied depending on their gender, status and place of residence<sup>15</sup>.

Results of the analysis show that the ratings given by female respondents were significantly higher than those of male respondents in the assessment of the impact of the

<sup>15</sup> A two-way analysis of variance demonstrated that the age of young people does not differentiate their assessment of the impact of the various factors on increasing their involvement in shaping the local environment – there was no significant interaction effect between the two factors,  $F(13,12944) = 1.33$ ; ns.

Protected by PDF Anti-Copy Free

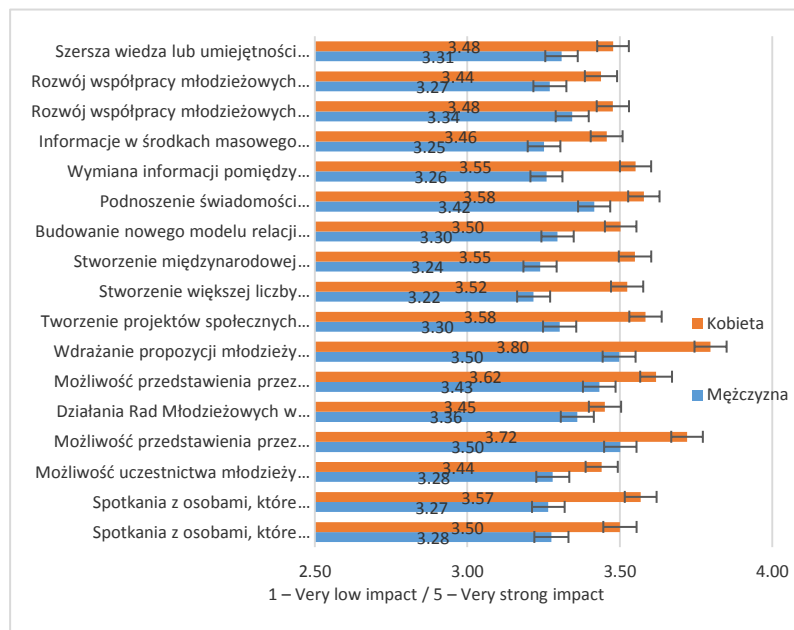
4<sup>th</sup> Regular Call, South Baltic, Programme 2014–2020

SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUPS NETWORK

STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17

various factors on (Upgrading the Pro-Version on Restoring the Watermark) environment for all the factors examined, with the exception of Youth Councils' activities within municipalities. The significant interaction effect between two factors was  $F(13, 12939) = 2.03$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ;  $\eta = 0.002$ . The interaction feature explains 0.2% of the variance of the dependent variable. The analysis results are shown in Figure 17.

**Figure 17. Assessment of the impact of measures likely to encourage increased civic participation of young people in Lithuania, Poland and Sweden vs respondents' gender (the error bars in the graph show standard errors)**



Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network project between September 2018 and November 2019.

Another factor that differentiated the respondents' opinions was their status. The results of two-way analysis of variance demonstrated a significant interaction effect,  $F(65, 12686) = 2.32$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $\eta = 0.01$ . The interaction feature explains 1% of the variance of the dependent variable. In general, the highest ratings of the potential impact of the nine factors on increasing young people's involvement in shaping the closest environment were given by university students. The implementation of youth proposals, for example by local authorities, schools or NGOs, identified by the majority of those surveyed as the most relevant factor for increasing their involvement, was the highest rated by university students, primary and secondary school pupils, employees and lower secondary school pupils, and the lowest rated by vocational school pupils. The opportunity for young people to present their opinions to local authorities, as a factor with a strong impact on young

people, also received the highest ratings from university students, slightly lower ones from primary, lower secondary and secondary school pupils, and the lowest from employed respondents and vocational school pupils. Another factor strongly stimulating youth engagement that was awarded best rating by university students was the exchange of information between young people about their activities. Slightly less favourable opinions came from lower secondary, secondary, primary and vocational school pupils and working participants. The opportunity for young people to present their opinions to school authorities and non-governmental organisations received the highest grades from university students and pupils of lower secondary, primary and secondary schools, and the lowest grades from vocational school pupils and employees. The most favourable assessments as to the development of social projects for youth civic engagement were made by university students; slightly less positive by lower secondary, secondary and primary school pupils, and the least favourable by vocational school pupils and working respondents. Meetings with people who actively work for the local environment, also highest rated by university students, and slightly lower by pupils of lower secondary, vocational, primary and secondary schools and working respondents, were also important from the point of view of young people's needs. The activities of the Youth Councils in municipalities, although not included in the group of key factors stimulating youth engagement, were highest appreciated by university students, and slightly less by primary, secondary, lower secondary and vocational school pupils and working participants. Another solution, i.e. development of cooperation between youth organisations at local level, considered to have an average impact on youth behaviour, was the highest rated by university students, lower secondary, secondary, vocational and primary school pupils, and slightly less favourably assessed by employed respondents. Meanwhile, raising public awareness of the importance of youth participation in public life, also of average impact, received the highest ratings from students of universities and working participants, and the lowest ratings from pupils of secondary, lower secondary, vocational and primary schools. Broadly understood competences of both representatives of institutions and youth are a key element of civic education. Various types of schools, in particular universities, although they appreciate the importance of this aspect of their role, in practice it is not always easy for them to unleash the potential of civic involvement of young people, which is increasingly recognized as an important feature of healthy democratic communities and cultures. The impact of



Protected by PDF Anti-Copy Free

4<sup>th</sup> Regular Call, South Baltic, Programme 2014–2020

SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUPS NETWORK

STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17

educational practices and student learning on to be one of the best ways to shape youth civic participation in the long perspective<sup>16</sup>.

As to other activities that could increase the involvement of young people in shaping the immediate environment, analysis revealed that people of different statuses made similar assessments. This was the case in for the following solutions: improved knowledge or skills of representatives of local authorities, schools or NGOs with respect to increasing youth civic participation; development of cooperation between youth organisations at international level; information in the media presenting examples of youth civil participation; development of a new model of relations between young people, public institutions and NGOs; establishment of an international youth organisation; establishment of more local youth organisations; opportunity for young people to participate in local authorities' meetings; meetings with people who tell young people how they can become involved. The results are shown in Figure 18.

<sup>16</sup> See: Handbook of research on civic engagement in youth, L. R. Sherrod, J. Torney-Purta and C. A. Flanagan (Eds), 2010 Hoboken, NJ, John Wiley & Sons, pp. 706; D. Watson, R. Hollister, S. E. Stroud, E. Babcock, The engaged university: international perspectives on civic engagement, Routledge, New York 2011, pp. 282; N. Mirra, A. Garcia, Civic Participation Reimagined: Youth Interrogation and Innovation in the Multimodal Public Sphere, *Review of Research in Education* 2017, Vol. 41, pp. 136–158.

Protected by PDF Anti-Copy Free

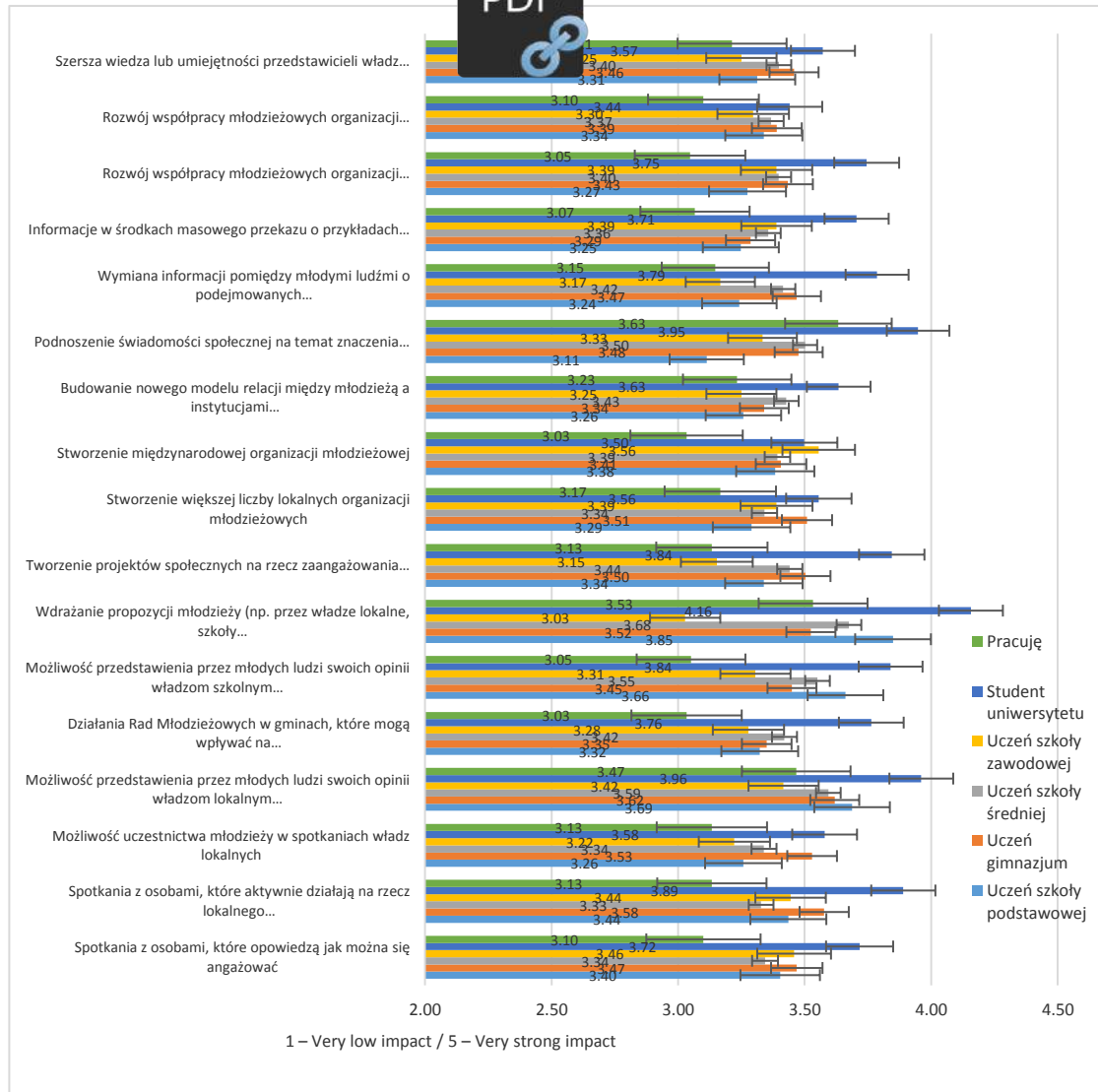
1<sup>st</sup> Regular Call, South Baltic, Programme 2014–2020

SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUPS NETWORK

STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17

(Upgrade to Pro Version to Remove the Watermark)

Figure 18. Assessment of the impact of measures likely to encourage increased civic participation of young people in Lithuania, Poland and Sweden – respondents' status (the error bars in the graph show standard errors)



Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network project between September 2018 and November 2019.

Another factor differentiating the responses of young participants was their place of residence. Apparently, the strongest impact of most of the categories of responses was indicated by the respondents from Iława and the medium impact by those from Hässleholm. A more detailed picture of the variation in response was revealed by two-way analysis of variance, with a significant interaction effect of  $F(65, 12755) = 2.22$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $\eta = 0.01$ . The interaction feature explains 1% of the variance of the dependent variable. Implementation of young people's proposals by local authorities, schools or NGOs is a solution assessed

most positively with respect to its positive impact on youth civic engagement stimulation by the residents of Iława, Elbląg, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and Gdynia, slightly less favourably by the respondents from Telšiai and the least positively by the residents of Hässleholm. The possibility for young people to present their views to local authorities was more important for the residents of Iława, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, Gdynia, Elbląg and Telšiai, and relatively less important for the residents of Hässleholm. The highest assessments of the expected impact of information exchange between young people about their efforts to increase the involvement of young people in matters affecting their environment were made by the residents of Iława, slightly lower by the inhabitants of Telšiai, Elbląg, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and Gdynia, and the lowest by the respondents from Hässleholm. The opportunity for young people to present their views to school authorities and NGOs was seen as the most effective by the young people from Iława, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, Gdynia, Elbląg and Telšiai, and as the least effective by the young people from Hässleholm. Meetings with people who actively work for the local environment received the highest ratings from the young people from Iława, Telšiai, Gdynia, Elbląg and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and the lowest from the respondents from Hässleholm. The establishment of more local youth organisations would be more encouraging for young people from Iława, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and Telšiai than for those from Elbląg, Gdynia or Hässleholm in terms of engagement in shaping their local environment. The possibility for young people to participate in local government meetings as a factor stimulating youth civic engagement was best assessed by the Iława respondents, slightly less so by those from Telšiai, Gdynia, Elbląg and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, and the least favourably by respondents from Hässleholm. The idea of developing social projects for youth civic engagement was most highly rated by the respondents from Iława, slightly lower by the inhabitants of Gdynia, Telšiai, Elbląg and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, and the lowest-rated by the young people from Hässleholm. As to meetings with people who would tell young people how to engage in local affairs, the highest ratings were given by young people from Iława, Telšiai, Gdynia and Elbląg, and slightly lower by the respondents from Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and Hässleholm. The activities of municipal Youth Councils which may influence local government decisions were better evaluated as a stimulant to youth civic engagement of by the young people from Iława, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, Elbląg, Gdynia and Telšiai than by the inhabitants of Hässleholm. The importance of

improved knowledge and skills of representatives of local authorities, schools, NGOs in increasing the civic participation of young people most highly rated by young people from Iława, slightly lower by those from Gdynia, Telšiai, Elbląg and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, while the respondents from Hässleholm received the lowest ratings. An important aspect for young people was also their cooperation at international and local level. The idea of establishment of an international youth organisation was the most appreciated by the people from Iława, slightly less by those from Telšiai, Elbląg, Gdynia and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and the least by the participants from Hässleholm. Other forms of development of cooperation between youth organisations at international level received the highest ratings from the Iława respondents, slightly lower by those of Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, Telšiai, Elbląg and Gdynia, and the lowest from the young people from Hässleholm. The development of cooperation between youth organisations at local level was similarly evaluated, with the highest ratings awarded by those surveyed in Iława and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, slightly lower grades given by the inhabitants of Telšiai, Elbląg and Gdynia, and the lowest by the respondents from Hässleholm. The young participants from Iława expressed the most positive opinions about building a new model of relations between young people and public institutions and NGOs, a little less favourable were the inhabitants of Elbląg, Gdynia, Telšiai and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, whereas the young people of Hässleholm were the least enthusiastic about that idea. Further evaluations concerned two important issues: raising public awareness of the importance of youth participation in public life, where the highest ratings were awarded by the residents of Iława, and the lowest by the inhabitants of Elbląg, Gdynia, Telšiai, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and Hässleholm, and the media reports on the examples of civic participation by young people, where the highest ratings were given by the young people from Iława, slightly lower by the respondents from Telšiai, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, Gdynia and Elbląg, and the lowest by the inhabitants of Hässleholm. The results are shown in Figure 19.

Protected by PDF Anti-Copy Free

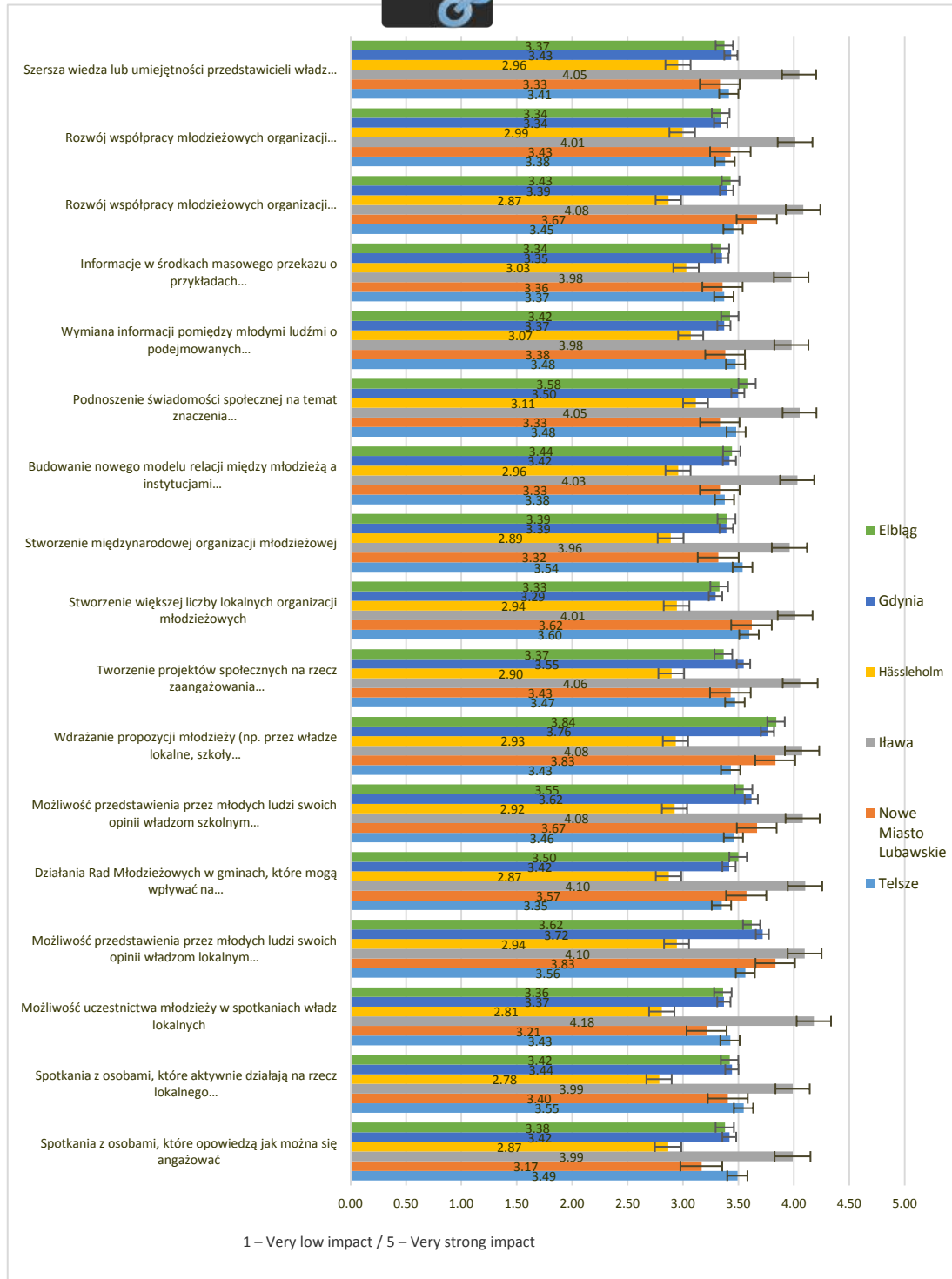
1<sup>st</sup> Regular Call, South Baltic, Programme 2014–2020

SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUPS NETWORK

STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17

(Upgrade to Pro Version to Remove the Watermark)

Figure 19. Assessment of the impact of measures likely to encourage increased civic participation of young people in Lithuania, Poland and Sweden respondents' status (the error bars in the graph show standard errors)



Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network project between September 2018 and November 2019

The competence gaps in adults and young people proved to be an important issue in terms of youth civic participation. The barriers identified by the respondents as barriers and areas needing improvement in order to increase the participation of young people in decision-making. Although in the case of young people the lack of adequate knowledge and skills to participate more in decision-making in schools, organisations and local and central authorities was identified as a barrier of medium importance by those surveyed, a majority of respondents from Gdynia and Iława considered it to be a significant obstacle to their civic activity. In addition, in the context of project objectives concerning improvement of the skills of adults working with young people, identification of young people's needs in this area was considered an important aspect that could help design more effective methods of action in the future.

Based on the opinions of the majority of respondents, it was found that the solution having the greatest stimulating effect on youth engagement in public affairs would be the enhancement of knowledge or skills with respect to ways to motivate oneself and others to act (29.2% of responses in the sample) and of social psychology competences (27.5% of responses in the sample). Both these needs were considered the most pressing by the young people from Iława and Elbląg. In Dzierzgoń, the responses concerning motivation competence were divided equally between very strong and strong impact. In Gdynia, the opinions of young people were also distributed evenly, but between very strong and medium impact. The respondents from Telšiai and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie considered this need to be important and their peers from Hässleholm assigned it medium importance. Only the young people from Elbląg declared a strong need to improve their social psychology knowledge and skills, and for the young people from other municipalities additional competences in this area were of medium importance.

The measures having a strong impact on the stimulation of youth civic participation may be the enhancement of their knowledge and skills regarding the opportunities and means of influencing decisions at school, university, in the municipal office, company or NGO (29.4% of responses in the sample) and regarding the methods of discussion and reasoning (27.9% of responses in the sample). The first idea was the most important for the majority of young people from Iława, slightly less important for the respondents from Gdynia and Hässleholm, and relatively least important for the young people from

Protected by PDF Anti-Copy Free

4<sup>th</sup> Regular Call, South Baltic, Programme 2014–2020

SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUPS NETWORK

STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17

Dzierzgoń. In contrast to the field of civic participation, it was easier to involve young people in public affairs according to the respondents from Elbląg and Iława. These competences would also be important for young people from Gdynia and Telšiai. The respondents from Nowe Miasto Lubawskie were not fully in agreement on this issue, and their responses were equally distributed between strong and medium impact. On the other hand, most of the young people from Dzierzgoń and Hässleholm were convinced that knowledge of the methods of discussion would only moderately contribute to the increase of their civic participation. As to the other areas of knowledge which could help young people increase their participation in decision-making, the majority of respondents assigned them medium importance. Table 12 shows the results concerning the improvement of competences of young people.

SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUP NETWORK **STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17**

**Table 12. Additional knowledge or skills to enhance youth engagement in civic affairs in Lithuania, Poland and Sweden (frequency, % of responses in the sample)**

No.	Statement	Scale	Poland					Sweden	Σ (%)	
			Lithuania	Dzierzgoń	Elbląg	Gdynia	Ilawa			Nowe Miasto Lubawskie
1.	Methods of decision-making at school, university, in municipal/town office, company, NGO	Very low impact	10 (1.0)	2 (0.2)	23 (2.3)	37 (3.7)	1 (0.1)	2 (0.2)	28 (2.8)	103 (10.3)
		Low impact	14 (1.4)	2 (0.2)	28 (2.8)	41 (4.1)	5 (0.5)	5 (0.5)	18 (1.8)	113 (11.3)
		Medium impact	69 (6.9)	3 (0.3)	62 (6.2)	117 (11.8)	8 (0.8)	22 (2.2)	24 (2.4)	305 (30.5)
		Strong impact	63 (6.3)	4 (0.4)	58 (5.8)	110 (11.1)	17 (1.7)	8 (0.8)	20 (2.0)	280 (28.0)
		Very strong impact	25 (2.5)	1 (0.1)	48 (4.8)	77 (7.8)	24 (2.4)	5 (0.5)	15 (1.5)	195 (19.5)
2.	Possibilities and methods of influencing decisions at school, university, in municipal/town office, company, NGO	Very low impact	8 (0.8)	2 (0.2)	15 (1.5)	28 (2.8)	1 (0.1)	1 (0.1)	19 (1.9)	74 (7.4)
		Low impact	13 (1.3)	4 (0.4)	33 (3.3)	44 (4.3)	6 (0.6)	9 (0.9)	25 (2.5)	134 (13.4)
		Medium impact	71 (7.1)	2 (0.2)	62 (6.4)	114 (11.5)	10 (1.0)	13 (1.3)	16 (1.6)	288 (28.8)
		Strong impact	58 (5.8)	3 (0.3)	58 (5.9)	121 (12.2)	14 (1.4)	12 (1.2)	28 (2.8)	294 (29.4)
		Very strong impact	31 (3.1)	1 (0.1)	51 (5.2)	74 (7.4)	24 (2.4)	7 (0.7)	17 (1.7)	205 (20.5)
3.	The art of establishing and developing contacts with representatives of various public institutions, organisations and businesses	Very low impact	6 (0.6)	2 (0.2)	21 (2.1)	28 (2.8)	2 (0.2)	0 (0.0)	20 (2.0)	79 (7.9)
		Low impact	19 (1.9)	1 (0.1)	25 (2.5)	49 (5.0)	2 (0.2)	11 (1.1)	24 (2.4)	131 (13.1)
		Medium impact	69 (7.0)	5 (0.5)	66 (6.7)	118 (11.9)	16 (1.6)	15 (1.5)	28 (2.8)	317 (31.7)
		Strong impact	57 (5.8)	3 (0.3)	56 (5.7)	116 (11.7)	14 (1.4)	10 (1.0)	20 (2.0)	276 (27.6)
		Very strong impact	29 (3.0)	1 (0.1)	50 (5.0)	69 (7.0)	21 (2.1)	5 (0.5)	13 (1.3)	188 (18.8)
4.	Methods of discussion and reasoning	Very low impact	6 (0.6)	1 (0.1)	15 (1.5)	30 (3.0)	1 (0.1)	0 (0.0)	20 (2.0)	73 (7.3)
		Low impact	13 (1.3)	1 (0.1)	24 (2.4)	41 (4.1)	3 (0.3)	6 (0.6)	22 (2.2)	110 (11.0)
		Medium impact	58 (5.8)	4 (0.4)	56 (5.6)	95 (10.0)	11 (1.1)	15 (1.5)	28 (2.8)	267 (26.7)
		Strong impact	64 (6.4)	3 (0.3)	58 (5.8)	108 (10.9)	15 (1.5)	14 (1.4)	17 (1.7)	279 (27.9)
		Very strong impact	40 (4.0)	3 (0.3)	65 (6.5)	107 (10.8)	25 (2.5)	7 (0.7)	17 (1.7)	264 (26.4)
5.	Writing official letters/applications	Very low impact	9 (0.9)	1 (0.1)	23 (2.3)	38 (3.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	23 (2.3)	94 (9.4)
		Low impact	19 (1.9)	2 (0.2)	28 (2.8)	36 (3.6)	3 (0.3)	9 (0.9)	24 (2.4)	121 (12.1)
		Medium impact	59 (6.0)	4 (0.4)	54 (5.4)	108 (10.9)	9 (0.9)	10 (1.0)	24 (2.4)	268 (26.8)
		Strong impact	58 (5.8)	3 (0.3)	59 (6.0)	91 (9.1)	23 (2.3)	16 (1.6)	17 (1.7)	267 (26.7)
		Very strong impact	36 (3.6)	2 (0.2)	55 (5.5)	109 (11.0)	20 (2.0)	7 (0.7)	17 (1.7)	246 (24.6)
6.	Methods of motivating oneself and others to act	Very low impact	4 (0.4)	1 (0.1)	20 (2.0)	30 (3.0)	1 (0.1)	0 (0.0)	17 (1.7)	73 (7.3)
		Low impact	13 (1.3)	0 (0.0)	24 (2.4)	26 (2.6)	5 (0.5)	7 (0.7)	18 (1.8)	93 (9.3)
		Medium impact	53 (5.4)	3 (0.3)	48 (4.8)	114 (11.5)	11 (1.1)	15 (1.5)	28 (2.8)	272 (27.2)
		Strong impact	58 (5.9)	4 (0.4)	54 (5.5)	96 (9.7)	12 (1.2)	15 (1.5)	23 (2.3)	262 (26.2)
		Very strong impact	53 (5.4)	4 (0.4)	71 (7.2)	114 (11.5)	26 (2.6)	5 (0.5)	19 (1.9)	292 (29.2)
7.	Event organisation skills	Very low impact	10 (1.0)	1 (0.1)	20 (2.0)	26 (2.6)	2 (0.2)	1 (0.1)	20 (2.0)	80 (8.0)
		Low impact	14 (1.4)	1 (0.1)	25 (2.5)	37 (3.8)	6 (0.6)	5 (0.5)	18 (1.8)	106 (10.6)
		Medium impact	56 (5.7)	4 (0.4)	60 (6.0)	113 (11.4)	7 (0.7)	14 (1.4)	29 (2.9)	283 (28.3)
		Strong impact	51 (5.2)	3 (0.3)	60 (6.0)	106 (10.7)	14 (1.4)	16 (1.6)	23 (2.3)	273 (27.3)
		Very strong impact	49 (5.0)	3 (0.3)	52 (5.3)	98 (9.9)	26 (2.6)	6 (0.6)	14 (1.4)	248 (24.8)
8.	Establishment and financing of NGOs	Very low impact	8 (0.8)	1 (0.1)	20 (2.0)	39 (3.9)	1 (0.1)	2 (0.2)	16 (1.6)	87 (8.7)
		Low impact	22 (2.2)	3 (0.3)	36 (3.6)	53 (5.3)	5 (0.5)	13 (1.3)	23 (2.3)	155 (15.5)
		Medium impact	64 (6.5)	4 (0.4)	57 (5.7)	117 (11.8)	10 (1.0)	12 (1.2)	29 (2.9)	293 (29.3)

**SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUPS NETWORK STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17**

9.	Politics	Strong impact	54 (5.4)	2 (0.2)	63 (6.4)	87 (8.8)	17 (1.7)	8 (0.8)	23 (2.3)	254 (25.4)
		Very strong impact	33 (3.3)	2 (0.2)	42 (4.2)	86 (8.7)	22 (2.2)	7 (0.7)	14 (1.4)	206 (20.6)
		Very low impact	16 (1.6)	3 (0.3)	41 (4.1)	71 (7.2)	3 (0.3)	4 (0.4)	18 (1.8)	156 (15.6)
		Low impact	24 (2.4)	4 (0.4)	49 (4.9)	57 (5.8)	10 (1.0)	12 (1.2)	21 (2.1)	181 (18.1)
		Medium impact	52 (5.2)	2 (0.2)	67 (6.8)	106 (10.7)	12 (1.2)	16 (1.6)	26 (2.6)	277 (27.7)
		Strong impact	44 (4.4)	3 (0.3)	37 (3.7)	89 (9.0)	18 (1.8)	6 (0.6)	25 (2.5)	222 (22.2)
10.	The functioning of the society	Very strong impact	45 (4.5)	0 (0.0)	25 (2.5)	59 (5.9)	12 (1.2)	4 (0.4)	14 (1.4)	259 (25.9)
		Very low impact	10 (1.0)	1 (0.1)	16 (1.6)	28 (2.8)	1 (0.1)	2 (0.2)	19 (1.9)	77 (7.7)
		Low impact	11 (1.1)	2 (0.2)	42 (4.2)	44 (4.4)	4 (0.4)	12 (1.2)	15 (1.5)	130 (13.0)
		Medium impact	65 (6.6)	3 (0.3)	65 (6.6)	128 (12.9)	10 (1.0)	13 (1.3)	31 (3.1)	315 (31.5)
		Strong impact	56 (5.7)	2 (0.2)	59 (5.9)	109 (11.0)	13 (1.3)	11 (1.1)	24 (2.4)	274 (27.4)
11.	Social psychology	Very strong impact	39 (3.9)	4 (0.4)	36 (3.6)	74 (7.4)	26 (2.6)	4 (0.4)	16 (1.6)	199 (19.9)
		Very low impact	11 (1.1)	1 (0.1)	17 (1.7)	29 (2.9)	0 (0.0)	4 (0.4)	20 (2.0)	82 (8.2)
		Low impact	16 (1.6)	2 (0.2)	24 (2.4)	37 (3.7)	3 (0.3)	7 (0.7)	16 (1.6)	105 (10.5)
		Medium impact	56 (5.6)	4 (0.4)	56 (5.7)	99 (10.0)	8 (0.8)	13 (1.3)	32 (3.2)	268 (26.8)
		Strong impact	54 (5.4)	2 (0.2)	62 (6.3)	103 (10.4)	10 (1.0)	12 (1.2)	21 (2.1)	264 (26.4)
12.	Economy	Very strong impact	44 (4.4)	3 (0.3)	58 (5.9)	115 (11.6)	34 (3.4)	6 (0.6)	15 (1.5)	275 (27.5)
		Very low impact	12 (1.2)	1 (0.1)	20 (2.0)	41 (4.2)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.1)	20 (2.0)	95 (9.5)
		Low impact	22 (2.2)	3 (0.3)	30 (3.0)	54 (5.5)	8 (0.8)	8 (0.8)	17 (1.7)	142 (14.2)
		Medium impact	50 (5.1)	6 (0.6)	68 (6.9)	111 (11.2)	16 (1.6)	19 (1.9)	27 (2.7)	297 (29.7)
		Strong impact	49 (5.0)	1 (0.1)	56 (5.7)	89 (9.0)	12 (1.2)	10 (1.0)	24 (2.4)	241 (24.1)
		Very strong impact	46 (4.7)	1 (0.1)	44 (4.5)	86 (8.7)	19 (1.9)	3 (0.3)	15 (1.5)	214 (21.4)

Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network project between September 2018 and November 2019

The most frequently chosen skills and areas of knowledge with a medium impact were

as follows:

- the art of establishing and developing contacts with representatives of various public institutions, organizations, enterprises (27% of responses in the sample), the mode in all the municipalities;
- functioning of the society (31.5% of responses in the sample) – only in Iława and Dzierzgoń the majority of respondents chose a very high intensity of the feature;
- methods of making decisions at school, university, municipal/town office, company, NGO (30.5% of responses in the sample) – only the majority of young people in Iława pointed to a very strong impact of this competence and only the majority of those surveyed in Hässleholm considered it very low;
- the economy (29.7% of responses in the sample) – only the majority of young people in Iława stated that the competence is very important;
- establishment and financing of NGOs (29.3% of responses in the sample) – only the majority of young people from Iława pointed to a very strong impact of this factor on their behaviour; a large proportion of respondents from Elbląg considered its impact to be strong and those from Nowe Miasto Lubawskie thought it was of little importance;
- event organising principles (28.3% of responses in the sample) – only the majority of respondents from Nowe Miasto Lubawskie saw this competence as very important, while in Elbląg the responses “strong impact” and “low impact” were equally distributed;
- politics (27.7% of responses in the sample) – unlike the majority of the sample, the respondents from Iława believed that it was a very important competence, and those from Dzierzgoń saw it as unimportant;
- the skill of writing official letters/applications (26.8% of responses in the sample) – a pressing need to improve their knowledge and skills in this area was declared by the respondents from Gdynia; the young people from Elbląg, Iława and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie found it had a strong impact, and in Hässleholm the same numbers of responses pointed to the average and low impact of that skill on increasing civic participation.

These conclusions are supplemented by the results of one-way analysis of variance, which revealed significant differences between the responses  $F(9, 8737)=32.52$ ;  $p<0.001$ ,  $\eta=0.03$ . The differences between the answers to the individual test questions were 3% in total.

Protected by PDF Anti-Copy Free

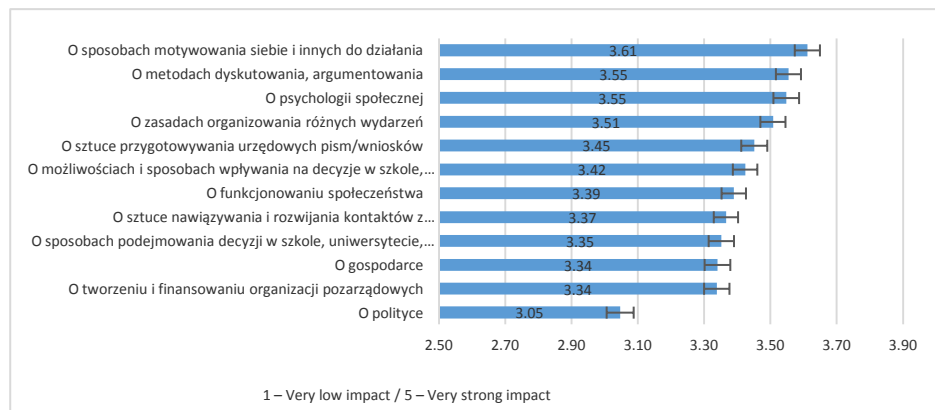
4th Regular Call, South Baltic, Programme 2014–2020

SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUPS NETWORK

STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17

The respondents do not benefit the most from additional competences in motivating themselves and others to act, and the least from the knowledge of politics. This underestimation of knowledge about politics by young people may be due to their limited awareness of what politics involves and what role it plays in society, or perhaps partly due to their frustration with political conflicts. Education in this area, combined with other areas of knowledge, will be of fundamental importance in terms of the effectiveness of civic education and, as a consequence, the civic participation of all social groups. The results of analysis are shown in Figure 20.

**Figure 20. Assessment of the impact of additional knowledge and skills on increased youth engagement in public affairs in Lithuania, Poland and Sweden (the error bars in the graph show standard errors)**



Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network project between September 2018 and November 2019

The opinions expressed by young people in this area varied according to gender, age, status and place of residence. This means that the above factors cannot be omitted in the course of in-depth research or when undertaking practical measures.

The effect of respondents' gender on their opinions was revealed by two-way analysis of variance – the significant interaction effect of the two factors was  $F(9, 8744) = 4.48$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $\eta = 0.004$ . The interaction feature explains 0.4% of the variance of the dependent variable. In their assessment of the strength of impact of additional knowledge and skills on increased public involvement, female respondents assigned significantly higher ratings than male respondents to all of the aforementioned categories, with the exception of those relating to the economy, politics and the establishment and financing of NGOs (the gender-related difference was statistically insignificant in this case). The results are shown in Figure 21.

Protected by PDF Anti-Copy Free

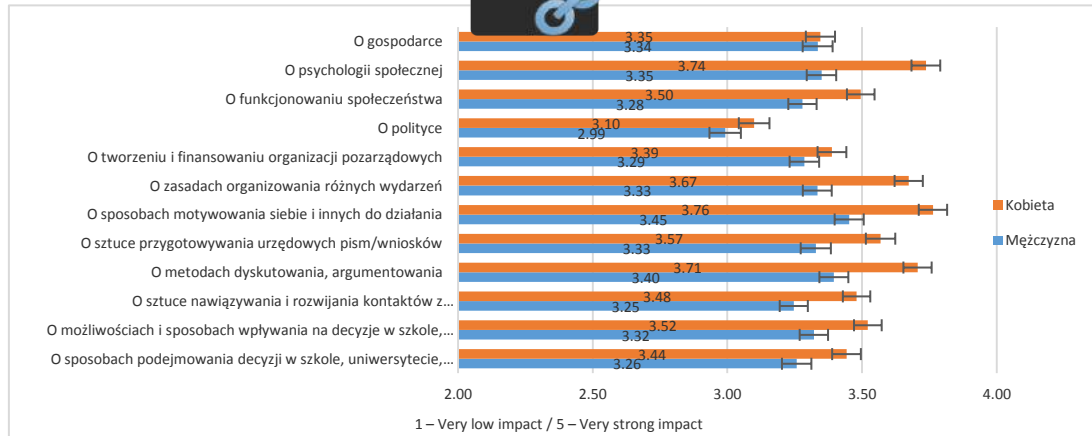
4<sup>th</sup> Regular Call, South Baltic, Programme 2014–2020

SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUPS NETWORK

STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17

(Upgrade to Pro Version to Remove the Watermark)

Figure 21. Assessment of the impact of additional knowledge and skills on increased youth engagement in public affairs in Lithuania, Poland and Sweden by respondents' gender (the error bars in the graph show standard errors)



Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network project between September 2018 and November 2019

With respect to the age of respondents, a two-way analysis of variance demonstrated a significant interaction effect of the two factors,  $F(9, 8746) = 3.60$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $\eta = 0.004$ . The interaction feature explains 0.04% of the variance of the dependent variable. When assessing the impact of additional knowledge and skills on increasing their engagement in public affairs, individuals aged 14–17 gave significantly higher ratings to the motivation skills,  $p < 0.05$ , and to the discussion and reasoning skills,  $p < 0.05$ . For the remaining test items, no statistically significant differences between age groups were demonstrated. The results are shown in Figure 22.

Protected by PDF Anti-Copy Free

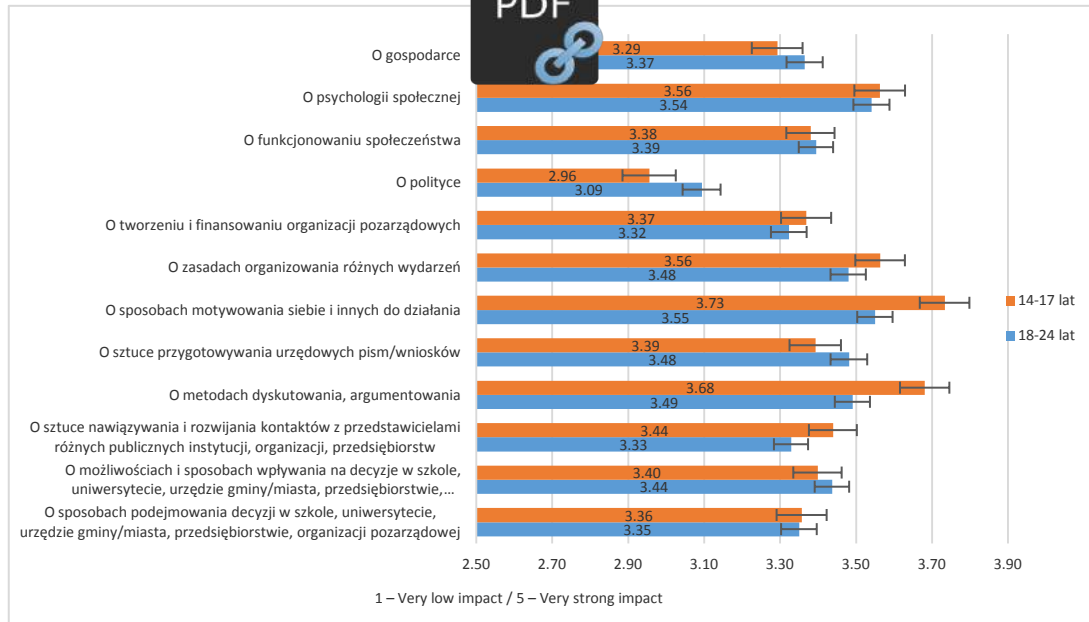
4<sup>th</sup> Regular Call, South Baltic, Programme 2014–2020

SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUPS NETWORK

STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17

(Upgrade to Pro Version to Remove the Watermark)

Figure 22. Assessment of the impact of additional knowledge and skills on increased youth engagement in public affairs in Lithuania, Poland and Sweden by respondents' age (the error bars in the graph show standard errors)



Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network project between September 2018 and November 2019

The diversification of opinions depending on the status of respondents proved to be somewhat more complex than in the case of age. The results of two-way analysis of variance demonstrated a significant interaction effect,  $F(44, 8520) = 1.46$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ;  $\eta = 0.01$ . The interaction feature explains 1% of the variance of the dependent variable. While, due to age, the motivation and self-motivation skills and the art of eristic was more important for those aged 14–17 than for older respondents, the relevance of first competence was independent and the latter was dependent on the status of the respondents. The interest in additional knowledge and skills concerning the methods of discussion and argumentation received the highest scores from university students, and slightly lower from pupils of lower secondary, secondary, primary and vocational schools and working respondents. Similarly, the knowledge of economics was of the greatest interest to university students, while lower secondary and secondary school pupils, employees, and vocational and primary school pupils were slightly less interested in it. The greatest need for the skills of organising different events was declared by university students, followed by pupils of lower secondary, primary and vocational schools, whereas working people saw it as slightly less relevant. Additional competence in the field of political science was most appreciated by students of lower secondary schools, and slightly

Protected by PDF Anti-Copy Free

4<sup>th</sup> Regular Call, South Baltic, Programme 2014–2020

SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUPS NETWORK

STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17

less so by students (universities, pupils of vocational schools, employees and secondary and primary school pupils. Might the interest in politics reported by lower secondary school pupils indicate positive changes in the future of greater awareness and perhaps also political participation of the younger generation? Another area of competence, relating to the preparation of official letters/applications, was rated most highly by university students, and least highly by pupils of lower secondary, secondary, primary and vocational schools, and working respondents. This technical and practical competence was more appreciated by university students, who are increasingly facing the need to draft such letters, and less valued by employees, who often already have the necessary knowledge and experience. It is worth noting that for all dependent variables, university students awarded the highest ratings compared to respondents with a different status. Meanwhile, respondents of different status made similar assessments of the following areas of knowledge and skills: social psychology; the functioning of society; establishment and financing of NGOs; the art of making and developing contacts with representatives of various public institutions, organisations and businesses; the ability and ways of influencing decisions, as well as decision-making methods at school, university, in municipal/city office, company or NGO. The results of analysis are shown in Figure 23.

Protected by PDF Anti-Copy Free

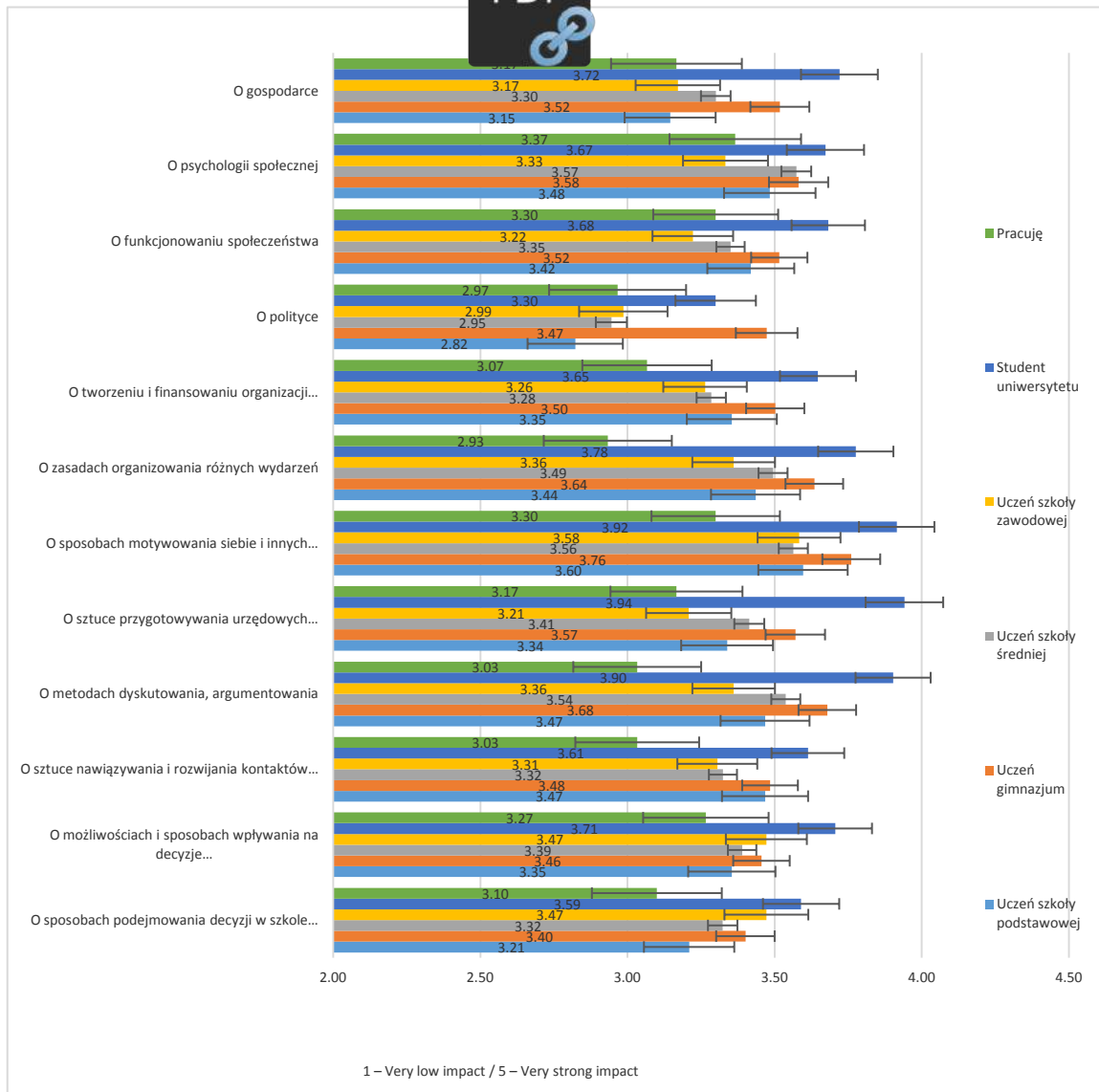
4th Regular Call, South Baltic, Programme 2014–2020

SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUPS NETWORK

STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17

(Upgrade to Pro Version to Remove the Watermark)

Figure 23. Assessment of the impact of additional knowledge and skills on increased youth engagement in public affairs in Lithuania, Poland and Sweden – respondents' status (the error bars in the graph show standard errors)



Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network project between September 2018 and November 2019.

The place of residence of young people aged 14–24 is another factor which differentiates the assessment of the impact of the various competences on increasing their engagement in shaping the local environment. The earlier conclusions were confirmed by two-way analysis of variance. It demonstrated a significant interaction effect,  $F(44, 8624) = 2.30$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $\eta = 0.01$ . The interaction feature explains 1% of the variance of the dependent variable.

The strongest need for additional knowledge and skills relating to motivation and self-motivation was reported by the young people from Iława, Telšiai, Gdynia and Elbląg, followed by the respondents from Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and Hässleholm. Social psychology was most valued by the young people from Iława and least valued by the participants from Gdynia, Telšiai, Elbląg, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and Hässleholm. The discussion and argumentation skills were most relevant to the participants from Iława, Telšiai, Elbląg, Gdynia and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, and least important for those from Hässleholm. The young people from Iława, and to a slightly lesser extent the inhabitants of Telšiai, Elbląg, Gdynia and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie were interested in the ways of influencing decisions at school/ university, in municipal/city office, enterprises and NGOs, which was considered the least useful by the young people from Hässleholm.

The skill of networking with representatives of various public institutions, organizations and businesses would be most helpful in becoming more involved in public affairs to the respondents from Iława, to a slightly lesser extent to the young people from Telšiai, Elbląg, Gdynia and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and to the least extent to the young people from Hässleholm. Better knowledge of the functioning of society received the highest ratings from the young people from Iława, and the lowest ones from the representatives of Telšiai, Gdynia, Elbląg, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and Hässleholm. The methods of decision-making at school, university, in the municipal/city office, company or NGO were considered most important by the young people from Iława, slightly less important by the respondents from Telšiai, Elbląg, Gdynia and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, and the least important by the participants from Hässleholm. The young people from Iława, Telšiai, Elbląg and Gdynia underlined the importance of the knowledge about the functioning of the economy, found to be somewhat less important by the respondents from Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and Hässleholm. The competences necessary to set up and finance NGOs were most valued by the young people from Iława, and relatively less appreciated by the participants from Telšiai, Gdynia, Elbląg, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and Hässleholm. Event-organising skills as a factor increasing young people's involvement in shaping their immediate environment received the highest ratings from the young people from Iława, Telšiai, Gdynia, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and Elbląg, and the lowest ones from the respondents from Hässleholm. Political knowledge was most highly rated by the young people from Iława and Telšiai, and lowest rated by those

Protected by PDF Anti-Copy Free

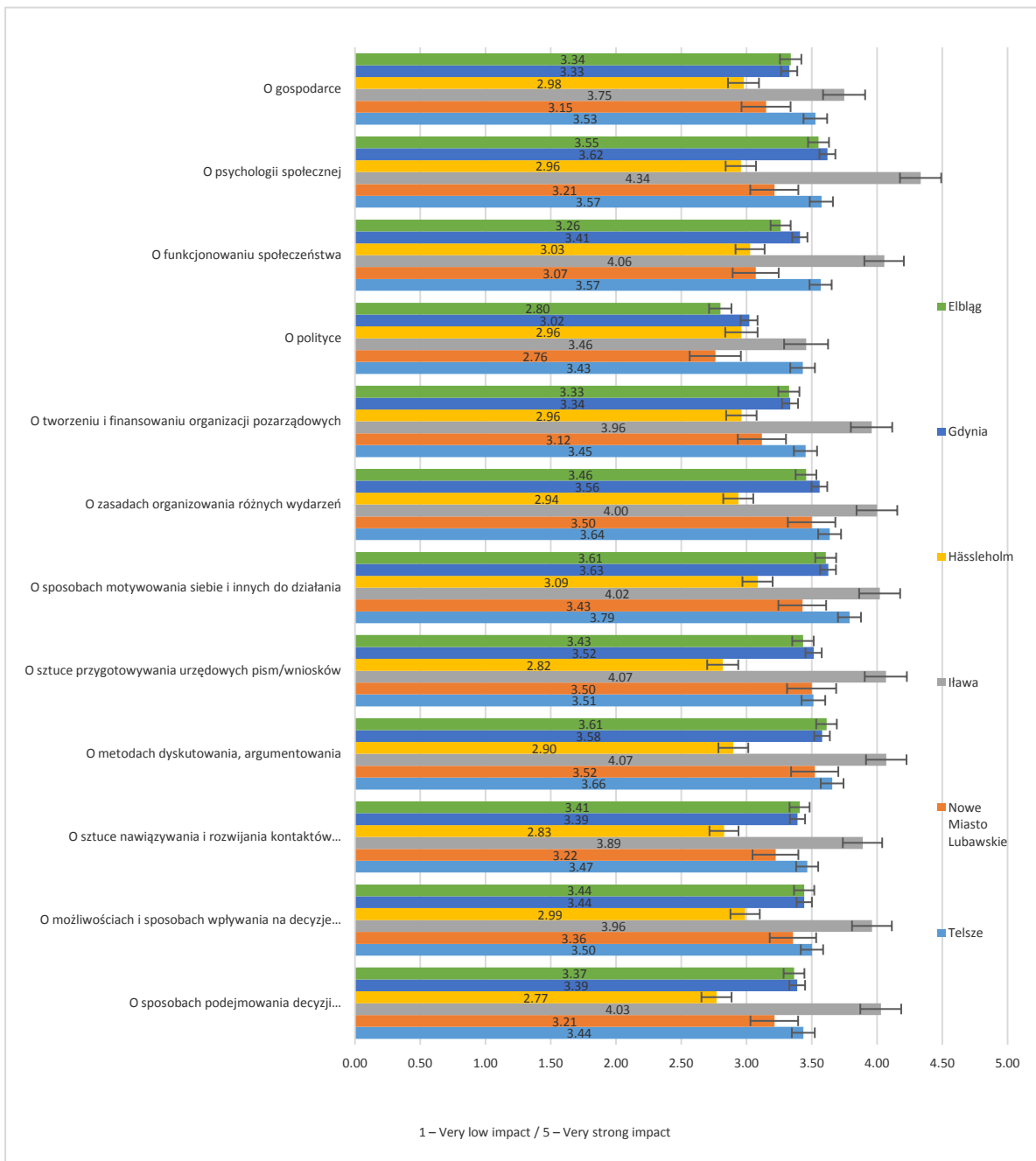
4<sup>th</sup> Regular Call, South Baltic, Programme 2014–2020

SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUPS NETWORK

STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17

surveyed in Gdynia, Hässleholm, Elbląg and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie. The ability to draw up official letters/applications was recognized as a very important competence by the young people from Ilawa, a little less important by those from Gdynia, Telšiai, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and Elbląg, and the least important by the respondents from Hässleholm. The results are shown in Figure 24.

**Figure 24. Assessment of the impact of additional knowledge and skills on increased youth engagement in public affairs in Lithuania, Poland and Sweden vs respondents' place of residence (the error bars in the graph show standard errors)**



Source: own elaboration based on the results of studies conducted as part of the South Baltic Youth Core Groups Network project between September 2018 and November 2019.

In conclusion, the identified key determinants of increased civic participation among young people aged 14–24 and their needs in respect were assigned the top two ranks. Ten out of seventeen categories were considered to have a strong and very strong impact on respondents' decisions. The factor of the strongest impact as identified by the majority of young people from the seven municipalities investigated was the implementation of young people's proposals, for example by local authorities, schools or NGOs. This constitutes proof of attention to the opinions voiced by young people, recognition of their needs and demands, and their involvement in decision-making processes, as well as of the credibility of decision-makers talking about the participatory and inclusive nature of civil society. Implementation of young people's proposals, was a very strong and strong motivating factor for the young people from Gdynia, Elbląg and Iława, followed by the respondents from Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and Dzierzgoń.

The following measures can have a strong stimulating effect on the involvement of young people in public affairs: the opportunity for young people to present their views to local authorities – important in Gdynia, Elbląg, Telšiai, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and very important in Iława; exchange of information between young people about their activities – important in Gdynia, Telšiai, Elbląg, Iława and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie; the opportunity for young people to present their views to the school authorities and NGOs – important in Gdynia, Elbląg, Telšiai, Hässleholm and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, and very important in Iława; meetings with people who actively work for the local environment – important in Gdynia, Telšiai and Elbląg; establishment of more local youth organisations – important in Gdynia, Telšiai, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and very important in Iława; the opportunity for young people to participate in meetings of local authorities – important in Gdynia, Elbląg and Dzierzgoń, and very important in Iława; development of social projects for youth civic engagement – important in Gdynia and Hässleholm, and very important in Iława; meetings with people who tell youth how to become involved – important in Telšiai and Hässleholm, and very important in Dzierzgoń and Iława. Only the young people from Iława considered all these factors to have the strongest impact on increasing youth involvement in shaping their immediate environment, while the respondents from Gdynia, Telšiai and Elbląg saw them as important. The significance of Youth Councils in municipalities, through which young people can most easily influence the decisions of local authorities, was not recognised to the same

degree by the majority of respondents from the seven municipalities surveyed. Their opinions were divided equally between the high and medium importance. They were awarded the highest ratings by the young people from Elbląg. The Town Youth Council was reactivated in 2019 and by the respondents from Iława such a council has been operating since 1997. The remaining issues examined were assessed by the majority as having an average impact on increasing young people's civic participation.

According to the majority of respondents from the seven municipalities surveyed, the development of cooperation between youth organisations at international level was the least likely to increase their involvement in decision-making processes. Such a low rank of this measure may be due to prioritisation of problems to be solved at local level before addressing the challenges of international cooperation.

Appropriate civic education is also an important issue in terms of effective mechanisms to stimulate young people's civic participation. The identified knowledge and skills gaps were seen by the young people surveyed as important barriers, which need to be addressed to increase youth participation in decision-making processes, at least at local or cross-border level. The shortage of adequate knowledge and skills to participate more fully in decision-making at schools in organisations and local and central authorities was indicated as a barrier of medium importance by a majority of youth from the seven municipalities, but the respondents from Gdynia and Iława considered it to be a serious obstacle to their civic activity.

On the basis of the research, two areas were identified, where broader or enhanced knowledge and skills would have the strongest impact on young people's involvement in public affairs: ways to motivate oneself and others to act and social psychology. The need for this competence was felt most strongly by the young people from Iława and Elbląg. The majority of respondents from the seven municipalities considered the following areas of knowledge to be of significant importance for stimulation of civic participation: possibilities and ways of influencing decisions at school/university, in municipal/city office, enterprise or NGO – the most important for young people from Iława and methods of discussion and reasoning – most important for young people from Elbląg and Iława.

**General conclusions are as follow:**

The quantitative surveys, revealed a medium level of civic participation of young people aged 14–24 in all the municipalities surveyed in Lithuania, Poland and Sweden. This situation is unsatisfactory given the needs and expectations of young people and suggests that there is a gap between the diagnosed state and the existing potential in youth environment. This problem is complex and determined by a number of factors, often difficult if not impossible to recognise together with correlations.

Despite declaring relatively strong interest and willingness to influence the matters concerning their environment, the majority of young people from the seven municipalities display low awareness of the opportunities for participation in decision-making and insufficient engagement. One of the reasons for the insufficient participation of young people in decision-making is the fact that most of them are only moderately interested in public affairs and find national problems to be far more noteworthy. The affairs concerning the immediate environment, such as school, university or work, proved to be the most important for young people from Hässleholm, but their interest in the neighbourhood was the weakest among respondents from other municipalities. However, the issues of the respondents' local district generated keen interest among youth from Iława and Dzierzgoń. The problems concerning the town or municipality were considered important mainly by the young people from Gdynia, Telšiai, Hässleholm and Iława. A large proportion of the youth surveyed were less interested in the Baltic Sea region. One exception were the young people from Iława, who reported keen interest in macro-regional and cross-border issues. The identified areas of interest make it possible to see the potential for the development of various forms of civic participation, taking into account the differences between their target groups. For example, a large proportion of the young respondents from the seven municipalities were most interested in the affairs of their friends. Young people's will to influence the shape of their immediate environment is a key factor in increasing their civic participation, as confirmed by a majority of young respondents and institution representatives confirmed in the survey. A large proportion of young people declared that they would rather like to have an influence on the affairs of their municipality, although at the same time most of those surveyed in the seven municipalities were moderately interested in the affairs of the commune in which they lived.

The young people (Upgraded Pro Version to Remove the Watermark) influencing their local reality.

The problem of unsatisfactory youth civic participation of young people in selected municipalities of Lithuania, Poland and Sweden has also been examined based on the opinions of young respondents with respect to assessment of young people's impact on the decisions taken in their municipality. In the opinion of the majority of young people surveyed in the seven municipalities, they are unable to have a say in all the topics examined and therefore do not take part in any discussion. A large proportion of young people from Poland and Lithuania held the belief that they had no influence on decisions concerning their municipality. Only the young people from Iława declared that they had the power to decide on the choice of local authorities and exercised that right. The highest level of public awareness was demonstrated by young people from Hässleholm, a majority of whom confirmed that they had the opportunity to speak on most of the issues examined and took advantage of that opportunity. As to most school or university-related matters, the young people from seven municipalities claimed that they had no say in such matters. Only in respect of the choice of leisure activities, the majority of respondents were aware of their right to co-decide but did not exercise it. The relatively largest opportunities for participation in the decision-making at schools or universities were declared by the young people from Hässleholm and Telšiai. These opinions suggest a low level of awareness among young people aged 14–24 as to what they, as citizens, can influence at municipality level by participating in decision-making processes. They also confirm youth's limited involvement in the immediate environment, as they do not even comment on issues in which they have a say. The main manifestation of youth civic participation in the seven municipalities turned out to be conversations with friends about specific issues. In Iława and Dzierzgoń, young people also benefited from membership of youth organisations, in Hässleholm from contacts with politicians or city/municipality officials, in Dzierzgoń and Telšiai from activities in church or religious association. The young people from Dzierzgoń also exchanged their views on social/political issues on the Internet and participated in public meetings for the local community.

The barriers to civic participation lie both on young people's side and on the institutions' side. For this reason, effective reduction of these obstacles requires cooperation between young people and decision-makers representing their environment. The young respondents identified similar barriers to their civic participation to those listed by the

institution representatives, the young participants from seven municipalities surveyed pointed to the lack of confidence in the implementation of their ideas by decision-makers and adults' lack of understanding young people's needs as the biggest obstacles. Although both aforementioned problems are on the side of young people, adult decision-makers can play a greater role in resolving them. It is the adults who, having properly recognised and understood the needs of young people, could more effectively encourage them to engage in public affairs and decision-making processes, thus demonstrating that the voice of young people is heard and taken into account. Furthermore, a majority of young respondents from the seven communes identified the following factors as major constraints to youth civic participation: lack of youth motivation to participate in decision-making at school, in organisations or local and central authorities; lack of information on how to engage in decision-making at school, in organisations and local and central governments, and politicians' disinclination to engage in a dialogue with young people. The problem of young people's poor motivation to participate in decision-making was the strongest in Polish municipalities and the Swedish municipality. The lack of information on how young people could become involved in decision-making had a stronger negative impact on young people from Gdynia, Iława and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie than those from the other municipalities. The lack of political will to engage in a dialogue with young people was a strong limiting factor for the civic participation of young people in Gdynia, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and Hässleholm. The young people from Elbląg, Gdynia, Hässleholm and Iława were the most likely to state that the reason for not engaging in public affairs was the lack of interest in decision-making. One of the barriers identified was the lack of adequate knowledge and skills for young people to participate more fully in decision-making. This problem was mainly emphasised by young people from Gdynia and Iława. Meanwhile, inadequate knowledge and skills of officials, school representatives and NGOs was particularly highlighted in Iława.

Intensification of dialogue and cooperation with young people and stimulation of their civic participation at local and cross-border level requires meeting the needs of both the institutions and young people. The views expressed by young people suggest that openness and involvement of institution representatives are key to increasing the civic participation of young people in Lithuania, Poland and Sweden. This is linked to the conviction held by the majority of young people surveyed in the seven municipalities that the most important factor in their active citizenship is the implementation of youth proposals, e.g. by local authorities,

schools or NGOs. (Updating young people's proposals through workshops) Considering them in the decision-making process constitutes a positive proof of real civic participation. Implementation of young people's proposals as a very strong and strong motivating factor for the young people from Gdynia, Elbląg, Iława, followed by the respondents from Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and Dzierżgoń. The following measures can also be of significant or great importance in this area: the opportunity for young people to present their views to local authorities – mainly according to the respondents from Iława, Gdynia, Elbląg, Telšiai and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie; exchange of information between young people about their activities – mainly according to the respondents from Gdynia, Telšiai, Elbląg, Iława and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie; the opportunity for young people to present their views to school authorities and NGOs – mainly according to the respondents from Iława, Gdynia, Elbląg, Telšiai, Hässleholm and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie; meetings with people who actively work for the local environment – mainly according to the respondents from Gdynia, Telšiai and Elbląg; establishment of more local youth organisations – mainly according to the respondents from Iława, Gdynia, Telšiai and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie; the possibility for young people to participate in meetings of local authorities – mainly according to the respondents from Iława, Gdynia, Elbląg and Dzierżgoń; development of social projects for youth civic engagement – mainly according to the respondents from Iława, Gdynia and Hässleholm; meetings with people who tell youth how to become involved – mainly according to the respondents from Dzierżgoń, Iława, Telšiai and Hässleholm. Only the young respondents from Iława rated all the above solutions as having the strongest impact on the increase of their engagement in shaping their immediate environment. The significance of municipal Youth Councils, through which young people can influence the decisions of local authorities, was not recognised to the same degree by the majority of those surveyed from the seven municipalities. The same number of respondents identified their large and medium impact on the increase of youth civic participation. Youth Councils were given the highest ratings by the young people from Elbląg, where the Town Youth Council was reactivated in 2019 and by the respondents from Iława, where such a council has been operating since 1997. The remaining issues examined were assessed by the majority as having an average impact on increasing young people's civic participation.

The young respondents from Lithuania, Poland and Sweden recognized the need to improve their competences, the shortage of which was identified as one of the barriers to

youth active citizens (Upgrade to Pdf Version to Remove this Watermark) their engagement in public affairs could be improved the most by knowledge and skills in the area of motivation and self-motivation, as well as social technology. These needs were considered the most pressing by the young people from Iława and Elbląg. Young respondents, in particular those from Iława, attached much weight to the opportunity to influence decisions made in schools, universities, municipality or city offices, businesses and NGOs. Knowledge and skills in the field of discussion and reasoning methods were the most important for the young people from Elbląg and Iława.

The importance of young people in modern society is linked, among other things, to two important issues: their future role in society and the protection of human rights. Participation of young people in the public life is crucial for social processes. Youth civic participation is connected to the engagement of young people in decision-making processes concerning issues relevant to them by the government, organisations and public services at many levels of governance. By enhancing the dialogue with young, the quality and legitimacy of public policies can be improved. Young people's active citizenship is an important factor in the development of every society and should be shaped by means of an effective multi-level youth policy.

It is not enough that the role of youth civic participation has been increasing in European countries' policies for many years. As well as in the and the EU's policies it is visible, including youth policy and the EU macro-regional strategy for BSR, that has reinforced the role of young people in policy. There is needed more effective bottom-up activities, including strong cities' policies for Youth. Improvement of youth civic participation depends to a large extent on the institutions' ability to stimulate young people's activity and to integrate them into decision-making processes at all stages, ranging from information, through hearings and dialogue, to the implementation of young people's proposals. Without providing the institutions and young people with the necessary competences, it will be very difficult to effectively stimulate the civic participation of young people. Appropriate civic education is therefore of great importance. The best way seems to be the development of systemic solutions based on multi-level governance. However, it is necessary to take into account the specific circumstances of each municipality, as many problems and their solutions are not of universal nature.

**Protected by PDF Anti-Copy Free**

4<sup>th</sup> Regular Call, South Baltic, Programme 2014–2020

SB YCGN – SOUTH BALTIC YOUTH CORE GROUPS NETWORK

STHB.05.01.00-28-0117/17

A holistic approach to the search for and implementation of effective ways to increase civic participation of young people seems to be the best solution. It allows all aspects to be taken into account and enables the development of systemic solutions which, of course, do not ignore the factors that differentiate the young people, such as gender, age, status and residence. Real opportunities for young people to participate in decisions concerning them as citizens have the special dimension of building the human capital of civil society. These opportunities are provided by informing youth about the existing issues, plans and draft decisions, by listening to their voice at every stage of the decision-making process, allowing the formal possibility of commenting on draft decisions and by implementing young people's proposals to meet their needs and to address the problems of other social groups. Without equipping young people with the appropriate professional and social competences, including those related to civic awareness, stimulation of youth civic participation will be very difficult, and may even be impossible or too strongly oriented towards non-governmental and non-formal forms of civic participation.