



# EURO-NET

## The Youth European Network



### *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.

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## 1. Innovation progress – more work needed

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**EU makes progress as a whole, but some member countries need to do more to catch up and become more competitive.**



Most EU countries continue to get better at fostering innovation. But some are not doing enough and are starting to fall behind, according to an annual research and innovation scoreboard. The scoreboard is a means of helping EU countries identify both key innovation drivers and where to concentrate efforts to stimulate growth and job creation. It compares countries based on research and development (R&D) investment levels, along with 23 other factors.

### **Investment gap**

The ranking shows traditionally innovative countries continue to improve. For others, the ability to innovate is rising at a slower pace – or has even fallen. As in previous years, Sweden remains at the top, followed by Germany, Denmark and Finland. Meanwhile Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia have increased innovation.

### **Innovation drivers**

Small businesses and the ability to turn ideas into commercial products and services are the main drivers of innovation growth. Top ranked countries also share a strong focus on supporting R&D. Business and universities play a key role in supporting national innovation efforts. Compared with other EU countries, the business sectors of all innovation leaders have higher levels of R&D investment and apply for more patents. They also have well-developed higher education sectors and strong links between industry and science.

### **Innovation Union**

Becoming more innovative – and removing bottlenecks that prevent good ideas from reaching the market – is at the heart of the EU's 'innovation union' strategy to become more competitive and boost growth and jobs. A progress report on the strategy shows it is on track, with implementation having started on 80% of the proposals. The approach includes promoting partnerships between the public and private sectors, easing access to funding and skilled workers, reducing red tape and lowering the cost of patenting new ideas. The strategy attempts to close the gap with global innovation leaders South Korea, the US and Japan. South Korea's lead over the EU is increasing, but since 2008 the EU has been catching up with the US and Japan.

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## 2. Legal reforms – raising standards

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**Some countries need to step up reforms to resolve civil and commercial cases efficiently – key to attracting investment and business.**

Improving the quality, independence and efficiency of national legal systems across the EU is key to reaching a high standard of justice and is important for people and companies alike. Achieving a high standard also increases a country's attractiveness as a place to invest and do business – boosting growth and job creation. To help governments, the Commission is providing its first "justice scoreboard". This is an annual evaluation of how EU countries deal with civil, commercial and administrative cases. The evaluation shows some governments need to step up reforms to achieve the higher standards in place elsewhere in the EU. The main observations are:



- **court cases last at least twice as long** in one third of EU countries as in the rest, sometimes creating a growing backlog. Timely decisions are essential for everyone;
- **regular monitoring and evaluation** to improve the speed and quality of justice lags in some EU countries;
- **alternative methods for resolving cases** (such as mediation) can cut courts' workloads and should be used more widely to reduce delays;
- **business perceptions of the courts' independence** are very low in some EU countries – justice must be seen to be done;

- **electronic systems** can help reduce delays and costs for people and business;
- **compulsory training for judges** and adequate resources are important for improving effectiveness.

#### Next steps

After consulting EU governments, the Commission will take the issues identified in this year's scoreboard into account when preparing country-specific guidance as part of this year's "European Semester" – an annual cycle of economic policy coordination targeting growth and job creation. Funding to help EU countries make agreed judicial reforms will become available in the EU's next multi-annual budget. The scoreboard compares EU countries using specific indicators of judicial quality, efficiency and independence. It allows the EU to track trends as a means of identifying problem areas. Ensuring all national justice systems operate effectively is also crucial for the consistent application of EU-level laws – including those on the economy, consumer protection and environment.

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### 3. Next steps for closer economic union

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#### Initial proposals would establish a framework for closer integration of EU economic and monetary policies.

Since the start of the euro crisis, the EU has put in place measures to align its response with the main economic challenges, as well as support efforts to boost growth and jobs. In October 2012, EU leaders decided even closer economic ties between EU countries were needed to build on these reforms. They called for proposals on creating a banking union, fiscal union, economic union and political union. In response the Commission presented a blueprint for creating

these. The initial measures proposed now by the Commission are in line with this plan.

**One proposal** sets out options on how to structure EU-level discussions on closer economic and monetary union. The discussions would assess the likely effects of the reforms on national economies, and allow countries to take appropriate measures in advance.

**A second proposal** would require EU countries to make specific reforms via a contractual arrangement among themselves. It also allows for EU financial support to help governments introduce these reforms. The money could be used for job training, for example.

#### Effective coordination

The 2 proposals would set up the process for the steps required for a "deeper union". As outlined in the blueprint, these would help ensure that responses to EU-wide economic problems are coordinated and more effective. Over the next 5 years, EU countries would coordinate their tax and employment policies. Eurozone countries under pressure would have access to a common budget, backed by a "redemption" fund to help them reduce large public debts to sustainable levels. After 5 years, the EU could take the next steps towards full banking, budgetary and economic union, followed by political union. These later steps would require modifications to EU treaties and increased democratic accountability. As part of the plan, EU countries would also implement reforms already agreed (or in the pipeline) on better economic and budgetary governance. They also need to approve an EU budget for 2014-20 – once this is done, a separate budget should be created to help EU countries complete economic reforms.

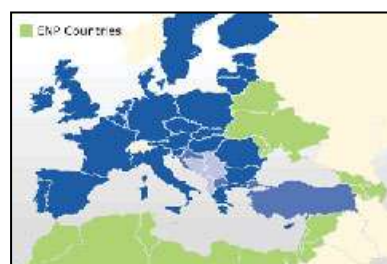
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### 4. Review of neighbourhood policy shows mixed results

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#### Two years into a new EU policy towards its neighbouring countries, the results are encouraging – but progress towards reforms and democracy remains uneven.

The European neighbourhood policy offers closer relations with the EU for 16 countries to its east and south. The countries benefit from greater trade, easier travel to and from the EU, and assistance in implementing reforms. The goal is to promote prosperity, stability and security in the Mediterranean and in eastern Europe. In 2011 the policy was re-launched with an



increased focus on supporting both democracy and economic growth. The first report since then – ENP: Working towards a stronger partnership – highlights encouraging achievements in areas including trade and travel, but points out uneven progress towards political and democratic reforms. The EU's neighbours to the south are at different stages of democratic reform:

- 3 countries have held democratic elections;
- Local grass-roots groups have become more vocal;
- Concerns remain over freedom of assembly, association and expression – including freedom of the press;
- Constitutional reform is slow.

Neighbours to the east continue to follow very different routes. Some have continued reforms and held elections that generally complied with international standards. Elsewhere elections fell short of such standards. Progress has been seen in trade, with new agreements under discussion with Moldova, Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan. Preparations are also underway for negotiations with Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan. 2012 saw significant progress towards visa-free travel between the EU and eastern Europe. Action plans are underway in several countries, while Armenia began waiving visas for EU citizens on 10 January 2013. A total of €12 billion is available for the EU's neighbourhood policy between 2007 and 2013. And despite the current economic crisis, grants and loans to the regions increased in 2012. In addition to supporting political reforms, the money helps to better lives in practical ways. Projects have improved road safety and public transport, supported water management, financed studies abroad and introduced renewable energy. Despite this, the latest EU Neighbourhood Barometer survey found that many people in these countries are unaware of the EU's activities there – although they are generally positive about their country's relations with the EU.

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## 5. European Parliament elections – getting out the vote

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**Better information about candidates' political positions and party affiliations – and one fixed election day – would get more people to the polls.**

For the 2014 elections to the European Parliament, the Commission wants to encourage more people to cast their vote. Participation in the elections has been declining – in 2009 only 43% of those eligible voted. Reversing this trend is important for European democracy, as members of the European Parliament directly represent EU citizens, who vote every 5 years to elect them. This could be achieved by providing voters with better information about candidates'

political positions and party affiliations. A **lack of information** is one of the major reasons for low voter turnout. The recent Eurobarometer survey #364 on electoral rights found that:

- 84% of Europeans think more voters would turn out if they had more information about the EU's impact on their daily lives, and about parties' programmes;
- 73% believe that they would be more likely to vote if they had more information about candidates' political affiliations;
- 62% think having party affiliated candidates for Commission president and voting held throughout Europe on the same day would increase turnout.

### **Informing voters**

In response the Commission is calling on national political parties to clearly let voters know to **which European political party they are affiliated**. This would help voters connect national political platforms with European ones. European and national political parties should announce their preferred candidate **for the next Commission president**. This is important for voters to know. Under new rules, Parliament is responsible for electing new Commission presidents, who are proposed by leaders of national governments meeting in the European Council. Proposals must take into account the results of European elections. Another recommendation is for EU countries to set a **common day for European elections**, with polling stations closing at the same time. Currently, countries can hold elections over a period of four days.

### **Next steps**

It is now up to EU countries to implement the recommendations before the 2014 elections.



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## 6. Better food labelling – more informed consumers

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**The Commission is working to protect consumers and ensure the integrity of packaged food sold in the EU – what you see on the label should be what you get.**

**EU food safety and consumer protection rules are clear: consumers must be informed of what they are buying, and all ingredients must appear on the package label.**

The discovery that horsemeat has made its way into products labelled as containing beef revealed that this fundamental requirement has not been universally respected. Horsemeat can be sold in the EU, but it must simply be declared on the label like any other ingredient. The Member States have been working to ensure that all mislabelled products are taken off the shelves. The Commission was first informed of the problem by UK authorities on 8 February. An alert was issued to all EU member countries through the food safety information network. Once countries began testing, they found a wide variety of meat products had been adulterated with horsemeat.



### **What is the EU doing now?**

The Commission developed an EU plan to coordinate a month long programme of testing products for undeclared horsemeat and for horsemeat containing the painkiller phenylbutazone (also known as 'bute'). It is illegal to give bute to animals meant to be sold as food for human beings. On 15 February national governments approved the plan – with the option of extending testing for another month.

### **What will the EU do in future?**

From 13 December 2014, EU rules will also require labels to indicate whether proteins added to meat products come from the same type of animal.

The Commission is about to make proposals on:

- improving harmonisation of penalties in case of fraud in the supply chain
- extending EU rules on the origin of foods to include more food types (e.g. beyond non EU eggs, honey and beef) and **all meats**.

Better labelling is **not** a means of ensuring that foods on the market are safe. Under the law, producers and retailers may only sell safe food. What better food labelling does is allow consumers to make an informed choice about what food they purchase and how to use it safely.

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## 7. Aiming high – an end to global poverty

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**As the world's biggest aid donor, the EU is leading efforts to set new UN targets to lift people out of poverty and achieve sustainable development.**



Over the past decade, the EU has worked to hit targets set by the UN for a drastic reduction in global poverty by 2015. Millions of people have been helped and lives saved, but much remains to be done. The Commission is calling on EU countries to take the lead in planning the next phase of this global effort to eliminate extreme poverty, after 2015. It has outlined a common EU approach on this issue – the result of a broad consultation process involving EU leaders, stakeholders and citizens. Efforts to end extreme poverty should be coupled with sustainable development. That means doing more to deal with the problems of climate

change, scarce resources, environmental damage and social inequalities.

### **Ingredients for development**

A post-2015 plan should update existing UN targets and cover issues such as social protection. Social development and the environmental measures should be a core part of structural reforms in developing economies. And there is no way of achieving inclusive, sustainable development without tackling issues of justice, equality, fairness, the empowerment of women and gender equality – important values in their own right.

### **A decent life for all**

The goals of development aid should be clear and ambitious, setting identifiable minimum targets. These goals should also seek to improve the quality of life for all, in areas such as education,

nutrition, and access to clean water and air. The lives of every man, woman and child should be at or above these minimum standards by 2030. Effective partnerships among governments, civil society and the private sector are necessary to reach these goals.

#### **Next steps**

The EU is looking to get all member government to agree on its common position by autumn this year, when all UN countries meet to discuss progress towards current 2015 development targets and plan for the next phase. The common EU position should also be integrated into global efforts to set targets for sustainable development for all countries.

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## **8. Secure borders, smarter checks**

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### **Proposals would strengthen controls for those entering the EU's passport-free travel area, speed up procedures for frequent visitors, and provide more security.**

EU citizens can travel freely among countries in its passport-free area without being subject to border checks. Foreigners travelling to the EU also enjoy this freedom – once they have gone through passport control at one of the area's entry points. However, the number of foreigners travelling to the EU is increasing, which could result in longer delays if procedures are not streamlined to help deal with the flow. In response the Commission is proposing to establish a common system of electronic registration at borders. This would speed up entry and exit procedures for legitimate travellers while improving security for all EU countries.



#### **Registered traveller programme**

Frequent visitors to the EU would be able to sign up to a new programme allowing them to enter the passport-free area using simplified border checks. They would receive a machine-readable card after first being screened and vetted to ensure they qualify. Once registered, they would be able to use the card at dedicated automated entry and exit gates instead of having to pass through manual passport checks. The gates would electronically check their cards, travel documents and fingerprints to ensure they are legitimate. About 5 million travellers are expected to use the system each year. They include business travellers, workers on short-term contracts, researchers, students and those living near the EU's borders. Making it as easy as possible for them to enter is in our economic interest. In 2011 foreign travellers made a €271 billion contribution to the EU economy.

#### **Electronic exit and entry recording**

Procedures would at the same time be improved for all travellers. A common electronic registration system would allow authorities to quickly determine when a foreign traveller has broken rules. This would replace the current manual system, based mainly on checks of stamps and visas in travel documents. This system is time consuming and does not allow authorities to easily detect those who have stayed in the EU longer than permitted.

#### **Next steps**

The proposals will now go before the European Parliament and EU leaders for consideration, with implementation planned by 2018.

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## **9. Female genital mutilation – stop it now**

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### **Commission launches consultation to get input on how to prevent forced circumcision of girls and women.**

Partial or full removal of a girl's external genital organs is carried out purely for cultural, religious and social beliefs – not for any medical reason. Hundreds of thousands of women living in Europe have been mutilated in this way, according to estimates. They are some of the 100 to 140 million subjected to the practice around the world – 90 million of them in Africa. The practice has severe physical and psychological consequences for victims. Many more

girls and women will be subjected to the same violation unless all governments step up prevention – here and around the world. While genital mutilation is illegal in most countries, the practice still continues. Prosecutions are very rare, often because cases are not easily detected, the evidence is hard to collect and people are reluctant to report the crime for a variety of reasons.

#### **Help needed**

You can help us find a way to end this practice in Europe by answering a few questions in an [online consultation](#). A recent report reveals there are victims, or potential victims, in at least 13 EU countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Spain, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and the UK. Action taken by EU governments to counter this practice is also detailed in the report. To mark International Women's Day on 8 March, the Commission is providing an extra €3.7m for EU programmes to prevent violence against women. Another €11.4m is being given to civic organisations and others working with victims. Other EU action to end female genital mutilation (and all forms of violence against women) here and abroad include support for victims and potential victims in countries where it occurs. EU action on this issue is aided by research undertaken by the European Institute for Gender Equality, which allows it to target resources where they are needed most.

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## **10. Climate change & energy targets post-2020**

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### **Public consultation to inform future EU energy and climate change policies (2020-2030).**

The EU already has climate and energy targets to achieve for 2020 – cutting greenhouse gas emissions, reducing energy use and boosting renewable energy. But to maintain momentum after 2020, it needs to start consulting and thinking now. Planning ahead will encourage early investment in new infrastructure and stimulate innovation in low-carbon technologies. The Commission is launching the process through an [online consultation](#), which runs until 2 July. You are invited to give your opinion on:

- what type (and level) of climate and energy targets should be set for 2030;
- how to achieve a fair plan which takes into account each EU country's specific energy needs and resources;
- how the EU's energy strategy can improve the competitiveness of its economy.

Your opinions will feed into proposals the Commission is planning for later this year on a climate and energy strategy to 2030. The proposals will seek to improve the current strategy and take into account changes in the EU energy mix, the economic situation and new technologies. The objectives remain the same – reduce greenhouse gas emissions, secure the EU's energy supply and support growth, competitiveness and job creation. As another part of its strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the Commission is also asking for opinions on how to encourage the development of technologies to capture and store CO<sub>2</sub>.

#### **Binding renewables targets create growth**

A report on the EU's progress in developing renewable energy shows that current policy with binding targets has led to strong growth of the sector. More households and businesses would turn to renewable energy if it involved less red tape, if renewables were better integrated into the energy market, and if subsidy programmes were clearer and more stable.



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## **11. Council of Europe TV Journal**

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The Council of Europe runs a weekly WebTV journal with the high lights of the Organisation's news, as well as insightful interviews with politicians and programme leaders. It's a new initiative designed to improve understanding of the Council of Europe's work and policies among partners, including the media, in member states and beyond. Take a look at the website each Friday to discover the weekly news review. This week's edition, dedicated to corruption issues and safety of raw materials, is here: <http://webtv.coe.int/index.php#clip=447528&time>.

The Council of Europe is also on Twitter: check us out at @coe, and on Facebook.

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## 12. European Prize "For youth employment in the Social Economy"

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In the current context of economic crisis, youth unemployment continues to rise everywhere in Europe. This worrying trend had encouraged the European Network of Foundations for Social Economy to launch, in 2011, a European Prize throughout the European Union entitled "For youth employment in the Social Economy". Its goal is to identify and encourage exemplary entrepreneurial



initiatives which can be deployed in other European countries as well. On 15 March 2013, PEFONDES gives a Euro-Mediterranean dimension to its action by launching the second edition of its European Prize, which seeks to reward a young social economy enterprise, which was set up by young people and has created employment for young people in the European Union or in Morocco.

**IMPORTANT: The completed application form must be returned by May 15, 2013 at the latest to [pefondes@pv.be](mailto:pefondes@pv.be)!** Comprised of international experts, the jury will be meeting in December 2013 to select a winning enterprise, which will receive a prize of €5,000. The assessment criteria for the selection of the winning enterprise are as follows: The scope for the multiplication of the entrepreneurial initiative in other countries of the European Union and in Morocco; The number, quality and longevity of the jobs created for young people; The degree of social and/or technological innovation; The level of compliance with the principles of the social economy; The incorporation of environmental best practices within the enterprise; The operational and financial capacity of the enterprise. For more information, please refer to the following [link](#).

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## 13. Cultural Policy Research Award (CPRA) 2013

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The European Cultural Foundation (ECF) and the leading European Network on Cultural management and cultural policy education, ENCATC, have launched the call for applications for the 2013 Cultural Policy Research Award (CPRA). The winner of the CPRA 2013, worth 10.000 Euro, will be publicly announced in November in Belgium during the Award Ceremony and 10th CPRA Anniversary Celebration. **Candidates** (who must hold at least a M.A. degree in social sciences, art & humanities, or public policy research, and must be no older than 35 years old) **must submit their**

**applications for the 2013 CPRA by Friday, 31 May 2013** through the online application form on the CPR Award website. Before applying, they are strongly advised to consult the application guidelines. The CPRA annual competition encourages the next generation of cultural policy researchers to undertake comparative and cross-cultural applied research that can inform policymaking and benefit practitioners active in the field. The Award is devoted to **innovative research projects** which contribute to new knowledge in the field. It brings visibility and recognition to young researchers and affiliates them with a community. For further information and to access the online application system, visit this [link](#), and for additional queries, contact Elizabeth Darley, Research and Communications Officer at ENCATC ([e.darley@encatc.org](mailto:e.darley@encatc.org))

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## 14. Competition: "A world you like. With a climate you like"

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The World You Like Challenge is a part of the public awareness campaign *A world you like. With a climate you like*, run by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Climate Action (hereafter mentioned as "the organiser"). It is a contest to reward existing pioneering low-carbon initiatives across the European Union, which make a real contribution to tackling climate change and can improve the quality of life, for example through lower energy bills, more comfortable homes, cleaner air, better public transport and less traffic congestion.



### Who can participate?

All natural persons aged 18 or over and living in one of the 27 EU Member States are entitled to take part. This contest aims to showcase solutions and projects designed by EU citizens, entrepreneurs, public or private institutions and businesses across the European Union. Employees of the organiser and of companies affiliated with the organiser are not permitted to take part. Each participant may enter only one submission.

### How to submit?

Participation is free of charge. The participant must fill in the online submission form and agree with the terms and conditions of the contest provided herein. The submission form will be available online at <http://world-you-like.europa.eu/en/> and will not be available for download. Each submission must correspond to one of the campaign themes which are:

- Travel & Transport;
- Producing & Innovating;
- Building & Living;
- Shopping & Eating;
- Re-use & Recycling.



Submissions are preferred in English but all official EU languages will be accepted.

Images used in submissions should have a max of 1,5 MB and should be in a JPEG or PNG formats. Videos submitted should not exceed 50MB and be in MP4 or 3GP formats. The participant must enter his/her submission within the time frame of the submission phase. Please note that once the submission has been entered, it may not be edited or resubmitted with edits. Before submissions are published on the website, the organiser will check whether they meet all contest criteria. The participant will receive an automated email once his/her submission is online. **Deadline for entries: 6 May 2013.** For more information, please refer to the following [link](#).

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## 15. The Voses project

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The project VOSSES (Volunteering Solutions for Entrepreneurship Spirit) was approved in the framework of the programme Leonardo – Transfer of innovation. The partnership involves: Spain (coordinating country), Italy, Denmark, Portugal and Romania. The main objective of the project is to realize several products such as an innovative e-learning course about entrepreneurship and an entrepreneurship curriculum, which will be adapted to all the other countries. The transfer will be focused on a particular target group, that is young people willing to develop an entrepreneurial project so as to fight the increasing youth unemployment. For this reason it will be essential to analyze the enterprises reality of the partner countries so that the VOSSES final products could meet the different needs.

Moreover, the project outputs will be translated into the different languages of the countries and each partner will customize the final products of the project according to the local needs in order to match supply with demand in the labour market and ensure the highest flexibility.



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## 16. Local Dissemination Group of the Voses project

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**On February 25 2013** was held in Potenza a Local Group Dissemination of the project VOSES (Volunteering Solutions for Entrepreneurship Spirit). At the focus group realized in the offices of Europe Direct Basilicata center participated local entrepreneurs, lawyers, professionals, trainers and accountants, in short operators who daily contact with the problems of training and youth unemployment and that, by virtue of this, are experts in the sector. For the meeting, recorded for the entire duration on magnetic media, was also made a report in the English language, to be used as a basis for evaluation of future operational steps of the project

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## 17. Second meeting of the Voses project in Romania

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In the period 15-18 April 2013 (including travel days) was held in Sibiu (Romania) the second meeting of the project VOSES (Volunteering Solutions for Entrepreneurship Spirit) during which were defined the new step of the Leonardo action. The meeting was hosted and very well organized by the local partner (Red Cross Sibiu). During the meeting were discussed the following arguments:



- Local Dissemination Group's conclusions and guidelines for transferring WTE training product to VOSES project;
- WTE modules to be transferred by all participants, identification of new modules according to the targets group needs identified during the LDG
- The Financial Issues
- The action plan of dissemination and valorization
- The action plan of monitoring and evaluation.

The meeting was very useful for the future development of the LDV action.

At the end of the meeting was also organized a nice sightseeing tour around Sibiu.

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## 18. Youth Exchanges already made and new realisation activity

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In the beginning of this year our Europe Direct office has developed several youth exchanges with the participation of teachers and students of the Lyceum of Human Sciences "E. Gianturco" of Potenza. Young people and their professors participated in the activities carried out in:

- a. FINLAND - where they participated at a training course titled "TAILWIND COACHING" made in Kokkola in the period 16-22 January;
- b. TURKEY - where they participated at a training course titled "YOUTH WORKS IN RURAL AREAS" made in Kayseri in the period 4-10 February;
- c. FINLAND - where they participated at the youth exchange titled "HEALTHY LIVING, GET TO KNOW OTHER CULTURES AND OURSELVES THROUGH SPORTS, RELAXING AND HEALTHY FOOD" in the period 23-30 March;
- d. TURKEY - where they participated at a training course titled "VOLUNTARY COMPETENCES FOR YOUTH" made in Gaziantep in the period 10-16 April.

In the coming weeks other initiatives will also be implemented in France (Simorre) and in Germany (Weimar).