



EUROPEAN POLICY BRIEF

MYPLACE: MEMORY, YOUTH, POLITICAL LEGACY AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

MYPLACE

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This SECOND policy brief of the Framework 7 Programme MYPLACE research project involving partners in 14 countries highlights the most policy-relevant findings and policy implications to date for CROATIA. A future Brief in July 2014 will highlight further results and recommendations.

Ongoing project

Commenced June 2011

DATE March 2014

INTRODUCTION

MYPLACE (www.fp7-myplace.eu) is a major 7.9 Million Euro EC funded project, running from June 2011 to May 2015 which explores young people's civic, political and social participation in 14 European countries, and particularly how it is shaped by the past, present and future shadows of totalitarianism and populism in Europe.

Conceptually, it goes beyond the comparison of discrete national 'political cultures' or rigid classifications of political heritage, such as 'post-communist' or 'liberal democratic'. It is premised rather on the pan-European nature of a range of radical and populist political traditions and the cyclical rather than novel nature of the popularity they might currently enjoy.

Empirically, MYPLACE employs an impressive combination of survey, interview and ethnographic research methods to provide new, pan-European data that not only measures levels of participation but captures the meanings young people attach to it.

Analytically, through its specific focus on 'youth' and the historical and cultural contextualization of young people's social and political participation, MYPLACE replaces the routine, and often abstract assumptions of presumed 'disengagement' from politics with an empirically rich mapping of their understandings and orientations towards European civic and political spaces.

In policy terms, MYPLACE identifies both the obstacles and facilitators for young people's reclamation of the European political arena as 'my place'.

The Purpose of the Policy Brief

This is the second of three Policy Briefs: this one reports on the results of: Work Package (WP) 2, involving collaborative work with local museum partners on how historical memory shapes current political responses of young people; WP4 'Measuring Participation' a large scale structured survey (N=1200 in total) in two contrasting sites, and; WP5 'Interpreting Participation' of a smaller number of in-depth interviews of survey respondents. The research was conducted at the end of 2012 and early 2013.

Policy Brief 3 will report on the results of WP6 on typologies of youth activism across Europe, WP7 the ethnographic case studies of selected young people's political activism (3 in each country), and WP2 intergenerational interviews as well as the implications of wider cross-national and cross-case analysis of themes from across the projects.

MYPLACE is distinctive in taking a multi-methods approach, including large scale survey, in-depth interviews and ethnographic case studies to inform policy and practice in holistic ways. Rather than seek to generalise in spurious ways about countries as a whole, the historical memory (WP2), survey (WP4) and in-depth interview research (WP5) was conducted at two contrasting sites in each country in order to show the interactions between local, national and international influences on young people's attitudes and behaviour. This facilitates deeper, more holistic understanding of the contexts shaping young people's attitudes and behaviours, as a basis for more effective policy responses and interventions. Project teams have worked closely with policy partners through Youth Policy Advisory Groups (YPAGs) to design and realise the research, and advice on its implications.

In Croatia research were conducted at Podsljeme and Peščenica, two city districts in Zagreb (Croatian Capital) which differ significantly in terms of socio-economics and demographics i.e. the share of ethnic and religious minorities, as well as the level of socio-economic inequalities. Podsljeme is ethnically and religiously homogeneous area (97% Croats, 95% Catholics), a rather peaceful, in economic terms prosperous, mostly residential, "upscale" area, although it is not the most elite part of the city. Peščenica is less ethnically and religiously homogeneous (minorities makes up about 14%; mainly Serbs, Bosnians and Roma with regard to ethnicity and Islamic and Orthodox with regard to religious affiliation) Additionally, Peščenica could be described as a more "troubled" part of the city: it is a poorer city district, mostly industrial, with higher crime rates than in Podsljeme.

In this Policy Brief we present some of the preliminary MYPLACE Croatian findings relevant for active participation of youth in society as well as history and memory. Namely, from the first comprehensive Croatian national key youth policy document (National Youth Programme from 2003-2008), over subsequent "National youth program from 2009th till 2013" and third 2013-2020 which is currently in preparation Active participation of young people in society has been stressed as one of the key issues of the national youth policy. Additionally, understanding the history is the currently important issue too, among youth education policy makers, as well as among experts and general public.

EVIDENCE AND ANALYSIS

All presented findings are based on research conducted within WP 2 "Interpreting the past (The construction and transmission of historical memory), WP4 'Measuring Participation' a large scale structured survey at Podsljeme (N=610) and Peščenica (N=607), and; WP5 'Interpreting Participation' - in-depth interviews of survey respondents (Podsljeme N=25; Peščenica=36).

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH IN SOCIETY

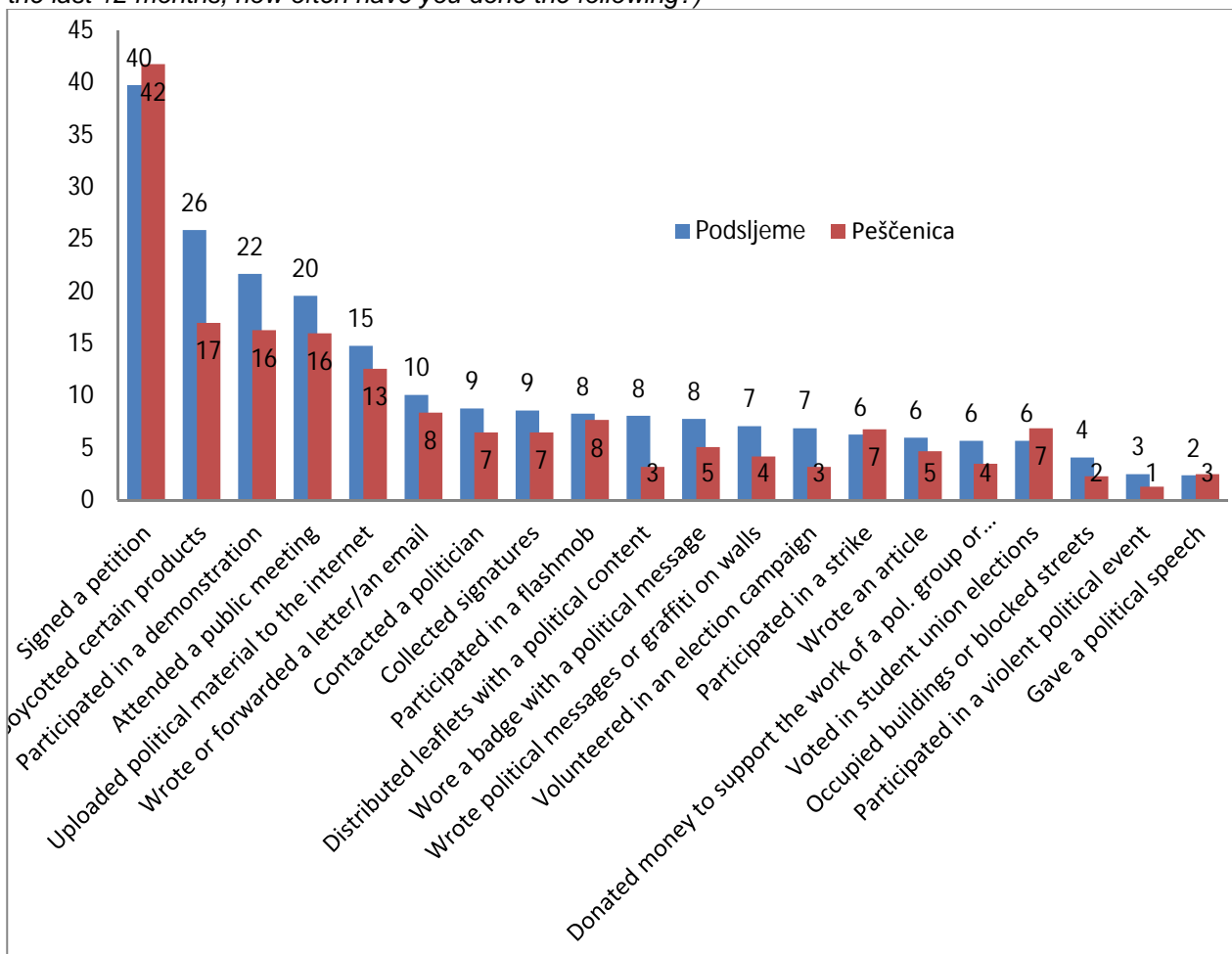
Mapping and measuring youth participation and civic engagement is the key task of the MYPLACE project. One of the specific project goals, which correspond to highlighted ongoing focus of Croatian youth policy, was to establish prevalence of attitudes to, and participation in, political organisations, social movements and civic action programmes among young people.

Political participation

- Young people in Podsljeme as well as in Peščenica reported low participation in political activities besides voting. Among 20 other specific political activities, signing petitions was the most prevalent activity (40% in Podsljeme and 42% in Peščenica) (Figure 1)

- Despite of absence of long history of political demonstrations relatively frequent activities were participation in demonstrations (22% in Podsljeme and 16% in Peščenica), Besides demonstrations relatively frequently activities were also boycotting certain products (26% in Podsljeme and 17% in Peščenica), attending a public meeting dealing with political or social issues (20% in Podsljeme and 16% in Peščenica) and uploading political material to the internet (15% in Podsljeme and 13% in Peščenica).
- Between 5% and 10% of youth in both locations writing or forwarding a letter/an email with political content (10% in Podsljeme and 8% in Peščenica), collected signatures, wrote an article (e.g., in a student newspaper, organisation journal, the internet or a blog), participated in a 'flashmob' or participated in a strike at least once during the 12 months before the survey.
- Among the least prevalent activities were giving a political speech (2% in Podsljeme and 3% Peščenica) and donating money to support the work of a political group or organisation (6% in Podsljeme and 4% in Peščenica)
- Less than 5% of youth had participated in a violent political event (3% in Podsljeme and 1% in Peščenica) or occupied buildings or blocked streets/railways (4% in Podsljeme and 2% in Peščenica).

Figure 1. Participation in political activities % (There are different ways of being politically active. During the last 12 months, how often have you done the following?)

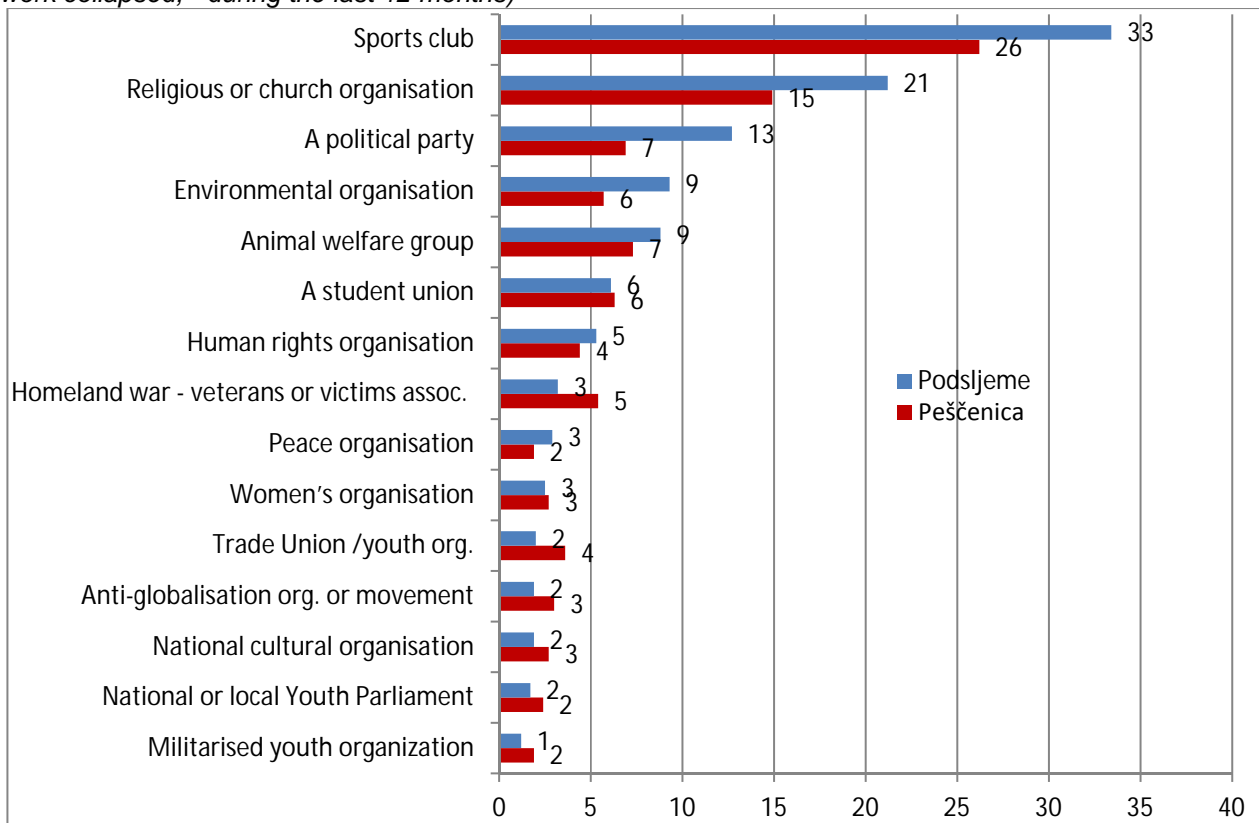


- Youth in Podsljeme more frequently than youth in Peščenica boycotted certain products on political or moral grounds (26% vs. 17%), participated in demonstration (22% vs. 16%) as well attended a public meeting (20% vs. 16%)

Organizational engagement

- Young people in both locations reported low engagement with organizations: Youth were most frequently involved with religious or church organizations 21% in Podsljeme and 15% in Peščenica, (and sports clubs 33% in Podsljeme and 26% in Peščenica), while 13% of youth in Podsljeme and 7% in Peščenica were involved in political party activities (Figure 2)
- The share of youth who reported engagement with national or local youth parliament is very low (2% in both survey locations, Figure 2)

Figure 2. Reported engagement with organizations (% member, participated in activity, done voluntary work collapsed, - during the last 12 months)



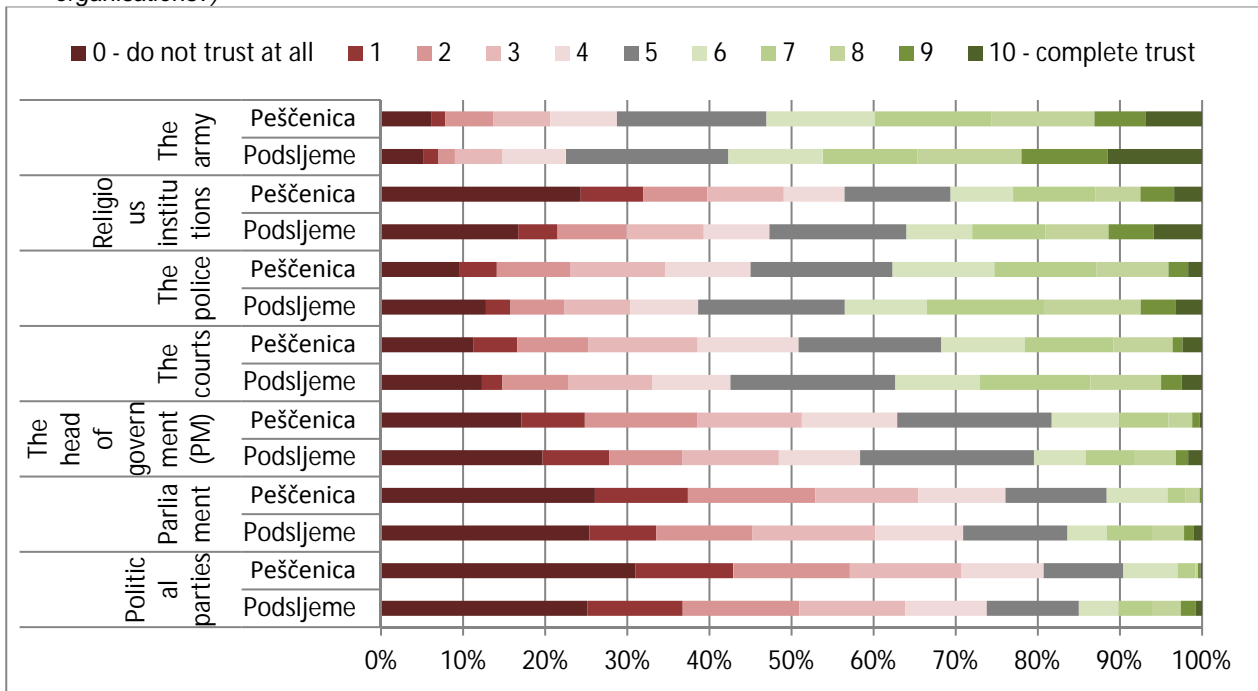
- Since the presented data were established in two district of Croatian capital, thus in highly urbanized context, and taking into account the importance of urbanity level as determinant of youth participation, it should be stressed that participation and organizational engagement is probably even lower in other less urbanized parts of Croatia.
- Regarding the differences between our two locations Podsljeme and Peščenica it should be noted that differences in the level of activism and organizational engagement between them were established only for three political activities (out of 20 analysed) and three organization (out of 15 analysed), thus our two contrasting location are more similar than different with regard to youth active participation in society. However, youth in Podsljeme more frequently than youth in Peščenica boycotted certain products on political or moral grounds (26% vs. 17%), participated in demonstration (22% vs. 16%) as well attended a public meeting (20% vs. 16%; Figure 1), and at the same time youth in Podsljeme more frequently than youth in Peščenica were involved in religious or church organisations (21% vs. 15%), a political party (13% vs. 7%), and environmental organizations 9% vs. 6% Figure 2).
- In contrast to other forms of political participation youth in survey expressed relatively high voting participation on the Croatian parliamentary election in December 2011. Taking into account only two age groups who were eligible to vote reported voting participation on national election in 2011 was equally prevalent among two age groups in Podsljeme (74% in 19-21 age group and 72% in and 22-25), while the share of youth in Peščenica who reported voting in the last Croatian national election was lower among youth in the 19-21 age group (65%) than among youth in the 22-25 age group (74%)

- The Majority of youth between 22-25 years old (who were eligible to vote) reported that they voted in the last local election in May 2009 (53% in Podsljeme and 60% in Peščenica).
- According to survey results on both locations the share of youth who have a particular political party that they felt closer to than other parties increased with age (Podsljeme: from 20% in 16-19 age group to 36% in 22-25 age group; Peščenica from 14% in 16-19 age group to 34% in 22-25 age group)
- 13% of youth in Podsljeme and 7% in Peščenica were involved in political party activities (Figure 2), while share of youth who supported political group or organization in some concrete ways is lower: 6% of youth in Podsljeme and 4% in Peščenica donated money to support the work of a political group or organisation (Figure 1); 7% of youth in Podsljeme and 3% in Peščenica volunteered in election campaign (Figure 1)
- Regarding left-right orientation, 54% of youth in Podsljeme and 51% of youth in Peščenica placed themselves in the middle of the left-right 0 to 10 scale, 30% in Podsljeme and 32% in Peščenica placed themselves on the left, while 16% in Podsljeme and 17% in Peščenica placed themselves on the right. However, almost 20% of youth in both locations did not know how to place themselves on the left-right scale or refused to do this.
- With regard to described voting behaviour as well political ideology youth in Podsljeme and Peščenica are fairly similar. It is not unexpected finding since the generally speaking political attitudes and behaviours, at least in Croatia are not so determined by socio-economic factors which partially differentiate our two locations. However it should be noted that some differences in voting and party preferences were established; for example among those who expressed attachment to some party, attachment to currently ruling party (Social Democratic Party) was less frequent in Podsljeme than in Peščenica, while attachment to the main current opposition Croatian Democratic Union party was more frequent in Podsljeme than in Peščenica.

Obstacles and Facilitators for Young People's Active Participation in Society

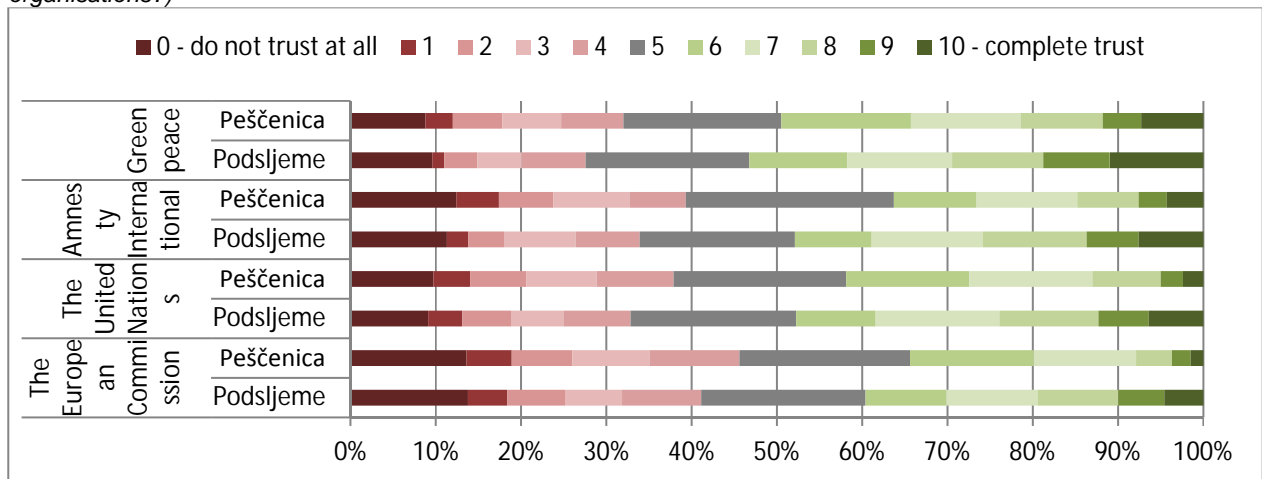
- One of the reasons for low participation of youth in political institutions can be their low trust in institution generally, and especially to political institutions:
 - Namely 74% of youth in Podsljeme and 81% of youth in Peščenica expressed the view that they **do not trust** or have a very low level of trust in Political parties while 71% of youth in Podsljeme and 76% in Peščenica stated the same for Parliament, while 59% of youth in Podsljeme and 63% in Peščenica expressed the same in relation to the Head of government (Figure 3).
 - Around a half of youth **do not trust** to media (53% in Podsljeme and 59% in Peščenica), religious institutions (47% in Podsljeme and 56% in Peščenica), banks (48% in Podsljeme, 54% in Peščenica), courts (43% in Podsljeme and 51% in Peščenica) and police (39% in Podsljeme and 45% in Peščenica, Figure 3).
 - Among all analysed institutions the share of youth who expressed lack of trust was lowest for the army (23% in Podsljeme and 29% in Peščenica, Figure 3).

Figure 3. Trust in national institutions (How much you trust each of the following institutions and organisations?)



- Around 40% of youth **do not trust** international institutions - the European Commission (41% in Podsljeme and 46% in Peščenica) while around a third expressed lack of trust in the United Nations (33% in Podsljeme and 38% in Peščenica) and for international NGO's - Amnesty International (34% in Podsljeme and 39% in Peščenica) and Greenpeace (28% in Podsljeme and 32% in Peščenica)

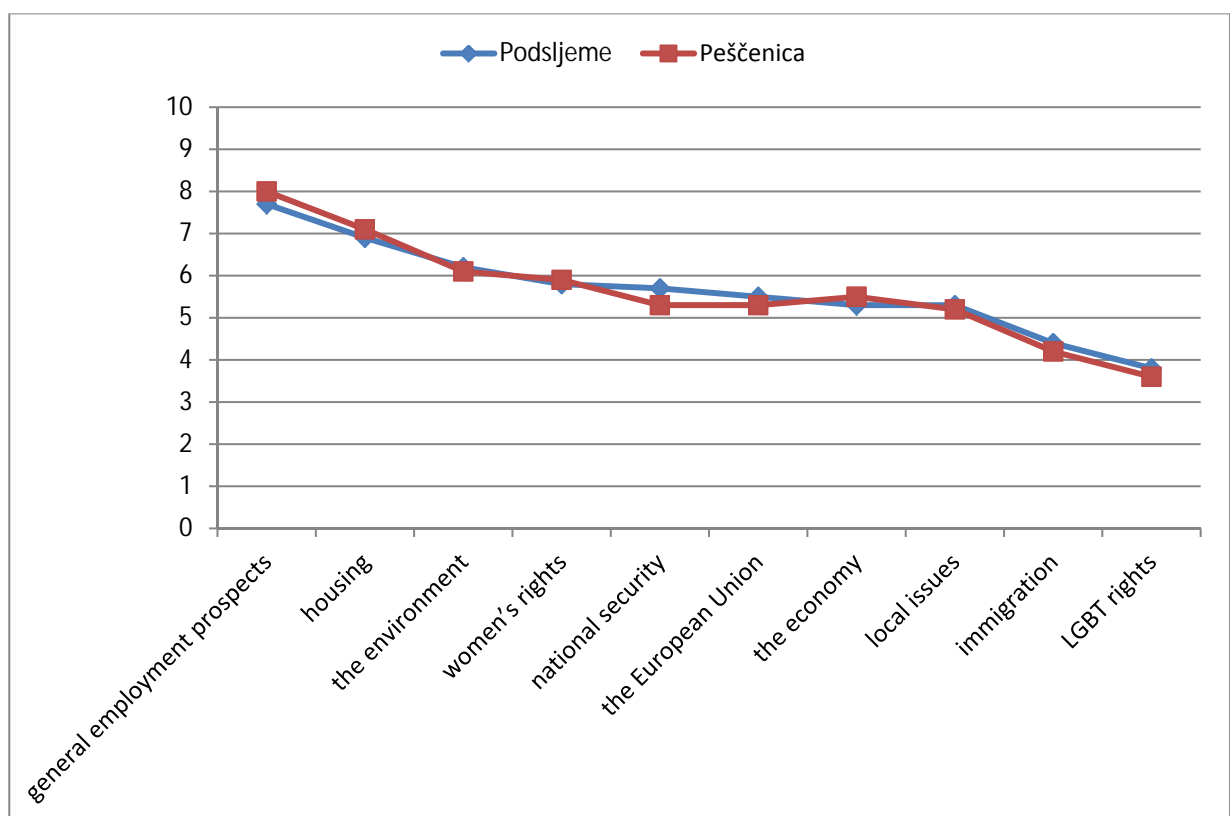
Figure 4. Trust in international institutions (How much you trust each of the following institutions and organisations?)



- Besides very low level of trust in Political parties and Parliament youth in survey expressed very negative attitudes towards politicians and politics, whereas attitudes were slightly more negative among youth in Peščenica than among youth in Podsljeme; 71% of youth in Podsljeme and 78% in Peščenica agree that politicians are corrupt and that the rich have too much influence over politics, while only 15% of youth in Podsljeme and 8% in Peščenica think that politicians are interested in young people like them.
- Semi-structured interview findings (WP5) confirmed that many young people's general opinion surrounding politics is often negative. Although for many respondents first association with politics was "government", "ruling the state" or other neutral associations, relatively common associations also included: "boring", "a lot of arguing", "people in suits with lot of paperwork", "ineffectiveness", and 'corrupted thieves'.

- In addition to negative attitudes towards politicians and politics, as well as lack of trust in political institution youth are generally characterized by low political efficacy. Survey results showed that personally contacting politicians is (together with participating in violent as well as illegal demonstrations) regarded as the least effective way of influencing politics out of the eleven analysed means of influencing politics (3 on 0 to 10 scale Podsljeme and 2.8 in Peščenica), while, youth considered voting in elections as relatively the most effective means of influencing politics, even though on average it was evaluated only as a moderately effective (average value around 5 on scale 0-10).
- One additional possible reason which could deterrence youth for more active participation in society could be fear or in more general terms lack of political as well as more general tolerance in society. Namely, survey results showed that considerable minority of youth (17% in Podsljeme and 12% in Peščenica) have occasionally or regularly felt threatened because of their support to a particular political movement. At the same 18% of youth in Podsljeme and 13% in Peščenica have occasionally or regularly felt threatened because they belong to some subculture, while 18% of youth in Podsljeme and 10% of youth in Peščenica have felt the same because of their gender.
- Additionally, youth in both survey locations are generally characterized by low interest in politics: 68% of youth in Podsljeme and 65% of youth in Peščenica were “not” or “not at all interested” in politics. Greater interest for politics was more characteristic for older and more educated youth.
- However, youth are more interested in issues which could have direct consequences on their lives: among ten contemporary issues youth in both locations are most interested in general employment opportunities (Podsljeme M=7.70 on a scale from 0 to 10, Peščenica M=8.01) and housing (Podsljeme M=6.87; Peščenica M=7.12, Figure 5)

Figure 5. Interest in contemporary issues (To what extent are you personally interested in...? on a scale of 0 to 10)



- Youth also expressed interest in for more general issues such as those related to the environment (Podsljeme, M=6.24, Peščenica M=6.13 on scale from 0 to 10) and women’s rights (Podsljeme, M=6.24, Peščenica M=5.91; Figure 5).
- Youth showed moderate interest in issues related to the European Union, national security, economy and local issues (Podsljeme M=5.67, M=5.32, M=5.31, Peščenica M=5.30, M=5.52, M=5.19, respectively). Issues of immigration and LGBT rights were given an average value of below 5 (on a scale from 0 to 10, Podsljeme M=4.38, M=3.77, Peščenica M=4.21, M=3.58, respectively, Figure 5).

Overall interest in contemporary issues is significantly related to age, gender and education level, whereby older, more educated and female respondents show more interest in different contemporary issues.

- At the same time about 51% of youth in Podsljeme and 54% in Peščenica were very or quite interested in issues to do with Europe, whereas youth were less frequently interested in Europe than in the city or country in which they live, while they were more frequently interested in Europe than in countries that neighbour with Croatia.
- Internet and TV evidently top the list as the medium through which most young people get informed about politics and current affairs; 37% of youth in Podsljeme and 44% of youth in Peščenica spend “1/2 hour to 1 hour” or “more than 1 hour” on Internet or watching TV on an average day, to get informed about politics and current affairs, while only 15% of them spend the same amount of time getting informed about politics and current affairs via a newspaper or radio on an average day.
- Despite relatively low interest in politics, youth in survey showed good general knowledge of national politics; almost all of them knew which is the main ruling party or coalition and who is the head of the Croatian government (ranging from 92% to 96% on both locations), while 73% of youth in Podsljeme and 78% in Peščenica knew “who is the foreign minister”. Higher level of knowledge is more characteristic for older and more educated youth, while it is equally characteristic for both gender as well as youth in different social class.
- However, survey results indicate generally lack of political and democracy understanding although youth generally have positive attitude toward democracy: Surveys finding showed that 73% of youth in both locations expressed positive attitudes towards a system with an opposition that can freely express its views, as well as towards a system with a democratic, multi-party system (70% - Podsljeme; 66% - Peščenica)
- At the same time 43% of youth in Podsljeme and 47% in Peščenica were neither dissatisfied nor satisfied with the way democracy works in Croatia. Among youth in Podsljeme 33% of them were satisfied, while 26% were dissatisfied, while the situation was reversed among youth in Peščenica: more youth were dissatisfied (36%) than satisfied (18%)
- Thus, youth in average support democracy, but they are not in average satisfied with the way democracy works in Croatia. Maybe this is this reason why at the same time 55% of youth in both locations expressed a positive attitude towards a system with a strong leader who is not constrained by parliament, while 32% of youth in Podsljeme and 25% of youth in Peščenica evaluated a system with army rule as good
- The majority of youth in both locations (in Podsljeme ranging from 43% to 55% and in Peščenica ranging from 48% to 56%), considered that violence is unjustified or never justified for analysed causes: to protect jobs from being cut, to end poverty, to prevent global warming, to protect your ethnic (racial) group, to overthrow a government and to respect animal rights, to protect human rights and to sustain a stable government. However, between 18% and 27% of youth in Podsljeme and between 14% and 25% of youth in Peščenica considered that violence is always or mostly justified for these causes.

Thus the MYPLACE data on CROATIA, consistent with previous Croatian studies of youth participation, confirmed relatively low level of active youth’s participation in society. Secondly, study confirmed relatively low interest for politics among young, accompanied by very negative attitudes towards politicians, whereas not negligible share of youth have occasionally or regularly felt threatened because of their support to a particular political movement. Additionally, findings indicate unemployment and housing as main concerns of young people, generally positive attitude toward democracy but also some inconsistent opinions such as favouring army rule and generally lack of political and democracy understanding.

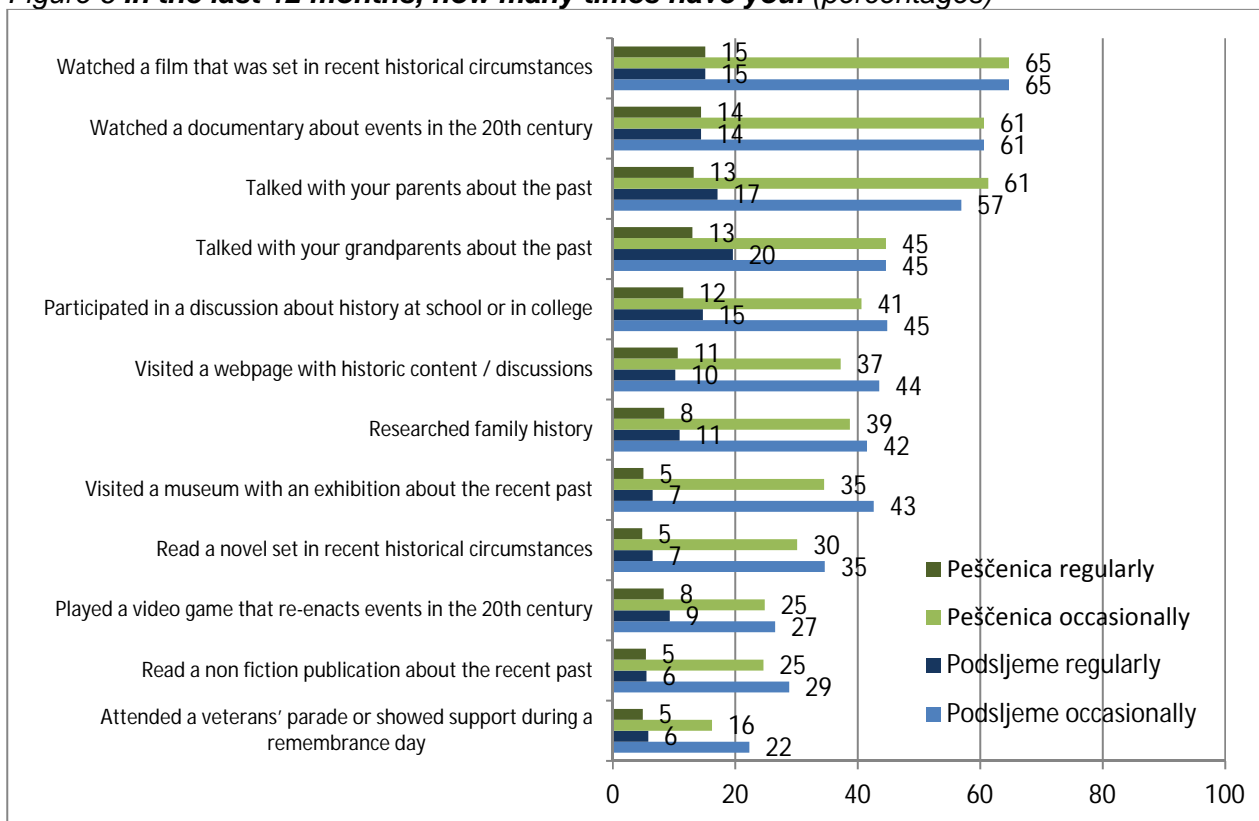
Although youth in Podsljeme and youth in Peščenica looks pretty similar in terms of analysed attitudes it should be noted that youth in Peščenica are slightly more critical than youth in Podsljeme: average trust in national institutions as well as international institutions are significantly lower among youth in Peščenica than youth in Podsljeme; youth in Peščenica on average expressed more negative attitudes towards politicians and politics than youth in Podsljeme, youth in Peščenica were less satisfied with the way democracy works in Croatia than youth in Podsljeme; and expressed more negative attitudes towards the system with army rule as well as general attitude towards violence than youth in Podsljeme.

HISTORY AND MEMORY

Preliminary findings from wp2 showed that Croatia could be placed among countries with 'divided memory', at least regarding WW2; there are different interpretations, discourses, and emphasis, especially regarding the role of fascism and its victims, or the role of communist atrocities and its victims, in our history. Young people, interviewed on both locations (wp5) showed differences in some emphasis too, but significant majority condemned the fact that history became a part of a 'daily-political' agenda and that history serve as an instrument of manipulation in political party's purposes. According to interviews (wp5) family background, Facebook and peers are key factors in shaping our respondents' attitudes and knowledge regarding history, which can indicate that educational system and most of the media failed to play more important role in the process of knowledge dissemination regarding history.

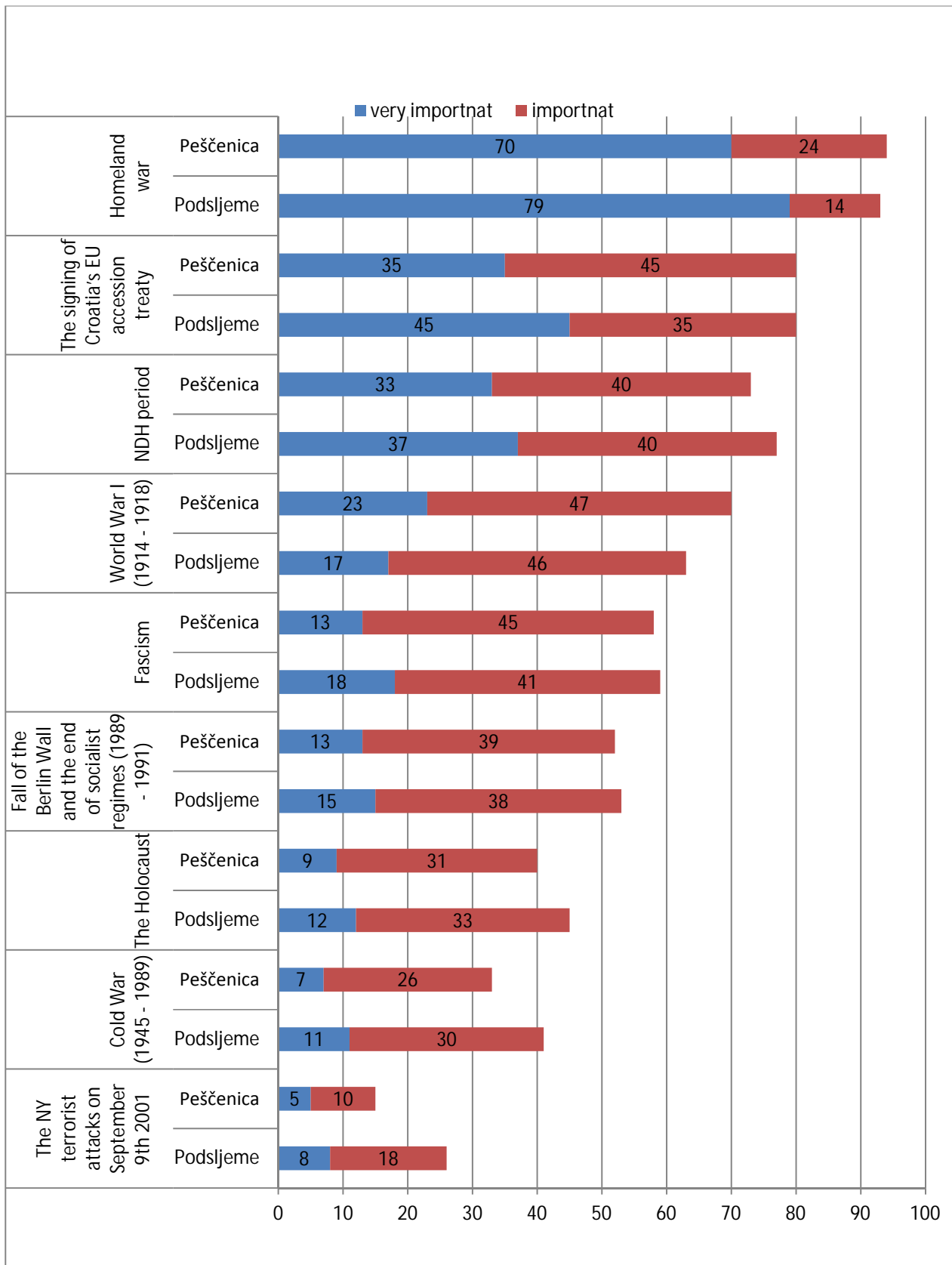
- Almost 70% of survey respondents in both locations show little or no interest in a recent history (69% in Podsljeme and 70% in Peščenica). More specifically, 21% of youth in Podsljeme and 16% in Peščenica were not interested in history at all, around 50% (48% in Podsljeme and 53% in Peščenica) showed little interest in recent history while around 30% of youth in both survey locations were very interested in recent history (31% in Podsljeme and 30% in Peščenica). On both locations interest in history was higher for youth with a higher level of education.
- At the same time, WP5 interview findings indicated a low level of basic knowledge on historic events, especially the WW2. Moreover, during the interviews youth generally expressed dissatisfaction with history in school; some arguing that there is too much history in school, others claimed that there is too little history, especially contemporary history, in school. Many respondents pointed out that school finished when the history subject reached the period of WW1, others also expressed dissatisfaction with the way that history is presented. When respondents spoke about history within the school program, many didn't have clear opinions about it, or just generally stated that history is oversaturated with facts. But, a significant number told that they didn't cover the more recent historical events at all in their class, including those going to gymnasium high schools which have more hours of history classes. This relates particularly to The Homeland War. Several of our respondents expressed discontent about the fact that they know very little about Croatian history of the second part of the 20th Century.
- Additionally, Wp2 and wp5 findings indicate that that most young people formed their memories with the help of their parents, as the primary source of information, indicating very low impact of educational system. It is especially visible when it comes to hard and difficult periods of history, like WW2; respondents coming from families with strong alignment to one of the sides will mostly express continuity of such an alignment, respondents coming from 'non-aligned' family background will be neutral, not interested, some of them expressing confusion and lack of knowledge, even not being able to name the sides in the WW2. Most of the respondents, as key findings of WP5 clearly showed, agree in dissatisfaction with history in school, majority of them emphasised the fact that they did not learn anything about recent history.
- About 70% of respondents 'occasionally' or 'regularly' watch movies or documentaries set in recent historical circumstances. Other activities, such as talking about history in family or in school or college was reported by approximately 60% of respondents, while all other activities related to history were conducted by less than 50% of respondents in the last 12 months (Figure 6).

Figure 6 In the last 12 months, how many times have you: (percentages)



- Most of the interviewed respondents (wp5) expressed their positive attitude towards organised visits to memory sites. Some of respondents stated that experience of the visit to memory site in Vukovar was the first information about that tragic moment in the Homeland War. Several respondents argued that visits to sites of memory could significantly improve knowledge on our recent history and provide different perspective, certain 'direct experience' for young visitors.
- Despite a relatively low interest in history, young people in both locations believe it is important to commemorate the past. Around 70% of survey respondents in both locations believe it is moderately to very important to commemorate the past. But, many interview respondents dislike the fact that historic events are politically instrumentalised. They want to commemorate events in order to stop disputes around them.
- According to the survey results (wp4) The Homeland War dominated as the most important historical event for Croatian history. However, it is important to emphasise the fact that Croatia's EU accession treaty was in second position with regard to importance for Croatian history. As many as 76% of young people in both locations found it 'important' or 'very important' for Croatian history (Figure 7). Nevertheless, youth, similarly to general public, were not homogenous with regard to the perceived possible consequences of Croatia's entry into the European Union. Around a third of youth in both locations agreed with the statement "Membership of the European Union will greatly benefit this country" (35% in Podsljeme and 30% in Peščenica), while a third was neutral (33%, 38%) and a third disagreed with this statement. It should be to mention the event that was in third place in terms of historical importance - the Independent State of Croatia period, a World War II puppet state of Nazi Germany – which around 70% of respondents found 'important' or 'very important' for Croatian history (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Importance of different historical events and period for the history of Croatia (percentages)



Thus the MYPLACE data on CROATIA regarding history and memory showed that significant number of young people perceive that events in recent history played decisive role in gaining independence (The Homeland war) and at the same time significant number of them showed dissatisfaction with history subject in school. One part of interviewed young people showed complete lack of knowledge and lack of basic information regarding important events in recent history, especially when it comes to WW2. Although some disagreements among respondents remind us to main stream discourses and disputes in the adult world, most of our respondents agreed that history should not be (ab)used for political purposes.

Research findings in WP2 showed that there is a certain similarity between perception of young respondents, arguing that political power has strong impact in official interpretation of historic events, and experts working in museums (most of them being young as well), arguing, in a bit more 'diplomatic' mode, the same thing – interpretation of history depends on the actual political power. The analyses of external discourses in WP2 showed that the WW2 in Croatia did not finish yet, according to disputes within the academic and broader public sphere. Therefore, it is not coincidence that some of our young respondents in interviews (WP2 and WP5) expressed the opinion that our past is the key determination of our present.

TWO LOCATIONS: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

- The analysed youth's attitudes and behaviours in Podsljeme and Peščenica are fairly similar. Reasons for those similarities in attitudes and behaviour at least partly could stem from similarities of our survey samples on many background aspects. Although two selected locations are different with regard to demographic and socio-economic indicators it seems that these differences are not big enough to have more pronounced effect on some of the analysed attitudes and behaviour. Additionally, socio-demographic differences between our surveyed samples in both locations, although in expected direction, were not so pronounced: the samples were similar with regard to ethnic background (Croatian 98% in Podsljeme and 96% in Peščenica) and citizenship (Croatian citizenship, 95% in Podsljeme and 92% in Peščenica, although the share of Roman Catholics is, as expected, higher in Podsljeme 84% than in Peščenica 79%), family status (not married/cohabitating 98% in Podsljeme; and 97% in Peščenica) as well as level of education and social class. However, more youth in Peščenica than in Podsljeme find it difficult or very difficult to live on their present income (20.3% vs. 13.8%; while more youth in Podsljeme than in Peščenica reported that they live comfortably on their present income 46% -Podsljeme, 37% - Peščenica).
- Despite these background similarities, some types of political activities as well as organizational engagement were more frequently among youth in Podsljeme than Peščenica. Additionally youth in Peščenica were slightly more critical than youth in Podsljeme: youth in Peščenica expressed more negative attitudes towards politicians and were characterised by significantly lower level of trust in national as well as international institutions and were less satisfied with the way democracy works in Croatia than youth in Podsljeme. Moreover attitudes towards the system with army rule as well as general attitude towards violence were more negative among youth in Peščenica than among youth in Podsljeme.
- Among two locations there are also some differences in self-perception: youth in Peščenica were less frequently interested in issues to do with the neighbourhood they currently live in than youth in Podsljeme, the level of social trust is lower among youth in Peščenica than in Podsljeme, whereas views on helpfulness of others are also slightly more negative among youth in Peščenica than among youth in Podsljeme. Similar differences in the perception of the neighbourhoods was evident during the interviews too; respondents from Podsljeme often emphasised beauty and fresh air, while respondents from Peščenica sometimes perceived their neighbourhood as dilapidated or uncared for. Moreover, Podsljeme is perceived more as a village, while the young inhabitants perceived Peščenica as an urban area
- WP5 respondents often refer to their new neighbours: members of the Croatian 'new rich' and 'urban villas' which have been gradually replacing the old architecture. Unfortunately, members of the 'new rich' and inhabitants living in 'urban villas' are almost absent from our samples because most of them rejected the survey as well as the interviews. This probably made an impact on our data, too: most of our respondents from Podsljeme belong to 'old-timers' whose parents and grandparents have lived in the neighbourhood when it really looked and functioned like a village. This is why respondents

from Podsljeme will define themselves as religious a little bit more often than their peers from Peščenica, and this is also why a little bit more of them support right wing and conservative opinions in comparison to respondents from Peščenica. This also explains why wp5 respondents from Podsljeme complained about high levels of social control, which is typical for smaller, rural areas. Coming from similar socio-economic backgrounds, apart from some cultural differences mentioned above, our respondents showed that there are, at least in this case, more similarities than differences regarding narratives of young people from two different zones in The City of Zagreb.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the next section we present some specific recommendations for different target groups relevant in the context of active youth participation in society as well as history and memories which are based on Croatian MYPLACE above described preliminary findings.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The Croatian MY Place findings stressed the need for further developing and strengthening all initiatives on different levels which could increase the active participation of Croatian youth with accompanying the need for changing the communication pattern on political scene, thus:

- Politicians should prove to young people that they are interested in demands and expectations of young generation. Politicians should start several types of public forums, different models of meetings and discussions with young people, especially because our study confirmed that youth have very negative attitudes towards politicians and revealed that personally contacting politicians is regarded as relatively least ineffective means of influencing politics. It is recommended to politicians and political parties to create relatively regular political meeting points for young with politicians. Within the perspective of change of previous 'party campaign' models, according to vision of various public forums and regular meetings, young people need to know that politicians are interested in people like them while the political parties and politicians need to learn more what issues are important for young as presented in this Policy Brief.
- There is also need for an initiative from the bottom, not only from above – it means that it is recommended to youth NGO and NGO' for youth to initiate, promote and support such structured contacts and interactions between youth and politicians.
- Since the Internet and TV evidently top the list as the medium through which most young people get informed about politics and current affairs it is recommended to all target groups that devote full attention to their web pages, social sites and their information and attempts to motivate and mobilize young people through the Internet. Apart from the need to organise 'public forums' for youth and meetings, there is a need to develop virtual forums and public spaces to provide information and increase participation opportunities. This includes whole spectrum of possibilities regarding modern technology; web pages, virtual spaces, social networks, interactive spots, learning communities etc. It is also recommended to develop Internet courses of civic education, as well as to use Internet for promoting information about participation activities of youth in other countries.
- As the least active group of young people, our analysis pointed out youth in 16-19 age group - almost a half of youth in this age group are completely inactive. It is not only that they are outside of any organised activity, even outside non-political (sport or church) activities, but their self-perception is shaped in 'we are still incompetent kids' discourse. Thus, there is a strong need for specific measures aimed to increase the participation, interest, as well as broad social competence and related resources that can enhance their role of active and responsible citizens.
- One of these measures is providing young people, especially youngest with more comprehensive civic learning in school. Civic education in Croatian schools is still in the experimental phase but could present an institutionalized venue for development of democratic culture among pupils.

HISTORY AND MEMORY

- It is necessary to re-organise history subjects in high schools, in order to establish greater knowledge and information about WW2 and in order to effectively meet the expectations of the pupils, expressed by our respondents' statement 'to learn about Croatia's recent history'. History schools (public seminars) and history points should be organised also outside schools, in physical as well as in the digital world; political parties and NGO's should develop initiatives for more knowledge on history and more models in knowledge dissemination. It is important that all social actors active in this field agree on presenting history without politically biased attitudes, to inform young people about the facts, including fascist as well as communist's atrocities.
- According to preliminary findings in wp2, where experts (mostly museum curators) claimed that they adjusted most of the exhibitions to the tastes and practices of younger generations, and because our respondents articulated the need for such visits, we would like to recommend organise visits to various memory sites in Croatia. Although recently Croatian government made an attempt to make organise visits to Vukovar memorial site obligatorily for schools, we recommend also organised visits to other memorial sites, including sites of memory regarding WW2.

The full research reports on which this Policy Brief is based can be accessed here: <http://www.fp7-myplace.eu/deliverables.php>

For further information please contact: admin@fp7-myplace.eu

RESEARCH PARAMETERS

MYPLACE: (Memory, Youth, Political Legacy and Civic Engagement)

- A four-year, €7.9 Million EC funded project
- Exploring how young people's social participation is shaped by the shadows (past, present and future) of totalitarianism and populism in Europe

MYPLACE combines survey, interview and ethnographic research to provide new, pan-European data that not only measures levels of participation but captures the meanings young people attach to it:

- Exploring the construction and transmission of historical memory with focus groups and around 30 inter-generational interviews (Work Package 2)
- Measuring young people's participation using a survey delivered in 14 countries with 18,000 respondents (Work Package 4)
- Understanding that participation using 900 in-depth follow up interviews (Work Package 5).
- Interpreting young people's activism through at least 42 ethnographic case studies (Work Package 7).

MYPLACE provides a hugely rich and sophisticated dataset, covering *young people's attitudes and beliefs in relation, specifically, to far-right and populist ideologies, but in practice covering issues such as class, xenophobia, racism, education and trust in democratic processes and associated social and political exclusion*. We welcome opportunities to work with interested policy makers as our data analysis develops. Please contact: admin@fp7-myplace.eu



PROJECT IDENTITY

PROJECT NAME Memory, Youth, Political Legacy and Civic Engagement (MYPLACE)

COORDINATOR Professor Hilary Pilkington, University of Manchester, United Kingdom
hilary.pilkington@manchester.ac.uk

CONSORTIUM

*Caucasus Research Resource Centre
Tbilisi, Georgia*

*Centro Investigacao e Estudos de Sociologia
Lisbon, Portugal*

*Daugavpils Universitate
Daugavpils, Latvia*

*Debreceni Egyetem
Debrecen, Hungary*

*Friedrich-Schiller Universitaet Jena
Jena, Germany*

*Institut Drustvenih Znanost Ivo Pilar
Zagreb, Croatia*

*Manchester Metropolitan University
Manchester, United Kingdom*

*Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences
Athens, Greece*

*State Institution of Ulyanovsk Research and Development Centre "Region"
Ulyanovsk, Russian Federation*

*Syddansk Universitet
Sønderborg, Denmark*

*Tallinn University
Tallinn, Estonia*

*The University of Manchester
Manchester, United Kingdom*

*The University of Warwick
Coventry, United Kingdom*

*Universitaet Bremen
Bremen, Germany*

*Universitat Pompeu Fabra
Barcelona, Spain*

*University of Eastern Finland
Kuopio, Finland*

*Univerzita sv Cyrila a Metoda v Trnavae
Trnava, Slovakia*

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DURATION

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BUDGET

EU contribution: 7 994 463 €.

WEBSITE

www.fp7-myplace.eu

**FOR MORE
INFORMATION**

Contact: Martin Price (Project Manager) – admin@fp7-myplace.eu

FURTHER READING

Deliverable 2.1: Country based reports on discourse production (publication via European Commission and MYPLACE website pending).

Deliverable 4.5: A series of country specific analyses which highlight local historical and cultural factors and which contrast the two regions sampled

Deliverable 5.3: Country based reports on interview findings

All published deliverable reports are available here:
<http://www.fp7-myplace.eu/deliverables.php>