

5th Newsletter of the EU4Youth Programme June 2020



THE FIFTH NEWSLETTER IS FEATURING THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

- ☛ Eastern Partnership Youth Engagement Summit
- ☛ EaP youth policy beyond 2020
- ☛ Key updates from Component 2 projects
- ☛ Online kick-off meeting of the new grantees
- ☛ EU4Youth Alumni network: online learning and capacity building for post-lockdown actions
- ☛ Youth policy developments in the EaP region

EU4Youth at a glance

EU4Youth fosters the active participation of young people in society and their employability, by developing youth leadership and entrepreneurship through a variety of actions, including capacity building, fellowships, support to policy dialogue, as well as providing grants to organisations active in these areas.

The EU4Youth Programme consists of three components:

Component 1: ☛ Capacity building – Eastern Partnership Youth Window – Erasmus+ projects

Component 2: ☛ Grant scheme – Focus on disadvantaged youth and youth entrepreneurship

Component 3: ☛ EU4Youth Support & Coordination team

☛ EU4Youth II – Youth Engagement Roadmaps

Eastern Partnership Youth Engagement Summit

Exploring the present and navigating the future

2-3 July 2020

2020 is an important year for the Eastern Partnership process. On the one hand, it is a conclusive year for implementing the '20 Deliverables by 2020' policy priorities; on the other, it is the year when a new EU policy framework will pave the way for a new set of common objectives for the future Eastern Partnership process.

In these circumstances, the EaP Youth Engagement Summit, taking place on 2-3 July 2020, is a highlight event that aims to celebrate and promote past and ongoing cooperation between the EU and its Eastern partner countries investing in the future of young people, and facilitate a dialogue between policy makers and youth on the overall approach and concrete steps for the future under the Eastern Partnership. The Summit will provide space for discussion, exchange on best practices and lessons learned, as well as networking and inspiration for future cooperation.

The Summit will take place in a fully virtual format. Such a format has been chosen due to the COVID-19 global pandemic in order to safeguard the health of participants and organisers. The Eastern Partnership Youth Engagement Summit will therefore be the first big online-only EU-Eastern Partnership youth event. It will be a free, globally accessible meeting for registered participants, with speakers, organisers and attendees scattered across dozens of locations across Europe while being connected via a video-conferencing tool and social media. Despite its virtual nature, the event will retain many characteristics of a traditional conference with invited keynote speakers, talks with follow-up questions, and small group discussions.

Around 450 active, critical and responsible youth leaders and youth workers will have a unique opportunity to hold a dialogue amongst themselves and with EU and EaP policy makers on achievements, best practices and challenges in the youth field in the European Union and its Eastern Neighbourhood region. The outcomes of discussions and possible conclusions will be documented in the form of a report, and shared with the relevant stakeholders.

Participants will be selected and invited by respective institutions and project teams.

The main **TOPICS** of the EaP Youth Summit include:

- ✓ The **Eastern Partnership beyond 2020** and the role for young people
- ✓ **COVID-19**: challenges and responsibilities towards young people;
- ✓ Youth **participation in policy making** through strengthening EaP Youth Councils and the EaP CSF;
- ✓ Youth **transition from education to work** through skills development;
- ✓ Youth **social entrepreneurship** realities and good practices;
- ✓ EU vs. disinformation through **positive communication**;
- ✓ Achievements under the **EU4Youth package**, with a focus on Erasmus+ and EU4Youth.

Expected **RESULTS** of the Youth Summit:

- ✓ **Sharing** and **celebration** of inspirational practices of youth work in the field of employment, entrepreneurship and civic engagement;
- ✓ **Exploration** and **recognition** of achievements of the grant projects under the EU Youth Programmes in Eastern Partner countries;
- ✓ **Harvesting conclusions** for navigating future opportunities for young people in Eastern partner countries beyond 2020.

EaP youth policy beyond 2020

Over the years, the EaP has been instrumental in bringing the EU and the Eastern partner countries closer together. The new 'Joint Communication: Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020' published on 18 March 2020 outlines the new long-term policy objectives for the Eastern Partnership beyond 2020 and sets out the measures that aim to strengthen resilience, foster sustainable development and deliver tangible results for society. Considering the achievements of the 2017-2020 'Youth and Education Package', the EU underlines the importance of continued support for youth in the EaP region in order to achieve:

Resilient, sustainable and integrated economies

The new communication outlines that *"Investing in people is key to preparing for the future and fostering societal and economic resilience"*. In this regard, the EU proposes a **new deal for youth**, which will include the following elements:

- ✓ **bridging the gap between the labour market and the education sector;**
- ✓ **increasing support for the employability of youth and for youth entrepreneurship;**
- ✓ **active labour market measures, such as the Youth Guarantee, to be adapted to the partner countries' labour markets; and**
- ✓ **building on a pilot young EaP civil servants' job-shadowing scheme, setting up a mobility and exchange programme for the EaP directed at young professionals.**

At the same time, education reform will have a strategic meaning to *"support to the modernisation and internationalisation of education and training systems, provide greater mobility and capacity building opportunities in formal and non-formal education."*

To respond to the needs of start-ups in the Eastern partner countries, the EU will continue to **support business, particularly women-led initiatives**, and encourage more young people to become entrepreneurs.

¹ www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/1_en_act_part1_v6.pdf

Resilient, fair and inclusive societies

To support the development of strong, resilient and inclusive societies in the EaP region, the EU will further support the **capacity of civil society organisations**, particularly grass root organisations, *"to meaningfully engage in policy-making processes and policy dialogue, and promote reforms and public accountability"*. The EU is also determined to further develop strategic partnerships with key organisations in the region *"to strengthen cooperation, build up the leadership skills of civil society activists, and engage with social partners (trades unions and employers' organisations)"*. Working with the partner countries to promote an enabling environment for the development of civil society in the Eastern partner countries will be the key. Topics such as **social innovation and social entrepreneurship** are also high on the agenda, and will be supported in the coming years. The **EaP Civil Society Forum** will continue to be a key partner in advancing the role of civil society in policy dialogue.

The EU will also continue to increasingly focus on youth participation and leadership. The **Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps** programmes will aim to *"empower the young generation by contributing to the establishment of inclusive and evidence-based youth policy, developing skills, supporting volunteering and cooperation projects"*. At the same time, the **Civil Society Fellowships scheme and the Young European Ambassadors initiative** will be strengthened to better help young people to develop key competences and skills, which are important for their active participation in democratic life and fostering civic engagement. **The EaP Youth Forum** will play even bigger role and *"become better integrated in structured youth policy dialogue within a network of EaP youth councils, modelled on the EU-internal youth structured dialogue."*

The 'Joint Communication: Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020' was endorsed by the Council Conclusions² on the Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020, adopted on 11 May 2020. This document underlines the important role of people-to-people contacts and highlights *"the need to put support for youth at the centre of the Eastern Partnership beyond 2020"*. The Conclusions also note the importance of targeted youth education and training for the reduction of labour emigration and brain drain.

Key updates from Component 2 projects

Support of EU4Youth projects during the COVID pandemic

In this June edition of our newsletter, we highlight the efforts of EU4Youth projects to support beneficiaries during the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to lockdowns all across Europe and as per the national regulations, most EU4Youth physical meetings and activities have been suspended. However, over time the projects adapted to the new reality, by moving to the virtual space and providing continued support to project beneficiaries. Below, we present the highlights of the projects' support activities.

² www.consilium.europa.eu/media/43905/st07510-re01-en20.pdf

The projects moved their activities online:

Virtual classrooms and continued skills development despite COVID-19 outbreak in Georgia, thanks to EU4Youth.

[👉 Read more](#)

EU4Youth SKYE clubs have managed to find ways to continue their meetings and learning despite the coronavirus pandemic and lockdown in Armenia and Georgia.

[👉 Read more](#)

Nine Armenian start-ups supported by EU4Youth are receiving online incubation to help them get their businesses up and running despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

[👉 Read more](#)

Provided creative solutions for online learning:

As schools closed, teachers and pupils turned to an online learning platform set up by EU4Youth in Armenia, thanks to the 'EU4Youth - SAY YES Skills for Jobs' project.

[👉 Read more](#)

Youth peer support provided a lifeline for young people in Armenia and Ukraine in the framework of the 'EU4Youth: Employability and Stability in Armenia, Belarus and Ukraine' project.

[👉 Read more](#)

Organised online events:

In Belarus, meetings with students went online: the Belarusian Red Cross Society organised an online event for future mentors as part of the EU4Youth project.

[👉 Read more](#)

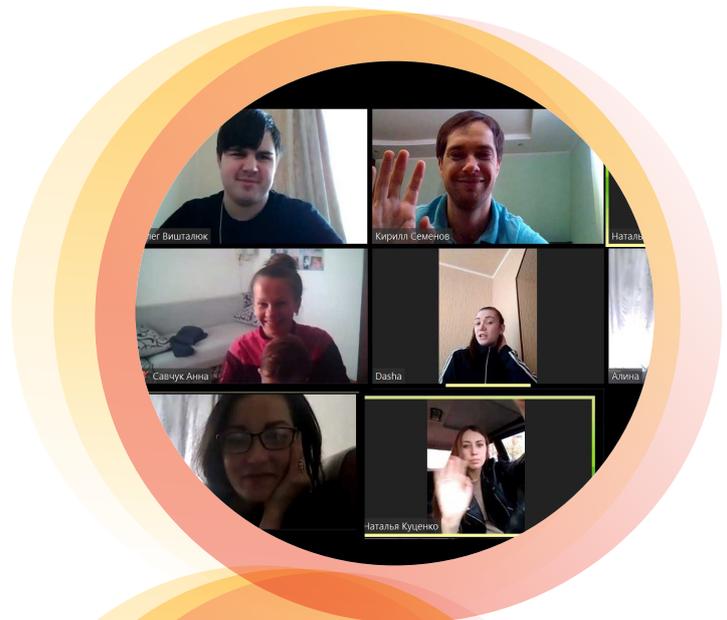
Working with low-motivated adolescents: online support provided to EU4Youth-trained specialists in Belarus.

[👉 Read more](#)

Stimulated support to local communities:

Thanks to EU4Youth, Victoria Rahmatulina has been able to provide her fellow citizens in Toretsk, in the Donetsk oblast of Ukraine, with good quality and affordable protective devices during the coronavirus pandemic.

[👉 Read more](#)



Recent success stories from EU4Youth beneficiaries

Production of natural dried fruits with EU4Youth support: how a young man from Armenia achieved success.

[☞ Read more](#)

EU4Youth story from Ukraine: from private lessons for children to a chain of English language schools.

[☞ Read more](#)

Success story from Armenia: Sveta Khachatryan – the first woman with a disability to pursue a career as a vet in Gavar.

[☞ Read more](#)

How one man from Mariupol became his own boss, with help from EU4Youth.

[☞ Read more](#)

‘School Garden’ teachers and students in Belarus are learning new techniques with EU4Youth support.

[☞ Read more](#)



Online kick-off meeting of the new grantees

The four new EU4Youth grant projects were launched in January 2020. The new projects build on the existing EU4Youth grant scheme under Component 2, but place a greater focus on social entrepreneurship.

In this regard, a virtual introduction meeting for the new EU4Youth Component 2 projects was organised by DG NEAR and the EU4Youth Support and Coordination team on 14 April 2020. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the new projects to the EU4Youth Programme, its coordination units and components, as well as for projects to present their action plans.

As a starting point, DG NEAR opened the meeting by highlighting the achievements of the Eastern Partnership in general, and the EU4Youth Programme in particular.

During the second part of the meeting, a short presentation of project activities and expected results was conducted by each of the four new grantees:

- ☛ *Social Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Development (SEED) Programme for Green Growth in Borderline Communities*
- ☛ *Social Entrepreneurship in Armenia and Georgia (SEAG)*
- ☛ *Unlocking the potential of young social entrepreneurs in Moldova and Ukraine*
- ☛ *Social Innovation Impact – A Strategic Partnership*

After that, the EU4Youth Coordination and Support team presented their coordinating role within the EU4Youth Programme, followed by the EU4Youth Youth Engagement Roadmaps project that presented the recently launched phase II of Component 3, whose purpose is to foster the employability and active participation of youth in society and the economy, by developing their skills and supporting them in becoming leaders and entrepreneurs.

A Q&A session closed the online meeting.

EU4Youth Alumni network: online learning and capacity building for post-lock-down actions

In its pilot phase the EU4Youth Alumni network unites **70 young beneficiaries** of EU4Youth, Erasmus+ Youth in Action and European Solidarity Corps programmes and the network of Young European Ambassadors, from the Eastern partner countries and Russia. It builds on the **enthusiasm and voluntary spirit** generated during participation in non-formal education mobility programmes with the aim to **support better engagement of disadvantaged young people** from Eastern partner countries in the EU mobility programmes.

The Alumni network was established in January 2020. Two kick-off training courses were organised in February and March, where Alumni developed competences and action plans to engage disadvantaged youth groups from their respective communities. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, activities planned within the EU4Youth Alumni Network have been suspended.

It is estimated that the Alumni network will restart its activities in September 2020 if the situation with pandemic stabilises and national health advice changes.

In the meantime, the EU4Youth Coordination and Support team is organising a series of online classrooms and webinars for Alumni to further develop their competences in the field of youth work. The following webinars/online classrooms have been planned for the Alumni:

Online Tools for Learning:

- ✓ Erasmus+ Project Development and Implementation (Series of 3 sessions)
- ✓ Motivation (Series of 2 sessions)
- ✓ Project management (Series of 2 sessions)
- ✓ Training/workshop design (Series of 2 sessions)

Youth policy developments in the EaP region

Armenia

The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Armenia has developed a draft version of the Youth Strategy for 2021-2025, which is planned to be finalised by the end of the year. Among other, the strategy will regulate the participation of youth and civil society in decision-making.

Georgia

The National Council of Youth Organisations of Georgia (NCYOG) is undergoing substantial reform, including the development of a new strategy, priorities for its work, action plan and external communication. The aim of the reform is to better address the needs of young people in Georgia and further promote their participation in all spheres of life. The reform plan consists of four phases: structural reforms; development of strategic documents and action plans; piloting reforms and the implementation of pilot projects; and finally, the evaluation process of pilot projects implemented earlier.

As the first two phases have been successfully completed, the implementation of pilot projects envisioned by the third phase has started on national level and in 11 municipalities of Georgia. The implementation of the following ten directions of the reform has been started:

1. Development of national youth strategy 2025;
2. Supporting municipal institutions to formulate and implement a municipal youth policy;
3. Institutionalising the mechanisms for youth participation in decision-making processes;
4. Supporting youth-led organisations and initiatives by establishing a grant scheme for regional youth organisations.
5. Working on professionalisation, recognition and standardisation of youth work in Georgia through an accredited certification programme of youth workers;
6. Developing of outreach and digital Youth Work;
7. Renewal of hobby education system;
8. Certification and regulation of youth camps;
9. Development of Youth Information and Career Guidance System;
10. Creating a supportive environment for youth entrepreneurship and to build a youth entrepreneurial culture.

Moldova

In Moldova, the process of establishing a Youth Agency is underway. The evaluation of the 2014-18 Youth Strategy is foreseen in the near future, while the development of a new document will take place in 2020.

Ukraine

Following a reform, the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine is now in charge of youth policies and their implementation. The draft concept of the “Youth of Ukraine” 2021-2025 programme is open for public consultations. The draft law “On the main principles of Youth Policy” has gone through several rounds of consultation since September 2019 and will be introduced for its first reading in the Rada in the summer of 2020.

If you know other stakeholders interested in the activities of the EU4Youth Programme and in EaP youth policy developments, please feel free to forward them this newsletter.