

December 2020

Newsletter of the EU4Youth Programme



HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

**Our warmest season's greetings
and best wishes for health and happiness in the New Year.**

THIS NEWSLETTER FEATURES THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

- ☛ EU4Youth Programme - Phase III
- ☛ Series of roundtables on 'Strengthening young people's employment, entrepreneurship and participation'
- ☛ Youth policy developments in the EaP region
- ☛ EU policy developments
- ☛ Updates from EaP Platform 4 meeting and 3rd Panel on Education, Youth and Culture
- ☛ Key updates from the EU4Youth Programme
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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 Coordination and Support
 - ☛ EU4Youth II - Youth Engagement Roadmaps

EU4Youth Programme - Phase III

The EU4Youth Programme will start its **third phase** next year. On 15 December 2020, the European Commission adopted a decision to reserve **EUR 16.2 million for EU4Youth phase III**. The overall objective will be to foster the active participation of young people in both democratic life and in the labour markets of the beneficiary countries. As in the previous phases, the focus on disadvantaged youth will remain a priority. At the same time, future actions aim to contribute to sustainable and smart growth, social cohesion and the reduction of social inequalities in the Eastern partner countries.

EU4Youth phase III will include **four components**. Their launch and roll-out can be expected to start towards the second half of 2021. The main elements will be:

1 A next-generation grant scheme on youth employment and entrepreneurship, with a focus on fostering young people's digital skills, and the skills needed for the green transition, alongside entrepreneurial and career management skills.

2 The Eastern partner countries will be supported in developing and implementing active labour market policies, including by adopting suitable elements from the EU Youth Guarantee, with the aim of integrating young people into the labour market.

3 Extra scholarships will be supported for students from the Eastern partner countries to study at the College of Europe in Natolin, to increase understanding of European politics and governance, and to foster multi-cultural learning.

4 Support for EU4Youth programme coordination will enter a new phase, in order to ensure a coherent implementation of the various EU4Youth phases and components.

More details and updates will be published in upcoming editions of the EU4Youth newsletter.



Series of roundtables on ‘Strengthening young people’s employment, entrepreneurship and participation’

To prepare the ground for strategic priorities under the New Deal for Youth, the EU4Youth Programme, in partnership with the local EU Delegations, organised **country roundtables in Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine**. The roundtables brought together in total around 300 local, national and international youth policy stakeholders active in the fields of youth employment, youth entrepreneurship and youth participation. These roundtables were supported in their respective countries by the Youth Agency of Georgia, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research in the Republic of Moldova, and the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine; in Georgia, the event was co-hosted by local programme implementers CEEN and Mercy Corps.

The roundtables were mostly held online, and aimed to:

- ✓ **Raise awareness about current trends and challenges in youth employment, youth entrepreneurship and youth participation in each country;**
- ✓ **Exchange best practices and explore new possibilities;**
- ✓ **Identify opportunities for further cooperation to enhance youth employment, youth entrepreneurship and youth participation;**
- ✓ **Present concrete project results and lessons learned under ongoing EU-funded grants.**

All three events tackled three main priorities:

- Youth Dialogue**, its various applications in EU Member States and potential to be replicated in the given Eastern partner country;
- key provisions of the **Youth Guarantee**, a topic received with great interest because of the increase in youth unemployment in all three countries due to COVID-19; and
- Youth Social Entrepreneurship (YSE)**, which provided space for discussion on the current state of YSE, its urgent needs, and challenges in each country.

Key inputs on these topics were made in partnership with DG for Education and Culture and the European Training Foundation, as well as representatives from EU Member States, while partner country stakeholders (Ministries, Public Employment Services, National Youth Councils, CSOs, international development partners) shared an overview of current national priorities in youth employment, youth entrepreneurship and youth participation.

Follow-up activities will be organised in the coming months in all the three countries, in order to build up the work around concrete ideas and areas of development that were identified during the roundtables.

The next roundtables will be organised in Azerbaijan, Belarus and Armenia in early 2021.



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 it aims to finalise by the end of the year. Among others, the strategy will regulate the participation of youth and civil society in decision-making.

Georgia

Reform of the youth sector is underway. Capacity is being strengthened at the Youth Agency, which has been in charge of youth policy implementation since 2019, and which is completing the evaluation of the previous youth strategy. The relevant Parliamentary Committee already has a draft of the new youth strategy, but the document has not yet been made public. The draft was developed in consultation with international organisations and local NGOs from the Working Group set up by the Committee. The Youth Agency recently initiated the establishment of a youth advisory council – a step towards the implementation of co-management.

Republic of Moldova

In the Republic of Moldova, the process of establishing a Youth Agency is underway. The evaluation of the 2014-2018 Youth Strategy is foreseen in the near future, and development of a new strategy will take place in 2021.

Ukraine

Following reform of the sector, the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine is now in charge of youth policies and their implementation. The national Youth Agency has been abolished.

The draft Concept of the State Social Targeted Programme ‘Youth of Ukraine’ 2021-2025 is open for public consultation. The draft Law ‘On main principles of Youth Policy’ underwent several rounds of consultations since September 2019 and has been introduced for a first reading at the Rada.

EU policy developments

Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027)

The new Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027) outlines the European Commission’s vision for high-quality, inclusive and accessible digital education in Europe. It is a call to action for stronger cooperation at European level to learn from the COVID-19 crisis, which has seen technology used on an unprecedented scale in education and training, as well as to make education and training systems fit for the digital age.

An EU-wide public consultation on the new Digital Education Action Plan ran from June until September 2020. The consultations gathered the views of EU citizens and stakeholders on the future of digital education during the COVID-19 recovery period and beyond.

The new Digital Education Action Plan sets **two strategic** priorities for the coming years:

- ✓ **Fostering the development of a high-performing digital education ecosystem;**
- ✓ **Enhancing digital skills and competences for the digital transformation.**

To strengthen cooperation and exchange in digital education at EU level, the EU is planning to create a new European Digital Education Hub, which will serve as a think-tank, supporting the development of policy and practice and monitoring the development of digital education in Europe, including the implementation of the new Digital Education Action Plan.

Find out more about the Digital Education Action Plan on the  [website of the EC](#).

European Skills Agenda

In the face of the rapid shift towards a climate neutral Europe and digital transformation, which are changing the ways in which we work, learn and live, the EU underlines the importance of developing the right skills to accompany these transformations.

The new **European Skills Agenda** is a five-year plan to help individuals and businesses develop more and better skills and to put them to use, by:

- ✓ **Strengthening sustainable competitiveness, as set out in the  **European Green Deal**;**
- ✓ **Ensuring social fairness, putting into practice the first principle of the  **European Pillar of Social Rights**: access to education, training and lifelong learning for everybody, everywhere in the EU;**
- ✓ **Building resilience to react to crises, based on the lessons learnt during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

The European Skills Agenda includes 12 actions organised around four building blocks.

Read more in the  [Communication on a European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience](#).



Reinforced Youth Guarantee: Bridge to Jobs

At the end of October the EPSCO Council, which brings together Ministers responsible for employment, social affairs, health and consumer policy from all EU Member States, adopted the European Commission's proposal for a **Council Recommendation on a Bridge to Jobs** from 1 July 2020, reinforcing the existing Youth Guarantee. The **Recommendation** steps up the comprehensive job support available to young people across the EU, and makes it more targeted and inclusive, also when it comes to the challenges caused by the pandemic.

The reinforced **Youth Guarantee** is a commitment by all EU Member States to ensure that all young people under the age of 30 receive a good quality offer of **employment, continued education, apprenticeship and traineeship** within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving education. Since 2014, each year more than **3.5 million young people** registered in the Youth Guarantee have accepted such an offer.

Under the new Recommendation, the Youth Guarantee reaches out to a broader target group up to the age of 29. It also adopts a more tailored approach by providing young people, in particular vulnerable ones, with guidance especially suited to their individual needs, and to the green and digital transition of the EU's economies.

Updates from EaP Platform 4 meeting and 3rd Panel on Education, Youth and Culture

The **EaP Platform 4 meeting** on 'Mobility and People-to-People contacts' took place on 27 November 2020. It was the fourth meeting of the current round of platforms devoted to the priorities for the period post-2020, to be designed in a common EU-EaP endeavour on the basis of the five long-term policy objectives outlined in the Joint Communication on the Eastern Partnership beyond 2020 adopted in March 2020. The event connected around 150 participants from the six partner countries, more than 40 representatives from 14 Member States, and representatives of the EaP Civil Society Forum.

The meeting highlighted the EU's continued engagement to strengthen mobility and people-to-people contacts in the Eastern Partnership, and discussed a list of future Platform 4 deliverables in the following areas:

1. **Investing in people** – education, youth employment, civic engagement and culture;
2. **Research and innovation**;
3. **Mobility**, visa issues, and integrated border management.

All interventions manifested a broad support for the current engagement under the 20 Deliverables for 2020, and for continuation of this work in the future, in particular on issues of youth and education.

The **third Eastern Partnership Education, Culture and Youth Panel** took place on 3-4 December 2020. The Panel contributed to the implementation of Deliverables 18 and 19 within the framework of the **Youth and Education Package** and the design of **post-2020 deliverables**. It also provided a platform for the technical discussion on digital learning, teacher training and development, and innovative ways and approaches to teaching and learning.

Finally, new regional programmes on EaP youth dialogue and an EaP Youth guarantee-type scheme were announced and discussed during the Panel.

Key updates from the EU4Youth Programme

EU4Youth Alumni Network: Digital Youth Work trainings

The **EU4Youth Alumni Network** unites young beneficiaries of the EU4Youth, Erasmus+ Youth in Action and European Solidarity Corps programmes, and the Network of Young European Ambassadors (YEAAs) from the Eastern partner countries. It builds on the enthusiasm and voluntary spirit generated during their participation in non-formal education mobility programmes in order to support the better engagement of disadvantaged young people from Eastern partner countries in their local communities and in EU mobility programmes.

COVID-19 restrictions have posed a significant challenge to the activities foreseen by the Alumni network. The virtual engagement of young people is already a challenge, and engaging disadvantaged youth in online activities faces the additional challenge that these groups have limited or no access to IT tools and internet, a situation in which already marginalised groups become even more marginalised due to the COVID reality.

In order to support the Alumni in designing virtual engagement with their beneficiaries, the EU4Youth Coordination and Support team organised a series of digital youth work trainings for Alumni to help them **boost their online activities during the pandemic**. The online trainings were provided by experienced digital youth work experts and focused on four core modules for mentors and Alumni:

- ✓ the digital world of young people;
- ✓ methods for digital peer-to-peer youth empowerment;
- ✓ designing and trying digital activities;
- ✓ digital youth work potentials for Idealab proposal.

The trainings were launched in mid-November and ran for one month, with the last session taking place on 21 December.



News and stories from EU4Youth grantees

News

For the first time in Ukraine, in the framework of the **EU4Youth - Unlocking the potential of young social entrepreneurs in Moldova and Ukraine** project, an **economic and legal study** was conducted, which shows the contribution of social entrepreneurship to the economy and society in the country.

[👉 Read more](#)

On 4 December, the CENN, which implements the **EU4Youth - Social Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Development (SEED) project**, signed a Memorandum for the creation of rural innovation knowledge hubs, with the aim of helping to develop youth entrepreneurial potential at local level in Georgia.

[👉 Read more](#)

The **EU4Youth - Social Entrepreneurship in Armenia and Georgia (SEAG)** project launched a grant competition for the development of youth social enterprises.

[👉 Read more](#)

Thirty teachers from schools in Minsk have completed a one-week training course aimed at helping them to support the employability of adolescents as part of the **EU4Youth - Employability and Stability** project.

[👉 Read more](#)

On 4 December, the first multi-stakeholder platform meeting was held in Armenia as part of the **EU4Youth - Social Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Development (SEED)** project. The aim of the platform is to unite different organisations to ensure that social entrepreneurship and green innovation practices and initiatives are sustained at central and regional levels of Armenia.

[👉 Read more](#)

EU4Youth SKYE clubs in Armenia have been supporting children displaced by the recent fighting in Nagorno Karabakh, spending time with them and helping them to integrate with their host communities. The SKYE clubs in Armenia have been set up within the framework of the **EU4Youth SAY YES Skills for Jobs project**.

[👉 Read more](#)

A Forum-Dialogue on 'School Garden: Knowledge in Life' was organised in the framework of the **EU4Youth - School Garden for Agricultural Entrepreneurship project**.

[👉 Read more](#)



Stories

Edible bouquets in Ukraine: how EU4Youth helped Anna Movchan establish an innovative business.

“Thanks to the European Union grant, my revenue rose by at least 30%!”

[👉 Read the full story](#)



Serving up posh burgers in Gori, with EU4Youth support.

“It’s a challenge, and you are a little scared, but you find strength in yourself, and you have some help from others, and it becomes a success.” -

Sophio Nozadze.

[👉 Read the full story](#)

A journey from hobby to entrepreneurship with EU4Youth support.

“When I received financing, I had the idea, but I lacked entrepreneurial experience and skills. Today, I have a specific direction, goal and environment to develop my own business even further.” - Tsitsi Shengelia.

[👉 Read the full story](#)



Youth Engagement Roadmaps project

Among its activities, the Youth Engagement Roadmaps project (Component III of the EU4Youth Programme) aims to foster the employability and the active participation of youth in society and the economy, by developing their skills and supporting them to become leaders and entrepreneurs. The project plans to organise **12 Policy Labs** (two per country).

The Policy Labs, organised as sequences of small-scale (15-20 people) participatory events addressing a relevant and urgent policy challenge, will take place in 2021, each within a period of 6-8 months. Their expected impact is to **enable youth to take an active role in all phases of the policy cycle**, by taking part in a structured and facilitated dialogue with frontline policy makers and stakeholders with different experience of participation in policy making and policy implementation. The fresh grassroots perspectives and diverse representations of policy challenges are also expected to **contribute to the improvement of policy design and implementation strategies**.

Recent EaP youth events

EaP CSF Annual Assembly

The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum's (EaP CSF) 12th Annual Assembly – 'EaP beyond 2020: renewing commitments to rights, security, and the green agenda', was held online on 7-10 December, bringing together more than 300 CSOs and EaP and EU decision-makers to explore the contours of the EaP policy beyond 2020. The event explored how civil society responded to current challenges, such as climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic, touching on new developments in citizens' self-organisation and the bottom-up initiatives launched to help others, and searching for ways to support and cultivate this newly-emerged enthusiasm and mobilisation to become a sustainable generator of societal changes in 2021 and beyond.

👉 *Find out more about this event*

Online Conference 'COVIDIMPACT – ACT ON SKILLS for post COVID-19 Recovery – Supporting Competitiveness, Social Fairness and Resilience'

The European Training Foundation (ETF) held an online event on 10-11 December on 'Supporting Competitiveness, Social Fairness and Resilience' in the post-COVID-19 recovery, with a focus on youth skills, employment and resilience. Improving the resilience of citizens, companies and public, private and non-governmental organisations is crucial, as the countries of the European Union and its Neighbourhood face a new surge in COVID-19 infections and growing restrictions. The event focused on priorities to build up and strengthen the resilience of people, companies, and education and employment systems, and will explore solutions for a fair and inclusive recovery. The two-day webinar is the ETF's second online event dedicated to sharing knowledge and experience on skills development in the context of the COVID-19 crisis and recovery agenda.

👉 *Find out more: Day 2 live stream recording*