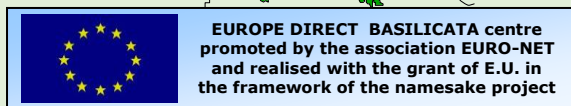




EURO-NET

The Youth European Network



**YEAR 19 - NUMBER 2
OF 20TH APRIL 2024
ENGLISH NEWSLETTER**

Bimonthly newsletter:

- 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**



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1. New EU funding for innovative ideas to reduce long-term unemployment

The Commission launched a call for proposals worth €23 million to help EU Member States develop new ways of tackling long-term unemployment and support people to find their way back into the labour market. This was announced in the recent action plan to tackle labour and skills shortages in the EU.

Through this call for proposals, funded under the “Social Innovation +” initiative of the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), the Commission aims to build on previous promising initiatives and to strengthen the role of social economy organisations. These organisations prioritise social and environmental purposes and reinvest most of their gains back into their initiatives. They have a proven capacity to support people who have suffered from isolation and poverty as a consequence of long-term unemployment.

New approaches to help people find jobs

While employment figures in the EU are at a record high with 75.5% in the fourth quarter of 2023,



tackling long-term unemployment – meaning people who have been out of work for more than a year – remains an issue in many Member States. In 2022, 4.5 million people over 25 years old in the EU were registered as long-term unemployed. The longer a person stays unemployed, the more difficult it is for them to find a job, increasing their risk of poverty and social exclusion. Traditional measures, like training without individualised support, are often insufficient to address the issue effectively. Looking for solutions, a recent EU-

funded report has shown the potential of innovative approaches like so-called “job guarantees” to help long-term unemployed people re-enter the labour market. Such measures help find or create jobs that are a good fit to people’s profiles, while addressing the needs of their local communities. These schemes can have wide benefits: they can provide useful services at an affordable cost for the local community, offer a new pathway to employment for people who have been out of work for a long time and help fill labour and skills gaps. Thanks to these initiatives, long-term unemployed people can start building their financial independence, professional growth and self-confidence. This improves their prospects for future employment in the wider labour market, supporting their social and economic inclusion.

Examples of innovative approaches

The report on “Job guarantees and other innovative approaches” highlighted examples for initiatives that successfully supported long-term unemployed people. For instance: the Marienthal Job Guarantee Pilot in Austria offers a job with fair pay to all people unemployed for a long time; in France, the Zero Long-Term Unemployment Territories initiative helps to hire people who have been jobless for at least one year. It assesses people’s skills and aspirations, matching them with community needs, and creating jobs that address those needs. The project redirects the savings from cash benefits otherwise paid to unemployed people towards creating these jobs; a similar approach has also been introduced in Belgium, with 17 zero long-term unemployment territories set to be launched in Wallonia, with support from the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+); the Solidary Basic Income initiative in Berlin, Germany, aims to tackle long-term unemployment by offering 1,000 job opportunities to people who have been unemployed for up to five years.

Next steps

Organisations have until 30 September 2024 to submit their proposals, following the instructions set out on the [website of the call](#), which must involve organisations from at least two different countries within the EU, Iceland, Montenegro, Norway and Serbia. Projects can last up to 36 months and may receive grants ranging from €1-3 million per project. An online session on 28 May 2024 will offer a chance to ask any questions about the call, while a match-making session will also be organised to facilitate the creating of new partnerships to build projects. Information on both sessions will be made available on the [webpage for the call](#).

Background

The European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) is the European Union’s main instrument for investing in people and supporting the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights. With €95.1 billion from the EU budget for the period 2021-2027, the ESF+ provides an important contribution to the EU’s employment, social, education and skills policies, including structural reforms in these

areas. Within the ESF+, the Social Innovation+ initiative is dedicated to developing and transferring innovative solutions to societal challenges, particularly in the fields of employment, education, skills and social inclusion.

2. Commission offers 35,500 DiscoverEU free travel passes to young people

Starting this summer, thousands of young people will once again travel around Europe by train for free thanks to the latest call of the DiscoverEU programme. To 16 April at 12:00 CET during the European Youth Week buzzing with activities, the Commission launched the latest DiscoverEU application round. It will end on Tuesday 30 April at 12:00 CET.

In total, 35,500 travel passes are available. To get one, young people born between 1 July 2005 and 30 June 2006 can do a quiz with five questions about the EU and one additional question on the [European Youth Portal](#). Successful applicants will get a free rail pass to travel in Europe for up to 30 days between 1 July 2024 and 30 September 2025. The call is open to applicants from the European Union and countries associated to the Erasmus+ programme including Iceland, Liechtenstein, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia and Turkey. Ticket holders can plan their own routes or be inspired by existing ones. For example, they can discover a route launched last year, which focuses on cities and places making the European Union 'beautiful, sustainable and inclusive' in line with the principles of the New European Bauhaus. Participants can also benefit from the DiscoverEU Culture Route an initiative of the 2022 European Year of Youth that combines various cultural destinations including architecture, music, fine art, theatre, fashion and design. Participants can visit the European Capitals of Culture which are on the UNESCO World Heritage List, European Heritage Label sites, or Access City Award label locations, which are cities that have gone above and beyond to become more accessible to everyone. DiscoverEU is much more than just a ticket. Participants will also receive a discount card with over 40,000 discount possibilities on public transport, culture, accommodation, food, sports and other services in eligible countries. Additionally, Erasmus+ National Agencies organise pre-departure information meetings, and national agencies across all Erasmus+ countries prepare DiscoverEU Meet-ups, learning programmes lasting from one to three days. Social inclusion is a top priority of the Erasmus+ programme, so participants with disabilities or health issues receive support on their journeys. Since October 2022, the Erasmus+ National Agencies have implemented the DiscoverEU Inclusion Action, allowing organisations working with young people with fewer opportunities to apply for a grant. This action provides extra support to participants, such as extra funding and the possibility to travel with accompanying persons. More than 250 projects have been awarded by the Erasmus+ National Agencies since the first call in October 2022, and two calls of the Inclusion Action are taking place in this year. While DiscoverEU encourages sustainable travel by rail, special arrangements are available for young people from outermost regions, Overseas Countries and Territories, remote areas and islands.



Background

The Commission launched DiscoverEU in June 2018 following a preparatory action from the European Parliament. It is integrated into the Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027. Since 2018, more than 1 million candidates have applied for 284,000 available travel passes. According to the latest post-travel survey, 72% of candidates declared it to be the first time travelling out of their country of residence by train. For many, it was also the first time they travelled without parents or accompanying adults, and the majority indicated an increased sense of independence. Over two-thirds said that they would not have been able to finance their travel pass without DiscoverEU. The DiscoverEU experience has given young people a better understanding of other cultures as well as European history and improved their foreign language skills. Participants are invited to become DiscoverEU Ambassadors to champion the initiative. The #DiscoverEU Official group has more than 96,000 members where young travellers can contact each other to share experiences and tips. To apply, eligible candidates need to complete a multiple-choice quiz on general knowledge about the European Union and other EU initiatives targeting young people. The Commission will rank applicants on the basis of their responses. The Commission will offer travel passes to applicants following their ranking up to the limit of available tickets.

3. Commission mobilises research and innovation funding

The Commission has adopted an amendment to the 2023-24 Work Programme of Horizon Europe, the EU's research and innovation programme.

The amendment mobilises previously unallocated Horizon Europe funding to increase the 2024 budget by nearly €1.4 billion to a total of €7.3 billion. This amendment includes an investment of nearly €650 million in the EU Missions aiming to contribute to solving some of the challenges facing Europe, for example, making more than 100 cities climate neutral, a New European Bauhaus facility, as well as experimental actions opening EU research and innovation opportunities to more newcomers, among other novelties. Some of the main features of this update of the Horizon Europe Work Programme include:

EU Missions

The EU will invest €648 million in 2024 in research and innovation activities underpinning the EU Missions. The EU Missions cover five areas and are a novelty brought by Horizon Europe to bring concrete solutions to some of our greatest challenges. They have ambitious goals and will deliver concrete results by 2030. The new actions for 2024 should result in restoring at least 25 000 km of free-flowing rivers, Climate City Contracts with more than 100 cities, 100 living labs and lighthouses leading the transition towards healthy soils, local and regional authorities better prepared to face climate-related risks, better cancer diagnosis and support to young cancer sufferers.

New European Bauhaus

The New European Bauhaus (NEB) aims to bring the benefits of the European Green Deal into people's daily lives and living spaces. In the three years since its launch, the NEB has provided solutions to concrete problems. Examples include the TOVA project from Spain that developed a 3D printing technique with earth to provide architectural solutions for sustainable, affordable, community-based housing. Another example is the WATSUPS project from Belgium that creates a new public space alongside the river Dyle to mitigate the risk of gentrification. These solutions are rooted in research and innovation that place the Europeans at the heart of the green transformation. A new NEB Facility will ensure that Europe continues to make most of this potential. It brings multi-annual budget support for 2025-2027 through two pillars, a research and innovation part to develop new ideas and a roll-out part to scale-up such solutions. The amended Horizon Europe work programme 2023-24 allocates €20 million to



preparing the ground for the implementation of the NEB Facility.

Experimental actions to attract newcomers

This amendment includes a package of new experimental actions to reinforce the openness of the programme, support the goals of the EU Missions and foster young researchers' careers. They will test new approaches in view of preparations for the last three years of Horizon Europe as well as of its future successor programme. The actions include four open topics giving researchers more freedom to focus their work on a subject they choose with a total budget of €76 million in Horizon Europe Clusters addressing 'Health', 'Climate, energy and mobility' and 'Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment'. An experimental action of €15 million for the EU Missions will make knowledge institutions such as universities or research organisations focal points of local transdisciplinary research and innovation activities with European outreach. In addition, the NEB call 'Transforming neighbourhoods, making them beautiful, sustainable, and inclusive' also aims to attract newcomers to the programme to maximise impact. Finally, €20 million will support talent ecosystems for attractive early research careers.

Cultural Heritage

The amendment also dedicates €48 million to the European Collaborative Cloud for Cultural Heritage. This new digital collaborative space will support cultural heritage institutions and researchers as well as the cultural and creative industries to reap the benefits of the digital transition. It will complement the common European Data Space for Cultural Heritage (the Data Space) funded under the Digital Europe programme.

Pandemic preparedness

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the challenges faced by European health care systems in detecting, preventing, fighting and managing outbreaks of infectious diseases. To help equip Europe for potential future pandemics, the amended work programme includes an investment of €50 million for a European Partnership for pandemic preparedness.

Paving the way for 2025

Calls for 2025 are also included in the amendment to ensure continuity of certain recurrent actions, such as the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) and 'Teaming for Excellence' and 'ERA (European Research Area) Fellowships' in the 'Widening participation and spreading excellence' and 'Reforming and Enhancing the European R&I system' part. The Commission plans to roll out the full range of actions for 2025 in a dedicated work programme in 2025.

Background

Horizon Europe is the EU's research and innovation programme for 2021-27. Originally working with €95.5 billion over seven years, the European Council decided to reduce its budget by €2.1 billion as part of the mid-term revision of the EU's long-term budget to allow the Union to finance other urgent priorities such as aid to Ukraine. The cut has been reduced by €100 million stemming from the re-use of decommitments, therefore, the reduction in 2025-27 will amount to €2 billion. The 2023-24 Horizon Europe work programme was adopted on 6 December 2022 and first amended on 31 March 2023. It is based on Horizon Europe's Strategic Plan 2021-2024, adopted in March 2021, which was co-designed with stakeholders, the European Parliament and the Member States. This amendment rolls out the investment for the EU Missions, which had been held back from the original work programme 2023-24 to enable the implementation of the Communication "EU Missions two years on: assessment of progress and way forward", adopted on 19 July 2023.

4. Energy Performance of Buildings Directive adopted

The Commission welcomes final adoption of the strengthened Energy Performance of Buildings Directive, another milestone of the European Green Deal.

This legislation sets the framework for Member States to reduce emissions and energy use in buildings across the EU, from homes and workplaces to schools, hospitals and other public buildings. This will help improve people's health and quality of life. The revised Directive sets ambitious targets to reduce the overall energy use of buildings across the EU, taking into account national specificities. It leaves in Member States' hands which buildings to target and which measures to take. It will boost the demand for clean technologies made in Europe, and create jobs, investment, and growth. Each Member State will adopt its own national trajectory to reduce the average primary energy use of residential buildings, by 16% by 2030 and 20-22% by 2035. For non-residential buildings, they will need to renovate the 16% worst-performing buildings by 2030 and the 26% worst-performing buildings by 2033. Member States will have the possibility to exempt certain categories of residential and non-residential buildings from these obligations, including historical buildings or holiday homes. Citizens will be supported in their efforts to improve their homes. The Directive requires the establishment of one-stop shops for advice on building renovation and provisions on public and private financing will make renovation more affordable and feasible. The Directive will boost Europe's energy independence, in line with the REPowerEU Plan, by reducing our use of imported fossil fuels. The revised Directive will make 'zero-emissions' the standard for new buildings. All new residential and non-residential buildings must have zero on-site emissions from fossil fuels, as of 1 January 2028 for publicly-owned buildings and as of 1 January 2030 for all other new buildings, with a possibility for specific exemptions. The strengthened Directive contains new provisions to progressively phase-out fossil fuels from heating in buildings and boost the deployment of solar power installations, taking into account the national circumstances. Member States will also have to ensure that new buildings are 'solar ready'. Subsidies for the installation of stand-alone boilers powered by fossil fuels will not be allowed as of 1 January 2025. It will also boost the uptake of sustainable mobility thanks to provisions on pre-cabling, recharging points for electric vehicles and bicycle parking spaces. Better planning of renovations and technical and financial support will be crucial to trigger a Renovation Wave across the EU, and this is foreseen under the revised Directive. To fight energy poverty and bring down energy bills, financing measures will have to incentivise and accompany renovations and be targeted in particular at vulnerable customers and worst-performing buildings, in which a higher share of energy-poor households live.



Next steps

The revised Directive will be published in the Official Journal of the Union and enter into force in the coming weeks. Member States will then have to transpose it into their national legislation.

Background

Buildings are responsible for around 40% of the EU's energy consumption, more than half of EU gas consumption (mainly through heating, cooling and domestic hot water), and 35% of the energy-related greenhouse gas emissions. At present, about 35% of the EU's buildings are over 50 years old and almost 75% of the building stock is energy inefficient. At the same time, the average annual energy renovation rate is only about 1%. In 2020, the Commission presented its Renovation Wave Strategy to at least double renovation rates by 2030 and to make sure that renovations lead to higher energy efficiency and more renewables in buildings. The Commission's proposal to revise the EPBD in December 2021 was further supplemented by additional elements on the deployment of solar energy on buildings as part of the REPowerEU plan in May 2022. The co-legislators reached a political agreement in December 2023. The Directive is a key building block in the EU's efforts to transition away from fossil fuels and to double the rate of energy efficiency improvements and triple renewable energy capacity by 2030, as agreed with global partners at COP28. This adoption builds on the completion and entry into force of the "Fit for 55" legislation, and will contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030.

5. Bulgaria and Romania join the Schengen area

On 31 March, Bulgaria and Romania become Schengen members: the Schengen rules will apply in both Member States including on issuing Schengen visas and controls at the internal air and sea borders will be lifted.

The Commission strongly welcomes this achievement, which follows the historic Council decision of December 2023. The Schengen accession of these two Member States will make the common area more attractive by significantly expanding the world's largest common area without internal border controls. President of the European Commission, Ursula **von der Leyen** said: *"Tomorrow*



marks an important day: Bulgaria and Romania join the Schengen family. I welcome the lifting of internal air and sea border checks. This is a great success for both countries. And a historic moment for the Schengen area - the largest area of free movement in the world. Together, we are building a stronger, more united Europe for all our citizens." Since last December, both Member States have taken all necessary measures to ensure a smooth application of the Schengen rules as from 31 March 2024. The Cooperation Frameworks launched earlier this March by the Commission together with Bulgaria and

Romania build on the successful implementation of the pilot projects for fast asylum and return procedures. With these Cooperation Frameworks, Romania and Bulgaria will further contribute to strengthening the cooperation on border and migration, as well as to the joint European efforts to address EU security at external borders and migratory challenges. Furthermore, a regional initiative on police cooperation was established between Member States along the Western Balkan and Eastern Mediterranean routes, including Bulgaria, Romania, Austria, Greece, Hungary and Slovakia. This will allow to address related challenges jointly and in a sustainable manner, including as regards cross-border crime. Bulgaria and Romania have continuously demonstrated a high level of commitment in ensuring an adequate protection of the EU external borders and have constantly acted as key contributors to the internal security of the Schengen area.

Next steps

The Council will need to take a decision to establish a date for the lifting of checks at internal land borders between Bulgaria, Romania and the other Schengen countries. The Commission will continue to provide all necessary support to the Presidency of the Council to ensure that a decision on land borders can be taken in 2024.

Background

Already in 2011, the Commission confirmed in the Schengen Evaluation reports that Bulgaria and Romania have met all requirements to be fully part of the Schengen area. The Commission has actively supported this process. The Schengen area without control at its internal borders is one of

EU citizens' most cherished achievements. What started as an intergovernmental project between five Member States in 1985 – Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg and Netherlands – has gradually expanded to become what is the largest area of free movement in the world. Besides facilitating free movement of people without internal border controls, Schengen significantly benefits Europe's economy.

6. Commission takes action to improve the quality of traineeships in the EU

Quality traineeships can help young people gain practical work experience, learn new skills and eventually find a good quality job. For employers, they are an opportunity to attract, train and retain talent. A quality traineeship requires fair and transparent working conditions and an adequate learning content.

The EU's 2014 Quality Framework for Traineeships set out 21 quality principles to ensure high-quality learning and working conditions. In its 2023 evaluation of this Council Recommendation, the Commission found that it had a positive impact on the quality of traineeships in the EU. However, the Commission's evaluation also found room for improvement and both the Conference on the Future of Europe and the European Parliament called on the Commission to improve traineeships. The European Commission is taking action and is proposing to improve working conditions for trainees, including pay, inclusiveness and quality of traineeships in the EU. The initiative consists of: a proposal for a Directive on improving and enforcing working conditions for trainees and combatting regular employment relationships disguised as traineeships; and a proposal to revise the 2014 Council Recommendation on a Quality Framework for Traineeships to address issues of quality and inclusiveness, such as fair pay and access to social protection. In 2019, the latest available reliable data, there were an estimated 3.1 million trainees in the EU. Approximately half of all trainees (1.6 million) were enrolled in paid traineeships.



Boosting rights for trainees

The proposed Directive will help Member States improve and enforce good quality working conditions for trainees, as well as combat regular employment relationships disguised as traineeships. Key elements of the proposed Directive include: the principle of non-discrimination, ensuring that trainees are treated equally in terms of working conditions, including pay, compared to regular employees, unless different treatment is justified on objective grounds, such as different tasks, lower responsibilities, work intensity or the weight of the learning and training component. Ensuring traineeships are not used to disguise regular jobs, through controls and inspections, with Member States using duration as a possible aspect to assess whether this is the case, and by asking companies to share traineeships' numbers, durations and working conditions. Allowing workers' representatives to engage on behalf of trainees to secure their rights. Requiring Member States to ensure channels for trainees to report malpractice and poor working conditions.

Fairer and more inclusive traineeships

The reinforced Council Recommendation applies to all trainees regardless of their employment status, including traineeships that are part of formal education and training curricula and those required for accessing specific professions. Key elements of the revised Council Recommendation include: recommending fair pay for trainees; ensuring access to adequate social protection for trainees, including appropriate coverage in line with national legislation of the Member State; appointing a mentor, to provide trainees with targeted support and advice; promoting equal access to traineeship opportunities, through reaching out to people in vulnerable situations and by ensuring that workplaces are accessible for trainees with disabilities; allowing for hybrid and remote working, by ensuring trainees receive the equipment needed; increasing employability by additional career guidance and incentives to traineeship providers to offer trainees a regular position after their traineeship. These new elements are in addition to what already exists in the 2014 Quality Framework for Traineeships Recommendation, such as having clear vacancy notices, providing a written agreement before the start of the traineeship setting out the terms, making sure traineeships are not excessively long or repeated, ensuring that the learning experience is a core part, guaranteeing the health and safety aspects, and promoting their recognition afterwards.

Next steps

The Commission's proposed Directive will be discussed by the European Parliament and the Member States. Once the proposed Directive is adopted by the co-legislators, Member States will have two years to incorporate it into national law. The Council Recommendation will be presented to the Council for consideration and adoption. Following this, the Commission will support Member States in implementing the Recommendation and will invite them to provide updates on national initiatives, reforms, best practices and statistics.

Background

The EU's 2014 Quality Framework for Traineeships sets out 21 quality principles for traineeships that Member States are recommended to put into practice to ensure high-quality learning and working conditions. In its 2023 evaluation of this Council Recommendation, the Commission found that it had a positive impact on the quality of traineeships in the EU. At the same time, the evaluation found room for improvement in applying, monitoring and enforcing the framework's quality principles. It is estimated that there are around 3.1 million trainees in the EU (among them 1.6 million paid trainees) and the demand for traineeships is expected to grow at least by 16% by 2030. According to a 2023 Eurobarometer survey, 78% of young Europeans did at least one traineeship and 68% said they found a job afterwards. 21% of respondents did a traineeship in another Member State, marking a significant increase since 2013 (9%). This package follows up on the European Parliament resolution of June 2023, calling the Commission to update the 2014 Quality Framework; the Conference on the Future of Europe, where EU citizens asked the Commission to ensure quality traineeships; and the European Year of Youth. It also contributes to implementing the European Year of Skills and complements the reinforced Youth Guarantee and other Commission initiatives supporting youth employment.



7. Commission proposes youth mobility between EU and UK

The Commission has proposed to the Council to open negotiations with the United Kingdom on an agreement to facilitate youth mobility. Such an agreement would make it easier for young EU and UK citizens to study, work and live in the UK and the EU respectively.

The withdrawal of the UK from the EU has resulted in decreased mobility between the EU and the UK. This situation has particularly affected the opportunities for young people to experience life on the other side of the Channel and to benefit from youth, cultural, educational, research and training exchanges. The proposal seeks to address in an innovative way the main barriers to mobility for young people experienced today and create a right for young people to travel from the EU to the UK and vice-versa more easily and for a longer period of time. The proposal sets out the conditions that would have to be met (age, maximum duration of stay, conditions of eligibility, rules for verifying their compliance) to enable young people to move without being tied to a purpose (i.e., to allow for studying, training or working), or quota-bound. For instance, under the envisaged agreement, both EU and UK citizens aged between 18 to 30 years would be able to stay for up to 4 years in the destination country.



Next steps

The Commission's recommendation will now be discussed in the Council. If the Council agrees, the Commission would be empowered to launch negotiations with the UK on youth mobility.

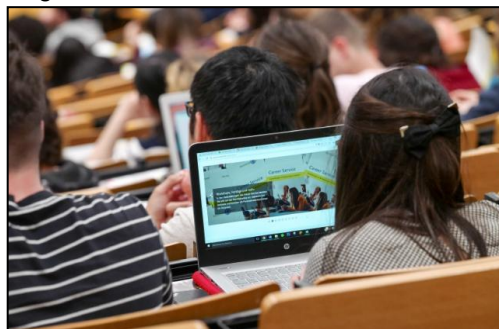
Background

Since the withdrawal of the UK from the EU, mobility between the EU and UK is governed by the respective domestic (immigration) rules of the EU and its Member States and the UK. This has resulted in decreased numbers of persons exercising mobility between the EU and the UK. The Commission's proposal on an EU-UK agreement on youth mobility could be usefully supported by a parallel discussion on the possible association of the UK to Erasmus+.

8. Commission rolls out plans for a European degree

The Commission is presenting three initiatives to advance transnational cooperation between higher education institutions, with the ultimate goal of creating a European degree.

A voluntary European degree would benefit students and the higher education community by boosting learning mobility within the EU and by enhancing students' transversal skills. It would help meet labour market demand and make graduates more attractive for future employers while, at the same time, attracting students from around the world and boosting European competitiveness. The three initiatives tackle the legal and administrative barriers to partner universities setting up competitive joint degree programmes at Bachelor, Master or Doctoral levels. The proposals build on universities' institutional autonomy and academic freedom. They fully respect the competences of Member States and regional governments in the area of higher education. This package comprises a Communication on a blueprint for a European degree and two proposals for Council recommendations to support the higher education sector: one to improve quality assurance processes and automatic recognition of qualifications in higher education, and the other to make academic careers more attractive and sustainable.



A blueprint for a European degree

The blueprint for a European degree presented paves the way for a new type of joint programme, delivered on a voluntary basis at national, regional, or institutional level, and based on a common set of criteria agreed at European level. Such a European degree would cut red tape and allow higher education institutions from different countries to cooperate seamlessly across borders and set up joint programmes. The Communication proposes a concrete cooperation path between EU Member States and the higher education sector towards the creation of a European degree recognised automatically across the EU. In view of the diversity of the European higher education systems across Europe, the Commission proposes a gradual approach for Member States towards a European degree, with two possible entry points: a preparatory European label: a label would provide a strong European branding. It would be given to joint degree programmes which meet the proposed European criteria: students receive a European degree label certificate together with their joint degree. A European degree: this new type of qualification would be based on the common criteria and be anchored in national legislation. It would be awarded either jointly by several universities from different countries or possibly by a European legal entity established by such universities: students receive a 'European degree' that is automatically recognised. The Commission will facilitate and support Member States in the work towards the European degree through a number of concrete actions, including a European degree policy lab supported by Erasmus+ programme, to be set up in 2025, aiming to engage Member States and the higher education community to develop guidelines towards a European degree. In 2025, the Commission plans to launch 'European degree pathway projects' within Erasmus+ programme to provide financial incentives for Member States, together with their accreditation and quality assurance agencies, universities, students, economic and social partners, to engage in the pathway towards a European degree.

Simpler and better quality assurance and automatic recognition of university degrees

The Commission's proposal for a Council Recommendation on a European quality assurance and recognition system in higher education invites Member States and higher education institutions to simplify and improve their quality assurance processes and practices. These are necessary conditions for accountability and trust - and to improve universities' performances. Member States are invited to take measures to allow higher education institutions to adapt the programmes offered more quickly to societal needs. This Recommendation would endorse innovative pedagogical offers and ensure that higher education institutions can create transnational programmes that are quality assured and automatically recognised across the EU. The European degree will depend on strong quality assurance and automatic recognition.

Valuing the diverse roles of academic staff equally

The proposed Council Recommendation on attractive and sustainable careers in higher education aims to give staff involved in cross-border work in education and innovative teaching methods the recognition and reward they deserve. It makes recommendations to ensure that national higher

education systems address the uneven recognition of the diverse roles staff take on in addition to research, such as teaching and investing in mainstreaming sustainable development. It also encourages Member States to promote transnational education activities.

Next Steps

The package will be discussed with the Council of the EU and key stakeholders in higher education in the coming months. The Commission invites the Council, Member States, universities, students, and economic and social partners to work jointly to make the European degree a reality.

Background

In September 2020, the Commission Communication on Achieving the European Education Area by 2025 identified the need to facilitate the delivery of joint degree programmes of higher education alliances. It was endorsed by the Council the following year. This package was announced by President von der Leyen in her State of the Union speech 2023 and is part of the Commission's 2024 Work Programme. The blueprint for a European degree builds on six Erasmus+ pilot projects involving more than 140 higher education institutions from across the EU.

9. Interoperable Europe Act enters into force

The Interoperable Europe Act, will facilitate cross-border data exchange and accelerate the digital transformation of the public sector.

The Act is essential to reaching the objectives of the EU's Digital Decade, such as having 100% of key public services available online by 2030. Interoperability is a core feature of a functioning Digital Single Market and contributes to a more effective implementation of digital features of public policies, from justice to health to transport. Citizens, businesses, and public administrations will benefit most of the new regulation when using interconnected digital public services that require



cross-border exchange of data. Examples of such services include mutual recognition of academic diplomas or professional qualifications, exchanges of vehicle data for road safety, access to social security and health data, the exchange of information related to taxation, customs, public tender accreditation, digital driving licenses, commercial registers. According to the impact assessment, the Act is expected to save up to €5 billion on a yearly basis. The Act will be implemented through a set of key measures: The setup of a multi-level cooperation framework bringing

together Member State most senior digital government practitioners, as well as a broad community of civil society, experts, academics and local actors, to define a common interoperability agenda and an evolving ecosystem of common interoperability solutions. This framework will be steered by the Interoperable Europe Board and supported by the Interoperable Europe Community. The introduction of mandatory interoperability assessments to build "interoperable-by-design" public services. This will help public sector bodies to explore and, where appropriate, address cross-border interoperability aspects already at the design phase of new services or tools. The Commission will provide the necessary guidelines and support. The 'Interoperable Europe Portal', a one-stop-shop to encourage the sharing and reuse of high quality and reliable interoperability solutions among public administrations. Strengthened innovation and policy support mechanisms, including training, regulatory sandboxes for policy experimentation, public-private GovTech and policy implementation support projects, to develop, test and scale up solutions. The regulation applies to public sector bodies, including EU Institutions and bodies. The implementation of the interoperable Europe Act will be funded through the Digital Europe Programme (DIGITAL).

Next Steps

Following the timeline defined in the Regulation, most of the provisions will apply within 3 months from the date of entry into force. Exceptionally: European Institutions, bodies and agencies and public sector bodies will run Interoperability assessments as of January 2025; Member States will designate national competent authorities 9 months after the date of entry into force of the Regulation, by January 2025.

Background

Public sector interoperability is the ability of administrations to cooperate and make public services function across borders, sectors and organisational boundaries. It plays a crucial role in designing

safe data flows and avoiding the duplication of efforts in public services. In different crises over the past years, public sector interoperability allowed for better coordination among Member States, mobilisation of resources where they were most needed, and the fast formulation of joint solutions. The Commission has been supporting interoperability between public administrations since the 1990s through the European Interoperability Framework (EIF), a series of action plans and funding programmes such as IDA, IDABC, ISA, ISA², and now DIGITAL. To assist Member States and European Institutions, bodies and agencies in implementation of the public sector interoperability policy, the Commission has developed a comprehensive set of tools and trainings, such as the EIF toolbox, the SEMIC Support Centre, the JoinUp platform and the Interoperable Europe Academy. In addition to these, the Commission has also created a GovTech Incubator initiative where governments come together to adopt the best solutions developed by startups and other governments across the EU. Several evaluations of public sector interoperability policy pointed to shortcomings and called for action. Member States have also increasingly stressed the need to strengthen European interoperability cooperation through, among others, the ministerial declarations signed in 2017 in Tallinn and in 2020 in Berlin. Likewise, EU citizens participating in the Conference on the Future of Europe have voiced a demand for enhanced cross-border interoperability. The Interoperable Europe Act responds directly to these calls for action.

10. Commission takes stock of the Clean Transition Dialogues

The Commission adopted a Communication taking stock of a series of Clean Transition Dialogues on transforming Europe into a clean, resource-efficient, fair and competitive economy.

Commission President von der Leyen announced the launch of the dialogues in her 2023 State of the Union speech, to discuss with European industry and social partners how to strengthen and support the implementation of the European Green Deal, contributing to a reinforced industrial approach. The Dialogues have been chaired by Executive Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič. This stocktake will feed into the discussion of EU leaders at the upcoming European Council on the next steps in Europe's clean transition. Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said, *"The European Green Deal is, and always has been, Europe's growth strategy. Clean growth brings real benefits to our industry, and they have embraced it. Because in the European economy of the future, competitiveness and sustainability will go hand in hand. Now that a predictable regulatory framework is in place, the Clean Transition Dialogues are an important way to work together with industry and social partners to implement it in the most effective way. The Dialogues showed that our partners are committed to getting the job done and delivering on our ambitious and essential targets. Based on their insights, Europe will continue to support industry in building a business model fit for a decarbonised economy."* Nine Clean Transition Dialogues have taken place so far. Industry and social partners confirmed their strong commitment to shape and implement the European Green Deal. Social partners highlighted the importance of ensuring the social fairness of the transition, to create good quality jobs as well as the need for reinforced structured social dialogue. The Dialogues have focused on hydrogen, energy-intensive industries, clean tech, energy infrastructure, critical raw materials, forest-based bioeconomy, cities, clean mobility, and steel.



A reinforced industrial approach: Building blocks and main elements

This Communication highlights a number of key building blocks that have been identified through the Dialogues which could support a reinforced industrial approach to deliver on the European Green Deal: an effective and simplified regulatory framework for businesses to deliver on the transition; action on energy prices; modern infrastructure; easier access to finance; and a stronger Single Market in a globally competitive environment. The Commission will continue its engagement with industry and social partners through the Clean Transition Dialogues and it stands ready to engage in a thorough debate with Council and Parliament on the key factors that need to be addressed.

Delivery through effective implementation and simplification

The EU has delivered the policy and regulatory framework to achieve the 2030 targets and to keep Europe on track towards climate neutrality and a sustainable economy by 2050. This clear

regulatory framework creates stability and predictability for all stakeholders. As the focus now switches to implementation, the Commission will provide further guidance to support industry and Member States in applying EU legislation and will strengthen the focus on burden reduction. The Commission will also publish on a dedicated platform a set of key indicators to monitor and measure progress of the green transition, competitiveness of the EU economy and the social transition. The Commission will further support industry in equipping the employees with the necessary skills for the transition, and will continue working with cities, regional and local authorities.

Abundant and affordable clean energy

Member States should make full use of the updated legal framework, notably the Renewable Energy Directive, to ensure the benefits of the clean transition flow to industry and citizens. Participants in the Dialogues stressed that securing the supply of abundant and affordable zero and low-carbon energy is a key condition to accelerate the decarbonisation of the EU economy and preserve the competitiveness of the European industry, and in particular energy intensive industries. Some industrial and transport sectors have called for additional innovative, transitory measures that secure energy at lower prices, while providing certainty to energy producers through long-term off-take. Industry also called for the creation of industrial clusters, that connect the largest manufacturing facilities and hubs with zero and low carbon generation plants, hydrogen and renewable- and low-carbon fuels producing facilities, or carbon capture, storage, transport and utilisation infrastructure. Participants in the Dialogues called on Member States to reconsider the level of taxes and levies on energy, including electricity. The Commission recalls that Member States need to take measures to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies, in line with recent COP conclusions and the Commission's proposal to review the Energy Taxation Directive.

Modern infrastructure as backbone for industry

Closer coordination is needed between the Commission, Member States, local and regional authorities, network operators, industrial actors, regulators and financial institutions on the development of infrastructure for the clean energy transition. The Commission will adjust the existing formats to provide a platform for a *regular* and *direct* engagement with all key actors, with a



focus on concrete infrastructure projects. Resilience requirements applicable to procurement and auctions will help create demand for EU-made equipment and components that meet high standards set for use in infrastructure development. The Commission will consider supporting industry in developing demand standardisation for cables, pipelines and technologies necessary for the development of the energy grid.

Unlocking finance for the transition

Private investment has not yet been sufficiently mobilised, but the private sector will continue to play a leading role in deploying investment in the clean transition. Participants in the Dialogues also stressed the need to reduce the cost of raising capital, diversify funding options for businesses, propose new innovative financial tools, and facilitate cross-border investing. A strong EU budget is needed to deliver higher quality investments and in this context the Commission urges swift progress on both the issue of innovative ways to use public funds to crowd in private investment, as well as the proposed ETS own resource. Overall, there is an urgent need to coordinate funding more at EU level, to create economies of scale, to enhance the efficient allocation of resources and make use of the single market. European institutions should strengthen their engagement with the institutional actors to mobilise private funding; the Commission should strengthen the political engagement and dialogue with the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), international financial institutions and private banks. Use of additional revenues from the EU Emissions Trading System, the Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform and auctions-as-a-service schemes like under the European Hydrogen Bank, are examples of promising funding tools put in place for the transition. Dialogue participants raised the important mismatch between the significant upfront investment costs of infrastructure development, and available funds.

Leveraging the clean Single Market in a globally competitive environment

The Single Market is the EU's greatest strength, as it provides scale and promotes a high level of standards also outside Europe. Based on the positive result of the joint purchase of gas, the Commission will consider developing demand aggregation and joint purchasing for other strategic commodities and organising a pilot for hydrogen and the joint purchasing of critical raw materials.

The Commission and Member States should make full use of policy instruments against unfair global competition, to ensure a level playing field on the internal and global markets. Implementing the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism and deploying more global carbon pricing through enhanced diplomacy are also important.

Background

To transform Europe into a clean, resource-efficient, and competitive economy, the Commission presented in 2019 the European Green Deal. This has been followed by a number of concrete initiatives; the majority of which are now embedded in EU law. The focus now shifts to implementation and delivery to make the Green Deal a success on the ground. Europe's industry and social partners should lead the transition of Europe's economy. At the same time, industry is coming under pressure because of the worsening security, geopolitical, and economic context, as well as the lack of a level playing field. The Clean Transition Dialogues were launched by President von der Leyen in the 2023 State of the Union speech as a new way for the Commission to engage with industry and social partners, to understand their current challenges, and to strengthen and support the implementation of the European Green Deal.

11. Youth4Regions – the programme for aspiring journalists

The Commission has opened the application period for the 8th edition of Youth4Regions, the programme that offers journalism students and young journalists a week in Brussels in October 2024, during which selected applicants will attend training courses, work side by side with experienced journalists and visit EU institutions and media organisations. Entries, covering three categories (general, photojournalism and video journalism), can come from EU Member States, neighbouring countries and accession countries. The winners will also participate in the competition for the prestigious Megalizzi-Niedzielski Prize, dedicated to recognising excellence in the work of young journalists, which will be awarded on 9 October 2024. Youth4Regions is the Commission's flagship initiative aimed at fostering the growth of journalism students and young journalists by giving them direct exposure to the EU. Since its launch in 2017, the programme has been completed by more than 210 individuals from across Europe, giving them access to valuable experience and knowledge. The application form and conditions of participation are available on the [programme webpage](#). The application period **ends on 8 July 2024**. The Commission will bear all programme costs for participants.



12. Eurodesk contest for the European elections!

Eurodesk Brussels Link, the European mobility information network for young people, is promoting a photography/design competition to raise awareness among young Europeans on the topic of the



European elections that will take place from 6 to 9 June 2024. To participate, you need to make a drawing or take a photo showing what 'don't let others choose for us' means when thinking about the 2024 European elections and send it in by filling in the form [here](#). Requirements: be between 18 and 30 years old; belong to one of the countries of the Eurodesk network. There will be 2 winners of the competition, selected by public vote. The winners will receive the following prizes: the person with the most votes will win an

Interrail ticket and Eurodesk merchandise; the person with the second-highest number of votes will win an Eastpak backpack and Eurodesk merchandise. **Deadline: 17 May 2024**. More information can be found at the following [link](#).

13. NATO Internship Programme

If you would like to gain experience working for a political and military alliance that promotes freedom and security, then the NATO Internship Programme might be for you! NATO offers six-month internships to applicants in the third year of their university studies, or recent graduates of a bachelor or master's programme. Internships apply to a broad range of expertise and skillsets, providing opportunities in areas like political affairs, defence and security, innovation, operations, communications, business support and human resources, finance, science and technology, and infrastructure and facilities. Internships take place at NATO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium – an exciting city that serves as a meeting point for many European and other international organisations, and a hub of activity and networking for young professionals. The NATO Internship Programme offers an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to learn from the NATO community while gaining six months of valuable work experience and a greater knowledge of the inner workings of the Alliance!



Main objectives of the NATO Internship Programme

- To provide interns with the opportunity to learn from the NATO community and get a better understanding and a more balanced view of the Organization.
- To improve NATO's access to theoretical and technical knowledge that the intern can apply through practical work assignments.
- To contribute to creating a more diverse workforce.
- To expand knowledge and understanding of NATO in member countries.

The NATO Internship Programme offers internship positions within the NATO International Staff, the International Military Staff and some of the NATO agencies and bodies at NATO Headquarters.

Eligibility criteria

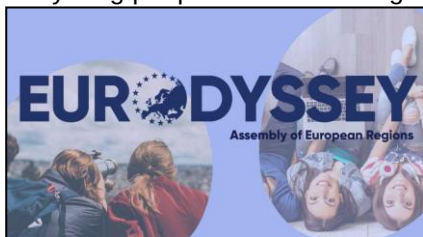
To apply for a NATO internship, you must fulfil below criteria on the date of your application:

- Age: 21+;
- Nationality: a citizen of a NATO member country;
- Educational status: at least two years of university completed and enrolled in a third year OR having obtained your highest degree less than a year prior;
- Languages: proficiency in one of the two official NATO languages: English or French. A working knowledge of the second is considered an asset. Knowledge of other languages may also be considered an asset for certain positions.

If you are a national of a [NATO partner country](#), you can contact your mission at NATO Headquarters or embassy in Brussels directly for information about potential internships within the mission or embassy. To apply, via an online form on the dedicated website, there is time **until 20 May 2024**. More information on [Nato.int](#).

14. Eurodessey, traineeships in Europe for young people

For young people between the ages of 18 and 30, the Eurodessey programme gives young people the opportunity to experience an apprenticeship from 3 to 7 months. Set up in 1985 thanks to the Assembly of European Regions (ARE), Eurodessey is the exchange programme between European countries that allows a period of paid work in a foreign company. The programme aims to reduce youth unemployment, provides a professionally satisfying experience and brings young people closer to the international labour market, allowing them to learn a foreign



language. Here are some of the internships available at this time:

- Junior Designer - deadline 15 May;
- Public Affairs Assistant - deadline 10 May;
- Junior E-commerce Marketing Associate - deadline 26 April;
- Communications Assistant - deadline 26 April.

All active traineeships can be found on the following [webpage](#).

15. Meeting on European themes in Lauria

On 16th March 2024 took place in Lauria (Italy), a conference on European issues at the Centro di Aggregazione Sociale "Agnese Scaldaferri" in the presence of various associations from Lucania. At the speakers' table were the mayor of Lauria Gianni Pittella, the director of the Europe Direct Basilicata Centre Antonino Imbesi, the vice-president of MOV Lucania Carmina Ielpo and the



Erasmus Plus ambassador for the Basilicata Region Margherita Colantuono. The meeting, held in the presence of about forty people, was moderated by the national coordinator of MLO Italy, Lucia Carlomagno, who immediately asked the former MEP Gianni Pittella to speak about his experience as an MEP. Pittella then recalled his time on the EP benches in Brussels, underlining the action that MEPs carry out for the benefit of citizens and recalling how he was, during the approval

of the EU budget, as its rapporteur, the proposer of the turnaround of the Erasmus programme, steering it towards the programme that it is today. After Pittella, it was the turn of Carmina Ielpo, who, on behalf of the MOV Lucania association, explained how the Erasmus Plus programme has opened opportunities for partnership and mobility also for the Lauria area, citing the 2 projects approved in the last year, an accreditation for KA1 mobility for adults and a Small Scale KA210 project. Antonino Imbesi then introduced and promoted the theme of the European elections. He literally moved those present by talking about the action that the EP has carried out and continues to carry out on an international level and the importance of participating in the vote in order to count, inviting all those present to be spokespeople in their respective associations and communities of the need to go and vote by choosing well who should represent them. Almost at the end of the event, the Erasmus Plus Ambassador for the Basilicata Region, Margherita Colantuono, spoke about her current experience, recalling that she herself is a "daughter of the programme" for which she is the spokesperson. At the end of the work, Lucia Carlomagno, after thanking those present and the speakers, made it clear that, for the growth of the whole southern area of Basilicata, Europe is a determining factor in that it enables the building of networks of relations and the launching of activities that can become life projects.

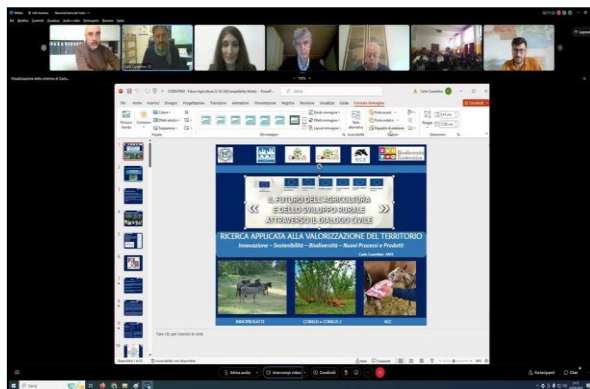
16. New video made by the staff of the Europe Direct Basilicata Centre

Here is our latest production, as a cartoon Euro-net, made for the Europe Direct centre of the University of Chieti. It is dedicated to the 2024 European Parliament elections that have been set, from 6th to 9th June; the citizens of the 27 Member States will be called upon to cast their votes to elect new representatives to the European Parliament. In Italy, the European elections will be held on Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 June. The purpose of the video is to inform and make people aware of the importance of voting; during the European elections we can all collectively decide on the future of the European Union. Our vote will decide which MEPs will represent us in the drafting of new laws and influence the election of the European Commission. These decisions will shape our daily lives and the lives of many others. It also informs citizens that at the Europe Direct centre at the University of Chieti it is possible to go and receive information not only about the upcoming elections but also about European exchanges and projects. The production direction of the video was, as always, supervised by Antonino Imbesi (head of our Europe Direct Basilicata centre), with the supervision of Annalisa Michetti (also head of the Europe Direct centre in Chieti), while Antonia Bruno handled the texts and dubbing direction. The voices are by: Antonia Bruno, Silvana Lagrotta and Mauro Vottari; while the storyboard and animation of the images were done by Gianluca Lagrotta. The video is available at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=31D2NGmoMGs>.



17. Event organised with the collaboration among six Europe Directs

European farmers are the backbone of Europe's food self-sufficiency and the driving force behind employment and sustainable growth in rural areas. They make an essential contribution to our collective ecological transition. At the same time, they face challenges such as climate change and global market competitiveness. They have shown remarkable resilience in difficult times marked by the pandemic, the energy crisis, the consequences of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and high levels of inflation. This was the common thread running through the event organised on 22nd March 2024 thanks to the collaboration between six Europe Directs based in inland rural areas of Italy. Specifically, the Europe Direct Basilicata, Caserta, Gioiosa Ionica Maiella, Molise and Umbria (listed strictly in alphabetical order only and not in terms of importance) joined forces with the common aim of giving a voice to agricultural producers, local food shop owners, retailers, consumer organisations, environmental groups, local and European institutions, agricultural schools and local universities to share ideas and highlight the needs of farmers. The programme was attended by European, regional and local officials. The rich panel consisted of: Massimo Pronio (Head of Communication European Commission Representation in Italy), Andrea Incarnati (exponent of DG Agriculture and Rural Development), Elena Sico (Head of Agriculture Department Abruzzo Region), Vincenzo Girfatti (Extraordinary Commissioner Matese Regional Park and Coordinator Europe Direct Caserta), Carlo Cosentino (Professor of Agriculture at the University of Basilicata), Emilia Reda (representative of the Agricultural Research and Analysis Council), Guido Mignolli (Director of the Terre Locride LAG), Alessandro Malerba (who spoke about the experience of the family



farm 'La terra di Zoe'), Angela Maria Loporchio of the 'GAL Mauridania' Puglia. Alessandro Rainoldi from the European Commission's European Joint Research Centre (JRC) closed the event.

18. Meeting in Potenza of the “Food for Change” project

On 4th April took place in Potenza a new transnational meeting of the project "Food for Change" (acronym "FFC"), approved by the Erasmus Plus National Agency in Denmark within the framework of the Erasmus Plus programme KA220-YOU - Cooperation partnerships in youth as action n.2022-1-DK01-KA220-YOU-000089325. At the meeting, hosted by the association EURO-NET (Europe Direct Basilicata centre) in its facilities in the historic centre of Potenza, all the other partners of the European initiative were also present: Crossing Borders (Denmark), Kainotomia & Sia Ee (Greece), Associação Novo Mundo Azul (Portugal), Asociacija "Aktyvus jaunimas" (Lithuania) and Comparative Research Network Ev (Germany). The members of the entire European consortium took the opportunity to discuss together the project's Handbook, which is now being translated into the various languages of the partnership, and the next steps of the initiative in order to define the respective timeframes for the implementation of the various activities still to be developed. More information on the project is available on the website: <https://foodforchange.eu/>.



19. Meeting in Potenza of the “Register BSS sector” project

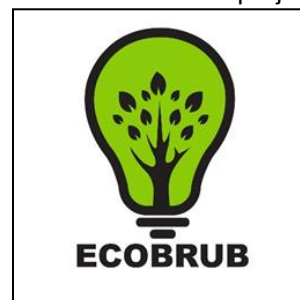
On 4th and 6th April took place in Potenza, at the Europe Direct Basilicata centre, the second transnational meeting of the project "Register BSS sector", an initiative approved by the EACEA (European Education and Culture Executive Agency) as project n. 101132877 in the framework of the call ERASMUS-EDU-2023-PI-FORWARD-LOT3 (i.e. within the Partnerships for Innovation -



Forward Looking Projects) in the Erasmus Lump Sum Grants. The partners of the project, Syntea Spolka Akcyjna (Poland - project coordinator), Dekaplus Business Services LTD (Cyprus), EURO-NET (Italy), Malopolska Agencja Rozwoju Regionalnego (Poland) and Agenzia per lo Sviluppo Dell'empolese Valdelsa (Italy) met to verify the results of the research and survey work carried out in the last two months in relation to the construction of the training register foreseen in the European initiative. All partners showed the results obtained and discussed the next steps concerning the development of the aforementioned register, whose technical solutions will also be designed to be usable and accessible for people with special needs and developed to meet the standards of the European Framework, characterised by a series of common models, principles and recommendations (legal, organisational, semantic and technical interoperability).

20. Courses restarted of the “ECOB RUB” project

On 7th April, after the replacement of a partner, the online courses foreseen in the project "Entrepreneurial Countryside to Boost Rural Businesses" (acronym "ECOB RUB") started again for the staff of the member organisations of the transnational consortium and intended to prepare the staff on how to develop the modules of the courses to be implemented with young people in the second part of the European initiative approved in Spain within the framework of the Erasmus Plus programme KA210-YOU - Small-scale partnerships in youth by the competent National Agency as initiative n. 2023-1-ES02-KA210-YOU-000153263. The new training session of the ECOB RUB project was held last Sunday by S.C. Predict CSD Consulting S.R.L, i.e. precisely by the Romanian partner that took over the initiative in place of Asociatia Revama, also a Romanian organisation, which was replaced on the initiative of the Spanish coordinator. The partnership is now composed of the Association de Cooperacion al Desarrollo Abarka (Spain - project coordinator), S.C. Predict CSD Consulting S.R.L (Romania), Asociaci3n Deportiva Y Cultural Entrejuegos (Spain) and EURO-NET (Italy).



21. Last meeting of “The first steps in STEM” project in Arad, Romania

On 10th and 11th April took place in Arad, Romania, the last meeting of the project "The first steps in STEM, Robotics and Programming", an initiative approved in Romania by the Erasmus Plus National Agency as action n. 2021-1-RO01-KA220-YOU-000029548 within the framework of Cooperative Partnerships in Youth. During the meeting, the eLearning platform developed and the latest activities realised by the entire European consortium were presented. The partners - Asociatia Zury (Romania- project coordinator), S.C. Predict CSD Consulting S.R.L. (Romania), EURO-NET (Italy), VSI Robotikos Mokykla (Lithuania) and Vantaan Venäläinen Klubi RY (Finland) - will also plan the activities still to be developed. The aim of the European partnership is to develop competences in robotics and STEM education, which are an important aspect of ensuring that new generations are prepared for a digitised future.



22. Last meeting of “Digi4You” project in Turkey

On 19th and 20th April, took place in Istanbul the last meeting of the project "Digital skills development toolkit for young NEETS to increase employability" (acronym "digi4you"), an initiative approved in Turkey by the National Agency of the same country within the framework of the Erasmus Plus Youth Cooperative Partnership programme as action n. 2021-2-TR01-KA220-YOU-000047996. During the meeting, the partners - BILIM VE INSAN VAKFI (project coordinator - Turkey), INDEPCIE SCA (Spain), ESICA (Austria) and EURO-NET (Italy) - presented the results obtained from the transnational initiative in the various partner countries showing how all the objectives were fully achieved and in many cases even largely exceeded. More information on the European initiative that will come to a close at the end of April is available on the website <https://www.digi4you.eu/> or on the project's official Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/digi4youproject>.



23. Salto Awards 2023 for the “Spirit of Europe-Origins” project

The project "The Spirit of Europe - Origins", an initiative funded in Romania by the Erasmus Plus KA2 Strategic Partnerships for Adult Education programme as action n.2019-1-RO01-KA204-063864 was recently awarded the prestigious European SALTO AWARDS for the year 2023 in the category "Digital Transformation". In the project, which saw five European organisations as partners in the initiative, namely S.C. PREDICT CSD CONSULTING S.R.L. (Romania), ASOCIATIA MILLENNIUM CENTER ARAD (Romania), IDEC (Greece), INERCIA DIGITAL SL (Spain) and EURO-NET (Italy), a 3-dimensional game was developed that allows one to experience a fragment of Europe's history, travelling through the epochs of our continent from ancient times to the Renaissance, through the realm of thoughts and emotions, where spirits fight for supremacy over human consciousness. In the game, the player experiences and learns about European historical events as we know them, interacting with more than a hundred characters, guiding their actions and assisting them in relation to the consequences in crucial events of



Europe's past. History is told through the perspectives of the gods, with personalised virtues and vices different from those of ordinary mortals, often developing in the spirit world and inspired by archetypal stories, Western philosophy and the fundamental principles upon which modern Western society is built: peace, democracy, rule of law, freedom, tolerance, pluralism and more. "We are very proud of this umpteenth international award won by our organisation in one of its projects" - said Anna Lagrotta,

President of the EURO-NET association, the European Commission's official information centre Europe Direct Basilicata - *It is yet another concrete demonstration of the enormous competence and professional self-sacrifice of our team, all made up of Lucania, with very high skills and abilities out of the ordinary, to whom, as President, my personal thanks go for what each of them has given and will give in the future to always offer new opportunities to our land*". SALTO also made a remarkable video to celebrate the winning project, which can be viewed at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JlMgV1AtkRw>. "Since the year in which the association was established, said Antonino Imbesi, head of the Europe Direct Basilicata centre, EURO-NET has done an enormous amount of work for the promotion of European activities and for the development of projects and initiatives of high educational and training value at EU level, succeeding in breaking down territorial boundaries, It has succeeded in breaking down territorial boundaries, making itself appreciated throughout Europe and winning many awards at the European Commission, National Agencies throughout Europe, various Italian Ministries, the Presidency of the Italian Republic, the Council of Europe and now also at SALTO for the quality of its actions and the innovativeness and usefulness of the products developed (2D and 3D electronic games, cartoons, films, training platforms, etc.). It was and is the work of a team that, for several

years, has involved some thirty employees who, in various capacities, always in a highly professional manner, participate as operational staff in the many initiatives and activities developed. We are, indeed, very proud of what we have done so far and we are sure that we can still give so much more". The association took the opportunity to mention that many projects have already been submitted and many more will be in the coming months. "We hope that even local and regional politics, of whatever colour it may be given that we are in an ongoing electoral period, concluded Anna Lagrotta, President of EURO-NET, will begin to plan and field new opportunities for the people of Basilicata. We are ready to face the challenge and, even, if it would be useful to Basilicata, to suggest concrete possibilities already experimented or experienced in many other European territories with success and that could represent a very useful tool to avoid the departure of our best brains..."

24. First training course of the “Youth Eco-Activism in the EU” project

On 7th and 13th March 2024 took place Copenhagen in Denmark, the first training course of the “Youth EcoActivism in the EU” project (acronym “YEAEU”), approved in France by the competent Erasmus Plus National Agency, as ref. n.2023-1-FR02-KA220-YOU-000159007. During the training in Denmark, the young Italians participating on behalf of the Italian partner in the project (the Potentine association Youth Europe Service), namely Giulio Pedota, Gabriele Di Carlo, Gaetano Mesce and Carmen Satriano, had the opportunity to take part in workshops and educational visits on environmental issues (including one to the European Environment Agency of the European Commission), improving their skills and knowledge in a field of such great importance for the future of the planet. The training was organised and hosted by the Copenhagen Youth Network, a non-governmental organisation founded in Denmark in 2012 that works in the field of social inclusion, combating stereotypes and promoting solidarity, intercultural awareness and education and employment skills for young people. In addition to the Potenza and Danish associations, the project partners include the following organisations Toulouse Youth Network (France - project coordinator), hanta educational services limited (Ireland), Youth Vision (Romania) and For Citizens - European Institute for Active Citizenship (Portugal). YEAEU aims to improve the awareness of the new generations regarding the climate crisis and help young people to take the initiative and actively face environmental issues at local, national and European levels, allowing them to become active actors, rather than passive spectators. The initiative aims to underline common values among young people in partner countries and among groups active in their communities, as it will guarantee to the participants to become more politically engaged in their communities to foment and support a change of direction. Finally, YEAEU aims to guide young people to create their own "green" social enterprises, encouraging bottom-up action and promoting youth activism.



25. Meeting in Nicosia for the “Green Urban Paths” project

The third transnational meeting of the “Green Urban Paths” project (acronym “G&PS”) took place in Nicosia (Cyprus) from 7th to 8th March, approved under the programme “Erasmus Plus KA220-ADU Cooperation partnerships in adult education” (as action no. 2021-1-DK01-KA220-ADU-000033665) by the competent Danish National Agency. During the meeting hosted by the Cypriot partner Stando LTD, the entire partnership, also composed of Køge Business College (Denmark - coordinator of the initiative), Youth Europe Service (Italy), TQC SRL (Italy), Comparative Research Network EV (Germany) and Associació Educativa I Cultural Blue Beehive (Spain), discussed the work done so far on the project's 3 Work Packages and discussed the next steps to complete the project's



activities. The “Green Urban Paths” project is aimed at operators, educators and mediators who wish to know, understand and support the dynamics for the development of innovative, dynamic and attractive sustainable tourism paths, capable of making the territory highly green and intends to implement the creation of paths to improve tourism skills, improving their accessibility in adult education, using new digital generation products (Apps and platforms) combined with theatrical storytelling to develop products capable of promoting eco-friendly solutions in the cities of the project partners.

26. Training in Rotterdam for the “GreenELEMENT” project

On April 8th and 12th took place in Rotterdam, Netherlands, the training of the project "Green Ecological LEad for sMall and MEidium-size eNTERprizes" (acronym "GreenELEMENT"), an initiative approved as action n.2022-1-NL01-KA220-VET-000087087 by the Erasmus Plus Agency in The Netherlands within the framework of the actions KA220-VET - Cooperation partnerships in VET. The training course involved six national representatives from each of the six partner countries of the initiative and composed of entrepreneurs interested in the development of green enterprises: during the training brainstorming, group reflections, workshops and group activities in which the participants will be actively involved. The objective of the course was to conduct a training activity with a group of SME leaders with the aim of improving their knowledge, skills and key competences in the area of green business leadership, while also providing feedback on the course content and methodologies developed, and a second pilot testing process was also developed, following the first one held in Cyprus with expert trainers. At the end of the training phase, participants from Nefinia (The Netherlands), Stando LTD (Cyprus), PNEVMA LLC (Bulgaria), Innovation Hive (Greece), DANITACOM - The Italian Chamber of Commerce in Denmark (Denmark) and Godesk srl (Italy) were asked to evaluate the quality of the course itself and of the entire activity developed in Rotterdam. More information on the project, in which the company GODESK SRL from Potenza in Italy is a partner, is available on the official website: <https://green-element.eu/> or on the Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/greenelementeu>.



27. Training for the “Green and Sustainable Food Educators” project

On April 15th and 18th (including travel days) took place in Turku, Finland, the first training of the project "Green and Sustainable Food Educators", an initiative approved in the Erasmus Plus programme KA220-VET - Cooperation partnerships in VET by the competent National Agency as action n. 2022-1-FI01-KA220-VET-000085304. The training course was aimed at finding out about the training activities organised in Finland in the research and food industry and was attended by at least two delegates from each of the partner organisations: University of Turku (Finland - project coordinator), Euro-Idea Fundacja Społeczno-Kulturalna (Poland), Youth Europe Service (Italy), Horeca Academie BV (Netherlands), M.M.C Management Center Limited (Cyprus) and Raison Seudun Koulutuskuntayhtymä (Finland). The Finnish training was followed by two other training activities that were developed in the Netherlands and Cyprus respectively and all aimed at professionalising the partners' staff in order to



create the professional figure of "European Green and Sustainable Food Educators", which is one of the project's primary objectives.