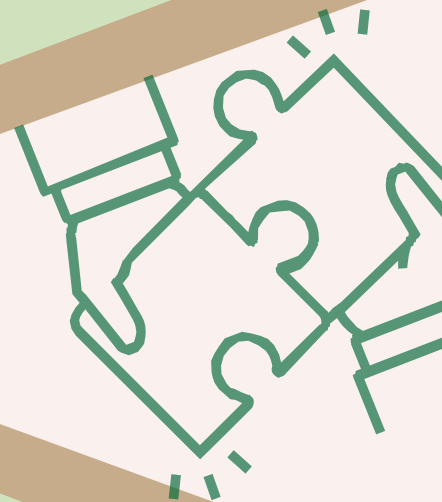




# White paper

## Recommendations for an ecopreneurial competence framework

June 2023



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## Executive Summary

This white paper has been elaborated in the context of the European project *EcopreNEETs: Boosting the eco-preneurial skills of NEETs*, coordinated by [Ligue de l'Enseignement Nouvelle-Aquitaine](#) (France) in partnership with [Atermon](#) (Netherlands), [Digicult](#) (Poland), [Learning Seed](#) (Greece), [Ecocenter](#) (Hungary) and supported by Erasmus+ Agency. The number of the project is 2022-2-FR02-KA220-YOU-000098683.

## Introduction

Since 2010, European youth-oriented policies used the “NEET” concept, an acronym for “Not in Employment, Education or Training”, to refer to the situation of many vulnerable young persons, aged between 15 and 29, in Europe, about their employability, education, training and social inclusion<sup>1</sup>. In 2019, 12.6% of the population aged 15–29 were considered as NEETs, which was the lowest point for a decade, but following the COVID-19 pandemic, this increased to 13.7% in 2020.

In 2022, after the COVID-19 pandemic, the consortium, made up of structures with different purposes but same concerns and values, identified important European issues concerning young people. Over the past decade, the unemployment rate of young Europeans has been constantly higher<sup>2</sup> than that of all other age groups. Economic and financial crises – not least the one triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>3</sup> – have hit young job seekers the hardest, especially the most vulnerable as women<sup>4</sup>, rural youth<sup>5</sup> and “low-level of education” young people<sup>6</sup>.

This period has created financial insecurity but has also affected the mental health of these young people in a more global way. They reported a lack of faith in the future and a lack of motivation to start working<sup>7</sup>. In addition to this, a recent international study showed that the majority of young people feel extremely worried about climate change and inadequate government response<sup>8</sup>.

The consortium thinks that one potential answer to these problems, employability and empowerment for sustainable development and climate change for NEETs could be through ecoentrepreneurship. Indeed, 46% of young people aged 15-30 in the EU, would consider setting up their own business, only few have taken active steps to do so. Lack of capital or resources, financial risks and insufficient knowledge and entrepreneurship skills were found as the main barriers to young people becoming entrepreneurs. In addition, only one-third of young people were familiar with the concept of social entrepreneurship<sup>9</sup>.

For these reasons, the purpose of this project is to re-engage the NEETS, especially the most vulnerable, to the labour market, increase their eco-preneurial skills, bridge the communication gap between young job hunters and future employers and provide them with innovative tools in order to thrive.

To be more specific, the project is primarily targeting young adults aged, who are reckoned as NEETs (18-30 years old), coming from rural areas, having long been disengaged from the labour market, and having limited or even no access to engineering and technology. This project seeks not only to enhance their competences and understanding of sustainable eco-preneurial and novel digital practices, but also to bring them in direct contact with potential employers and stakeholders, thus giving them a push to feel more included.

Moreover, the project focuses on the upskilling of trainers and youth workers. By "training the trainers" we aim to promote a new methodology for NEETs education, based on sustainability and small-scale actions, which if applied, will lead to a positive impact on NEETs and in the struggle against environmental indifference. Furthermore, the project's impact derives from the improvement of NEETs employability, their familiarisation with sustainability and the values

<sup>1</sup> Source: Eurofound - European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (15.09.2022) [NEETs](#)

<sup>2</sup> Source: European Commission (22.05.2018) [Situation of young people in the European Union](#)

<sup>3</sup> Source: International Labour Organisation – ILO Monitor (27.05.2020) [COVID-19 and the World of Work, Fourth edition – Updated Estimates and Analysis](#)

<sup>4</sup> Young women are more likely to neither be in employment nor in education or training than young men. In 2021, 14.5% of young women aged 15–29 in the EU were NEETs. Source : Eurostat - Statistics explained (26.05.2023) [Statistics on young people neither in employment nor in education or training](#)

<sup>5</sup> Source : EU - CoE youth partnership 2021 [Young people in rural areas: diverse, ignored and unfulfilled](#)

<sup>6</sup> In 2021, the NEET rate for young people aged 15–29 in the EU was 15.5% among those with a low level of education, compared with 13.1% among those with a medium level of education and 9.2% among those with a high level of education. Source : Eurostat - Statistics explained (26.05.2023) [Statistics on young people neither in employment nor in education or training](#)

<sup>7</sup> Source: Eurofound (2021) – Research report - [Impact of COVID-19 in young people in the EU](#)

<sup>8</sup> Source: Marks E., Hickman C., Pihkala P., Clayton S., Lewandowski E. R., Mayall, E.E., Wray B., Mellor C., van Susteren, L. (2021) [Young People's Voices on Climate Anxiety, Government Betrayal and Moral Injury: A Global Phenomenon](#)

<sup>9</sup> European Union (March 2023) [Social entrepreneurship and youth - Eurobarometer survey](#)

of [Agenda 2030](#)<sup>10</sup>, the creation of an online space dedicated to bring them in contact with future employers and finally the upskilling of their trainers/youth workers.

Finally, this project will also affect stakeholders (mainly SMEs) that aspire to grasp a greener business behaviour, youth policy makers, public authorities and regional development agencies. Those groups will be for the first time exposed to innovative training materials delivered through experiential learning and micro-e-learning elements through a diverse portal. They will also be given the chance to communicate directly with training professionals and young NEETs, to directly inquire after their needs and potentially recommend.

To sum up, the project results will include:

- **an online training** (Work package n°2: training MOOC for Eco-skills) aiming to strengthen the skills of NEETS according to a competency framework previously defined, about eco-entrepreneurship;
- **a training for trainers** (Work package n°3), to help NEETS mentors in their training and mentoring methods, and thus give them the keys to direct NEETs towards eco-entrepreneurship;
- **Incubator for NEETS** (Work package n°4: EcopreneNEETs incubation), including online workshops, coaching and mentoring services for the beneficiaries.

Thus, in dealing with the aforementioned objectives, this white paper can serve as a compass to ensure the relevance of the project. This white paper aims to

1. Verify the previous studies developed in the application form by updating them and studying the European and each national context in more detail<sup>11</sup>.
2. Present and analyse the interviews conducted with targets, in order to:
  - Obtain more specific information,
  - Understand the different audiences affected by this project, their needs and their issues.
3. Draw up clear recommendations for our project, its relevance and its sustainability. These recommendations will concern the 3 working packages detailed above (e.g. methodologies to be applied to accompany NEETs and "NEET coaches", methods to be used for e-learning, topics to be prioritised, ways to involve stakeholders, as well as risks to avoid)
4. Formulate the eco-preneurial competency framework.

Finally, this white paper aims to answer the following questions: why and how can eco-entrepreneurship be the solution to (re)mobilise young NEETs and give them the power to act and to engage, for a more sustainable world, and how to accompany them.

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<sup>10</sup> The [Sustainable Development Goals](#) are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere. The 17 Goals were adopted by all UN Member States in 2015, as part of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) which set out a 15-year plan to achieve the Goals. The 2030 Agenda and the resulting SDGs present a profoundly innovative conception of sustainable development:

- They combine the fight against extreme poverty and the reduction of inequalities with the preservation of the planet in the face of climate disruption;
- They transcend the sustainable development issues of all the countries of the planet in a global and universal approach;
- They are the result of an unprecedented consultation of actors from civil society, the private sector, local authorities, the research community, etc.

<sup>11</sup> For the countries concerned by the project: Greece, Hungary, Poland, Netherlands, France.

## Purpose of the white paper

The ambition of this white paper is to develop and promote an eco-skills framework where young NEETs will find inspiration, motivation, valuable knowledge and expert advice on how to create their own eco-business, or be placed in existing companies where they can practice their eco-business skills.

This white paper aims to focus and describe a specific context, in different main fields:

1. Characteristics of NEETs in Europe and each partner country (age, gender, training and education, rate unemployment, specificities about rural youth),
2. Policy, support and programme for young people (regarding training and employment) in Europe and each partner country,
3. Policy, support and programme for entrepreneurship (including social, inclusive entrepreneurship) in Europe and each partner country,
4. The implementation of green/eco business, data, networks in Europe and each partner country,
5. Trainings and MOOCs about eco-entrepreneurship.

In order to do this,

- The first step was to explore the European and local contexts. The objective was to identify and collect data to understand a context,
- The second step consisted in carrying out a survey: the partners questioned target audiences (three profiles: NEETs, NEETs' coaches / mentors / accompanying persons, eco-entrepreneurs) on their practices and knowledge of the eco-entrepreneurship field.

The recommendations of this white paper will contribute to the methodology and action plan of the EcopreNEETs work packages (MOOCs, mentoring, coaching and incubator) to help NEETs become active and competitive in the labour market.

These recommendations will therefore contribute to

- Support young NEETs in setting up their own business. The e-learning methodology and action plan that will be created will aim to involve both NEETs, stakeholders, as well as professional mentors appointed by the partner organisations.
- Provide young NEETs with guidance, mentoring and coaching to help them become active and competitive in the labour market and support them in setting up their own eco-business.



# Glossary

## NEET

NEET is an acronym for 'Not in Employment, Education or Training', used to refer to the situation of many young persons aged between 15 and 29, in Europe. The aim of the NEET concept is to broaden understanding of the vulnerable status of young people and to better monitor their problematic access to the labour market.

Source: Eurofound - European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (15 September 2022) [NEETs](#)

## Young people / youth

There is no universal consensus on what "youth" is. Youth is socially constructed and refers to the period of complex transitions to autonomy, from childhood to adulthood. Definitions of young people vary between countries. The age range 15-29 is often selected for statistical purposes at EU level. Under the Erasmus+ programme, various opportunities are available for young people aged 13 to 30. The Council of Europe youth sector's activities are available for young people aged 18 to 30, with justified exceptions.

Source: EU (European Union) and COE (Council of Europe) (October 2019, revised 2021) [Youth policy essentials](#)

## Rural area

A rural area is an area where more than 50% of its population lives in rural grid cells (grid cells that are not identified as urban centres or as urban clusters), as used in the degree of urbanisation (the degree of urbanisation classifies local administrative units (LAUs) as cities, towns and suburbs or rural areas based on a combination of geographical contiguity and population density, measured by minimum population thresholds applied to 1 km<sup>2</sup> population grid cells; each LAU belongs exclusively to one of these three classes).

Source: Eurostat [Glossary: Rural area - Statistics Explained](#)

## Study level

In Europe, the levels of study are typically categorised as follows:

- **Primary Education:** This level includes the early years of education, usually starting around the age of 5 or 6, and continuing until the age of 11 or 12. It provides a foundation in basic subjects such as mathematics, language, science, and social studies.
- **Secondary Education:**
  - Lower Secondary Education: Also known as "compulsory" or "basic" education, this level generally covers the ages of 11 or 12 to 15 or 16. It builds upon the primary education and offers a broader curriculum, including subjects like literature, history, geography, foreign languages, and natural sciences.
  - Upper Secondary Education: This level typically covers the ages of 15 or 16 to 18 or 19, and it prepares students for higher education or vocational training. Upper secondary education offers more specialised subjects and allows students to choose a specific track based on their interests and career aspirations. It may include general academic programs or vocational training, depending on the country's education system.
- **Tertiary Education:**
  - Bachelor's Degree: This is the first level of higher education and usually takes three to four years to complete. It provides a comprehensive education in a specific field and typically requires the completion of a final project or thesis.
  - Master's Degree: This is the second level of higher education and usually follows the completion of a bachelor's degree. Master's programs can range from one to two years and offer advanced coursework and research opportunities in a specialised area.
  - Doctorate (Ph.D.): This is the highest level of education and focuses on research and original contributions to a specific field. Doctoral programs can last three to five years, and students are required to produce a significant research thesis or dissertation.

Source: Publications Office of European Union (2022) [The structure of the European education systems 2022/2023](#)

## Labour force

The labour force, or currently active population, comprises all persons who fulfil the requirements for inclusion among the employed (civilian employment plus the armed forces) or the unemployed. The employed are defined as those who work for pay or profit for at least one hour a week, or who have a job but are temporarily not at work due to illness, leave or industrial action. The armed forces cover personnel from the metropolitan territory drawn from the total available labour force who served in the armed forces during the period under consideration, whether stationed in the metropolitan territory or elsewhere. The unemployed are defined as people without work but actively seeking employment and currently available to start work. This indicator is seasonally adjusted and it is measured in persons.

Source: OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) [OECD Data Labour force](#)

## Employment

The employment level is defined as the number of people engaged in productive activities in an economy. The concept includes both employees and the self-employed. The two main measures used for employment are the number of persons employed or the number of employees. More complex measures of employment are sometimes produced by measuring the number of hours worked or by converting the number of hours into full-time equivalent units. In addition, some particular categories of employment are measured, such as part-time employment, female employment, self-employment, apprenticeships, homeworkers and unpaid employment (unpaid family workers and working proprietors).

Source: Eurostat [Glossary: Employment - Statistics Explained](#)

## Unemployment

An unemployed person is defined, by Eurostat, according to the guidelines of the International Labour Organization, as:

- Someone aged 15 to 74 (16 to 74 years in some EU Member States);
- Not employed during the reference week according to the definition of employment;
- Currently available for work, i.e. Available for paid employment or self-employment before the end of the 2 weeks following the reference week;
- Actively seeking work i.e. had either carried out activities in the four-week period ending with the reference week to seek paid employment or self-employment or found a job to start within a period of at most 3 months from the end of the reference week.

Source: Eurostat [Glossary: Unemployment - Statistics Explained](#)

## Unemployment rate

The unemployment rate is the number of people unemployed as a percentage of the labour force.

Source: Eurostat [Glossary: Unemployment - Statistics Explained](#)

## Entrepreneurship

Introduced in 2006, the OECD-Eurostat Entrepreneurship Indicators Programme has developed definitions of "entrepreneur", "entrepreneurship" and "entrepreneurial activity" to support the development of related indicators. The programme recognises the disagreement and diverse perspectives among researchers on this issue and deliberately adopts a pragmatic approach based on two principles, relevance and measurability. It is important to note that the OECD and Eurostat definitions emphasise the dynamic nature of entrepreneurial activity and focus not on intentions but on actions. They are intended to guide data collection and analysis.

- Entrepreneurs are persons (business owners) who seek to generate value, through the creation or expansion of economic activity, by identifying and exploiting new products, processes or markets.
- Entrepreneurial activity is the enterprising human action in pursuit of the generation of value, through the creation or expansion of economic activity, by identifying and exploiting new products, processes or markets.
- Entrepreneurship is the phenomenon associated with entrepreneurial activity.

Source: OECD - Ahmad et Seymour (2008) [Definitions of the entrepreneur, entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial activity](#)

## Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

- micro enterprises: less than 10 persons employed
- small enterprises: 10-49 persons employed
- medium-sized enterprises: 50-249 persons employed

- small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs): 1-249 persons employed
- large enterprises: 250 or more persons employed

Source: Eurostat [Small and medium-sized enterprises \(SMEs\) - Structural business statistics](#)

### Inclusive entrepreneurship

Inclusive entrepreneurship contributes to social inclusion to give all people an equal opportunity to start up and operate businesses.

Source: OECD [Inclusive Entrepreneurship](#)

Inclusive entrepreneurship aims to ensure that all people, regardless of their personal characteristics and background, have equal opportunities to create and run a business.

Source: European Commission [Social economy and inclusive entrepreneurship](#)

### Social entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship has a main goal to address pressing social challenges and meet social needs in an innovative way while serving the general interest and common good for the benefit of the community. Briefly, social entrepreneurship targets social impact primarily rather than profit maximisation in their effort to reach the most vulnerable groups and to contribute to inclusive and sustainable growth.

Source: OECD [Social Entrepreneurship in Europe](#)

Social entrepreneurship is the process through which specific types of actors – the “social entrepreneurs” – create and develop organisations that may be either social enterprises or other types of organisations. It also designates a field including a broad set of initiatives with a social impact dimension in a spectrum ranging from for-profit to non-profits. Social entrepreneurship flourishes when a holistic policy ecosystem is in place – an appropriate regulatory framework, means to ensure a better access to market, finance, and opportunities for skills development notably through business support structures.

Source: OECD [Social entrepreneurship & Social Enterprises](#)

### Social enterprise

A social enterprise is an operator in the social economy whose main objective is to have a social impact rather than make a profit for their owners or shareholders. It operates by providing goods and services for the market in an entrepreneurial and innovative fashion and uses its profits primarily to achieve social objectives. It is managed in an open and responsible manner, and, in particular, involves employees, consumers and stakeholders affected by its commercial activities.

Source: European Commission [Social enterprises](#)

Social enterprises are identified by the OECD as “any private activity conducted in the public interest, organised with an entrepreneurial strategy, whose main purpose is not the maximisation of profit but the attainment of certain economic and social goals and which has the capacity for bringing innovative solutions to the problems of social exclusion and unemployment.” More recently, the European Commission has defined a social enterprise as being “an operator in the social economy whose main objective is to have a social impact rather than make a profit for their owners or shareholders. It operates by providing goods and services for the market in an entrepreneurial and innovative fashion and uses its profits primarily to achieve social objectives. It is managed in an open and responsible manner and, in particular, involves employees, consumers and stakeholders affected by its commercial activities.”

Source: OECD [Social entrepreneurship & Social Enterprises](#)

### Social economy

The social economy encompasses a variety of businesses, organisations and legal forms, such as social enterprises, cooperatives, mutual benefit societies, non-profit associations and foundations – which all share the feature of systematically putting people first.

Source: European Commission [Social economy and inclusive entrepreneurship - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion](#)

The term social economy refers to all business activities that are not only driven by a strong social mission but also intended to be economically viable. This includes cooperatives, mutual societies, non-profit associations, foundations and social enterprises, covering a wide range of activities. The aims of social economy organisations are generally to provide goods and services (including employment opportunities) to their members or community, and pursue

general interest goals such as environmental protection. In this way, social economy organisations aim to make a profit for people other than investors or owners.

Source: Eurofound [Social economy](#)

### Eco-entrepreneurship / green entrepreneurship

Among the terms available to describe green entrepreneurship, the following are the most commonly used: eco entrepreneurship, ecopreneurship, environmental entrepreneurship, sustainable entrepreneurship, ecological entrepreneurship, enviro-preneurship or sustainopreneurship. A green entrepreneur can be either making her business “green” or simply entering a “green business”. In other words, green entrepreneurship could be defined in terms of the technology used for production in any sector of the economy, or in terms of the sectors, firms are active in, in which case our attention is restricted to parts of the economy producing specific types of output. The former is sometimes referred to as a process.

Source: OECD [Measuring Green Entrepreneurship | Entrepreneurship at a Glance 2011](#)

Eco-entrepreneurship, or ecopreneurship, is a business behaviour adopted by people who want to create a “green” business. In other words, it is a way to contribute to sustainable development while making profit.

Source: ENI (European Neighbourhood Instrument) CBC (Cross-Border Cooperation) Med(iterranean) - [Eco-entrepreneurship: do you know what it is?](#)

Environmental Entrepreneurship, Green entrepreneurship or Ecopreneurship relate to a substantial role in the development of a more sustainable economic and commercial system. The identification and definition of such entrepreneurship is very complex. Ecopreneurship engages into many different forms and a wide variety of business activities. Their commitment towards sustainability varies but on the overall, their impact on the environment remains positive.

The major traits identified and accepted in every school of thought are:

1. Entrepreneurs undertake business ventures with associated measures of risk with a possibility of failure.
2. Commercial activities have an overall positive effect in the natural environment moving towards sustainability.
3. Operate with a set of values and aspirations leading to sustainability referred to as “Sustainable Consumption and Production” practices.

Source: UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) [Eco-Entrepreneurship Guide](#)

An ecopreneur is a person who seeks to transform a sector of the economy towards sustainability by starting business in that sector with a green design, with green processes and with the life-long commitment to sustainability in everything that is said and done (Isaak, 2005).

There exist two types of ecopreneurs:

1. “Environment-conscious entrepreneurs” are individuals who develop any kind of innovation (product, service, and process) that either reduces resource use and impacts, or improves cost efficiencies while moving towards a zero-waste target.
2. “Green entrepreneurs”, are those who are both aware of environmental issues and whose business venture is in the environmental marketplace. Such entrepreneurs pursue environmental-centred opportunities, which show good profit prospects (Volery, 2002).

Both Entrepreneurship and Environmentalism are based on a perception of value. The attitudes which inform environmental concern create areas of value that can be exploited entrepreneurially. Environmental Entrepreneurs” not only recognise opportunity, but construct real organisations to capture and fix change in society (Anderson, 1998).

Source: OECD iLibrary [Measuring Green Entrepreneurship | Entrepreneurship at a Glance 2011](#)

### Sustainable development

Sustainable development means meeting the needs of the present whilst ensuring future generations can meet their own needs. It has three pillars: economic, environmental and social. To achieve sustainable development, policies in these three areas have to work together and support each other.

Source: European commission [Sustainable development](#)



The [Brundtland Report](#), as the report entitled Our Common Future is widely referred to, defines sustainable development as 'Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'

Source: RELX – SDG Resource Centre (01.08.21) [Sustainable development—definition and application at European Union \(EU\) level — practice note](#)

### The 2030 agenda for sustainable development

The [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

The [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity. The 17 SDGs are integrated—they recognise that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability. Countries have committed to prioritise progress for those who are furthest behind. The SDGs are designed to end poverty, hunger, AIDS, and discrimination against women and girls. The creativity, knowhow, technology and financial resources from all of society is necessary to achieve the SDGs in every context.

Source: UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) [Sustainable goals - goals by 2030](#)

### Circular economy

The circular economy is a model of production and consumption, which involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products as long as possible. In this way, the life cycle of products is extended. In practice, it implies reducing waste to a minimum. When a product reaches the end of its life, its materials are kept within the economy wherever possible thanks to recycling. These can be productively used again and again, thereby creating further value.

Source: European Parliament (Updated: 22.02.2023) [Circular economy: definition, importance and benefits](#)

A circular economy aims to maintain the value of products, materials and resources for as long as possible by returning them into the product cycle at the end of their use, while minimising the generation of waste. The fewer products we discard, the less materials we extract, the better for our environment.

This process starts at the very beginning of a product's lifecycle: smart product design and production processes can help save resources, avoid inefficient waste management and create new business opportunities.

Source: Eurostat [Circular economy](#)

### Green economy

UNEP has defined Green Economy as "one that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities." In its simplest expression, a Green Economy can be considered as one that is low in carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive.

Source: UNEP [Green economy](#)

A green economy is defined as low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive. In a green economy, growth in employment and income are driven by public and private investment into such economic activities, infrastructure and assets that allow reduced carbon emissions and pollution, enhanced energy and resource efficiency, and prevention of the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Source: European Union – Central Asia Water, Environment and Climate Change Cooperation (WECOOP) [EU Green Deal](#)

### Green growth

Green growth means fostering economic growth and development, while ensuring that natural assets continue to provide the resources and environmental services on which our well-being relies.

Source: OECD [Green growth and sustainable development](#)

# 1. European and partner countries' contexts

## 1.1. Europe

### 1.1.1. NEETs

#### Statistics

13.1% of the 15-29 year olds in 2021 were NEETs. Young women are more likely NEETs than young men. 14.5% of young women aged 15–29 were NEETs, while the corresponding share among young men was 2.7 percentage points lower, at 11.8%.

10.9% of young people aged 15–19 were both employed and in education and thus made use of this more flexible transition from education to work. The share rose to 19.6% among those aged 20–24, before falling somewhat for older age groups, 14.9% among those aged 25–29 and 10.8%.

The EU gender gap for NEETs increased in relation to age. For those aged 25–29, the rate was consistently higher for women than for men in all EU Member States.

The NEET rate for young people aged 15–29 was 15.5% among those with a low level of education, compared with 13.1% among those with a medium level of education and 9.2% among those with a high level of education. Concerning people aged 15–29 with tertiary education, NEET rates were in general considerably lower than for the other levels of education.

#### Urban and rural areas

NEET rates were higher in rural than in urban areas in 17 EU member states. Young people living in rural areas generally have access to fewer services and do not have the same opportunities to get involved in youth work and non-formal learning as their peers living in urban areas. They face age-specific vulnerabilities and suffer directly the consequences of the lack of opportunities, underdevelopment of infrastructure and services in their communities (employment, housing or access to basic services). Moreover, youngsters in rural areas have not the same opportunities to get involved in youth work and non-formal learning as their peers living in urban areas. Young people in urban areas are more likely to be educated than those living in small towns and rural areas. Lack of skills and training opportunities are major reasons for increasing unemployment. In many rural areas the education, vocational education and training system may already have been disadvantaged by the underdevelopment or lack of certain services.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the closure of education and learning facilities left a large proportion of rural youth outside education, owing to the difficult context they live in, and difficulties in accessing technologies for distance learning<sup>12</sup>.

The share of young people (aged 15–29) who were NEETs was lowest in cities (12.2%) and about the same level in towns, suburbs (13.9%) and rural areas (13.7%). The pattern of lowest NEET rates in cities (as compared with both rural areas and towns and suburbs) was repeated in 15 EU Member States<sup>13</sup>.

In 2021, some 9.7% of all young people in the EU aged 18–24 years were early leavers from education and training. This share was higher among the subpopulation of young people living in towns and suburbs (10.7%) and rural areas (10%), while it was lower for those living in cities (8.7%). Across the whole of the EU, a higher share of young men (11.4%) than young women (7.9%) were early leavers from education and training; this pattern was repeated for all three categories when analysed by degree of urbanisation<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> Source: EU - CoE youth partnership (2021) - [Young people in rural areas: diverse, ignored and unfulfilled](#)

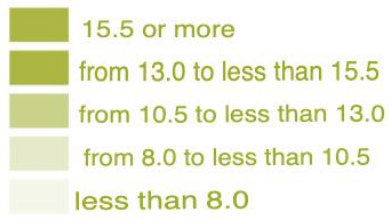
<sup>13</sup> Source: Eurostat - Statistics explained (26.05.2023) [Statistics on young people neither in employment nor in education or training](#)

<sup>14</sup> Source: Eurostat - Statistics explained (23.05.2023) [Early leavers from education and training](#)

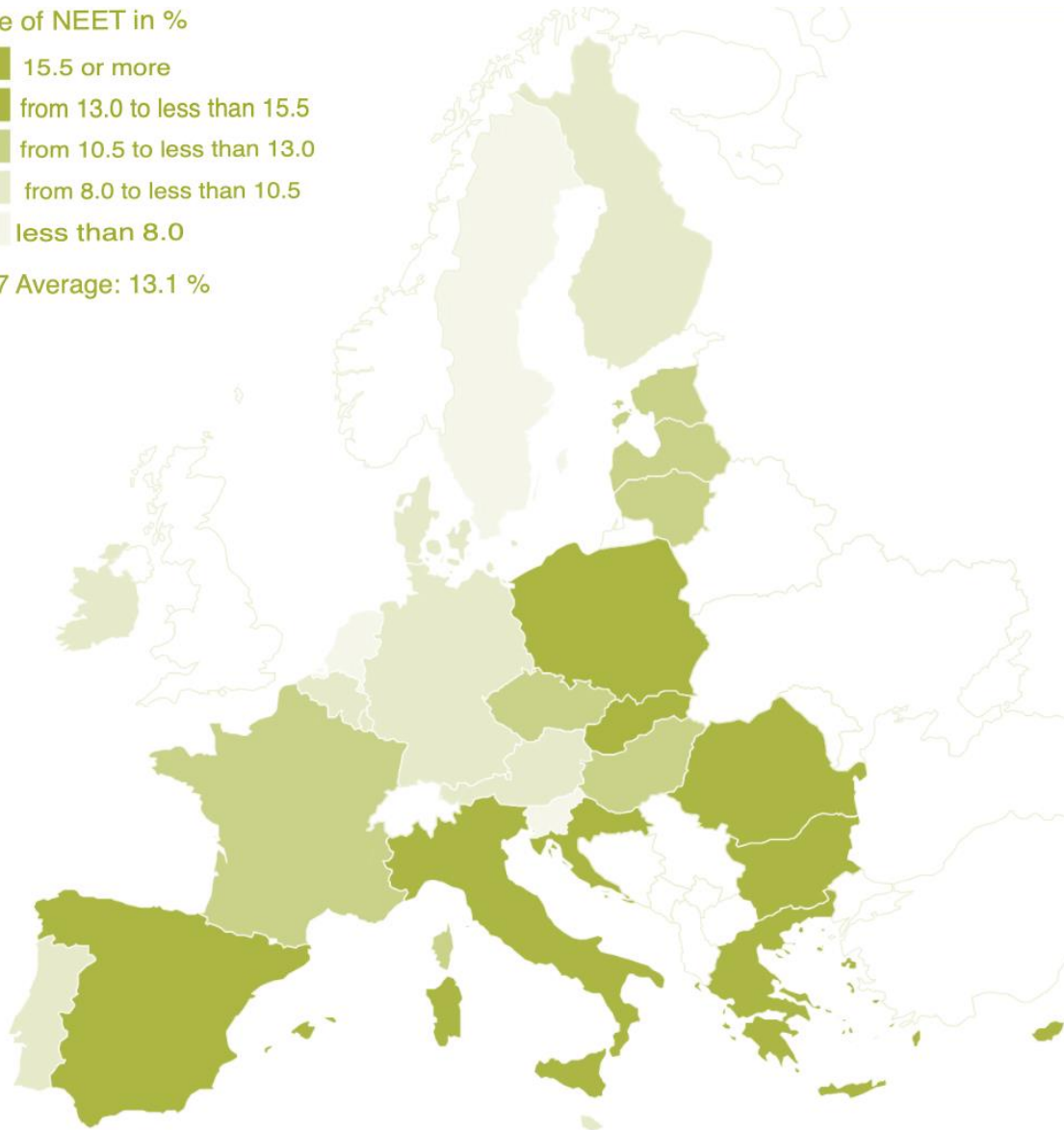
## NEETs' figures

Share of young people aged 15 to 29 who are NEET in the European Union in 2021<sup>15</sup>

share of NEET in %

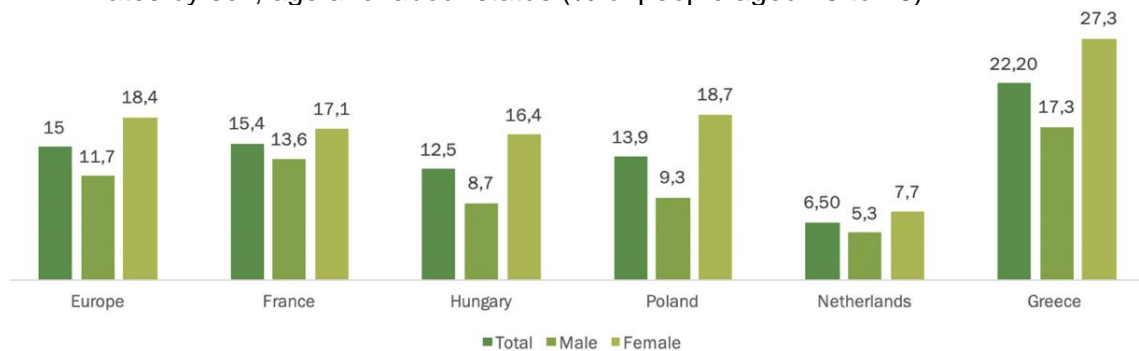


EU27 Average: 13.1 %

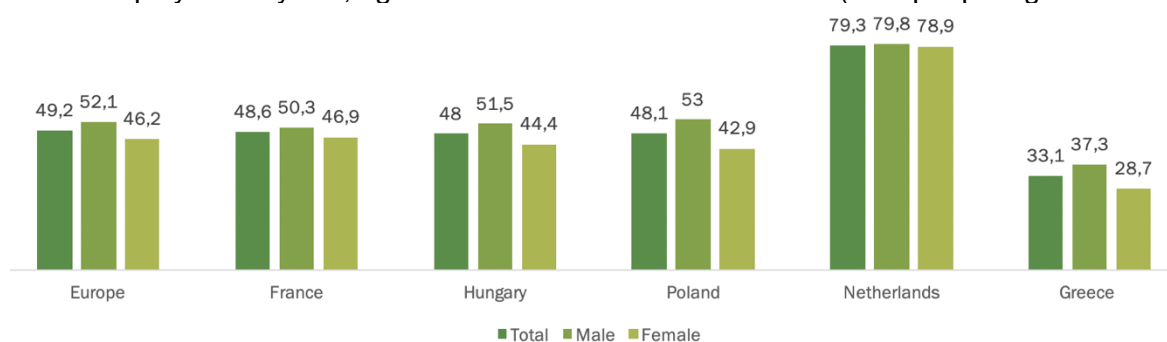


<sup>15</sup> INSEE (National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies) FOCUS - n°285 (10.01.2023) [After a peak due to health crisis, the proportion of young neither in employment, nor in education and training is falling again](#)

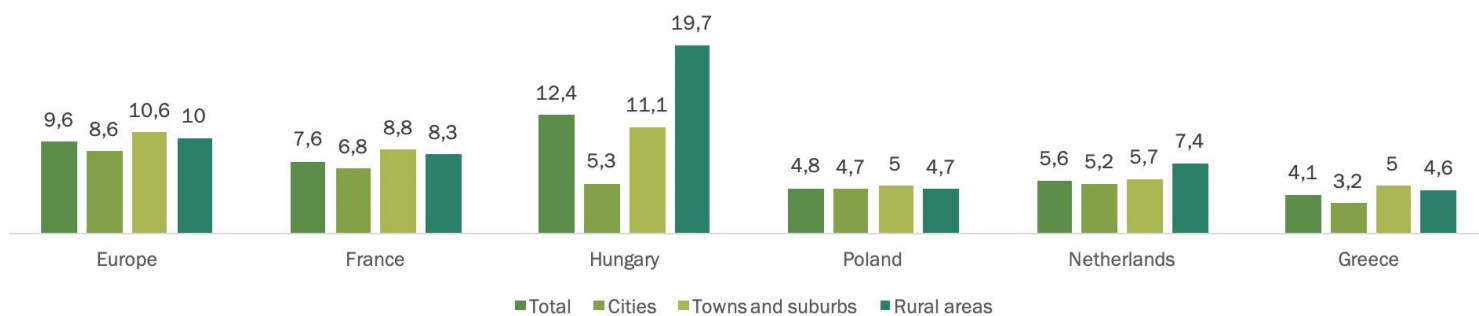
### NEET rates by sex, age and labour status (% of people aged 15 to 29)<sup>16</sup>



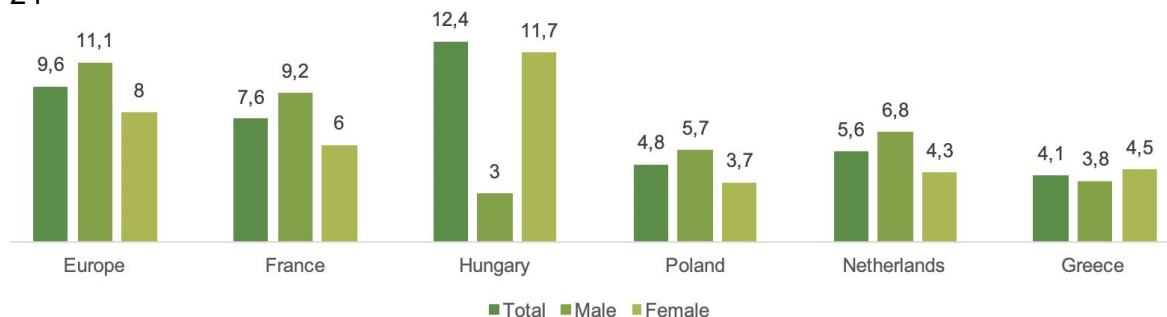
### Youth employment by sex, age and educational attainment level (% of people aged 15 to 29)<sup>17</sup>



### Early leavers from education and training by sex and degree of urbanisation (% of people aged 18 to 24)<sup>18</sup>



### Early leavers from education and training by sex and labour status (% of people aged 18 to 24)<sup>19</sup>



<sup>16</sup> Source: Eurostat (Last update: 26.04.2023) [Young people neither in employment nor in education and training by sex, age and labour status \(NEET rates\)](#)

<sup>17</sup> Source: Eurostat (Last update: 26.04.2023) [Youth employment by sex, age and educational attainment level](#)

<sup>18</sup> Source: Eurostat (Last update: 26.04.2023) [Early leavers from education and training by sex and degree of urbanisation](#)

<sup>19</sup> Source: Eurostat (Last update: 26.04.2023) [Early leavers from education and training by sex and labour status](#)



## 1.1.2. Youth employment policy

### Youth employment

The EU unemployment rate and ratio for people aged 15-29 was 13% and 7.1% respectively<sup>20</sup>. The COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on labour markets across the world<sup>21</sup>. Significant structural differences among Member States in young people's participation in the labour force exist due to institutional factors, cultural determinants, job market for students, etc. Differences in the national systems of education and training also play a major role<sup>22</sup>.

A higher proportion of young female NEETs aged 15–29 were outside the labour force (not actively seeking work) compared with young male NEETs of the same age. The share of young men outside the labour force was 6.3%, compared to 10.2% among females<sup>23</sup>.

Early leavers from education and training may face challenges when trying to enter the labour market. In 2021, the distribution between different labour market outcomes was as follows: 42.3% of all early leavers were in employment, while 34% were not employed but wanted to work. The remaining 23.7% were not employed and did not want to work. In relation to the population aged 18-24, this corresponded to 4.1% of employed early leavers, 3.3% of early leavers who were not employed and wanted to work and 2.3% of early leavers who were not employed and did not want to work<sup>24</sup>.

Over the past decade, the unemployment rate of young Europeans has been constantly higher than that of all other age groups. Economic and financial crises – not least the one triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic – have hit young job seekers the hardest. Policies aiming at boosting young people's employment can be subdivided in two main groups: some directly offer insertion in the labour market by sponsoring measures like temporary job placements and paid in-work training; other policies focus on stimulating employers to hire young job seekers, through economic advantages like the reduction of taxation and social security contributions<sup>25</sup>.

### European policy

During the aftermath of the global 2008 financial crisis, youth unemployment went up from 16.0% in 2008 to a peak of 24.4% in 2013, with record lows of 14.9%, just before the COVID-19 pandemic hit. To build back better from the new economic downturn triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission adopted a [Youth Employment Support communication](#) in 2020<sup>26</sup>.

The 2020 [Youth Employment Support package](#) is built around 4 strands.

1. Created in 2013, the [Youth Guarantee](#) aims to ensure that all young people under the age of 25 receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. The [reinforced Youth Guarantee](#) launched by the European Commission in July 2020, aims at dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic's effects on European youth. The reinforced program foresees four phases: mapping, outreach, preparation, and offer. The [Youth Employment Initiative \(YEI\)](#) is one of the main EU financial resources to support the implementation of the Youth Guarantee<sup>27</sup>.
2. [The Council Recommendation of 24 November 2020 on vocational education and training \(VET\) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience](#) defines key principles for ensuring that vocational education and training is agile, as it adapts swiftly to labour market needs and provides quality-learning opportunities for young people and adults alike. It places a strong focus on the increased flexibility of vocational

<sup>20</sup> Source: Eurostat - Statistics explained (August 2023) [Youth unemployment](#)

<sup>21</sup> Source: Eurostat - Leaflet and other brochures (September 2022) [2022 edition Young people in Europe - A statistical summary](#)

<sup>22</sup> Source: Eurostat - Statistics explained (August 2023) [Participation of young people in education and the labour market](#)

<sup>23</sup> Source: Eurostat - Statistics explained (26.05.2023) [Statistics on young people neither in employment nor in education or training](#)

<sup>24</sup> Source: Eurostat - Statistics explained (23.05.2023) [Early leavers from education and training](#)

<sup>25</sup> Source: European Commission - Youth Wiki (September 2020) [Comparative overviews - Employment and entrepreneurship - Integration in the labour market](#)

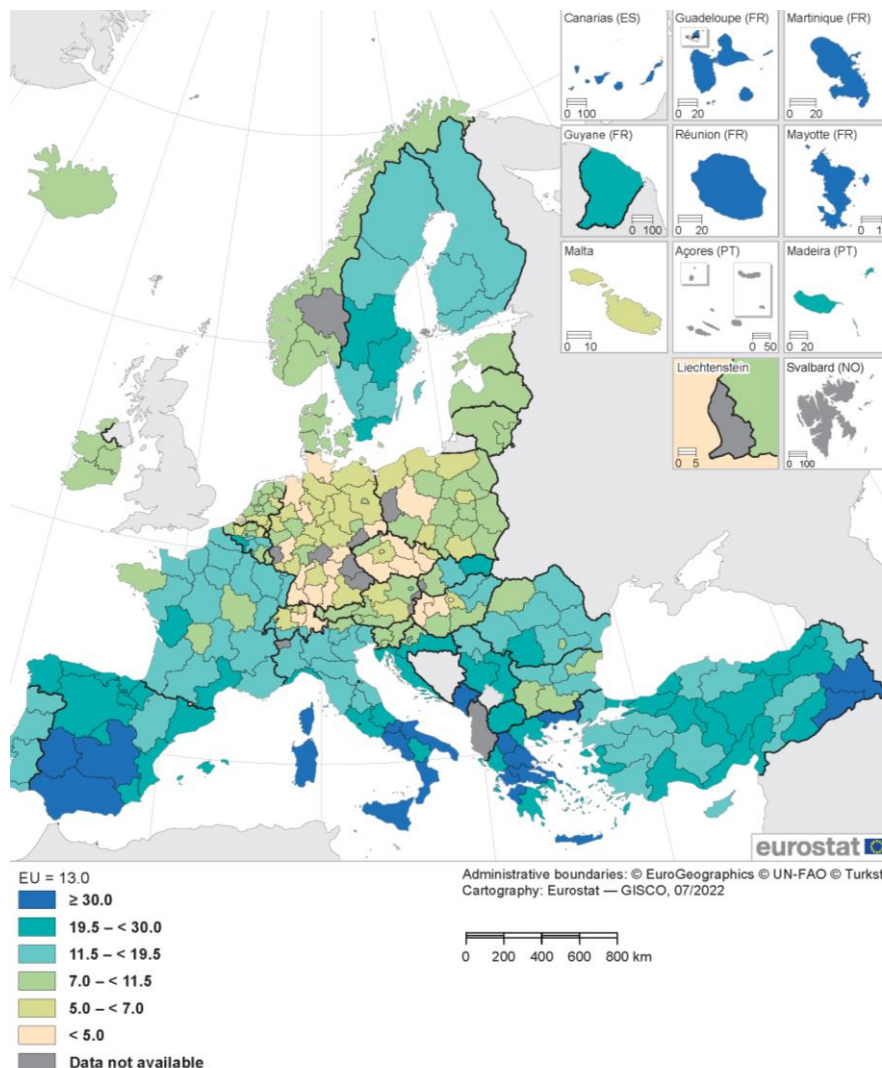
<sup>26</sup> Source: European Commission - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - Policies and activities - European employment strategy - [Youth employment support](#)

<sup>27</sup> Source: European Commission - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - Policies and activities - European employment strategy - [Youth employment support](#)

education and training, reinforced opportunities for work-based learning and apprenticeships and improved quality assurance<sup>28</sup>.

3. [The European Alliance for Apprenticeships \(EAfA\)](#) unites governments and key stakeholders with the aim of strengthening the quality, supply and overall image of apprenticeships across Europe, while also promoting the mobility of apprentices. These aims are promoted through national commitments and voluntary pledges from stakeholders. Since 2020, the renewed EAfA calls for new commitments on digital and green apprenticeships, focusing on the economic sectors that will be at the front line of the transition to a climate-neutral Europe<sup>29</sup>.
4. [The European network of Public Employment Services](#) was established following a Decision – amended in 2020 – by the Council and the European Parliament to maximise efficiency of public employment services (PES). The network compares PES performance, identify evidence-based good practices and foster mutual learning, promotes the modernisation and strengthening of PES service delivery, prepares inputs to the [European Employment Strategy](#) and the corresponding national labour market policies<sup>30</sup>.

Youth unemployment rate, 2021 (% of labour force, people aged 15–29)<sup>31</sup>



<sup>28</sup> Source: European Commission - European Education Area - Quality education and training for all - [Vocational education and training initiatives](#)

<sup>29</sup> Source: European Commission - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - Skills and qualifications - [European Alliance for Apprenticeships](#)

<sup>30</sup> Source: European Commission - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - Policies and activities -European employment strategy - [European network of Public Employment Services](#)

<sup>31</sup> Source: Eurostat regional yearbook 2022 [Youth unemployment rate, 2021 \(% of labour force, people aged 15–29\)](#)

### 1.1.3. Entrepreneurship in Europe

In 2018<sup>32</sup>, the majority of enterprises in the EU were small enterprises, with shares of 97% or above among the EU countries. Small enterprises typically accounted for between 40% and 60% of total employment<sup>33</sup>.

Youth have a high level of interest in self-employment but only 6.5% of working youth (20-29 years old) in the European Union were self-employed. The gender gap in self-employment starts early. Young women were only about 60% as young men to be self-employed (4.8% vs. 8%). Youth are slightly more likely than adults to be involved in starting a business. Survey data indicate that 4.7% of youth (18-30 years old) were actively working on setting up a business between 2014 and 2018.

Only 15.9% of self-employed youth (20-29 years old) employed other people. New young entrepreneurs are optimistic about their job creation potential: 11.1% indicated that they expected to create at least 19 additional new jobs over the next five years compared to 9.8% overall.

However, youth face a number of key barriers to business creation and self-employment. Youth were slightly less likely than adults to feel that they had the knowledge and skills for entrepreneurship (36.3% vs. 41.9% for adults). 44.5% of youth viewed fear of failure as a barrier to entrepreneurship over this period.

#### European policy measures for entrepreneurship

##### Social economy and inclusive entrepreneurship

There are some 2,8 million social economy entities and enterprises in Europe, employing together around 13,6 million people. The European Commission supports social and inclusive entrepreneurship through [funding](#), [knowledge-building](#), and [policy work](#)<sup>34</sup>. Thus, the European Commission promotes [social economy](#) and [inclusive entrepreneurship](#) because of their important role in job creation, work integration and inclusive and sustainable growth. Social economy can help implement the principles of the [European Pillar for Social Rights](#) and deliver on its 2021 Action Plan and the 2030 headline targets. It also contributes to achievement of the [sustainable development goals](#).

##### European pillar of social rights

The [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) sets out [20 key principles](#) and rights to support fair and well-functioning labour markets, structured around three chapters: [equal opportunities and access to the labour market](#), [fair working conditions](#), [social protection and inclusion](#). These actions will require a joint effort by Member States and the EU, with an active involvement of social partners and civil society. The Action Plan puts forward three EU-level targets in the areas of employment, skills and social protection to be achieved by 2030<sup>35</sup>.

##### Inclusive entrepreneurship and microfinance

[Inclusive entrepreneurship](#) policies aim to support the creation and growth of businesses by under-represented groups (e.g. women, youth, migrants and seniors) and the unemployed. In view of the challenges of the green and digital transitions, Europe will need innovative solutions and all entrepreneurial talent should be encouraged.

Micro-enterprises represent over 90% of European enterprises and are decisive for boosting jobs, growth and investment in Europe. Microfinance provides very small loans (micro-loans) to entrepreneurs, social enterprises, employees who wish to become self-employed, the unemployed and others living in poverty who are not considered bankable<sup>36</sup>.

##### Supporting youth entrepreneurship in Europe

Youth entrepreneurship is high on the EU political agenda as a tool to fight youth unemployment and social exclusion as well as stimulating innovation among young people:

<sup>32</sup> Source: European Union and OECD- OECD iLibrary (10.12.2019) [Youth self-employment and entrepreneurship activities | The Missing Entrepreneurs 2019 : Policies for Inclusive Entrepreneurship](#)

<sup>33</sup> Source: Eurostat - Statistics explained (July 2023) [Entrepreneurship - Statistical indicators](#)

<sup>34</sup> Source: European Commission - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - Priorities and Activities - European employment strategy - [Social economy and inclusive entrepreneurship](#)

<sup>35</sup> Source: European Commission - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - Policies and Activities - [Delivering on the European Pillar of Social Rights](#)

<sup>36</sup> Source: European Commission - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - Priorities and activities - European employment strategy - [Inclusive entrepreneurship and microfinance](#)

- Fostering youth entrepreneurship is one of the objectives of the [Europe 2020 strategy](#);
- Employment and Entrepreneurship are one of the eight fields of action promoted by the [EU Youth Strategy](#) (2010-2018);
- Entrepreneurship is a key competence in the [European Reference Framework on Key Competencies for Lifelong Learning](#) (2006).

Youth work and non-formal learning play an important role in developing the creative and innovative potential of young people including entrepreneurial skills. Youth policy and programmes at EU and national level support this:

- The [EU Youth Strategy Council Resolution on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field](#) (2010-2018) includes entrepreneurship among its eight fields of action;
- The importance of youth entrepreneurship is stressed in [Conclusions on promoting youth entrepreneurship to foster social inclusion of young people](#) (Council of European Union, 2014);
- The [Erasmus+](#) programme (2014-2020) has a strong focus on innovation and entrepreneurship, particularly in the Key Action 2 through strategic partnerships and transnational youth initiatives<sup>37</sup>.

Launched in 2009 by the European Commission, [Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs](#) is a cross-border exchange programme, which aims to help new and aspiring entrepreneurs acquire the relevant skills to run and grow a small business by working with an experienced entrepreneur in another country for 1 to 6 months. Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs is one of the key actions of the [Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan](#)<sup>38</sup>.

[NextGenerationEU](#) is a recovery plan, which aims to emerge stronger from the pandemic, transform economies, and create opportunities and jobs for Europe. The EU can help fund start-up grants and loans for young entrepreneurs, mentoring schemes and business incubators, bonuses for SMEs hiring apprentices, training sessions to acquire new skills needed on the labour market, capacity-building of public employment services, career management training in formal education, investments in digital learning infrastructure and technology<sup>39</sup>.

### Fostering skills and qualifications Entrepreneurial competencies

[EU Member States have committed to increasing the opportunities for youth entrepreneurship](#), as a way to facilitate school-to-work transition and boost employment. One of the core actions is promoting the attainment of entrepreneurial competences both in and out of school. Non-formal learning fosters experiential learning through hands-on activities like enterprise simulation and job shadowing. National authorities in the vast majority of countries have established measures to strengthen young people's entrepreneurial competences out of formal education. Measures vary across countries (entrepreneurial skills obtained in non-formal contexts can lead to qualifications or supporting hands-on training, providing financial facilitations to young people who want to combine education and entrepreneurship)<sup>40</sup>.

### Traineeships outside formal education

Several European initiatives support quality traineeships through the [EU Youth Guarantee](#). To uphold the quality of traineeships, several requirements have been identified in the [Quality Framework for Traineeships](#) (QFT). Traineeships are organised in the framework of formal education, as compulsory or optional part of study curricula: offered by [active labour market programmes \(ALMP\)](#), delivered by employment services and targeting young job seekers. Traineeships outside of formal education exist in the majority of European countries. In half of

<sup>37</sup> Source: European Union - EU Youth Strategy - [European Youth Portal - Employment and entrepreneurship](#)

<sup>38</sup> Source: European Commission - Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs - Entrepreneurship and SMEs - Supporting entrepreneurship - [Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs](#)

<sup>39</sup> Source: European Commission - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - Policies and Activities - European Employment Strategy - [Entrepreneurship and SMEs Youth employment support](#)

<sup>40</sup> Source: European Commission - Youth Wiki (September 2020) [Comparative overviews - Employment and entrepreneurship - Measures furthering entrepreneurial competences through non-formal learning](#)



these countries, all traineeships are regulated, irrespective of their type. In the other half, regulations apply only to traineeships organised under ALMP<sup>41</sup>.

#### Alma (aim, learn, master, achieve)

The initiative called ALMA (Aim, Learn, Master, Achieve) is being implemented within the [European Social Fund Plus](#) (ESF+). It aims to help these young people finding their way to the job market, especially the most disadvantaged NEETs aged 18-29, who are vulnerable with regard to their chances of accessing work or training for individual or structural reasons (e.g. disability, long-term unemployment, insufficient school performance/vocational skills, migration background). ALMA offers participants a supervised work-experience in another EU Member State for a period of 2 to 6 months, a comprehensive project cycle with coaching and counselling at every step<sup>42</sup>.

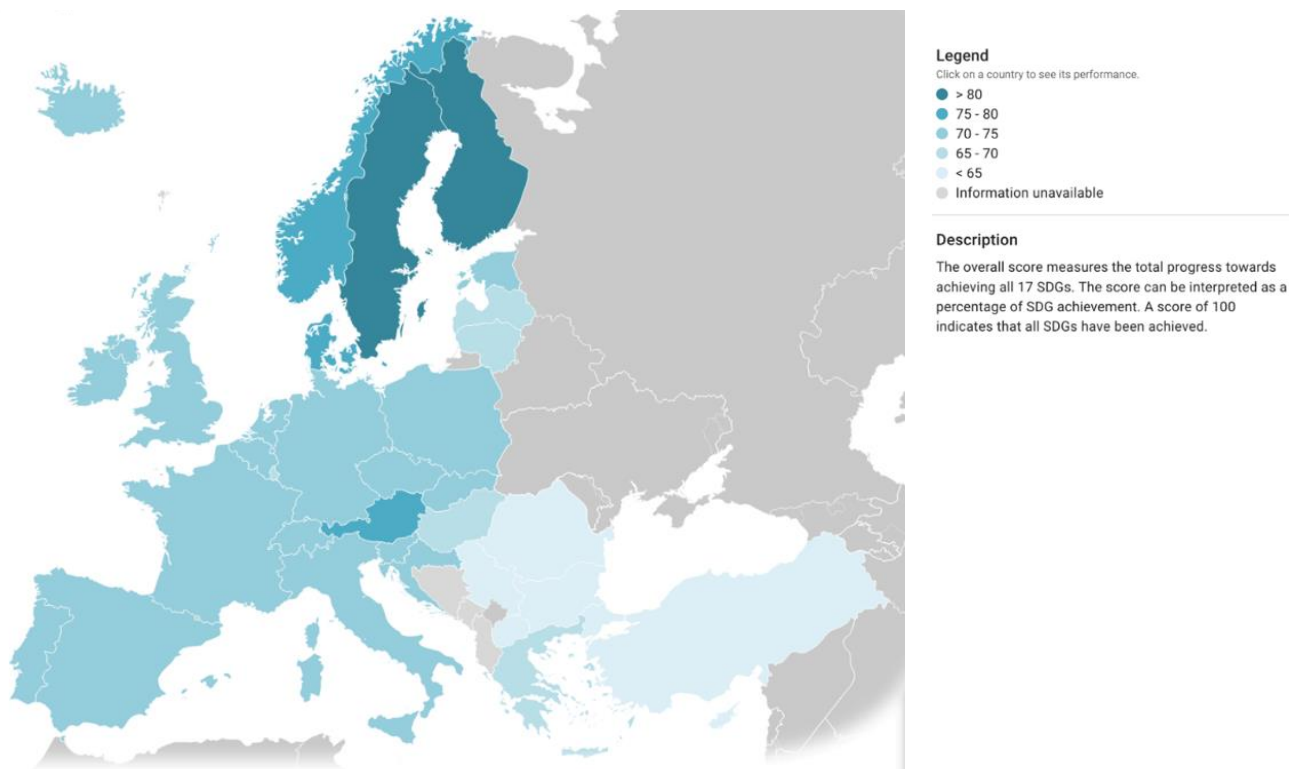
#### The European entrepreneurship competence framework (EntreComp)

Launched in 2016, and developed by the European Commission, as part of the [New Skills Agenda for Europe](#), the Commission established a [European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework \(EntreComp\)](#). It intends to support and inspire actions to improve the entrepreneurial capacity of European citizens and organisations. [EntreComp](#) offers a comprehensive description of the knowledge, skills and attitudes that people need to be entrepreneurial and create financial, cultural or social value for others. [The common reference framework identifies 15 competences in 3 key areas that describe what it means to be entrepreneurial](#)<sup>43</sup>.

### 1.1.4. Green economy / business / entrepreneurship

#### Sustainable goals

The 2022 SDG Index Scores and Rankings by country and subregions<sup>44</sup>



<sup>41</sup> Source : European Commission - Youth Wiki (September 2020) [Comparative overviews - Employment and entrepreneurship - Regulations on traineeships outside formal education](#)

<sup>42</sup> Source: European Commission - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - Policies and Activities - Skills and qualifications - [ALMA \(Aim, Learn, Master, Achieve\)](#)

<sup>43</sup> Source: European Commission - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - Policies and Activities - Skills and qualifications - [The European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework \(EntreComp\)](#)

<sup>44</sup> Source: [Europe Sustainable Development Report 2022 - Achieving the SDGs: Europe's Compass in a Multipolar World](#)

### European green deal

- To achieve the goals set by the [European Green Deal](#), the Commission has pledged to mobilise at least €1 trillion in sustainable investments over the next decade. 30% of the EU's multiannual budget (2021-2028) and the EU's unique [NextGenerationEU](#) (NGEU) instrument to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, has been allocated for green investments. EU countries must devote at least 37% of the financing they receive.
- The [EU Cohesion Policy](#) helps EU countries, regions, local governments and cities to implement large investments that contribute to the European Green Deal. They must devote at least 30% of what they receive from the [European Regional Development Fund](#) to these priorities (investments in a smarter, greener, more connected and more social Europe that is closer to its citizens).
- The Commission has put in place the [European Green Deal Investment Plan](#) (EGDIP), also referred to as [Sustainable Europe Investment Plan](#) (SEIP), as part of the Green Deal. This includes the Just Transition Mechanism, which focuses on ensuring a fair and just transition to a green economy.
- The [InvestEU programme](#) contributes to this effort and provides the EU with crucial long-term funding by leveraging substantial private and public funds. The InvestEU Regulation provides that the InvestEU fund as a whole will target at least 30% of investment contributing to climate objectives<sup>45</sup>.

### Horizon Europe

[Horizon Europe](#) is the EU's research and innovation program for 2021-2027. It provides funding opportunities and support for eco-entrepreneurs and start-ups working on sustainable technologies, renewable energy, and environmental solutions. It tackles climate change, helps to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and boosts the EU's competitiveness and growth. The programme facilitates collaboration and strengthens the impact of research and innovation in developing, supporting and implementing EU policies while tackling global challenges. It supports creating and better dispersing of excellent knowledge and technologies.

### European tools

- [The Better Entrepreneurship Policy Tool](#) is an online tool designed for policy-makers and other interested parties at local, regional and national level who wish to explore how public policy can support youth, women, migrants and the unemployed in business creation and self-employment and support the development of social enterprises. It stimulates reflection on inclusive and social entrepreneurship policies and programmes, promotes learning through international good practices, enhances inclusive and social entrepreneurship policy design and implementation<sup>46</sup>.
- [Better Incubation](#) is kick-starting an "eco-systemic" change by bringing incubation and business support services closer to society as a whole and to promote entrepreneurship and self-employment as means to create jobs, develop skills. Better Incubation mobilises and empowers Business Support Organisations to grow their capacities and expand their outreach to inclusive and social entrepreneurship, helping social entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs from Under-Represented Groups to access available financial tools and increase their businesses' chances of survival and growth<sup>47</sup>.

### International gateways

- [The EU SWITCH to Green](#) supports EU international cooperation by providing technical assistance where good will or enthusiasm for innovation may be complemented by additional operational, knowledge or other capacities.
- [Learning for Nature](#) is an e-learning programme brought to you by the United Nations Development Programme. The Learning for Nature platform aims to promote best practices in conservation and sustainable development, Develop the capacity of biodiversity policymakers, practitioners, and local and Indigenous communities, catalyse ongoing peer-to-peer learning and facilitate knowledge exchange.

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<sup>45</sup> Source: European Commission - Strategy and policy - Priorities - [A European Green Deal - Finance and the Green Deal](#)

<sup>46</sup> Source: European Commission and OECD - [The Better Entrepreneurship Policy Tool](#)

<sup>47</sup> Source: EBN (European Business & Innovation Centre Network) [Better Incubation](#)

## Green business & eco entrepreneurship: some European projects supported by Erasmus+



### [DIGREEN: go for a green business](#)

→ [Learning platform](#)

The project aims to increase employment opportunities for newcomers in the EU by strengthening their digital and entrepreneurial skills in Green Economy. In this way, the project contributes to the European Green Deal.



### [EYE - Entrepreneurship, youth and environment project](#)

→ [Learning activity](#)

The project aims to enable and educate young people in the age range 18-35 years to acquire the necessary skills and tools on how to generate and implement their "green" business idea and on how to create their own SME / start-up.



### [GEA - Green Entrepreneurship in Action](#)

→ [Courses](#)

The project aims to seeking common and innovative solutions, best practices and the latest technologies to increase the entrepreneurial skills of young Roma and vulnerable people in green businesses.



### [Young GREENtrepreneurs](#)

→ [YounGreenHub](#)

The project aims to promote green entrepreneurship among young people through innovative solutions in regions where the green economy is developing significantly but youth employment is below the expected level.



### [GEE - Green Entrepreneurship Europe](#)

→ [Learning materials](#)

The project aims to improve the key competencies and skills of young people to take an active role in building the green economy and strengthen cooperation between school and the world of work.



### [BC4ESE – Building Capacities for innovation in the eco-social entrepreneurship education](#)

→ [Project results \(eBook, platform, online training\)](#)

The project aims to build capacities for the promotion of eco-social entrepreneurship (ESE) and the development of non-formal education tools and methodologies.



### [B-ECO – Start-up Eco Entrepreneurs project](#)

→ [Project results](#)

The project focus on promoting access and learning through Open Educational Resources (OER), supporting ICT in VET field to improve and extend the offer of high-quality learning opportunities tailored to individual trainers by including innovative ways of delivery.



### [IMPRINT+](#)

→ [Course Modules](#) and [Application](#)

The project aims to highlight the amount of natural resources we use in our daily lives. Through education, action and entrepreneurship it empowers young European citizens and communities to restore and conserve their local natural resources.

## 1.2. France

### 1.2.1. NEETs

#### Statistics

In 2021, in France, 12.8% of young people aged 15 to 29 were NEET, slightly less than the EU average (13.1%). This proportion was low before the age of 18, but increased with age to reach 18.3% at age 24. After a peak in 2020 due to the health crisis, the NEET share started to decrease again and was, in the summer of 2022, at 11.6%.

The proportion of NEETs among young people varies greatly according to age. The increase between the ages of 15 and 24 is mainly due to unemployment, which peaks at 24 (9.3% at this age).

On average, 17.4% of young people aged 25 to 29 are NEET. 25-29 year olds are more often unemployed and slightly less often in training, but equally often in employment.

Between the ages of 15 and 24, young men are more likely to be NEET than young women (9.7% in 2021). On average, they leave the school system earlier and are therefore more often in employment at these ages, but also more often unemployed.

38.1% are in initial education without employment, 15-24 year olds are more likely to be in education or training. NEET 15-24 year olds are less educated, more likely to live with their parents and more likely to have a recognised disability than other young people. 63% of young NEETs are in contact with the public employment service. 48% of young NEETs have been unemployed and untrained for one year or more. These long-term NEETs are less qualified than the average NEET and suffer from a combination of socio-economic difficulties. 56% of them are in contact with the public employment service<sup>48</sup>.

#### Urban and rural areas

1,6 million young people aged 15 to 29 live in the predominantly rural area, which is home to 18% of the population. Because of the lack of local training opportunities, the obstacles to mobility in rural areas and the family culture, young people in rural areas are more likely to opt for vocational training at the end of junior high, which they can follow in an [Apprentice Training Centre](#) (CFA) or a vocational school.

Between the ages of 15 and 19, 58% of young people in rural areas are on an apprenticeship or vocational training contract, 13 percentage points more than young people in urban areas. Generally, among people aged 17 to 29 who have left the education system, fewer young people in rural areas than in urban areas (28% compared with 37%) have a higher education qualification, and more have a baccalaureate (29%) or vocational training certificate (27%). 7.3% of young people in rural areas have a 2nd or 3rd cycle university diploma compared to 15.4% of young people in urban areas. Between the ages of 15 and 19, they are even almost twice as likely to be in employment as urban youth (19% and 11% respectively).

Between the ages of 25 and 29, the differences are reduced, even though the employment rate of young urban men remains slightly lower (74% compared to 82%). 61% of job seekers under 25 y/o are women.

### 1.2.2. Youth employment policy

- The Public Employment Service in the territories is managed by the State and representatives of the main operators responsible for implementation of employment policies at local level: the national employment service [Pôle emploi](#), [local missions](#) and bodies specialising in the professional integration of the disabled, the Cap Emploi network. It brings together all public and private actors responsible for implementing policies bearing on employment and vocational training. The SPE is under the aegis of the [Ministry in](#)

<sup>48</sup> Source: INSEE (National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies) FOCUS - n°285 (10.01.2023) [After a peak due to health crisis, the proportion of young neither in employment, nor in education and training is falling again](#)  
Source: DARES (Directorate for the animation of research, studies and statistics) Analyses - n°006 (February 2020) [Young people who are neither in education, employment nor training \(NEET\) : which profiles and which pathways?](#)



[charge of labour](#), and more specifically under that of the [General Delegation for Employment and Vocational Training](#) (DGEFP).

- Created on 1 January 2019 by the [law for the freedom to choose a professional future of 5 September 2018](#), the [France compétences agency](#) aims to ensure the funding, regulation and improvement of vocational training and apprenticeships.
- The main authority responsible for youth policies is currently the Ministry in charge of Education and Youth, which relies in particular on its Directorate for Youth, Popular Education and Associative Life ([DJEPVA](#)).
- In addition to the competences linked to economic development, high school management, regional planning and transport management, the Regions have competences in the implementation of policies for vocational training and job seekers, and the integration of young people.

### Labour market

In 2021, according to the [French economy dashboard](#) of the INSEE, 87.4% of employment is salaried, 76.1% is in the service sector, and 41% is female. This rate is falling slightly (48% in 2020). When young people have a job, it is usually temporary<sup>49</sup>.

In [2022](#), the NEET rate of young people aged 15-29 is 11.8%. This rate, which was 12.3% at the end of 2019, peaked in mid-2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic (15.8%). In particular, there are long-term NEETs, who have been without training or employment for a year or more and who, in 2021, will account for 48% of this category.

The French labour market is characterised by the presence of employees on “short” contracts and permanent contracts. [Special forms of employment](#) (fixed-term contracts, temping, subsidised contracts and apprenticeships) have been developed and are the main form of occupation for young people. Over half of all jobs occupied by the 15-24 y/o age bracket are special forms of employment.

### Youth employment measures

- The obligation to train up to the age of 18 was introduced by [the law of 26 July 2019](#). Between the ages of 16 and 18, any young person who is not in education must be offered either an entry into a school or apprenticeship programme, or a job, civic service volunteering, a support programme or social and professional integration. The [local missions](#) are responsible for implementing identification and support actions.
- For young people aged 16 to 25 (or 29 if they are recognised as a disabled worker), who are not students, are not in training and have difficulty accessing sustainable employment, the [Youth commitment contract](#) (CEJ) offers a profoundly renewed and intensive individual support, with the objective of a faster and sustainable entry into employment. CEJ is implemented by [Pôle emploi](#) and the [local missions](#).
- The Second Chance schemes financed by the [Ministry of Labour](#), the [EPIDE](#) and the [Second Chance schools](#) (E2C) offers, to early school leavers aged 17-25, a refresher course on the fundamentals of schooling, and supports motivated young people in the construction of their personal and professional project.
- The [apprenticeship contract](#) (16 to 29 years old) is based on the principle of alternating between theoretical teaching in an [Apprentice Training Centre](#) (CFA) or training establishment and teaching of the trade at the employer's premises, with a view to acquiring a State diploma.
- The [professionalisation contract](#) (16 to 25 years old and other beneficiaries according to certain criteria) is an employment contract concluded between an employer and an employee. It enables the acquisition of a professional qualification recognised by the State and/or the professional branch.
- [The "1 young person, 1 solution" plan](#), launched in 2020, aims to offer a solution to each young person (15 to 30 years old). It mobilises a range of levers: recruitment aid, training, support, financial aid for young people in difficulty, etc. in order to respond to all situations<sup>50</sup>.

<sup>49</sup> Source: European Commission – Youth Wiki (Last update: 17.03.2023) [France- General context](#)

<sup>50</sup> Source: Ministry of Labour, Employment and Integration – [Youth measures](#)

### 1.2.3. Entrepreneurship in France

#### Statistics

The number of new enterprises increase in all regions, by at least 9%. This growth is marked in most sectors: those that contribute the most are transport and storage (+25%), specialised, scientific and technical activities (+17%) and other household services (+42%). 40.2% of sole traders are under 30 years old<sup>51</sup>.

The average age of the sole trader is 35 years (41% are women). Women are in the majority in human health and social work (74%), other household services (74%), industry (60%) and education (52%). The share of men is highest in construction (98%), transport and storage (90%) and information and communication (74%)<sup>52</sup>.

#### Entrepreneurship support for young people

The public authorities have introduced programmes and tools designed to facilitate the initial fundraising start-ups require. Many of them are implemented via the [Bpifrance](#) (French public investment bank), which can both invest in and fund company projects. [The ministry of economy](#) also acts to promote start up creation, in particular through encouraging private individuals to invest in start-ups.

- The [PEA – Share savings plan \(Plan d'épargne en actions\)](#) enabling the acquisition of a portfolio of shares in European companies while, under certain conditions, benefiting from tax exemption.
- The setup of [business-angel](#) groups and business-angel investment companies has been facilitated by relaxing the tax system applying to such bodies.
- The [legal framework governing participative funding](#) has been relaxed so that start-ups can access it. Type of funding is particularly well adapted to innovative companies.
- Innovative young companies carrying out research and development projects and enjoying [young innovative company](#) status can benefit from exemption from taxes on profits and social contributions<sup>53</sup>.

#### Funding for young entrepreneurs

- [Bpifrance](#) finances and develops companies at every stage of their development, providing credit, guarantees, innovation aid and equity capital.
- The [French Tech Acceleration fund](#) offers a boost to private French start-up accelerators. 200 million, which the State can co-invest in equity or quasi-equity in private initiatives.
- The [Ministry of Higher Education and research](#) is also responsible for promoting start-ups via the [I-LAB](#) scheme, which supports creation of innovative companies. In addition, several universities have created their own start up programmes and incubators, such as the incubator [Polytech Start-up Lounge](#).
- A number of regions and municipalities promote creation of start-ups on their territories by accompanying young entrepreneurs, providing them with financial support and informing them on existing networks.
- [10,000 entrepreneurs](#) aims to transmit the culture and desire for entrepreneurship to young people aged 13 to 25. Its actions are based on 3 priorities: to encourage equal opportunities for each young person, to promote entrepreneurship by women among young people and to prepare young people for the world of tomorrow.
- The [Association Jeunesse et Entreprises - AJE](#) (Association Youth and Enterprises) aims to help young people discover the business world in order to better integrate it. This ambition is based on strong, sustainable and innovative actions, implemented with its local or national partner companies.
- [Entreprendre Pour Apprendre](#) (Enterprise to Learn) is a federation of 17 associations approved by the [Ministry of National Education and Youth](#). Its activities are recognised as complementary to school. It brings together young people, supervisors and professionals from the business world to enrich each other. The objective is to give each person the power to achieve his or her full potential through a collective experience: the [Mini-Enterprise®](#)<sup>54</sup>.

<sup>51</sup> Source: INSEE Première - n°1892 (02.02.2022) [Boom in the creation of companies and micro-entrepreneurs in 2021](#)

<sup>52</sup> Source: INSEE Première - n°1922 (15.09.2022) [Four of ten entrepreneurs were employees before starting their business](#)

<sup>53</sup> Source: European Commission Youth Wiki (Last update: 17 March 2023) [France - Overview - Employment & Entrepreneurship - Start-up funding for young entrepreneurs](#)

<sup>54</sup> Source: Bpifrance Création (August 2021) [Networks dedicated to raising awareness of entrepreneurship among young people](#)

- [Pépité France](#) (student centres for innovation, transfer and entrepreneurship) work to raise awareness of the entrepreneurial spirit, provide training and support for the projects of students and young higher education graduates. It organises a continuum of support for young people, beneficiaries of the [student-entrepreneur status](#), from the emergence of the idea to its realisation.
- [Moovjee](#) (Movement for young and student entrepreneurs) has 3 main lines of action: support (through the mentoring programme), promoting (with the Moovjee Prize), inform and support (simplifying access to the levers of creation and development).
- The National Association [Les Entrepreneuriales](#) (ANLE) designs, distributes and qualifies the free certification programme [Les Entrep'](#), to reveal or strengthen the entrepreneurial potential of each young person.
- [Enactus France](#) supports high school students, students and professionals in developing their skills to undertake and act<sup>55</sup>.
- [Acre](#) is a form of assistance for business start-ups in the form of a partial exemption from social security contributions for the first 12 months of activity.
- The aim of the [Young University Enterprise](#) (JEU) status is to support the creation of companies from higher education. To this end, the creators benefit from social and tax advantages similar to those of the [Young Innovative Company \(JEI\)](#).
- [Adie can grant a flat-rate State bonus of €3,000 to young entrepreneurs](#) in a situation of social inclusion, in order to finance any need related to the creation of a business.
- The ["1youth 1mentor" programme](#) offers young people aged 18 to 30 who are committed to entrepreneurship a mentoring programme lasting a minimum of 6 months. The mentors are (former) entrepreneurs who have experience in business creation and entrepreneurship<sup>56</sup>.

### Social entrepreneurship

Social and environmental issues are the most urgent problems to solve according to the general public and social entrepreneurs. Climate change is the most urgent issue for social entrepreneurs in 2021 (81%), followed by unemployment (56%). Also linked to the Covid-19 crisis, health comes in third place for social entrepreneurs with 45%. 61% of the social enterprises said that they were looking for financial support through collaborations, and for 27%, subsidies. In times of crisis, the logic of partnerships therefore seems to focus on financial needs, but continues to be centred on other market expectations<sup>57</sup>.

47% of young people aged 18 to 30 want to start their own business. The pandemic has had a paradoxical effect on the motivation to create one's own business: 47% of 18-30 year olds say they want to start their own business (53% for the 18-24). This desire is driven by the desire for freedom and independence, the primary driving force behind business creation, which is cited well before any other motivation. Young people are less and less attached to the status of employee, now preferring self-employed status, even though they are aware of the risks involved in starting a business. They place more emphasis on their lack of experience among the risks. The job insecurity also worries them. The fear of financing remains the most important. For 65% of young people, starting a business is above all a way of making a difference in the world. In 2022, 31% of them envisage a model where all employees would be decision-makers, 29% would be ready to start a business capable of creating social links and contributing to the development of their region and 27% would favour a project linked to sustainable development or the environment<sup>58</sup>.

## 1.2.4. Green economy/ business / entrepreneurship

### Context

Around 80,000 people under 30 years of age work in the green economy. They are mainly present in energy and water production and distribution (20%), as well as in the nature and environmental protection sector (30%). As regards the "greening" professions, the majority work in tourism and entertainment (39%).

<sup>55</sup> Source: Bpifrance Création (August 2021) [Networks dedicated to support young people](#)

<sup>56</sup> Source: Bpifrance Création (October 2021) [Support for young people](#)

<sup>57</sup> Source: Convergences (July 2021) [Social Entrepreneurship – Barometer 2021](#)

<sup>58</sup> Source: France Active - Survey OpinionWay for France Active (17.02.2022) [1 in 2 young people want to become entrepreneur, and many of them want to start a committed business](#)

The activities of the green economy account for almost 1 million jobs, divided between:

- Eco-activities (waste treatment, wastewater management and renewable energy). Only 5% of jobs are actually dedicated to environmental protection;
- Peripheral activities, which concern the production and distribution of water, the management of green spaces, transport and the management of natural resources.

A distinction is made between so-called "green" jobs (linked to the environment) and "greening" jobs (which incorporate or are likely to incorporate environmental skills).

- 144,000 people work in the fields of environmental protection, resource management and development, and renewable energy.
- The greening professions (exercised by 3.8 million people), 2/3 of whom work in activities not directly linked to the environment: construction, industry, transport, agriculture, maintenance of green spaces.

According to the [Pexe association](#), eco-companies have 15 employees and nearly 70% of them have less than 19 employees. The eco-companies are anchored locally and the sector is structured in networks, clusters and competitiveness clusters. Nearly 80% of the managers were thinking of recruiting, but they emphasise the difficulties in finding people with the "right" profile (e.g. engineers, agronomists, energy specialists, salespeople, etc.).

### Place of young people

20% of green economy occupations are carried out by workers under the age of 30. As regards green jobs, young people are more present in the professions of energy and water production and distribution (20%) and nature and environmental protection (30%).

Among the greening professions, the tourism and entertainment professions are the youngest (39% are under 30 years old), as they are often carried out by students while they are studying. There are also 33% of employees in the maintenance of green spaces who are under 30 years old. According to the latest report on green jobs by SDES, [the statistical service of the Ministry of Ecology](#), nearly 16% of new graduates express the desire to move into eco-activities.

Launched in 2018, by the [Ministry of Ecological Transition and Solidarity](#) and the [Ministry of Labour](#) (as part of the [government's 2018-2022 skills investment plan](#)), the [10Kverts programme](#) aims to enable young people to be trained in green and greening jobs, in recycling and circular economy professions<sup>59</sup>.

### French eco-entrepreneur support networks

- [Ecopreneurship of France](#) works with the creators or managers of eco-companies whose aim is to produce goods and services capable of measuring, predicting, limiting or correcting environmental impacts. It also provides support for creators of eco-technologies ([Training and coaching](#)).
- [PEXE](#) is the national association of clusters, competitiveness clusters and professional associations in the environment and energy management sectors. PEXE works to create new networks and establishes partnerships with foreign networks, in order to share good practices, to promote common actions, to make the specificities of each network visible ([Actions carried out by the PEXE](#)).
- [Going Green](#) has the objectives of promoting the green economy and strengthening the dialogue between the business community and public stakeholders. It is a platform for entrepreneurs involved in sustainable development.

### Some French and francophone training and MOOCs

- [SCP/RAC](#) (Regional Activity Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production) provides technical support in eco entrepreneurship and eco-design training. The centre has developed a specific [Training Methodology for Eco-entrepreneurs](#).
- The MOOC "[Cultivating the entrepreneurial spirit of young people](#)", created by Bpifrance Création, offers resources for an entrepreneurial approach. It is open to educational teams of secondary school students, students and apprentices who wish to carry out a project and develop the entrepreneurial spirit of young people.
- Launched by the [Institute of the Francophonie for Sustainable Development \(IFDD\)](#), a specialised body of the [International Organisation of Francophonie \(OIF\)](#), the [JeClimate](#)

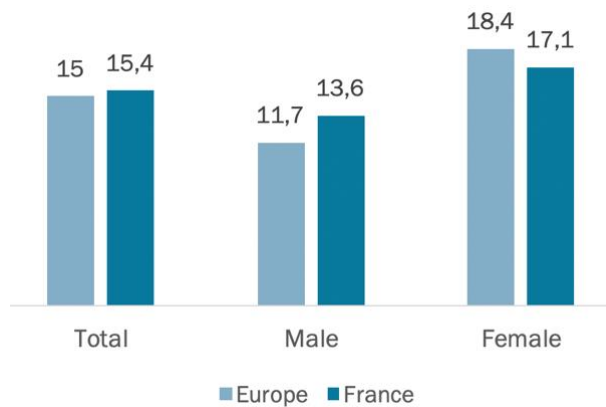
<sup>59</sup> Source: CIDJ#InfoJeunesse (2020) [Green economy environment – Sectors that are recruiting 2019-2020](#)  
Source: Ministry of Labour, Employment and Inclusion (14.05.2018) [Launch of 10,000 training courses for green and greening professions](#)

toolbox consists of training modules and dynamic tools to accompany the future entrepreneur.

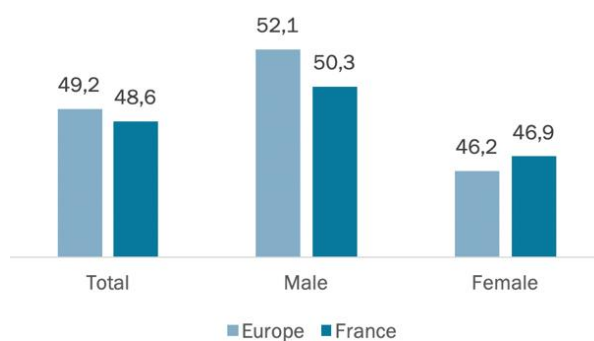
- [Objective 2030](#) initiative thus aims to foster concrete progress in sustainable development through the implementation of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). It seeks to meet their need for specialised training and to support innovative actions and solutions that combine social inclusion, economic progress and protection of the planet.

### 1.2.5. France - country card NEETs

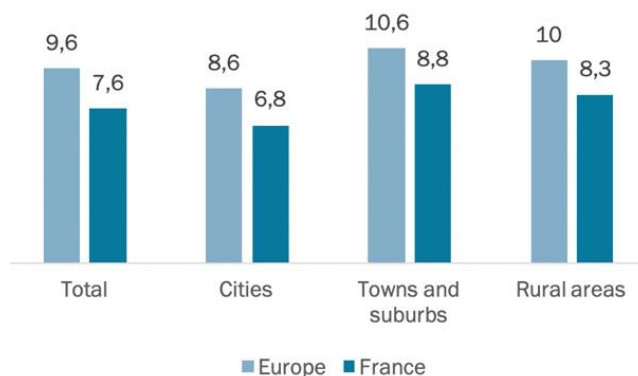
NEET rates by sex, age and labour status (% of people aged 15 to 29)<sup>60</sup>



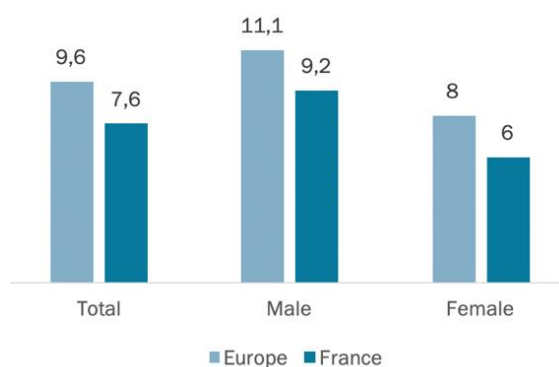
Youth employment by sex, age and educational attainment level (% of people aged 15 to 29)<sup>61</sup>



Early leavers from education and training by sex and degree of urbanisation (% of people aged 18 to 24)<sup>62</sup>



Early leavers from education and training by sex and labour status (% of people aged 18 to 24)<sup>63</sup>



<sup>60</sup> Source: Eurostat (Last update: 26.04.2023) [Young people neither in employment nor in education and training by sex, age and labour status \(NEET rates\)](#)

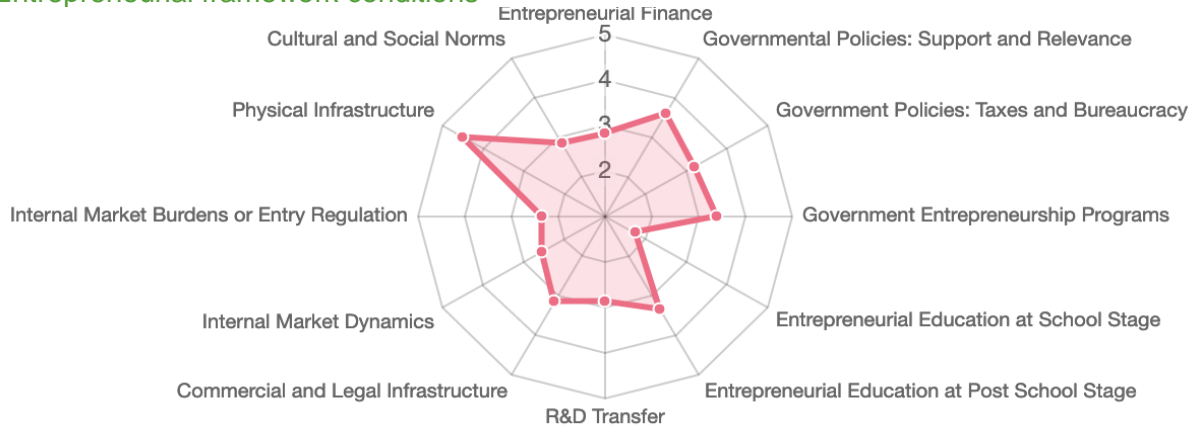
<sup>61</sup> Source: Eurostat (Last update: 26.04.2023) [Youth employment by sex, age and educational attainment level](#)

<sup>62</sup> Source: Eurostat (Last update: 26.04.2023) [Early leavers from education and training by sex and degree of urbanisation](#)

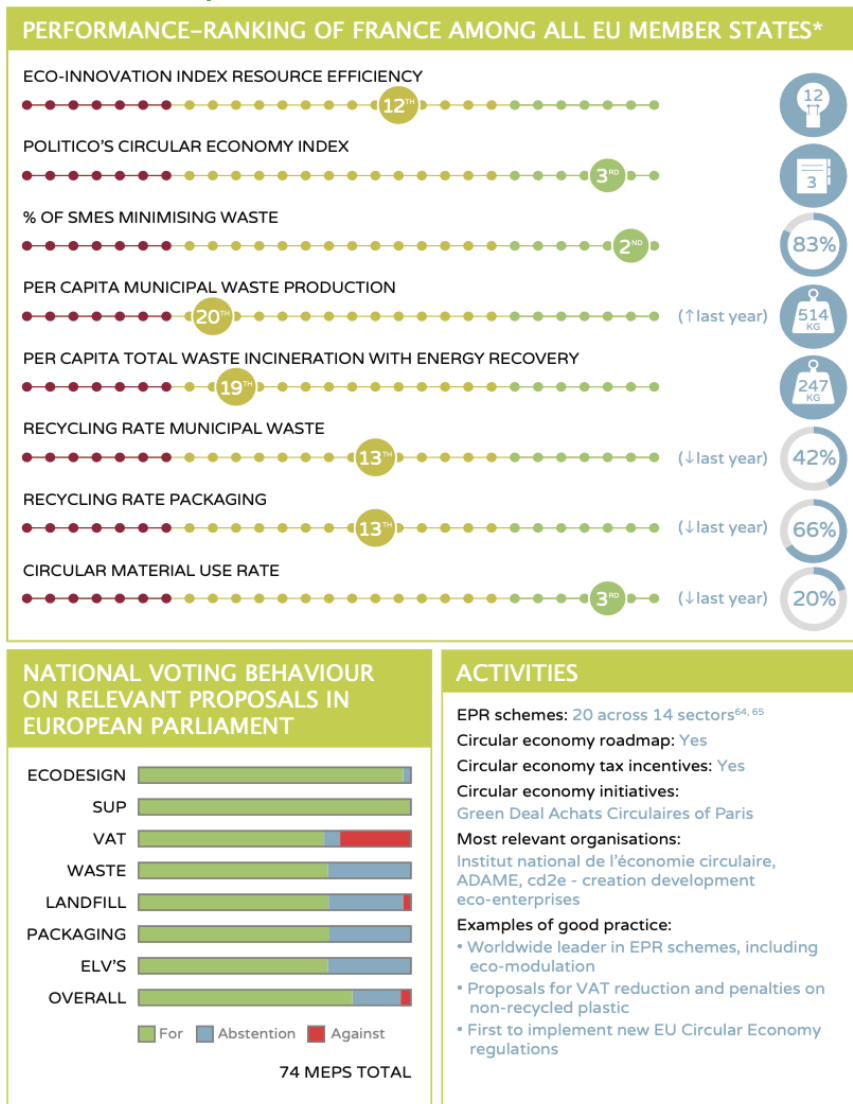
<sup>63</sup> Source: Eurostat (Last update: 26.04.2023) [Early leavers from education and training by sex and labour status](#)



## Entrepreneurial framework conditions<sup>64</sup>



## Overview of circular economy<sup>65</sup>



<sup>64</sup> Source: [Global Entrepreneurship Monitor – Economy profiles](#)

<sup>65</sup> Source: Ecopreneur.eu - European Sustainable Business Federation (2019) [Circular economy update overview of circular economy in Europe](#)

## 1.3. Hungary

### 1.3.1. NEETs

#### Statistics

In 2021, in Hungary, according to Eurostat data<sup>66</sup>, the proportion of young people between the ages of 19 and 25 who neither study nor work is 8.7% for men and 14.8% for women. 19.4% of 20-34-year-olds did not work or attend any training: for men, 10.1%, for women, 29.2%.

The COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on all economic activities and employment rates, not only in Hungary, but also globally. The data for youth unemployment rate rose from 14% in 2019 before the pandemic, to around 18% in 2021. However, some improvements can be seen from 18.2% in April of 2021 the youth unemployment rate decreased to 17.3% in May of 2021<sup>67</sup>.

#### Urban and rural areas

The NEET rate shows a considerable improvement of nearly 40% between 2009 and 2019 in the urban environment for all age groups. A slight improvement can be detected in the towns and urban environment, which amounts to 25% for all age groups between 2009 and 2019. However, special services and targeted programmes are required to make a difference for NEET Youth. The youngest people (aged 15-19 years) have the highest unemployment rate, and it does not depend on the type of the settlement/area. According to the latest data, in 2019 the age group's unemployment rate was 23.30%: 22.80% in towns and suburbs and 22.40% in rural areas (city data is not available for this age group).

Unemployment rates are the lowest in cities: in 2019, 8.20% in the population aged 20-24 years, 3.90% in the next age group (20-24 years) and only 2.80% among young people aged 30-34 years (the last data refers to 2018, because data is not available for 2019).

NEETs face with many problems: social exclusion, lack of opportunities (e.g., education, health, infrastructure, public transport, and labour market conditions), low socio-economic status and a lack of relationships outside the enclosed settlements. NEET Youth are facing with these multi-dimensional difficulties, regional disparities and a lack of proper services<sup>68</sup>.

### 1.3.2. Youth employment policy

The Government's youth employment policies are mainly related to the [Youth Guarantee Scheme](#) and thus the government body responsible for policymaking is the [Ministry for Economic Development](#).

The policy directions also show an increasing emphasis on vocational training, in line with the directions considered desirable by the [Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry](#).

Promoting entrepreneurship is also an important objective of employment-related youth policy. While there is no specific government strategy for developing young people's entrepreneurial skills, the issue itself is addressed in several strategic documents, including the [National Youth Strategy](#) as well as having a big emphasis in the public education<sup>69</sup>.

#### Labour market

According to the [Hungarian Central Statistical Office \(HSCO\)](#) data from 2022, the employment rate of the 15-29 year olds increased above 40% in 2014 and has reached 47.1% in 2019, which is a return to the pre-crisis level. The employment rate of young people between the ages of 15 and 24 was 27.5% compared to the 32.7% EU average in 2021. The rate of those who are employed part-time is very low in the society as a whole and it is not different with young people, either. The employment rate of under 15-24 years old young people was about 27% in the first half of 2022 and it has not changed significantly compared to 2021.

<sup>66</sup> Source: Eurostat - Statistics explained (26.05.2023) [Statistics on young people neither in employment nor in education or training](#)

<sup>67</sup> Source: M.O.T.H.E.R. Project (27.01.2022) [The situation of NEET youth in Hungary](#)

<sup>68</sup> Source: COST European Cooperation in science and technology - COST Action 18213 (December 2020) [Rural NEETs in Hungary – 2009-2019 overview](#)

<sup>69</sup> Source: European Commission - Youth Wiki (Last update: 02.04.2023) [Hungary – Employment and entrepreneurship](#)



The employment possibilities of young people have changed notably in the recent years. According to Eurostat data, the [Oeconomus Economic Research Foundation](#) found that the proportion of those who work alongside their studies increased significantly between 2009 and 2016. Young people who gained work experiences during their higher education studies are less likely to become unemployed after they obtain their degree.

The government policy ensures also that young people have the opportunity to gain work experience during their higher education studies through the mandatory internship included in the [Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education](#)<sup>70</sup>.

### Youth employment measures

The backbone of the system is the Youth Guarantee Active Labour Market Programme. The [National Employment Service](#) (PES), which implements the guarantee, coordinates the system under this programme. The programme aims to promote the entry of young people under 25 into the labour market by providing wage subsidies, entrepreneurship support and training linked to labour market services such as job search assistance or mentoring.

The aim of the [GINOP-5.1.10-18](#) and [GINOP-5.2.7-18](#) is to provide support to young entrepreneurs in the disadvantaged regions of Hungary. In the frame of the projects, the applicants can receive professional support to create their business plan, to acquire the skills to start their business and to get financial support. The organisations implementing the programme are:

- [Széchenyi Programme Office](#),
- [National Association of Young Entrepreneurs \(FIVOSZ\)](#),
- [The Hungarian Foundation for Enterprise Promotion](#),
- [Budapest Polytechnics Foundation](#),
- [OFA Non-profit Kft.](#)

Under the programme, the organisations provide young people with training to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to become entrepreneurs and run a business (support, advice and mentoring).

In 2021, one main youth related provision was [the personal income tax exemption](#) under 25 years from January 2022.

In the first half of 2019, a new traineeship training application ([GINOP 5.2.4-16](#)) has been prepared that aims to support the integration of young people with vocational qualifications aged under 25. The aim is to encourage micro, SME to create internships so that young people can gain real work experience, which can improve their employability and long-term chances on the labour market.

- The companies hire the trainees full-time for 9 months with wage subsidy and then continue to employ them for another 4.5 months at their own expense.
- SMEs can use the support provided to fund the wages of apprentices and cover the additional costs of employing and training apprentices. The planned budget is co-funded by the [European Social Fund \(ESF\)](#) and the budget of Hungary.
- A supplementary programme also assisted the successful implementation of the Traineeship programme: Traineeship programme – support services.

Direct job creation outside the Youth Guarantee Programme is not related strictly to youth employment. The role of the [Public Work Scheme](#) should be mentioned: the long-term unemployed must work in the secondary labour market in order to get a (lower than minimum wage) salary and the possibility to get state subsidies. Although the explicit aim of the scheme is to help workers return to the primary labour market.

The [Support of the enterprises employment](#) was a governmental initiative to provide non-refundable support to workplaces which employ registered job seekers under 25 or who has been registered as a job seeker at least for a month. The employer was able to receive this support for 6 months for reducing the social contribution tax (paid by the employer)<sup>71</sup>.

<sup>70</sup> Source: European Commission - Youth Wiki (Last update: 02.04.2023) [Hungary - General Context](#)

<sup>71</sup> Source: European Commission - Youth Wiki (Last update: 02.04.2023) [Hungary - Integration of young people in the labour market](#)

### 1.3.3. Entrepreneurship in Hungary

#### Statistics

There are currently about 510,000 early-stage entrepreneurs in Hungary (i.e. those starting or managing a business that is less than 42 months old)<sup>72</sup>. Almost half (49.7%) think it is easy to start a business and a third (36.5%) believe that there are good opportunities to start a business in the next six months. These are among the findings of the new [GEM Hungary 2021/2022 National Report](#):

- A higher proportion of men than women consider it easy to start a business.
- Young people are less confident in their knowledge and less positive about the supportive environment for starting a business but would still prefer to do so.
- Considering entrepreneurial activity, Hungary is in the middle among GEM participating countries.
- According to the survey, early-stage entrepreneurship amounted to 9.8%. This is lower than the GEM average (13.7%). However, the ratio of established businesses in Hungary - 8.4% - is slightly higher than the global GEM average of 6.8%)<sup>73</sup>.

According to the [GEM](#), conducted in Hungary in 2021-2022, the typical entrepreneur is between the ages of 25-44. The study states that young people under 25 may feel insecure about starting a business and they do not believe they have the appropriate knowledge and skills for that ([Budapest Lab](#), 2022). Although young people have positive attitudes towards self-employment and entrepreneurship, the analysis indicates that for most young people employment represents the generally accepted positive vision for the future in the labour market. The low risk appetite, the widespread fear of failure, the unpredictable economic situation (with the frequent changes in the tax system and government bureaucracy), the lack of effective teaching on the skills/competencies required for entrepreneurship and the predominantly negative opinions about entrepreneurship in society are all factors that contribute to these rates.

The current trend of more and more young people working in start-ups and the growing visibility offer the opportunity for attitudes and motivation to change in the long term. According to research [Hungarian Youth 2020](#), 19% of the 15-29-year-olds consider to become an entrepreneur in a few years<sup>74</sup>.

#### Entrepreneurship support for young people

Promoting entrepreneurship is also an important objective of employment-related youth policy. While there is no specific government strategy for developing young people's entrepreneurial skills, the issue itself is addressed in several strategic documents, including the [NYS](#), as well as having a big emphasis in the public education<sup>75</sup>.

- [Young Entrepreneurs Association Hungary \(FIVOSZ\)](#) is one of the most significant advocates of start-up supporters is the [National Association of Young Entrepreneurs](#). It provides information on government and private opportunities.
- The main coordinator for public opportunities is [Design Terminal](#), a non-profit organisation, dealing with business and cultural talent management. [Its operations](#) are funded by government grants and company partnerships. State grants are provided by the form of a public service contract signed with the [Prime Minister's Office](#). Its [activities](#) include a Mentoring Program for start-ups, Professional guidance, networking possibilities, funding for space industry entrepreneurs, the digitalisation of the start-up sector, in cooperation with the [Hungarian Chamber of Agriculture](#), running a start-up scholarship programme, support start-ups to become a Fintech, contribute to the success of Europe's space programmes by exploring innovative ideas.
- A new initiative is the [MVM Edison Light Up!](#) is an innovation tender and a start-up contest for supporting start-ups. The programme [aims](#) to embrace innovative ideas in the field of energy, which can offer solutions to real problems can make everyday life easier for users and can make the operation of the energy sector more efficient<sup>76</sup>.
- [Youth entrepreneurship programme](#) is to prepare young people aged 18 to 25 and registered unemployed people aged 25 to 30 who are interested in business and planning

<sup>72</sup> Source: OECD - [Inclusive Entrepreneurship Policies, Country Assessment Notes \(2020\)](#)

<sup>73</sup> Source: GEM - Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (13.07.2022) [GEM Hungary 2021-2022 National Report](#)

<sup>74</sup> Source: European Commission - Youth Wiki (Last update: 02.04.2023) [Hungary – General Context](#)

<sup>75</sup> Source: European Commission - Youth Wiki (Last update: 02.04.2023) [Hungary – Employment and Entrepreneurship](#)

<sup>76</sup> Source: European Commission - Youth Wiki (Last update: 02.04.2023) [Hungary – Start-up funding for young entrepreneurs](#)

to start a new individual or microenterprise to start their own business. Within the programme, the organisations provide young people a training (competencies and knowledge, operation of a business, assistance in preparing a business plan, advice and mentoring).

- The [Enter the market!](#) programme is implemented by the [National Employment Public Non-Profit Limited Association \(OFA\)](#) and supports the business creation of young people under 35 in two stages, following the same method as the above-mentioned Youth entrepreneurship programmes.
- The mission of the [National Research, Development and Innovation Office](#) is to support the scientific and innovation ecosystem to build a competitive Hungary. The Office also [supports](#) business innovation and market-oriented research and development activities.
- One of the biggest funding organisations is [Hiventures](#). Hiventures [mission](#) is to support innovative ideas of the present and future and to foster a sustainable and value-generating ecosystem of start-ups, SMEs and large enterprises in Hungary. The Fund is a state-owned venture capital company, which aims to provide financing solutions to Hungarian entrepreneurs with capital using their own and EU resources. The [National Research, Development and Innovation Office](#) and the [Hungarian Development Bank](#) is their professional supervisor. Their target group includes SME and large companies and their aim is to establish a long-term strategic cooperation with them. They have a mentor network also and the companies have the opportunity to receive professional support for the ventures in the 'pre-seed phase'.
- The [Széchenyi Funds](#) has a significant role in funding.
- Other important initiatives in Budapest are coordinated by the [Budapest Enterprise Agency Public Foundation](#).
- The [Foundation for Small Enterprise Economic Development](#) supports the competitiveness of small enterprises by the development of entrepreneurial knowledge, by the reinforcement of the non-profit sector, and by pursuing activities in the field of equal treatment.

### Barriers to business creation

Potential entrepreneurs were as likely as the EU average to report a “fear of failure” as a barrier to business creation for the period 2015-19 (47.1% vs. 45% for the EU). There were little differences in the proportion of men (42.9%) and youth (40.6%) who reported this barrier. However, women (51.2%) and older people (47.9%) were more likely to indicate that a fear of failure was barrier to business creation.

Overall fear of failure was slightly above the EU average for all groups except youth. One of the reasons for these results is that Hungary often ranks poorly in terms of both media attention given to entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education at pre-tertiary levels. The new national SME strategy 2019-30 seeks to address this, in part, by raising the profile of entrepreneurs since many do not consider it to be an attractive career path (SME strategy 2019-30).

Another important barrier to entrepreneurship for many people from under-represented and disadvantaged groups is a lack of entrepreneurship skills. Over the 2015-19 period, adults were about as likely as the EU average to report that they have the skills to start a business (38.5% vs. 42.5%). Overall, men were more likely to be confident in their business skills than women over this period (48% vs. 29.1%). Youth were slightly less likely than the EU average to report having the skills to start a business (31.3% vs. 37.2%)<sup>77</sup>.

### 1.3.4. Green economy / business / entrepreneurship

#### Context

The latest representative research of [GKI Economic Research Co.](#) showed that 21% of businesses did their best to produce their products from recyclable materials. Companies with fewer than 11 employees (26%) and between 151-250 employees (23%) sought to use recyclable raw materials in the largest proportion. According to a nationally representative survey, micro and small businesses, what holds them back the most from being even greener is the following:

<sup>77</sup> Source: OECD [Inclusive Entrepreneurship Policies, Country Assessment Notes – Hungary - 2020](#)

- lack of resources or external support (whether from the government or various organisations),
- regulations that change frequently and are difficult to follow,
- insufficiently encouraging regulation.

The role of the [Global Green Growth Institute \(GGGI\)](#) consists in assisting the Government in delivering climate objectives at national and international levels. The provided support includes the delivery of the amended [National Clean Growth Strategy \(NCDS\)](#) towards 2050 climate neutrality objectives and policy support under the [European Green Deal \(EGD\)](#). GGGI also supports bilateral climate actions in the Western Balkan region focusing on city-level climate actions, energy efficiency in the building sector, and the development of bankable projects. In 2019, GGGI assisted the government in the development of the [Western Balkans Green Center](#) to support climate action and bilateral financing to promote green transition in the Balkan region.

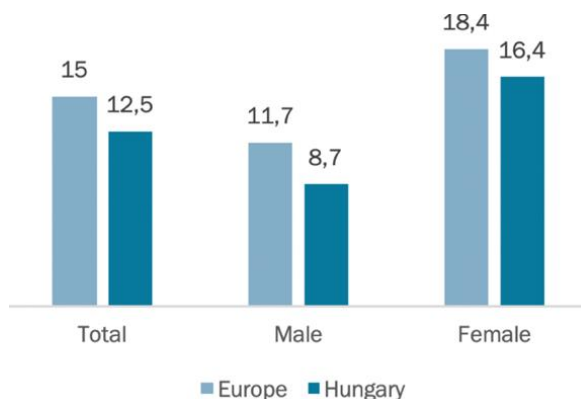
### Eco-entrepreneur support networks / trainings

In Hungary, young people can learn about green-focused businesses and fields of expertise at universities, organisations and training courses offered by large companies.

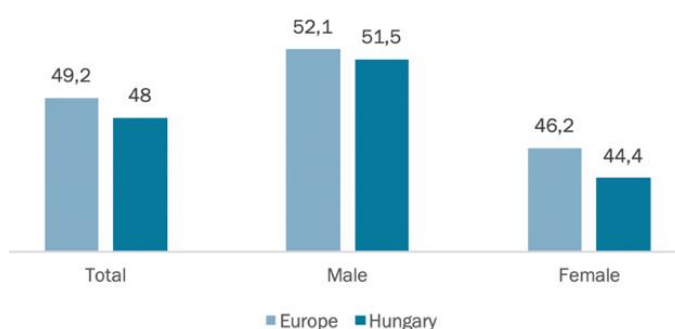
- [MNB-EduLab](#), a subsidiary of [Magyar Nemzeti Bank](#), launched the so-called [Economist's free educational website](#), on which current economic, financial and business topics are discussed in the form of educational videos in an understandable way, with the help of the country's leading economists and specialists.
- [Budapest Business School University](#) launched its [Green Mentor online training for environmentally conscious thinking and professionals](#).
- [Hungarian business Angel network](#) - the official angel investor association of Hungary created in 2017. It aims to welcome and unite all business angels who are interested in investment opportunities not only on a local, but on a regional level as well. The network's mission is to integrate Hungary into the international circulation of business angels and truly represent both the companies and the investors' interests.
- The [Bács-Kiskun County Chamber of Commerce and Industry](#) is launching an exclusive Green Economy specialist training for all entrepreneurs who consciously build their environment and profession, and who plan to carry out their activities, future developments and investments taking into account the already perceived climate change.

### 1.3.5. Hungary - country card NEETs

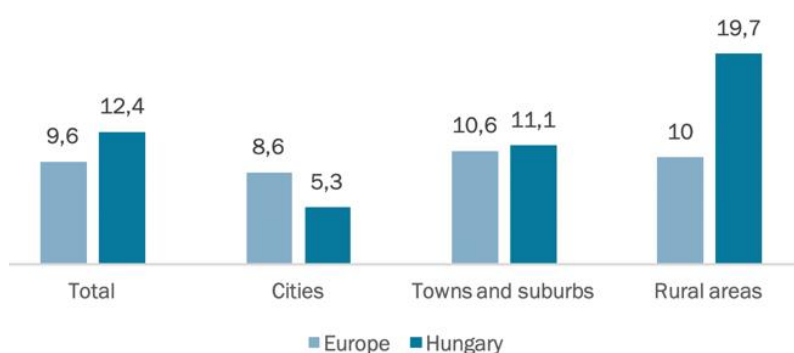
NEET rates by sex, age and labour status (% of people aged 15 to 29)<sup>78</sup>



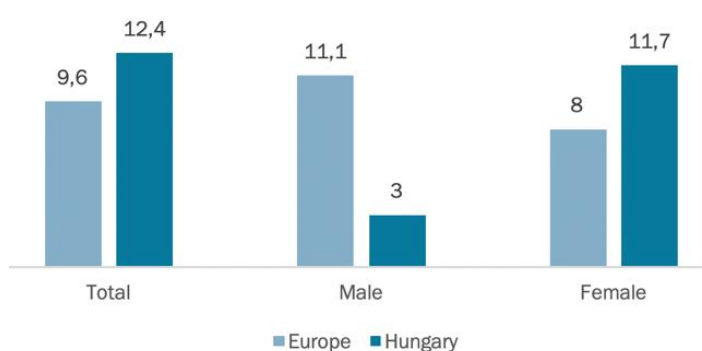
Youth employment by sex, age and educational attainment level (% of people aged 15 to 29)<sup>79</sup>



Early leavers from education and training by sex and degree of urbanisation (% of people aged 18 to 24)<sup>80</sup>



Early leavers from education and training by sex and labour status (% of people aged 18 to 24)<sup>81</sup>



<sup>78</sup> Source: Eurostat (Last update: 26.04.2023) [Young people neither in employment nor in education and training by sex, age and labour status \(NEET rates\)](#)

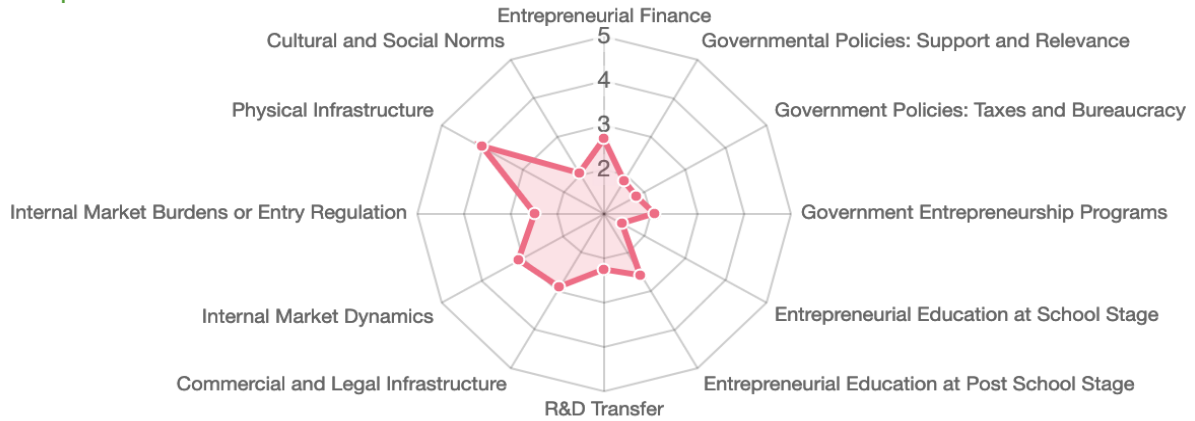
<sup>79</sup> Source: Eurostat (Last update: 26.04.2023) [Youth employment by sex, age and educational attainment level](#)

<sup>80</sup> Source: Eurostat (Last update: 26.04.2023) [Early leavers from education and training by sex and degree of urbanisation](#)

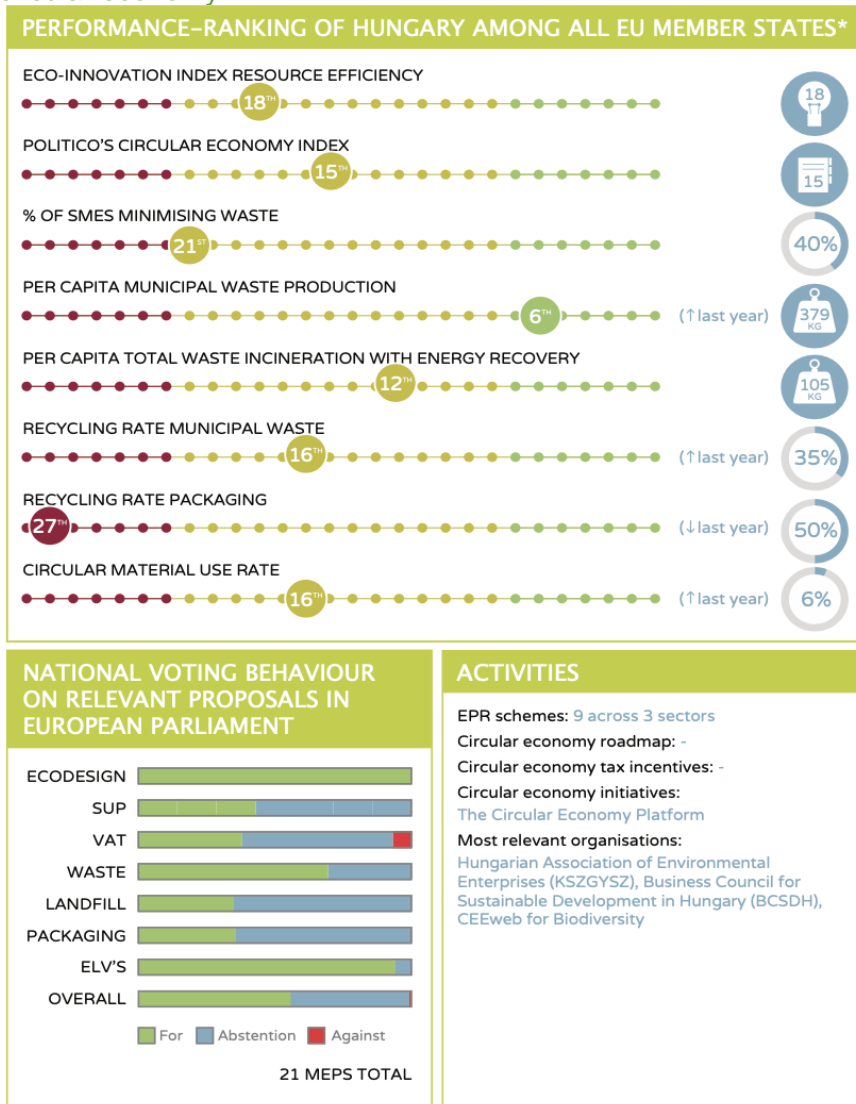
<sup>81</sup> Source: Eurostat (Last update: 26.04.2023) [Early leavers from education and training by sex and labour status](#)



## Entrepreneurial framework conditions<sup>82</sup>



## Overview of circular economy<sup>83</sup>



<sup>82</sup> Source: [Global Entrepreneurship Monitor – Economy profiles](#)

<sup>83</sup> Source: Ecopreneur.eu - European Sustainable Business Federation (2019) [Circular economy update overview of circular economy in Europe](#)

## 1.4. Poland

### 1.4.1. NEETs

#### Statistics

In 2021, in Poland, according to Eurostat data<sup>84</sup>, the proportion of young people between the ages of 19 and 25 who neither study nor work is 10.1% for men and 16.9% for women. Young women are less likely employed than young men, particularly those with lower levels of education. Only 23% of 25-34 years old women with below upper secondary attainment were employed in 2020 compared to 59% of men. This gender difference is 43% of women and 69% of men with below upper secondary attainment are employed.

The impact of the pandemic on the economy has raised concerns about the prospects of young adults, especially those leaving education earlier. The unemployment rate among 25-34 years old with below upper secondary attainment was 12.8% in 2020. The share of 18-24 years old NEETs was 11.9% in 2019, which increased to 12.6% in 2020<sup>85</sup>.

Young NEETs are mostly people aged 25 and over. There is only a small fraction of early school leavers among NEETs. In this area, Poland performs better than other EU Member States – in the youngest group (aged 15–19): only 3% of youth are not in employment, education or training, while the EU average is 6%. From a certain age, economically inactive women start to be the dominant subgroup of NEETs –they are responsible for increasing the average age<sup>86</sup>.

#### Urban and rural areas

In 2021, the share of young people (aged 15–29) in the EU who were NEETs was lowest in cities (12.2%) and about the same level in towns, suburbs (13.9%) and rural areas (13.7%). The pattern of lowest NEET rates in cities (as compared with both rural areas and towns and suburbs) was repeated in 15 EU Member States. In Poland, the situation follows a similar trend meaning that NEETs rate is lower in cities (10,9%) and increasing in towns, suburbs (13,8%) and rural areas (15,0%).

The majority of NEET youths reside in small towns or rural areas, with 68% living in villages and towns with fewer than 20,000 inhabitants. Due to their location, these individuals have less access to appealing job opportunities, nurseries, kindergartens, and labour market institutions. Moreover, they face challenges with limited access to public transportation, which hinders their mobility<sup>87</sup>.

### 1.4.2. Youth employment policy

The main authorities responsible for youth employment policies in Poland are [the Ministry of Family and Social Policy](#), the [Ministry of National Education](#), and the [Ministry of Development, Labour and Technology](#). The National Labour Inspectorate is also responsible for reinforcing labour laws and regulations. Additionally, local governments play a role in implementing youth employment policies and providing support to young people at the regional level.

In addition to the main authorities responsible for youth employment policies, there are several other public actors involved in this area: Regional labour offices, Local labour, National Centre for Supporting Vocational and Continuing Education, Social Security Institution, Regional development agencies - responsible for promoting economic development and creating job opportunities in their regions.

Non-public actors involved in youth employment policies may include Employers' organisations and business associations, Trade unions, Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), Foundations and charitable organisations, Educational institutions, Private employment agencies, Professional associations and chambers, Industry-specific organisations and associations, International organisations and networks operating in Poland.

<sup>84</sup> Source: Eurostat - Statistics explained (26.05.2023) [Statistics on young people neither in employment nor in education or training](#)

<sup>85</sup> Source: OECD (2020) [Education at a Glance 2021: OECD Indicators - Poland](#)

<sup>86</sup> Source: Instytut Badan Strukturalnych, Smoter, M. (March 2019) [Not studying or working. A challenge for public policy?](#)

<sup>87</sup> Source: COST European Cooperation in science and technology - COST Action CA18213 (December 2020) [Rural NEETs in Poland – 2009-2019 overview](#)

## Labour market

Since 2016, the situation on the Polish labour market has been gradually improving, with unemployment rates below 10%. Still, the highest unemployment rate is observed in the age group 15-24 years old, however many branches of industry complain about insufficient workforce resources. The Covid-19 pandemic influenced significantly the labour market situation in Poland, especially when it comes to services - a branch employing many young people<sup>88</sup>.

Women are significantly less active than men in self-employment (12.3% vs. 21.6% in 2019). The self-employed rate for youth (8.5%) was much lower than other groups, but above the EU average (6.2%). The self-employed were substantially less likely to have employees than the EU average (23% vs. 31% in 2019). Compared to other age groups, young people (under 25 years old) are characterised by a very low professional activity rate (only 35%) and low employment rate. Young people are in a more vulnerable position on the Polish labour market than other age groups, because of the lack of professional experience and skills mismatch<sup>89</sup>.

## Youth employment measures

Youth employment is supported through a range of services and instruments provided for in the Act of 20 April 2004 on the promotion of employment and labour market institutions.

- Employment Offices offer funding support, which can be obtained for starting a business.
- The [YGI](#) (unemployed youth and job seeking graduates of schools and higher education institutions).
- [Voluntary Labour Corps \(OHP\)](#) projects [Action Activation](#) and [Unlock Your Potential \(YEI and ESF\)](#) are implemented. Additional actions have been taken within the framework of central competitions organised under the programme [Young People on the Labour Market](#) (Knowledge Education Development Operational Programme). OHP have launched the [Electronic Youth Activation Centre - ECAM](#), a service platform for young jobseekers, those with learning difficulties or having problems with functioning in their environment.
- [State Fund for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons - PFRON](#) subsidises services and instruments addressed to people with disabilities offered by Employment Offices. Support can be provided to people with disabilities registered as unemployed and those who do not have an unemployed status but who are looking for work<sup>90</sup>.

### 1.4.3. Entrepreneurship in Poland

#### Statistics

Over the past two years, due to the pandemic, the number of entrepreneurs opting to establish a new business has further decreased. Men are more inclined to engage in start-up activities than women. In 2019, the margin between the two genders was minimal, but it increased over the next two years, with 61% of men and 39% of women now involved.

According to the [GEM survey results](#)<sup>91</sup>, start-ups in 2019 and the following two years mostly consisted of enterprises introducing new products/services, solidifying their market position, and prototyping. Unfortunately, there is still a gender imbalance in the Polish start-up market, with only 21% of start-ups having more than half of their team comprised of women.

According to [Start-up Poland](#)<sup>92</sup>, the majority of Polish start-ups are young or very young companies. The 2022 survey indicates that as many as 83% of the surveyed companies have been operating on the market for less than four years. Most Polish start-ups are small entities, with 35% of them having between 4 and 10 employees, and 18% employing between one and three people on a permanent basis.

In 2022, a major priority of the Polish government is to boost entrepreneurial activity. This is the goal of the [New Polish Deal](#) signed at the end of 2021, which aims to simplify and cut taxes for entrepreneurs and to incentivise investment in innovative technology.

<sup>88</sup> Source: European Commission – Youth Wiki (Last update: 30.03.2021) [Poland – Employment and entrepreneurship](#)

<sup>89</sup> Source: OECD (2020) [Inclusive Entrepreneurship Policies, Country Assessment Notes, Poland - 2020](#)

<sup>90</sup> Source: European Commission – Youth Wiki (Last update: 31.03.2021) [Poland – Integration of young people in the labour market](#)

<sup>91</sup> Source: GEM Consortium – PARP (2022) [Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Poland 2022](#)

<sup>92</sup> Source: Start-up Poland (2022) [Polish Startups 2022](#)



## Developing entrepreneurship Policy framework

The government [Strategy for Responsible Development until 2020](#) (with a forecast up to 2030) focuses on the development of entrepreneurial competences and support for the creation of new innovative companies in Poland. [Ministry of Development](#) and the [Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy](#) and the [Polish Agency for Enterprise Development \(with the program Start-Up Poland\)](#) play a particularly important role in the context of supporting entrepreneurship at policy level, in the creation and effective implementation of the strategy related to entrepreneurship and innovation.

The [National Bank of Poland](#) (Gospodarstwa Krajowego) has been involved in the promotion of economic and financial education among young people, and operates an [economic education portal](#). It implements the [First Business – Start-up Support](#) scheme of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy to support the development of entrepreneurship. [Ministry of Economic development and Technology](#) launched the [School for an Innovator](#) program in 2019. It aims to develop practical skills to work with students, shape students' pro-innovation competences, and develop recommendations in this regard.

Some other measures:

- Entrepreneurship is part of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education. This means that most third-level students must, at least to a minimum extent, come into contact with entrepreneurship during their studies.
- The new law in higher education, [Constitution for Science \(2018\)](#) focuses on promoting entrepreneurship through the development of partnerships for knowledge transfer and strengthening of co-operation between higher education institutions, businesses and employers.
- The most comprehensive scheme of supporting youth entrepreneurship is offered by the [Youth Enterprise Foundation](#). This NGO aims at preparing children and young people for market economy conditions and enabling young people to acquire the knowledge and practical skills necessary to facilitate the implementation of their professional plans ([under the Knowledge Education Development Operational Programme](#)).
- The Education Loans Fund are intended only for postgraduate studies, courses, training and other forms of adult education offered by national and international entities. The scheme offers participation in individual mentoring, meetings and lectures with representatives of various professions and participation in training sessions on the development of interpersonal competences<sup>93</sup>.

Information on how to set up a business and source funding is widely available. It can be located on various websites: the [Ministry of Development](#) and the [Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy](#), the [Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy](#), [the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development](#), [The National Development Bank](#), [websites of provincial and district Employment Offices](#), Student Career Centres, [Academic Business Incubators](#), regional and local entrepreneurship support centres, entrepreneurship foundations and associations, [Youth Guarantee Initiative](#) website.

The access to capital to start business is available from several sources:

- The [First Business – Start-up Support](#) scheme of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy is implemented by [Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego](#). The aim of the scheme is to develop entrepreneurship and create new jobs. Funds for the implementation of the scheme come from the Labour Fund.
- [Academic Business Incubators \(AIP\)](#) offer the possibility of setting up a Trial Company, without registering a business. The pre-incubation model involves using the legal personality of Academic Business Incubators by first-time entrepreneurs for setting up their business.
- Employment Offices offer funding support for starting a business. The amount of funding is specified in a contract, but cannot be higher than 6 times the average salary. Some Employment Offices run schemes, which offer funding to young people (aged 18 to 30) for the running of a business<sup>94</sup>.

<sup>93</sup> Source: European Commission – Youth Wiki (Last update: 31.03.2021) [Poland – Development of entrepreneurship competence](#)

<sup>94</sup> Source: European Commission – Youth Wiki (Last update: 12.01.2021) [Poland - Start-up funding for young entrepreneurs](#)

## Networks

There are several networks of young entrepreneurs in Poland such as [Youth Business Poland](#), [the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development](#), [the Polish Chamber of Young Entrepreneurs](#) and [Leviathan Youth Forum](#). There are also many local associations of young entrepreneurs, such as the [Association of Young Entrepreneurs – Wrocław](#).

- The [National Chamber of Commerce](#) is carrying out a project called Innovative Youth, which attempts to facilitate co-operation between youth organisations, higher education institutions, business incubators and science and technology parks.
- [Young & Innovative Forum](#) is one of the most popular start-up conferences, which gathers approximately 300 young entrepreneurs on the spot and 15 000 online viewers (2018)<sup>95</sup>.
- [Start-up Poland](#) is a government-backed program that aims to support innovative start-ups. They offer grants of up to 200.000 PLN (approximately 43.000 €), as well as mentorship, training, and access to co-working spaces.
- [Foundation for Technology Entrepreneurship \(FPT\)](#) is a dynamically developing organisation that helps corporations and large enterprises to collaborate with innovative technology start-ups.
- [National Centre for Research and Development \(NCBR\)](#) is a government agency that offers funding and support for research and development projects, including those related to entrepreneurship. They have several programs and initiatives that support young entrepreneurs.

## Social entrepreneurship

The policy on social enterprises in Poland is shaped in the first place by the [Ministry of Family and Social Policy](#) and by the Department of Public Benefit located within the structure of this Ministry. The support structure for social enterprises consists of social economy support centres (OWESs), which provide tailored service for social enterprises<sup>96</sup>. These activities are largely driven by youth (18-30 years old), who were more likely than the EU average to be an early-stage entrepreneur.

There are currently about 1.8 million early-stage entrepreneurs. Removing the gaps in early-stage entrepreneurship activity rates across the main population groups (i.e. applying the early-stage entrepreneurship rate of men who are 30-49 years old to the whole population) would result in about 514,000 additional early-stage entrepreneurs. Only 3% of the entrepreneurs are youth<sup>97</sup>.

## Social entrepreneurship and youth

Many young people are interested in creating businesses that have a positive social or environmental impact, and the government and other organisations have been supporting their efforts through various programs and initiatives. Poland has a number of organisations that support social entrepreneurship and youth, including accelerators, incubators, and co-working spaces that offer training, mentoring, and funding to young entrepreneurs. These are just a few examples of the many organisations that are working to support social entrepreneurship and youth: [Ashoka Poland](#), [The Bridge Foundation](#), [Foundation for Social and Economic Initiatives \(FISE\)](#), [Social Wolves](#).

### 1.4.4. Green economy/ business / entrepreneurship

#### Context

In recent years, the green economy has been growing in Poland as the government and businesses recognise the importance of environmental sustainability. The government has also launched several initiatives to support the development of green technologies and sustainable practices, such as the [Polish Green Building Council](#), which promotes sustainable building practices, and the [Polish Wind Energy Association](#), which supports the development of wind energy projects in the country. The green economy represents a promising trend that has the potential to drive sustainable development and economic growth while protecting the environment.

<sup>95</sup> Source: European Commission – Youth Wiki (Last update: 12.01.2021) [Poland – Promotion of entrepreneurship culture](#)

<sup>96</sup> Source: Ciepielewska-Kowalik, A - Publications Office of the European Union (2020) [Social Enterprises and their ecosystems in Europe, Poland Country Report](#)

<sup>97</sup> Source: OECD (2020) [Inclusive Entrepreneurship Policies, Country Assessment Notes, Poland - 2020](#)

In 2021, in Poland, there were 15 million persons employed, the majority in the group of industry section – 21.6% of total employed. A registered unemployment rate in 2021 has been one of the lowest ones since 2000 and equalled 5.8%<sup>98</sup>.

Green economy activities in Poland refer to the various economic activities that are focused on reducing negative environmental impacts, promoting sustainable development, and addressing climate change. These activities span across several sectors and industries, and they are often supported by government policies and initiatives. Eco-businesses encompass various sectors and industries, providing environmentally friendly and socially responsible products and services.

### Place of young people

Many eco-businesses in Poland have recognised the value of engaging young people in their operations and have developed initiatives to attract and retain young talent. According to a report by [the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development](#), in 2019, over 16% of employees in the environmental sector were aged between 15 and 24. This indicates a significant level of youth participation in the sector. Furthermore, over 80% of eco-businesses are SMEs and young people are more likely to be employed in these types of businesses.

There are also several initiatives aimed at supporting young people's engagement in eco-businesses. For example, the [Polish Ministry of Climate and Environment](#) has launched the Climate Academy program, which offers training and support for young people interested in pursuing careers in the environmental sector. Another example is the Green Tandem program, which connects young people with eco-businesses and provides them with mentoring and support to start their own environmentally friendly business.

### Eco-entrepreneur support networks / trainings

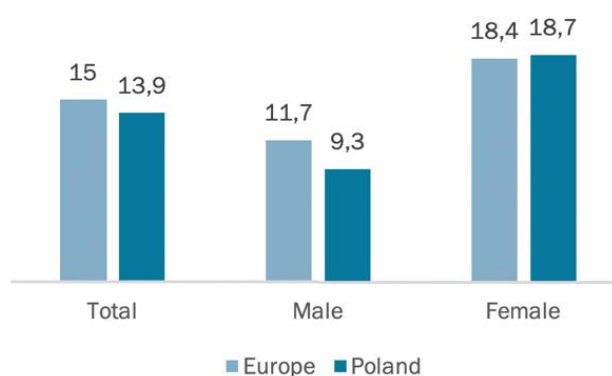
- [GreenEvo](#) seeks to speed up the transfer of environmental technology by running a contest for green technology companies. The effort has established a platform for exchange of knowledge and experience, connected international business partners.
- [Climate-KIC Poland](#) is part of the broader European organisation and supports eco-entrepreneurs in developing climate innovation and sustainable solutions. They offer various programs, including entrepreneurship education, accelerator programs, and access to a network of experts and mentors.
- [Polish Green Network](#) is an organisation that promotes sustainable development and supports eco-entrepreneurs. They provide networking opportunities, training, and resources for eco-entrepreneurs and organisations working towards a greener future.
- [Foundation for Sustainable Energy](#) focuses on promoting renewable energy and sustainable practices. They support eco-entrepreneurs through training programs, consultations and networks.
- [Impact Foundation Poland](#) aims to foster social and environmental entrepreneurship. They support eco-entrepreneurs through mentorship, training, networking events, investors.
- [Polish Sustainable Business Association](#) promotes sustainable business practices and supports eco-entrepreneurs. They provide resources, training, and networking opportunities to help eco-entrepreneurs develop and scale their businesses.

<sup>98</sup> Source: Statistics Poland (16.01.2023) [Green economy indicators in Poland 2022](#)

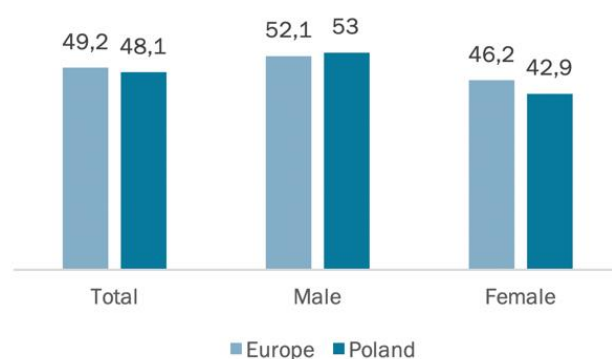
### 1.4.5. Poland - country card

#### NEETs

NEET rates by sex, age and labour status (% of people aged 15 to 29)<sup>99</sup>



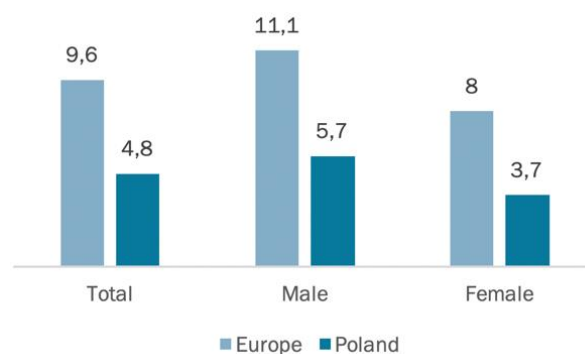
Youth employment by sex, age and educational attainment level (% of people aged 15 to 29)<sup>100</sup>



Early leavers from education and training by sex and degree of urbanisation (% of people aged 18 to 24)<sup>101</sup>



Early leavers from education and training by sex and labour status (% of people aged 18 to 24)<sup>102</sup>



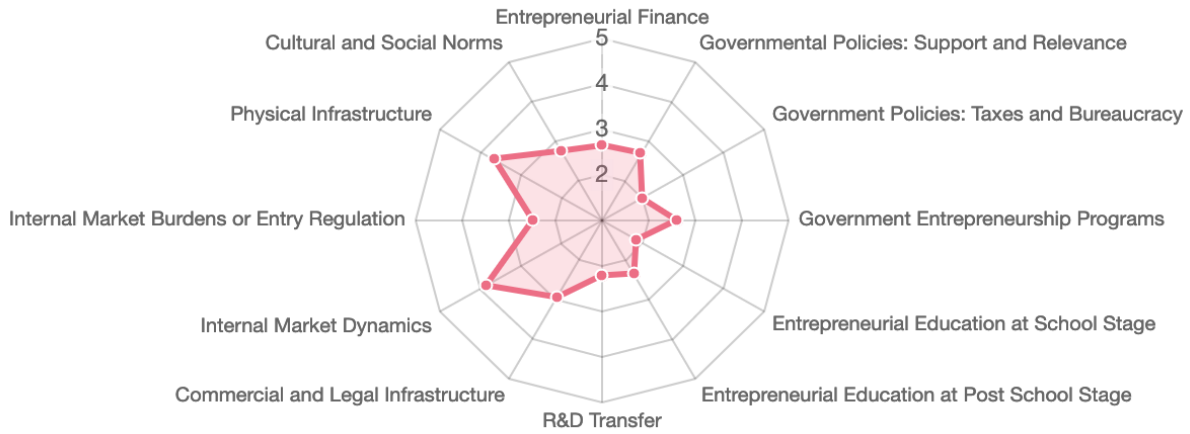
<sup>99</sup> Source: Eurostat (Last update: 26.04.2023) [Young people neither in employment nor in education and training by sex, age and labour status \(NEET rates\)](#)

<sup>100</sup> Source: Eurostat (Last update: 26.04.2023) [Youth employment by sex, age and educational attainment level](#)

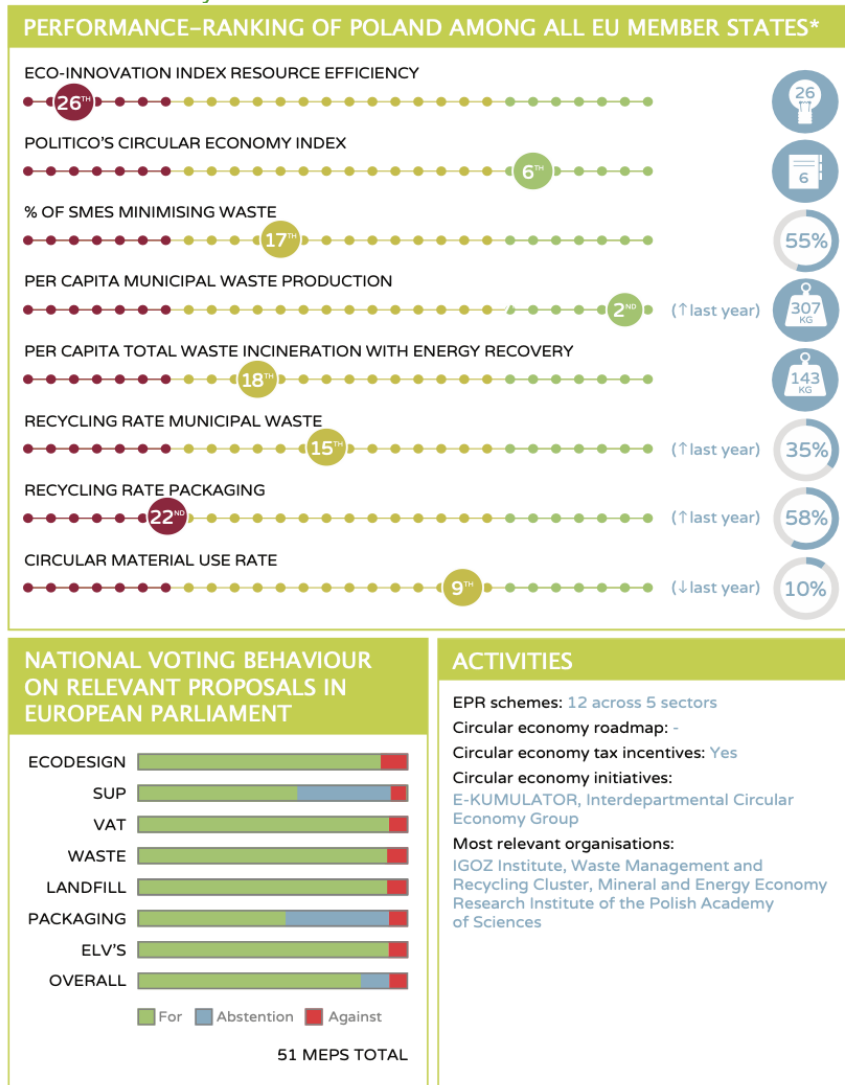
<sup>101</sup> Source: Eurostat (Last update: 26.04.2023) [Early leavers from education and training by sex and degree of urbanisation](#)

<sup>102</sup> Source: Eurostat (Last update: 26.04.2023) [Early leavers from education and training by sex and labour status](#)

### Entrepreneurial framework conditions<sup>103</sup>



### Overview of circular economy<sup>104</sup>



<sup>103</sup> Source: [Global Entrepreneurship Monitor – Economy profiles](#)

<sup>104</sup> Source: Ecopreneur.eu - European Sustainable Business Federation (2019) [Circular economy update overview of circular economy in Europe](#)



## 1.5. Netherlands

### 1.5.1. NEETs

#### Statistics

In the Netherlands, the youth NEET rate has fluctuated around 5% for several years. Based on the Eurostat data<sup>105</sup>, in 2021, the NEET rate was in 5.5%.

Young women are less likely to be employed than young men, particularly those with lower levels of education. Only 53% of 25-34 year olds women with below upper secondary attainment were employed in 2020 compared to 74% of men.

Foreign-born young adults (15-29 year olds) are also more likely to be NEETs than native-born young adults. The share of NEETs among foreign-born young adults who arrived by the age of 15 is 10%, while the share of NEETs among those who arrived at age 16 or later is 19%<sup>106</sup>.

#### Education

Over 817,000 Dutch young people between the ages of 15 to 27 years were not in education and 151,000 of them (18.5%) did not have a job. 167,000 young people left education without a so-called [start qualification](#), which means not having gained at least a senior general secondary education (HAVO) diploma or a secondary vocational education (MBO) level 2 diploma. 67,000 (40.1%) of these 167,000 young people did not have a job, compared to 12.1% of the young people that had gained a start qualification.

The covid 19 pandemic negatively affected the youth unemployment rates. The youth unemployment rate raised from 6.3% in February 2020 to 11.3% in August 2020, after which it slowly decreased to 9.4% in February 2021<sup>107</sup>.

NEETs show limited correlation with urbanisation. In particular, data from the second phase of the quantitative study suggests that NEETs are more likely to be found in rural areas of the country.

The majority of NEETs typically fall within the age range of 15 to 24. Moreover, many Dutch NEETs have not completed their education or lack the necessary qualifications for employment. They may have dropped out of school or not pursued further education or training. A substantial percentage of Dutch NEETs may work occasionally, but they are generally not in stable or regular employment.

In general, NEETs in the Netherlands are more likely to be unmarried and without children compared to individuals who are employed or engaged in education or training. It is less common for NEETs to have families, as they often face challenges in terms of financial stability and independence.

Finally, most NEETs come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Some NEETs may face socio-economic disadvantages or come from low-income households, while others may have personal circumstances or challenges that hinder their engagement in education or employment.

### 1.5.2. Youth employment policy

#### Youth policy employment

- At the national level the cooperation between the [Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment](#) and the [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#) are intensive concerning this policy issue. They aim to tackle youth unemployment and school dropout of young people.
- An important measure of the [Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment](#) is the [Tackling youth employment](#). This measure aims to tackle youth unemployment and to integrate young people to the labour market. Several important stakeholders, such as municipalities, educational institutions, [division of the Social Security Agency \(UWV\)](#) and employers'

<sup>105</sup> Source: Eurostat - Statistics explained (26.05.2023) [Statistics on young people neither in employment nor in education or training](#)

<sup>106</sup> In the Netherlands, the term youth is applied to children and young people from 0 up to the age of 25. In 2021, there were almost 4.9 million children in this age group: children (0 – 12 years) and young people (12 – 25 years). This is 28% of the total population of 17,5 million inhabitants. As in most other industrialised countries, the proportion of youth in the total population is decreasing. Source: OECD [Education at a Glance 2021 : OECD Indicators - Netherlands](#)

<sup>107</sup> Source: European Commission – Youth Wiki (Last update: 15.07.2021) [Netherlands - General-context](#)



organisations are involved at regional level to make sure that young people can gain work experience and can find jobs.

- The [general third support and recovery package](#) provided by Government during the corona crisis was also available for municipal service, crisis support by [regional mobility teams](#) and additional work-based training at secondary education level, in order to guide young people towards further education or work. Each of the 35 labour regions have also presented regional plans with involvement of local stakeholders, which contained concrete ambitions and objectives to be undertaken. The coordination of the approach is in the hands of both the [Minister of Social Affairs and Employment](#) and the [Minister of Education, Culture and Science](#). The approach comprises supporting youngsters who are looking for work after fulfilling school obligations, who are unemployed after a period of work and apply for an unemployment benefit, who have left school without a basic qualification, who are unemployed and receive no unemployment benefit, they can ask the municipality for support.
- Within the Dutch education policy there is the obligation, for people up to the age of 18, to obtain a basic qualification or a diploma for senior general secondary education or pre-university education. Young people between the age of 18 and 23 are assisted by their schools and monitored by the [Regional Reporting and Coordination Centre \(RMC\)](#).
- The [Minister of Social Affairs and Employment](#) launched the programme [Further Integration in the Labour Market](#) in November 2018. The programme comprises pilot projects. One pilot projects investigate measures aimed at all citizens with a non-western migratory background including young people, for example counteracting prejudices during recruitment and selection processes and improving labour market positions).
- The [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#) handed over the central advisory role to a new foundation in August 2015: the [Foundation for Cooperation on Vocational Education, Training and Labour Market](#) (SBB) is responsible for labour market research, the development and maintenance of the qualifications structure and the accreditation of work placement companies.
- Municipalities have a jongerenloket (youth box) for young people between 16 and 27 years. Young people with questions related to education, income and work can approach the youth counter in their municipality.
- The government also pays attention to disabled young people, who find it difficult to work or to find a job. In 2013, the Cabinet decided in the [Social Agreement](#) to tackle unemployment. Within this Social Agreement employers agreed to create 100,000 jobs and the government agreed to create 25,000 extra jobs, the so-called [Job Agreement](#). Employers and government are responsible for reaching the goals in the Job agreement.
- The intervention [Proefplaatsen \(Trial jobs\)](#) gives disabled (young) employees receiving social benefits the possibility to work as a trial employee during 2 months and the employees continue to receive social benefits. During these 2 months, the employer does not pay wages.

### Youth employment measures

The Dutch government is actively involved in promoting that young people leave school with a diploma and are able to find suitable jobs. The government takes policy measures and cooperates with both the business world and the education sector to achieve this.

Municipalities focus on supporting young people without a diploma or the necessary starting qualifications. Stimulating participation in the labour market is based on the [Participation Act](#) (2014). The Act is meant to help all people (including youth) with or without work restrictions to find suitable jobs.

For students of Secondary Vocational Education, a 'learning-by-doing' educational route has been developed. It combines working and learning in companies acting as learning environments. The [Scientific Council for Government Policy](#) (WRR) calls for policies aiming at [social cohesion in education to foster equal opportunities for all youths](#). The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science stimulates easier transition between different kinds of schools, to learn from each other's experiences, awareness of all involved, and space to experiment<sup>108</sup>.

<sup>108</sup> Source: European Commission – Youth Wiki (Last update: 20.11.2020) [Netherlands – Employment and entrepreneurship](#)

### Other measures

The programme [Together to the Client](#) is a large-scale cooperation between different organisations such as the [VNG \(Association of Dutch Municipalities\)](#) and the Employee Insurance Agency ([UWV](#)) that aims to support municipalities and the 35 labour market regions to improve the provision of services to jobseekers and employers.

Besides national measures, a lot also happens at the regional and local level. Some examples:

- Another project that has a focus on youth work is [Tailor-made route \(T.O.M.\)](#). T.O.M. is an initiative of the municipality of Den Bosch for young NEET's between the ages of 16 and 27 years. Through this process, young people are supported in education and a job.
- The [Graafschap College](#) guides vulnerable students, who have finished their secondary vocational education (MBO), towards the labour market. Students who do not know how to find a job are offered support by a job coach of the [School-ex programme](#).
- The initiative [Learn2Work](#) is a learning and working project supported by youth work. It helps young people with multiple problems to structure their lives. The municipality of Almere is one of the actors providing grants.

Young people are relatively often employed through a flexible labour contract. With this [Work and Security Act](#) (2014), the government has created a balance between permanent and flexible terms of employment<sup>109</sup>.

### Labour market

The Dutch economy has quickly recovered from the crisis caused by the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020.

Unemployment is low. On average, 4.2% of the labour force was unemployed in 2021, which equates to 408,000 people. In practice, the potential in the labour market is greater than the official statistics suggest. This is because people who are not working but are not immediately available for work and/or not (yet) looking for work are not counted as part of the unemployed active population.

Sectors with the most jobs are care and welfare, commerce and rental and other business services. Temporary agency work increased in 2021. This is customary when an economy is doing well again after a crisis. Employers first outsource work to temporary workers. At a later stage, employers then employ people themselves under temporary or permanent contracts<sup>110</sup>.

## 1.5.3. Entrepreneurship in the Netherlands

### Policy and context

The main policy responsibility for entrepreneurship lies with the [Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment](#). However, a number of other Ministries may be involved in designing policies. For example, [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science](#) has a role to play in increasing skills amongst both employees and entrepreneurs. For entrepreneurship policies that target vulnerable groups, the [Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment](#) shares responsibility with the [Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate](#). A number of the policy supports are implemented via national level agencies, regional governments, and municipal governments. Dutch entrepreneurship policy tends to take a more general approach, usually not distinguishing between different target groups but tailoring support to individual entrepreneurs<sup>111</sup>.

[The Dutch Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Report from 2019](#) shows that the Netherlands scores well in terms of physical infrastructure, cultural and social norms regarding entrepreneurship, commercial infrastructure and access to finance. Two recent actions aim to reduce administrative burden on entrepreneurs and SMEs, namely the [Dutch Advisory Board on Regulatory Burdens \(ATR\)](#) (2017-21), that reviews all new regulations with a view to reducing burdens on firms and citizens. Further simplifications in the taxation and regulatory systems are anticipated over the period 2018-21 as part of the [Coalition Agreement 2017](#).

<sup>109</sup> Source: European Commission – Youth Wiki (Last update: 31.03.2022) [Netherlands – Integration of young people in the labour market](#)

<sup>110</sup> Source : European Commission – EURES (11.07.2022) [Labour market information - Netherlands](#)

<sup>111</sup> Source: OECD (2020) [Inclusive Entrepreneurship Policies, Country Assessment Notes - The Netherlands 2020](#)

### Barriers to business creations

Despite this strong condition, administrative burden remains a disproportionate obstacle to entrepreneurship for some population groups. Migrants, for example, indicate that they face many challenges in navigating the regulatory environment, often due to difficulties with language. About 45% of the population self-reported having the skills and knowledge needed to start a business in 2019. This level of entrepreneurship skills in the population would be expected to be a favourable influence on the level of entrepreneurship activities and is broadly consistent with the high levels of literacy and digital literacy among adults and students.

People were less likely to report that a “fear of failure” was a barrier than the EU average over the 2015-19 period (34.5% vs. 45.0%). Of the core population groups, women and youth were the most likely to report this barrier (38.8% and 37.8%), but these groups were nonetheless less likely than the corresponding EU average to report this (48.9% for women and 44.7% for EU youth respectively).

A lack of entrepreneurship skills appears to be less of a barrier to business creation in the Netherlands. The share of youth who report having the skills needed to start a business has increased substantially over the past decade: 43.2% of youth self-report having the skills to be an entrepreneur (37.2% for the EU).

### Self-employment and entrepreneurship activities

Nearly 15% of the working population were self-employed in 2019, which was slightly above the EU average. Women were 60% as likely as men to be early-stage entrepreneurs. Youth (18-30 years old) were very active in early stage entrepreneurship between 2015 and 2019: more than 15% were starting or managing a new business. This share was about double the EU average (7.8%). Moreover, early-stage entrepreneurship increased over the past decade. This growth was observed across all of the population groups; however, it was particularly striking among youth entrepreneurs.

### Support schemes

- National schemes are often delivered by local agencies and organisations, and these are complemented by a diverse set of initiatives from municipal governments and non-government organisations. Many of these initiatives aims at women, youth and migrants. There are two successful and long-standing schemes: [Bbz](#) for the unemployed and [Credits](#) for those facing financial exclusion.
- The curriculum of the [Secondary Vocational Education](#) (MBO) has been adjusted with the introduction of options that offer the possibility to learn entrepreneurial skills. On the website of [Entrepreneurial Now](#), students can broaden their skills and gain more knowledge.
- [Platform Education2032](#). The [Netherlands Enterprise Agency](#) and [Young Entrepreneur](#) developed an advice report in which they indicate that entrepreneurial education should be a basis for the future curriculum.
- The [Tax authority](#) has developed a [teaching package “Entrepreneurship and taxes”](#) for students in secondary schools to increase their fiscal consciousness. A teaching package developed is called [business enterprise design and taxation](#). This package contains a manual for teachers, assignments and a summary of the theory.
- The Erasmus+ programme is a large-scale initiative that gives young people the opportunity to develop their skills and competences<sup>112</sup>.

### Developing entrepreneurship

The government developed a set of measures in order to create a favourable environment for business creation. Funding opportunities to create a start-up can be found on [Netherlands Enterprise Agency](#). One of the important Dutch initiatives is [StartupDelta](#). It intends to strengthen, connect and grow the thriving and competitive start-up eco-system of the Netherlands, making it the best place to start and grow innovative companies.

- The [Dutch government](#) wants to help ambitious start-ups and other entrepreneurs to grow quickly, through the [Ambitious Entrepreneurship Action Plan](#). It is important that start-ups have better access to capital, knowledge, innovation and the global market<sup>113</sup>.

<sup>112</sup> Source: European Commission – Youth Wiki (Last update: 20.11.2020) [Netherlands - Development of entrepreneurship competence](#)

<sup>113</sup> Source: European Commission – Youth Wiki (Last update: 20.11.2020) [Netherlands - Start-up funding for young entrepreneurs](#)

- The business foundation [Young Entrepreneurs](#) plays an important role in promoting entrepreneurship for young people. It offers educational programmes and experience based projects for all education levels. Young Entrepreneurs cooperates with private organisations like the ABN AMRO Bank and the [Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy](#).
- The [Dutch government](#) is helping entrepreneurs to access networks because good networks help businesses grow. All entrepreneurs are offered access to [Business.gov.nl \(Ondernemersplein\)](#), the online place where entrepreneurs can access services from a range of agencies like the [Chamber of Commerce](#) and the [Tax and Customs Administration](#). Specific information is offered to young entrepreneurs, like students.
- Another important network at the national and regional level is the largest employers' organisation [VNO-NCW](#) represents the interests of Dutch business and industry and provides a range of services to its members. VNO-NCW also maintains special links with a variety of other organisations<sup>114</sup>.

#### 1.5.4. Green economy/ business / entrepreneurship

##### Context

According to figures of [Statistics Netherlands \(CBS\)](#) taken from the latest Green Growth web publication, assessing developments of environmental indicators during the period 2000-2016, the Dutch economy is growing increasingly green. Companies are implementing cleaner production processes and are using relatively fewer raw materials. In addition, production and employment in the environmental goods and services sector have increased. However, biodiversity and environmental quality (e.g. water quality) are lagging behind.

In October 2011, the Government launched their Sustainability Agenda to examine how key sectors can help the country attain green growth. As part of the Sustainability Agenda, the [Green Deal programme](#) aims to involve the private sector in the green transition. For example, the government has set agreements with the [Dutch Dairy Organisation](#) and the [Dutch Agricultural and Horticultural organisation](#) to have zero-carbon emissions in dairy chains by 2020. By removing harmful regulations, Green Deals aim to strengthen private initiatives. The Netherlands will also pursue greener production outputs by switching to a bio-based economy<sup>115</sup>.

The Netherlands has a strong focus on innovation and research in the field of green business. It supports research and development activities related to sustainable technologies, materials, and practices. The country has established innovation hubs, such as [the Green Chemistry Campus](#) and various technology institutes, to foster collaboration between businesses and researchers<sup>116</sup>.

##### Eco-entrepreneur support networks / trainings

- The [Green Projects Scheme](#) stimulates new developments in environmental technology, circular economy, and durable and innovative (construction) projects.
- The project [Alliance for Green Entrepreneurship](#) address adult learners and will work on fostering sustainable entrepreneurship education by creating a specialised, learner-driven educational materials and resources, dedicated to the development of competences for creating circular economy models, green start-ups and digital enterprises for promoting social innovation and strengthen the third sector entities.
- [Green Entrepreneurship Centre](#) (VHL University of Applied Sciences). In collaboration with knowledge institutions in Gelderland, VHL University of Applied Sciences (VHL) offers a wide range of workshops, training programmes and courses.
- The [Centre for Sustainable Entrepreneurship](#) wants to make sustainable entrepreneurship and the transition to a circular economy successful. This mission translates in new teaching programs for students, new research programs for scholars and new solutions for regional, national and international communities. The Centre provides students, business leaders, scholars, policy-makers and citizens with all knowledge and competencies they need to make sustainable entrepreneurship and the transition to a circular economy successful.

<sup>114</sup> Source: European Commission – Youth Wiki (Last update: 31.03.2022) [Netherlands – Promotion of entrepreneurship culture](#)

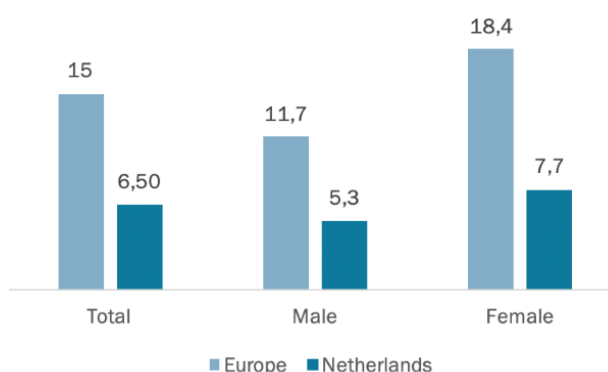
<sup>115</sup> Source: OECD [Green growth in action: The Netherlands](#)

<sup>116</sup> Source: CBS Statistics Netherlands (2009) [Green growth in the Netherlands](#)

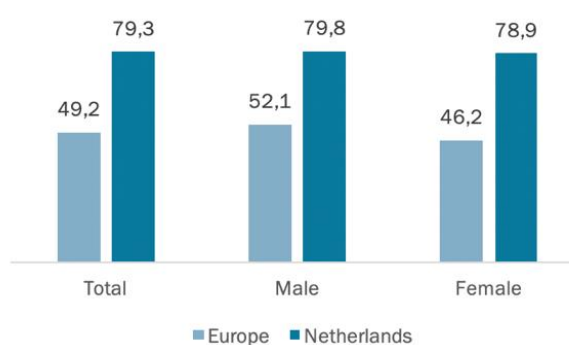


### 1.5.5. Netherlands- country card NEETs

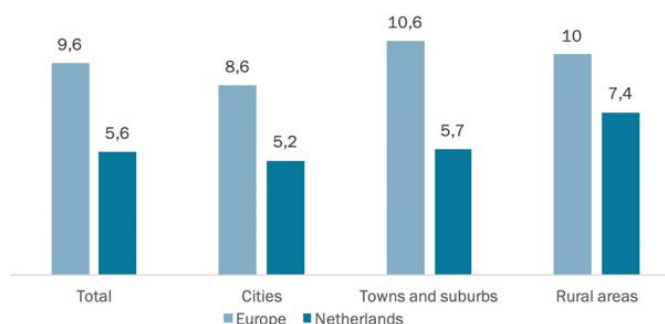
NEET rates by sex, age and labour status (% of people aged 15 to 29)<sup>117</sup>



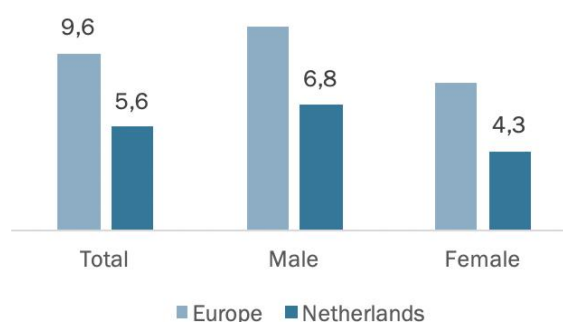
Youth employment by sex, age and educational attainment level (% of people aged 15 to 29)<sup>118</sup>



Early leavers from education and training by sex and degree of urbanisation (% of people aged 18 to 24)<sup>119</sup>



Early leavers from education and training by sex and labour status (% of people aged 18 to 24)<sup>120</sup>



<sup>117</sup> Source: Eurostat (Last update: 26.04.2023) [Young people neither in employment nor in education and training by sex, age and labour status \(NEET rates\)](#)

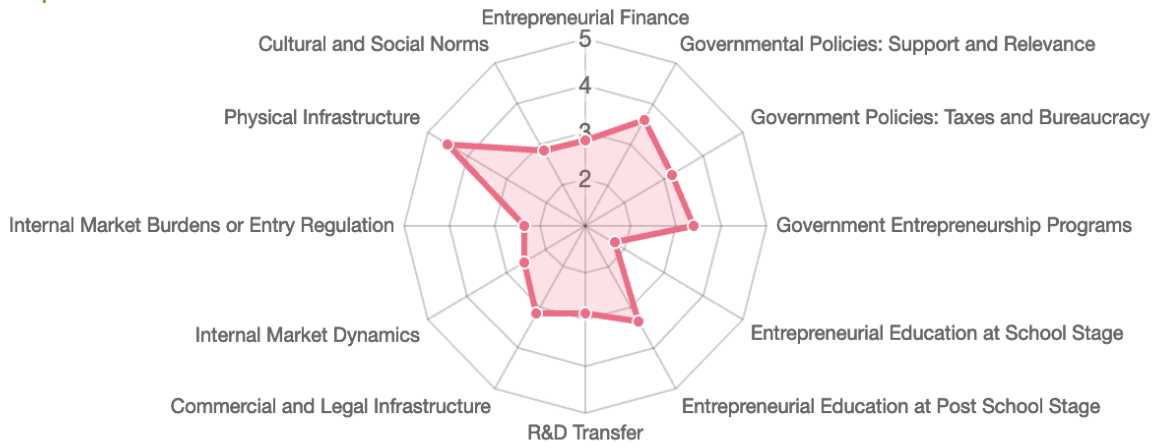
<sup>118</sup> Source: Eurostat (Last update: 26.04.2023) [Youth employment by sex, age and educational attainment level](#)

<sup>119</sup> Source: Eurostat (Last update: 26.04.2023) [Early leavers from education and training by sex and degree of urbanisation](#)

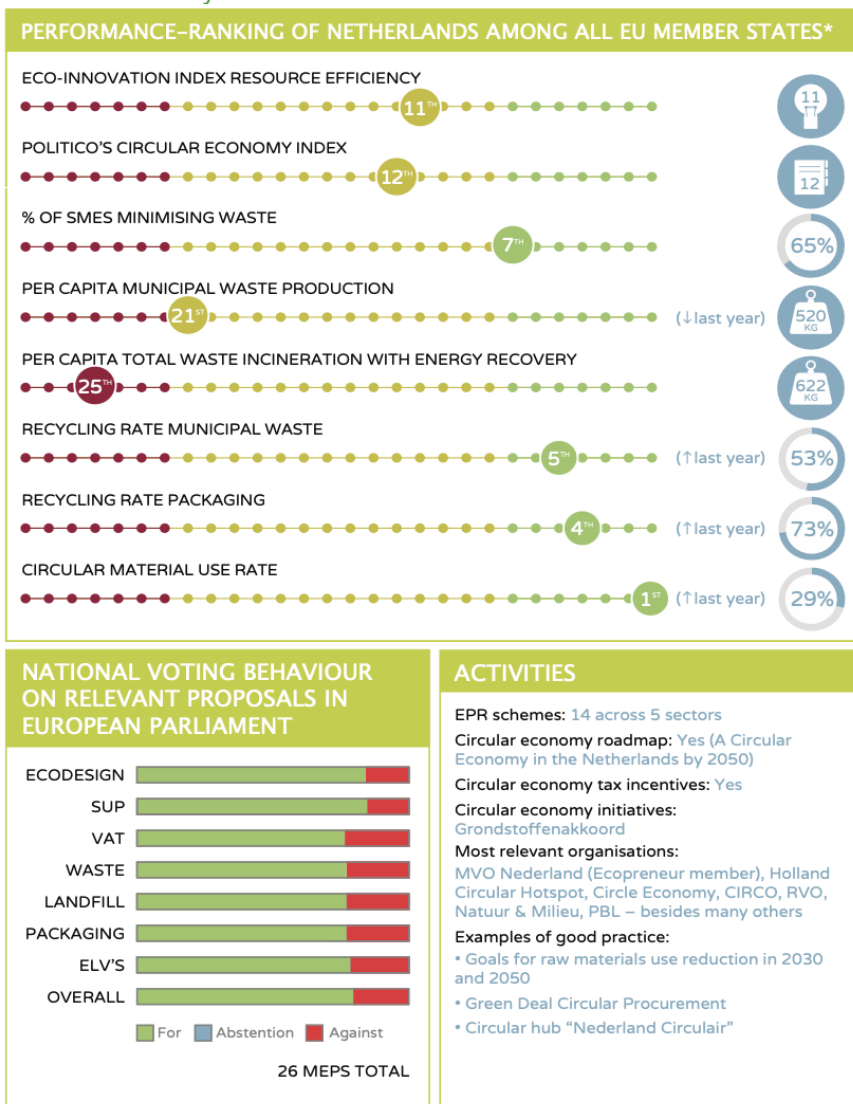
<sup>120</sup> Source: Eurostat (Last update: 26.04.2023) [Early leavers from education and training by sex and labour status](#)



## Entrepreneurial framework conditions<sup>121</sup>



## Overview of circular economy<sup>122</sup>



<sup>121</sup> Source: [Global Entrepreneurship Monitor – Economy profiles](#)

<sup>122</sup> Source: Ecopreneur.eu - European Sustainable Business Federation (2019) [Circular economy update overview of circular economy in Europe](#)

## 1.6. Greece

### 1.6.1. NEETs

#### Statistics

According to Eurostat<sup>123</sup>, the NEET rate for young people aged 15-24 in Greece was 23.6% in the first quarter of 2021, i.e. nearly one in four young people in Greece.

The majority of NEETs are between the ages of 20 and 24. NEETs in Greece can be of either gender, although the likelihood of becoming NEET may be influenced by sex. More specifically, the rate of NEETs is higher among women than men.

The breakdown of NEET subgroups, according to OECD's interim report (2014), shows that 4.9% of young Greeks aged 15-19 are inactive NEETs, with the majority either in education or employed. The [Absents Barometer](#)<sup>124</sup> study indicates that 65.4% of the youth population aged 15-24 are pupils or students, with 16.2% employed.

NEET rate has been relatively high for several years, partly due to the country's economic crisis. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has also had an impact on the NEET rate, as many young people have struggled to find employment or continue their education or training during the pandemic.

The highest percentage of NEETS young people come from tertiary education, while in second place is upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education, and in third place is pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education. This is an exception: it is the only country in the European Union where young people with tertiary education occupy the largest majority of NEETS<sup>125</sup>.

#### Education

Most NEETs have completed secondary or post-secondary education, and lack work experience. The NEET population has a high proportion of women and discouraged workers, as reported by Eurofound.

According to GPO ([Greek Pubic Opinion](#)) & KEADIK ([Centre for Human Rights - of the University of Crete](#))<sup>126</sup>, the educational level of Greek NEETs is generally low, with a majority having graduated from lower secondary education, and in most cases, having a moderate educational level (i.e. graduates of higher secondary level or technical school). Nevertheless, early school leaving should be considered a risk factor for becoming NEET, as exemplified by the case of Roma students.

There is a limited correlation between NEETs and urbanisation. NEETs are more likely to be found in rural areas of the country. The majority of NEETs are unmarried and do not have children, with only a small percentage being married. They usually live with their parents and siblings, with their parents having a secondary or rarely tertiary education level. Family income is typically low to medium, and no NEETs were found in families with higher income, highlighting socio-economic inequalities and intergenerational transmission of poverty. However, NEETs appear to have a better socio-economic status compared to those in other EU member states due to living with their families and sharing their income, which helps prevent social exclusion and extreme poverty.

<sup>123</sup> Source: Eurostat - Statistics explained (26.05.2023) [Statistics on young people neither in employment nor in education or training](#)

<sup>124</sup> Source: University of Crete – Department of Political Science – KEPET & KEADIK (2007-2013) [Project Absents Barometer: Detection, categorization and empirical grounding of policy proposals for tackling a new form of social vulnerability: The NEETs \(Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training\)](#)

<sup>125</sup> Source: International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, Drakaki, M., Papadakis, V., Kyridis, A., & Papargyris, A. (2014). [Young people not in employment, education or training \(NEETs\) in Greece: The impact of the financial crisis and austerity policies. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science](#)

World Bank (2021) [Not in education, employment, or training, total \(% of population ages 15-24\) - Greece](#)

Thessaloniki Project Management Agency SA (2013) [Needs analysis report for the project "New Neighbourhood Networks" \(NNN\)](#)

<sup>126</sup> Source: International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, Drakaki, M., Papadakis, V., Kyridis, A., & Papargyris, A. (2014) [Young people not in employment, education or training \(NEETs\) in Greece: The impact of the financial crisis and austerity policies. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science](#)

### 1.6.2. Youth employment policy

Although there is no definition by law for the Greek Youth and its age limits, age group 15 to 29 years old is the most commonly used in governmental strategy documents and researches. Youth employment policy in Greece has been a significant challenge due to high rates of youth unemployment and underemployment.

The main state authority for employment and entrepreneurship is the [Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs](#) through its supervised bodies: the [Public Employment Services](#) and the [National Institute for Labour and Human Resources Development](#). The Greek government has implemented several policies and initiatives to address this issue, including:

- The government launched a Youth Guarantee scheme in 2014 aimed at providing employment, training, apprenticeship, or continued education opportunities for young people up to the age of 25. The initiative was implemented with the support of the European Union.
- The government has launched several programs to encourage companies to hire young people, including subsidies for employers who hire young people on permanent contracts.

Despite these efforts, youth unemployment remains a significant challenge, with a youth unemployment rate of over 30% as of 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated this issue, leading to increased job losses and reduced job opportunities for young people. The youth unemployment rate is disproportionate in comparison to the EU average, especially after the economic crisis and the pandemic crisis<sup>127</sup>.

#### Labour market

In 2021, the unemployment rate was 13.2%. The unemployment rate is highest among women, persons aged up to 24 years.

The majority of the people outside the labour force aged 15-74 have either never worked in the past (45.5%) or it has been more than 8 years since their last employment ended (29.2%). Furthermore, during the last few years Greece has been particularly hard hit by the refugee crisis due to its geographical situation on the route most frequently used by refugees. According to European Commission estimates, a large wave of refugees entered the EU illegally, and a great many of them used Greece as a point of entry. This places a heavy burden on the Greek economy and adversely affects tourism on the Greek islands<sup>128</sup>.

The current labour market is characterised as an environment with lack of job opportunities, intensified structural problems like inflexibility, high regulation, and strict rules for firing and hiring workers, making the creation of jobs as well as the transition from one job to the other more difficult.

Greek youth unemployment on average fluctuates at one of the highest percentages amongst the EU. According to Eurostat, the youth unemployment rate in Greece was more than twice the national average in 2020. In 2020 and amidst the COVID-19 crisis, the Greek youth unemployment rate for people aged 15-24 years was 45.8%.

Moreover, the gender gap in youth unemployment is quite significant, with the youth unemployment rate for men being 36.8% in 2020, while climbing up to 53.7% for women. Furthermore, there are very stark regional inequalities, with the youth unemployment rate being 49.1% in rural areas in 2020 and 43.5% in urban areas<sup>129</sup>.

#### Measures for youth employment

To support employment, government agencies implement the following measures:

- The measure of the recruitment subsidy for young people up to 29 years of age with 1200 euros. In more detail, for 2022 and in order to deal with youth unemployment in the context of dealing with the consequences of COVID-19, all young people aged 18 to 29 who have no previous work experience and will be hired within the year, receive 6 months of prepaid work time that they can use for their first job. The aid amounts to 1200 euros for the first 6 months of full-time employment. Half of this amount will be received by the employee (in

<sup>127</sup> Source: European Commission – Youth Wiki (Last update: 17.03.2023) [Greece – Employment & entrepreneurship](#)

<sup>128</sup> Source: EURES – [Labour Market information - Greece](#)

<sup>129</sup> Source: European Student Think Tank (07.04.2023) [Youth Unemployment in Greece and the integration of NGEU funds into the new National Strategy](#)

addition to his salary), as an incentive to find a job and the rest by the employer as a wage cost subsidy. For part-time work corresponding to at least 50% of full-time work, half the amount will be given.

- The expansion of the subsidised jobs program from 100,000 to 150,000 jobs. The program in question, which has been in force since October 2020, provides for a 6-month subsidy 100% in contributions for each targeted recruitment of an unemployed person and a subsidy of 200 euros in salary for each recruitment of a long-term unemployed person.
- The extension of the "Co-Working" program until the end of the year, which provides for a 60% subsidy on the salary reduction and a 100% coverage of the contributions corresponding to the reduced salary.
- The extension of the subsidy program for vacancies in culture.
- The payment of special purpose compensation (534€/month) for artists and tour guides.

### Flexibility measures with an emphasis on young people

In the general context of strengthening employment as described in the previous section, as well as in the labour legislation in Greece, flexibility measures with an emphasis on young people are included (e.g. first job contracts, safety of young workers)<sup>130</sup>.

### 1.6.3. Entrepreneurship in Greece

The main state authority for employment and entrepreneurship is the [Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs](#) through its supervised bodies: the [Public Employment Services](#) and the [National Institute for Labour and Human Resources Development](#).

Greek SMEs are significant in the Greek economy as they generate 63.6% of value-added and 85.2% of employment, surpassing the EU average numbers. Furthermore, from all the findings, it appears that, in 2019, the easing of uncertainties and the growth dynamic has strengthened the entrepreneurship situation, before the advent of the pandemic crisis that drastically changed the data of the economy. Finally, entrepreneurs are investing more resources in development, organisation management, and business extroversion.

The economic crisis had allowed many people to start their entrepreneurship journey. From the other side, there are still some droughts, problems, and fears about the economy and business situation. In addition, many enterprises were struggling with government tax policy and other bureaucratic issues. Lastly, satisfaction rates of business operations are moderated among survey participants<sup>131</sup>.

The financial crisis in 2009 was definitely a wake-up call for the country. His new condition led to Greek Entrepreneurship's rebirth<sup>132</sup>. The crisis led to a situation where some people, due to the lack of good job opportunities or because of a new business opportunity, decided to start their own business.

In recent years there are several start-ups that appear in the country with some of them being particularly successful. In 2020, there was a significant increase in capital invested in companies launched more than 10 years ago. Main examples being Viva Wallet and Skrutz that have attracted strong international interest.

The Greek Government has launched an initiative called [Elevate Greece](#), which aims to identify promising start-ups and assist in their growth, while fostering a strong innovation ecosystem. Through this initiative, Greek start-ups can apply for official accreditation by the [Ministry of Development & Investments – General Secretariat for Research & Innovation - GSRI](#).

### Social Entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship in Greece has been gaining momentum in recent years. In 2017, the first [EXPO of social entrepreneurship](#) took place in Athens. Social economy in Greece was

<sup>130</sup> Source: European Commission – Youth Wiki (Last update: 23.03.2023) [Greece- Integration of young people in the labour market](#)

<sup>131</sup> Source: [KnE Social Sciences](#) Athanasios Vasilopoulos, Christos A. Tsitsakis (November 2021) [The Development of Entrepreneurship in Greece – The Aftermath of an Economic Crisis \(Conference paper\)](#)

<sup>132</sup> Source: IED - Institute of Entrepreneurship Development (18.02.2021) [The Transformation of Greek Entrepreneurship](#)



first institutionalised in 2011. According to a report by the European Commission, the social economy in Greece represents 3.6% of the country's GDP (gross domestic product) and employs approximately 191,000 people. However, the sector faces several challenges, including limited access to financing, lack of legal framework, and low public awareness of social entrepreneurship. To address these challenges, the Greek government has developed various policies and initiatives to support social entrepreneurship. The Social Entrepreneurship Fund, established in 2013, provides financial support to social enterprises and aims to foster social innovation and entrepreneurship. In addition, the [Greek Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs](#) launched the Social Entrepreneurship Center in 2015, which offers training, mentoring, and networking opportunities to aspiring social entrepreneurs.

Several successful social enterprises have emerged in Greece, addressing various social and environmental issues, such as refugee integration, youth unemployment and waste management<sup>133</sup>.

Self-employed people is very high in Greece. In 2019, the self-employment rate was nearly double the EU average (23% vs. 12.5%). Seniors and youth, the most affected by the persisting effects of the financial crisis, have the highest self-employment rates. The most notable gaps in the inclusive entrepreneurship support system are for female entrepreneurs and immigrant entrepreneurs. Support for women entrepreneurs is in place and support for immigrant entrepreneurs has not kept pace with the growth in immigration in recent years<sup>134</sup>.

### Youth entrepreneurship

Youth entrepreneurship is well established and the majority of initiatives appear to be of reasonable quality. While many of these actions are implemented through the Youth Employment Initiative, there are also many schemes that support innovative entrepreneurship in higher education<sup>135</sup>, like including the entrepreneurship education into the formal education system, establishing start-up incubators and accelerators, mentorship programs, consulting services, networking, internationalisation support and simplified regulatory administrative and regulatory procedures.

Moreover, several programmes focus on youth entrepreneurship and specifically on individuals aged 18 to 29 with an emphasis on women. These are 12 months actions where registered unemployed 18–29-year-olds apply for funding, including a business plan proposal, to promote the self-employment of 1,000 young unemployed people through the creation of sustainable businesses. The amount of aid for new businesses is €14,800. The project is co-financed by the Greek State and [the European Social Fund/Youth Employment Initiative](#), under the Programme [Human Resources Development, Education and Lifelong Learning 2014-2020](#)<sup>136</sup>.

### Programme supports

According to the Youth Guarantee Action Plan, actions and programmes have been implemented by the Hellenic Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs:

- Supporting business plans of unemployed young people aged 18-29. The programme was implemented in collaboration with the social partners and was aimed at creating a unified counselling and mentoring environment for young people aged 18–29 to develop and implement sustainable business plans in the given economic and social environment. The business ideas were evaluated for their maturity by a team of assessors based on predefined evaluation criteria, and the 3,000 most mature business ideas were selected for guidance so that the beneficiaries could prepare complete business plans.
- Entrepreneurship programme for unemployed young people aged 18-29 and strengthening entrepreneurship. Youth Entrepreneurship Counselling Programme. Mentoring services were implemented in collaboration with the social partners for the

<sup>133</sup> Source: AthensLive (22.03.2019) [What about Social Entrepreneurship in Greece?](#)

<sup>134</sup> Source: OECD - [Inclusive Entrepreneurship Policies, Country Assessment Notes, Greece \(2020\)](#)

<sup>135</sup> Source: OECD - [Inclusive Entrepreneurship Policies, Country Assessment Notes, Greece \(2020\)](#)

<sup>136</sup> Source: CNN Greece (12.04.2021) [Youth Entrepreneurship: 14,800 euro grants - What you need to know](#)



beneficiaries of the programme Entrepreneurship programme for unemployed young people aged 18-29<sup>137</sup>.

All initiatives to strengthen youth entrepreneurship are announced on the websites of the [Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs](#) as well as the [Ministry of Development and Investments](#).

[Grant Program for business initiatives employing](#) 3,000 young freelancers aged 18 to 29 with a focus on digital economy<sup>138</sup>.

#### 1.6.4. Green economy/ business / entrepreneurship

##### Local context

One of the key initiatives is the National Action Plan for the Promotion of Green Economy, which was launched in 2016. The plan aims to promote sustainable development in all sectors of the economy and promote the use of renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power. It also focuses on energy efficiency and aims to reduce energy consumption in buildings and transport.

Another important initiative is the development of the circular economy, which aims to reduce waste and promote the reuse and recycling of materials. In this regard, the Greek government has launched the [National Action Plan for the Circular Economy](#), which aims to promote sustainable production and consumption practices and reduce waste generation.

Furthermore, Greece has made significant progress in the development of renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the production of electricity from renewable sources, and the government has set a target of producing 35% of the country's electricity from renewables by 2030.

[The National Energy and Climate Plan \(NECP\) of Greece](#) provides a comprehensive plan to achieve specific energy and climate goals by 2030. However, Greece still confronts persistent environmental issues in several areas. Although waste management has shown some improvement, the majority of municipal waste is still being disposed of in landfills (77%), and the recycling rate has only moderately increased from 14.7% in 2017 to 16% in 2019. In terms of the circular economy, Greece's performance falls short of the EU average, creating additional strain on natural ecosystems (Factsheet on Green Policies in Greece, prepared by the [Foundation for Economic and Industrial Research](#) – IOBE, in the context of the e-Conference on Greece and the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility, organised jointly with the European Commission in September 2021).

Finally, the Greek government has also been promoting sustainable tourism, which is an important sector of the economy. Initiatives in this regard include promoting sustainable practices in the tourism industry, promoting eco-tourism, and encouraging the use of sustainable transportation in the tourism sector<sup>139</sup>.

##### Green entrepreneurship networks / trainings

- [EKO Greece](#). EKO, the Entrepreneurship and Social Economy Group, is a non-profit organisation seated in Athens, Greece, established in 2013, operating at a local and European level, with youth as its main target group. EKO's primary mission is to contribute to the creation of an inclusive society, which will be in the position to develop and grow sustainably.
- [The Hellenic Initiative](#) is a global non-profit organisation that brings together Diaspora Greeks and Philhellenes to invest in the future of Greece through programs focused on crisis relief, entrepreneurship, and economic development.
- [Green Business Network \(GBN\)](#) is a Greek organisation that aims to foster green entrepreneurship and sustainability. It provides a platform for networking, collaboration, and knowledge sharing among green businesses and entrepreneurs.
- The [Hellenic Start-ups Association \(HSA\)](#) supports and represents the interests of Greek start-ups, including those focused on green and sustainable technologies. It provides resources, mentorship, and networking opportunities to entrepreneurs.

<sup>137</sup> Source: European Commission – Youth Wiki (Last Update: 01.09.2022) [Greece - Inclusive programmes for young people](#)

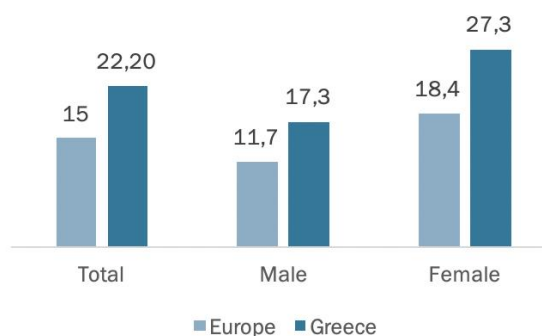
<sup>138</sup> Source: European Commission – Youth Wiki (Last Update: 23.03.2023) [Greece - Start-up funding for young entrepreneurs](#)

<sup>139</sup> Source: Institute of Economic and Industrial Research - IOBE (2021) [Factsheet on Green Policies](#)

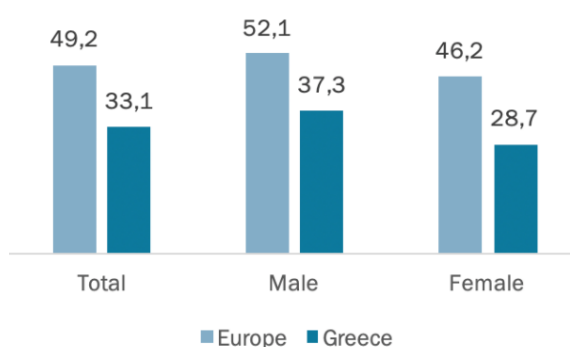
- [Sustainable Greece 2020](#) is an initiative that promotes sustainable entrepreneurship and innovation. It supports businesses that contribute to environmental protection, social responsibility, and economic growth in Greece.

### 1.6.5. Greece- country card NEETs

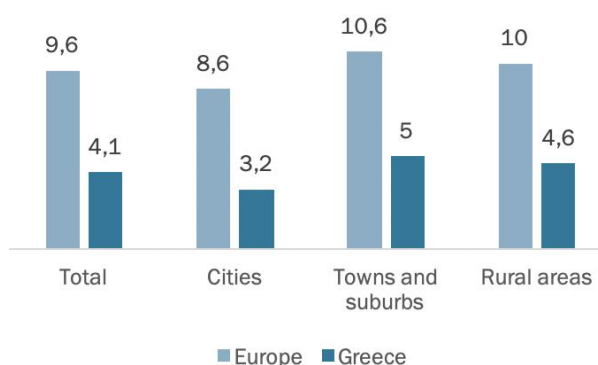
NEET rates by sex, age and labour status (% of people aged 15 to 29)<sup>140</sup>



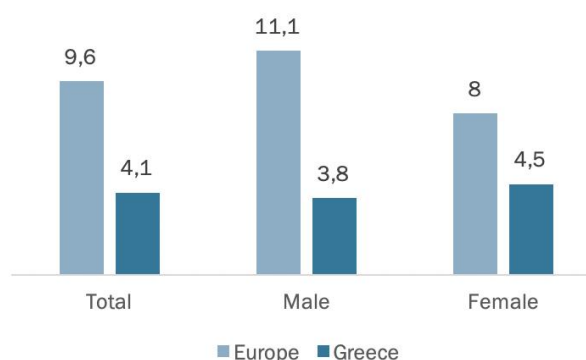
Youth employment by sex, age and educational attainment level (% of people aged 15 to 29)<sup>141</sup>



Early leavers from education and training by sex and degree of urbanisation (% of people aged 18 to 24)<sup>142</sup>



Early leavers from education and training by sex and labour status (% of people aged 18 to 24)<sup>143</sup>



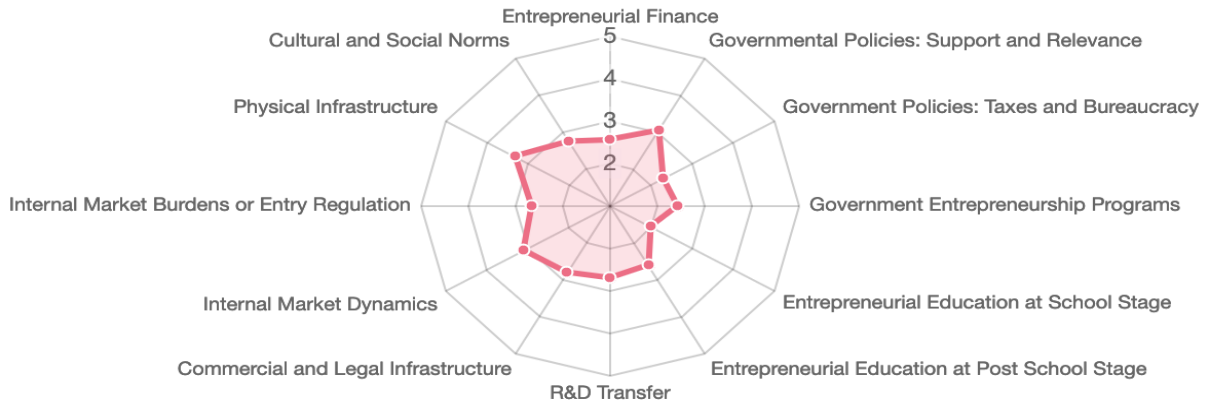
<sup>140</sup> Source: Eurostat (Last update: 26.04.2023) [Young people neither in employment nor in education and training by sex, age and labour status \(NEET rates\)](#)

<sup>141</sup> Source: Eurostat (Last update: 26.04.2023) [Youth employment by sex, age and educational attainment level](#)

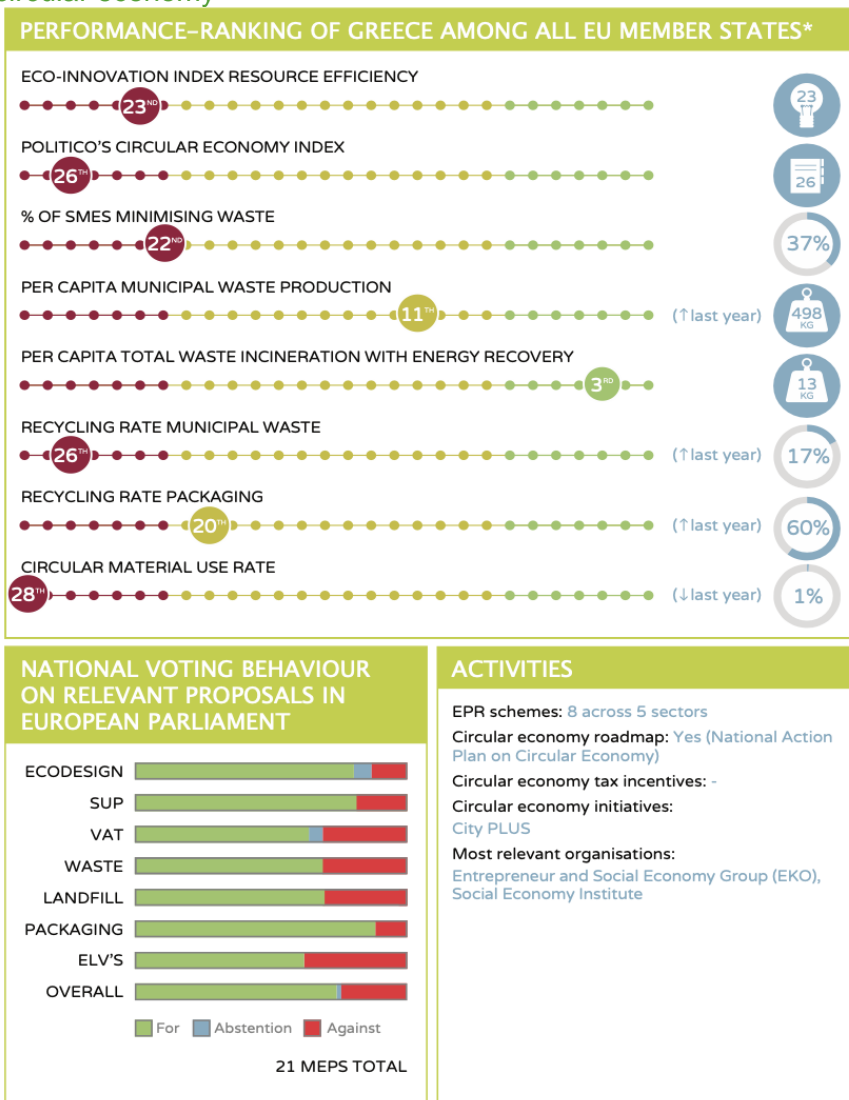
<sup>142</sup> Source: Eurostat (Last update: 26.04.2023) [Early leavers from education and training by sex and degree of urbanisation](#)

<sup>143</sup> Source: Eurostat (Last update: 26.04.2023) [Early leavers from education and training by sex and labour status](#)

## Entrepreneurial framework conditions<sup>144</sup>



## Overview of circular economy<sup>145</sup>



<sup>144</sup> Source: [Global Entrepreneurship Monitor – Economy profiles](#)

<sup>145</sup> Source: Ecopreneur.eu - European Sustainable Business Federation (2019) [Circular economy update overview of circular economy in Europe](#)

## 1.7. Brief summary

### 1.7.1. NEETs

#### Europe



The profile of NEETs varies across countries and regions, but there are some **common factors** observed among this population in Europe: **age** (15-29 years-old), **gender** (young women have higher NEET rates compared to young men), **educational level** (lower than their peers), be part of “**vulnerable groups**” (low-income families, marginalised communities, people with disabilities, ethnics minorities...); live in **rural areas**, and have a **lack of work experience**.

#### France



France has been actively addressing the NEET issue through various policies and programs. The country offers a range of educational pathways, including vocational training and apprenticeship programs, to facilitate the transition from education to employment. These efforts have helped reduce the NEET rate in France, although challenges remain. NEETs' rate stays higher than the European average. **Compared to other countries, the NEETS rate is lower in rural areas (18%) than in cities (20%) and between the ages of 15 and 24, young men are more likely to be NEET than young women (9.7% in 2021).** After 24, this changes afterwards.

#### Hungary



**NEETS' rate has been relatively high compared to the European average.** The country has faced challenges in providing adequate education and employment opportunities for young people. The government has implemented several measures to address the issue, such as vocational training programs, subsidies for employers hiring young people, and entrepreneurship support. Despite these efforts, **youth unemployment and NEETS' rate remain a concern in Hungary.**

As for many countries, the **young women are more represented than men in NEETS profiles; the average of young women is higher than EU average while the number of young men is lower. NEETS are more presents in town, suburbs, and rural areas than in cities.** The youngest people (aged 15-19 years) have the highest unemployment rate.

#### Poland



Poland has been experiencing a significant reduction in NEET rates over the past years. The country has implemented various initiatives and reforms to combat youth unemployment and improve education and training opportunities. Specific policies include vocational training programs, apprenticeships, and job placement services. However, regional disparities and structural issues still contribute to a higher NEETS' rate in certain areas, particularly in rural regions.

**Majority of NEETS are resident of small towns and rural areas.** In line with European characteristics, **the rate of women is higher than men**, but it is important to note that the gender difference is higher than the other countries for the women: only 23% of 25-34 years old women with below upper secondary attainment were employed in 2020 compared to 59% of men. However, Poland is the best country **concerning the 15-19 years old: it is the country with the lowest rate.**

#### Netherlands



NEET's rate in the Netherlands has fluctuated around 5%, with the lowest rate in 2021 at 5.5%. **Young women**, especially those **with lower levels of education, are less likely to be employed** compared to young men. **Foreign-born young adults (15-29 years old) have a higher likelihood of being NEET** compared to native-born young adults. Many NEETs have not completed their education or lacked the necessary qualifications for employment. To finish, NEETs are more likely to be found **in rural areas**. The Netherlands has the lowest number of NEETS compared to the other European countries involved in the project.

#### Greece



Greece has been grappling with a high NEETS rate, exacerbated by the economic crisis in the country. The prolonged recession and limited job opportunities have affected young people's employment prospects and access to education and training. The government has implemented various measures, such as subsidised employment programs and entrepreneurship support, to address youth unemployment and NEET rates. Efforts are also being made to enhance vocational training and improve the match between education and labour market needs. The issue to find work for young people is particularly showed by the rate of **young people with tertiary education, which is the largest majority of NEETS in Greece, and a specificity in Europe.** As with the other countries, **women are most represented (18.1% for 16.6%).**



## 1.7.2. Youth employment policies and entrepreneurship

### Europe



**Poland, Hungary, France, Netherlands and Greece have all adopted numerous measures to improve youth employment, including the Youth guarantee program.** This initiative aims to provide young people with a job, apprenticeship, traineeship, or further education within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. In addition, **all the countries involved are implementing the vocational education and training (VET).** Most of the countries involved have put in place **financial measures** to encourage employers to hire young workers, but also **to encourage young people to start their own business.**

### France



**The number of new enterprises is increasing** in all regions, with significant growth in sectors such as transport and storage, specialised, scientific and technical activities, and other household services. **40.2% of sole traders are under 30 years old**, and the average age of sole traders is **35 years old.** **Women are in the majority in sectors such as human health and social work, other household services, industry, and education, while men dominate in construction, transport, storage, and information and communication.** Public authorities have introduced programs and tools to facilitate initial fundraising for start-ups, implemented through Bpifrance (French public investment bank) and the Ministry of Economy. Various initiatives provide financial support, tax exemptions, and legal frameworks for start-ups. Various associations and schemes are also supporting young people in their enterprise.

### Hungary



Hungary has a **slightly lower percentage of adults with the skills to start a business compared to the EU average, and men tend to be more confident in their business skills than women.** **The typical entrepreneur falls between the ages of 25 and 44.** Factors such as low risk appetite fear of failure, unpredictable economic conditions, lack of effective entrepreneurship education, and negative societal opinions contribute to lower entrepreneurship rates among young people. **Several initiatives and organisations support entrepreneurship for young people, providing information, mentoring programs, funding opportunities, and support for business creation.**

### Poland



Due to the pandemic, **the number of entrepreneurs starting new businesses has decreased over the past two years.** **Men are more inclined than women to engage in start-up activities,** with a widening gender gap observed over the past two years. In addition, there is a gender imbalance in the Polish start-up market, with only **21% of start-ups having more than half of their team comprised of women.** **The majority of Polish start-ups are young or very young companies and small entities land by 30+ years old men.** The Polish government prioritises boosting entrepreneurial activity through the **New Polish Deal**, aiming to simplify and cut taxes for entrepreneurs and incentivise investment in innovative technology.

### Netherlands



**In 2019, nearly 15% of the working population in the Netherlands were self-employed,** slightly above the EU average. **Women were 60% as likely as men to be early-stage entrepreneurs, and youth (18-30 years old) were very active in early-stage entrepreneurship, more than double the EU average.** Administrative burden remains a significant obstacle for certain population groups. The Netherlands has a high level of entrepreneurship skills in the population, and fear of failure is less of a barrier compared to the EU average. Regarding this, The Dutch government has implemented **measures to create a favourable environment for business creation.** Various national and local initiatives aim to support entrepreneurship, particularly targeting women, youth, and migrants.

### Greece



**The European economic crisis had a devastating impact on businesses in Greece, leading to job losses and unemployment.** However, it also created an environment where people started their own businesses due to the lack of job opportunities or new business prospects. **Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play a significant role in the Greek economy.** **Youth entrepreneurship programs target individuals aged 18 to 29.** Measures include funding support for business plans, entrepreneurship education in the formal education system, start-up incubators, mentorship programs, and simplified regulatory procedures. The Greek government has implemented various actions and programs to support youth entrepreneurship (counselling and mentoring services, strengthening entrepreneurship, and funding initiatives).

### 1.7.3. Eco-entrepreneurship and green business

#### Europe



Europe has implemented various policies to support and promote green business and eco-entrepreneurship, like the European Green Deal, Horizon Europe, the Circular Economy Action Plan, or the EU sustainable finance... These policies aim to foster a sustainable and environmentally friendly business environment. In addition, European countries have established start-ups incubators, accelerators, and innovation hubs that provide mentoring, networking, and funding support specifically tailored to eco-entrepreneurs. These initiatives aim to nurture and develop sustainable business ideas.

#### France



Approximately **80,000 people under the age of 30** work in the **green economy** in France. The **green economy** in France encompasses nearly **1 million jobs (waste treatment, wastewater management, and renewable energy)**. Approximately 10,000 to 12,000 eco-companies operate in France, consisting of a few large operators, **90% SMEs and VSEs (very small enterprises)**, and around **fifty intermediate-sized companies (ETIs)**. The sector is structured in networks, clusters, and competitiveness clusters. **Workers under the age of 30 represent 20% of green economy occupations in France.** Young people are more prevalent in **energy and water production and distribution and nature and environmental protection.** Among the greening professions, **tourism and entertainment** have the **highest percentage of young workers.**

#### Hungary



**21% of businesses** in Hungary aim to **produce from recyclable materials.** Smaller companies showed the **highest proportion of using recyclable raw materials.** The **main challenges** faced by micro and small businesses in becoming greener include a **lack of resources or external support, frequent and difficult-to-follow regulatory changes, and insufficiently encouraging regulations.** At national and international levels, Global Green Growth Institute assists the Government in achieving climate objectives. They provide support for the delivery of the National Clean Growth Strategy and policy support under the European Green Deal.

#### Poland



**Poland has recognised the importance of environmental sustainability and has set ambitious targets for reducing carbon emissions and increasing renewable energy.** The government has launched initiatives and organisations like the Polish Green Building Council and Polish Wind Energy Association to support green technologies and sustainable practices. **Young people have an important role in eco-businesses.** Initiatives. "Climate Academy" program and "Green Tandem" program support young people's engagement in eco-businesses and offer training, mentoring, and support for their careers in the environmental sector. **Several networks and organisations support eco-entrepreneurs.** They offer programs, training, mentoring, networking opportunities, and access to funding for eco-entrepreneurs.

#### Netherlands



The Dutch government has a **strong focus on green growth and promotes eco-innovation to create new employment opportunities while reducing pollution and resource consumption.** The Dutch government has identified sectors where Dutch businesses and research centres excel internationally. These sectors play a central role in governmental policies aimed at promoting innovation and enhancing the country's economic competitiveness. **The Netherlands prioritises innovation and research in green business.** Innovation hubs and technology institutes foster collaboration between businesses and researchers.

#### Greece



**The pandemic accelerated the adoption of new practices,** as digital technologies, e-commerce, or **greener activities.** The economic and environmental challenges have prompted a **greater emphasis on sustainability and the green economy.** From the state point of view, the National Action Plan for the Promotion of Green Economy (launched in 2016) aims to promote **sustainable development across all sectors of the economy.** It focuses on the use of **renewable energy sources** like solar and wind power, as well as energy efficiency measures to **reduce consumption in buildings and transport.** In addition, **Greece has initiated several plans to reduce waste, promote the reuse and recycling or material, product electricity from renewable sources, and promote sustainable tourism.**

## 2. Interviews

In addition to the analysis of the different contexts (Europe, France, Hungary, Poland, Netherlands, Greece), partners had to verify the results of the research conducted at pre-application level. To do so, participants from both direct (NEETs & youth workers/trainers) and indirect target groups (Human Resources departments, policy makers etc.) were expected to participate in the survey and provide feedback to be incorporated in the needs analysis. The results are used to formulate the ecopreneurial competence framework based on participants' background.

### 2.1. Methodology

Profiles interviewed:

- NEETs x 2 in each country
- Eco-entrepreneur x 2 in each country
- Accompanying persons x 2 in each country

An interview grid was designed for each person profile<sup>146</sup>. For each one, one main objective has been set:

- NEETs: knowing the knowledge and expectations of NEETs in the field of eco-entrepreneurship
- Accompanying persons for NEETs: thinking about support in line with NEET's needs
- Ecopreneurs: definition and understanding of eco-entrepreneurship by those who practise it

The aim was also to encourage them to participate in the project.

Interview process:

- Presentation of the project EcopreNEETs to the person interviewed
- Method: recording and transcribing of the interview
- Duration: 1h

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<sup>146</sup> Interview grids available in annex

## 2.2. Profile of interviewed persons

NEETS	Name	Gender	Age	Status / Profession / Enterprise
France	Léonie B.	Female	18	High school diploma, not the baccalaureate
France	Laura A.	Female	23	Did not complete her bachelor's degree in computer science
Poland	Anna K.	Female	24	Bachelor of Science in economics
Poland	Katarzyna	Female	22	Secondary education
Poland	Yuliia S.	Female	20	Secondary education
Poland	Piotr W.	Male	22	Secondary education
Poland	Wojciech N.	Male	20	Secondary education
Poland	Dorota P.	Female	21	Secondary education
Hungary	Szabó I.	Male	23	University degree
Hungary	Eőry P.	Female	23	University degree
Greece	Spyrogiannis K.	Male	25	Bachelor Degree in Agriculture
Greece	Konstantina Z.	Female	25	High School Diploma in Agriculture
The Netherlands	Asal Ahmadi	Female	20	Secondary education
The Netherlands	Noah Vercruysse	Male	25	Bachelor's degree in computer science
ACCOMPANYING PERSONS FOR NEETS		Gender	Age	Status / Profession / Enterprise
France	Carine G.	Female	50	Social worker
France	Thierry A.	Male	52	Social worker
Poland	Agata J.	Female	28	Social worker
Poland	Marta L.	Female	29	Social worker
Hungary	Szilágyi H. R.	Female	40	Youth mentor
Hungary	Kárpáti R.	Female	40	Youth mentor
Greece	Nikolas B.	Male	29	Youth worker
Greece	Maria K.	Female	25	Youth Worker
The Netherlands	Olivia Bakker	Female	35	Social worker
The Netherlands	Johanna de Vries	Female	32	Youth worker
ECOPRENEURS		Gender	Age	Status / Profession / Enterprise
France	Olivier G.	Male	51	Funeral sector
France	Léa R.	Female	39	Consulting
Poland	Karolina L.	Female	32	Eco-Tourism
Poland	Jukub K.	Male	34	Eco-Tourism
Hungary	Kovács S.	Male	40	Eco-business
Hungary	Nagy L.	Male	38	Eco-tourism
Greece	Stavroula T.	Female	40	Eco-tourism
Greece	Vlastaras T.	Male	43	Technology
The Netherlands	Mark van Rossum	Male	39	Transports
The Netherlands	Thomas Corsel	Male	42	Agriculture

## 2.3. Interview analysis

All the interviews<sup>147</sup> were transcribed and appended to this document. To analyse them, the consortium decided to keep the answers by profile and to study each question individually. The aim was to give an overview of the responses obtained. For the closed questions, diagrams were drawn up to provide an overview. For the open-ended questions, a summary and analysis of the responses obtained in relation to our expectations. Where relevant, quotations were included.

As a reminder, the results will be used to formulate the ecopreneurial skills framework (useful for the training MOOC) and to draft recommendations for all the work packages (eco-skills training MOOC / training of trainers / EcopreneNEETs incubation).

them, the consortium decided to keep the responses by profile and to study each question individually.

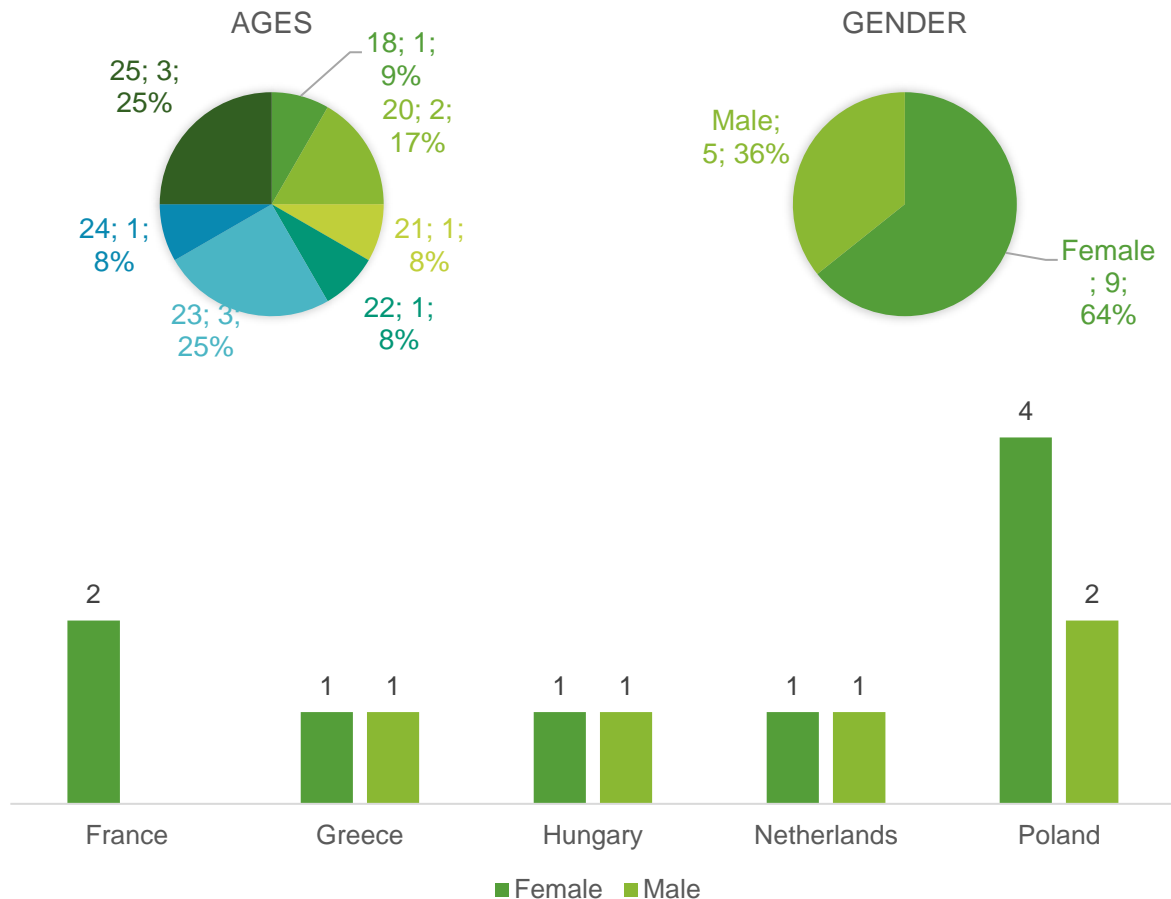
### 2.3.1. NEETs

#### General information relative to the cross section

The study of the results of the interviews carried out with the 14 young people is not intended to represent and analyse the situation and characteristics of NEETs in the different countries. Nevertheless, efforts were made to ensure diversity in the profiles interviewed, as detailed in the points below.

The open-ended interview method is designed to encourage qualitative rather than quantitative feedback, which is why we chose to interview 14 young people, not more. As the sample is small, the aim is not to produce purely statistical data, but rather to obtain information on the profiles of the young people we will meet and train according to their expectations, needs and problems, and to improve our project in the light of this information.

#### Age group / Gender / Country

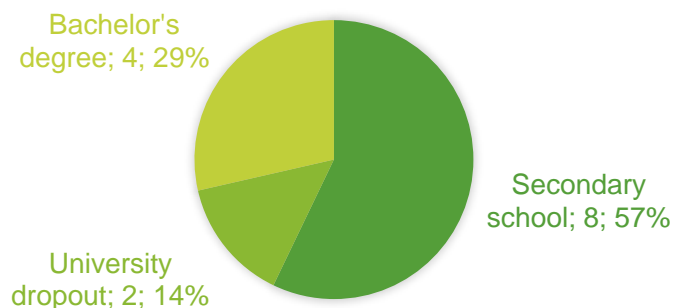


<sup>147</sup> Interviews transcripts available in annex



As the diagrams show, the age range of the young people interviewed is between 18 and 25. We therefore do not have any young people representative of the ages between 15 and 17 and 25 and 29, which has an impact on the information we receive. In terms of gender, we interviewed a majority of women, in line with Eurostat statistics on the higher proportion of women among NEETS. Finally, we obtained more positive responses from Poland to do the interviews, which means that our sample is predominantly Polish, which should be taken into account when analysing the information obtained.

### Age group / Gender / Country

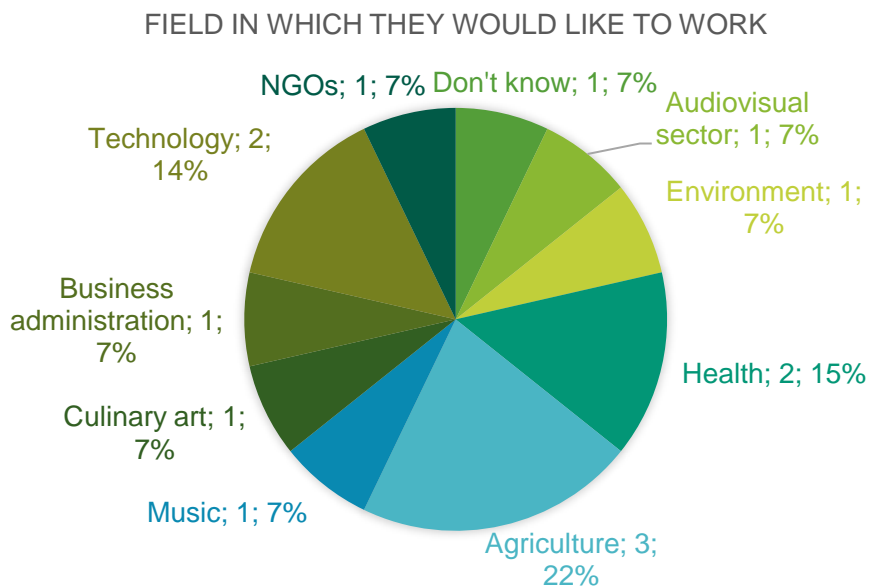


The majority of the young people interviewed had stopped their studies at secondary school (57%), while 4 of them had obtained a university degree. The remaining 2 had dropped out of university along the way.

Our cross section is therefore not the most representative of the reality of NEETs in the area, with a low level of schooling, having left school before the end of secondary education. This information needs to be cross-referenced with the age of the young people, as our sample was relatively small (18-25), with the majority aged between 23 and 25.

For the 2 young people concerned by the early dropout from university, this can be explained by a lack of interest in the subject they were studying and a desire to redirect their studies towards a subject more in line with their aspirations. In their case, one of them had stopped studying computer science to go into audio-visual jobs, while another had stopped studying economics to make music her career. They have a deep desire to do a job that matches their passions. As Laura A., from France, said: *"I don't want to do something I don't like at all, I don't want to force myself to go to work; it wouldn't be productive"*.

### Work interest



The sectors in which NEETs are interested in working are diverse and varied, but 2 sectors occur more: agriculture and technology. The people interviewed knew members of the consortium beforehand, so they may come from the same place. They all have a genuine desire to work in the field they are passionate about, although they do not necessarily mention salary aspirations.

Only one person said that she doesn't know which sector she is interested in. But she also was the youngest person interviewed (18 years old).

People interviewed are not by definition primarily interested in entrepreneurship or the environment.

### Why were they left out of the labour market?

There are many reasons mentioned by the NEETs interviewed:

- Have not enough or the right skills x3
- Don't know what to do for work x2
- Lack of opportunities x2
- Took a break after secondary school x2
- Want to do volunteering before
- Jobs founds did not fit the expectations
- Have to join the army
- Not accompanied enough (mental health problems)
- Not enough experience
- Not easy to combine life as a single mother with a busy job
- Lack of confidence
- Not fluent in the local language
- Her culture does not encourage women to work.

The most frequent occurrences relate to the skills that young people still need to acquire, indecision about a potential career and the lack of opportunities (in relation to their area, in this case rural).

For example, one of them expressed the fact that the rural area she resides in has limited exposure to arts and music (her sector of interest), and another explain it was easy to find a job in agriculture in his territory but not in other areas. These testimonies support the statistical data mentioned above concerning the greater difficulties encountered by young people in rural areas in finding employment, training or support.

This question highlighted the fact that some young people belong to "vulnerable groups", which are more likely to become NEETs. Among the young people questioned, such as being a single mother and having to take on the responsibilities that this entails while having a job, or being a war refugee and not speaking the local language, or further being part of a cultural group that does not encourage women to work. Once again, these testimonies support the statistical data mentioned before, about vulnerable groups and being NEETs.

### Weaknesses

The weaknesses identified by the NEETs interviewed regarding their employability profile:

- No professional experience x3
- Missing bachelor's degree x3
- Not enough specific knowledge / skills x3
- High expectation on the work place's values
- Mental health & basic abilities to work (understand instructions, respect deadlines...)
- Too shy
- Miss the whole picture and the goal setting
- Not enough practical knowledge
- Lack of confidence and ability to present herself
- Not enough basic digital skills
- No practical experience
- Empty period in the CV
- Family related issues

Some of the weaknesses mentioned repeatedly include a lack of professional experience, missing studies, and insufficient specific knowledge or skills. Furthermore, the lack of basic digital skills emerged as additional weaknesses, considering the place of digital in modern workplaces.

For some of the people interviewed, the weaknesses are more to do with interpersonal skills than knowledge.

Issues related to basic work abilities were mentioned, such as understanding instructions and meeting deadlines, ability to see a bigger picture, setting goals, or even oral communication. These factors indicate the importance of not only addressing the technical skills required for a job but also supporting individuals in developing the necessary personal and emotional skills to thrive in the workplace, and give them keys to develop self-confidence. Furthermore, one person mentioned the lack of ability to present herself, which is also part of self-confidence work.

### Employability potential

NEETs interviewed seem rather defeatist about their employability potential. They think they need to go back to school or have more experience to be interesting for employers, or acquire interpersonal skills.

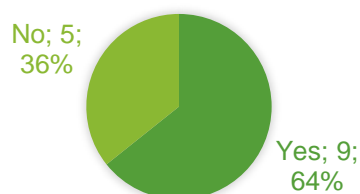
Only two of them said they had the skills, but were not sure if they wanted to work right away, or if the job they had the skills for is of still interest to them.

Moving on to the knowledge areas, NEETs expressed an interest in:

- Designing programs and softwares (mentioned twice): two person interviewed want to make technology their career, and are particularly passionate about the video game industry.
- Social media
- Marketing: in the case of the person interviewed, the aim is to develop these skills with a view to using them in the farming profession.
- Medical knowledge
- Organisation
- Polish language: this reference is linked to the refugee experience of a young Ukrainian woman who now lives in Poland. She pointed out that not being able to speak the local language was a major handicap when it would come to finding a job.
- Basic administrative softwares.
- International law: this knowledge is valuable for pursuing careers or engaging in activities related to international affairs and NGOs, as one of the interviewees said. She wants to work in charity or humanitarian organisation.
- Political sciences

This rather exhaustive list shows that the majority of the young person questioned have a good ability to identify the skills and knowledge that they possess or want to possess in order to be able to practise the profession that interests them.

### Knowledge about eco-business and eco-entrepreneurship



These results show that the terms used are still relatively unfamiliar to the public and to young people. The examples mentioned are limited to associations (as Ligue de l'enseignement or Greenpeace) and a state scheme developed in Poland (GreenEvo). Sometimes, they tried to define it, but not successfully, or by limiting this term to the notion of environment. For example, one of them thought it was businesses focused on hiking, excursions...

A recommendation for the e-learning course could be to clearly define this term, and the different fields of action that eco-entrepreneurs may have.

### Opinion on opportunities connected to eco-based skills

Several interviewees mentioned the importance of being able, thanks to these skills, to:

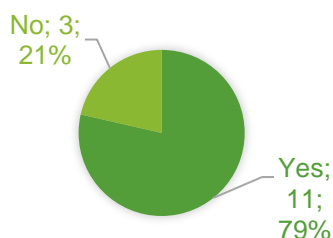
- develop projects that are consistent with their values and the environment,
- be in line with European policies,
- meet companies' demand for eco-friendly skills,
- learn about less polluting practices in their professional and personal lives,
- contribute to a more sustainable future.

To quote one of interviewees, Katarzyna from Poland: *"eco-based skills present a multitude of opportunities in the present era. Acquiring knowledge and honing skills in this field can have a twofold impact: benefiting the planet and unlocking thrilling career prospects"*.

Some said they were not sure whether having these skills would make it easier for them to be hired, but that from a personal point of view it would be of interest to them. Others shared more views that are negative, saying that they were not interested in it, or that it would not be interesting to work in a rural area, or that these skills only brought limited opportunities.

As the definition of "eco-based skills" had not been given previously, some confused and limited this term with the notion of ecological practices. What we have to conclude is that the majority of young people have seen a real interest in developing these skills, but that there is still work to be done to make these terms more familiar.

### Interest on developing eco-based skills?

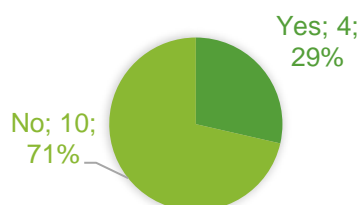


The vast majority of respondents told us that they were interested in developing eco-skills, without really knowing what they were, but convinced of the importance of working in accordance with ecological values. For most of them, it mainly meant "knowing how to do things ecologically", to adopt less polluting habits and for more sustainability.

For some other persons, the term was much more meaningful, particularly for one whose vocation was farming and who came from a farming family, Wojciech N., from Poland, *"in the agricultural sector, eco-based skills can help improve crop yields while minimising environmental impact. They can also lead to the adoption of regenerative farming methods that enhance soil health and biodiversity."*

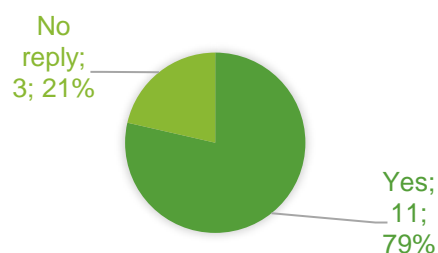
Another one cited training courses using eco-skills that she would like to follow, Konstantina Z. from Greece: *"trainings on ecotourism, new technological practices in agriculture, internships..."*

### Online training program

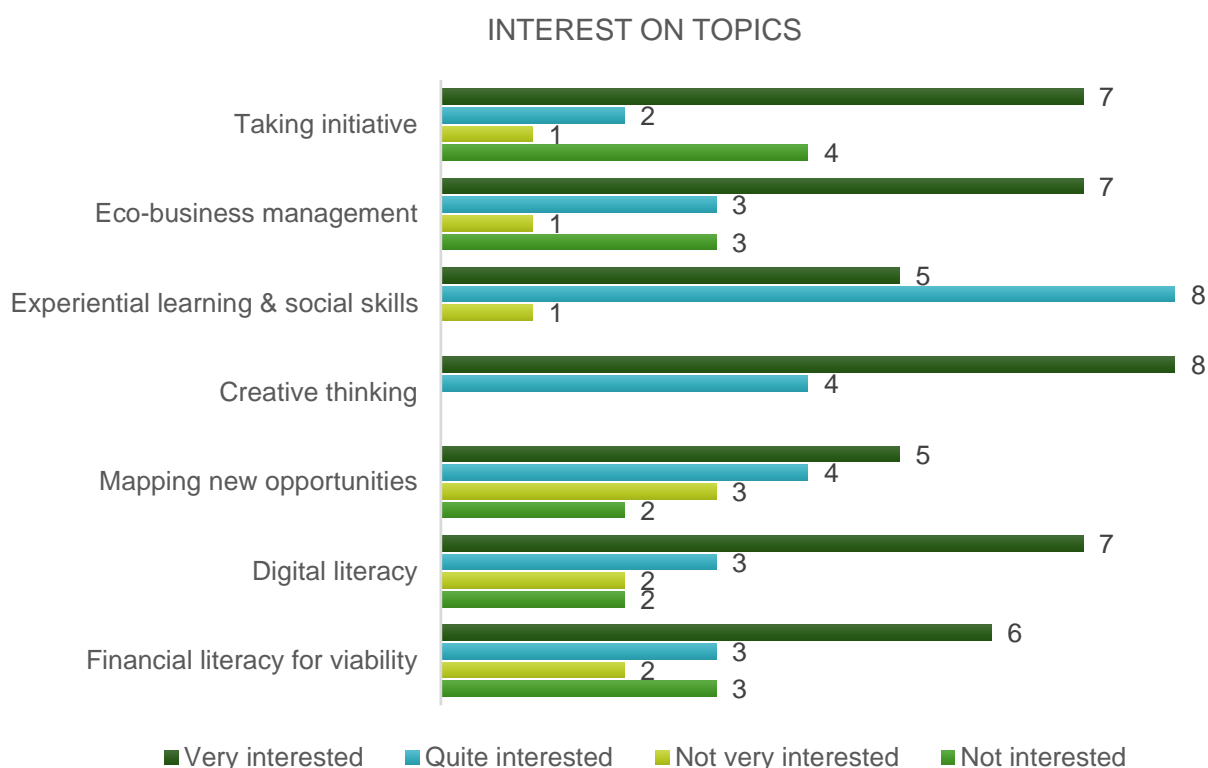


A small percentage of the young NEETs questioned replied that they had already taken part in online training, and only 2 specified which one (for the first one it was the CNED, a French national education program, and the other one a training about virtual reality). It is difficult to deduce an analysis, as none of them gave their opinion on the subject.

## Interest on training program with the goal of strengthening their job profile and topic choices



Even if not many of them have taken online training courses, they are still interested in being trained to acquire new skills.



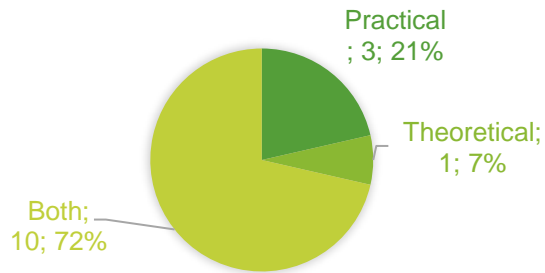
In order, from the subject that arouses the most interest to the one that arouses the least:

- creative thinking - the only subject on which none of the young people expressed a negative response;
- experiential learning & social skills – with only one “not very interested” and zero “not interested”;
- eco-business management - slightly more mixed responses (10 rather positive and 4 rather negative) ;
- digital literacy ; same as eco-business management, 10 answers on “very” or “quite” interested ;
- taking initiative ; higher rate of “not interested” (4) but also 7 very interested and 2 quite interested, it seems to be a divisive subject;
- Mapping new opportunities and financial literacy have mixed response, and the same distribution (9 positive response and 5 negative).

What can be seen from these responses is that NEETs were very interested in the subjects proposed. Still a few stand out: creative thinking, experiential learning and social skills, eco-business management and digital literacy. What is interesting is that this does not necessarily match up with the desires they described earlier, but they show a real curiosity and eagerness to learn.



### Type of training: practical / theoretical / both



The results speak for themselves: 72% of young people prefer training that combines theory and practice. This should be one of our recommendations for the MOOC.

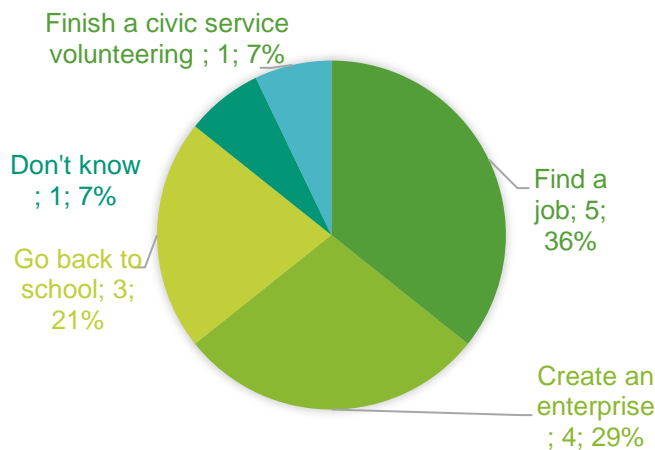
### Suggestions and comments to the future training MOOCs

Only three of the young people interviewed answered this question, which are as much advice as comments.

- "Should be fun, interactive games"
- "there shouldn't be any theory, I prefer to test things out"
- "Theoretical learning seems to be easier from home."

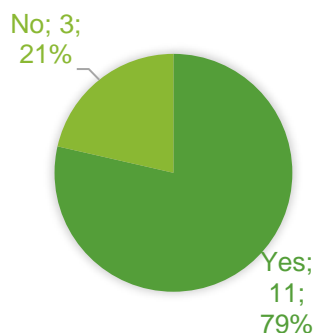
The consortium will therefore need to find ways of making e-learning interactive and fun, while remaining easy to do from home.

### NEETs interviewed plans for future



The sample questioned showed similar aspirations, i.e. the desire to find a job for the most part (36%), to set up a business (29%), and to go back to school for 21% of them. This is representative of NEETs in general. It is interesting to note that despite a very small sample, a good proportion of them want to set up their own business, with "eco-values" which reinforces the consortium's decision to work on entrepreneurship.

### Interest on participating in EcopreNEETs project



The young people were quite enthusiastic about the project and most of them want to take part. This is very positive for the future of the project and the interest that young people will have in our productions.

Of course, some were less convinced and said they did not necessarily have the time, or that they were not interested.

## 2.3.2. Accompanying persons / social and youth workers

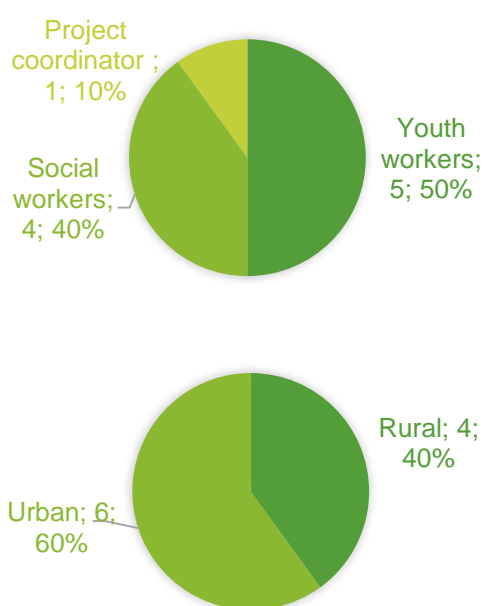
### General information relative to the cross section

The study of the results of the interviews carried out with 10 professionals is not intended to represent and analyse in detail the situation and characteristics of social workers in our different countries.

The open-ended interview<sup>148</sup> method is designed to encourage qualitative rather than quantitative feedback, which is why we chose to interview 10 people, not more. As the sample is small, the aim is not to produce purely statistical data, but rather to obtain information on the profiles of the persons, their expectations, needs and problems as professionals, and have feedback about their support to young people and specifically NEETs. The information gathered will enable us to draw up useful recommendations for both training courses aimed at professionals and those aimed at NEETs.

### Work profile

2 people were interviewed per country (Poland, France, Hungary, Greece, Netherlands). Women are more represented: we interviewed 8 women and 2 men.



As shown above, the people interviewed work in professions related to supporting young people and individuals. Sometimes young people are their core activity (50%), sometimes they work with people of all ages (40%). The last person interviewed also works in the youth sector, providing young people with international experience and internships.

The places where the workers interviewed are based are partly explained by the places where our different structures operate. So we have a slight predominance of people from urban areas, but also a number from rural areas, which gives us complementary points of view on support for NEETs.

In terms of their missions, the various respondents occupy fairly similar functions, which consist of accompanying, helping and guiding people, including

NEETs, whether in the field of education and employment, or on more specific subjects such as helping people to move abroad, the environment, health, etc. For most of them, support is provided on a one-to-one basis, to be as personalised as possible and provide the best possible response to each individual's problems.

### Weaknesses and lack of skills identified by interviewed regarding to NEETs

Based on the different testimonials provided, here are some similarities in the weaknesses commonly associated with NEETs:

- Lack of direction or goals. NEETs often struggle to find a clear path or purpose, leading to a lack of motivation and self-confidence. They may not know what they want to do or lack a sense of inspiration in the available job opportunities.
- Limited or no prior work experience. Many NEETs lack practical experience, making it challenging for them to compete in the job market. This lack of experience can hinder their ability to find employment.
- Skills gaps. NEETs frequently face skill deficiencies, both in terms of hard skills (knowledge) and soft skills. About the hard skills, they refer to specific technical or job-

<sup>148</sup> You can find the complete interviews in annex of this document.

related skills, while soft skills encompass interpersonal skills, communication, teamwork, problem solving, and adaptability.

- Limited access to resources. Some NEETs come from disadvantaged backgrounds with limited access to resources like career guidance, job opportunities, or supportive networks. This lack of resources further exacerbates their difficulties in finding employment.
- Low self-confidence and self-esteem. NEETs often lack belief in their abilities and underestimate their potential to succeed in the labour market. This lack of confidence can hinder their job search and overall motivation.
- Limited knowledge about effective job search strategies: NEETs may lack knowledge about how to effectively search for jobs, including resume writing, interview skills, and networking. This lack of understanding can make it challenging for them to navigate the job market.
- Mental health issues: Some NEETs face mental health challenges such as anxiety or depression, which can influence their motivation, self-confidence, and ability to secure and maintain employment.
- Language and cultural barriers: NEETs from vulnerable communities may face language barriers and lack knowledge about the realities of the labour market. This can hinder their ability to access opportunities and find suitable employment.

These testimonies are quite comparable to the testimonies of the NEETs concerning the question on the reasons why they were left out of the job market. This shows us that young NEETs have a quite good perception of their lacks in this area.

### Benefit of training program

The social and youth workers interviewed were generally in favour of offering hard and soft skills training to NEETs, as this quote from an interview shows: *“By investing in comprehensive training programs that encompass both hard and soft skills, we can significantly enhance the employability and overall prospects of NEETs. It is important to provide them with the necessary support and resources to bridge these skills gaps, empowering them to become active participants in the labour market and fostering their personal and professional growth.”* Marta L., Poland.

To make this training as relevant as possible from their point of view, in order to empower NEETs to actively participate in the labour market, the interviewees gave some advice:

- Allow participants to take breaks or stop at any time, recognising their difficulty with commitment ;
- Avoid excessive reliance on computers and prioritise real-life contact and interaction;
- Providing a well-rounded training program, offering to learn hard and soft skills ; in order to build self-confidence and improve communication abilities ;
- Emphasise on digital skills training (including “how to do the administrative tasks”) ;
- Include basic job search training (CV, cover letter, searching training and job opportunities online...)

### Knowledge on eco business

The interviewees had not necessarily heard of the term "eco-business" before the interview, but they were all more or less able to summarise its meaning, focusing in particular on the environmental aspect.

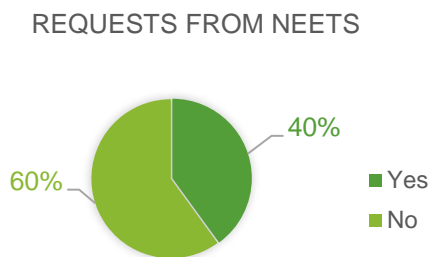
### Opportunities of eco business skills

According to the interviewees point of view, acquiring eco-skills provides several benefits for NEETs:

- Eco-skills offer NEETs employment prospects in emerging sectors like renewable energy, waste management, eco-tourism, green construction, sustainable agriculture, and environmental consultancy. Indeed, there is a growing demand for professionals with eco-skills due to the shift towards a more sustainable economy. NEETs who possess expertise in environmentally friendly sectors are well-positioned to meet this demand and secure employment opportunities. NEETs increase their chances of being sought after by employers and gaining a competitive edge in the job market.

- Acquiring eco-skills enables NEETs to undergo personal development. By gaining knowledge and expertise in sustainable practices, environmental conservation, and green technologies, NEETs can enhance their skillset, increase their self-confidence, and broaden their horizons.
- Eco-skills empower NEETs to contribute to a more sustainable society. By actively participating in sectors that address climate change, promote sustainability, and reduce environmental impact, NEETs can play a role in building a better future for the planet.

### Requests from NEETs and attractiveness for eco-entrepreneurial training

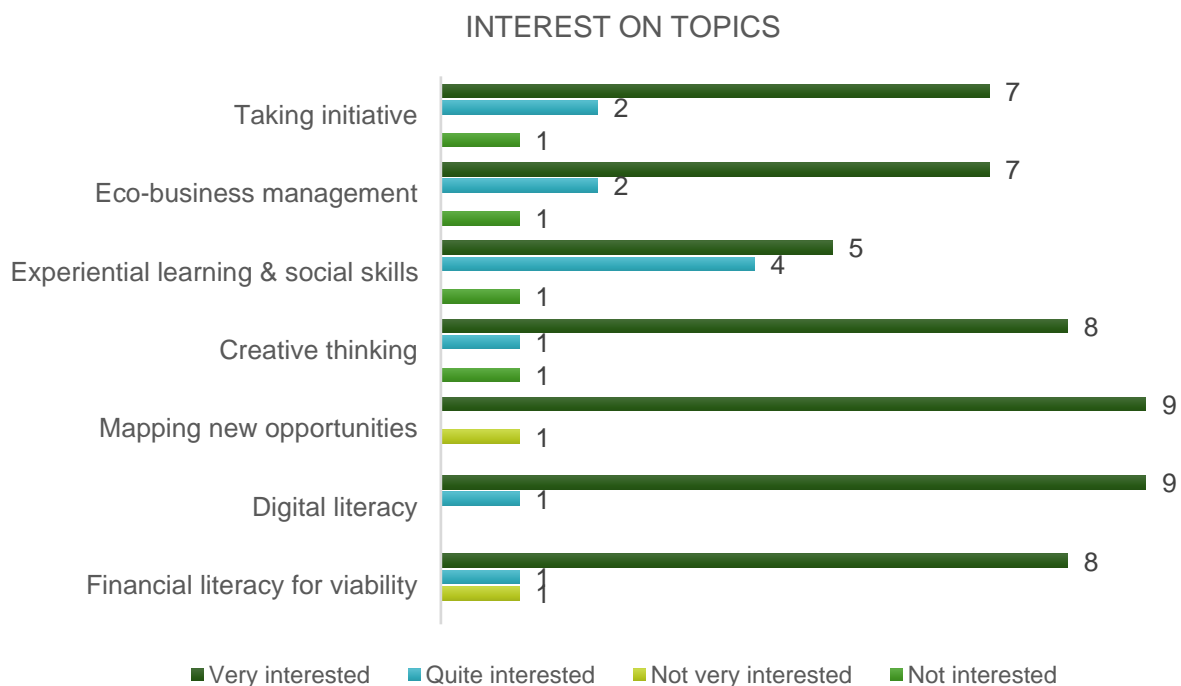


To the question, “Do you have requests from NEETs for training in eco-entrepreneurship or creation of an eco-entreprise (or related fields - ecology, sustainable development ...-)?”, 6 of the respondents indicated that this was not the case, but that it could potentially be of interest to them because young people are generally sensitive to the environmental cause. According to one of the interviewees, “the field of eco-entrepreneurship and related areas can be highly attractive to young

people. Many individuals today are passionate about environmental issues and are eager to make a positive impact through their work. The prospect of creating their own eco-friendly businesses or being part of that prioritise sustainability resonates with their values and aspirations » Agata J., Poland.

The other 4 respondents indicated they had received requests in this area, mainly concerning entrepreneurship in the first instance and then sustainable and ecological practices. According to one of the interviewees, Carine G. from France “Young people who want to start their own business in general do so because they don't want to be employed or no longer employed, then it's because they want to do something they like, with their own ideas, and finally the ecology. The guideline of ecology does not come from them at the beginning.”

### Eco-entrepreneurial training program: topics



From the point of view of youth and social workers, certain subjects are more likely to arouse the interest of young NEETs.

At the top of the list are:

- Digital literacy (higher rate)
- Mapping new opportunities
- Financial literacy for viability
- Creative thinking

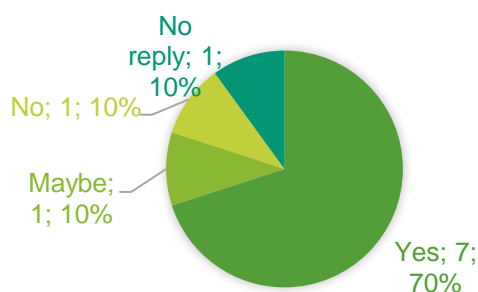
Then, in order, eco-business management, taking initiative, and experiential learning & social skills.

The ranking of subjects is reversed compared with the NEETs, who listed "creative thinking", "experiential learning & social skills" and "eco business management" as the top subjects that interested them. It is difficult to analyse this, as the sample of respondents is very small. However, it is also possible that the youth and social workers interviewed answered this question thinking about the needs of the NEETs and not about their desires for training or their points of interest. In this case, it might be interesting, particularly in the context of creating a training pathway, to keep all the subjects mentioned, which were, in spite of everything, all favourably received.

### Assessment on their NEETs digital skills

Not everyone answered this question (7 out of 10 people) as they did not necessarily have an opinion on that subject. The average score obtained was 3.4/6 for NEETs' digital skills. This rating is in line with the needs mentioned above.

### Want to test EcopreNEETs productions?



As with the NEETs questioned, the vast majority of social and youth workers responded favourably to the proposal to test our products (training, educational tools, etc.). This is a good indicator of the relevance of the project and the needs identified by the consortium.

### 2.3.3. Eco-entrepreneurs

#### General information connected to the cross section

The study of the interviews' results carried out with 10 eco-entrepreneurs is not intended to represent and analyse in detail the situation and characteristics of this professional category in our different countries.

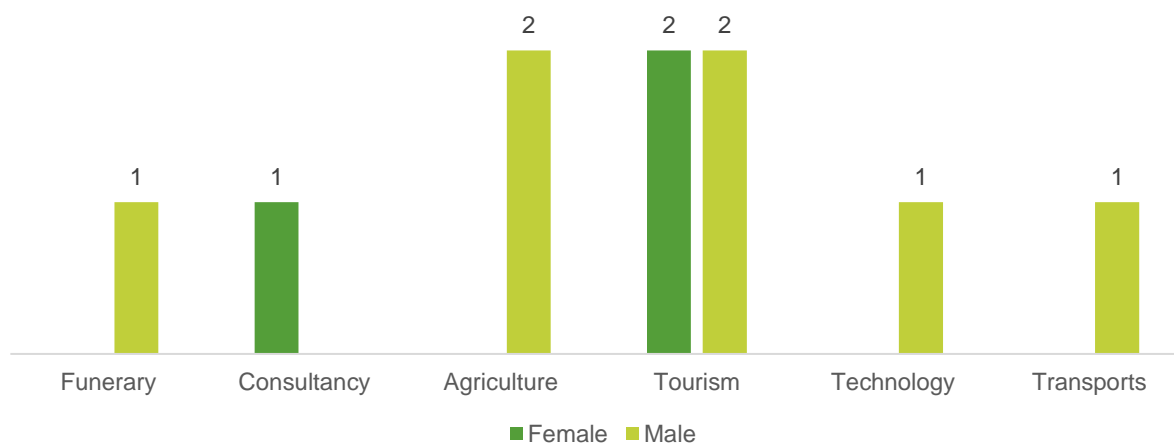
The open-ended interview method is designed to encourage qualitative rather than quantitative feedback, which is why we chose to interview 10 people, not more. As the sample is small, the aim is not to produce purely statistical data, but rather to obtain information on the profiles of the persons, their experience, their career paths, and their advice and recommendations in order to help young people to become entrepreneur. The information gathered will enable us to draw up useful recommendations for both training courses aimed at professionals and those aimed at NEETs.

#### Profile

2 people were interviewed per country (Poland, France, Hungary, Greece, Netherlands). Men are more represented: we interviewed 3 women and 7 men. The people interviewed have between 5 and 14 years' experience in their field; having only feedback from people with more than 5 years' experience gives us an assurance of hindsight from their point of view.



In terms of the fields in which the people interviewed work, we have a varied panel, even if we have an over-representation of eco-tourism, which can be explained by the rise in these new tourist practices<sup>149</sup>, as well as by the location of the consortium's structures.



### Vision/ definition of eco-entrepreneurship

The eco-entrepreneurs interviewed had the opportunity to talk about their vision and definition of eco-entrepreneurship; only one person in the sample was unable to answer this question. For some, it was the first time they had heard the term.

Here are the common points found in the various testimonials:

- Environmental focus: all the perspectives emphasise the importance of environmental protection and sustainability as a central aspect of eco-entrepreneurship. This includes minimising negative environmental impacts, conserving resources, reducing pollution, promoting biodiversity, and actively contributing to the preservation and restoration of the natural world.
- Business innovation: eco-entrepreneurship is seen as a means to drive change and innovation in business practices. It involves adopting new approaches and seeking out sustainable solutions to address environmental challenges.
- Social responsibility: some perspectives highlight the connection between eco-entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship. They argue that eco-entrepreneurship cannot be separated from social entrepreneurship, as both involve creating ventures that have a positive impact on society, promote human well-being, and address social issues.
- Balancing profit and sustainability: several viewpoints emphasise the need for eco-entrepreneurship to achieve a balance between economic viability and environmental conservation. While profit generation is acknowledged as an important aspect of business, it should not come at the expense of the environment. Eco-entrepreneurs are encouraged to consider the long-term sustainability of their ventures.
- Behaviour change and education: eco-entrepreneurship is seen as an opportunity to inspire behaviour change both in individuals and organisations. It involves raising awareness about environmental issues, educating stakeholders, and encouraging sustainable practices beyond the immediate business context.
- Self-reflection and personal growth: some perspectives touch upon the personal development aspect of eco-entrepreneurship. They highlight the importance of self-reflection, knowing one's limits, and choosing clients and partners who align with the eco-entrepreneur's values. This includes the idea of slow entrepreneurship, respecting personal balance, and learning from experiences and frustrations.

<sup>149</sup> Source European Commission -Climate Action and the Environment - Transport and Mobility – Tourism – travel behavior - [Attitudes of European towards tourism](#)

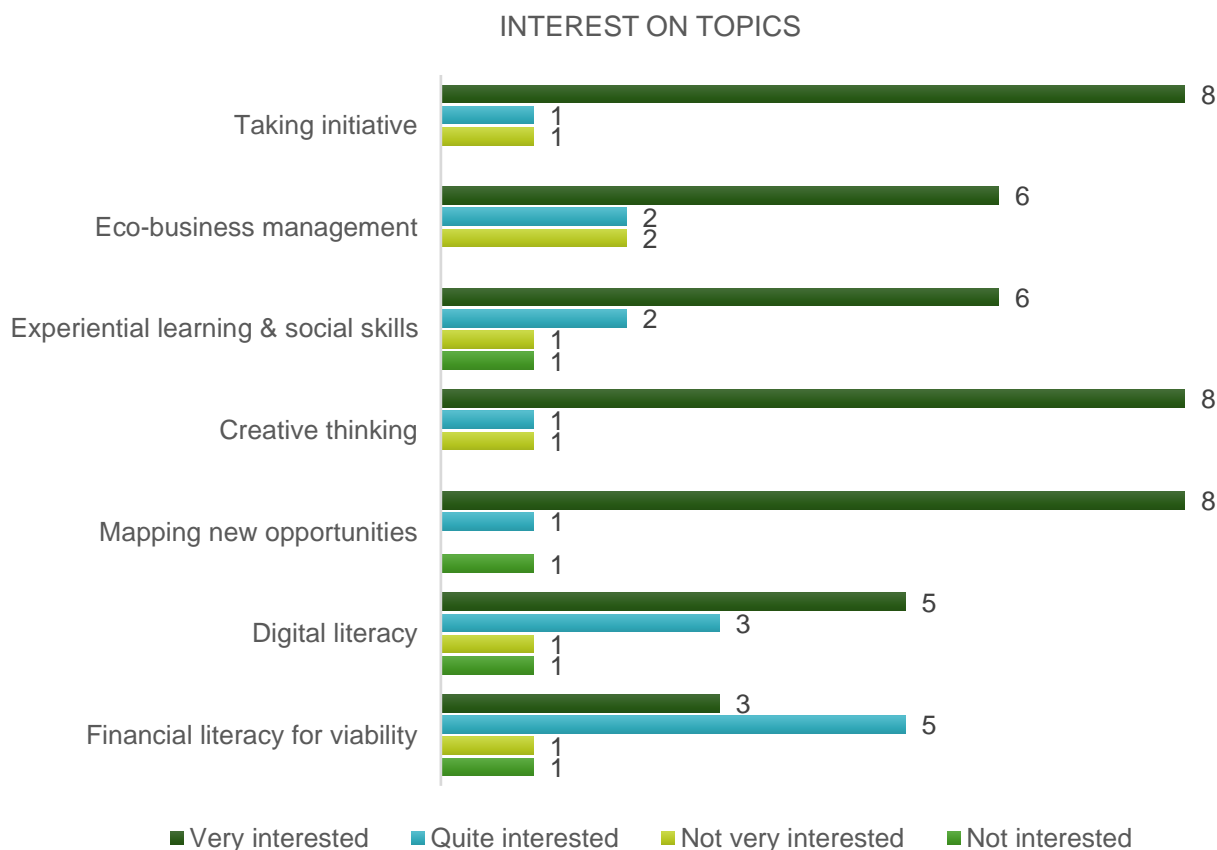
Overall, these viewpoints converge in recognising eco-entrepreneurship as a business approach that combines profit generation with a deep commitment to environmental sustainability, social responsibility, innovation, and behaviour change. It involves adopting practices that minimise negative impacts, create positive change, and contribute to a greener and more sustainable future. These descriptions are entirely consistent with the definition given by UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) in [the Eco-Entrepreneurship Guide](#).

### The challenges encountered and how to overcome them

The eco-entrepreneurs interviewed all mentioned many problems they had encountered since they started their business. As most of them work in different sectors, it is difficult to summarise the common difficulties that eco-entrepreneurs may encounter, but a few similarities emerge:

- Financial constraints: traditional funding sources may not be readily available for sustainable initiatives, requiring entrepreneurs to identify alternative funding options and be resourceful in seeking financial support. They may also suffer from competition from other companies. Moreover, they need to navigate the additional costs associated with sustainable practices and find innovative solutions that align with both ecological values and profitability.
- Awareness and demand: this requires efforts to educate and create awareness among the general public, as well as building a market demand for sustainable solutions.
- Need for systemic change: this involves engaging with various actors, services, and institutions to promote sustainability.
- Policy and regulatory barriers: it is mandatory to stay informed about existing regulations, advocating for policy changes, and working within the legal framework to drive sustainable initiatives.
- Personal and professional evolution: developing skills, evolving mind-set, and adapting to changing circumstances were mentioned as crucial factors in overcoming obstacles.

### Eco-entrepreneurial training program: topics



From the point of view of eco-entrepreneurs, certain subjects are more likely to arouse the interest of young NEETs.

At the top of the list are:

- Taking initiative (higher rate, equal with creative thinking)
- Creative thinking
- Mapping new opportunities
- Digital literacy

Then, in order, eco-business management, experiential learning & social skills, and financial literacy. "Creative thinking" received the most positive votes from all audiences combined. The analysis of all the responses will be proposed in part 3/ recommendations.

The eco-entrepreneurs were given the opportunity to add any topics they felt were important. They repeatedly mentioned the importance of developing soft skills such as stress management, frustration management, and the ability to question oneself, but also stay honest and cultivate one's passion.

### Types of supports for the creation of the eco-business

Based on the testimonials provided, here is a list of the different types of support received by the eco-entrepreneurs:

- Support from friends and family
- Incubators and consultants
- Psychological follow-up
- Networking, collaboration, support from local and experts
- Training and coaching
- Financing (local authorities, foundations, crowdfunding...).

Only one of them indicated that he did not want to work with other people, as this could weaken the company; the others talked about the importance of being surrounded, by relatives or experts.

### Training and education pathway

The majority of those interviewed said that, in addition to their initial studies, they had taken part in training courses specialising in their area of business, such as the funeral industry or eco-tourism. Most of them had also taken part in training in managerial skills. Some also stressed the importance of attending events such as conferences and workshops, to keep abreast of new developments and to continue learning, as Jukub K. from Poland "*These educational endeavours allowed me to stay up-to-date with industry trends, expand my professional network, and learn from experts in the field.*"

### Eco-entrepreneurs: gaps and needs

The eco-entrepreneurs mentioned numerous issues and needs for better management and development of their business, summarised below:

- Lack of support (targeted aid programs that could provide financial assistance, technical support, capacity-building initiative, help in finding financing, mentorship...)
- Lack of training (about project management, community engagement, sustainability in the business model, green marketing, impact measurement, environmental regulations, legal framework and regulations,...)
- Lack of funding
- Lack of clear and supportive legislation
- Lack of politics about ecological transition
- Lack of network platforms (to connect eco-entrepreneurs, potential investors, relevant stakeholders... at local, national and European level,...)

These comments will enable us to think about teaching aids and training content that will help solve certain problems. Moreover, this inventory could be shared with social and youth workers to help them identify the gaps in terms of support for young people in the eco-entrepreneurship field.

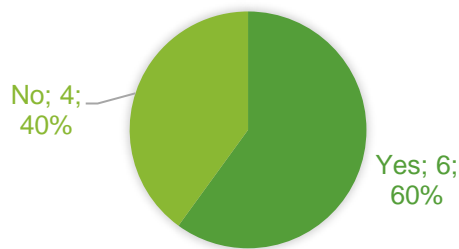
## Most important advice

The eco-entrepreneurs had plenty of advice to offer young people who want to get started. Given their diversity and complementarity, we have chosen not to summarise them but rather to incorporate them as they stand into the document:

- *“You have to know if you want to go through with your idea and if you are ready to sacrifice a lot of things...”* Olivier G – France
- *“To be accompanied by the right people, to be curious, to go and meet people, not to remain alone. You do not have an infinite knowledge and you evolve thanks to others. You have to be humble. Today, this link in the chain is missing. There are few people to support you at HR level. Structures exist but they are not well known. Have the honesty to be accompanied.”* Léa R - France
- *“They should train themselves in the field of finance and organisational development before taking the plunge.”* Kovács S and Nagy L - Hungary
- *“There is always a risk in entrepreneurship, and they need to be patient.”* Stavroula T - Greece
- *“Personal growth, experience in the field, and gaining knowledge through his experiences.”* Vlastaras T. - Greece
- *“Prioritise the integration of sustainable practices into every aspect of their business. This means considering environmental and social impacts at every stage, from sourcing materials and production processes to distribution and waste management. The importance of conducting thorough research to identify innovative and eco-friendly solutions that align with the local context and market demands. Actively collaborate with local communities, conservation, and government entities. Building strong partnerships not only helps in creating a positive impact but also increases credibility and support for the business. Finally, the importance of educating and raising awareness among all members of the workforce engaged in the business.”* Karolina L - Poland
- *“Traveling and gaining diverse experiences have been integral to my journey as an eco-entrepreneur. My passion for eco-tourism has taken me to various destinations, allowing me to witness the beauty of different landscapes, encounter unique cultures, and gain insights into sustainable practices worldwide. These travel experiences have not only enriched my personal growth but also shaped my professional perspective on responsible tourism. As an eco-entrepreneur, my actions speak louder than words. Set a positive example by implementing sustainable practices in my own operations. From using eco-friendly materials to promoting waste reduction, be a leader in sustainability and inspire others to follow suit. Stay true to your values. In the ever-growing eco-tourism industry, it can be tempting to compromise on your sustainability principles to cater to mass tourism demands. However, it is essential to stay true to your values and maintain a strong commitment to environmental and social responsibility. Authenticity and integrity will set you apart and attract like-minded travellers”* Jukub K - Poland
- *“To avoid taking unnecessary risks.”* Mark V R. - Netherlands
- *“Young people need to realise that sustainable businesses are not risk-free entities and there is always a risk factor. Therefore aspiring eco-entrepreneurs need to avoid unnecessary risks, create a solid business plan and ensure funding”* Thomas C Netherlands

As we can see, several eco-entrepreneurs insist on taking risks, building networks, learning about other practices, training, and not making compromises (prioritising sustainable methods over simpler methods that are less in line with the company's values). This advice will be valuable as we develop our training plan.

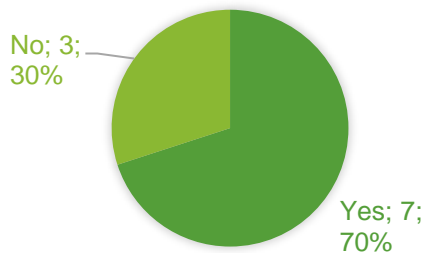
### Experience on hiring / working with NEETs



Of the panel of eco-entrepreneurs interviewed, 6 have had the opportunity to work with one or more NEETs. Of these, 2 had a rather negative experience, citing various problems such as motivation and ethics, but they believe that a training can help them to improve themselves in this area.

One of the 4 remaining people said that he was very happy with their collaboration with NEETs (over 8 years for one of them), while another said that she could not yet give an assessment yet (recently hired). The last two gave no information about their collaboration with NEETs.

### Interest on participating in ECOPRENEETS project



The majority of respondents were in favour of testing and participating in the products made by the consortium as part of the EcopreNEETs project.



## 3. Recommendations

The purpose of this section is to present the initial objectives and to add, contribute, confirm or refute the actions and recommendations written in the grant application.

### 3.1. General recommendations

#### 3.1.1. NEETs target profile

All the information obtained in parts 1/context and 2/interviews confirms our idea of producing solutions to equip NEETs and mentors in favour of eco-entrepreneurship.

According to the various sources concerning NEETs and their profile in Europe, it would seem appropriate to focus particularly on the following in our NEETs target group:

- young people aged between 15 and 29,
- especially girls,
- from vulnerable groups;
- with a low level of education;
- from rural areas;
- with lack of professional experience.

All productions must take into account the difficulties that NEETs may encounter and aim to remove obstacles.

Based on the results of the interviews, it is clear that the support offered to NEETs should include help with orientation, definition of a project for the future, according to their values and desires, the development of soft skills and knowledge, and support in acquiring a network and work experience.

The objective is to re-mobilise NEETs via a global and innovative project, by enabling them to work in a field they are passionate about (WP2) and by ensuring that the project is disseminated through the provision of support tools (WP3) and the creation of a support network of eco-entrepreneurs (WP4).

#### 3.1.2. Communication/dissemination strategy

Here is the partners dissemination strategy focuses on promoting the project:

- At organisational level: staff members & cross-department colleagues, who can benefit from the project personally and professionally, trainers, youth workers, etc. At this level, the dissemination will take place internally, through newsletters, meetings, and seminars.
- At youth organisations level: diverse youth training centres, local authorities, etc., that want to participate in the validation activities or directly reach job hunters or youth workers.
- At local/regional level: young NEETs (aged 18-30) from rural and urban areas, who have long been disengaged from the labour market and are seeking E&T opportunities to re-engage with it. Different NGOs, youth centres, organisations active in environmental awareness, training institutions and non-formal learning providers, that might be eager to train their audience in the EcopreNEETs programme, after participating in it. The general public could be also informed in order to become aware of the new actions towards youth unemployment and environmental sustainability.
- At national level public authorities, ministries, NA, associations, governing bodies, etc. can benefit to be informed about the project initiative and the potential use of its results
- At European level: various EU platforms (SALTO, EACEA, Erasmus+ Project Results, EC), associations, synergies, etc. can be also reached as they can disseminate the project results further into EU recommendations.

This study showed that eco-entrepreneurship is an emerging subject, sometimes still unfamiliar to young people and their support workers. One of the challenges will therefore be to communicate widely and disseminate information about our project while making it easy to understand for all audiences. Indeed, we need to make the terms accessible, perhaps by adding examples, images, drawings, etc. in each document and communication support.

In addition, establishing partnerships with local organisations, eco-businesses and educational institutions can facilitate communication and buy-in around the project, access to additional resources, and open up networking opportunities for the NEETs involved in the project.

In addition, it might be appropriate to organise awareness-raising sessions to inform NEETs about the basic principles of eco-entrepreneurship, its benefits and its positive impact on the environment. It could also highlight the career and business opportunities that exist in this field, by inviting eco-entrepreneurs to talk to them.

## 3.2. Work Package 2 “Training MOOC for Eco-Skills”

The results of the interviews confirm the desire of young NEETs for more training, in order to develop or affirm certain soft skills or knowledge.

### 3.2.1. Initial objectives

The goal is to raise environmental awareness among NEETs, especially those from rural areas, in the context of promoting eco-entrepreneurial learning methods. The MOOC will introduce young people to the world of eco-entrepreneurship, focusing on the skills (entrepreneurial and digital) they need to have in order to pursue a career within a business or even start their own eco-company. To that end, interactive multimedia training materials will be developed and hosted in a xAPI compliant learning environment<sup>150</sup> offered in public as Open Educational Resources (OER).

From the outset, the consortium wishes to divide the materials into three key pillars:

- Theory: This session includes useful information about the realities of labour market, the required skills for finding a job and the importance of eco-entrepreneurship in companies. The goal is to provide young NEETs with valuable knowledge that will enhance their employability chances.
- Practice: This session focuses on the role of the environment in youth employment, exposing young individuals to environmental activities that will be displayed as interactive multimedia resources within the course. This part will support participants in putting their newly acquired skills into action with emphasis in organic entrepreneurship and sustainable rural entrepreneurship. The objective is to enhance the entrepreneurial skills of the target group while increasing their eco-consciousness.
- Assessment: The final session includes gamified quizzes that evaluate the skills and knowledge gained through theory and practice. Self-assessment questions will allow participants to control their progress.

### 3.2.2. Platform recommendations

The partners have agreed that the project's accessibility and inclusion will be ensured by:

- Access to information without language barriers.
- The design and technical delivery of information reaching the gaps for people with disabilities.
- The adaptation of information to cover learning difficulties
- The access to a free education regardless of socio-economic factors and educational background
- The access to educational resources that are open for everyone (OER)
- The equal possibilities in education for vulnerable groups

Indeed, the results obtained show that many NEETs may have weaknesses in terms of digital skills, according to the NEETs themselves and the support workers. The platform therefore needs to be simplified as much as possible, easy to use, so as not to isolate people who are uncomfortable with the tool. The platform initially chosen therefore seems to be the right solution. It would also be a good idea to offer technical and pedagogical support to learners throughout the MOOC, in order to be sure to answer questions and solve problems encountered by learners.

<sup>150</sup> The Experience API (xAPI) is an e-learning software specification that records and tracks various types of learning experiences for learning systems.

### 3.2.3. Method recommendations

According to the NEETs questioned, the MOOC will have to combine theory and practice ; this confirms the choice initially made. Moreover, it has to be fun and interactive, and achievable from home. Incorporate videos, quizzes, case studies, online discussions, practical exercises, discussion forums, etc. could be a good advice to promote active learning and learner participation. Finally, divide the content of the MOOC into modules or smaller learning units may make it easier for learners to navigate and progress, at their own pace and according to their availability.

### 3.2.4. Content recommendations

As this study has shown, the field of eco-entrepreneurship is still largely unknown to young people. One of the first areas of content proposed could therefore focus on the different concepts, explaining the field of activity, the different professions, etc. It could also include video testimonials from eco-entrepreneurs. The aim would be to give young people the keys to understanding this field of activity and enabling them to define it.

It will also be important for the content to enable young people to develop their knowledge and soft skills.

In the interviews, several subjects/skills were put to the vote of each interviewee, whether NEETs, support workers or eco-entrepreneurs themselves. Each of the subjects/skills received a fairly positive response, and none of them stood out as clearly positive or negative.

The recommendation may therefore be to retain all these elements, which are, as a reminder:

- taking initiative
- eco-business management
- experiential learning & social skills
- creative thinking
- mapping new opportunities
- digital literacy
- financial literacy for viability.

In addition, it would be relevant to add the missing elements identified by eco-entrepreneurs in their own training:

- Identify the various types of support available and how to obtain them (targeted aid programs that could provide financial assistance, technical support, capacity-building initiative, help in finding financing, mentorship...);
- Teach project management, risks management, community engagement, sustainability in the business model, green marketing, impact measurement, environmental regulations, legal framework and regulations,...;
- Teach how to raise funds ;
- Identify the network platforms (to connect eco-entrepreneurs, potential investors, relevant stakeholders... at local, national and European level...) and supporting young people in their integration.

As suggested in the section above (method), all these subjects and skills can be integrated by NEETs thanks to different types of training, both theoretical and practical.

## 3.3. Work package 3 “Train the trainers”

### 3.3.1. Initial objectives

This particular WP aims to re-train a number of trainers/youth workers in order to ensure a more sustainable & ecopreneurial education for NEETs. By doing so, the partners aspire to override certain methods of training, that have proven to be ineffective and even outdated in some cases. The partners have agreed that sustainability is the key for the future and an eco-preneurial mind-set will certainly enhance NEETs chances for employability. However, in order for NEETs to develop an eco-preneurial mind-set, their training should be updated and up to par with today's standards.

### 3.3.2. Method recommendations

As previously decided (referring to grant application), and in accordance with the planning of youth workers, a period of one-hour seminars will take place in all countries of the project. .

The choice of this format will make it easier for youth workers to take part, as their schedule are often full and it is difficult for them to spare several days for training.

The results of the interviews show that they are very interested in this opportunity, which reassures us in our decision to offer tools for the youth support professions. With the conclusion of the seminars, the leader of the WP, Ecocenter Alapítvány, will compose a Booklet of Needs for trainers, which will contain all information gathered in the WP's previous phases, along with further comments and instructions.

### 3.3.3. Content recommendations

Like the online training course for NEETs, the training course for those accompanying young people could include a mix of theory and practice.

Initially, and in the same way as the NEETs, they will need to have a good understanding of this field of activity, what it encompasses, the different professions and the methods for accessing them. Indeed, the interviews highlighted this lack of knowledge and the need for training for NEETs and social workers.

In addition, we will enable them to provide the best possible support for NEETs, such as, for example:

- turnkey workshops to run with NEETs, individually or in group, to develop their soft skills, including autonomy and creativity, in relation to the eco-preneurial competency framework;
- information on entrepreneurship in general, the support available in each country, and how to help young people set up their own businesses;
- Sharing good practices, between youth workers and meeting eco-entrepreneurs;
- Networking methods, to enable young people to build up a network in this field of activity....

## 3.4. Work package 4 “EcopreNEETs incubation”

### 3.4.1. Initial objectives

This WP aims to develop and promote a solid framework that will support young NEETs in starting up their own business. The objective is to provide young NEETs with guidance, mentoring and coaching services to help them become active and competitive in the labour market and - why-not - support them in starting their own eco-business. This will be achieved with the implementation of dedicated online traineeship sessions. According to the results from the online workshops and to the overall project implementation, partners will map improvements and document on the best practices implemented during the e-traineeships as part of the continuous involvement process (CIP). This document will serve as the starting point for future initiatives against young NEET's unemployment and exclusion.

### 3.4.2. Method recommendations

According to the decisions made by the consortium and written in the grant application, two actions will be carried out to ensure the incubation of NEETs wishing to become eco-entrepreneurs: at first, the setting up of e-training (action plan still to define). Considering NEETs interviewed said that one of their main weaknesses was a lack of experience, this action seems to be a good solution for them. We need to be careful to ensure that we also enable soft skills to be built up through on-the-job experience, which can complement e-training. Developing some of the soft skills mentioned by NEETs requires face-to-face contact and experimentation in real-life conditions (autonomy, initiative, communication skills, teamwork, stress management, time management...)

Moreover, in accordance with the commitments made by the consortium, the activities that demand the participation of the target group will be organised in venues with easy access, especially to people with disabilities. Factors to be considered are:

- Place accessible with public transportation
- Elevators and ramps

- Bathrooms accessible to people with disabilities
- Training of personnel on respecting people with disabilities
- Inclusion of a sign language speaker
- Food restrictions will be taken into account

The schedule and duration of the activities will be designed flexibly, while for those who cannot attend the activities will be the provision of online participation.

The second action is setting up of online mentoring workshops with eco-entrepreneurs. Results of interviews with eco-entrepreneurs have confirmed the need for actions to create networks, partnerships and peer support, which was missing in their pathway.

Throughout the implementation of this work package, we will need to be vigilant to ensure that the links between NEETs and eco-entrepreneurs are really effective, that links are created and that networking really helps to open doors for young people.

### 3.5. Follow-up / evaluation

The consortium has drawn up a Quality Monitoring Plan including quantitative and qualitative indicators to ensure the relevance of the project and the achievement of its objectives. You will find below a reminder of these commitments. The results of the context analysis and interviews only served to reinforce the idea that it was necessary to develop a consistent evaluation plan, allowing for monitoring and modification along the way, in order to update content (as policies and support evolve regularly in each country and in Europe, for example) and avoid possible pitfalls.

#### 3.5.1. Qualitative indicators

It is anticipated that at least 70% of participants, who have been introduced to EcopreneNEETs findings, will use this portal on a daily basis in order to obtain information, communicate and for skills retention. The partnership is committed to monitoring the process throughout the project's duration and after its completion. This will be achieved by reviewing and analysing the portal's usage and activity logs, designed to provide useful insights in terms of behavioural patterns, as well as unique visitor numbers.

Additional qualitative indicators:

- the partners' satisfaction with regards to the project coordination, implementation, overall progress and quality of the results (monitored every 6 months with the use of evaluation questionnaires compiled by the Quality Manager)
- the partners' satisfaction regarding the organisation and realisation of the transnational meetings (checked after each meeting via evaluation questionnaires compiled by the Quality Manager)
- the participants' satisfaction in the multiplier events (monitored through anonymous questionnaires distributed during the events, put together by the Quality Manager)
- the participants' overall satisfaction concerning the training materials (monitored through anonymous questionnaires distributed during the validation/piloting activities).

#### 3.5.2. Quantitative indicators

- the number of participants from the target groups provide feedback on the needs analysis
- the number of key stakeholders/policy makers in the multiplier events
- the number of people registered in the matchmaking environment
- the number of invitations to get involved in EU platforms/events
- at least 80% positive feedback in the evaluation of the training experience during the validation activities
- at least 80% positive feedback in the evaluation of the Ecopreneurship Training
- at least 80% positive feedback in the overall evaluation of the Matchmaking Environment
- at least 90% positive feedback pertaining to the overall experience with the training and infrastructure
- at least 90% positive feedback from the trainers & youth workers
- a minimum of 120 participants in the multiplier events



- at least 1800 stakeholders reached by the end of the project
- at least 500 followers in social media, and an average of 500/month unique users accessing the project webpage during the last 4 months.

## 3.6. Sustainability

### 3.6.1. Initial objectives

EcopreNEETs is not considered a one-off project by the partnership, since all partners are already involved in activities and projects that address youth employability, social inclusion and environmental awareness. The EcopreNEETs project was based on a number of existing initiatives in the different areas related to the project's thematic. In fact, the project complements and interacts with such actions, ensuring its long-term sustainability.

In addition to the fact that the partnership has already established an extensive network of stakeholders to draw upon, the project results will continue to be disseminated through a variety of activities after the project's completion, in accordance with the S&P (Sharing and Promotion) and exploitation plans. In particular, the matchmaking environment to be developed for the project, along the organisation of e-traineeships that will require the active participation of stakeholders, will allow the creation of synergies with organisations, which undertake related initiatives. The goal is to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and expertise among interested parties, which will subsequently influence recommendations for new policies and stimulate new initiatives.

As part of the partnership, an Intellectual Property Rights agreement (IPR) will be signed, guaranteeing that the partners will use the project results after the duration of the project. This agreement will be signed by all partners and include a list of exploitable results, along with exploitation activities and succession schemes.

Outside the partnership, all project materials will be available and freely accessible under a Creative Commons License as Open Educational Resources (OER). On the other hand, the Matchmaking Environment will be available as an open software, allowing participants and interested parties to also contribute to potential improvements. The added value of EcopreNEETs is that it will provide youth organisations and training institutions with a high-value training methodology and concrete tools, so that they will develop and enhance the training they offer, targeted at a wider audience of young people.

### 3.6.2. Recommendations

As the results of the context analysis and the interviews have shown, one of the pitfalls that needs to be overcome is the continuous updating of information/materials.

The consortium will therefore have to find solutions to ensure that this information is continuously updated after the project. This could involve setting up a new project or creating a dynamic group of eco-entrepreneurs, NEETs and professionals involved in supporting young people who have benefited from the project and who are willing to update the materials on a voluntary basis.

## Conclusion

There were several ambitious objectives in writing this white paper.

The first was to draw up an overview of the situation regarding NEETs, employment and entrepreneurship (whether 'green' or not), and existing public policies in our different countries. This report, illustrated by data and maps, was intended to give us an overall view of the situation in Europe, verify our initial hypotheses, and draw some initial conclusions about the similarities and differences between our different countries. To do this, we carried out research based on national and European studies and official data, which we compiled and analysed, to draw conclusions about the current situation. It emerged that the situation of NEETs remained a key issue in the wake of the health crisis, to a greater or lesser degree in some countries, and always more prevalent among young women and in rural areas. We also found that all the countries had put in place solid measures to counter youth unemployment, encourage entrepreneurship and support the ecological transition. This observation, made in June 2023, is a snapshot in time: it will of course require us to keep updated on new policies and studies related to our subjects and the opportunities for our target groups.

The second objective was to meet and interview the people involved: NEETS, the target audience; social workers/youth workers, to get their professional view of the needs and characteristics of NEETS; eco-entrepreneurs, to hear about their experiences and get their advice. All this to support, complete and illustrate the information obtained previously. By interviewing these people, we also obtained advice for the next stages of our project. Their feedback reassured us that the project was attractive to them, going in the right direction and relevant. The vast majority of the people we interviewed showed great interest in EcopreNEETs, which legitimized our approach. NEETS, in particular, shared their strong desire to reintegrate (in the world of work or by returning to education/training), to regain the power to act and to contribute to a more sustainable society. The social and youth workers were also very enthusiastic about the opportunity presented by this project, and the possibility of being trained to support young people towards eco-entrepreneurship. Through these interviews, qualitative data were collected that validated the potential of the eco-entrepreneurial approach for NEETs and society as a whole. Furthermore, valuable recommendations were documented that will be incorporated into future projects. Their participation and feedback will be both a compass and a key to the quality of our work packages and the dissemination and sustainability of the project.

The third objective was to draw up a range of recommendations based on the general findings and the interviews conducted, not only for the project's work packages (MOOC for training in eco-entrepreneurial skills, training of trainers and EcopreNEETs incubators) but also for the project's overall working method, quality assessment, communication and dissemination strategy. We have drawn up a set of recommendations relating to each of the above points, in terms of methods and content. For the most part, these recommendations supported or supplemented decisions taken beforehand when the project was structured. For example, this work enabled us to highlight issues such as digital accessibility, flexibility and adaptability, which we will need to demonstrate throughout the project.

Finally, by fulfilling all the above objectives, this white paper should facilitate the creation of a framework of ecopreneurial skills, the starting point for the construction of MOOCs, the next stage of our project.

Therefore it appears that eco-entrepreneurship can be a solution for (re)mobilising young NEETs, provided they are supported by social and youth workers, in a dynamic network with experienced eco-entrepreneurs. Connecting eco-entrepreneurs and stakeholders for inspiration is also a priority, so that NEETs can visualise what they are learning and feeling, and compare their ideas with professionals who have taken risks for a more sustainable society.

With this white paper as a compass to ensure the quality of the project, the EcopreNEETs consortium is launching into the adventure with very high expectations and a commitment to produce work packages that are relevant, accessible, innovative and transferable.

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# Annexes

## Interview grids

### NEETs

Profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Profile of the accompanying person for NEETs</li> <li>- Age</li> <li>- Gender: female, male, agender, bigender, no binary, other, prefer not to say)</li> <li>- Place / country of residency</li> <li>- Profession - mentor, coach, social worker, employee of a support / guidance structure / incubator, ...</li> <li>- Experience (number of the years worked in the profession - make proposals for year ranges)</li> <li>- Structure represented - object / thematic field</li> <li>- Other?</li> </ul>																																													
NEETs and Eco-entrepreneurship	<p>Tell us about your work context (rural, urban, social and economic context)</p> <p>What is your exact affiliation with NEETs? (Explain your work and link to NEETs)?</p> <p>Why do you think NEETs are left out of the labour market?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- According to your experience, can you describe the weaknesses that most NEETs have in common?</li> <li>- According to your experience, can you describe the skills that most NEETs lack today? Do you think he/she would benefit from a training program in hard or soft skills?</li> </ul> <p>In your opinion, what are the opportunities for eco-based skills? Do you know what eco-business is?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do you have requests from NEETs for training in eco-entrepreneurship or creation of an eco-entreprise (or related fields: ecology, SD ...)?</li> <li>- Do you think this field of training and/or work can be attractive for young people? If yes, in what (precise)</li> <li>- Do you know of any support schemes for a NEET who wants to become an eco-entrepreneur? If yes, which ones (precise)</li> </ul> <p>Do you think NEETs would be interested in joining an ecopreneurial training program? If yes, could you please give your suggestion for a training program that would be beneficial for NEET individuals in each of the following sectors:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 50%;"></th> <th style="width: 12.5%; text-align: center;">Not interested</th> <th style="width: 12.5%; text-align: center;">Not very interested</th> <th style="width: 12.5%; text-align: center;">Quite Interested</th> <th style="width: 12.5%; text-align: center;">Very Interested</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Financial literacy for viability</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Digital literacy</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mapping new opportunities</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Creative thinking</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Experiential learning &amp; social skills</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Eco-business management</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Taking initiatives</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other?</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Not interested	Not very interested	Quite Interested	Very Interested	Financial literacy for viability	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	Digital literacy	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	Mapping new opportunities	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	Creative thinking	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	Experiential learning & social skills	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	Eco-business management	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	Taking initiatives	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	Other?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
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## Accompanying persons for NEETs






Profile	<p>Profile of the accompanying person for NEETs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Age</li> <li>- Gender: female, male, agender, bigender, no binary, other, prefer not to say)</li> <li>- Place / country of residency</li> <li>- Profession - mentor, coach, social worker, employee of a support / guidance structure / incubator, ...</li> <li>- Experience (number of the years worked in the profession - make proposals for year ranges))</li> <li>- Structure represented - object / thematic field</li> <li>- Other?</li> </ul>																																													
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## Ecoentrepreneurs

Profile	<p>Profile of the eco-entrepreneur</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Age,</li> <li>- Gender: female, male, agender, bigender, no binary, other, prefer not to say</li> <li>- Place / country of residency</li> <li>- Experience (number of years worked in the field of the eco-entrepreneurship)</li> <li>- Professional experience before creating an eco-enterprise             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Business Sector (object / thematic field)</li> <li>- Clean Technology,</li> <li>- Sustainable agriculture,</li> <li>- Eco-Tourism,</li> <li>- Green building and construction,</li> <li>- Waste management and recycling,</li> <li>- Sustainable fashion,</li> <li>- Food and beverage,</li> <li>- Education and Training,</li> <li>- Other</li> </ul> </li> </ul>																																													
Eco-entrepreneurship	<p>What is your vision / definition of eco-entrepreneurship?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What are the most common challenges in pursuing an ecopreneurial career?</li> <li>- How did you overcome these challenges?</li> </ul> <p>Could you please specify your preferred qualifications for potential employees / colleagues in each of the following sectors (your business sector and overall ecoentrepreneurship):</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="837 891 1524 1422"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Not interested</th> <th>Not very interested</th> <th>Quite Interested</th> <th>Very Interested</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Financial literacy for viability</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Digital literacy</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mapping new opportunities</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Creative thinking</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Experiential learning &amp; social skills</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Eco-business management</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Taking initiatives</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other?</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Other comments</p>		Not interested	Not very interested	Quite Interested	Very Interested	Financial literacy for viability					Digital literacy					Mapping new opportunities					Creative thinking					Experiential learning & social skills					Eco-business management					Taking initiatives					Other?				
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Training and support	<p>About training or support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have you been helped or accompanied in the creation of your eco-business? If yes, by whom and how?</li> <li>- What training / education have you completed? If not, how would you have liked to be accompanied?</li> </ul> <p>What are the gaps in ecoentrepreneurship, what are the needs in terms of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support</li> <li>- Training</li> <li>- Laws</li> <li>- Support programs</li> <li>- Network</li> </ul> <p>What is your most important advice for a promising eco-entrepreneur?</p>																																													
Participation and follow-up	<p>Not mandatory but interesting to know</p> <p>Have you ever hired a NEET? If yes, please can you briefly evaluate his/her performance? If yes, do you think he/she would benefit from a training program?</p> <p>Do you wish to be a tester/participant of EcopreNEETs project (incubator, testing the MOOCS and training)?</p>																																													
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## Interview transcriptions

	NEETs	Accompanying persons	Ecoentrepreneurs
	<a href="#">FRANCE</a>	<a href="#">FRANCE</a>	<a href="#">FRANCE</a>
	<a href="#">HUNGARY</a>	<a href="#">HUNGARY</a>	<a href="#">HUNGARY</a>
	<a href="#">POLAND</a>	<a href="#">POLAND</a>	<a href="#">POLAND</a>
	<a href="#">NETHERLANDS</a>	<a href="#">NETHERLANDS</a>	<a href="#">NETHERLANDS</a>
	<a href="#">GREECE</a>	<a href="#">GREECE</a>	<a href="#">GREECE</a>

## Project consortium

### Project coordinator

Ligue de l'Enseignement Nouvelle Aquitaine (France)



[Ligue de l'Enseignement Nouvelle-Aquitaine \(LENA\)](#) is the regional union of the 12 federations of the Ligue de l'Enseignement. Its objective is to train responsible citizens, to fight against inequalities and to contribute to the construction of a more just and independent society. LENA is active in many fields: education, training, cultural action, outdoor activities and sports, holidays and tourism, social leisure, educational action in schools and families, economic information, vocational training and the environment.

### Partners

Atermon B.V. (Netherlands)



[Atermon](#) is an IT company heavily involved in providing e-learning solutions for different contexts and target groups. The company conceptualises intelligent solutions for E&T based on gamification models and technologies and we design practical applications and tools in support of ICT-enabled E&T.

Learning Seed (Greece)



[Learning Seed](#) is a people-centred NGO that aims to provide practical support to socially vulnerable and marginalised groups and people in need by offering attractive training courses that ensure equal access to education and training opportunities. Its aim is to alleviate social exclusion and activate civil societies through experience-based non-formal education approaches.

Ecocenter Alapitvany (Hungary)

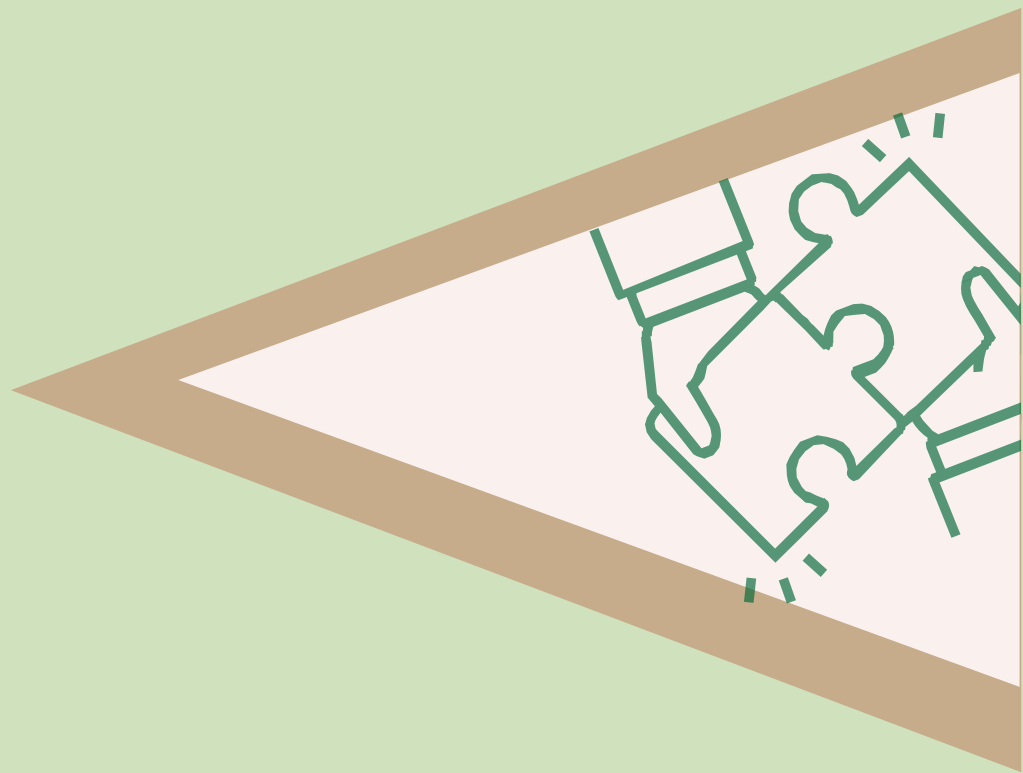


[Ecocenter Alapitvany](#) is a non-profit foundation that links education, culture, health and ecological issues for a sustainable and quality way of life and for the protection of the cultural and natural environment. The main activities of the foundation are education and training in various fields for individuals, schools, SMEs and organisations, as well as consultancy and recognition of competences in order to link education and culture to a sustainable and quality way of life.

Digicult (Poland)



[Digicult](#) is an IT organisation that focuses on developing different methodologies, techniques and knowledge in order to design innovative, effective and culturally responsive approaches. The organisation creates engaging and sustainable cultural awareness experiences



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“EcopreNEETs: Boosting the eco-preneurial skills of NEETs”

Project number: 2022-2-FR02-KA220-YOU-000098683