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The Youth European Network

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- *to spread European opportunities and initiatives,*
- *to disseminate the respect of human rights and the awareness about the development of Europe's cultural identity and diversity,*
- *to fight discrimination against minorities, xenophobia, intolerance and racism,*
- *to help, with youth activities, the democratic stability and social inclusion in Europe,*
- *develop active European citizenship and civil society by giving impetus to the training of youth leaders and youth workers working within a European dimension;*
- *to promote European youth activities, such as exchanges, seminars, conferences, debates and training courses,*
- *to encourage exchange of ideas, proposals, experiences and good practises at international level.*

NEWSLETTER REALISED BY
THE ASSOCIATION EURO-NET
AS EUROPE DIRECT BASILICATA CENTRE

EUROPE DIRECT
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1. Winter 2023 Economic Forecast

Almost one year after Russia launched its war of aggression against Ukraine, the EU economy entered 2023 on a better footing than projected in autumn.

The Winter interim Forecast lifts the growth outlook for this year to 0.8% in the EU and 0.9% in the euro area. Both areas are now set to narrowly avoid the technical recession that was anticipated for the turn of the year. The forecast also slightly lowers the projections for inflation for both 2023 and 2024.

Outlook improves thanks to enhanced resilience

Following robust expansion in the first half of 2022, growth momentum abated in the third quarter, although slightly less than expected. Despite exceptional adverse shocks, the EU economy avoided the fourth-quarter contraction projected in the Autumn Forecast. The annual growth rate for 2022 is now estimated at 3.5% in both the EU and the euro area. Favourable

developments since the Autumn Forecast have improved the growth outlook for this year. Continued diversification of supply sources and a sharp drop in consumption have left gas storage levels above the seasonal average of past years, and wholesale gas prices have fallen well below pre-war levels. In addition, the EU labour market has continued to perform strongly, with the unemployment rate remaining at its all-time low of 6.1% until the end of 2022. Confidence is improving and January surveys suggest that economic activity is also set to avoid a contraction in the first quarter of 2023. Headwinds, however, remain strong. Consumers and businesses continue to face high energy costs and core inflation (headline inflation excluding energy and unprocessed food) was still rising in January, further eroding households' purchasing power. As inflationary pressures persist, monetary tightening is set to continue, weighing on business activity and exerting a drag on investment. The Winter interim Forecast's projected growth for 2023 of 0.8% in the EU and 0.9% in the euro area is respectively 0.5 and 0.6 pps higher than in the Autumn Forecast. The growth rate for 2024 remains unchanged, at 1.6% and 1.5% for the EU and the euro area, respectively. By the end of the forecast horizon, the volume of output is set to be almost 1 per cent above that projected in the Autumn Forecast.

After peaking in 2022, inflation to ease over the forecast horizon

Three consecutive months of moderating headline inflation suggest that the peak is now behind us, as anticipated in the Autumn Forecast. After reaching an all-time high of 10.6% in October, inflation has decreased, with the January flash estimate down to 8.5% in the euro area. The decline was driven mainly by falling energy inflation, while core inflation has not yet peaked. The inflation forecast has been revised slightly downwards compared to autumn, mainly reflecting developments in the energy market. Headline inflation is forecast to fall from 9.2% in 2022 to 6.4% in 2023 and to 2.8% in 2024 in the EU. In the euro area, it is projected to decelerate from 8.4% in 2022 to 5.6% in 2023 and to 2.5% in 2024.

Risks to the outlook are more balanced

While uncertainty surrounding the forecast remains high, risks to growth are broadly balanced. Domestic demand could turn out higher than projected if the recent declines in wholesale gas prices pass through to consumer prices more strongly and consumption proves more resilient. Nonetheless, a potential reversal of that fall cannot be ruled out in the context of continued geopolitical tensions. External demand could also turn out to be more robust following China's re-opening – which could, however, fuel global inflation. Risks to inflation remain largely linked to developments in energy markets, mirroring some of the identified risks to growth. Especially in 2024, upside risks to inflation prevail, as price pressures may turn out broader and more entrenched than expected if wage growth were to settle at above-average rates for a sustained period.

Background

The Winter 2023 Economic Forecast provides an update of the Autumn 2022 Economic Forecast, which was presented on 11 November 2022, focusing on GDP and inflation developments in all EU Member States. This forecast crucially hinges on the purely technical assumption that Russia's aggression of Ukraine will not escalate but will continue throughout the forecast horizon. It is also underpinned by a set of technical assumptions concerning exchange rates, interest rates and commodity prices with a cut-off date of 27 January. For all other incoming data, including assumptions about government policies, this forecast takes into consideration information up until and including 1 February. The European Commission publishes two comprehensive forecasts (spring and autumn) and two interim forecasts (winter and summer) each year. The interim forecasts cover annual and quarterly GDP and inflation for the current and following year for all Member States, as well as EU and euro area aggregates. The European Commission's next forecast will be the Spring 2023 Economic Forecast, scheduled to be published in May 2023.

2. EC proposes 2030 zero-emissions target for new buses and trucks

The European Commission has proposed ambitious new CO_2 emissions targets for new heavy-duty vehicles (HDVs) from 2030 onwards.

These targets will help to reduce CO2 emissions in the transport sector - trucks, city buses, and long-distance buses are responsible for over 6% of total EU greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and more than 25% of GHG emissions from road transport. These strengthened emissions standards would ensure that this segment of the road transport sector contributes to the shift to zero-emissions mobility and the EU's climate and zero pollution objectives. The Commission proposes phasing in stronger CO_2 emissions standards for almost all new HDVs with certified CO_2 emissions, compared to 2019 levels, specifically: 45% emissions reductions from 2030; 65% emission reductions from 2035; 90% emissions reduction from 2040.

To stimulate faster deployment of zero-emission buses in cities, the Commission also proposes to make all new city buses zero-emission as of 2030. In line with the European Green Deal and REPowerEU objectives, this proposal will also have a positive impact on the energy transition, by lowering demand for imported fossil fuels and enhancing energy savings and efficiencies in the EU's transport sector. It will provide benefits for European transport operators and users by reducing fuel costs and total cost of ownership, and ensure a wider deployment of more energy-efficient vehicles. It will also improve air quality, notably in cities, and the health of Europeans. Moreover, this is a key sector to support the European clean tech industry and boost international competitiveness. The EU is a market leader in the production of trucks and buses and a common legal framework helps to secure that position for the future. In particular, the revised standards provide a clear and long-term signal to guide EU industry investments in innovative zero-emission technologies and boost the rollout of recharging and refuelling infrastructure.

Background

Emissions in the HDV sector have been increasing year-on-year since 2014 with the exception of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Especially in the freight sector, emissions are increasing rapidly. This is mainly due to growing road transport demand, which is expected to keep rising in the future. In 2019, freight emissions were 44% higher than emissions from the aviation sector and 37% higher than maritime transport emissions. The vast majority of heavy-duty vehicles in the EU fleet (99%) currently run on internal combustion engines, fuelled largely by imported fossil fuels such as diesel. This adds to the EU's energy dependency and current volatility of the energy market. The current HDV emissions standards date from 2019, but are no longer in line with the EU's climate objectives. Existing legislation does not provide a sufficiently clear and long-term signal to investors and does not reflect the new reality in the energy sector and the rapid developments in the HDV industry globally. The proposed new CO_2 standards are in line with the EU's increased climate ambitions, the Fit for 55 package and the Paris Agreement. To support this proposal, investments need to be channelled into zero-emission vehicles and into the recharging and refuelling infrastructure, and the Commission has already proposed the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation to develop the necessary charging infrastructure to support the green transition of the heavy duty vehicles sector. In particular, the Commission proposed to install charging and fuelling points at regular intervals on major highways: every 60 kilometres for electric charging and every 150 kilometres for hydrogen refuelling. The Commission is working intensively with the co-legislators to finalise the negotiations on these proposals.

3. New exposure limits for lead and diisocyanates

The Commission has taken action to further improve the protection of workers from the health risks linked to the exposure to dangerous chemicals: lead and diisocyanates.

In the case of lead, a significantly reduced exposure limit will help prevent health issues of workers, for example affecting reproductive functions and foetal development. For diisocyanates, a new exposure limit will prevent cases of asthma and other respiratory diseases. Concretely, the Commission proposes to amend two Directives: for lead, the Directive on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens, mutagens and reprotoxic substances at work, and for lead and diisocyanates, the Directive on the protection of workers from the risks related to chemical agents at work. The proposed changes will also be key to protect workers in the context of advancing the transition to climate neutrality: both lead and diisocyanates are likely to be used, for example, in the production of batteries and in processes to make electric vehicles lighter, in wind turbines or as insulating materials during building renovations.

Further lowering the exposure limit for lead

Lead can affect sexual function and fertility, and it can harm the development of a foetus or offspring of exposed women. It can also damage the nervous system, the kidneys, the heart and blood of people exposed to it. It is estimated that currently, 100,000 workers in the EU are exposed to lead at work, according to the European Commission's impact assessment. The EU has had occupational exposure limits in place to protect workers from the negative health effects of lead since 1982. On the basis of the latest scientific evidence, the Commission proposes: to further lower the occupational exposure limit from 0.15 milligrams per cubic meter (0.15mg/m^3) to 0.03mg/m^3, and to lower the biological limit value from 70 microgram per 100 millilitre of blood (70µg/100ml) to 15µg/100ml. While the workforce exposed to lead is predominantly male, female workers may face additional risks as lead can affect pregnant women and the developing foetus. Therefore, the Commission also reiterates that to better protect women, it is paramount to raise awareness among workers of childbearing capacity and put in place specific measures to minimise any possible risks and in addition ensure that the blood lead level in women of childbearing age should not exceed the reference values of the general population not occupationally exposed to lead in the respective Member State. When national reference levels are not available, blood lead levels in women of childbearing age should not exceed the biological limit value of 4.5 µg/100ml.

Introducing first-ever exposure limits for diisocyanates

Diisocyanates describe various chemicals that are often grouped based on their common properties, and which can cause respiratory diseases like asthma. The Commission's impact assessment estimates that currently, 4.2 million workers in the EU are exposed to diisocyanates. There are currently no limit values for diisocyanates at EU level. The Commission therefore proposes to introduce, for the first time, limit values to protect workers from exposure to diisocyanates at work. These limit values refer to the nitrogen, carbon, and oxygen group of diisocyanates, responsible for their ill-health effects: an overall occupational exposure limit of 6µg NCO/m^3 (this stands for the maximum concentration of a substance in the air a worker breathes in a certain reference period, 8 hours) and a short-term exposure limit of 12µg NCO/m^3 (this stands for a shorter reference period, 15 minutes. It applies when the negative health effects of a substance cannot be adequately controlled with an overall exposure limit, for instance during short but high intensity exposure). In addition to the limit values, the Commission proposes so-called “notations”. Notations are indications added to limit values, which alert employers and workers of possible exposure via routes other than inhalation, for example, through the skin, and of the need to implement protective measures.

Next steps

The Commission's proposal will now be discussed by the European Parliament and the Council. Once adopted, Member States will have two years to transpose the Directive into national law.

Background

This proposal is the result of an extensive consultation process, including a two-stage consultation with social partners, and of close collaboration with scientists and representatives of workers, employers, and Member States. It follows up on the commitments made in the EU

Strategic Framework on health and safety at work 2021-2027, where the Commission announced a proposal for limit values for lead and diisocyanates. It also stems from the fourth revision of the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive in March 2022, which extended its scope to reprotoxic substances, which affect reproductive functions. This proposal brings lead under the scope of the now Carcinogens, Mutagens and Reprotoxic Substances Directive. The actions will also contribute to implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights. Lead accounts for around half of all occupational exposures to reprotoxic substances. Approximately 300 cases of ill-health occur annually in the EU due to past exposure to lead. Exposure occurs in the mining and primary processing of lead, and its subsequent use in products such as batteries. In addition, workers can be exposed to lead due to its historical application in renovations, waste collection, recycling, and environmental remediation. Occupational exposure to diisocyanates accounts for 9% to 15% of all asthma cases in adults of working age. Peak exposure (meaning short duration, high intensity) is a key contributor to developing asthma. This is why in addition to a general occupational exposure limit, a short-term exposure limit is proposed. Work-related exposure to diisocyanates occurs primarily in the manufacturing of polyurethane, which is used for products such as foams, plastics, coatings, varnishes, two-pack paints, and adhesives. Since there are currently no limit values for diisocyanates, the Commission proposes a transitional period until 31 December 2028 to support businesses with implementation. Until then, the occupational exposure limit will be 10µg NCO/m^3, and short-term exposure should be limited to 20µg NCO /m^3.

4. Civil Protection: EU outlines Disaster Resilience Goals

The European Commission adopted a Recommendation and a Communication to establish common goals to boost disaster resilience in the areas of civil protection.

This includes ways to better prepare European countries for natural hazards, including earthquakes, floods and forest fires to name a few. In view of the rapidly changing risk landscape, the European disaster resilience goals aim to improve the capacity of the EU, its Member States and Participating States to the EU Civil Protection Mechanism to anticipate and withstand the effects of future major disasters and emergencies. To this end and in close cooperation with Member States, the European Commission identified five goals to pursue collectively. The five European Disaster Resilience Goals are: Anticipate – To improve risk assessment, anticipation, and disaster risk management planning. The complexity and interdependency of risks the EU faces makes it important to identify vulnerabilities in critical sectors, and anticipate hazards and threats. Prepare – To increase risk awareness and preparedness of the population. Increasing risk awareness and preparedness of the population helps to reduce the impact of disasters. Alert – To enhance early warning. Enhancing early warning systems ensures that warning messages across the national, regional and local levels reach the right people on time. Respond – To enhance the EU Civil Protection Mechanism response capacity. By further enhancing the EU Civil Protection Mechanism response capacity, the EU can provide more help to fill critical gaps and avoid further deterioration of the situation when the capacity of a country is overwhelmed. Secure – To ensure a robust civil protection system. Civil protection systems need to remain operational 24/7, during and after disasters, when they are most needed. Updating business continuity plans and procedures and ensuring coordination and information sharing across sectors, including with critical infrastructure providers, will help civil protection systems to function at all times. To kick-off the implementation of these goals, the European Commission is launching five flagship initiatives, one under each goal. For example, a flagship initiative will be to launch preparEU, a pan-European awareness raising programme for disaster resilience targeting European citizens.

Background

When the scale of an emergency overwhelms the response capabilities of a country, it can request assistance via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. Once activated, the EU's Emergency Response Coordination Centre coordinates and finances assistance made available by EU Member States and eight additional Participating States (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, and Türkiye) through spontaneous offers. The Union disaster resilience goals set priority areas and related specific objectives to strengthen the disaster resilience of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and of the Member States. The goals are a non-binding common baseline to support prevention and preparedness actions in the event of disasters which affect two or more countries at the same time.

5. Green Deal Industrial Plan: putting Europe's net-zero industry in the lead

The Commission presents a Green Deal Industrial Plan to enhance the competitiveness of Europe's net-zero industry and support the fast transition to climate neutrality.

The Plan aims to provide a more supportive environment for the scaling up of the EU's manufacturing capacity for the net-zero technologies and products required to meet Europe's ambitious climate targets. The Plan builds on previous initiatives and relies on the strengths of the EU Single Market, complementing ongoing efforts under the European Green Deal and REPowerEU. It is based on four pillars: a predictable and simplified regulatory environment, speeding up access to finance, enhancing skills, and open trade for resilient supply chains. Ursula **von der Leyen**, President of the European Commission, said: *"We have a once in a generation opportunity to show the way with speed, ambition and a sense of purpose to secure the EU's industrial lead in the fast-growing net-zero technology sector. Europe is determined to lead the clean tech revolution. For our companies and people, it means turning skills into quality jobs and innovation into mass production, thanks to a simpler and faster framework. Better access to finance will allow our key clean tech industries to scale up quickly."*

A predictable and simplified regulatory environment

The first pillar of the plan is about a simpler regulatory framework.

The Commission will propose a Net-Zero Industry Act to identify goals for net-zero industrial capacity and provide a regulatory framework suited for its quick deployment, ensuring simplified and fast-track permitting, promoting European strategic projects, and developing standards to support the scale-up of technologies across the Single Market. The framework will be complemented by the Critical Raw Materials Act, to ensure sufficient access to those materials, like rare earths, that are vital for manufacturing key technologies, and the reform of the electricity market design, to make consumers benefit from the lower costs of renewables.

Faster access to funding

The second pillar of the plan will speed up investment and financing for clean tech production in Europe. Public financing, in conjunction with further progress on the European Capital Markets Union, can unlock the huge amounts of private financing required for the green transition. Under competition policy, the Commission aims to guarantee a level playing field within the Single Market while making it easier for the Member States to grant necessary aid to fast-track the green transition. To that end, in order to speed up and simplify aid granting, the Commission will consult Member States on an amended Temporary State aid Crisis and Transition Framework and it will revise the General Block Exemption Regulation in light of the Green Deal, increasing notification thresholds for support for green investments. Among others, this will contribute to further **streamline and simplify the approval of IPCEI-related projects**.

The Commission will also facilitate the use of existing EU funds for financing clean tech innovation, manufacturing and deployment. The Commission is also exploring avenues to achieve greater common financing at EU level to support investments in manufacturing of net-zero technologies, based on an ongoing investment needs assessment. The Commission will work with Member States in the short term, with a focus on REPowerEU, InvestEU and the Innovation Fund, on a bridging solution to provide fast and targeted support. For the mid-term, the Commission intends to give a structural answer to the investment needs, by proposing a European Sovereignty Fund in the context of the review of the Multi-annual financial framework before summer 2023. To help Member States' access the REPowerEU funds, the Commission has adopted new guidance on recovery and resilience plans, explaining the process of modifying existing plans and the modalities for preparing REPowerEU chapters.

Enhancing skills

As between 35% and 40% of all jobs could be affected by the green transition, developing the skills needed for well-paid quality jobs will be a priority for the European Year of Skills, and the third pillar of the plan will focus on it. To develop the skills for a people centred green transition the Commission will propose to establish Net-Zero Industry Academies to roll out up-skilling and re-skilling programmes in strategic industries. It will also consider how to combine a 'Skills-first' approach, recognising actual skills, with existing approaches based on qualifications, and how to facilitate access of third country nationals to EU labour markets in priority sectors, as well as measures to foster and align public and private funding for skills development.

Open trade for resilient supply chains

The fourth pillar will be about global cooperation and making trade work for the green transition, under the principles of fair competition and open trade, building on the engagements with the EU's partners and the work of the World Trade Organization. To that end, the Commission will continue to develop the EU's network of Free Trade Agreements and other forms of cooperation with partners to support the green transition. It will also explore the creation of a Critical Raw Materials Club, to bring together raw material 'consumers' and resource-rich countries to ensure global security of supply through a competitive and diversified industrial base, and of Clean Tech/Net-Zero Industrial Partnerships. The Commission will also protect the Single Market from unfair trade in the clean tech sector and will use its instruments to ensure that foreign subsidies do not distort competition in the Single Market, also in the clean-tech sector.

Background

The European Green Deal, presented by the Commission on 11 December 2019, sets the goal of making Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. The European Climate Law enshrines in binding legislation the EU's commitment to climate neutrality and the intermediate target of reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels. In the transition to a net-zero economy, Europe's competitiveness will strongly rely on its capacity to develop and manufacture the clean technologies that make this transition possible. The European Green Deal Industrial Plan was announced by President von der Leyen in her speech at to the World Economic Forum in Davos in January 2023 as the initiative for the EU to sharpen its competitive edge through clean-tech investment and continue leading on the path to climate neutrality. It responds to the invitation by the European Council for the Commission to make proposals by the end of January 2023 to mobilise all relevant national and EU tools and improve framework conditions for investment, with a view to ensuring EU's resilience and competitiveness.

6. Commission sets out rules for renewable hydrogen

The Commission has proposed detailed rules to define what constitutes renewable hydrogen in the EU, with the adoption of two Delegated Acts required under the Renewable Energy Directive.

These Acts are part of a broad EU regulatory framework for hydrogen which includes energy infrastructure investments and state aid rules, and legislative targets for renewable hydrogen for the industry and transport sectors. They will ensure that all renewable fuels of non-biological origin (also known as RFNBOs) are produced from renewable electricity. The two Acts are inter-related and both necessary for the fuels to be counted towards Member States' renewable energy target. They will provide regulatory certainty to investors as the EU aims to reach 10 million tonnes of domestic renewable hydrogen production and 10 million tonnes of imported renewable hydrogen in line with the REPowerEU Plan.

More renewables, less emissions

The first Delegated Act defines under which conditions hydrogen, hydrogen-based fuels or other energy carriers can be considered as an RFNBO. The Act clarifies the principle of "additionality" for hydrogen set out in the EU's Renewable Energy Directive. Electrolysers to produce hydrogen will have to be connected to new renewable electricity production. This principle aims to ensure that the generation of renewable hydrogen incentivises an increase in the volume of renewable energy available to the grid compared to what exists already. In this way, hydrogen production will be supporting decarbonisation and complementing electrification efforts, while avoiding pressure on power generation. While initial electricity demand for hydrogen production will be negligible, it will increase towards 2030 with the mass rollout of large-scale electrolysers. The Commission estimates that around 500 TWh of renewable electricity is needed to meet the 2030 ambition in REPowerEU of producing 10 million tonnes of RFNBOs. The 10Mt ambition in 2030 corresponds to 14% of total EU electricity consumption. This ambition is reflected in the Commission proposal to increase the 2030 target for renewables to 45%. The Delegated Act sets out different ways in which producers can demonstrate that the renewable electricity used for hydrogen production complies with additionality rules. It further introduces criteria aimed to ensure that renewable hydrogen is only produced when and where sufficient renewable energy is available (known as temporal and geographic correlation). To take into account existing investment commitments and allow the sector to adapt to the new framework, the rules will be phased in gradually, and designed to become more stringent over time. Specifically, the rules foresee a transition phase of the requirements on “additionality” for hydrogen projects that will start operating before 1 January 2028. This transition period corresponds to the period when electrolysers will be scaled up and come onto the market. Furthermore, hydrogen producers will be able to match their hydrogen production with their contracted renewables on a monthly basis until the 1 January 2030. However, Member States will have the option of introducing stricter rules about temporal correlation as of 1 July 2027. The requirements for the production of renewable hydrogen will apply to both domestic producers as well as producers from third countries that want to export renewable hydrogen to the EU to count towards the EU renewables targets. A certification scheme relying on voluntary schemes will ensure that producers, whether in the EU or in third countries, can demonstrate in a simple and easy way their compliance with the EU framework and trade renewable hydrogen within the Single Market. The second Delegated Act provides a methodology for calculating life-cycle greenhouse gas emissions for RFNBOs. The methodology takes into account greenhouse gas emissions across the full lifecycle of the fuels, including upstream emissions, emissions associated with taking electricity from the grid, from processing, and those associated with transporting these fuels to the end-consumer. The methodology also clarifies how to calculate the greenhouse gas emissions of renewable hydrogen or its derivatives in case it is co-produced in a facility that produces fossil-based fuels. Following adoption, the Acts will now be transmitted to the European Parliament and the Council, which have 2 months to scrutinise them and to either accept or reject the proposals. At their request, the scrutiny period can be extended by 2 months. There is no possibility for the Parliament or Council to amend the proposals.

Background

In 2020, the Commission adopted a Hydrogen Strategy setting out a vision for the creation of a European hydrogen ecosystem from research and innovation to production and infrastructure, and development of international standards and markets. Hydrogen is expected to play a major role in the decarbonisation of industry and heavy-duty transport in Europe and globally. As part of the “Fit for 55” package, the Commission has introduced several incentives for its uptake, including mandatory targets for the industry and transport sectors. Hydrogen is also a key pillar of the REPowerEU Plan to get rid of Russian fossil fuels. The Commission has outlined a ‘Hydrogen Accelerator' concept to scale up the deployment of renewable hydrogen. In particular, the REPowerEU Plan aims for the EU to produce 10 million tonnes and import 10 million tonnes of renewable hydrogen by 2030. On top of the regulatory framework, the Commission is also supporting the emergence of the hydrogen sector in the EU via Important Projects of Common European Interest (IPCEIs). The first IPCEI, called "IPCEI Hy2Tech", which includes 41 projects and was approved in July 2022, aims at developing innovative technologies for the hydrogen value chain to decarbonise industrial processes and the mobility sector, with a focus on end-users. In September 2022, the Commission approved "IPCEI Hy2Use", a second project which complements IPCEI Hy2Tech and which will support the construction of hydrogen-related infrastructure and the development of innovative and more sustainable technologies for the integration of hydrogen into the industrial sector.

7. Single Market turns 30

The Commission has published the 2023 Annual Single Market Report and the 2022 Single Market Scoreboard, as part of activities to mark the 30th anniversary of the Single Market.

The reports confirm that the Single Market remains a key tool to address Europe's current challenges and highlight the importance of continuously improving its functioning, as well as highlighting the Single Market's impact in terms of increased added value for the EU's economy.

Both reports will provide input for discussions with Member States on strengthening the Single Market and will inform the Commission's future work to ensure the Single market meets its full potential in supporting the resilience and competitiveness of the European economy. The 2023 Annual Single Market Report (ASMR) takes stock of the integration of the Single Market and analyses how it helps Europe to navigate current geopolitical tensions, improve EU competitiveness and support the green and digital transitions of our economy. The 2022 Single Market Scoreboard shows how the Single Market benefits the EU economy. It provides a detailed overview of how EU Single Market rules were applied across the European Economic Area, with the objective of identifying improvements for the Single Market. The Scoreboard focuses on the progress made in implementing EU law, overall business conditions, integration of the Single Market and other major policy goals like growth and jobs, resilience, digital and green economy.

The key findings of the reports are that:

- **A strong Single Market underpins Europe's ability to tackle key challenges**: The 2023 Annual Single Market Report focuses on the need to leverage the power of the Single Market to ensure the availability of critical goods, services, skills, and capital needed for Europe's twin transitions. It finds that progress is needed in boosting the resilience of supply chains, addressing strategic dependencies, especially for critical raw materials, improving integration in the services market, and ensuring Europe has the technologies and skills to tackle these challenges. The Single Market Scoreboard provides additional evidence on results achieved so far in terms of competitiveness, trade, economic resilience and twin transitions, pointing to areas for possible improvements. These include, for instance, reducing barriers to exercising professions (e.g. legal services) or recognise professional qualifications (e.g. tourist guides) across borders, improving public and private investments, supporting SMEs and pursuing national efforts in support of the twin transitions.
- **Strong potential of digital tools and data to improve governance of the Single Market**: this year's Annual Single Market Report highlights how novel approaches, including better use of digital technology and e-government solutions – like, among other the Single Digital Gateway and the Once Only Technical System (OOTS) - will lead to better trust among authorities and reduce the burden for businesses and administrations.
- **Single Market brings growing added value to the EU economy**: Both the Annual Single Market Report and the Single Market Scoreboard assess the benefits and increased trade between Member States enabled by the Single Market since its creation. The Scoreboard shows growing trade integration after the COVID-19 pandemic: in June 2022 trade within the EU represented 60% of overall EU trade.
- **Businesses benefit from better enforcement of rules and general conditions, but difficulties remain**: The Scoreboard establishes that the implementation and enforcement of Single Market rules are improving; this is reflected in fewer infringement proceedings against Member States in 2021, a first in 4 years. The Scoreboard also shows better use and application of several essential Single Market tools like the Internal Market Information System, the Single Market Transparency Directive, as well as increased use of the SOLVIT network, which helps prevent or remove obstacles in the Single Market. In addition, businesses across most Member States perceived regulatory burdens to have decreased in 2021 but face increasingly issues around late payments by public authorities, especially due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Background

The annual reports prepare the ground by providing background analyses for the Communication “The Single Market at 30”, which will be published by the Commission in the coming weeks. The Annual Single Market Report was first published accompanying the Update of the Industrial Strategy in May 2021. This analysed the state of play of the European economy and evaluated progress made in delivering the 2020 European Industrial Strategy. The Commission is publishing the third edition of the Annual Single Market Report, which also commemorates the 30th anniversary of the Single Market. The Single Market Scoreboard was first published in 1997. The 2022 edition of the Single Market Scoreboard includes - next to traditional indicators – new business environment indicators regarding administrative responsiveness and burden of regulation, as well as information on access to services and services markets, labour mobility and access to finance. It also reports on results achieved by the Single Market in terms of growth, employment and social indicators, integration of goods and services, economic resilience, digital and green transitions.

8. EC takes action to ensure a well-functioning Single Market for services

The Commission is pursuing 24 cases against several Member States for breaches of services related legislation.

These decisions are taken to ensure the correct implementation of rules aimed at the good functioning of the Single Market for services. Services are crucial to the EU economy. They account for around 70% of the EU's GDP and an equal share of its employment. The lack of or incorrect implementation of EU legislation is a reason for the Single Market for services to underperform. Recent studies estimate the long-term potential benefits of removing obstacles to the intra-EU services market at between €279 billion and €457 billion of additional yearly GDP. Similarly, the recently published Annual Single Market Report underlines how a genuinely integrated Single Market is a precondition for Europe to address current geopolitical challenges and develop a resilient and globally competitive European economy. The Commission is

determined to use all available tools to continue to remove barriers for companies looking to offer cross-border services and to make it easier for them to do business. These barriers hold back the full potential of the Single Market for services. The services sector and persisting obstacles deserve particular attention in the efforts to strengthen the EU's recovery and resilience. The Commission pursues consistent efforts to make Member States reduce restrictions in the single market for services, using all available instruments. For example, the work with Member States in the Single Market Enforcement Task Force (SMET) has particularly focused on collaborative efforts to simplify the regulatory framework and reduce administrative barriers, including in the services sector. SOLVIT is another instrument that delivers pragmatic solutions for citizens and businesses when they are experiencing difficulties with their EU rights being recognised by public authorities while moving or doing business cross-border. The Commission has also persistently taken robust enforcement actions in the past years. These actions have led to tangible improvements in the integration of the Single Market for services, allowing the Commission to close 18 cases. These achievements concern the revised Professional Qualifications Directive and follow two big batches of infringement cases launched in 2018-2019. This closures will bring concrete benefits for businesses and workers who want to provide services across the EU, such as: removing the obligation to take a specific language test for health professionals in Poland if they can attest knowledge in other ways; removing an obligation to undertake a specific language test that included unrelated skills checks for health professionals in the Netherlands; ensuring accelerated procedures for the recognition of professional qualifications in Portugal; removing disproportionate restrictions to work as a tourist and mountain guide in Bulgaria. Furthermore, Romania now ensures the automatic recognition of the professional title of EU lawyers, in conformity with the Lawyers' Establishment Directive, facilitating the free movement of lawyers in the EU. In addition, the closed cases which concerned the failure to fully or correctly transpose the Proportionality Test Directive into national legislation help to make sure that Member States correctly apply the proportionality test in practice and thus prevent unjustified and disproportionate rules from being introduced and harming the Single Market for Services. The enforcement actions adopted address the failures of Member States to properly integrate core Single Market rules into their own national legal frameworks within due time, or failure to ensure that the national legal framework complies with EU rules, thereby creating obstacles in important services sectors.

EU Proportionality Test Directive for regulation of professions

The Directive on a proportionality test before adoption of new regulation of professions, requires Member States to make sure that any requirements for professions they introduce are necessary and balanced. The Directive provides a set of criteria to prevent unnecessarily burdensome national rules, which can hamper qualified candidates to access or exercise a wide range of professions in another Member State. The Directive is a powerful tool for facilitating access to and exercise of regulated activities by professionals across the EU. The issue affects many Europeans: around 50 million people, 22% of the European labour force, work in professions to which access is restricted to those holding specific qualifications or for which the use of a specific title is protected, e.g. lawyers or pharmacists. Often there will also be specific requirements on how the profession can be exercised, such as limitations on who can hold the shares of those companies or how these services can be advertised. Ensuring that such rules are justified and proportionate creates concrete benefits for European citizens, both for professionals as well as for consumers.

The Commission has decided to send 11 additional letters of formal notice to Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, France, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, the Netherlands, Slovakia, and a letter of formal notice to Estonia to ensure that introduction of professional regulation via parliamentary amendments is covered by a prior proportionality assessment. In addition, the Commission has decided to send 5 reasoned opinions to Germany, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia and Spain for not having properly implemented the EU Proportionality Test Directive for regulation of professions. These reasoned opinions address in particular the failure to include all relevant measures in the proportionality assessments, or the lack of implementation of the necessary procedural guarantees or of certain criteria for those assessments. The action taken to ensure its proper implementation will help to prevent or dismantle disproportionate barriers in the Single Market, in line with the objectives of the EU Single Market Enforcement Action Plan.

Enforcement of the Services Directive

The **Services Directive** aims to remove the barriers to trade in services within the EU. It simplified the administrative procedures for service providers, enhanced the rights of consumers and businesses receiving services, and fostered cooperation among EU countries. In addition, it obliges Member States to remove all total prohibitions on commercial communication, including all total prohibitions of a form of commercial communication, for regulated professions.

Bans on commercial communications of lawyers

Advertising restrictions for legal services hamper business development and client acquisition. They also hinder the development of advertisement on social networks, therefore obstructing the transition into a digital era. Reducing such regulatory barriers in business services has been shown to increase competition and sector dynamics, leading to greater allocative efficiency and lower prices for consumers. The Commission has therefore decided to open an infringement against **Malta, Poland and Slovenia** for having in place a total prohibition on the advertising of lawyers' activities contrary to the Services Directive.

Barriers to the activities of real-estate agents

The Commission has decided to open an infringement against **Cyprus** for having in place prohibitions to team up with other professions in the real estate agency domain and **Slovenia** for fixing minimum tariffs for certain real estate intermediation services.

A circular issued by the competent Cypriot authority effectively prohibits natural persons not registered as real estate agents in Cyprus to hold shares in real estate agencies. Requiring 100% of shares to be held by real estate agents registered in Cyprus is a disproportionate measure which infringes the Services Directive. The Slovenian Law introduced price restrictions for certain real estate intermediation services in violation of the Services Directive.

Construction services

The Commission has decided to open an infringement against **Belgium** for having in place a disproportionate guarantee scheme obliging certain construction service providers to pay a financial guarantee to cover payments made by their clients. The guarantee scheme imposed by Belgium on so-called non-approved contractors for the construction and sale of dwellings to be built or under construction has been set much higher (100%) than for approved contractors (5%).

This restricts the freedom of establishment/to provide services of foreign building contractors as well as non-construction companies (like real estate developers). According to the Commission, the Belgian law imposing this guarantee scheme violates several provisions of the Services Directive.

Coastal concessions

The Commission has decided to open an infringement against **Spain** for having failed toto ensure a transparent and impartial selection procedure for the granting of concessions relating to coastal areas. In addition, according to the Commission, the possibility to extend existing concessions for up to 75 years without justification is against the EU rules. The Spanish Coast Act provides for the possibility of granting ‘concessions' (authorisations within the meaning of the Services Directive) to build permanent premises (e.g. restaurants, agrofarms, paper or chemical industry, etc.) in the so-called ‘maritime-terrestrial public domain', outside ports, without an open and transparent selection procedure. It also allows for the possibility of extending their duration for up to 75 years, again without a selection procedure. This law breaches the Services Directive.

Background

The need to tackle barriers in the area of services is particularly acute: 60% of the barriers businesses faced 20 years ago still exist, according to the recently published Annual Single Market Report. Barriers confirmed by business stakeholders include complex national procedures and lack of information on these; disproportionate national requirements in the area of services and burdensome administrative requirements for service provision, including as regards posting workers. Despite the fact that the legal framework for a smoothly functioning Single Market for services has been laid down in the Treaties and EU legislation, the failure to properly implement and apply these rules at national level continues to hamper the free flow of services. For this reason, the Commission has developed a multi-dimensional enforcement approach, which includes not only “classical” targeted and strategic enforcement action, but also collaboration with Member States in fora like the Single Market Enforcement Taskforce (SMET) and other dedicated expert groups; supporting Member States by detailed guidance documents; and preventing barriers by means of the Proportionality Test Directive as well as the Single Market Transparency Directive and Services Directive notification tools.

9. Strengthening social dialogue

The Commission presents an initiative to further strengthen and promote social dialogue with concrete actions at national and EU level.

It renews our strong commitment to social dialogue as a cornerstone of the EU social market economy and its competitiveness. The initiative empowers social dialogue to adapt to the changing world of work and new trends on the labour market, against the backdrop of the transitions to a digital and climate neutral economy and the emergence of new forms of employment. The negotiations between organisations representing employers and workers

(social partners) through social dialogue and collective bargaining help improve living and working conditions, such as pay, hours of work, annual leave, parental leave, training, and health and safety measures. They also have a crucial role to play in adapting to changing economic and social circumstances and achieving the productivity gains that are necessary to enhance the competitiveness of European businesses. All this helps to ensure social fairness and democracy at work, and boost Europe's prosperity and resilience. Social partners also play a crucial role in times of crisis or change. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, they quickly helped to organise health and safety measures at work, and short time work schemes. Social partners are also helping to find balanced solutions to adapting the labour market to the digital age. The close cooperation between employers and employees is also essential to ensuring the efficient organisation of industrial production activities, and to equipping the work force with green and digital skills. However, the degree and quality of the involvement of social partners varies considerably among countries. At the same time, union membership and the share of workers covered by collective agreements at national level is declining (from an EU average of about 66% in 2000 to about 56% in 2019). Newer forms of employment such as platform work and certain groups such as young people are also less likely to be represented, with some sectors like care seeing a near-total absence of collective bargaining. In this context, the Commission proposes a Council Recommendation, which sets out how EU countries can further strengthen social dialogue and collective bargaining at national level. The Commission also presents a Communication on reinforcing and promoting social dialogue at EU level. Social partners were closely involved in preparing these initiatives.

Enabling social dialogue to thrive at national level

The Commission's proposal for a Council Recommendation recommends that Member States: ensure the consultation of social partners on the design and implementation of economic, employment and social policies according to national practices; encourage social partners to look at new forms of work and atypical employment, and to communicate widely about the benefits of social dialogue and on any collective agreements put in place; enable an increase in workers and employers' organisations' capacity, for instance ensuring they have access to relevant information and ensuring support from national governments. The proposed Council Recommendation fully respects national traditions as well as social partners' autonomy. It allows Member States to determine how to best achieve these objectives, taking into account their specific circumstances.

Promoting social partners' involvement at EU level

To further promote the role of social partners in EU policy making and reinforce sectoral social dialogue at EU level, the Commission proposes a set of measures to:

- Reinforce European sectoral social dialogue by modernising its framework, in close collaboration with EU social partners, through a possible revision of the current rules.
- Continue to support social partner agreements, notably through administrative support and legal advice.
- Strengthen social partners' involvement in EU policymaking, for instance by gathering the views of the European cross-industry social partners on EU policy priorities ahead of the Commission Work Programme.
- Make the EU's technical and financial support for social partners more effective. For instance, the Commission will set up, in cooperation with social partners, a research network for monitoring and promoting EU social dialogue.

In addition, the Commission calls on social partners to negotiate and conclude more social partner agreements and improve the membership and representativeness of both trade unions and employers' organisations. The Commission will also continue to promote social dialogue internationally through regular cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and others. The Commission encourages Member States to continue to ratify and effectively implement ILO Conventions.

Next steps

The Commission will follow up, closely working with social partners, on the proposed actions at EU level listed in the Communication. Member States will discuss the Commission proposal for a Council Recommendation with a view to its adoption by the Council. Once adopted, the proposal invites Member States to submit to the Commission a set of measures, which have been discussed with social partners, to implement this Recommendation. The implementation of the measures will be monitored in the context of the European Semester.

Background

Social dialogue and the involvement of workers is a key principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights and an integral part of the 2021 Porto Social Commitment. The Commission announced in the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan that it would present an initiative to support social dialogue at EU and national level, as also underlined by Commission President von der Leyen at the 2022 Tripartite Social Summit. The Commission prepared this initiative with the close involvement of social partners and held exchanges with the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. The social dialogue initiative, also mentioned in the Commission Communication "Conference on the Future of Europe, Putting Vision into Concrete Action" of June 2022, makes a significant contribution to the follow-up to the Conference. The social dialogue initiative also contributes to the 2023 European Year of Skills and the Green Deal Industrial Plan as social partners play a key role in supporting skilling, job transitions and EU competitiveness.

10. Harnessing Talent in Europe: a new boost for EU Regions

Europe's got talent. But talent needs to be nurtured, especially as the EU is going through important demographic transition.

This is even more needed in regions that suffer from a shrinking labour force and a low share of persons with a tertiary education, and in regions hit by the departure of young people. If left unaddressed, this transition will trigger new and growing territorial disparities as regions age and fall behind in number and skills of their workforce. It can change Europe's demographic landscapes hampering the resilience and competitiveness of the EU. Ensuring that regions facing a talent development trap become more resilient and attractive is crucial in the EU's commitment of leaving nobody and no place behind. This is why the Commission is launching the "Talent Booster Mechanism". This Mechanism will support EU regions affected by the accelerated decline of their working age population to train, retain and attract the people, the skills and the competences needed to address the impact of the demographic transition. The Mechanism is presented Communication on Harnessing Talent in Europe's Regions and is the first key initiative in 2023 contributing to the European Year of Skills as proposed by the Commission, which aims to bring a fresh impetus for re- and upskilling. The Communication offers tailor-made, place based and multi-dimensional solutions, including the use of existing EU funds and initiatives to support regions most affected by the ongoing demographic transition and its side-effects and prevent the emergence of new and increased territorial disparities in the EU. The Commission is also publishing its 2023 Report on the Impact of Demographic Change, which updates the Demography Report of 2020. It revisits the demographic trends and the impacts that had been identified in light of recent developments, such as Brexit, Covid or the Russian military aggression against Ukraine. The Report stresses that, to ensure future prosperity and well-being in the EU, it is crucial to address the challenges brought about by the demographic transition. These challenges include an ageing as well as declining population, and a shrinking working-age population, but also increasing territorial disparities, including a growing urban-rural divide. The Report looks into how and if the established demographic patterns are accelerated or disrupted, and when they take place, if the disruptions are transitory, or have a lasting impact on demographic change.

The 'talent development trap' in some EU Regions

EU Member States are facing a sharp decline of their working age population. This population has decreased by 3.5 million people between 2015 and 2020 and is expected to shed an additional 35 million people by 2050. 82 regions in 16 Member States (accounting for almost 30% of the EU population) are severely affected by this decline of the working age population, a low share of university and higher-education graduates, or a negative mobility of their population aged 15-39. These regions face specific structural challenges such as inefficiencies in labour market, education, training and adult learning systems, low performance in the areas of innovation, public governance or business development, and low access to services. By addressing these challenges, the regions could attract more skilled workers. Several of these regions are already in a 'talent development trap' while the others face this risk in the near future. If left unaddressed this situation will threaten the long-term prosperity of the EU.

A new EU mechanism: the 'Talent Booster Mechanism'

The Commission will develop the **Talent Booster Mechanism based on 8 pillars:**

1. A **new pilot project will be launched in 2023** to help regions facing a 'talent development trap' elaborate, consolidate, develop and implement tailored and comprehensive strategies, as well as to identify relevant projects, to train, attract and retain skilled workers. Support will be provided to pilot regions selected on the basis of an open call.
2. A **new initiative on 'Smart adaptation of regions to demographic transition'** will kick off in 2023 to help regions with higher rates of departure of their young people to adapt to the

demographic transition and invest in talent development through tailored place-based policies. Benefiting regions will be selected on the basis of an open call.

3. The **Technical Support Instrument** (TSI) will support Member States, upon demand under the TSI 2023 call, with reforms at national and regional level, necessary to address the shrinking of the working-age population, the lack of skills and respond to local market needs.
4. **Cohesion Policy** programmes and the Interregional Innovation Investments **will** stimulate innovation and opportunities for high-skill jobs and thus contribute improving possibilities to retain and attract talents in these regions.
5. **A new call for innovative actions will be launched under the** '**European Urban Initiative**' to test place-based solutions led by shrinking cities that address the challenges of developing, retaining and attracting skilled workers.
6. **EU initiatives** that support the development of talents will be **signposted on a dedicated webpage**. This will provide easier access to information to interested regions about EU policies in areas such as research and innovation, training, education, and youth mobility.
7. **Experiences will be exchanged and good practices will be disseminated**: regions will have the possibility to set up thematic and regional working groups to address specific professional or territorial challenges.
8. **The analytical knowledge** required to support and facilitate evidence-based policies on regional development and migration will be further developed.

Unleashing talent through existing EU funds and initiatives

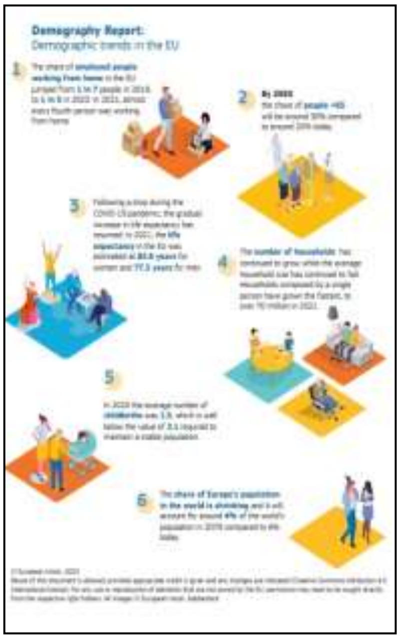
The Communication also highlights how existing EU instruments and policies can support economic revitalisation and the development of the right skills to attract high-potential activities in the affected regions, including through the steer of the European Semester. Among others, the new European Innovation Agenda that sets out the Deep Tech Talent Initiative, a specific flagship to respond to the talent gap in deep tech sectors, integrating all regions in Europe. The Communication also stresses how Cohesion Policy is and will continue to help these regions to diversify their economy, upgrade the accessibility to services, boost the efficiency of public administration and ensure the involvement of the regional and local authorities through dedicated place-based strategies. Finally, it offers many examples of national and regional initiatives and best practices that effectively address the structural challenges in a local context, enhancing the regions' attractiveness for talents. To facilitate mutual learning, the Commission continues to work with national authorities, mapping the most acute demographic challenges they have identified as well as examples of policies and projects aimed at managing the impacts of demographic change.

Next steps

The Commission will regularly report on the implementation of this Communication.

Background

Addressing demographic change is key to building a fairer and more resilient society. As the on-going demographic transition affects various policy areas, it requires that policymakers, engage in complex coordination involving all relevant actors at EU, national, regional, and local level. While most of the policy levers dealing with these challenges remain at the national level, the Commission takes account of the implications and impact of demographic change in its policy proposals. The Commission already adopted a Report on the Impact of Demographic Change in Europe in 2020, which paved the way for further initiatives in 2021 with the adoption of the Green paper on ageing and the Long-term vision for the EU's rural areas towards 2040. Among the most recent initiatives at EU level which support Member States in dealing with demographic change in various areas and sectors, there is the European Care Strategy with the Council Recommendations on access to affordable, high-quality long-term care and early childhood education and care, the EU Comprehensive Strategy on the Rights of the Child and the European Child Guarantee, Youth Employment Support Package, the Commission Recommendation on Effective active support to employment, the Council Recommendation on ensuring a fair transition to climate neutrality, the Disability Employment Package and the recent proposal to make 2023 the European Year of Skills.



11. Europe&Youth 2023: international student contest

The Istituto Regionale di Studi Europei del Friuli Venezia Giulia (IRSE) is pleased to announce the 46th edition of Europe&Youth 2023 International Contest, Time to change your tune! The contest is open to University students, High/Secondary School students, and anyone who has not reached the age of 27 by the 30th April 2023, from Italy and all EU Member States. How to participate? Choose one of the topics and write an essay: for university students and under 27, written essays must not exceed 10,000 characters including spaces; for High/Secondary School students, written essays must not exceed 5,000 characters including spaces. A video presentation based on the topic (maximum 2 minutes), will be considered an important added value. For university students and under 27 essays can be submitted only by individuals. For High/Secondary School students essays can be submitted by individuals, in pairs or in groups. Only one topic can be chosen. Each competitor or pair of competitors can participate with only one piece of work. Essays will be evaluated by a special commission. Best essays will be assigned money prices of: 400, 300, 200, 100 euros. The Award Ceremony will take place between May and June 2023. **Deadline: 30th april 2023.** For more information please visit the following **link**.

12. The Young Entrepreneurs Challenge

The ISPA contest intends to judge and reward the images submitted based on the following criteria: photojournalistic quality, originality of documentary content, and adherence to the themes and mission stipulated by the award. Taking part in the ISPA contest is free of charge. It is open to photographers of any nationality who are 18 years of age or older at the time of their entry. There are three categories in the ISPA: Single Photo, Photo Story, and Grant. The images, stories, and projects must be uploaded in their entirety to a specific page of the website www.ispaward.com, choosing from the three respective contest categories. The same photo can be submitted as a Single Photo, be part of a Photo Story, and contribute to a Grant Project. The organization has the right to nominate in the Single Photo category an image that appears in an already nominated Photo Story. Every application must adhere to the themes and mission stipulated by the ISPA.

Single photo

- Each photographer may submit a maximum of 10 Single Photos.
- The pictures must have been taken after January 1st, 2020.
- The pictures must have been taken within Italy's borders.
- Every image must be accompanied by a caption in English (obligatory) and Italian (optional), in which the candidate, in addition to providing essential information about the image in question, must justify the sustainability of its content.

Photo story

- Each photographer may submit a maximum of 10 Photo Stories.
- All the pictures in the Photo Story must have been taken after January 1st, 2020.
- At least half of the photos presented must have been taken in Italy.
- Photo Story must consist of a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 12 images.
- Every picture must be accompanied by a caption in English (obligatory) and Italian (optional).
- Every Photo Story must be accompanied by a title and an explanatory note written in English (obligatory) and Italian (optional), between 800 and 1,000 characters, in which the candidate, in addition to providing essential information about the story in question, must justify the sustainability of the content in the sequence of images.

Grant

- The Grant is intended as funding that is offered in order to develop or start a new photojournalism project that corresponds to the Award's mission.

- Each photographer may submit a maximum of five Projects, which must include a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 30 images per Project. There are no time constraints on these photos and they must have been taken by the photographer in question. These images should preferably be linked to the Project that is to be developed. Alternatively, images that aren't linked to the Project (but which offer a portfolio that is representative of the candidate's photographic style) can be accepted.
- In all cases, the images must be accompanied by a caption in English (obligatory) and Italian (optional).
- The pictures in the Project may have been taken anywhere in the world.
- Each Applicant must also provide: a biography in English (obligatory) and Italian (optional), between 1,000 and 3,000 characters; an explanatory note on the work produced to date and the intentions for its development, in English (obligatory) and Italian (optional), between 1,500 and 3,000 characters; a draft business plan indicating how the Grant will be invested to implement the Project, in English (obligatory) and Italian (optional), between 1,000 and 3,000 characters. The business plan must include an estimate of the relative expenses, such as transport, accommodation, meals, rentals, assistance, equipment, post-production, research materials, fees for collaborators, as well as miscellaneous costs. The plan cannot include items such as the production of books, exhibitions, workshops and laboratories.
- The Projects must be produced and completed strictly within the timeframe, between May 2, 2023 and October 31, 2023. The final selection, to be submitted strictly at the end of the six-month period, must include a minimum of 50 images, 40 of which were created from scratch.
- The project must be realized within Italy's borders.

Photographers interested in participating in the contest must submit their entries by 11:00 p.m. (Italian time, GMT+1) **on March 20, 2023** for the Grant category, and by 11:00 p.m. (Italian time, GMT+1) on September 4, 2023 for the Single Photo and the Photo Story categories. In order to submit an entry, the Applicant must register and upload all their images solely and exclusively on the ISPA website (www.ispaward.com). The Organizer will award the following prizes: Single Photo Winner: €1,500; Photo Story Winner: €3,500; Grant Winner: €10,000. In the event of two projects tying for the award, the prize will be divided between the two winners. For more information consult the following **link**.

13. Traineeships at the General Secretariat of the Council

Every year, there are around 100 places available for paid traineeships, and up to 6 places for paid trainees with a disability. A traineeship at the General Secretariat of the Council (GSC) offers: first-hand experience of the work of the GSC; EU knowledge - insight into the processes and policies of the EU institutions; an opportunity to contribute to the Council's day-to-day business; the chance to work in a multicultural, multilingual and multi-ethnic environment; an opportunity to share your fresh point of view and the knowledge you have acquired during your studies Important information: the organisation of traineeships is currently affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Find out more, by reading the section on COVID-19 implications for traineeships. Depending on the needs of the service, your daily work would generally be equivalent to that of junior administrator officials at the beginning of their career, such as: preparing meetings and drafting minutes; attending meetings of Council preparatory bodies and Coreper (Committee of the Permanent Representatives of the Governments of the member states to the EU); researching on a particular project; translating documents; compiling documentation, writing reports.Trainees will also be invited to take part in a study programme that includes visits and conferences at other EU institutions in Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg. GSC traineeships are open to: EU citizens; citizens from candidate countries that have concluded EU accession negotiations. Candidates must have very good knowledge of at least two EU official languages. Given that English and French are used extensively for internal communication within the GSC, a good knowledge of **English or French** is required, (*C level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). The majority of applications currently come from candidates with qualifications in law, political science, international relations, EU studies and economics. The GSC is also looking for trainees with **qualifications in other**

domains, such as: translation, human resources, communication, education studies, computer sciences (collaboration platforms), archives and document management, civil engineering, graphic design, multimedia, agriculture, biochemical engineering, health and food safety, energy management, environment, aerospace engineering. **The application period is open from: 12 pm CET, 13 February 2023, to 12 pm CET, 15 March 2023**. For more information please consult the following **link**.

14. Traineeships at the Court of Auditors

The Economic and Social Committee (ESC) annually organizes paid long-term (five months) and unpaid short-term (one to three months) internships. Long-term paid internships are for young Europeans who already have a college degree and have knowledge of one of the ESC's areas of activity, which was deepened during their studies, while short-term unpaid internships are for young Europeans enrolled in university. Short-term unpaid internships last from a minimum of 1 month to a maximum of 3 months and can start at any time of the year. Long-term paid internships last 5 months and begin on September 16 and February 16 each year.

Long-term paid internships:

- Recognized university degree (minimum three-year course of study);
- Basic skills in one of the areas of activity of the EESC;
- Thorough knowledge of an official language of the European Union and a satisfactory knowledge of another language (for applicants from non-member states of the Union, thorough knowledge of only one official language is required).

Short-term unpaid internships

- Recognized university degree (course of study of at least three years);
- or require to do the internship in order to complete their university studies.

Remuneration

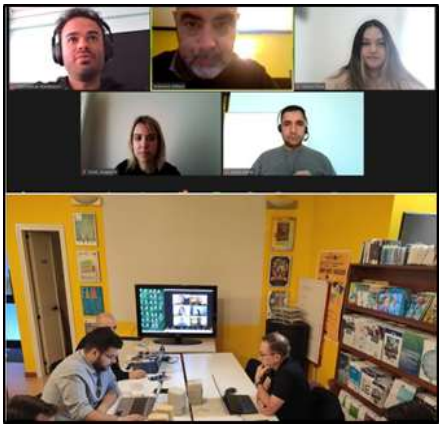
Long-term paid internships provide a monthly stipend of approximately EUR 1,252.68. Please note: If trainees already hold a grant offered by an external institution, the EESC cannot in any way provide an additional grant. Deadline: Spring period February-July: Deadline Sept. 30; **Fall period September-February: Deadline March 31, 2023**. For more information and applications please consult the following **link**.

15. Final meeting in Italy for the “Future Friendly Africa” project

The final meeting for the project “Future Friendly Africa – Capacity transfer for program for youth development and environmental entrepreneurship in Senegal and Sub-Saharan Africa” (acronym “FUTURE FRIENDLY AFRICA”) took place on December 27th in Potenza, in Italy. The initiative has been approved by the European Commission at a centralized level as action number 619137-EPP-1-2020-1-BG-EPPKA2-CBY-ACPALA within the European program “Erasmus Plus Capacity Building for Youth”. The meeting has been aimed at assessing the work done in the last two years by the European partnership, which has included the following organizations: Narodno Chitalishte Badeshte Sega 2006/NC Future Now (Bulgaria – project coordinator), CACSUP (Senegal) and EURO-NET (Italy). More information on the project are available on the official website of the project https://friendlyafrica.eu/.

16. TPM in Potenza for the "Game4CoSkills" project

A new transnational meeting for the "Mobile game for cognitive skills development and concept teaching for adults with intellectual disabilities" (acronym "Game4CoSkills") took place on January 5th in Potenza, in Italy. The initiative has been approved by the Erasmus Plus National Agency in France as action number 2021-1-FR01-KA220-ADU-000026181 within the KA220 program Cooperative Partnership in Adult Education. The meeting was intended to be in presence for all the partners, but some of them (the ones from Turkey, Greece and Cyprus) have had some issues to physically take part in the meeting, hence they have joined virtually. During the meeting, all the results of the survey conducted within the Output1 have been presented together with all the activities related to the scenarios and animations of the same intellectual product, which has been completed so far. All the partners have expressed their opinions on the products and decided for the next steps to undertake within the project, including the dates of the next European meetings. The French coordinator, Doctor Alexis Lacapelle, has also reminded the partners to prepare the necessary documentation to submit the interim report of the project in order to obtain the second advance of funds foreseen for the initiative. The project aims at developing an app and an online platform including some e-games for the development of cognitive skills and the teaching to adults with intellectual disabilities to be used individually or in groups, covering the development of multiple cognitive skills and teaching strategies in order to allow adults with the aforementioned problematics to learn while having fun. The partnership which is taking care of the development of the project is composed by the following organizations: Interactive 4D (France), Austrian Association Of Inclusive Society (Austria), Synthesis Center For Research And Education Limited (Cyprus), Avrasya Yenilikçi Toplum Dernegi (Turkey), Elliniki Etairia Nosoy Alzheimer Kai Syggenon Diatarachon Somateio (Greece) and EURO-NET (Italy). More information on the project are available on the website of the initiative http://game4coskills.eu/ and on the Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/Game4CoSkills



17. Short online meeting for the "CREATIVENTER" project

A short online meeting took place on January 6th on Zoom for the project "Creativity skills for young social entrepreneurs for development in the VUCA world", acronym "CREATIVENTER". The initiative has been approved in Poland by the National Agency as action number 2021-1-PL01-KA220-YOU-000029767 within the Erasmus Plus Cooperative Partnerships in Youth program. The meeting, strongly demanded by the Polish coordinator, has focused on the assessment of the work done on the Output 1, almost completed, and on the necessary documentation to submit the interim report to the Polish National Agency by the end of January. By assessing the activities, it has been shown that the work carried out so far is of excellent quality and the animations developed within the PR1 are extremely eye-catching and interesting. The project is addressed at supporting the development of social enterprises by strengthening creativity and innovation with various training activities to support young people in developing their own entrepreneurial initiative and by contributing, in a direct way, to reducing youth unemployment and by strengthening, at the same time, the proactivity of new generations and European citizenship. For this reason, CREATIVENTER includes the creation of 3 innovative products all directed at young social entrepreneurs: an e-learning course, a handbook to develop creative skills and a chatbot (a software that simulates and processes written or spoken human conversations) with a digital assistant to support the creativity of those who would like to venture in the development of an enterprise. In addition to that, the project requires 5 multiplier events (one for each partner of the project) with the final objective of

supporting and helping at least 120 young entrepreneurs to develop the key skills required for the development of their business. The partners of the project are the following organizations: Fundacja Marki Polskiej Im. Prof. Witolda Kieżuna, (Poland, project coordinator), Spółdzielnia Socjalna Osób Prawnych Centrum Usług Środowisko-Wych (Poland), Embaixada Da Juventude (Portugal), Ukrainian Center of the Future (Ukraine) and EURO-NET (Italy).

18. First meeting in Malmö for the "SPEAK IT UP!" project

The first transnational meeting for the project "Speak It Up: Youth Public Speaking Skills Development Towards a Democratic Society in Contemporary Europe", acronym "Speak It UP!" took place in Malmö, in Sweden, on January 18th. The initiative has been approved in Sweden as action number 2022-1-SE02-KA220-YOU-000086337 within the Erasmus Plus KA220-YOU program – Cooperation partnerships in youth, of which the Italian association EURO-NET, center Europe Direct Basilicata, is partner. The project, which has formally started on November 11th, 2022, and will be over after 24 months of activities at the end of October 2024, is mainly addressed at improving the public speaking's capacity of young people within democratic processes and in all the other activities related, through a non-formal education process and the development of various intellectual products, such as a research on the actual learning background, a guide for trainers, an app for mobile phones and a board game. "Speak it UP!" is thus intended at improving the civic active participation of young people and at strengthening their sense of initiative by supporting their engagement to take part in democratic processes, in addition to helping leaders and youth trainers to improve and develop their public speaking skills. Besides EURO-NET (which was represented at the meeting by Doctor Veronica Summa) the other organizations that form the partnership developing the project are: Internationella Kvinnoföreningen (Sweden – project coordinator), Möllans Basement (Sweden), Asociacija Aktyvistai (Lithuania), Centrum Edukacyjne EST (Poland), Dracon Rules Design Studio (Greece), Stando LTD (Cyprus) e Pnevma LLC (Bulgaria).

19. Meeting in Turku for the"MOOC4ALL" project

On January 17th and 18th (excluding travel days) took place in Turku, in Finland, a new transnational meeting within the European project "MOOC4ALL - Innovative Model for Facilitating On-line Learning Success" (acronym "MOOC4ALL"), which has been approved as action number 2021-1-BG01-KA220-VET-000029853 by the Bulgarian Erasmus Plus Agency within the Erasmus Plus program KA220-VET Cooperation Partnerships in Vocational Education and Training. The meeting (attended by Doctor Luigi Vitelli for the EURO-NET association) has been addressed at assessing the work completed so far and at planning the last steps before the finalization of the activities of the project, which is scheduled to finish by the end of March 2023. The project, which is nearing completion, will now proceed towards the testing of the e-learning products developed in order to assess their effectiveness before the final publication. The partners of this Erasmus + initiative are the following organizations: Narodno Chitalishte Badeshte Sega 2006 (Bulgaria – project coordinator), University of Turku (Finland), Stando Ltd (Cyprus), Kainotomia (Greecie), EURO-NET (Italy) and Krase Research and User Experience (The Netherlands). The organization from The Netherlands is also completing the development of an app which will include all the intellectual products developed during the 17 months of activities and this app will be presented in all the countries of the partnership within local dissemination activities. More information of the project are available on the Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/Innovative-Model-for-Facilitating-Online-Learning-Success-110541508153755 or on the website https://mooc4all.site/.

20. Meeting in Oxford for the “HEPA4ALL” project

The fourth transnational meeting for the project “HEPA4ALL” (complete name as “Encouraging Participation in Sports and Health Enhancing Physical Activities with an Inclusive Approach”) took place on January 26th in Oxford, in the United Kingdom. The initiative has been approved in 2020 by the EACEA as action number 622480-EPP-1-2020-1-UK-SPO-SCP within the field of the Erasmus Plus Sport Program (application EAC/A02/2019 - Collaborative Partnerships). The partnership, which is composed by Italy, UK, Ireland, Greece and Cyprus, aims at identifying strategies and long-term measures to boost inclusion and participation in sport activities that improve health (HEPA) by including all segments of society, in particular disabled and disadvantaged people, through the involvement in various disciplines and sport activities. New latest generation tools such as a platform with videos and an application are under development. During the meeting, attended by Doctor Veronica Summa representing EURO-NET (a new staff member who has been working at the Europe Direct Center based in Basilicata for a few weeks already), the partners have assessed the work already completed and discussed about the activities to complete and develop within the European project. The English project coordinator, Ikkaido (UK), claimed to be very satisfied with the activities and has encouraged to do more in terms of dissemination of activities by following the example of the Europe Direct Basilicata Center, which stood out in this. More information of the project, the activities and the products developed are available on the official Facebook page of the initiative https://www.facebook.com/hepa4all and on the website http://hepa4all.eu/ .

21. “ARES”: the multi-language podcast project starts from Potenza

The project “ARES – A Radio for Employability Skills” starts from Potenza. The initiative has been approved within the Erasmus+ KA210-ADU Program – Small scale partnerships in adult education – as action number 2022-1-IT02-KA210-ADU-000081472. The project aims at training educators and young adults to the podcast tool in order to explore current events and ongoing changes, to improve expressiveness and communication, to acquire a wide range of soft skills including critical thinking, sense of collaboration, creativity, entrepreneurship, and new techniques (such as researching sources, organizing information, structuring content, intelligent use of technologies and software, use of the voice, public speaking, editing) with the objective of acquiring and training some of the skills required by the job market. The project, which is coordinated by the communication agency Basilicata Press and has been approved by the INDIRE National Agency, will also involve for 12 months a German partner (ERASMUS ME Academy of Bonn) and a Spanish partner (Asociaciò educativa i cultural Blue Beehive of Ibi, in the Alicante province) with the objective of laying the foundation for the establishment of an international radio station managed and run only by young people. The project aims at creating a video guide for those educators who are interested in acquiring this kind of non-formal learning methodology and bringing it to their organizations, and also an online course for young adults so that they can grasp and share the project idea and be immediately operational in the podcast production. The ARES platform will host within a year 300 podcasts, 150 of which in English, and will train young people also on their linguistic skills. “The job challenges have shifted the focus to the issue of employability, which means always working on oneself and on one’s skills in order to be appealing to an ever changing job market” – explains Vito Verrastro of Basilicata Press, project designer and founder of the “Lavoradio” podcast. In order to align to these changes, young people must feel like protagonists and no longer simply

spectators of the present and the future: hence the idea of making young people discover the existing opportunities on the European, national and local levels and then converting these ideas into a podcast, which allows a non-formal learning that will help engage, motivate and stimulate young people's actions. In addition to that, ARES will help young people to work on some technical skills which are highly demanded by the job market, especially in the fields of communication and content creation, with the objective of increasing the employability of participants. It is possible to follow the project on the official Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100087562917983.

22. First online meeting for the "CURKIDS" project

The first online meeting for the project "Integrated STEM Education with an Interactive Digital Library for Curious Kids" (acronym "CURIKIDS") was held online on February 1st. The initiative has been approved by the Erasmus Plus National Agency in Turkey as action number 2022-1-TR01-KA220-SCH-000086836 within the Erasmus Plus KA220-SCH Program – Cooperation partnerships in school education. The project, which is coordinated by the Akdeniz University of Antalya in Turkey, relies on a partnership composed by: University of Bari "Aldo Moro" (Italy), Antalya Il Milli Egitim Mudurlugu (Turkey), AIJU (Spain), Cofac (Portugal) and EURO-NET (Italy). The initiative has the objective of equipping education and learning systems with a free educational digital library with a "creative commons" license, in order to support teachers in developing innovative skills while safeguarding the inclusive nature of learning opportunities and enabling students to acquire reading and creating skills to increase the basic competences in primary education. The main activities of the project include the development of 5 work packages aiming at increasing the capacity of educational institutions of managing a digital education by using animated storybooks. The project will try to spark interest about reading and develop skills as comprehension, analytical thinking, and creativity by equipping students with a personalized library based on STEM. During the first meeting, the partners have presented their organizations and have discussed about the first steps to follow, including the dates of the first meeting in Antalya.

23. Last meeting in Denmark for the "A-Class" project

From February 13th till 17th took place in Aarhus, in Denmark, the last transnational meeting of the project "The "A" class: integrating and supporting students with autism in the mainstream classroom" (acronym "The A Class"). The initiative has been approved by the Erasmus Plus National Agency in Denmark within the Erasmus Plus KA2 Strategic Partnerships for School Education Program, as action number 2020-1-DK01-KA201-07505. During the meeting, attended for the EURO-NET association by the two trainers Giulia Maria Provenzale and Raffaele Messina, the partners have presented the results of the project and the products on which they have been working on. In addition to that, the partners have also taken part in a big dissemination event held in Denmark by the coordinator Sosu Ostjylland. The project has achieved brilliant results and the products realized are all of high quality and usefulness for all those teacher who daily face the problem of their students' autism. For this reason, all the

partners of the initiative - Sosu Ostjylland (Denmark), EURO-NET (Italy), Inercia Digital (Spain), Masaryk University (Czech Republic), Center for Autism (Croatia), Stando Ltd (Cyprus) and Association for improving quality of life of people with autism spectrum disorders “Blue Firefly” (Macedonia) – have claimed to be extremely satisfied by the work done which has produced an educational package including new innovative approaching methods to be used in class. More information on the project are available on the official website https://theaclass.eu/ and on the Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/KA2TheAclass .

24. Online event with the representatives of the Student Council of Potenza

An online workshop was held on February 15th by the Europe Direct Basilicata Center with the cooperation of the representatives of the Student Council of the Province of Potenza in order to talk about the actions and policies put in place by Europe to cope with the current situation and the existing opportunities provided by the European programs. Lastly, also the actions and initiative within the Erasmus Plus program have been discussed.

25. ANGinRADIO-SUD: a success by EURO-NET

It has been some months that the activity of the online radio developed by EURO-NET has restarted under the coordination of Vito Verrastro and Antonino Imbesi. The initiative has been promoted this year within a partnership involving 9 other organizations based in the South of Italy and in the islands, with whom has been developed an ATS named “ANGinRadio-SUD”. Partners of this initiative are: EURO-NET, Associazione Studentesca Universitaria ETS, ACLI Giovani Napoli, Associazione NWM Network, Innovazioni Sociali ODV, People Help The People APS, Associazione Culturale Cilento Film Music Festival, Torre dei Giovani, Associazione Valentia APS and Associazione I Ragazzi di San Rocco. The project expects to involve about 60.000 young people through the presence of several stations at universities, associations, in big cities, hinterlands and also more isolated territories. The network employs the language of young people in order to communicate at the same level by addressing cultural topics and by developing a process of sharing and non-formal learning which uses live audio and video on many social platforms such as Spotify, Google Podcast and YouTube. The activities involve over a 100 young people from various local realities and schools, also thanks to the use of a mobile van with a radio station inside, thus ensuring a multiplier effect. In order to promote this wonderful activity together with the many others of the project, EURO-NET has held a big public event at the CominCenter in Potenza on February 16th.

26. Towards the end of the “TELEGROW” project

After the last transnational meeting held in Valencia,in Spain, the “Telegrow” project comes to an end after 2 full years of activities. By the end of February, the last dissemination activities open to the public will be held in Italy and in some other partner countries. These activities will be useful to promote to the audience the products developed during the 24 months of work. The project “Telegrow: “Enhancing the Teleworking Digital Skills for the Middle aged employees” has been approved as action number 2020-1-ES01-KA226-VET-096306 by the National Agency in Spain within the Erasmus Plus program and the special call of October 2020 for KA226 VET projects in the field of creativity and innovation. The project has achieved all the objectives set and has created a series of products which have allowed to develop a general framework on teleworking in the partner countries, a guide on digital skills, some training modules for people over 50 and a e-learning online platform for trainers and learners. The project has been developed by Florida Centre de Formació, Coop. V (Spain), EURO-NET (Italy), Stowarzyszenie Centrum Wspierania Edukacji I Przedsiebiorczosci (Poland), Kainotomia & Sia EE (Greece), E-Seniors: Initiation Des Seniors Aux Ntic Association (France) and Markeut Skills Sociedad Limitada (Spain). More information on the prokect are available on the Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/TeleGrow-Enhancing-Teleworking-Skills-for-the-Middle-aged_employees-106389581610827 and on the official website of the initiative https://telegrow.erasmus.site/.

27. New meeting for the "Explore Europe" project

A new meeting for the "Explore Europe" project took place on January 3rd and 4th in Potenza, in Italy. The initiative has been approved at the Youth Europe Service association (Potenza) as action number 2020-2-IT03-KA205-018664 by the Youth National Agency within the KA205 initiatives of the Erasmus Plus Strategic Partnerships for Youth program. During the meeting, the partners have assessed the status of the Intellectual Outputs under development. The partnership, composed by Youth Europe Service (Italy), S.C. Predict CSD Consulting S.R.L (Romania) and Damasistem (Turkey), has received from the Erasmus + Youth National Agency, during Christmas time, the approval of extension of the action till May 31th 2023. The project is developing three interactive latest-generation games (for online and mobile phones) which will allow the development of educational and formative activities conducted by youth operators in an innovative way, which means by using gamification methodologies with the objective of making young people live a competitive adventure (young people will have the opportunity to learn how to confront themselves in specific competitions) based on the respect of human rights, promotion of integration and inclusion, support to solidarity, enhancement of citizenship's rights and drive towards European values. More information on the initiative are available on the project's Facebook page www.facebook.com/Explore-Europe-104476754982850/ and on the official website www.exploreurope.eu.

28. First online meeting for the "PLE4YOUTH" project

The first meeting for the project "Personal learning environment to improve young people's skills for future challenges" (acronym "PLE4YOUTH") took place online on January 11th during the afternoon. The initiative has been approved by the Spanish Erasmus Plus National Agency as action number 2022-1-ES02-KA210-YOU-000083769 within the Small Scale Partnerships in Youth. The partnership, which is in charge of developing the project in the next 24 months, is composed by Associació Educativa i Cultural Blue Beehive (Spain – project coordinator), The Hub Nicosia Ltd (Cyprus) and Youth Europe Service (Italy). The objective of the project is creating a learning personalized digital inclusive environment for the most disadvantaged young people, in order to enhance digital transformations and establish easier access to targeted knowledge which is important for the development of key competences of new generations. It is about developing a collection of digital tools which allow, on one hand, to enhance the in-depth analysis of various topics of interest to young people, and, on the other hand, to encourage young people to adapt while playing a proactive role in their own informal and non-formal education. The "PLE4YOUTH" project aims at developing a digital environment based on a PLE (Personal Learning Environment) composed by three formative online modules based on the topics of interest of young people for their informal education, including a SPOOC (Self-Paced Open Online Course) as a methodology for non-formal education, which includes the necessary training to adapt the PLE to every circumstance. During the meeting the Spanish coordinator has presented the two-year project, all the tasks have been assigned to the partners, and the deadlines to carry out the research and develop the platform have been established. The Potenza-based association will be working on the following topics: digital identity and how to create a correct digital profile with secure passwords; applying critical thinking to learn how to identity fake news; entrepreneurship; tips on how to create a curriculum vitae and how to handle job interviews; development of soft skills; inclusive leadership.

29. Meeting in Poznan for the "INTERACT" project

A new transnational meeting for the project "Innovative Cultural Heritage the Root of European Identity" (acronym "INTERACT") took place on January 10th and 11th in Poznan, in Poland. The initiative has been approved by the English National Agency as action number 2020-1-UK01-KA204-078950 within the Erasmus Plus Program KA2 Strategic Partnerships for Adult Education.

The meeting has been attended in presence by the many representatives of the project's partner organizations and virtually by Romania (the only partner which could not participate face-to-face to the activity) and by some Italian technicians (as requested by the coordinator Olivier Gnamian, despite the fact that the Y.E.S. Association was present at the meeting with the Doctor Luigi Vitelli). The meeting has been focused on the assessment of the technological work necessary to complete the products of the project and on the definition of the request for extension of the activities of at least 4 months (the British coordinator is in charge of submitting the request to the British National Agency). The extension is necessary in order to complete all the activities as best as possible and offer high quality products. The partnership, composed by Find an Internship (UK), Youth Europe Service (Italy), S.C Predict CSD (Romania), Interacting S.L (Spain) and Logos Polska (Poland), has agreed on the proposed extension of the project development deadlines and has established new deadlines to submit the work still to be developed. More information of the project can be found on the website https://interactproject.eu/ and on the official project's Faceebok page https://www.facebook.com/Erasmus-Plus-Interact-100911398721786.

30. Inter-generational workshop for the "RUN FOREST RUN" project

The inter-generational workshop within the "Run Forest Run" project took place on January 11th in Potenza, in Italy. The initiative has been approved in Poland as action number 2021-2-PL01-

KA210-YOU-000051306 within the Erasmus Plus Small Scale Partnerships in Youth Program, of which the Italian association based in Basilicata, Youth Europe Service, is partner together with two foreign organizations, which are Instytut Nowych Technologii (Poland) and BestSeller (Serbia).

This latest creative workshop named "Eco connects generations - intergenerational workshops on ecology" has been addressed at creating an inter-generational activity based on the exchange of ecological experiences related to reusing and recycling between young people and adults. This workshop was held at the MOON (Museo Officina Oggetti Narranti – Workshop Museum of Narrative Objects) by the staff of the Potenza-based association involved in the project KA210-YOU, which pursues the objective of encouraging people (young people in particular) to discover the world around them and motivating them to do their best, also with simple daily-life actions, to protect the environment and combat climate change. During this second activity of "Run Forest Run", attended by 18 students of the "Liceo Scientifico Pier Paolo Pasolini" located in Potenza (High School of Sciences) and 6 adults over 55, the two generations, have confronted themselves on the topics related to ecology for over three hours and have worked together on the development of interactive activities and the production of short videos lasting from 5 to 8 minutes (by employing simple mobile phones) related to the backstage and the actions carried out during the workshop.

31. Short online meeting for the "SPEAK" project

A short online meeting for the project "Speaking skill Performance Enhancement in entrepreneurial customs for sociAl worKers" (acronimo SPEAK) took place on January 12th. The initiative has been approved by the Erasmus Plus KA2 National Agency as action number 2020-1-SE01-KA204-077885. The meeting has been focused on the assessment of the finalization of the many animations developed within the IO2 (in the picture one of the two animations created by the Potenza-based association Youth Europe Service) and the relating subtitles in all languages, as well as the assessment of the handbook as part of the IO3 (still to be translated from English to all the partners' languages) and the planning of the activities related to the formative platform as envisaged by the IO4, still to be completed under the guidance of the Potenza-based organization (which is extremely expert and qualified in the sectors of cartoons animation and development of new technologies). The partnership (composed by organizations from Sweden, Austria, Turkey and Italy) has also discussed the dissemination initiatives to promote the products already completed. The project is experimenting some new ways and innovative skills to help and make social workers more professional and to improve their communicative skills with the audience. All those who are interested can follow the development of this interesting initiative on the project's official Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/SPEAK-103210721662026/ or on the project's website https://www.speakproject.eu.

32. Meeting in Potenza for the “EI4Future” project

The second transnational meeting for the project “Emotional Intelligence for Emotional Resilience” (acronym “EI4Future”) took place in Potenza, in Italy, on January 27th. The initiative has been approved within the actions KA220-ADU by the Spanish Erasmus Plus National Agency as action number 2021-1-ES01-KA220-ADU-000026157. The meeting, which has been hosted by the society GODESK SRL in its office in Potenza, has been addressed at assessing the work done on the Output 1 of the project (called “Training Materials with Techniques Using Gamification”) and at planning the activities for the Output 2 (called “MOOC - Massive Open Online Course EI4Future”). The work on the Output 2 will be coordinated by the Potenza-based GODESK SRL, which has delivered during the meeting an accurate presentation on the programme of activities planned for all the partners. During the meeting the partners have also discussed about the next motilities to be planned and about the importance of the dissemination activities, which have been excellently carried out by GODESK SRL, which has stood out for the number and the quality of the dissemination activities completed so far within the project. In addition to that, GODESK SRL has also published the first explanatory e-brochure about the project in Italian and English. The project’s partnership is composed by Indepcie SCA (Spain – project coordinator), Instituto Ikigai (Spain), Center for Education and Innovation (Greece), Vienna Association Of Education Volunteers (Austria), Avrasya Yenilikçi Toplum Derneği/EURASIA (Turkey) and GODESK SRL (Italy). The partnership aims at boosting the importance of emotional intelligence within the daily life, both from a personal and professional point of view, by supporting adults with fewer opportunities (thus belonging to socially disadvantaged contexts, hence unemployed, immigrants, refugees, disabled) to develop skills to manage their emotions and to become more emotionally resilient. More information of the project and its activities are available on the official Facebook page of the initiative https://www.facebook.com/EI4Future or on the website (partially under development) http://www.ei4future.eu/.

33. First online meeting for the “VRPAYouth” project

The first meeting within the project “Innovative Integration Between Virtual Reality and Rapid Prototyping for Youth” (acronym “VRP4Youth”) was held online on January 27th. The initiative has been approved by the Turkish Erasmus Plus National Agency as action number 2022-1-TR01-KA220-YOU-000089257 within the Erasmus Plus Program KA220-YOU – Cooperation Partnerships in Youth. The project, which is coordinated by the Gazi Üniversitesi of Ankara (Turkey), can rely on a partnership composed by: Kungliga Tekniska Hoegskolan (Sweden), Association of Academicians Union (Turkey), Instituto Politecnico Do Porto (Portugal) and GODESK SRL (Italy). The initiative aims at increasing long term youth employment in Europe by fostering the understanding of the needs of unemployed youth and related industries in the context of virtual reality (VR) and rapid prototyping (RP), by spreading knowledge of innovative applications on an international scale to increase youth employability, and by promoting the integration of Industry 4.0 outcomes into youth skills and competencies. The main activities of the project include the development of 4 work packages: the WP1 includes activities related to the project management, its assessment and the methodology to be used; the WP2 aims at developing surveys, analysis and workshops

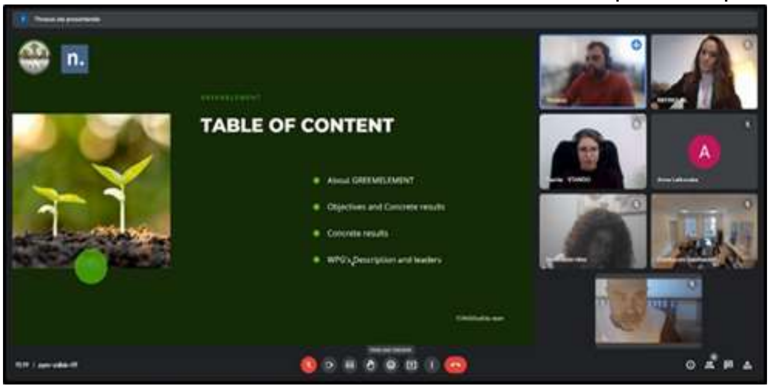
in order to prepare and carry out a research on VR and RP; the WP3 includes the development of training modules, the creation of a platform and applications; the WP4 includes all the dissemination activities and the website. During the meeting, the partners have presented themselves and their organizations, and the Turkish coordinator has presented the overall project and defined activities and deadlines to complete the project.

34. The website of the "SAFE" project has been completed

The website of the project "Social Awareness For Europe" (acronym "SAFE") is finally ready and online. The initiative has been approved in Norway as action number 2021-1-NO01-KA220-ADU-000029476 within the Erasmus Plus KA220-ADU Program – Cooperation partnerships in Adult Education. The SAFE website has been developed by the IT developer of the Italian association YOUTH EUROPE SERVICE (partner of the initiative with great expertise in this field) and has been presented to the partnership during the meeting in Virginia, Ireland, on February 8th and 9th. During the transnational meeting, attended by Doctor Luigi Vitelli, the partnership have assessed the work already completed on the Output 1 and Output 2 and have planned the following steps to develop. The partnership of the project includes: Fonix AS (Norway); Academia Postal 3 Vigo S.L. (Spain); The Rural Hub CLG (Ireland) and Youth Europe Service (Italy). The initiative is aimed at reducing the intolerance and social exclusion amongst adults in the European Union. This objective should be achieved by equipping adults with high-quality competences, tools and methodologies to manage these issues, by promoting positive values, avoiding believing fake news and fostering an inclusion perspective based on respect, equality and social justice. Four training courses will be activated within the SAFE project in order to provide associations, public institutions, organizations and operators with valuable tools to learn how to appropriately handle situations of exclusion by promoting tolerance and mutual respect. At the end, a virtual community will be created for the exchange of experiences and values, as well as the sharing of resources and promotion of tolerance.

35. First online meeting for the "GreenELEMENT" project

The first meeting of the project "Green Ecological LEad for sMall and MEdium-size eNTerprizes" (acronym "GreenELEMENT") was held online on February 2nd. The initiative has been approved as action number 2022-1-NL01-KA220-VET-000087087 by the Erasmus Plus Agency in the Netherlands within the KA220-VET actions – Cooperation partnerships in VET. The project is aimed at assessing the state of art of key competences in Green Business Leadership in order to build a curriculum for trainers and develop an e-learning platform, an inter-active app and an e-game, by engaging entrepreneurs, trainers and all the target groups on the importance of promoting key skills in this field. The partners of the initiative are: Nefinia (The Netherlands), Stando LTD (Cyprus), Pnevma LLC (Bulgaria), Innovation Hive (Greece), Danita (Denmark) and Godesk SRL (Italy). The project will develop an innovative GBLC training program for trainers in vocational education, which will be useful to train business leaders promoting sustainability in their organizations. The initiative is extremely innovative since it combines the 17 Sustainable



Development Goals (SDGs) by the United Nations and the European Green Deal and contributes to the development of key skills that drive sustainable business management through a new business framework which is more environmentally friendly.