

WP6: CAPITALISATION Policy recommendations

Summary document of EU-level policy recommendations prepared
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The following document is a summary of EU-level policy recommendations that have been synthesized based on the country reports of all the Yenesys project partners (Estonia; Cyprus; Italy; Greece; Madeira; Spain; Croatia).

The national-level policy recommendations for the NEETs remain separate in each of the country reports, whereas the EU-level policy recommendations have been summarised and combined in this report.

The set of EU-level policy recommendations presented here is a result of numerous expert interviews and workshops that each of the partner organizations held in their countries during 2021 with the various experts that work with youth and NEET policies but also others. Due to the frames of the Yenesys project, the policy recommendations particularly address the problems associated with NEETs on islands/remote areas and access to green jobs.

The policy recommendations are presented under various categories, such as:

- Education and training
- Labour market and business innovation
- Youth & NEET status
- Programs and Action Plans
- Communication & social/ psychological
- Insularity

Education and training	
Barrier	Measure
Lack of Lifelong Learning Centres on medium and small islands.	Development of locally applicable measures programs coordinated by the Municipalities and responding to local labour market needs and promoting the economic, social, cultural, and personal development of their citizens. Exploiting the wealth of modern and asynchronous tele-education and tele-training activities on offer so that they do not constitute a barrier to skills development in remote areas.
Lack of knowledge on sustainability issues at the behavioural and career level. There are no reskilling initiatives within the lifelong learning programs.	Enhancing career education actions. Standardized and periodical training of trainers and career advisors on green jobs, so that the knowledge level is up to date. Knowledge about green professions should be transferred to career counsellors through studies, web portals, and videos with professional profiles.
	Lifelong learning strategy should include upskilling and re-skilling elements that are related to green jobs and that is also suitable for people who live on islands.
	Green jobs workshops at local youth centres.

<p>The European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) is the European Union (EU)'s main instrument for investing in people. With a budget of almost € 99.3 billion for the period 2021-2027, the ESF+ will continue to provide an important contribution to the EU's employment, social, education, and skills policies, including structural reforms in these areas.</p> <p>The European Social Fund (including the additional funds from REACT-EU) establishes objectives and contributions for the EU policies, namely in the scope of energy and environment, but does not allocate obligatory shares for thematic areas:</p> <p>“2. Through the investment priorities listed in paragraph 1, the ESF shall also contribute to the other thematic objectives listed in the first paragraph of Article 9 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, primarily by:</p> <p>(a) Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon, climate-resilient, resource-efficient, and environmentally sustainable economy, through the improvement of education and training systems necessary for the adaptation of skills and qualifications, the up-skilling of the labour force, and the creation of new jobs in sectors related to the environment and energy;”</p>	<p>The European Social Fund (including the additional funds from REACT-EU) should establish a specific share for environmental education/training/up and reskilling namely for youth and NEETs, to prepare professionals for the green jobs market, in line with the EU goals/commitments and requirements for sustainable recovery with NextGenerationEU implementation and EU long term budget.</p>
<p>The limited supply of opportunities on islands for further vocational training and lack of specializations (e.g. green skills).</p>	<p>Vocational training should be included in EU policies and should also be supported on the EU level. Support should be targeted to green skills, entrepreneurship, and digital skills building.</p>
<p>The economy of the islands relies heavily on tourism, resulting in strong seasonal fluctuations in labour supply, intensifying the precarious work of young people.</p>	<p>In green development interventions, the focus should be on the training of human resources and especially young people on the islands, to ensure the sustainability of projects and the development of human capital.</p>

The European Commission has several tools and support mechanisms to study or teach abroad (Information on studying, teaching abroad, scholarships, and finding the best university in a specific EU country). Specifically concerning Scholarships and student finance:

- Find a scholarship (How to get a scholarship in Europe, EU funding programmes for education, country profiles, find out about research and other costs, scholarships for international students, grants for interpretation student)
- Student finance (Types of financial support available for students). Sources of relevant information:
 - FAQs - University fees and financial help
 - Erasmus+ Master Degree Loans opening up access to more affordable lending for cross-border studies

The EC support for education is mainly based on the ESF+ and on the above-mentioned tools and mechanisms to study or teach abroad. Nevertheless, considering the financial constraints of several Member-states and EU autonomous regions, in particular islands and outermost regions, the implementation of a centralized EU student loan system to support education/training/up-reskilling could make the difference for citizens of the EU that do not even have financial conditions to proceed with their education in their own country/region.

Lack of homogenization of study plans in Europe to obtain “green” professionals.

Given the constraints of some EU Member-states and Autonomous regions, the EU should consider the implementation of an EU student loan system supported by a Central European Fund to receive applications from students from all or preselected Member-States/Autonomous regions. This centralized EU loan system for students could be inspired by the Norwegian loan system for students.

This centralized EU loan system for students will enable to increase equality and combat exclusion in the EU by supporting citizens in different conditions, namely:

- That don't fulfil the requirements for access to programs financed by ESF+;
- That want to have access to specific thematic areas that are not available under the options financed by ESF+ programs in their regions;
- Those are not eligible for national/regional scholarship systems.
- That don't want to overload precarious family budgets, even having access to scholarships (take note that students from islands have additional costs to study in the main island, in the mainland or abroad in other EU Member-states);
- That don't have family or don't have family approval and support to study;
- That are compelled to work to help their families, compromising their own future;
- That have already studied but want to change or update their studies in emergent areas, such as sustainability areas.

In islands, namely in archipelagos with fragmented territories, and in touristic regions with higher cost of living, the students have additional costs (air transports, accommodation, subsistence) to study in the main island, in the mainland or abroad in other EU Member-states, being this EU loan system for students an opportunity to promote equity and reduce exclusion, key objectives of the EC for all EU citizens.

It is necessary to generate more green employment, and for this it is necessary to professionalize certain activities related to this sector, introducing new university degrees and training cycles, which should be homogeneous throughout Europe.

Labour market and business innovation	
Barrier	Measure
<p>Many young people, despite having high levels of training and high potential, do not find positions that match their abilities and expectations. Especially in the less dynamic and developed areas of the EU, there is no adequate enhancement of human capital, resulting in an exit from the NEET condition only by going elsewhere or accepting a downward adjustment.</p>	<p>To minimize the dissymmetry between what is expected and what is received from the job market, the EU should start considering minimum guaranteed wage according to the job position. This defensive mechanism could transform not promising job opportunities into acceptable offers for young workers, who in turn can start a renovating process when hired in those realities. Additionally, including in the recruitment phase an orientation not only on job skills requirement but also on the job life expectations, it could help to avoid unpleasant situations during the career progress.</p> <p>In addition, career advisory services should be updated and customized. Promotion of technical and future green jobs during middle school and updating the advice offered by career advisors. Formally establishing the role and participation of (Public Employment Service) PES in schools.</p>
<p>The employer's perception of the benefits of employing young professionals with green skills is not identified. Green occupations are often considered secondary as they do not involve a large part of the amount of work required to make a business operational and economically viable.</p>	<p>Foster communication events for companies regarding the new required skills and qualifications that will support the sustainable development transition.</p>
<p>Despite of the interest of young people, farming is not popular these days due to low financial support and benefits, resulting to lack of sustainable and local food growth.</p>	<p>Targeted support schemes for young farmers (funding, low-rate loans etc.).</p>
<p>Many young people who perform their apprenticeships end up still jobless as the employers have no funding to hire them long-term.</p>	<p>The EU could support the creation of a special control mechanism for employers benefitting from governmental schemes.</p>
<p>Councillors on employment issues often don't have expertise on entrepreneurship issues.</p>	<p>Continuous trainings to councillors that provide employment support on business innovation related topics in order to support services for young businesspeople (such as legal, financial).</p>
<p>Too much bureaucracy and lack of support schemes for creation of green businesses.</p>	<p>Digitalisation of public services and businesses to eliminate bureaucracy. Subsidize start-ups in green economy and utilization of renewable energy sources.</p>

<p>A significant weakness is found in the availability of appropriate and effective regional structures to support the "entrepreneurial discovery process" and overall the management and monitoring of the implementation of Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation.</p>	<p>Enhancing the complementarity of investments, businesses and research in order to highlight the competitive local advantages on market opportunities. Supporting green entrepreneurship in order to reduce the negative effects of economic activities on nature.</p>
<p>The EU funds for infrastructures, support for entities of public, private and social sectors and employment programmes have the requirement, among others, to contribute to EU sustainability objectives, but a bigger mandatory share of funds to support green areas or green employments is not established. Also, the EU funds do not establish a higher percentage of support and a percentage of non-repayable funds to support green infrastructures, green and refurbished processes, green businesses and public initiatives, employment in green areas namely for youth and NEETs, the creation of green job positions and upskill and reskill of the workforce for the green transition.</p>	<p>Taking into account the sustainability requirements for socioeconomic recovery, the commitments of the Green Deal and the vulnerability of islands ecosystems with economies largely dependent on touristic activities based on natural resources, the EU should establish a higher mandatory share of the 2021-2027 long-term EU budget & NextGenerationEU to support operations in green areas of public, private and social sectors on infrastructures, new and refurbished processes, businesses, public initiatives, upskilling and reskilling of workforce, support employment and create new job positions, namely for youth and NEETs. Reinforcing this approach, a higher percentage of support and a percentage of non-repayable funds of 2021-2027 long-term EU budget & NextGenerationEU should also be established for operations in green areas in order to meet socioeconomic recovery based on sustainability requirements and Green Deal commitments. A mandatory share of support with non-repayable funds should also be established for awareness raising on sustainability solutions and behaviours, that are crucial for entities of public, private and social sectors and citizens in general in order that EU support funds meet the expected/defined sustainability objectives.</p>

The EU funds regarding innovation for infrastructures, entities of public, private and social sectors and start-ups have the requirement, among others, to contribute to EU sustainability objectives, but a mandatory share to support innovation in green areas is not established.

Also, the EU funds for innovation do not establish a higher percentage of support and a percentage of non-repayable funds to support green infrastructures, new green and refurbished processes, green businesses and public initiatives, employment in green areas, creation of green job positions namely for youth and NEETs and upskill and reskill the workforce for the green transition. Also, the EU funds for innovation do not establish specific conditions for operations in islands to consider their specificities, small scale economies, unique and threatened natural heritage and high vulnerability to climate change.

Lack of homogenization of labour frameworks, professions, and professional certificates in Europe.

Taking into account the sustainability requirements for socioeconomic recovery and the commitments of the Green Deal, the EU should establish a mandatory share of the innovation support funds and guarantee programmes from 2021-2027 long-term EU budget & NextGenerationEU to support innovative operations in green areas of public, private and social sectors on infrastructures, new and refurbished processes, businesses, public initiatives, upskilling and reskilling of workforce, support employment and create new green job positions, namely for youth and NEETs. A non-repayable percentage of support should also be considered to boost investments in innovation in sustainability areas namely in circular economy that is crucial for islands.

Namely, this approach should be applied for all the objectives of the InvestEU programme (including the funds for Research, innovation and digitalisation, small and medium-sized enterprises and social investment and skills). For islands, innovation on sustainability areas, and in particular on circular economy, should have special attention in terms of majority factors and non-repayable support in order to decrease the dependence from the exterior, to overcome the waste treatment specific difficulties of small isolated and fragmented territories, to increase the sustainable use of local resources and to increase resilience to climate change. The incubator role of islands should also be explored in the scope of solutions and business innovation on sustainability. The constraints related to small size of islands and related institutions cannot be a barrier to access EC funds namely through projects supported by EU competitive budget such as Horizon Europe.

It's necessary to establish a joint labour framework with joint basic stipulations, since each community country has its own legislation and labour framework. Due to this, there are European policies and mechanisms for the insertion of young people in the labour market that are not applicable in some of the countries. Also, not all countries have the same qualifications or professions. A European framework should be developed that establishes minimum requirements for each country; such as establishing the regulated figure of the Apprentice throughout Europe.

Youth & NEET status	
Barrier	Measure
<p>The longer a subject remains in a NEET condition, the more likely to sink, as many studies confirm, into a spiral of skills deterioration and demotivation.</p>	<p>The NEET situation must be addressed as soon as possible when manifested, starting from the school period. In fact, many efforts are spent on this group age to prevent radicalization in later stages.</p>
	<p>No one must be left behind; specific solutions must be tailored to older people who probably failed already with the previous NEET initiatives or that did not have the possibility to join one in the past. To face this difficult situation, specific initiatives should be organised for older NEETs, with individual focus, to better understand their specific needs.</p>
	<p>Steps need to be taken for preventative treatment and curative treatment. This means not only to try and find ways to help NEETs, but to eliminate the causes that make a young person become a NEET</p>
<p>The definition of NEET is often associated with negative implications making the target group feel socially excluded and labelled.</p>	<p>The definition of NEET should not come with negative associations, stronger and more positive communication tools are needed to help get rid of negative implications also on the EU-level.</p>
<p>NEETs are a heterogeneous group with subgroups (young people with high educational qualifications, young people from vulnerable groups, affected by poverty, low level of education, etc.) whose issues cannot be addressed as a whole. The categories of NEETs must be communicated and dealt with more separately (young mothers, NEETs with criminal backgrounds etc) also on EU level.</p>	<p>Enhancement of the targeted social research through the proposals of Integrated Territorial Investments aiming at the development of human capital. Target-based approaches are often more effective for eliminating short term solutions. Young people must be divided into different groups by their backgrounds, based on whether they went to a university or have basic education, or have a criminal background or they are mildly autistic, and so on. There needs to be a clear definition for NEETs and how to identify them.</p>
<p>The island's residents have additional costs regarding transport to participate in National and EU level volunteering initiatives. The EU funded volunteering initiatives in green areas are limited.</p>	<p>Create a specific EU approach with adequate financial support for youth island residents to carry out volunteering activities in the main island, in the mainland and other EU territories.</p>
	<p>Considering the EU sustainability policies and targets of the NextGenerationEU fund, the EU should create specific initiatives to support youth volunteering programmes on green areas.</p>

	<p>Volunteering online can be an option to overcome additional costs. It is important to promote EU and other global volunteering initiatives online. Where to look:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -EU Aid Volunteers: offering support to humanitarian aid organisations online -UN Volunteers Online: the United Nations has one of the most developed online volunteering programmes -Greenpeace: fighting for the environment by creating online campaigns
<p>Many young people are often not registered in the unemployment registers of Public Employment Services, and as a result they cannot be identified and finally they are given incentives to join employment-enhancing actions</p>	<p>The municipalities to have a coordinating role to facilitate the inventory of employment needs. According to the recommendations of the Council of Europe, the development of policies for NEETs requires effective mapping and reach out of NEETs.</p>

Programmes and Action Plans	
Barrier	Measure
<p>The decision-making processes for investments are performed in a technocratic way without securing the social consensus, resulting in a lack of trust and understanding of the benefits from the interventions developed within the context of the green reconstruction of the economy.</p>	<p>Strengthening bottom-up approaches by ensuring maximum level of local participation and consensus in order to gain trust in the implementation of "green" procurement. Enhance dissemination on the new data brought by green policies and foster the participation of local actors and communities in decisions to make a proper prioritization of projects based on meeting the needs while ensuring the maximum social benefits.</p>
<p>The lack of intervention logic between the development needs and the choice of objectives and results causes the inefficient use of the Funds and the non-achievement of the objectives of the results of the Programmes.</p>	<p>Linking policies for collaborative workplaces with policies based on the place-based development approach with the aim of revitalizing geographically isolated areas.</p>
<p>In the European Union, meeting the objectives seems sometimes more important than the quality of support for young people. The question is how it is possible to do quality work that also meets the EU objectives and requirements. The focus should be on why you don't have a job?</p>	<p>Individual needs and more thematic field solutions must be communicated more strongly. This also requires higher financial resources dedicated to specific programs. (Yenesys project is a great example of such youth program)</p>

Communication & social/psychological	
<p>Difficulty communicating with specific target groups.</p> <p>Previously it has been a mistake thinking that young people would use portals or employment centres and it has greatly limited Programs' success. In many occasions</p>	<p>In this situation, the contact channels are above all related to the so-called word-of-mouth. This latter requires an alliance of employment services not only with schools but also with associations and organizations operating in the area (community services, street work, ...) and social networks (Internet,</p>

<p>NEETs are discouraged of such programs and thus should be reached in more direct ways.</p>	<p>social media, and smartphone services), hence using a communication style capable of capturing interest and attention, also experimenting with different methods, maybe also involving peers who have lived and have come out of this condition.</p>
<p>The approach to the issue is merely economic and job oriented and ignores the psychological aspect of it</p>	<p>All programs and initiatives towards NEETs and young unemployment should also take care of the psychological aspect that such topics hinder. Unemployment might cause psychological issues that can as consequence hinder job opportunities starting a vicious cycle that is hard to exit.</p>

<p>Insularity</p>	
<p>Barrier</p>	<p>Measure</p>
<p>The apprenticeships mechanisms financed with EU funds have specific rules that limit the regional offer for apprenticeships, namely for NEETs on Sustainability Areas. The rule to hire a trainee after three financially supported apprenticeships limits apprenticeship opportunities given the small number of companies and organizations that work on sustainability or with sustainability approaches.</p> <p>On the other hand, the professional apprenticeship areas are limited to the educational background of candidates even when they have a science-based education and interest in developing a green career (e.g., when youth professionals have a degree in chemistry/business management/geography, they cannot apply for support to do an apprenticeship in a transversal area such as sustainability management).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering the specificities and vulnerabilities of insular regions, in particular outermost regions, that are recognized by the EC, (e.g. small market scale, isolation, fragmented territories, distance from the mainland, dependence on air transport, vulnerability to climate change) and the restricted number of private companies with know-how on sustainability issues, the EU should create a majority factor to cover extra costs of island participants in EU supported initiatives in main island/mainland and other EU Member states, namely in the scope of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU employment mechanisms; - EU mobility schemes (e. g Erasmus +); - The relaunching of European Apprentices Network (EAN), one of the six priorities of the Action plan of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA): The renewed European Alliance for Apprenticeships – Action Plan 2020-2021); - The new Commission initiative for NEETs called ALMA ALMA (Aim, Learn, Master, Achieve) with the aim to help these young people find their way to the job market by combining support for education, vocational training or employment in their home country with a work placement in another EU country. • Given the small size of companies in islands, the lack of technical knowledge on sustainability issues, the environmental requirements for economy recovery, the importance of sustainability in islands highly dependent on nature based touristic activities, the EU should launch specific dual

	<p>mentoring/apprenticeship programmes for islands to support external expertise mentoring on green areas to implement in complement to apprenticeships programmes to increase apprenticeships opportunities in green areas and increase sustainability approaches in organizations, fostering economy development based on sustainability. The management authorities of EU funds for apprenticeships should constitute a database of certified experts/entities (energy and environment agencies) for external mentoring. In the scope of the mentoring programme, the expert selected should visit periodically the company and meet the trainee and the person responsible from the organization in order to support the implementation of sustainable procedures in the organization in the scope of the apprenticeship. This external mentoring approach for trainee up-skilling should obligatorily involve a responsible person from the administration and an agreement in order to commit the organization for the implementation of sustainable solutions and procedures with the support of the trainee, increasing the possibility to create a green job position based on the satisfaction of new organization needs. Specific dual mentoring/apprenticeship programmes should be promoted for social and economic activities with specific sustainability requirements (e.g., external mentoring for sustainability management positions for hotel facilities, restaurants, schools, social sector entities, etc.).</p>
<p>The EU funds for infrastructures, support for entities of public, private and social sectors and employment programmes have the requirement, among others, to contribute to EU sustainability objectives, but a higher mandatory share of funds to support green areas or green employments is not established. Also, the EU funds do not establish a higher percentage of support and a percentage of non-repayable funds to support green infrastructures, green and refurbished processes, green businesses and public initiatives, employment in green areas namely for youth and NEETs, the creation of green job positions and upskill and reskill of the workforce for the green transition. Also, the EU funds do not establish a specific approach for islands that are largely</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The EU should establish for islands a higher mandatory share of the 2021-2027 long-term EU budget & NextGenerationEU to support operations in green areas of public, private and social sectors on infrastructures, new and refurbished processes, businesses, public initiatives, upskilling and reskilling of workforce, support employment and create new job positions, namely for youth and NEETs. •Reinforcing this approach, a higher percentage of support and a percentage of non-repayable funds of 2021-2027 long-term EU budget & NextGenerationEU should also be established for operations in green areas on islands in order to overcome specific vulnerabilities and meet socioeconomic recovery based on sustainability requirements and Green Deal commitments.

<p>dependent on the exterior, have small scale economies, have vulnerable ecosystems and the economy is highly dependent on tourism activities based on nature</p>	<p>•A mandatory share of support with non-repayable funds should also be established for awareness raising on sustainability solutions and behaviours, that is crucial for entities of public, private and social sectors and citizens in general in order that EU support funds meet the expected/defined sustainability objectives. For islands, a particular share of funds with a non-repayable rate should be reserved for micro companies, as they constitute the highest percentage of companies, and have specific constraints in terms of manpower and technical expertise in sustainability issues, having financial constraints to access of subcontracting and consulting services for technical solutions and financial applications</p>
<p>The EU funds for innovation do not establish specific conditions for operations in islands to consider their specificities, small scale economies, unique and threatened natural heritage and high vulnerability to climate change.</p>	<p>The EU should establish for islands a mandatory share of the innovation support funds and guarantee programmes from 2021-2027 long-term EU budget & NextGenerationEU to support innovation initiatives in green areas of public, private and social sectors on infrastructures, new and refurbished processes, circular economy, businesses, support employment and create new job positions in innovative green areas, namely for youth and NEETs. For islands, innovation on sustainability areas and, in particular, on circular economy should have special attention in terms of majority factors and non-repayable support in order to decrease the dependence from the exterior, to overcome the waste treatment specific difficulties of small isolated and fragmented territories, to increase the sustainable use of local resources and to increase their resilience to climate change. The incubator role of islands should also be explored in the scope of solutions and business innovation on sustainability. The constraints related to small size of islands and related institutions cannot be a barrier to access EC funds namely through projects supported by EU open budget as Horizon Europe.</p>

<p>Islands, namely Outermost Regions, have specificities and vulnerabilities that require specific approaches. In the scope of sustainability, this was recognized by the European Commission in several initiatives, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •By recognizing that islands and outermost regions have particular vulnerabilities to climate change in the new EU strategy on adaptation to climate change from 24 February 2021. •By setting up a Clean Energy for EU Islands Secretariat to deliver the objectives of the Clean Energy for EU Islands Initiative. The Secretariat facilitates the clean energy transition in EU islands from the bottom up. It helps local citizens, local authorities, local businesses, and academic institutions work together to move forward towards the clean energy transition on their island. The key topics covered by the Clean Energy for EU Islands Secretariat are energy production, energy efficiency, heating and cooling, transport to and from the island and transport on the island. <p>However, these EU island tailored initiatives should have a broader thematic scope to take into account all the specificities and vulnerabilities of these territories, in particular outermost regions.</p>	<p>Specific approach for islands and outermost regions should be reinforced in the scope of the European Commission support to Member-States on Education and Training, European Education Area and Teaching methods and materials (Teaching methods, Available education materials, Start Cooperation with another school or educational institution). In addition, the specific EU approach for islands and outermost Regions should be reinforced by creating a “Sustainability for islands secretariat”, namely by expanding the competences of the Clean Energy for EU Islands Secretariat to also support education.</p>
<p>Lack of affordable housing for young people on islands.</p>	<p>State should create a scheme to subsidize construction of houses to offer affordable housing to young professionals that want to live and work on the island.</p>