



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

Youth participation in national parliaments

10 years of empowering youth in parliament



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37%

37 per cent of chambers of parliament have no MPs under 30.

Some 25 per cent of the world's single and lower chambers have no MPs aged under 30.

25%

73%

73 per cent of the world's upper chambers have no MPs aged under 30.

Source: Youth participation in national parliaments 2021

QUOTAS

Based on our 2020 surveys, only **9 countries** have **youth quotas** in their legal frameworks, a number that remains **unchanged since 2016**.

9

AGE

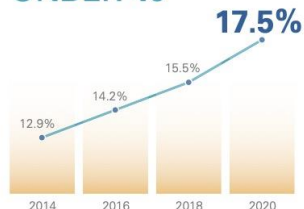
Global percentage of young MPs (men and women) by age category

UNDER 30



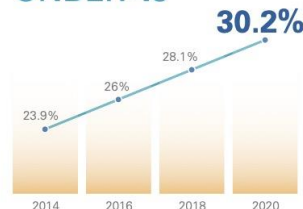
2.6 per cent of the world's MPs are aged under 30 – increase of **1 per cent** since 2014.

UNDER 40



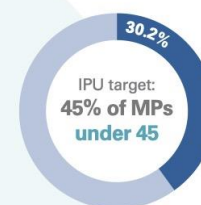
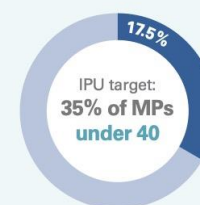
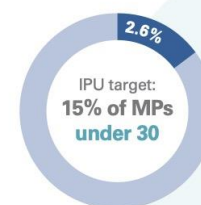
17.5 per cent of the world's MPs are aged under 40 – increase of **4.6 per cent** since 2014.

UNDER 45



30.2 per cent of the world's MPs are aged under 45 – increase of **6.3 per cent** since 2014.

Progression of number of young MPs towards the respective targets set by the IPU



Each target also calls for **50-50 gender parity**



Percentage of women in each age category of young MPs

1.1%

6.1%

9.8%

ELIGIBILITY

The age at which citizens are eligible to run for parliamentary office rarely coincides with the legal voting age



69%

69 per cent of countries impose a 'waiting time' between voting age and age of eligibility for office.

The waiting time is generally longer for upper than for single or lower chambers.



The age requirements for upper chambers range from 18 to 45, with an average of 28.6.

The average waiting time is 10.4 years.



The age requirements for single and lower chambers range from 17 to 30 with an average of 21.6.

The average waiting time is 3.5 years.



39%

Only 39 per cent of chambers analysed have a **committee** whose name explicitly refers to "youth".

16%

16 per cent of parliaments have a **caucus** of young MPs.

Key findings

Youth participation in national parliaments

Top-ranking countries for parliamentarians under ages 30, 40 and 45 (single and lower chambers)

| Under age 30 | | | Under age 40 | | | Under age 45 | | |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|-------|--------------|--------------|-------|--------------|-------------------|-------|
| Rank | Country | % | Rank | Country | % | Rank | Country | % |
| 1 | Norway | 13.61 | 1 | Armenia | 57.58 | 1 | Armenia | 71.97 |
| 2 | Armenia | 12.12 | 2 | Ukraine | 46.34 | 2 | Ukraine | 63.36 |
| 3 | San Marino | 11.67 | 3 | Italy | 42.70 | 3 | Turkmenistan | 63.20 |
| 4 | Gambia (the) | 10.34 | 4 | Suriname | 37.25 | 4 | Maldives | 59.77 |
| 5 | Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) | 9.82 | 5 | Afghanistan | 37.10 | 5 | Italy | 59.52 |
| 6 | Suriname | 9.80 | 6 | Gambia (the) | 36.21 | 6 | Gambia (the) | 56.90 |
| 7 | Denmark | 9.50 | 7 | Romania | 35.26 | 7 | Netherlands (the) | 55.33 |
| 8 | Sweden | 9.42 | 8 | Turkmenistan | 35.20 | 8 | Kyrgyzstan | 54.17 |
| 9 | Djibouti | 9.23 | 9 | Kyrgyzstan | 35.00 | 9 | Belgium | 54.00 |
| 10 | Chile | 8.39 | 10 | Norway | 34.32 | 10 | Suriname | 52.94 |



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Key findings

Youth participation in national parliaments

Top-ranking countries for parliamentarians under ages 30, 40 and 45 (upper chambers)

| Under age 30 | | | Under age 40 | | | Under age 45 | | |
|--------------|----------------------------------|-------|--------------|---------------------|-------|--------------|---------------------|-------|
| Rank | Country | % | Rank | Country | % | Rank | Country | % |
| 1 | Belgium | 10.00 | 1 | Belgium | 41.67 | 1 | Belgium | 48.33 |
| 2 | Somalia | 3.70 | 2 | Burundi | 28.21 | 2 | Afghanistan | 41.18 |
| 3 | Trinidad and Tobago | 3.33 | 3 | Jamaica | 23.53 | 3 | Burundi | 41.03 |
| 4 | Australia | 2.63 | 4 | Trinidad and Tobago | 23.33 | 4 | Romania | 34.56 |
| 5 | Mexico | 1.96 | 5 | Myanmar | 21.43 | 5 | Colombia | 33.02 |
| 6 | Spain | 1.89 | 6 | Kenya | 20.59 | 6 | Myanmar | 32.59 |
| 7 | South Africa | 1.89 | 7 | Somalia | 20.37 | 7 | Kenya | 30.88 |
| 8 | Kenya | 1.47 | 8 | Colombia | 16.98 | 8 | Trinidad and Tobago | 30.00 |
| 9 | Netherlands (the) | 1.33 | 9 | Afghanistan | 16.18 | 9 | Somalia | 29.63 |
| 10 | Democratic Republic of the Congo | 0.92 | 10 | South Africa | 15.09 | 10 | Mexico | 29.41 |



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Key findings

Youth participation in national parliaments

In addition to legal barriers, there are many others:

- Financial
- Mistrust
- Life-cycle challenges (education, family, career)

Trust: Younger people are generally more mistrustful of the political system, and more likely to disengage from it than engage with it



Higher education: Younger people are likely to be focusing on completing university or training for a specific profession



Family: Younger people are likely to be starting families and caring for young children which can be incompatible with standing for office



Finances: Younger people are likely to prioritize reducing student debt, and securing a residence above political campaign spending



Career: Younger people are more likely to be focusing on getting a foothold in their chosen career than standing for public office



Mobility: Younger people are more mobile than older people, and are likely to rent and move frequently, reducing the likelihood of committing to serve a single constituency



Prejudice: Younger people are likely to experience age-related prejudice within political parties concerning their suitability for public office



Recommendations

Youth participation in national parliaments

- **Eliminate barriers for young MPs**
 - Lower age of eligibility: Not too young to run
 - Policies and practices to address life-cycle challenges
 - More equitable campaign financing for young people
- **Prioritize special measures for youth**
 - Youth quotas
 - Youth Committees and Caucuses
- **Address double discrimination of young women**
 - Quotas that take gender into account
 - Implement Call to action on young women's political participation

Recommendations

Youth participation in national parliaments

- **Empower young MPs**
 - Opportunities for leadership positions
 - Mentorship and training
- **Empower young people who aspire to be young MPs**
 - Create or strengthen youth wings in political parties
 - Open up parliament to youth perspectives in between elections

How IPU Can Help

Youth participation in national parliaments

- Trainings for newly-elected young MPs
- Mentorship programmes
- Technical support
 - Youth caucuses and networks
 - Legislative support for electoral reform
 - Policy guidelines





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Thank You

Zeina Hilal
Manager
Youth Participation Programme
zh@ipu.org