PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF TURKIC STATES

YOUNG PARLIAMENTARIANS GROUP

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REPORT

ENGAGEMENT OF THE YOUTH IN POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES AND REPRESENTATION RATE OF YOUNG PARLIAMENTARIANS IN TURKPA MEMBER STATES

INTRODUCTION

The participation of young people in political decision-making processes and their representation in elected institutions are important aspects of youth engagement in public and political life. In this regard, examining the opportunities available to young people to participate in decision-making, as well as their representation in national parliaments, makes it possible to identify national practices and areas for further cooperation among the TURKPA Member States.

The objectives of the TURKPA Young Parliamentarians Group include promoting cooperation and the exchange of experience on issues concerning young people. From this perspective, youth participation in political processes covers not only representation in elected bodies, but also participation in electoral processes, parliamentary and advisory mechanisms, political parties, youth councils and different forms of dialogue with public institutions.

The information presented by the TURKPA Member States shows that different legal, institutional and practical measures are used to encourage youth participation in political and public life. These include provisions of electoral legislation, youth councils and parliamentary mentoring programmes, electoral

awareness activities, youth forums, political literacy initiatives and other mechanisms aimed at strengthening communication between young people and decision-makers.

At the same time, the available information shows differences in the way youth representation is measured across the Member States. National definitions of youth and the age categories used in statistical reporting differ, while updated age-disaggregated information on the composition of national parliaments is not available for all Member States. These differences should be taken into account when comparing the representation of young parliamentarians.

On this basis, the present report examines the engagement of young people in political decision-making processes and the representation rate of young parliamentarians in the TURKPA Member States. Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Türkiye are considered on a country-by-country basis, with particular attention to relevant legal and institutional frameworks, practical mechanisms for youth participation, available parliamentary representation data and national practices that can contribute to the exchange of experience within TURKPA.

AZERBAIJAN

Youth policy in Azerbaijan is based on the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On Youth Policy” (2002) and around 20 other normative legal acts. The information submitted by the Azerbaijani side also refers to three State Programs on Azerbaijani Youth covering 2005–2009, 2011–2015 and 2017–2021, as well as the Development Strategy for Azerbaijani Youth for 2015–2025. These documents were aimed at creating conditions for the active participation of young people in all spheres of society and supporting the development of their creative and innovative potential. Additional measures include the Order “On State Care for Young Talents in Azerbaijan” (1996), the Order “On Establishing Special Scholarships for Young Talents” (2007), the Decree “On Establishing the Presidential Award for Youth” (2013) and the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On Voluntary Activity” (2019). In 2016, a network of “Youth Houses” social service institutions were also established to support youth development and provide social, psychological, legal and informational assistance.

Increasing the participation of young people in public and political life and in decision-making processes is identified as one of the key areas of state youth policy. Relevant measures were implemented within the framework of the State

Program on Azerbaijani Youth for 2011–2015, the Development Strategy for Azerbaijani Youth for 2015–2025 and the State Program on Azerbaijani Youth for 2017–2021. These measures have included electoral awareness activities. Ahead of the 2015 elections to the Milli Majlis, 5,000 young people took part in training sessions and seminars organized by district and city youth and sports departments under the slogan “Your Vote – Your Future”. In 2020, awareness-raising activities were conducted among more than 13,000 first-time voters within the “Vote – Let Your Voice Be Heard” project.

Azerbaijan also uses regular youth dialogue platforms. The First Forum of Azerbaijani Youth was held on 2 February 1996, and one year later 2 February was declared Youth Day in Azerbaijan. According to the information submitted for the present report, a total of 11 Youth Forums had been held by 2026. These forums provide opportunities for young people from the capital and the regions to exchange views, raise issues of concern and communicate proposals and initiatives relevant to the future development of the country. The Azerbaijani side identifies this long-term forum mechanism as a practice that could be shared among TURKPA Member States in order to facilitate dialogue between young people and state institutions.

Institutional mechanisms supporting youth participation include the Youth Foundation of the Republic of Azerbaijan, established in 2011, and the National Assembly of Youth Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan, which was established in 1995 at the initiative of 11 youth organizations and currently brings together more than 130 members. The Assembly seeks to promote joint efforts to address youth-related issues, protect the rights of young people and strengthen cooperation among youth organizations. According to the submitted information, the Ministry also provides annual grant funding for projects implemented in various fields. Local and foreign delegates, young people and volunteers have additionally participated in more than 50 international events and dialogue platforms, including the “Baku Decides” 1st Youth Climate Negotiations, the “By Youth For Youth” International Forum, “Shusha – OIC Youth Capital”, the ECO Youth Forum, the D-8 Youth Dialogue and events held under the CICA chairmanship.

The Azerbaijani submission also emphasizes the influence of political culture and civic traditions on youth engagement. It notes the role of patriotism, commitment to statehood and civic responsibility developed through the family, educational institutions and the wider social environment in encouraging young people to participate in public and political life. Youth structures within political parties are identified as another channel of political participation. According to the information provided, young people account for 39.9 percent of the membership of the New

Azerbaijan Party, whose Youth Union organizes discussion-based meetings with young people in the regions, takes their views into consideration and supports their initiatives. This figure concerns party membership and should not be interpreted as a measure of youth representation in Parliament.

The measures described by the Azerbaijani side therefore combine legislative and policy frameworks, electoral awareness initiatives, youth dialogue mechanisms, institutional platforms and measures aimed at strengthening civic participation. The experience of the Azerbaijani Youth Forums is specifically presented by the Azerbaijani side as a practice that may be shared among TURKPA Member States. However, the information submitted for the present report does not contain an updated age breakdown of the current composition of the Milli Majlis. Therefore, the current representation rate of young parliamentarians cannot be reflected on a basis directly comparable with Member States for which age-disaggregated parliamentary data are available.

KAZAKHSTAN

The representation of young people in political institutions in Kazakhstan is supported by provisions of the electoral legislation. When political parties approve their lists of candidates for the Kurultai, women, youth and persons with disabilities must together account for at least 30 percent of the total number of candidates. The same combined requirement applies to the allocation of parliamentary mandates obtained by political parties. The 30-percent requirement therefore concerns the three categories collectively and does not establish a separate quota of 30 percent for young people.

These provisions were applied during the first elections to the Kurultai of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2026. At the end of the registration process, seven political parties had included a total of 545 candidates in their party lists for 145 parliamentary seats. Among them, 74 candidates were under the age of 35. Women, young people and persons with disabilities together accounted for 43.9 percent of all registered candidates. The elections were held on 23 August 2026, and the elected deputies were registered by the Central Election Commission on 27 August.

According to information released by the Kurultai in September 2026, 25 deputies aged 35 and under serve in the 145-member Parliament. They represent 17.2 percent of the deputy corps. Of these young parliamentarians, 10 are women and 15 are men. The youngest deputy is 27 years old, while the average age of

members of the Kurultai is 46. Women hold 49 seats, accounting for 33.8 percent of the total membership.

Alongside parliamentary representation, attention is given to increasing the electoral awareness of young citizens. Young Voters Clubs operate in all regions of Kazakhstan as platforms for dialogue on electoral issues and for improving understanding of electoral procedures. As of April 2026, more than 3,000 young people participated in 248 such clubs across the country. Their activities include projects on electoral culture, legal awareness and the exercise of electoral rights.

The Republican Forum “Youth and Elections”, held in Kyzylorda in April 2026, brought together members of Young Voters Clubs from all regions, representatives of election commissions and young voters. The discussions focused on the electoral process and on establishing regular direct dialogue between election authorities and young people. More than 400 young voters participated in the forum.

Kazakhstan therefore combines legislative measures concerning representation with practical mechanisms aimed at involving young citizens in electoral processes. The presence of 25 deputies aged 35 and under in the first convocation of the Kurultai provides a clear indicator of the current level of youth representation, while the activities of Young Voters Clubs are intended to broaden participation and understanding of political processes among the younger generation.

KYRGYZSTAN

Young people constitute a significant part of the population of the Kyrgyz Republic. According to data for 2026, approximately 2.519 million people aged 14–35 live in the country, accounting for 31.6 percent of the total population. Against this background, particular attention is paid to creating opportunities for young people to participate in public administration and political decision-making processes.

At the parliamentary level, the Youth Council under the Chair of the Jogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic was established on 25 February 2026. It functions as a consultative and advisory platform intended to maintain dialogue between young people and Parliament, promote youth initiatives and encourage wider participation in legislative and political processes. The Council includes young

deputies of the Jogorku Kenesh and local councils, representatives of youth and civil society organizations, as well as young professionals from different fields.

One of the principal initiatives of the Council is the “Young Professionals School”. More than 600 candidates from different regions applied for the programme and 120 participants were selected following a multi-stage selection process. The programme includes the “1 Deputy – 1 Mentee” model, under which participants are assigned to members of the Jogorku Kenesh and become familiar with the day-to-day work of Parliament. They have the opportunity to observe the preparation of legislative initiatives, the work of parliamentary committees and hearings, the preparation of analytical materials and work with citizens’ appeals.

Similar mechanisms operate at the local level. According to the information provided by the Kyrgyz side, 86 Youth Councils with a total membership of 854 people operate across the country. Their work includes representing the interests of young people, supporting local initiatives and maintaining cooperation with state bodies and local self-government authorities. The Republican Congress of the Youth of Kyrgyzstan, held in Bishkek on 14–15 May 2026 with the participation of 120 delegates and guests, also provided an opportunity for young people from different regions to raise issues of concern and present proposals on youth policy.

Cooperation between young parliamentarians has also developed at the international level. Following the signing of an agreement between the Youth Council under the Chair of the Jogorku Kenesh and the Youth Parliament of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of Uzbekistan, the First Kyrgyz-Uzbek Forum of Young Parliamentarians was held in Tashkent on 14–16 May 2026. The Second Kyrgyz-Uzbek Forum of Young Parliamentarians and Young Leaders was subsequently held in the Issyk-Kul Region on 10–12 August 2026. These meetings focused on the exchange of experience in youth parliamentarism and parliamentary cooperation.

The measures undertaken in Kyrgyzstan are mainly focused on providing young people with practical access to parliamentary and public administration processes and establishing regular channels of communication with decision-makers. The information submitted by the Kyrgyz side, however, does not contain an updated age breakdown of the current composition of the Jogorku Kenesh. Therefore, the current representation rate of young parliamentarians cannot be reflected on a comparable statistical basis.

TÜRKİYE

Young people continue to constitute an important part of the population of Türkiye. According to the Turkish Statistical Institute, the population aged 15–24 amounted to approximately 12.7 million at the end of 2025, representing 14.8 percent of the total population.

The legal framework provides young citizens with the possibility of direct participation in parliamentary politics. Article 76 of the Constitution of the Republic of Türkiye stipulates that every Turkish citizen over the age of 18 is eligible to be elected as a deputy. The Twelfth Development Plan for 2024–2028 also places emphasis on the participation of young people in decision-making mechanisms and provides for increasing the number and quality of mechanisms designed for this purpose.

The results of the parliamentary elections of 14 May 2023 provide a measurable indication of the representation of younger age groups in the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye. According to the Supreme Election Council, among the 600 deputies elected in 2023, one was aged 18–24, three were aged 25–29, 16 were aged 30–34 and 43 were aged 35–39. Thus, 20 elected deputies, or approximately 3.3 percent, were under the age of 35 at the time of the election, while four deputies were under the age of 30.

In the information submitted for the present report, Türkiye also emphasizes the importance of evidence-based youth policy. The Türkiye Youth Atlas is designed to regularly monitor the youth profile and bring together information relating to social relations, employment, economic conditions, digital habits, cultural values and other factors affecting young people. The Turkish side considers that systematic collection of such information can contribute to the development of youth policies and provide a basis for comparing approaches among TURKPA Member States.

Türkiye has also proposed the development of a common “Political Literacy Education Curriculum” for TURKPA Member States. The proposal is directly aimed at supporting young people’s participation in decision-making processes. The relevant Directorate of the Ministry of Youth and Sports has expressed its readiness to contribute to the preparation of the curriculum, as well as to the exchange of educational materials, institutional experience and experts among the Member States.

The experience of Türkiye shows that lowering legal barriers to parliamentary participation alone does not necessarily result in a high level of representation of

younger age groups. At the same time, measures aimed at political literacy, youth data collection and participation in decision-making provide additional channels through which young people may become more closely involved in political and public processes.

CONCLUSION

As demonstrated in the country sections of the report, the TURKPA Member States apply different legal, institutional and practical measures to encourage the participation of young people in political and public life. These measures range from electoral provisions and parliamentary representation to youth councils, mentoring programs, electoral awareness activities, youth forums and political literacy initiatives. Despite differences in national approaches, the examples presented in the report show a common interest in creating opportunities for young people to engage more closely with political institutions and decision-making processes.

The available information also shows that the representation of young people in national parliaments cannot currently be compared on a fully uniform statistical basis. While age-disaggregated parliamentary data are available for some Member States, comparable updated information is not available for all countries, and the definitions and age categories used in relation to youth may differ. More systematic collection and exchange of comparable data can therefore help provide a clearer picture of youth representation across the TURKPA Member States.

The country experiences also show that youth political engagement extends beyond parliamentary representation alone. Electoral awareness initiatives, youth councils, mentoring schemes, regular forums for dialogue and political literacy activities provide additional channels through which young people can gain practical experience and interact with decision-makers. The exchange of these practices among TURKPA Member States can support further cooperation and provide additional opportunities for young people to participate in political decision-making processes.