



# Youth entrepreneurship

*A Policy Brief from the Policy Learning Platform  
for a more social Europe*

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**SOCIAL**



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## Summary

Youth entrepreneurship has been on the EU policy agenda for over a decade but continues to be an important policy area as the challenges around enabling young people to take up entrepreneurship and the associated benefits remain. Especially in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and the market uncertainties caused by international conflicts the youth have been in a vulnerable state for several years and need even more assistance in finding their footing in our societies.

Overall, this policy brief seeks to provide inspiration and guidelines for policymakers to strengthen youth entrepreneurship support. It explores how youth entrepreneurship policy interventions are implemented on the EU level as well as in different regions of Europe. The document gives an overview of the main policy instruments and support programmes on the EU level and it showcases some of the good practices and policy changes of Interreg Europe projects. Considering the nature of the projects, there is a narrower focus on youth entrepreneurship in rural areas and entrepreneurship support for pre- and high school students. The document also proposes key insights and main policy recommendations.

The knowledge, solutions and good practices showcased in this policy brief come mainly from Interreg Europe projects.

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# European context

## Entrepreneurship: a competence that applies to all spheres of life

In 2016 [The European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework \(EntreComp\)](#) was developed under the New Skills Agenda for Europe and is still used as a **key reference methodology** in European entrepreneurship support instruments. EntreComp uses a broad conceptualization of what constitutes “entrepreneurship” – it is seen as a **competence that empowers individuals not only to start and scale businesses but also to contribute positively to their personal development and society at large**. In other words, even if participants in entrepreneurship support initiatives do not end up launching their own businesses, they still get relevant life skills that can either open up new labour market opportunities or be applied in the public or third sector.

EntreComp **supports youth entrepreneurship** by guiding educational programs that aim to build practical skills and entrepreneurial mindsets. It provides practitioners with direction and inspiration on how to implement such programmes. The methodology offers a structured approach to building a solid foundation in entrepreneurship, equipping youth with the skills and confidence needed to innovate, collaborate, and succeed in various fields, from social enterprises to high-growth startups.

## The importance of youth entrepreneurship policy

In 2020 the EC and OECD jointly published the study “[Policy Brief on Recent Developments in Youth Entrepreneurship](#)” which examined the landscape of youth entrepreneurship within the EU, identifying trends, potential, challenges, and policy recommendations. According to the report, there are four main reasons why policy makers should concentrate on supporting youth entrepreneurship. First, **there are market and institutional obstacles** that make it harder for youth to embark on an entrepreneurial path than their elders. Second, many youths have difficulties entering the labour market and **entrepreneurship can provide an alternative route into the labour market** alongside employment.

This aspect is especially important currently as during the Covid-19 pandemic young people were more likely to experience job loss and unemployment, housing insecurity and interruptions to their schooling and education plans. Long-term unemployment in turn has adverse effects on the individual and it creates societal problems related to trust in institutions and a higher probability of crime. Therefore, youth entrepreneurship policy can be one tool to combat youth unemployment as well as social exclusion. Third, as young people are more likely to make use of the latest technologies, it can also mean that **youth-led businesses can bring about new innovations as well as economic gains** to local economies. Lastly, referring back to the EntreComp notion, **entrepreneurship programmes can help youth develop transversal skills that will help them in their career**, regardless of whether they go on to start a business.

The study also identified **four main challenges that youth entrepreneurs face**:

- Low levels of awareness and few entrepreneurship role models
- Lack of entrepreneurship skills
- Difficulty accessing finance
- Small entrepreneurship networks

Furthermore, young people in Europe tend to **show a high level of interest in entrepreneurship** – nearly 40% indicate a preference for self-employment over working as an employee – but **only 5% of youth** in the EU were working on a start-up over the period 2018-2022. The numbers vary considerably across member states, from 16% in Latvia to less than 3% in Italy. This situation has prompted the EC and the OECD to include a chapter on youth entrepreneurship within their 2023 report “[The Missing Entrepreneurs 2023](#)”. The report identifies factors contributing to this gap, such as **limited access to finance, limitations in building professional networks, lack of entrepreneurial skills and fear of failure**.

The report estimates that there are over 800 000 “missing” young entrepreneurs in Europe. There is also a gender divide: young men (20-29 years old) are about 1.6 times more likely to be self-employed than young women. Regarding economic gains, it should also be kept in mind that according to the report young entrepreneurs also create jobs for others. While the share of young self-employed people who are employers in the EU has remained stable over the past decade, they are nonetheless providing at least 350 000 additional jobs in the EU.

To conclude, there is **untapped potential** in youth entrepreneurship and regions could do more to further promote entrepreneurship and support young entrepreneurs, therefore bringing about benefits and alleviating some risks to society. The potential of policy interventions has been nicely summarised in the EU and OECD study:

“Public policy can address many of the market and institutional failures impeding youth entrepreneurship by increasing awareness about the potential of entrepreneurship, embedding entrepreneurship teaching at all levels of education, offering training and coaching outside of education, improving access to finance and supporting the development of entrepreneurship networks for young people.”

*Recent Developments in Youth Entrepreneurship 2020 (EC & OECD)*

The following chapters of the present document **explore how such policy interventions are already being implemented on the EU level as well as in different regions of Europe**. The next two sub-chapters give a quick overview of the main policy instruments and support programmes. The document then moves on **to showcase some of the good practices and policy changes of Interreg Europe projects**. Considering the nature of the projects the focus is on **youth entrepreneurship in rural areas and entrepreneurship support for pre- and high school students**.

## The EU policy framework

The European Union offers various support for youth entrepreneurship through several policies that enable funding, training programs and networking opportunities for young entrepreneurs. Youth entrepreneurship has been high on the EU political agenda for **over a decade**. As already mentioned, entrepreneurship has been identified by the EC as a vital competence for European citizens as evidenced by the 2016 EntreComp framework. Since then, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the European policy support for youth has been strengthened by [the Youth Employment Initiative](#) and the update of [the European Skills Agenda](#), which includes entrepreneurial skills within one of the 12 foreseen actions (Action 7: Increasing STEM graduates and fostering entrepreneurial and transversal skills).

As part of the Action, the EC intends to launch **a European Action on Entrepreneurship Skills** which, among other goals, will focus **on young women entrepreneurs** as well as continue to systematically use **the EntreComp competence framework**. Furthermore, the EC intends to continue **promoting entrepreneurship skills at all levels of education and training** - from primary and secondary school education to VET and higher education.

Youth is also kept in mind in the case of the [Just Transition Fund](#). The "[Youth for a Just Transition: A Toolkit for Youth Participation in the Just Transition Fund](#)" is a document created by the EC Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy to empower youth to actively participate in shaping a transition to a climate-neutral economy, especially in regions heavily reliant on fossil fuels and carbon-intensive industries. The document outlines multiple strategies that empower youth, including supporting youth entrepreneurship. It emphasizes financial and structural support mechanisms specifically aimed at young entrepreneurs.

Key initiatives include providing **micro-financing options** and **mini-grants** for young adults with business ideas, particularly those that contribute to sustainable practices and the green transition. Additionally, it encourages

**incubation and mentorship** programs to aid youth in developing and launching their projects. This focus allows youth to actively contribute to the economy's transition to sustainability by implementing their innovative ideas, addressing local challenges, and acquiring entrepreneurial experience within the Just Transition framework.

[The Youth Entrepreneurship Policy Academy \(YEPA\)](#) is an OECD-EU **policy-learning initiative for three years** to strengthen policy measures around youth entrepreneurship.



It has been set up in the context of the previously mentioned report on Missing Entrepreneurs in order to facilitate exchanges across countries and stakeholder groups (policymakers, youth entrepreneurship organizations, social entrepreneurship networks, program managers, and researchers) on lessons learned, pitfalls to avoid, and emerging approaches to supporting young entrepreneurs.

Thus, the initiative **aims to strengthen youth entrepreneurship policies and programs** by addressing the barriers young people face in entrepreneurship. YEPA's activities include thematic events and reports focused on various aspects of youth entrepreneurship, such as access to finance, building networks, and leveraging technology innovations. The initiative also has a strong focus on inclusive and social entrepreneurship.



Lastly, when designing and implementing policies for the next generations, it is important to also let them have a say in the direction to take. Founded in Brussels in 1994, [JEUNE, the Young Entrepreneurs Organization of the European Union](#) plays a vital role in **advocating for young entrepreneurs by fostering a continuous dialogue with key European institutions**.

Supported by the Erasmus+ programme, JEUNE promotes entrepreneurship through lobbying, training initiatives, and networking events that support business incubation and the development of policies favourable to young entrepreneurs. The organisation represents over 1.6 million young people interested in entrepreneurship across 20 countries.

## The programmes for youth entrepreneurs

The policies described above feed directly into programmes created to facilitate the achievement of the goals around youth entrepreneurship. While there are many programmes under which activities involving youth are eligible, the following three programmes are exemplary of policy in practice.

[Erasmus+ Alliances for Innovation](#) aim to boost Europe's innovation capacity through stronger cooperation and knowledge flow among higher education, vocational education and training, businesses and the broader socio-economic environment. The programme finances topical projects through public calls and has two strands, the first of which is relevant here. The "[Alliances for Education and Enterprises](#)" call for projects is meant to bring together enterprises and both higher education and vocational training providers to work together in partnership. The goal is **to address skills mismatches by designing new curricula** for higher education and vocational education and training and supporting the development of a sense of initiative and entrepreneurial mindset in the EU. The deadline for the next call is March 2025.



One of the few youth entrepreneurship initiatives directly referenced in [the New European Innovation Agenda](#) is the "[Girls go Circular](#)". This initiative set up under [The European Institute of Innovation and Technology KIC RawMaterials](#), has equipped over 40,000 schoolgirls aged 14-19 across Europe with digital and entrepreneurial skills through an online learning programme about the circular economy.

The online learning platform “Circular Learning Space” offers students the option of choosing between different learning modules on topics like e-waste, climate change, food, or robotics. Besides the mission to increase students’ environmental awareness and digital skills, the programme has a clear focus on entrepreneurship. Through challenge-based exercises, students learn how to identify business opportunities, take initiative and work in teams. These exercises are further supported by group activities that boost creativity, and confidence, that train analytical and problem-solving skills and that ultimately support students in becoming the change-makers of tomorrow.

## Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs

Since 2009, one of the main EU-level support programmes for entrepreneurship has been the [Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs \(EYE\)](#). It is an exchange programme designed to equip aspiring entrepreneurs with essential skills to start or run a successful business in Europe.

The programme matches new entrepreneurs with more experienced “host” entrepreneurs in another country to work together for a period of up to six months. This experience allows new entrepreneurs to gain valuable on-the-job training and knowledge on what to keep in mind when start developing a business. Essentially the idea is that ‘would-be’ entrepreneurs gain competencies and perspectives that will prove invaluable during their business start-up phase. In addition, the programme enables to explore new markets and to create international business connections.

At the same time the “hosts” benefit from new perspectives and potential connections from another market. As of 2024 the EYE programme has facilitated 12,000 successful business exchanges involving nearly 24,000 entrepreneurs and has created a dynamic network of ambitious individuals and experienced business owners. While there is no age limit to be eligible for the program, it is most commonly promoted and used by young people.

## Youth entrepreneurship in Interreg Europe

Interreg Europe supports national, regional and local authorities by co-financing projects tackling youth entrepreneurship and youth involvement, such as [RuralYouthFuture](#), [atWork4NEETs](#) and [YESVolunteer](#). It also has co-financed the projects [E-COOL](#) and [iEER](#), which were specifically focused on young people’s entrepreneurial skills, while several other projects also shared experiences related to this field. Therefore, the programme has already **collected several inspiring good practices as well as policy changes that work as guidance for other European regions seeking to set up new or adjust existing programmes for youth entrepreneurship**. Due to the nature of the projects, most of the good practices identified by the project partners have a focus on youth entrepreneurship in **rural areas** and entrepreneurship support for **pre- and high school students**. The examples illustrated below are organised into these two main categories.

### Youth entrepreneurship in rural areas

In the spring of 2024, the [Policy Learning Platform](#) organized a workshop “[Entrepreneurship in rural areas with population decline](#)” which in one of its working sessions also focused on youth entrepreneurship. An important takeaway was that young people are not a minority to be helped but often a misused resource, so as much as possible, they should also be included in the design of the policies and support programmes. Peer-to-peer learning methods and mentoring support were also emphasized, the latter seen as an important contributor to business survival rate.

The challenges related to youth policies are intensified in rural areas where there are fewer opportunities in the labour market as well as in education and social activities. As many rural regions in Europe are fighting depopulation it is especially important to retain young people. Providing opportunities to start and grow a business locally is, therefore, a tool that policymakers in rural areas have in their arsenal. Below are two examples of such good practices from Latvia and Slovenia.

## GOOD PRACTICE 1: THE COUNTRYSIDE WILL BE!

THE COUNTRYSIDE WILL BE ! ("LAUKIEM BŪT!" in Latvian) is an initiative promoting rural youth entrepreneurship and fostering sustainable development in rural areas. By offering tailored business training, individual consultations, and a financial award competition, the programme empowers young people aged 18 to 40 to turn their business ideas into reality. More concretely, the programme includes:

- **5-day training + business idea presentation event** (ca 25h total), covering 14 topics vital for business success over
- **Award competition:** after completing the training, within a two-year period participants can submit their business plan for the Award Competition. Business ideas must focus on rural regions or small towns with populations under 15,000, in either agriculture or non-agriculture sectors. Awards range from 150 EUR to 2,900 EUR for winners placing 1st to 6th in three categories.
- **Individual consultations:** participants can receive tailored support for starting business ideas or exploring the development opportunities for an existing company.
- **Group coaching:** joint group sessions aimed at developing various skills based on participants' needs.

The programme was launched by the Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre (LLKC). It is financed by the Latvian Rural Support Service and the Ministry of Agriculture, with additional support from the financial institution Altum. The programme is available in all Latvia, except for major cities.

[Click here to find out more about this practice.](#)



Image source: [Laukiem But!](#)

Laukiem But! is the only initiative for rural youth and rural entrepreneurship in Latvia, and it has impressive results as between 2012-2023 over 2500 young people participated in the training and nearly 650 participated in the business ideas competition; with over half of the participants launching or continuing businesses as a result. A key to the success of the programme has been the use of an extensive network of 26 LLKC offices across Latvia which has enabled to directly engage with potential participants. The programme is seen as **important in addressing rural depopulation in Latvia and effective in empowering rural youth to contribute to their communities and ensure the long-term sustainability of rural areas.**



## GOOD PRACTICE 2: AGRO FI MICRO – Microcredits in agriculture for young people

AGRO FI MICRO provides soft zero-interest loans to young farmers. Young farmers are considered a vulnerable target group, so the farmer does not have to offer any collateral to secure the loan. They can use the funds for whatever they want, mostly for further development and to buy machinery. The loans are between € 5.000 and € 25.000 and the total repayment period is between 12 and 60 months. At the end of its implementation, the project must achieve at least one of the following objectives:

- Preservation of agricultural production
- Restoration of production potential due to natural disasters
- Improving liquidity
- Achieving greater market orientation and competitiveness
- Developing agricultural holdings by moving towards green, digital and climate-neutral agriculture

The AGRO FI Micro is funded by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food of Slovenia from the state budget. €3.3 million is available between 2023-2027.

[Click here to find out more about this practice.](#)



Image source: [Slovenian Regional Development Fund](#)

One of the greatest challenges pointed out by the EC and OECD reports described above is the lack of access to finance for youth entrepreneurs. The 2023 report cites a recent survey where 40% of respondents claimed lack of capital and resources as a barrier to entrepreneurship and self-employment. Therefore, financial instruments such as AGRO FI MICRO that help young agri-sector entrepreneurs maintain businesses in their own region are very much needed. **Especially noteworthy is the instrument's low entry barrier** as normally young entrepreneurs need to rely heavily on own-financing for their businesses due to a lack of collateral and financial history needed to access external finance. In the case of AGRO FI MICRO, no collateral is requested.

## Youth entrepreneurship and education

The formal education system is considered **one of the most effective ways of promoting youth entrepreneurship** as there is direct access to the target group. Policy inputs that directly add entrepreneurial components to the formal education systems as well as extracurricular programs can go a long way in paving the way for the next entrepreneurial generations. The European Parliament has [also emphasised](#) the importance of promoting entrepreneurship in non-formal and informal education **as a way of improving early school leavers' employment prospects**. According to the EntreComp framework introduced earlier, there is in general a two-stage progression in entrepreneurial learning:

1. Developing increasing independence and responsibility in acting upon ideas and opportunities to create value and
2. Developing the capacity to generate value from simple and predictable contexts up to complex, constantly changing environments

Activities aimed at pre- and high school students mostly fall under the first stage – the goal is **to provide encouragement, provide basic entrepreneurial know-how, and teach transversal skills** like working in teams, initiating ideas and taking ownership in small projects.

In May 2021 the Platform organized [a miniseries](#) around the topic of youth entrepreneurship. The series explored the benefits of introducing entrepreneurship at an early stage, the potential of hackathons in vocational education as well as challenge-based innovation programmes for university students. While the event series recordings and results are available on the website, it is worth reiterating some of the key learnings that still hold true:

- Programmes for young students should focus on developing their entrepreneurial skills – having guts, taking risks, being responsible and developing self-esteem – and not on entrepreneurship per se. The focus should be on skills that will benefit the youth no matter which career path they take.
- Student entrepreneurship programmes should be aligned with the innovation and sustainable development goals of the region to be relevant for the overall development of the local economy and to raise awareness of the most pressing challenges and issues.
- In the case of challenge-based ideation events where challenges of real SMEs are at the centre of activities, business cases should be prepared well in advance to generate interest and recruit university students.

Below are examples of two good practices that work precisely in this area.

### GOOD PRACTICE 3: RInovatoRI – encouraging entrepreneurial competences of children



RInovatoRI is a programme aimed at Croatian primary school students (age 11-14) in the city of Rijeka. It provides basic knowledge for problem solving and creation of student business ideas. It is a layered programme consisting of three parts:

(1) Regular program: weekly workshops during the school year with study visits, case studies, guest lecturers and field activities, (2) Weekend School of Entrepreneurship: 3-days workshops with trainers and external experts/mentors on specific topic with an aim to develop an innovative product prototype, (3) Summer RInnovation Lab: 3-week summer workshops and study visit around topical issue resulting with innovative ideas and solutions. The programme content combines typical topics such as business modelling and marketing with specific topics such as use of AI tools and 3D technologies, sustainability and business ethics. The programme was initiated by the City of Rijeka. It is financed by the city together with the local youth centre and participation fees.



[Click here to find out more about this practice.](#)

## GOOD PRACTICE 4: Youth Entrepreneurship Summer School (YES) Program



The YES Program offers high school students the opportunity to learn through experiential learning how a business works and to approach the world of entrepreneurship. It is an annual summer school hosted every year by Athens University of Economics and Business.

The objective is to bring together students from different backgrounds and to promote entrepreneurship through seminars and workshops given by the university professors as well as renowned Greek entrepreneurs. The curriculum includes lectures, analysis and discussion of case studies, participation in business games, group activities, as well as developing a business plan for a new business. Regarding the latter, students are working in teams whilst drafting a business plan for their own idea, and finally the teams with the best ideas are awarded. Notably, participants receive scholarships based on their performance through a skill test.

The programme has been run in Athens for 15 years and in 2018 was also scaled to Ioannina, showing its high replicability in other regions with universities. The programme has benefitted over 650 students. Furthermore, each year there have been 1-2 promising ideas that have become real businesses.

[Click here to find out more about this practice.](#)

The two practices above **tackle several of the main challenges of youth entrepreneurs** outlined at the beginning of the policy brief. Both provide training on entrepreneurial skills and increase awareness around entrepreneurship as such. They also notably tackle the challenge of 'lack of entrepreneurship role models' – RinovatoRI uses guest lecturers, study visits and mentoring by external experts while the YES Program includes renowned Greek entrepreneurs in its seminars and workshops. These first contacts with real practitioners also the first stepping stones in broadening the networks of young people.

### Policy changes – youth entrepreneurship governance

All Interreg Europe projects strive towards **improving local, regional or national policies** to ensure that public money is spent in the right place and way. Below are examples of how the governance structure of the youth entrepreneurship policy was adjusted in the Marche Region, Italy and South Moravian Region, Czech Republic as an outcome of interregional collaboration.



#### Policy change in Marche Region – systemic coordination and training the trainers

By participating in the Interreg Europe [iEER project](#) the Marche Regional Authority (Italy) realized that there is a lack of a systematic/vertical policy regarding the governance of the entrepreneurial ecosystem and an absence of a strong and regional action on the training of trainers (university and secondary schools' teachers) regarding entrepreneurial skills. These concerns were brought to the attention of the relevant decision-makers who decided to implement a policy change within the Regional Guidance Programme 2018-2020 funded by Marche ESF Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020. Prior to this change youth entrepreneurship had not been covered under one operational instrument.

First, a regional governance structure was set up for the ecosystem: the Regional Board on Young Entrepreneurship was set up as an institutional board composed of the main private (e.g. crowd-funding platforms, private incubators, start-uppers, universities knowledge transfer offices, creative hubs, etc) and public actors of the regional ecosystem. These stakeholders meet periodically on a voluntary basis to suggest regional activities and interventions to boost the entrepreneurial spirit of the region, especially of young people.

Secondly, a new training the trainers initiative was launched to support the pre-start up phase of aspiring young entrepreneurs. For the first time, the four regional universities started working together on the youth entrepreneurship topic. The goal was to involve teachers to stimulate entrepreneurial spirit among young

students using the methodology of design thinking. This new programme was based on the transfer of the good practice [Aula Emprende](#) from Valencia, Spain. All four regional universities took part in the programme and 32 student teams were supported in the first pilot. The success of the programme led the Regional Authority to finance the project with annual frequency through a call for projects for universities.

The policy change offers great learning value as **it emphasizes the importance of regional governance structures** and often there is no need to invent something new but rather a well-working approach from another part of Europe can be successfully replicated.

### **Policy change in South Moravian Region – new initiatives to support students' entrepreneurship, initiative and creativity**

By participating in the Interreg Europe [E-COOL project](#), the South Moravian Region (Czech Republic) was able to influence their Regional Action Plan for Education Development (RAP), which was their main policy instrument relating to entrepreneurship education in the region implemented under the Operational Programme Research, Development and Education (OP VVV) for the 2014-2020 period. The RAP emphasizes the connection between education and the labour market.

Thanks to the E-COOL project, a functional system of cooperation was created within the framework of the RAP, with the condition of the involvement of representatives of all secondary and higher vocational schools in the region, the business sector, representatives of companies, employers and other key actors who influence education and at the same time business support.

Furthermore, the E-COOL project's action plan was included in the RAP in 2021. Namely, after a thorough analysis of the different good practices of the other partners in the consortium, three examples of good practices were selected as inspiration, transformed and adapted for the needs of the South Moravian Region and piloted. The actions were:

- a 10-module entrepreneurship e-learning course JICskill for nearly 300 students.
- a 5-day program in which 27 secondary school participants were given tailored support and learned the basics of leadership, personal development in everyday life and how to build a personal vision for their future, as well as how to manage their emotions needs and strengths.
- a 5-day summer programme in which 50 students tried their first steps towards entrepreneurship, verified their business idea, tried working in a team, got to know themselves better, met like-minded young people and took away a lot of new motivation and inspiration to do something. The summer programme was also inspired by the Greek Youth Entrepreneurship Summer School good practice described above.

Overall, the goal of the actions was to support key competencies leading to the development of entrepreneurship, initiative and creativity of students by deepening cooperation between schools, entrepreneurs and employers and other actors in the region. Based on that experience, the pilot actions were finally introduced as part of permanent practices offered in the South Moravian Region.

The policy change also reflects the EntreComp ideals that **entrepreneurship is a competence** which is also about taking initiative and being creative. The three piloted actions indicate that the end goal is not always making young people into entrepreneurs but rather providing young people the skills needed to take agency of their lives and have better prospects in whichever sector the person ends up working in the future, either as self-employed or an employee.

Similarly to the policy change from the Marche Region (Italy) mentioned above, the Interreg Europe project also provided the South Moravian Region **an important stimulus for improving the local governance structure** around the topic of youth entrepreneurship, thus improving collaboration and policy feedback loops.

# Policy recommendations

This policy brief has explored the main challenges around youth entrepreneurship, the related EU policy instruments and programmes as well as concrete good practices and policy changes within the Interreg Europe community. Below is a summary of main takeaways for policymakers.

## Policy solution 1: entrepreneurship as an overall competence

- The policy brief began by introducing **The European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (EntreComp)** developed under the New Skills Agenda for Europe. This framework is suggested as a guide to policymakers and practitioners in designing entrepreneurial programmes. It sees **entrepreneurship as a competence that empowers individuals** not only to start and scale businesses but also to contribute positively to their personal development and society at large.
- This notion has been mirrored in several of the good practices and policy changes featured in this document. It has also been one of the main recommendations in events organised by the Policy Learning Platform. Essentially it is a reminder that youth entrepreneurship programmes, especially those aimed at pre- or high-school students, are not so much about establishing new youth-led startups, but rather to improve youth involvement through such initiatives: to improve their human capital, to enhance soft and life skills.

## Policy solution 2: governance structures matter

- The two policy changes from the Marche Region and South Moravian Region highlighted **the importance of having solid collaborative frameworks and regional governance structures** around the youth entrepreneurship policy area.
- **The Regional Board on Young Entrepreneurship** set up in Marche Region works as a replicable example of how a structure can be given to a body of a voluntary nature in order to identify the most suitable regional activities and interventions to boost the entrepreneurial spirit of young people.
- On the other hand, the South Moravian Region offers another approach where the **youth entrepreneurship agenda is furthered through a regional action plan on education** which by mandate needs to involve representatives of all secondary and higher vocational schools in the region, companies, employers and other key actors in the region who influence education and the business ecosystem. This approach ensures that all relevant stakeholders are around the same table, thus leading to better policy design and buy-in from the key stakeholders.

## Policy solution 3: access to finance needs to be made easier

- One of the greatest barriers for youth entrepreneurs is limited access to finance. Therefore, financial instruments aimed at young people or frameworks that help them connect with the investor communities are very much needed. The **AGRO FI MICRO** instrument also highlighted the **importance of low entry barriers** as normally young entrepreneurs need to rely heavily on their own financing for their businesses due to a lack of collateral and financial history needed to access external finance.
- While not explored in detail here, one of the main policy recommendations of the two collaborative reports by the EC and OCED is that **training programmes should be combined with financial support**. Support programmes that combine the two appear to be more likely to support the sustainable creation of new enterprises compared to those only offering finance or training individually. The aspects of financial instruments for young entrepreneurs will be explored more in future activities of the Platform.

# Sources and further information

The Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform experts provide a tailored set of resources, contacts, or in-depth analyses to help you find the answers you are looking for. Explore our services that can help you solve regional policy challenges.

## Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform information

- Workshop on [Entrepreneurship in declining rural areas](#)
- [Youth entrepreneurship](#) miniseries
- Story on [Making Europe Entrepreneurial](#)



**RuralYouthFuture**

### Improving the role of youth policies for rural sustainable development

The project aims to enhance the efficacy of youth employment policies for sustainable rural development. This ambitious endeavor unites municipal, regional, and national entities in a common goal: addressing the unique needs of young individuals in rural territories. By reducing inequalities with their urban peers and combating aging and depopulation, RuralYouthFuture seeks to forge a brighter future.



**atWork4NEETs**

### Increasing Work Prospects of NEETs through capacity building and improved policy measures

atWork4NEETs is a project which aims to identify and exchange good practices to improve the current policy tools to facilitate young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs) to access meaningful opportunities to improve their skills and find suitable jobs in seven European regions.



**YESVolunteer**

### Fostering youth volunteering for personal and professional growth in a more social Europe

YES Volunteer seeks to enhance youth development, across seven European regions, by expanding access to enriched volunteering opportunities fostering personal and professional growth. To achieve this, the regions involved in this project will exchange and capitalize on good practices regarding civic engagement programs for youth.

## Other sources

- [The European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework \(EntreComp\)](#)
- [The European Skills Agenda](#)
- [Erasmus+ Alliances for Education and Enterprises](#)
- [Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs](#)
- [Policy brief on Recent Developments in Youth Entrepreneurship](#)
- [The Missing Entrepreneurs 2023](#)
- [Youth for a Just Transition: A Toolkit for Youth Participation in the Just Transition Fund](#)

## Interreg Europe Programme

Interreg Europe is an interregional cooperation programme co-financed by the European Union. With a budget of 379 million euros for 2021-2027, Interreg Europe helps local, regional and national governments across Europe to develop and deliver better policies through interregional cooperation projects and its Policy Learning Platform services. The programme promotes good practice sharing and policy learning among European regions in 36 countries – the 27 Member States, as well as Norway, Switzerland and the 7 EU candidate countries. Interreg Europe contributes to the EU cohesion policy together with the other European Territorial Cooperation programmes known as Interreg.

## Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform

The Policy Learning Platform is the second action of the Interreg Europe programme. It aims to boost EU-wide policy learning and builds on good practices related to regional development policies.

The Platform is a space where the European policy-making community can tap into the know-how of regional policy experts and peers. It offers information on a variety of topics via thematic publications, online and onsite events, and direct communication with a team of experts.

## Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform expert services

Our team of experts provide a set of services that can help you with regional policy challenges. Get in contact with our experts to discuss the possibilities:



Via the [policy helpdesk](#), policymakers may submit their questions to receive a set of resources ranging from inspiring good practices from across Europe, policy briefs, webinar recordings, information about upcoming events, available European support and contacts of relevant people, as well as matchmaking recommendations and peer review opportunities.



A [matchmaking session](#) is a thematic discussion hosted and moderated by the Policy Learning Platform, designed around the policy needs and questions put forward by the requesting public authority or agency. It brings together peers from other European regions to present their experience and successes, to provide inspiration for overcoming regional challenges.



[Peer reviews](#) are the deepest and most intensive of the on-demand services, bringing together peers from a number of regions for a two-day work session, to examine the specific territorial and thematic context of the requesting region, discuss with stakeholders, and devise recommendations.

Discover more: [www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning](http://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning)



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