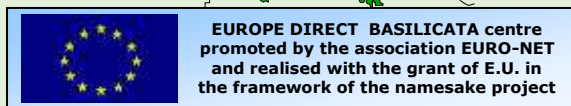




# EURO-NET

## The Youth European Network



**YEAR 19 - NUMBER 6  
OF 20<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 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. Parliament approves the “von der Leyen II” Commission

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**Following a debate with Ursula von der Leyen on her new team and programme, MEPs elected the College of Commissioners as a whole by roll-call vote.**

370 MEPs voted in favour, 282 against, and 36 abstained. To be confirmed, the College of Commissioners needed a majority of the votes cast (rule 129.7 of the EP Rules of Procedure). This will be Ursula von der Leyen’s second term as Commission President, following the approval of her first Commission by MEPs in November 2019.

### **Debate with MEPs before the vote**

Ahead of the vote, Ursula von der Leyen presented her team and programme, wherein she confirmed the portfolio changes requested by MEPs in the course of Parliament’s evaluation process. “We are ready to get to work immediately,” she said, stressing that her Commission will always be devoted to fighting for freedom, sovereignty, security and prosperity. You can read her speech on the Commission’s website. Ms von der Leyen announced that the Commission’s first initiative will be a competitiveness compass, to close Europe’s innovation gap



with the US and China, to increase security and independence and to deliver on decarbonisation. On the European Green Deal, she said, “we must and we will stay the course on its goals”. She committed to presenting a clean industrial deal, launch a strategic dialogue on the future of Europe’s car industry, continue working on a competitive circular economy, and work towards a European savings and investment union. On the ongoing wars in Ukraine, the Middle East and parts of Africa, Ms von der Leyen said that “Europe must play a stronger role in all of these areas”, stressing that it is “needed more than

ever”. Strengthening our security is crucial, she said, calling on Europe to spend more on defence. “Europe’s security will always be this Commission’s priority,” she added. In the subsequent debate, some MEPs stressed the need for the new Commission to begin addressing the challenges Europe is facing quickly. They called on the Commission to improve European competitiveness in the light of intensifying global competition, to implement the European Green Deal, to ensure energy independence, and to build a defence union in response to the ongoing war in Ukraine. Others signalled their disapproval of the new College of Commissioners. Recordings and excerpts from the debate are available on Parliament’s Multimedia Centre.

### **Next steps**

After its formal appointment by the European Council via a qualified majority, the new European Commission took place its duties on 1 December 2024.

### **Background**

The proposed College of Commissioners was assessed by MEPs in dedicated public hearings between 4 and 12 November. Candidates submitted themselves to European Parliament committee hearings to assess their suitability and their ability to carry out the duties linked to the portfolios to which they had been assigned. Parliament’s Conference of Presidents declared the hearings closed and published the evaluation letters of all Commissioners-designate on 27 November. Read more about the Commission investiture process of 2024 in the briefing note by Parliament’s Research Service.

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## 2. Commission steps up support to strengthen EU security

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**The Commission is adopting a Communication to support Member States to counter hybrid threats from the weaponisation of migration by Russia and Belarus and to strengthen security at the EU’s external borders.**

The serious and persistent nature of the hybrid threats at the Eastern EU border by Russia and Belarus, pose new challenges for the EU. To guarantee security and territorial integrity in this exceptional context, Member States bordering Russia and Belarus must be able to act decisively. This calls for a strengthened EU response, in full respect of EU and international law. President **von der Leyen** said: “We have taken another decisive step to support our frontline Member States in countering hybrid threats from Russia’s and Belarus’ unacceptable

*weaponisation of migration. Especially countries bordering Russia and Belarus, such as Finland with its 1.340-kilometre-long border with Russia, are facing the heavy challenge to guarantee the security of the Union and territorial integrity of Member States. Today we offer these countries further support, including an additional 170 million in funding to upgrade electronic surveillance equipment, improve telecommunication networks, deploy mobile detection equipment and counter drone intrusion. Autocrats must never be allowed to use our European values against us."* This

Communication supports Member States, by setting the framework for actions that should prevent Russia and Belarus from using the EU's principles and values against the EU. Identifying the challenges at the EU's external land borders with Russia and Belarus and the threat to the Union's security: Russia and Belarus take advantage of people, using human beings in an act of hostility, disregarding their vulnerability. They use this hybrid warfare as a political tool to destabilise our societies, to undermine the unity of the EU and to jeopardise the safety and integrity of the Schengen area and the security of the Union as a whole. In line with the European Council's position, with this Communication, the Commission is supporting Member States to prevent Russia and Belarus from using European principles and values, including the right to asylum, against the EU. Strengthening the EU policy response and operational support: The EU has already taken several steps to counter the instrumentalisation of migrants by Belarus in Latvia, Lithuania and Poland in 2021 and by Russia at its border with Finland. Financial, operational and diplomatic efforts, including with the countries of origin and transit, were promptly stepped up. To further enhance border surveillance at the borders with Russia and Belarus, the Commission is now making available additional funding totalling €170 million: 150 million through the Border Management and Visa Instrument (BMVI), and an additional 20 million from the BMVI Thematic Facility for a more extensive geographical distribution. These funds will support Estonia with €19.4 million, Finland with €50 million, Latvia with €17 million, Lithuania with €15.4 million, Poland with €52 million and Norway with €16.4 million to upgrade electronic surveillance equipment, improve telecommunication networks, deploy mobile detection equipment and counter drone intrusions thereby ensuring real-time situational awareness and enhance the mobility of border patrols. Setting the legal context: Member States have an obligation to protect the EU external borders. At the same time, they must respect fundamental rights and the principle of *non-refoulement*. In view of the serious nature and persistence of the threat to the security of the EU and the territorial integrity of Member States at the EU external borders with Russia and Belarus, Member States may invoke Treaty provisions to exceptionally and under stringent conditions go further than what is provided for by EU secondary legislation under the control of the Court of Justice. This could include measures that may entail serious interferences with fundamental rights such as the right to asylum and related guarantees subject to the requirements under the Charter. This Communication outlines the conditions for such measures which have to be proportionate, limited to what is strictly necessary in clearly defined cases, and temporary. Increasing cooperation with the Union and other Member States: The Commission encourages Member States to carefully weigh all the interests at stake and make use of all the possibilities afforded by the Union's legal order when taking exceptional measures to tackle hybrid attacks from weaponisation of migration. In light of the principle of sincere cooperation, Member States are invited to cooperate closely with the Union and other Member States. Coordination among neighbouring Member States is also necessary to ensure consistency and effectiveness of any action.



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### **Next Steps**

The Commission will always stand by Member States in their efforts to ensure a safe and secure Union with a fully functioning Schengen area, for the benefit of all EU citizens and in full respect of fundamental rights. Member States are encouraged to make use of all the possibilities covered by EU legislation. The Commission is ready to engage with Member States taking exceptional measures, to help ensure that all relevant considerations are taken into account.

### **Background**

In 2024, irregular arrivals at the EU-Belarusian border - especially the Polish-Belarusian border - increased significantly by 66% compared to 2023. 90% of migrants illegally crossing the Polish-Belarusian border have a Russian student or tourist visa. The EU has already offered significant support to the most concerned Member States and taken a wide range of actions to step-up the EU preparedness to counter this threat. This included financial and operational support and

diplomatic and outreach efforts (including with countries of origin and transit). The Commission also proposed in 2021 measures against transport operators who facilitate smuggling of migrants, and in 2023 the Directive laying down minimum rules to prevent and counter the facilitation of unauthorised entry, transit and stay in the EU. The Commission stands ready to work with the European Parliament and Council to progress swiftly on adopting these proposals.

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### 3. Erasmus+ Annual Report 2023

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**The 2023 Erasmus+ Annual Report showcases the programme's achievements in supporting lifelong learning and cooperation, with a strong focus on social inclusion, green and digital transitions, and the promotion of EU values.**

The report also explains how the programme has supported projects addressing the consequences of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, including through funding to further boost cooperation in the area of learning. With a total budget of over €4.5 billion in 2023, 12.5% higher than the previous year, Erasmus+ supported nearly 32,000 projects, involving over 84,500 organisations. The programme's learning mobility actions provided opportunities to more than 1.3 million students, learners, professors, teachers, trainers, youth workers, sport coaches



and young people. Erasmus+ had, by the end of 2023, provided opportunities for 15.1 million people to study, train, work and volunteer abroad since its start in 1987. Prioritising inclusion and diversity, Erasmus+ continued to better reach people of different age groups and from diverse cultural, social and economic backgrounds. By becoming more accessible for small organisations and more inclusive for people with fewer opportunities, the programme increased in quality and progressed in ensuring equal opportunities for all. In 2023, over 200,000 of the Erasmus+ participants were people with

fewer opportunities, including migrants and people with disabilities, as well as EU citizens living in remote areas or facing socioeconomic difficulties. In 2023, 23% of participants in Erasmus+ learning mobility activities used low-emission transport for the main part of their travel, such as bus, train or car-pooling. In line with the Digital Education Action Plan, the programme continued to pave the way for the digital transformation of our education and training systems. In 2023, 31,890 participants, including young people and teaching and administrative staff in all fields of education and training, undertook mobility activities and followed training activities to acquire digital skills. The Erasmus+ programme also plays a pivotal role in helping to strengthen European identity and values, and in contributing to a more democratic European Union. In 2023, €390.6 million funded 1,460 cooperation projects which support democratic participation. The Erasmus+ 2025 call for proposals was launched on 19 November 2024.

#### **Background**

Erasmus was created in 1987, and in that year provided learning mobility opportunities to just 3,000 university students. Since then, there have been significant changes to the programme, and it has been continuously modernised. One such change has been the expansion of the programme to include countries that did not originally take part. In 2014, the name was changed to Erasmus+, marking the broadening of the programme to all education fields, as well as Youth and Sport. The programme offers opportunities to study, train or learn abroad. It helps to foster the European and international dimension of learning through bottom-up cooperation projects between education institutions, public authorities, SMEs or NGOs. It supports policy developments, projects, and cooperation in the fields of education, training, youth and sport. Today, it is one of the most emblematic EU programmes. The Erasmus+ programme continued to play a key role in the Commission's policy response to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, in 2023 particularly supporting those who fled the war to integrate into EU learning systems, and to sustain ongoing cooperation projects. Additionally, the programme funded the printing and delivery of 1.5 million textbooks for Ukrainian pupils. Erasmus+ has a budget of €26.2 billion for 2021-2027. The DiscoverEU action - supporting 18-year-olds to travel around Europe and discover its rich cultural diversity - was integrated into the Erasmus+ programme in 2021. In 2023, two application rounds were opened, with more than 289,000 young people applying for around 71,642 travel passes, confirming their interest in this action.

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## 4. EU companies top counterparts in R&D investment growth

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**Europe's industry has increased its investment in research and development (R&D) by 9.8% in 2023, surpassing the growth of corporate R&D investment in the US (+5.9%) and China (+9.6%) for the first time since 2013, according to the new edition of the EU Industrial R&D Investment Scoreboard.**

In 2023, the EU was second globally in R&D private investment (18.7%), trailing the US (42.3%), but ahead of China (17.1%), Japan (8.3%) and countries in the rest of the world (13.6%). Despite slowing global R&D growth (+7.8% vs. +12.6% in 2022), the top 2000 companies invested a record €1257.7 billion on R&D in 2023. The top 50, among them 11 EU companies, contributed 40.1% of investments, revealing a strong concentration of R&D in the biggest players. Research and innovation (R&I) will be at the centre of the EU's economy in the coming years, aimed at boosting innovation and scientific excellence in the race to a clean and digital economy, and contributing to the EU's sustainable competitiveness and prosperity. This year's Scoreboard reaffirms that, while European companies are relevant global players, the industrial structure explains the innovation gaps with main competitors. Moreover, the EU must further boost private R&I investments, develop key sectors, such as Information & Communication Technologies (ICT) and health, address disparities among Member States, and promote technology deployment and the creation and growth of EU-based players.



**EU leads R&D investments in automotive, which together with ICT and health drive global R&D growth**

In the past decade, four sectors – software, ICT hardware, health, and automotive – have accounted for more than three-quarters of global R&D investment. The ICT software sector has grown the fastest across the world, with a 10-year compound annual growth rate of 13.3%, followed by health (7%), ICT hardware (6.9%) and automotive (6.3%). R&D investments in ICT and health are now slowing down from their post-COVID-19 surge. In the automotive sector, a stronghold for the EU, companies headquartered in the EU accounted for 45.4% of global R&D investment of the sector in 2023 and invested over twice as much as their US and Japanese peers, and more than three times as much as Chinese competitors. On the other hand, the R&D investment of EU ICT software companies remained marginal on the global scale, whereas US-based firms constitute 70% of the sector's global R&D and China has established significant R&D-investing companies. Companies from the US also account for 43.3% of the total R&D of the ICT hardware sector, where large players from the Republic of Korea and Taiwan are gaining global relevance in semiconductor manufacturing. At the same time, the health sector has the largest number of companies in the top 2000, with 437 companies, including smaller biotech ones. Among them, 238 US-based companies are leading in health R&D (52% of global total), while the number of Chinese companies in the health sector has increased from 13 to 63 over 10 years, closing in on the EU (64 firms in 2023). Global investment in the energy sector has seen a 21% increase in 2023 to €23.8 billion, surpassing the aerospace and defence and just below the chemicals sector.

### **A closer look at the EU**

Spread across 19 Member States, the top 800 companies based in the EU invested €247.7 billion in R&D in 2023, growing by 8.7% from the previous year. The automotive sector leads the EU-800 list, accounting for 34.2% of EU corporate R&D investments, followed by the health sector (19.3%), ICT hardware (14%) and ICT software (7.8%). Some of the EU companies in the semiconductor, automotive components, and biotech/pharma sectors have seen extraordinary increases in R&D investment, growing between two to fifty times over the past decade. Such investment increases suggest ongoing diversification and significant growth potential in these areas. Among the top EU-800 companies, there are 99 small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) with fewer than 250 employees. Most of them (74) are in the health sector and are based in Sweden, France, Denmark, and Germany. French SMEs lead in R&D investment (34% of the total), followed by Sweden (21.3%) and the Netherlands (16.6%). These SMEs invested €2.4 billion in R&D in 2023, a 3.7% increase compared to the previous year. Lower performing research and innovation countries, the so-called widening countries, are less represented in the Scoreboard ranking. In 2023, of the 2000 top corporate R&D investors in the world, only four have

headquarters in one of the EU 15 widening Member States (one each in Portugal, Hungary, Slovenia, and Malta). Over half of the 14000 subsidiaries of Scoreboard companies in EU widening countries are in Czechia (34.1%) and Poland (16.6%), revealing the importance of these top innovators headquartered in other EU countries for some of the widening countries.

#### **Background**

The EU Industrial R&D Investment Scoreboard has been published annually since 2004. The 2024 Scoreboard provides economic information from the latest financial accounts (Financial Year 2023) of the world's top 2000 R&D investors, as well as the top 800 companies based in the EU. These companies account for 85-90% of global private R&D funding. The Scoreboard has become a reference for analyses and data in science, industry and policymaking, with major publications referring to its findings, such as the recent report by Mario Draghi - The future of European competitiveness, the report Align, act, accelerate, as well as various policy documents in the past 20 years. The Scoreboard data is made available to the public, in accordance with the Commission's open science practice.

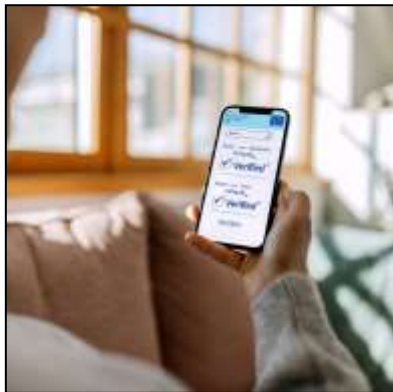
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## **5. EU introduces Flight Emissions Label**

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**The Commission adopted a Regulation putting in place a Flight Emissions Label (FEL), which offers a clear and trustworthy methodology for calculating flight emissions.**

Airlines operating flights within the EU or departing from the EU will be able to voluntarily join this label which will be fully operational as of July 2025. By the beginning of next summer, passengers will have the possibility to view and compare the estimated greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions of their flights enabling them to make more informed purchasing decisions. Currently, the lack of a common methodology and criteria for estimating flight emissions leads airlines and ticket sellers to report emission levels using disparate methodologies which are not necessarily comparable. The



Flight Emissions Label aims to change this by setting out a reliable and harmonised methodology for estimating flight emissions, considering factors like aircraft type, average passenger numbers and freight volume on board, as well as aviation fuel used. When searching for flights or booking tickets online, a dedicated logo will be displayed alongside the flight emissions data, guaranteeing that the information is reliable. This will help passengers make informed decisions and protect them from misleading greenwashing claims. The Flight Emissions Label will support aviation's transition to net zero by ensuring fair competition among airlines, promoting the uptake of Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF), and supporting fleet renewal. Since the estimations are based on actual

consumption data, it will also encourage airlines to operate more efficiently and sustainably. The European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) will be responsible for estimating the flight emissions in accordance with the most advanced international standards on the accounting of aviation emissions. This methodology will allow for a fair, transparent, and harmonised estimation of flight emissions based on the most recent performance in the same route.

#### **Next steps**

By 1 February 2025, airlines that operate flights within the EU or depart from the EU can opt-in to participate in the Flight Emissions Label. To do so, they will need to submit the required data to the EASA. The first flight labels will then be assigned by EASA by 1 July 2025, and will apply to flights scheduled during the 2025 winter season.

#### **Background**

The Flight Emissions Label is foreseen by Article 14 of the ReFuelEU Aviation Regulation. This Regulation is part of the EU's broader strategy to promote sustainable aviation, with a focus on increasing the use of SAF through various initiatives, including the ReFuelEU Aviation, the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) and other measures. The goal is to ensure fair competition in the aviation industry while encouraging its transition towards more sustainable practices. Airlines from the EU and non-EU countries, eligible under ReFuelEU Aviation, may choose to participate in the Flight Emissions Label scheme on a voluntary basis. To maintain a level playing field, the scheme prohibits private initiatives from displaying EU flight emissions information to passengers, ensuring that all operators adhere to the same standards.

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## 6. Commission steps up support to strengthen EU security

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1. Identifying the challenges at the EU's external land borders with Russia and Belarus and the threat to the Union's security: Russia and Belarus take advantage of people, using human beings in an act of hostility, disregarding their vulnerability. They use this hybrid warfare as a political tool to destabilise our societies, to undermine the unity of the EU and to jeopardise the safety and integrity of the Schengen area and the security of the Union as a whole. In line with the European Council's position, with this Communication, the Commission is supporting Member States to prevent Russia and Belarus from using European principles and values, including the right to asylum, against the EU.
2. Strengthening the EU policy response and operational support: The EU has already taken several steps to counter the instrumentalisation of migrants by Belarus in Latvia, Lithuania and Poland in 2021 and by Russia at its border with Finland. Financial, operational and diplomatic efforts, including with the countries of origin and transit, were promptly stepped up. To further enhance border surveillance at the borders with Russia and Belarus, the Commission is now making available additional funding totalling €170 million: 150 million through the Border Management and Visa Instrument (BMVI), and an additional 20 million from the BMVI Thematic Facility for a more extensive geographical distribution. These funds will support Estonia with €19.4 million, Finland with €50 million, Latvia with €17 million, Lithuania with €15.4 million, Poland with €52 million and Norway with €16.4 million to upgrade electronic surveillance equipment, improve telecommunication networks, deploy mobile detection equipment and counter drone intrusions thereby ensuring real-time situational awareness and enhance the mobility of border patrols.
3. Setting the legal context: Member States have an obligation to protect the EU external borders. At the same time, they must respect fundamental rights and the principle of *non-refoulement*. In view of the serious nature and persistence of the threat to the security of the EU and the territorial integrity of Member States at the EU external borders with Russia and Belarus, Member States may invoke Treaty provisions to exceptionally and under stringent conditions go further than what is provided for by EU secondary legislation under the control of the Court of Justice. This could include measures that may entail serious interferences with fundamental rights such as the right to asylum and related guarantees subject to the requirements under the Charter. This Communication outlines the conditions for such measures which have to be proportionate, limited to what is strictly necessary in clearly defined cases, and temporary.
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## 7. European Board on Agriculture and Food

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**The European Commission officially sets up the European Board on Agriculture and Food (EBAF), thus taking up on one of the recommendations of the final report of the Strategic Dialogue on the Future of Agriculture.**

Chaired by Commissioner for Food and Agriculture, Christophe Hansen, the European Board on Agriculture and Food aims at sustaining a new culture of dialogue, trust and multistakeholder participation, among the actors of the food supply chain and civil society, as well as with the Commission. President **von der Leyen** said: *“Agriculture is at the heart of our Europe's future. We*



*carry forward the energy of the Strategic Dialogue on the Future of EU Agriculture to build trust and bring people together. The European Board on Agri-food is to tackle the full complexity of the agri-food value chain, supporting our farmers and driving a more resilient, competitive, and sustainable agri-food system.”* This consultative body is expected to provide high-level advice to the Commission on the follow-up of the report of the Strategic Dialogue on the future of EU agriculture and will contribute to the work on the Vision for agriculture and food, to be presented within the first 100 days of the mandate.

Members will be encouraged to foster understanding and exchange of experience among them and pay particular attention to the coherence and synergy of Union policies and their consistency with private sector initiatives. The Board is set up for five years and is expected to meet in principle between two and six times a year. Commissioner Hansen may convene the group for additional meetings when urgent advice is needed. A call for applications is [published](#) 5 December to form the Board's membership. It will be composed of maximum 30 member organisations representing three categories of stakeholders: the farming community, other actors of the food supply chain, and civil society including in areas such as environment and climate, animal welfare or consumer issues. There should be a balanced representation of these three categories of stakeholders in this group. The organisations who apply for membership should demonstrate the broadest relevant competence and expertise in areas relevant to agriculture and food at Union level and display the widest geographical representativeness across Member States. They should also be registered in the [Transparency Register](#). The deadline for submitting applications to the EBAF will be on **8 January 2025**. The Commission will evaluate all applications and aims to finalise the Board's membership at the beginning of 2025. The Board's first meeting will be convened immediately after.

## Background

In September 2023, President **von der Leyen** announced in her State of the Union address the Strategic Dialogue on the Future of EU Agriculture which was launched in January 2024 and brought together major stakeholders from the European agri-food sectors, civil society, rural communities and academia to reach a common understanding and vision for the future of Union farming and food systems. The European Board on Agriculture and Food's advice and opinions will complement the specific and sectorial expertise already available, including from the Civil Dialogue Groups.

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## 8. New Eurobarometer survey, shows record high trust in the EU

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### **The latest Eurobarometer reveals the highest level of trust in the European Union since 2007 and the highest-ever support for the euro.**

The survey also shows that Europeans have a more optimistic view about the future. They would like to see a stronger and more independent EU, especially in the face of the current global challenges.

#### **Trust in the EU is at its highest level in 17 years**

51% of Europeans tend to trust the EU, the highest result since 2007. Trust in the EU is highest among the young people aged 15-24 (59%). In another 17 year-record, 51% of Europeans said they trust the European Commission. Almost three quarters of respondents (74%) say they feel citizens of the EU, the highest level in more than two decades. In addition, more than six in ten EU citizens (61%) are also optimistic about the future of the EU. At the same time, 44% of EU citizens continue to have a positive image of the EU, while 38% have a neutral image and 17% have a negative image of the EU. Positive trends also registered in most of the enlargement countries surveyed. The majority of citizens tend to trust the EU, in Albania (81%), Montenegro (75%), Kosovo (70%), Georgia (58%), North Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (56% each), and Moldova (52%). In Türkiye 42% (four percentage points more compared to the previous survey) tend to trust the EU and in Serbia 38% (+2 percentage points). 38% of United Kingdom respondents (+6 percentage points) also share this view.



#### **Europeans want a stronger, more independent and sustainable EU**

Nearly seven in ten respondents (69%) agree that the EU has sufficient power and tools to defend the economic interests of Europe in the global economy. Similarly, 69% agree that the European Union is a place of stability in a troubled world. According to Europeans, security and defence (33%) should be the main priority area for the EU action in the medium term, followed by migration (29%), the economy (28%), climate and the environment (28%), and health (27%). At the same time, 44% of European citizens think that ensuring peace and stability will have the highest positive impact on their life in the short term, followed by securing food, health, and industry supplies in the EU and managing migration (both 27%). When it comes to specific areas for EU action in the clean sector, Europeans believe the EU should prioritise renewable energy (38%) first, followed by investments in sustainable agriculture (31%), energy infrastructure (28%) and clean technology investments (28%).

#### **Historic high support for the euro and growing optimism about the economy**

The Eurobarometer survey registered the highest support ever for the common currency, both in the EU as a whole (74%) and in the euro area (81%). When it comes to the perception of the situation of the European economy, 48% of Europeans (up one point since spring 2024) find it good while 43% (up two points) find it bad. The perception of the situation of the European economy has steadily improved since autumn 2019. A plurality of citizens (49%) think the European economic situation will remain stable in the next 12 months.

#### **Continued support for EU's response to the war in Ukraine**

In the face of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, nearly nine Europeans in ten (87%) agree with providing humanitarian support to the people affected by the war. 71% of EU citizens support economic sanctions on the Russian government, companies, and individuals and 68%

agree with providing financial support to Ukraine. Six in ten approve of the EU granting candidate status to Ukraine and 58% agree with the EU financing the purchase and supply of military equipment to Ukraine. The war in Ukraine continues to be considered as the most important issue at EU level (31%) out of 15 items (followed by immigration at 28% and the international situation at 22%), while 76% of European respondents agree that Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a threat to the security of the EU.

#### **Background**

The Standard Eurobarometer 102 (Autumn 2024) was conducted between 10 October and 5 November 2024 across the 27 Member States. Overall, 26,525 EU citizens were interviewed face-to-face. Interviews were also conducted in nine candidate and potential candidate countries (all except Ukraine) and the United Kingdom.

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## **9. EU adopts 15<sup>th</sup> sanctions package against Russia**

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### **The Commission welcomes the Council's adoption of the 15th sanctions package against Russia.**

The focus of this package is to keep cracking down on Russia's shadow fleet, as well as combating sanctions' circumvention. It also includes substantial individual and entity listings related to the Russian military-industrial complex and increases the legal protection of EU Central Securities Depositories (EU CSDs). With this package, the EU has, for the first time, imposed 'fully-fledged' sanctions (travel ban, asset freeze and prohibition to make economic resources available) on various Chinese actors. The 15<sup>th</sup> package contains these key elements:

#### **Anti-circumvention measures**

As Russia continues to look for ways to evade the Oil Price Cap, the EU is determined to strengthen measures to help prevent such evasion. This package targets 52 new vessels from Russia's shadow fleet, increasing the total number of such listings to 79. These vessels (non-EU) are subject to a port access ban and a ban on provision of services. These ships have been found to be engaged in high-risk shipping practices when transporting Russian oil or petroleum products, in arms deliveries, grain theft, or supporting the Russian energy sector. This targeted approach by the EU increases the cost for Russia to use such vessels as they are no longer able to do business-as-usual in the EU or with EU operators. It also reduces the number of vessels in Russia's shadow fleet that are able to carry Russian crude oil. Importantly, listings also tackle the serious



maritime safety and environmental risks posed by the often old and underinsured vessels of the shadow fleet. The EU will continue to closely monitor trade of Russian oil shifts and different practices designed to circumvent the oil price cap, both in terms of compliance by G7 operators and operations of the dark fleet.

#### **Additional listings**

This package includes 84 additional listings, including 54 individuals and 30 entities, responsible for actions undermining the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and independence of Ukraine. They are now subject to asset freezes, and – in the case of individuals – also to travel bans. Listings primarily affect Russian military companies that manufacture aircraft parts, drones, electronics, engines, high-tech components for weapons, and other military equipment. The listings also target a number of senior managers in companies active in the Russian energy sector (including shipping companies), providing important revenues to the Russian government. The EU is also sanctioning the military unit responsible for the striking of the Okhmadyt children hospital in Kyiv as well as individuals responsible for children deportation and propaganda. For the first time since the start of Russia's invasion, the EU has adopted 'fully-fledged listings' (i.e. a travel ban, an asset freeze and a prohibition to make funds available) on seven Chinese persons and entities, namely one individual and two entities facilitating the circumvention of EU sanctions, and four entities supplying sensitive drone components and microelectronic component to the Russian military industry in support of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. This listings also include two senior officials from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. This comes as a follow-up to the October

European Council, G7 discussions on third countries' continued support for Russia's war of aggression, and the deployment of North Korean troops to Russia.

#### **Trade**

This package also adds 32 new companies to the list of those supporting Russia's military and industrial complex in its war against Ukraine (20 Russian firms, seven under Chinese/Hong Kong jurisdiction, two from Serbia, and one each from Iran, India and United Arab Emirates). Stricter export restrictions with respect to dual-use goods and technology, and advanced technology items, will now apply to them.

#### **Protecting the interests of eu operators**

This measures include a prohibition to recognise or enforce in the EU some specific rulings issued by Russian courts that give exclusive mandatory competence to Russian courts in disputes between Russian and EU companies, regardless of the prior agreement of the parties. This will protect EU companies from the recognition of damages illegally awarded against them in Russia.

This new package also extends some existing derogations that enable EU operators to divest from Russia. While none of these derogations are new provisions, they will give more time to our companies to exit Russia.

#### **Financial sector measures**

In order to address the increasing litigation and retaliatory measures in Russia that result in the seizing of assets of EU Central Securities Depositories (CSDs), this package introduces two important amendments: a loss recovery derogation: This will allow for the release of cash balances held by EU CSDs. This derogation will enable CSDs to request competent authorities of the Member States to unfreeze cash balances and use them to meet their legal obligations with their clients; a no liability clause for EU CSDs: This clarifies that EU CSDs are not liable to pay interest or any other form of compensation to the Central Bank of Russia, beyond interest contractually due.

#### **Background**

EU sanctions remain at the core of the EU's response to Russia's unjustified military aggression against Ukraine, as they degrade Russia's military and technological capability, cut the country from the most developed global markets, deprive the Kremlin from the revenues it is financing the war with, and impose ever higher costs on Russia's economy. In this respect, sanctions contribute to fulfilling the EU's key objective, which is to continue to work for a just and lasting peace, not another frozen conflict. Their effects grow over time as the sanctions erode Russia's industrial and tech base. As guardian of the EU Treaties, the European Commission monitors the enforcement of EU sanctions by EU Member States. Anomalous, growing trade figures for some specific products/countries are hard evidence that Russia is actively attempting to circumvent sanctions.



This calls for us to redouble our efforts in tackling circumvention and to ask our neighbours for even closer cooperation. EU Sanctions Envoy David O'Sullivan continues his outreach to key third countries to combat circumvention. Working with like-minded partners, we have also agreed a list of Common High Priority sanctioned goods to which businesses should apply particular due diligence, and which third countries must not re-export to Russia. In addition, within the EU, we have also drawn up a list of sanctioned goods that are economically critical and on which businesses and third countries should be especially vigilant

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## **10. Council Recommendation on smoke-free environments**

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### **The Commission welcomes the adoption by the Council of the revision of the Council Recommendation on smoke-free environments.**

The revised Recommendation aims to better protect people, especially children, from second-hand smoke and aerosols. It also seeks to de-normalise and discourage the use of tobacco and emerging products, especially among younger people, and fight against nicotine addiction. Tobacco and nicotine consumption is the largest avoidable health risk, and the most significant cause of premature death in the EU. The revised Recommendation calls on Member States to extend smoke-free environment policies to key outdoor areas, such as public playgrounds, outside

areas of healthcare and education premises, public buildings and transport stops. This Recommendation has a particular focus on better protecting children and young people from the adverse impacts of second-hand smoke. Member States also supported the revised



Recommendation's call to include emerging products (such as electronic cigarettes and heated tobacco products) in their smoke-free policies, which are increasingly appealing to very young users. The Recommendation follows and builds on national-level actions some Member States have already taken, such as extending smoke-free policies to educational facilities and the inclusion of emerging products in existing smoking bans. The World Health Organization has clearly stated that there is no safe level of exposure to second-hand smoke and outlines that exposure to second-hand aerosols of emerging products such as electronic cigarettes and heated tobacco products can potentially result in significant respiratory and cardiovascular issues. The Commission will support Member States in the implementation of the Recommendation, including with EU funding from the EU4Health programme. It is up to each Member State to consider and implement the Recommendation in accordance with their national context. Nearly 700,000 lives are lost in the EU every year due to tobacco consumption. It is a leading cause of cancer, with 27% of all cancers attributable to the use of tobacco. In 2023, 24% of Europeans were estimated to be smokers. The objective of the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan is to achieve a tobacco-free generation by 2040, where less than 5% of the EU population uses tobacco products.

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## 11. The Young Entrepreneurs Challenge

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The Young Entrepreneurs Challenge invites young people with fresh and innovative technology-based business ideas to submit a 60-second video presentation on the competition website. Finalists are selected for the final based on the competition's key criteria: feasibility, technological innovation and sustainability. Eligibility Criteria: individuals aged between 16 and 25 on 1 February 2025; residents and/or citizens of a continental European country. Business proposals must: be legal in all continental European countries; be in the pre-start-up phase (not yet in business), or have not been in business for more than three years and have an annual turnover of less than £100,000 (€120,000) in the last financial year; not have a political lobbying purpose; be a personal idea of the applicant and not infringe the copyright, patent or intellectual property of others. Awards; funding of approximately £10,000/€12,000 for business start-up; mentorship package to accelerate your idea, ticket to the One Young World 2025 Global Summit in Munich, Germany. **Deadline: 17 January 2025, 5pm (GMT).** More information can be found at the following [link](#).



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## 12. European Central Bank, internships and job opportunities

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The European Central Bank is offering internship opportunities at its headquarters in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, as well as job openings. Specifically, the opportunities concern: Economist Graduate Programme 2025 (for recent graduates and those with postgraduate degrees); Head of Digital Security (Cybersecurity) Division; IT Infrastructure Specialist; Market Infrastructure Specialist - Market Infrastructure Management; Student Research Assistant Traineeship Programme - Monetary Policy Research/Senior Management; Technical Security Specialist. To work at the European Central Bank, fluency in English and knowledge of a second official language of the European Union is required. The deadlines for the various positions are concentrated in January 2025, **between 2 and 20 January 2025**. For full details of the open positions and the requirements, visit the [dedicated section](#) on the ECB's website.



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### 13. Internship in Brussels at the European Travel Commission

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The European Travel Commission, a non-profit organisation responsible for the promotion of Europe as a tourism destination in third markets, is looking for an intern to join its research and development department. The purpose of the internship is to offer motivated young professionals the opportunity to gain work experience in an international organisation and to develop knowledge of European and global practices in the tourism sector. The traineeship lasts six months, renewable for a further six months, and is based in Brussels, Belgium. Internship activities: data collection and drafting of statistical reports; preparation of studies, infographics, videos and presentations related to the tourism sector; helping to organise meetings and events; updating the organisation's contact database; updating the organisation's website; communication and marketing activities. Those who meet the following requirements may apply for the traineeship: hold a recognised degree in Tourism, recently obtained; have a good knowledge of statistics and Microsoft Office; have an excellent knowledge of English. The traineeship lasts for 6 months, with the possibility of being extended for a further 6 months. Trainees will receive a monthly allowance of EUR 1,000 net. **Deadline: 6 January 2025.** More information can be found at the following [link](#).



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### 14. Traineeship in the Design team, Directorate General Communications

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The European Central Bank is looking for an intern for the Design team. The selected person will join the team responsible for the ECB's visual communication products, which include photography, videography, graphic design and branding. During the placement, the intern will contribute to the creation of graphic solutions for a wide range of communication products, such as static images, explainer videos and infographics, designed for different platforms (including the ECB's websites and its social channels). The internship has an initial duration of 6 months, with the possibility of extension up to a maximum of 12 months. The location of the internship is at the European Central Bank in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. Ideal candidates should: possess at least a bachelor's degree in graphic design, visual communication or related disciplines; be proficient in the main graphic design software, such as Adobe Creative Suite (Photoshop, Illustrator, After Effects), and have a sound knowledge of the principles of design, layout, colour theory, typography and motion graphics, demonstrated through a portfolio of relevant projects; have a good knowledge of English and another official language of the European Union. A monthly salary of EUR 1,700 is expected, plus an allowance for accommodation. **Deadline: 2 January 2025.** More information can be found at the following [link](#).



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### 15. Multiplier event of the “Speak It Up” project

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On 19<sup>th</sup> October 2024 took place in Potenza, in the prestigious innovation space managed by the company GODESK SRL, the Italian multiplier event envisaged in the project “Speak It Up: Youth Public Speaking Skills Development Towards a Democratic Society in Contemporary Europe” - acronym “Speak It Up”, an initiative (approved in Sweden as action no. 2022-1-SE02-KA220-YOU-000086337 within the framework of the Erasmus Plus programme KA220-YOU - Cooperation partnerships in youth). The dissemination event, organised by the EURO-NET association, was attended by some thirty people interested in the activities of the project developed by a European consortium, composed of Internationella Kvinnoföreningen (Sweden - coordinator of the initiative), Möllans Basement (Sweden), Asociacija Aktyvistai (Lithuania), Centrum Edukacyjne EST (Poland),

Dracon Rules Design Studio (Greece), Stando Ltd (Cyprus), Pnevma Llc (Bulgaria) and EURO-NET (Italy). More information on the entire Erasmus Plus project can be found at the following link: <https://speakitupproject.eu/>.

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## 16. Training course in Arad of the “ECOB RUB” project

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In the period 22-24 October 2024 took place in Arad, Romania, the training foreseen in the project “Entrepreneurial Countryside to Boost Rural Businesses” (acronym “ECOB RUB”), a 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 action no. 2023-1-ES02-KA210-YOU-000153263. Three young people from each partner organisation - Association de Cooperation al Desarrollo Abarka (Spain - project coordinator), S.C. Predict CSD Consulting S.R.L. (Romania), Asociación Deportiva Y Cultural Entrejuegos (Spain) and EURO-NET (Italy) - participated in the training (for Italy the young people who participated in the training course were Angelo Savio Del Guadio, Davide De Mitri and Lorenzo Casella). Trainer of the entire initiative was Antonino Imbesi, head of the Europe Direct Basilicata centre and start-up expert. The new training was supposed to be held in Potenza, Italy, but the partnership, due to the high hosting costs and the limited funds available, decided to ‘transfer’ it to Romania, where it was hosted by the Romanian partner S.C. Predict CSD Consulting S.R.L. The activity was structured as a pilot course on how to set up youth and social enterprises in rural areas.



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## 17. Dissemination events of the “The first steps in STEM” project

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On 18<sup>th</sup> October 2024 took place in Potenza, at GODESK, the multiplier event of the project “The first steps in STEM, Robotics and Programming”, an initiative approved in Romania by the Erasmus Plus National Agency as action no. 2021-1-RO01-KA220-YOU-000029548 within the framework of Cooperative Partnerships in Youth. The event was attended by heads of organisations and training centres as well as teachers from various schools and the general public, who greatly appreciated the products and activities of the European initiative. During the dissemination seminar, EURO-NET staff presented the project, the activities implemented and the online game “The Robot’s Journey e-GAME – SirKwitz”, which makes learning programming easy and fun. The project was developed by an international partnership consisting of: 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). During the sessions of the event, held in conjunction with the European Commission's Erasmus Days, a small buffet was also offered to participants. On November 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> took place in Potenza, at the IPSIA G. Giorgi institute, two more project dissemination events. The activities involved as many as 29 students from the aforementioned vocational institute who engaged in hours that can be counted as school-to-work alternation in developing levels of the “SirKwitz” game that makes learning robotics programming easy and fun. The e-game is an educational and entertainment game that explores



28 puzzles on four topics to master the fundamental concepts behind programming and develop problem-solving skills. The game requires players to explore key programming concepts such as basic logic, loops, orientation, sequences and debugging. The game can be downloaded free of charge from the link: <https://store.steampowered.com/app/2776550/SirKwitz/>.

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## 18. First meeting in Germany of the “JUSTurbanities” project

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In the period 4-6 November 2024 took place in Berlin, Germany, the first meeting of the project “Eurbanities Game Based Learning for the Just Transition of Cities” - acronym “JUSTurbanities” - an initiative approved in Germany in the Erasmus Plus programme KA220-ADU - Cooperation partnerships in adult education. JUSTurbanities aims to empower urban communities in deprived neighbourhoods to foster active citizen participation in the “multi-crisis” era we have been experiencing in recent years characterised by health lockdowns, energy crises and geopolitical conflicts. With the direct involvement of educators, trainees, and local communities, Justurbanities intends to create a digital game-based learning curriculum for citizens, stakeholders, and public/municipal employees involved in local policy implementation and develop the following main activities: Gathering and exchange of knowledge on local needs, good practices, future scenarios, learning methods; Co-design of the game and curriculum in local and transnational workshops and online sessions ;Learning and testing of game and curriculum prototypes in local workshops and transnational trainings; Building a European community of educators, citizens, municipal workers, public administrators and practitioners through extensive and effective dissemination and through intensive use of the project's e-learning platform. The partners in the European initiative, in addition to the association EURO-NET, the Europe Direct Basilicata centre, are Comparative Research Network EV (Germany - project coordinator), Almost There AB (Sweden); Stowarzyszenie NA Drodze Ekspresji (Poland), Stadtlabor Innovationen FUR Urbanelebens Qualitat GMBH (Austria), Asociatia Pentru Tranzitia Urbana (Romania) and finally E35 Fondazione Per La Progettazione Internazionale (Italy). The first Justurbanities meeting will allow the partners to get to know each other and to discuss all the issues of the project, as well as to define the steps of its implementation, which will last 36 months.



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## 19. Meeting in Greece for the “DigiyouhtKit” project

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On 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2024 took place in Piraeus, Greece, a new international meeting of the European project “DIGI-YOUTH KIT” (acronym “DYO”) approved as ref. no. 2023-1-FR02-KA220-YOU-000159986 by the Erasmus+ National Agency in France within the framework of the initiatives KA220-YOU - Cooperation partnerships in youth. The meeting was attended by all 11 project partners, i.e. Pole Metropolitain Pour L'entrepreneuriat, Le Carburateur (France, Coordinator of the Transnational Consortium), Cooperative D'initiative Jeunes (France), Burgaski Svoboden Universitet (Bulgaria), Regional Cluster North-East (Bulgaria), Aintek Symvouloi Epicheiriseon Efarmoges Ypsilis Technologias Ekpaidefsi Anonymi Etaireia (Greece), Eyropaiko Institutoyto Topikhs Anaptykshs (Greece), Asociatia Millenium Center Arad (Romania), S. C. Predict Csd Consulting S.R.L.(Romania), Asociatia Zury (Romania), Fundacja Innowacja I Wiedza (Poland) and Euro-Net (Italy), the developments realised since the beginning of the project in the framework of the development of the training modules aimed at creating and



developing youth centres in Europe were verified. The aim of the project is, in fact, to increase the quality of youth workers' work and to ensure digital transformation through the development of 2

online training courses for coordinators and youth centre leaders working with young people and youths and to enable the development of an informal network of at least 20 European youth centres. Furthermore, the project envisages the creation and testing of an e-game on the topic of youth centre management, thus enhancing the active participation of young people.

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## 20. Database and intermediate report of the “Register BSS sector” project

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The partners of the “Register BSS sector” project (an initiative approved by the EACEA as project no. 101132877 within the framework of the call ERASMUS-EDU-2023-PI-FORWARD-LOT3), have completed the last steps of verification of the training courses database to be made available to all European users. The check concerned the conformity of the hundreds of bids selected with the project assumptions and the format of the data collected so that they were compatible with the specially created platform. Furthermore, these days the project partners are: Syntea Spolka Akcyjna (Poland, European coordinator), Agenzia per lo Sviluppo dell'Empolese Valdelsa (Italy), Dekaplus Business Services LTD (Cyprus), Malopolska Agencja Rozwoju Regionalnego (Poland) and EURO-NET (Italy), are engaged in the drafting of the periodic or interim report of the activities developed in the first year of the initiative. The Polish project coordinator requested all its project partners to produce the necessary reporting documentation to be developed and submitted to the aforementioned Executive Agency of the European Commission responsible for the approval, monitoring and evaluation of centralised projects. After the report phase, in which the partnership's efforts in creating the register of existing training courses at European level will be highlighted and emphasised, following the analytical study of the materials and analysis of all the necessary information, the programmatic development of the innovative training activities with the visors and their promotion to the general public will begin, activities planned for the second year of the project.



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## 21. Event on Green Economy

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On 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024 the EURO-NET association organised, as part of the Europe Direct 2024 project, an important event with the presence of no less than 34 students at the MOON in Potenza on Green Economy and Circular Economy, Material Recovery, Lower Consumption, Energy Saving (in collaboration, as always, with La Luna al Guinzaglio). The aim was to show how important it is



to try to follow European policies for environmental friendliness and recycling in order to safeguard our planet. The aim of the workshop is twofold: to support the commitment in defence of the environment in all its forms and, at the same time, to enable young people to contribute to the fight against climate change by limiting the impact of their consumption. Reuse and re-use of objects from our daily lives, after all, are the first steps towards sustainable waste management, a strategic objective promoted by the European Commission in its common policies. On the other hand, if reuse preserves the value of products from a material, energy and labour point of view, configuring itself as one of the motors of the circular economy, the reuse chain has the task of taking used

goods away from disposal and reintroducing them into the economic sphere, so that they can once again perform their function, replacing the purchase of a corresponding new good. The participating young students showed that they understood the message very well and applied themselves with commitment in all the activities developed.

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## 22. Event in Francavilla Fontana for startups

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As part of the Europe Direct 2024 project, the EURO-NET association took place organised an event in Francavilla Fontana aimed at young people and focused on the development of start-ups, with an eye to the future and a growing focus on the new challenges posed by the world of innovation. The event served as a guide to explore new technologies, innovation, sustainability, but also new leadership models together. It was a path of discovery and growth inspired to shape the future of youth entrepreneurship, which Europe needs so much and which, thanks to technological innovations, also guided by a careful and conscious use of Artificial Intelligence, can produce new job and development opportunities, as well as new businesses. The young people present actively participated in all the proposed activities, developing interesting ideas and applying their creativity and passion.



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## 23. New youth exchange project on pandemic studies approved in Turkey

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We are pleased to inform you that we have been approved a new youth exchange project on pandemic scientific studies entitled in Turkish “Bilimsel Pandemi Yönetimi” to be developed in Antalya, Turkey, from 20 January 2025 to 27 January 2025 (including travel days). The project will



involve a total of 35 participants (4 young people aged between 18 and 30 years and 1 team leader without age limit from each participating country, i.e. from Portugal, Italy, Croatia, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Ukraine and, of course, Turkey. The project aims to show what kind of institutions carry out the work of health control and prevention from pandemics, what research methods are applied to protect the population, what training and protection measures are needed in the field of health to increase individual

awareness, and many other elements related to the problem. In the activity programme, each country will be responsible for conducting and managing one-day activities, while the Turkish team will manage activities such as introductions, ice-breaking games and language development games on the first day of the youth exchange. Afterwards, an in-depth look at the Erasmus+ programme and the importance of Youthpass will also be conducted. The national teams will be able to design creative activities related to covid-19 and epidemics, communicating in advance to the Turkish coordinator materials needed for the development of the specific workshops. In addition, the Turkish team will also have a medical team that will demonstrate in practice the precautions that must be taken during a pandemic.

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## 24. New steps of the “Learn STEM” project

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On 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2024 took place in Kirsehir, Turkey, the last transnational meeting of the project “Innovative Model of learning STEM in secondary schools” (acronym “Learn STEM”) initiative approved by the Erasmus Plus National Agency in Turkey with Ref. no. 2022-1-TR01-KA220-SCH-000087583. The meeting was aimed at presenting all the results developed in the two-year project and the many products realised, as well as planning the final dissemination activities planned. The meeting in Turkey was attended by all the partner organisations: Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi (Turkey), Ingenious Knowledge GmbH (Germany), Universität Paderborn (Germany), IEK Kavalas (Greece), Liceul Tehnologic “Haralamb Vasiliu” (Romania), Ahi Evran Anadolu Lisesi (Turkey), Yusuf Demir Bilim Ve Sanat Merkezi (Turkey)



and EURO-NET (Italy). The event was an opportunity for EURO-NET (Europe Direct Basilicata centre) to show and share with the partners the many dissemination “output” developed during the partnership and aimed, as well, at strengthening the capacity of secondary schools to promote competences in STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) through innovative and interactive pedagogical methods and approaches, in particular, through the use of IoT (Internet of Things). On 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024 took place in Basilicata one of the project's last



activities, a workshop that involved several dozen students and teachers from Lucania and showed how to take advantage of the e-learning training courses developed in the two-year European initiative that will come to a final conclusion at the end of December. During the dissemination and pilot event, which was developed by the EURO-NET association, participants in the pilot seminar were able to familiarise themselves with the various activities carried out in the project and the STEM lessons contained on the <https://learnstem-website.eduproject.eu/> platform, which was developed by the entire partnership. Moreover, the fourth and last “Learn STEM” newsletter (see attached image) has been distributed in the various project partner countries for a few days now. This initiative will end in March 2025, after the Turkish National Agency granted a three-month extension for its development. The project's newsletter focuses on the description of the last transnational partner meeting held in Kirsehir (Turkey); on the collection of e-games that each partner is carrying out in order to enrich with content the eLearning platform created by the partnership; and on the development of the national pilot workshops or multiplier events planned in each country belonging to the European consortium of this Erasmus+ project. This newsletter, which both in terms of content and graphics was developed by the staff of the EURO-NET association (Europe Direct Basilicata centre) will now also be promoted on the various project tools and via social channels by the many members of the European “Learn STEM” consortium. More information on the project can be found on the website [www.learnstem.eu](http://www.learnstem.eu) or on the Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61551859486150>.



## 25. Second meeting in Volos of the “WARRIOR” project

On 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024 took place in Volos, Greece, the second meeting of the project “Warrior’s Values: Effective Defence against Fakes and Frauds” - acronym “WARRIOR” - an initiative approved by the association EURO-NET (Europe Direct Basilicata centre) in the Erasmus Plus KA220-YOU - Cooperation partnerships in youth programme by the National Agency for Youth (ref.



no. 2023-1-IT03-KA220-YOU-000153640). The international meeting served the partners to discuss various issues, such as the completion of Work Package No. 3 and the training activities envisaged in it and to be developed with youth workers, as well as to evaluate the work developed. The project, which is awaiting the positive evaluation of the interim report by the NGO and thus the release of the second tranche of funding, will now in fact have to develop a series of seminars in each partner country aimed at providing youth workers with a capacity-building in order to train young people to recognise fake news as well as existing fakes and manipulations on the web and social media. The project partners, which, in addition to EURO-NET (lead partner of the initiative), are Ukrainian Center of the Future (Ukraine), InnoVed (Greece); Foundation International Center of Dialogue, Innovations and Future (Poland) and Erasmus ME Academy gGmbH (Germany) also took the opportunity to talk about the dissemination developed and about the next steps. More information on the project is available on the official website of the initiative at <https://warriorproject.eu/it/home-it/> or on the Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61554717032106>.

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## 26. Multiplier events of the “Green Urban Paths” project

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After the development in Potenza in the second half of October of the first Italian Multiplier Event of the project “Green Urban Paths” (acronym “G&PS”) - an initiative approved within the framework of the programme “Erasmus Plus KA220-ADU Cooperation partnerships in adult education” (ref. no. 2021-1-DK01-KA220-ADU-000033665) by the competent Danish National Agency - now the staff of the Youth Europe Service association is working to organise a new dissemination event, this



time to be developed online and therefore virtually. The first event was attended by heads of organisations and training centres, as well as teachers from various schools and the general public, who greatly appreciated the products and activities carried out in the European initiative, which once again saw the aforementioned association from Potenza play the role of a major player in the development of next-generation digital products, even created and developed with the aid of state-of-the-

art artificial intelligence tools. During that meeting, the association's staff, especially Dr. Alessia Di Tolla and Dr. Andrea D'Andrea, showed the enthusiastic audience in the room the entire development of the project, the products created and the fantastic results obtained in the European initiative, which also involves the following organisations: TQC SRL (Italy), Comparative Research Network EV (Germany) and Associació Educativa I Cultural Blue Beehive (Spain). The large audience in attendance particularly enjoyed the presentation of augmented reality products that, thanks to the use of artificial intelligence, move the backgrounds of the “green” areas that the project was intended to promote. The “Green Urban Paths” initiative (the conclusion of which has been officially extended to 27/12/2024) 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 accessibility in adult education, using new generation digital products (Apps and platforms) combined with theatrical storytelling to develop products capable of promoting environmentally friendly solutions in the partner cities. Now all that remains for the Y.E.S. association to do is to develop a second event in which at least 10 other people interested in learning about the new methods developed by the project for the promotion of sustainable and green tourism routes in the various territories forming part of the European partnership will have to participate. More information on the “Green Urban Paths” project is available at the following link: <https://www.greenurbanpaths.com/>.



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## 27. The “RESCUE” project concluded

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The project “Raise your voice against Plastic”, acronym “RESCUE”, an initiative approved in



Austria by the Erasmus+ National Agency (ref. no. 2022-1-AT01-KA220-YOU-000086418), within the actions of the Erasmus+ programme KA220- YOU - Cooperation partnerships in youth has come to an end. The project, which involved numerous organisations working in the environmental sector throughout Europe, i.e. Sudwind Verein für Entwicklungspolitik und Globale Gerechtigkeit (Austria - project coordinator), Kainotomia & Sia EE (Greece), Jugend-& Kulturprojekt EV (Germany), Stowarzyszeni and Centrum Wspierania Edukacji i Przedsiębiorczości Osci (Poland), Cuiabluu OÜ (Estonia) and Youth Europe Service (Italy), has brilliantly achieved all its objectives, far exceeding even the most optimistic expectations and enabling a large number of young people to become ambassadors of the environment and conscious European citizens who are also capable of being spokespeople for the need to change our daily habits in order to try to preserve our planet. In the last days of the project, which ended definitively on 30

November 2024, the partners who had not yet realised or completed the national dissemination events developed them in order to adequately promote the results of the Community initiative to the general public. In Italy, thanks to the Youth Europe Service association (which also took care of the creation of the last planned newsletter), as many as 70 young people were made aware of the results of the Community initiative during two multiplier events (almost doubling the target of 40 participants set in the project for our country for this activity). More information on the RESCUE project is available on the portal <https://rescue.erasmus.site/e-learning/green-portal/>.

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## 28. New training in the Netherlands on sustainable cooking

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On 20<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> November 2024 took place in the Netherlands, in The Hague, a new training of the project “Green and Sustainable Food Educators” (ref. no. 2022-1-FI01-KA220-VET-000085304), an initiative approved in the Erasmus Plus programme KA220-VET - Cooperation partnerships in VET by the Dutch National Agency. The 2-day training course was hosted by the partner Horeca Academie BV and was aimed at providing intensive training for the staff of the European consortium member organisations in order to enable them to be certified as “European Educators for Green and Sustainable Food” through the Europass. To this end, 2 persons from each partner organisation participated in the training activity: 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 course focused on discovering the secrets of developing a sustainable cuisine, which is based on the three fundamental pillars of reducing consumption, recycling and reuse. In fact, cooking sustainably means not only wasting food within the catering chain, but also reusing leftovers in a creative and healthy way, creating dishes with zero-kilometre ingredients and low emissions for production and transport, as well as buying quality and seasonal products, and adopting cooking methods with a low environmental impact. For the association from Potenza, Caterina Lacerra and Donato Viola attended the meeting.




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## 29. Second training course of the “Youth Eco-Activism in the EU”

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On 25<sup>th</sup> November to 01<sup>st</sup> December 2024 took place in Charneca da Caparica, in the province of Lisbon (Portugal), the second youth training of the project “Youth Eco-Activism in the EU” (acronym “YEAEU”), approved in France by the competent Erasmus Plus National Agency as ref. no. 2023-1-FR02-KA220-YOU-000159007. During the training in Portugal, the four young Italians participating on behalf of the Youth Europe Service association: Gabriele Teodosio De Nicola (group leader), Giovanni Battista Ricciardi, Antonello Corniola and Giovanni Paolo Rugiano (the latter three being members of the Provincial Council of Students of the Province of Potenza), had the opportunity to engage in workshops, laboratories, team-building and icebreaking activities with as many delegations of young people of their own age from France, Ireland, Romania and Portugal. The aim of the project training is to guide young people in setting up their own social enterprises focused on climate



change mitigation and to encourage young people to engage in climate action through civic activism. Each partner organisation of the project (Hanta Educational Services Limited from Ireland, Youth Vision from Romania, For Citizens - European Institute for Active Citizenship from Portugal and Youth Europe Service from Italy) developed part of the training activities by working in groups and subgroups in order to involve all participants in activities that on the one hand, as mentioned above, raise awareness about the climate crisis and on the other hand, guide participants in setting up their own social enterprises to try to mitigate climate change.

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### 30. Last meeting in Potenza for the “VRP4Youth” project

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On 28<sup>th</sup> November 2024 took place in in Potenza the last transnational meeting of the project “Innovative Integration Between Virtual Reality and Rapid Prototyping for Youth” (acronym “VRP4Youth”), an initiative approved by the Erasmus Plus National Agency in Turkey as action no.2022-1-TR01-KA220-YOU-000089257 within the framework of the Erasmus Plus programme KA220-YOU - Cooperation partnerships in youth. All the members of the European consortium, i.e. Gazi Universitesi (project coordinator - Turkey), Kungliga Tekniska Hogskolan (Sweden), Association Of Academicians Union (Turkey), Instituto Politecnico Do Porto (Portugal) and Godesk Srl (Italy), will now have to develop dissemination events in December with the participation of at least 50 people among stakeholders and students from high schools and universities: VRP4Youth will in fact end, after 24 months of activity, at the end of this month, having achieved all the set objectives. More information on VRP4Youth is available on the official website <https://vrp4youth.org/> and on the initiative's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/people/VRP4Youth/100090467855108/>.



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### 31. Multiplier Event of the “G4G” Project

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Last week, a dissemination event took place in Italy of the “Learning serious video game coding for green awareness” project (acronym “Games4Green”) in which two important organisations from Basilicata (the Chamber of Commerce of Basilicata and the association Youth Europe Service) are



Italian partners. The multiplier event was organised precisely by the non-profit association Youth Europe Service and was carried out by Dr. Luigi Vitelli, who followed and guided the development of the entire initiative on behalf of the Potenza organisation. The project, which ends at the end of December, involved not only the aforementioned Italian organisations but also the following transnational entities: Erasmus ME Academy gGmbH (project coordinator - Germany), InnoVED (Greece), Asociaci3 Educative i Cultural Blue Beehive (Spain) and Rigas Tehniska Universitate (Latvia). Games4Green aims to promote environmental sustainability through the use of educational video games and focuses on training

young people and VET (Vocational Education and Training) trainers in the art of video game programming, using innovative tools to raise awareness of climate change, sustainability and the circular economy: through a modular online course (SPOOC) and a personalised learning environment (PLE), participants can, in fact, acquire technical and transversal skills, while also improving social inclusion, entrepreneurship, female participation in the video game industry, employability and fostering the creation of green and innovative start-ups. The initiative was funded by the German National Agency Erasmus Plus within the framework of the Erasmus Plus programme within the actions KA220-VET, i.e. in the cooperative partnerships directed towards vocational training as ref. no. 2022-1-DE02-KA220-VET-000085499. More information is available on the official Erasmus+ website <https://games4green.eu/> or on the project's Facebook page [https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100092178621932&locale=it\\_IT](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100092178621932&locale=it_IT).

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### 32. Pilot Activities and final seminar of the “PLE4YOUTH” Project

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At the end of November took place in Italy the pilot activity of the project “Personal learning environment to improve young people's skills for future challenges” (acronym “PLE4YOUTH”) approved by the Spanish National Agency Erasmus Plus as action no. 2022-1-ES02-KA210-YOU-000083769 in the Small Scale Partnerships in Youth. The event was developed by the staff of the Youth Europe Service association, Vito Verrastro and Antonino Imbesi, who together with dozens

of young people addressed some of the issues and modules developed during the 2-year European partnership, which in addition to the association from Potenza also involved two foreign organisations, Associació Educativa i Cultural Blue Beehive (Spain - project coordinator) and The Hub Nicosia Ltd (Cyprus). The aim of the project, which will end at the end of December, was to create an inclusive digital personalised learning environment to serve the most disadvantaged young people, enhancing digital transformation while establishing easier access to targeted knowledge important for the development of key competences of the new generations. Last week a big public outreach event was held for the project in fact the event, which was expected to be attended by 30 young people and stakeholders, was a huge success: in fact it was so well developed by the Youth Europe Service staff that it was attended by as many as 150 students and teachers. During the Final Seminar, whose keynote speaker was Dr. Vito Verrastro, all the activities developed during the two-year project by the European partnership composed of Associació Educativa i Cultural Blue Beehive (Spain - project coordinator), The Hub Nicosia Ltd (Cyprus) and Youth Europe Service (Italy) were illustrated. During the event, both the PLE, the Personal Learning Environment (a personalised tool, which enables each young person to deepen their knowledge of the topics they are interested in, while at the same time improving resilience, self-esteem and critical thinking); the online course modules contained in the SPOOC and developed with Moodle; and the PLE4YOUTH Guide (see attached image), which consists of a manual, created in Canva, that brings together and elaborates all 3 training modules in a printed version. The students showed a particular and marked interest in the PLE, which explained in a simple way, can be identified as a virtual desktop that gives access to various tools and resources of interest and allows for the generation of personalised learning paths, and many of them registered on the platform in order to take advantage of all the opportunities it contains. More information on the project, which will end at the end of December 2024 having met and far exceeded all the set targets, can be found at: <https://ple4youth.eu/>.



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### 33. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all of you!

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This is the last issue of our annual newsletter. We hope you enjoyed it: our aim was, is and will continue to arouse your interest and curiosity in Europe and its opportunities, as well as to promote the values of European citizenship. But because Christmas approaches, we do not want to bore you further and, therefore, we wish you peaceful holidays. We'll see on next February 2025. Merry Christmas... and Happy New Year!

