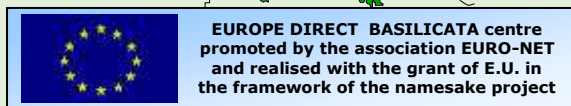




EURO-NET

The Youth European Network



**YEAR 20 - NUMBER 6
OF 20TH DECEMBER 2025
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. United Kingdom to rejoin Erasmus programme from 2027

In May, the United Kingdom and the European Union held their first ever summit and agreed to strengthen cooperation through a new strategic partnership. This partnership will make us safer, put people at the heart of our relations and support business growth. Following the summit, the European Commission and the UK concluded negotiations for the UK's association with Erasmus+ in 2027. This association would offer significant opportunities in all areas of education, training, sport and youth for people in the UK and the European Union, particularly for the younger generation. The European Commission and the UK will now work to negotiate the UK's participation in the EU's internal electricity market and will define the necessary framework for such participation. Closer cooperation on electricity would bring real benefits to businesses and consumers across Europe, stimulate investment in the North Sea and strengthen energy security. The Commission and the UK will move swiftly towards the UK's association with Erasmus+ and the opening of negotiations on the UK's participation in the EU's internal electricity market, in accordance with their respective procedures and legal frameworks and respecting each other's decision-making autonomy. For further information, please see the following [link](#).

02. Europeans see strong benefits from EU membership

74% of Europeans say their country has benefited from EU membership. Almost six in ten EU citizens (59%) are optimistic about the future of the EU, and almost three-quarters of respondents (73%) feel they are EU citizens. Trust in the EU remains high, with 48% saying they trust the EU. Europeans want a stronger and more assertive EU. Two-thirds of respondents (67%) agree that the European Union is a place of stability in a troubled world. Support for strengthening the EU's economic independence is overwhelming: 83% believe that the Union should diversify its global trade relations. Almost eight out of ten Europeans (79%) are in favour of a common defence and security policy among Member States, the second highest result since 2004. Ensuring peace and stability remains by some distance the action that will have the most positive impact on the lives of European citizens in the short term (selected by 42%), followed by creating more job opportunities (26%), ensuring food, health and industrial supply in the EU (25%) and managing irregular migration (24%). As regards EU budget priorities, citizens would like the EU budget to be spent on employment, social affairs and public health (42%), education, training, youth, culture and media (36%) and defence and security (35%). For further information, please consult the following [link](#).

03. Kubilius in Rome for talks on European defence readiness

On 12 December, Defence and Space Commissioner Andrius **Kubilius** was in Rome to meet with Italian Defence Minister Guido Crosetto for a series of talks on strengthening Europe's defence readiness at a time of growing geopolitical uncertainty. The visit was part of the European Union's efforts to accelerate work to enhance its preparedness, consolidate industrial resilience and promote the joint development of military capabilities together with Member States. More information is available at the following [link](#).

04. New Eurobarometer on digital skills in schools

According to a new Eurobarometer survey published recently, nine out of ten Europeans believe that digital skills should be taught at all levels of education. [The survey](#), 'Future Needs in Digital Education', captures citizens' views on the importance of digital skills in schools, focusing on the role of teachers, the integration of artificial intelligence, and the benefits and challenges that technology brings to teaching and learning. The vast majority of EU citizens (92%) agree that schools play a key role in teaching how to manage the potential negative impacts of digital technologies on health and mental well-being. In addition, 78% of Europeans believe that these skills should receive the same attention as reading, maths and science. Eighty per cent agree that digital literacy helps protect them from misinformation and disinformation online. A large majority (89%) consider it essential that all teachers have the necessary skills to help students distinguish

fact from fiction online and navigate the complexity of the digital information landscape. For further information, please visit the following [link](#).

05. The Commission identifies actions to reduce the tax gap

On 11 December, the European Commission published its first '**Mind the Gap**' report, which builds on the experience gained from previous reports on the VAT gap and now extends it to direct taxation. The document provides a comprehensive assessment of tax gaps in the EU and its 27 Member States, while highlighting opportunities to support key policy priorities at European and national level. According to the report, estimates of tax compliance gaps reached a total of several hundred billion euros in 2023. Tax gaps can result from evasion and avoidance, but also from tax policy instruments such as allowances or reliefs, when they are not designed with sufficient care. Compliance gaps generated by evasion and avoidance weaken public finances and undermine confidence in tax systems. The VAT compliance gap rose to €128 billion in 2023, reversing the progress seen during the pandemic. For corporate income tax, the latest available data indicate an average compliance gap of 10.9% of revenue collected. The report also outlines the strategies adopted in different Member States, highlighting strengths and areas requiring action. Addressing tax gaps requires action in several priority areas, from strengthening tax administrations – through skills development and more effective use of data – to reviewing past policy choices to ensure that tax instruments remain efficient and targeted. The 'Mind the Gap' report is accompanied by two technical studies documenting significant tax revenue losses due to non-compliance with value added tax (VAT) and corporate income tax across the EU. More information is available at [the following link](#).

06. Commission proposes to modernise EU energy infrastructure

On 10 December, the Commission presented the European Networks Package, which aims to modernise and expand the EU's electricity network to enable efficient energy flows across all Member States, integrate cheaper clean sources and accelerate electrification. The package will help to ensure secure, clean and affordable energy for all Europeans, strengthen the Union's energy independence and support our competitiveness. For further information, please consult the following [link](#).

07. Commission approves €1.5 billion Italian state aid scheme

The European Commission has approved a €1.5 billion Italian state aid scheme to support strategic investments aimed at increasing the production capacity of clean technologies, in line with the objectives [of the Clean Industry Pact](#). This measure will contribute to the transition to a net-zero economy. The scheme was approved under [the Clean Industry Support Framework \(CISAF\)](#) adopted by the Commission on [25 June 2025](#). The scheme will be co-financed by [the Recovery and Resilience Facility](#). The purpose of the scheme is to grant aid for investments that increase the production capacity of net-zero emission technologies listed [in Annex II to the CISAF](#), as well as the production of key specific components of those technologies. Under the scheme, the aid will take the form of grants, soft loans or a combination of both. The measure will be open to companies throughout Italy. Aid may be granted until 31 December 2030.

08. The Spanish city of Zaragoza wins the Access City Award 2026

Zaragoza (Spain) has won the Access City Award 2026 for its outstanding commitment to making the city accessible to people with disabilities. The city takes a rights-based approach, founded on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Its accessibility infrastructure consists of comprehensive municipal accessibility regulations, a clear strategic plan with objectives, deadlines and budgets, and strong governance through a dedicated Accessibility Office and a formal Accessibility Committee. Zaragoza is also at the forefront of ensuring the full

participation of people with disabilities in society, with accessible public transport, public spaces and digital services: for example, it has a fully accessible tram network, wide pedestrian walkways without steps, inclusive banking and commercial initiatives, and certified accessible websites and apps that have contributed significantly to making Zaragoza more accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities. In addition, housing is a particular strength, with initiatives such as the Flumen project providing inclusive and accessible housing that promotes independent living and social inclusion. The prizes awarded for the Access City Award 2026 were as follows: 1st place: Zaragoza (Spain); 2nd place: Valencia (Spain); 3rd place: Rennes (France). In addition, a special mention for accessibility in housing was awarded to the city of Salzburg in Austria and a special mention for accessibility in emergency preparedness was awarded to Valencia (Spain). The only Italian city to receive a special mention for information and communication technologies for an inclusive and technological approach to accessibility was Piacenza. Further information is available at the following link: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_2949

09. Survey to help shape the future of European Capitals of Culture

The European Commission has recently published a public consultation on the European Capital of



Culture (ECoC) initiative, which will remain open until 2 January 2026. 2025 marks the 40th anniversary of this important EU cultural initiative, which saw the city of Matera awarded the title in 2019 and which, over the years, has brought together cities, regions, countries and, above all, people, reducing borders and enabling the development of thousands of high-level cultural events and initiatives. By participating in the survey and sharing your opinions and ideas on the subject, you will help the EU to: 1) ensure that the initiative remains accessible and in line with today's global challenges; 2) strengthen cooperation

between those involved in past, present and future Capitals of Culture; 3) improve the visibility and long-term legacy of the initiative. For further information: https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/15592-European-Capitals-of-Culture-new-legal-basis-after-2033_en

10. Help4U: digital platform to help young victims of online sexual abuse

Help4U is a new digital platform, developed by Europol and CENTRIC, to support children and young people who are victims of sexual abuse or harm online. Designed to be simple, confidential and accessible, Help4U helps young people find reliable advice, understand their rights and get in



touch with people who can help them. The platform offers clear and practical guidance for anyone under the age of 18 who needs help, as well as information for parents, teachers and professionals who support them. What sets Help4U apart is its strong focus on accessibility. The platform allows young people to choose how they want to receive assistance: by reading, chatting or finding a

service nearby. All content is written in clear, age-appropriate language so that it is easy to understand and use. Help4U started as a pilot project between Belgium, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands and Slovenia, but has since expanded to include Bulgaria, Cyprus, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Romania, with more countries planned for 2026 and beyond. The platform was developed in close collaboration with experts in the fields of psychology, education, IT, data protection, law enforcement and academia. For further information, please visit the following [link](#).

11. European Commission makes €1.4 billion available for innovation

The Commission has just adopted the European Innovation Council (EIC) Work Programme 2026, which makes €1.4 billion available to support pioneering innovations and European deep tech companies. The programme introduces a number of improvements to make funding faster, more flexible and better aligned with the needs of innovators. The programme will pilot new advanced innovation challenges to accelerate the commercialisation of high-risk, high-return research in strategic areas. Preparations are also underway for the Scaleup Europe Fund, a privately managed investment initiative co-financed under the EIF Fund, aimed at improving access to late-stage financing for deep tech scale-ups and supporting their expansion in Europe. A simplified application procedure will also be introduced for the EIF Accelerator, reducing full proposals from 50 to 20 pages and introducing evaluation cycles every two months instead of twice a year. The process will also include a clearer assessment of technological maturity to support more efficient investment decisions. More information on the 2026 programme is available at [the following link](#).

12. A renewed call to end violence against women

On 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women was celebrated. Unfortunately, data from the European Union shows that one in three women in Europe: 1) has experienced gender-based violence; 2) has had a violent partner during her lifetime; 3) has experienced sexual harassment in the workplace. When we consider that this violence continues to be underreported, these figures take on even greater significance. For these reasons, the EU, committed to eradicating this deeply rooted gender-based violence, adopted a strong and comprehensive law to combat gender-based violence in May 2024, after acceding to the Istanbul Convention (the first legally binding international treaty to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence) in 2023. Work is also underway on a new gender equality strategy to be presented in 2026, in which the elimination of violence against women will be a central element. Practical assistance is also available in Europe, thanks to the establishment of a common EU hotline number 116016, which victims can call at any time. For more information, please visit the following [website](#).

13. Mediterranean Pact launched in Barcelona

Ministers from EU Member States and Southern Mediterranean partner countries met in Barcelona



on 28 November to jointly launch the Mediterranean Pact. This was a historic moment for deeper EU cooperation with Mediterranean countries. The initiative takes place on the 30th anniversary of the Barcelona Process, a partnership that promotes cooperation and stability between the EU and Mediterranean countries through shared initiatives.

It is another important step towards a more stable, secure and prosperous common Mediterranean area. High Representative/Vice-President Kaja Kallas and Commissioner for the Mediterranean Dubravka Šuica co-chaired the launch event, which was attended by ministers from across Europe and the Mediterranean, demonstrating the importance of this strengthened partnership. Following the launch event in Barcelona and subject to approval by partner countries, EU leaders are expected to welcome the pact at the December European Council meeting. This will be followed by the preparation of a specific action plan. This plan, which will be presented in early 2026, will specify the participating countries and stakeholders for each initiative. More information is available at the following [link](#).

14. A guarantee to help workers in transition acquire new skills

The European Commission has launched a new programme, the Skills Guarantee, to support workers and businesses and address labour shortages in strategic and growing sectors. A flagship initiative under the Skills Union, the Skills Guarantee will strengthen strategic sectors in line with the future European Competitiveness Fund: it will enable workers to move to strategic sectors, find new jobs and develop additional skills. As a first step, the Commission has launched a pilot project for the Skills Guarantee, with a budget of €14.5 million, which will focus on workers in the automotive industry and its supply chain who are at risk of unemployment. The results of the pilot phase will contribute to the design of the future Skills Guarantee programme. Member States are invited to expand the use of the Skills Guarantee as soon as possible, including through the funding available for the remaining years of the current multiannual financial framework (2021-2027). For further information, please consult the following [link](#).

15. Winners of the GRANTS 2025 call for proposals

The European Commission Representation in Italy recently published the list of beneficiaries for



the call for proposals COMM/IT/GRANTS/2025, relating to the selection of proposals for communication and media actions to strengthen the dialogue on the European Union in Italy. The beneficiary Rai spa informed the contracting authority that it was withdrawing from the grant during the award procedure. At present, the contracting authority cannot contact the participants on the reserve list as the available budget is not sufficient to award the grant to the first five proposals with the same score (87). The reserve list remains valid until 31 December 2025, as communicated in the letters to the participants included in the reserve list. The list of beneficiaries of the call for

proposals COMM/IT/GRANTS/2025 and the corresponding grant amounts can be consulted on the website of the European Commission in Italy.

16. The Commission imposes a fine of €120 million on X

The Commission has today fined X €120 million for breaching its transparency obligations under the Digital Services Regulation. The infringements include the misleading design of its 'blue tick', the lack of transparency in its advertising register and the refusal to provide researchers with access to public data. The fine imposed today was calculated taking into account the nature of the infringements, their severity in terms of EU users affected and their duration. This is the first non-compliance decision taken under the Digital Services Regulation. Henna Virkkunen, Executive Vice-President for Technological Sovereignty, Security and Democracy, said: "*Misleading users with blue ticks, obscuring information about advertisements and penalising researchers are unacceptable online practices in the EU. The Digital Services Regulation protects users and gives researchers the ability to identify potential threats. The regulation restores trust in the online environment. With the first non-compliance decision under the Digital Services Regulation, we are holding X accountable for undermining users' rights and evading its responsibilities.*" More information is available at the following [link](#).

17. Latest Eurobarometer survey

According to the European Commission's latest Eurobarometer survey, public support for the euro remains very strong. The survey shows that 79% of respondents believe that having the euro is good for the EU, in line with the results of the 2024 edition. A large majority (70%) of respondents

believe that it is also good for their country. The survey found that most respondents in the euro area believe that the euro has made travelling more easier and less expensive. Around eight out of ten respondents say that the euro has made it easier to compare prices for purchases made in different euro area countries, including online. The results also show a high level of support for the Recovery and Resilience Facility, the central instrument of NextGenerationEU, the Commission's post-pandemic programme aimed at supporting the recovery and economic growth of Member States, making their societies more sustainable and resilient, and preparing them for the green and digital transition. This approach has received strong public approval, with 67% of participants in favour of a recovery plan to support all Member States, provided they make green, digital and social investments and reforms. The survey also gathered citizens' views on a number of issues related to euro coins and banknotes. 61% of respondents are in favour of abolishing 1 and 2 cent coins, reflecting a high and stable level of support for this initiative. The Eurobarometer survey was conducted through interviews with over 18,600 respondents from all 20 euro area Member States between 15 and 23 September 2025. The full results are available online at [the following link](#).

18. 25 years of the Charter of Fundamental Rights

The Charter of Fundamental Rights is at the heart of the European Union as it defines the fundamental rights enjoyed by all people in our Union. Ahead of its 25th anniversary, the European Commission has published the 2025 annual report on the application of the Charter in the EU, which reviews everything that has been done to strengthen its application from 2020 to the present. Henna Virkkunen, Executive Vice-President for Technological Sovereignty, Security and Democracy, said: "The Charter of Fundamental Rights is the cornerstone of our Union, our common commitment to dignity, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law. At a time when these values are increasingly under threat, we must be more determined than ever." Michael McGrath, Commissioner for Democracy, Justice, the Rule of Law and Consumer Protection, said: "The Charter of Fundamental Rights is the beating heart of fairness and justice in our Union. It transforms our core values — dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law — into concrete freedoms that people experience every day. Fundamental rights are the foundation of democracy, and our task is clear: to defend these rights, support those who defend them, and ensure that everyone in the EU can enjoy them fully." The report sets out measures at national and EU level to further support the implementation of the Charter from 2026 to 2030 and beyond. More information is available at [the following link](#).

19. First meeting of the Presidency's Advisory Committee on Youth ()

On 3 December, the first meeting of the Presidency's Youth Advisory Committee was held, focusing on the safe use of social media. Established by President von der Leyen through the 2024-2029 political guidelines, the Presidency Youth Advisory Council was created as an expert group by a Commission decision on 25 June 2025, marking a milestone for youth participation at the highest political level. The committee's objective is to advise the European Commission on issues of importance to young people across Europe and to act as a sounding board for ideas developed by the Commission. Its main tasks include: 1) identifying the challenges faced by young people from different backgrounds; 2) advising the Commission on the basis of information gathered from young people; 3) providing feedback on existing and proposed EU policies and initiatives to better align them with the needs of young people; 4) facilitating communication between the Commission and young people in all EU Member States; 5) ensuring that the rights and needs of all young people are taken into account in Commission policies and initiatives; 6) raise public awareness of the committee's work by sharing key messages within youth representative networks. The committee brings together representatives of young people aged 18 to 28 from the national youth councils of EU Member States, representing a wide range of youth organisations, local and regional councils and the European Youth Forum. The representatives were selected by the Commission from proposals submitted by the national youth councils and youth councils designated by the EU Member States and the European Youth Forum. For further information, please consult the following [link](#).

20. Call 'Markets and Networking' in the Creative Europe programme

Within the Creative Europe MEDIA 2021-2027 programme, the 'Markets and Networking' call for proposals has been published with the aim of enhancing the promotion of European audiovisual content on international markets and strengthening cooperation between professionals in the sector, encouraging co-creations, co-productions and networking. Cooperation between audiovisual professionals and the promotion of European works are pursued by supporting two types of projects: 1) Markets, which focus on a specific type of film and innovative content, or market networks that feature similar genres/themes or are located in the same region; 2) Networking and cooperation activities between networks across the entire value chain, for the promotion of European talent and works. With regard to audiovisual industry markets, initiatives related to physical, digital or hybrid events dedicated to business-to-business exchanges between



European professionals are eligible, aimed at facilitating co-productions, sales and collaborations and having a structural impact on the European audiovisual sector, as well as on the promotion and marketing of European works in global markets. Activities must also adapt to emerging trends by integrating innovative content (video games, VR, XR, AI, cross-media), animation or genre audiovisual works. Market networks, organised on a thematic or geographical basis, aimed at strengthening the overall impact on the audiovisual ecosystem, are also eligible for funding: for example, regional market networks or platforms connecting markets dedicated to specific content (children, documentaries, animation, video games, AR/VR). With regard to networking activities, business-to-business promotional initiatives are eligible, including the possibility of financial support to third parties, aimed at facilitating the distribution and circulation of European works, the exchange of good practices and the adoption of innovative technologies and business models. Activities dedicated to the co-creation of series, with the aim of developing marketable and competitive European serial formats, are also eligible for funding. Across the board, all activities must include environmental sustainability strategies, as well as measures to ensure diversity, inclusion and gender equality. The maximum duration of projects is set at 24 months. The total budget for the call is €16.5 million and there is no maximum amount that can be funded per project. More information is available at the following [link](#).

21. Results of the strategic visit to Saudi Arabia

Last week, the director of the Europe Direct Basilicata centre, Antonino Imbesi, promoted a strategic visit to Saudi Arabia aimed at creating opportunities and cooperation between the European Union and Saudi Arabia. The action taken was particularly effective and led to the



development and signing of several Memoranda of Understanding for the future development of possible concrete actions between the two continents and to promote European initiatives in Saudi Arabia, which is considered a third country by the EU. Among the MOUs signed, the most notable are those with the SAUF (Saudi University Sport Federation), part of the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education and Sport, and the Tourism Media Association of the Saudi Ministry of Tourism. Another important result was the agreement reached to develop an investment fund together with a major Saudi investor, the Maloon Investment Fund, which has made €35 million available for the development of companies and start-ups. Contacts have also been established with SAFFIR, the football research institute in Saudi Arabia (the country that will host the World Cup in 2034), which has expressed great interest in developing a partnership with Basilicata. Finally, an agreement was signed (at the Saudi Arabian National Chamber of

Commerce in the presence of around forty emirs) between companies operating in Riyadh for the development of concrete cooperation actions. *"I am very satisfied with the work carried out during the exploratory mission to Saudi Arabia," said Antonino Imbesi, "and I am firmly convinced that, after the extraordinary results achieved in just five days, we can truly establish institutional and strategic cooperation with Europe that will translate into significant investments and new joint initiatives and projects, thanks in part to European programmes open to third countries."*

22. Eurodesk guide on the use of AI in youth information services



Eurodesk Brussels Link, the European coordination office of the Eurodesk network, has just published the new 'Eurodesk Guide on the Use of AI in Youth Information Services'. This practical and accessible guide is designed to help youth information practitioners understand the basics of artificial intelligence, its impact on the youth communication sector and how to use AI tools responsibly and effectively in their daily work. The publication contains simple explanations, tips for using AI in youth communication and ethical guidelines, all tailored to the specific needs of youth communication in Europe. The guide also includes a self-assessment tool and the Eurodesk Principles on AI, which enable the network to navigate the rapidly changing digital landscape, putting the needs and interests of young people first. For more information, please visit the following [link](#).

23. Europe Direct Basilicata confirmed for the next five years

The EURO-NET association is pleased to announce that it has been officially selected as the Europe Direct Basilicata centre for the next five years, during which it will further increase its efforts to promote information on the actions and opportunities offered by the European Commission in all areas. From 2026 to 2030, the association will strengthen its presence in Basilicata by opening several new decentralised branches throughout the region: in addition to the Potenza facility (where new offices in zone G of the regional capital will be inaugurated by the end of January) and the historic decentralised headquarters at the Tilt in Marconia di Pisticci, three other operational offices are planned to be equipped by the first half of the new year. These are: 1) Matera (which will be activated with the support of the Its Academy foundation of Basilicata and, it is hoped, the Municipality of Matera); 2) Lauria (which should be activated in the Town Hall as soon as the



municipal administration's commissarial management ends after the early dissolution of the administration led by MEP Gianni Pittella (who, together with the then Deputy Mayor Lucia Carlomagno, had enthusiastically embraced the idea of a European information centre in the south-western part of the region); 3) Baragiano, whose Mayor, Giuseppe Galizia, a long-time advocate of the importance of building bridges between local communities and EU institutions, will provide a room in the Town Hall. The partnership put in place for this five-year period by the EURO-NET association is, to say the least, exceptional, with almost a hundred public and private entities participating, confirming the excellent work carried out in recent years in promoting Europe and supporting citizenship at regional level. *"We are all particularly proud of this result,"* said

Antonino Imbesi, Director of the newly confirmed Europe Direct Basilicata centre, *"not least because our proposal has received an excellent evaluation from the European Commission, whom we thank for the trust they have once again placed in us. This credit should be shared with all the administrations and organisations that have shared our journey and decided to support our activities. Now we will have to work even harder and we are counting on the support of those bodies, including the Regional Council, the USR and the Municipality of Potenza, which have promised more effective support and collaboration for the development of the entire programme of actions and initiatives."* 2026 will see a particularly busy programme of activities, with many events and initiatives planned, including dialogues with young people 'A scuola d'Europa' (At the School of

Europe), national events on agriculture, participation in the Festival delle Opportunità (Festival of Opportunities) in Potenza and the Lucania Film Festival in Pisticci, an exhibition on the founding fathers of the EU, a concert for Europe (to be held presumably at the city's Teatro Stabile with the collaboration of the 'Walter Gropius' Artistic, Musical and Choreographic High School in Potenza), moments of reflection on the geopolitical prospects and defence of Europe, information campaigns on the internet, traditional media and social media, two surveys on European issues, a video spot on the European Ocean Pact, newsletters in Italian and English, and even the creation of the first national Europe Direct magazine in collaboration with other Italian centres in the network.

24. Second training session of the SUSTAIN-EDU project in Basilicata

The second and final training workshop of the 'Sustainability Education for Empowering Youth in Vocational Education' project (acronym 'SUSTAIN-EDU') took place from 15 to 17 December in Basilicata. The initiative



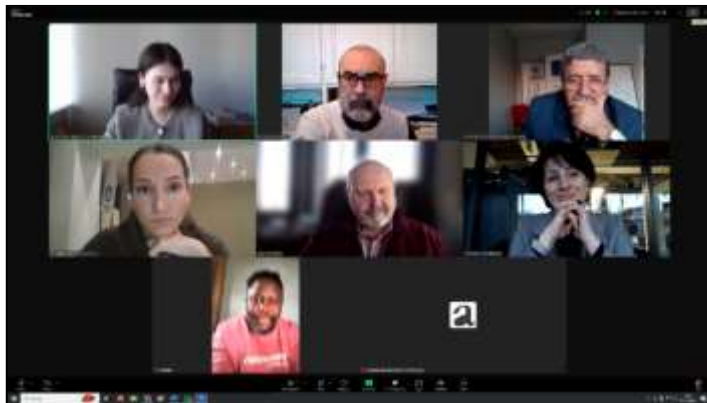
was approved by the Portuguese Erasmus+ Agency under the Erasmus Plus KA210-VET programme - Small partnerships in VET as action no. 2023-2-PT01-KA210-VET-000182244. The training course, aimed at four participants from each of the partner organisations, namely EURO-NET (Italy), Agrupamento de Escolas

de Águas Santas (Portugal) and Intercontinental Development Centre (Netherlands), was designed to provide practical and concrete insights into sustainability in various professional fields and included various activities, including, on 15 December, an introduction to sustainable farming practices with a guided tour of Nicola Coriglione's farm in Pisticci, which promotes biodiversity, pollination and low-impact food production. On the first day of activities, participants also had the opportunity to see how the Municipality of Pisticci has created a public vertical garden as an example of sustainable urban regeneration, integrating green infrastructure, improving air quality and enhancing aesthetics. On 16 December, workshop participants travelled to Matera, where they visited the 'L'Albero di Eliana' B&B, an eco-sustainable accommodation facility in the Sassi, discovering how sustainability can be integrated into tourism through water and energy saving, waste reduction, local products, digital tools and slow tourism. On the afternoon of the second day of the workshop, participants visited the Noi Ortadini Social Promotion Association, which transforms abandoned urban areas into community gardens through sustainable agriculture, citizen participation and social inclusion. Finally, on 17 December, participants had a meeting with ARPAB, which presented the LUCAS project, focusing on environmental data, pollution prevention and eco-health. More information on the project and its many activities is available on the initiative's official website at <https://sustainedu.eu/>.

25. First online meeting of the EmpowerHERment project,

The first official meeting of the partners of the project "EmpowerHERment – Equipping Migrant Women with Skills for Social Business, Leadership, and Sustainability, Empowered by Problem-Based Learning, Digital Innovation, and AI Tools" (acronym "EmpowerHERment") was held on 12 December. This initiative is co-funded by the European Union and approved by the Erasmus+ National Agency in Spain as part of cooperation partnerships related to adult education. The online meeting served as an opportunity to get to know each other and discuss the first steps of the project, as well as to define the contractual agreements. During the meeting, the Spanish coordinator Abarka also presented the various tools already in place for reporting and administration of the initiative, explaining how they will be updated during the project's development. EmpowerHERment has set itself very important goals for developing a society that

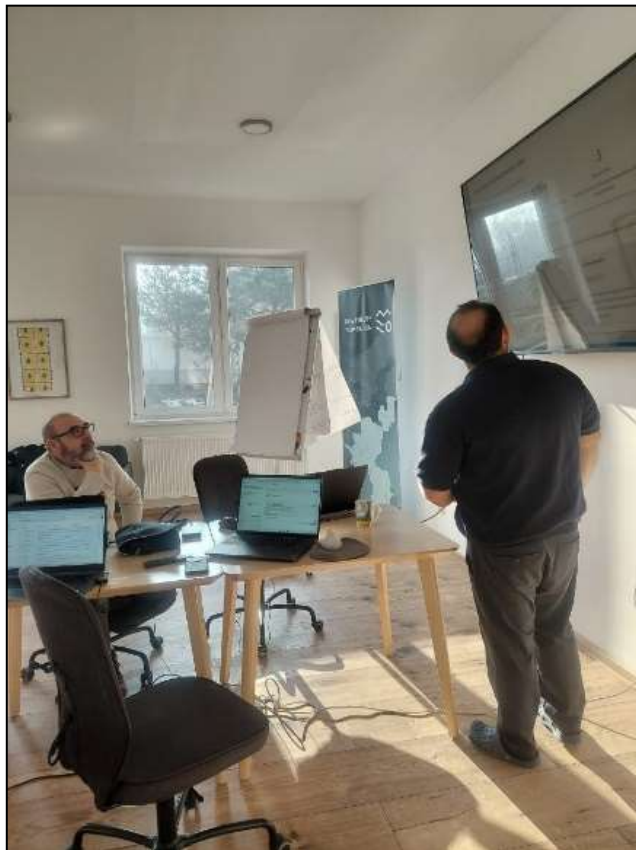
effectively integrates migrants, with the aim of equipping over 100 women in this category with entrepreneurial, digital and employability skills through learning based on artificial intelligence and problem solving. The initiative will now get underway with the launch of Work Package 2, which, led by the Dimitra training centre (Greece) with technical support from the Potenza-based company GoDesk, will focus on developing a comprehensive gap analysis report aimed at identifying the training needs of educators, knowledge gaps and real-world challenges based on surveys, focus groups and interviews. For this reason, the European partnership of the project, which, in addition to



ABARKA (Spain – partnership coordinator), DIMITRA (Greece) and GODESK (Italy), also includes AVRUPA SOSYAL GELISIM AKADEMISI OZEL EGITIM YAYINCILIK VE ORGANIZASYON LIMITED SIRKETI (Turkey) and BIEDRĪBA WE-MEAN – VEIDOSIM LABĀKU NĀKOTNĪ JAUNĀKĀM PAAUDZĒM (Latvia), has decided to meet again online in the near future to define the work to be carried out for the development of the research planned in this initial phase of the project.

26. First meeting of the 'FitGenerations Smart TrAlnert' project

The first meeting of the small-scale centralised project 'FitGenerations Smart TrAlnert' (acronym



'FGST') approved by the EACEA (European Commission Executive Agency in Brussels) under the ERASMUS-SPORT-2025 call for proposals in the ERASMUS-LS (ERASMUS Lump Sum Grants) actions and co-funded by the EU. During the meeting held between 5 and 8 December 2025 (including travel days), the project partners, namely the Polish organisation Spółdzielnia Socjalna Reha Silesia and the Italian association EURO-NET (which hosts the Europe Direct Basilicata centre, recently officially renewed for the next five years 2026-2030), discussed the implementation phases of the entire initiative, defining the various implementation steps and products (including dissemination) to be achieved by the end of the partnership, which has a total duration of only 18 months. *"The meeting was very fruitful,"* said Antonino Imbesi, director of the Europe Direct Basilicata centre, *"as in addition to precisely defining each phase of development of the innovative sports actions planned in the FGST project, the partners also planned future project activities to be carried out using other European funds, also defining an action*

plan for the next calls." The next step in the 'FitGenerations Smart TrAlnert' project will be to launch specific focus groups involving young people, older people and sports experts to understand how best to develop the first product (an app) dedicated to facilitating intergenerational sports integration.

27. Happy holidays



Happy Christmas and Happy New Year 2026