

Young people suffer more than other age groups from disadvantages such as unemployment, difficult access to education and training, obstacles to set up new businesses, lack of basic services. These disadvantages are even worse for young people living in rural areas, causing often young people's migration to bigger towns and cities and increasing the issue of depopulation that traditionally affects rural areas. High level strategies and a set of tools and instruments have been provided at EU and Member States level to address these issues and offer concrete solutions to young people.

Basic data¹

18.7%: Youth (15-24) unemployment rate in 2016 in the EU-28.

8.3%: Unemployment rate of the working population (15-74) in 2016 in the EU-28.

54.9%: farmers older than 55 years in Europe (2013).

6.9%: farmers younger than 35 years in Europe (2013)

Population aged 18-24 in 2015:

- Early-leavers' rate from education and training: **12,2% in rural areas**; 11.5% in towns and suburbs; 9.8% in cities.
- NEETs (not in employment, education or training): **17.9% in rural areas**; 16.5% in towns and suburbs; 14.2% in cities.
- People aged 30 to 34 with tertiary level of education: 27.9% in rural areas; 33.4% in towns and suburbs; 48% in cities.

Challenges

Challenges faced by rural youth

- ✓ Access to appropriate education opportunities
- ✓ Access to employment opportunities
- ✓ Social inclusion
- ✓ Participation and engagement in the civic life
- ✓ Participation in cultural activities
- ✓ Lack of services and infrastructures

Challenges faced by young farmers and new entrants in agriculture

- ✓ Access to land
- ✓ Access to capital
- ✓ Access to labour
- ✓ Access to market
- ✓ Access to knowledge and advice

What solutions proposed?

Targeted political approach: high level EU strategy

CAP support for young people

Other support for young people in all regions

EU Youth strategy: set up at EU level – implemented by national governments

Introduced in 2009 for a nine-year period (2010-2018), promotes more and equal opportunities in education and the labour market, active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity.

Areas of intervention: **education, employment, creativity, entrepreneurship, health and sport, participation, social inclusion, volunteering, youth and the World**. In December 2016 the European Commission has released the Communication COM (2016)940 "Investing in Europe's Youth", which forms the basis for the definition of the new youth strategies for the coming years. The main needs highlighted are fighting youth unemployment, increasing skills and competences of young people, and increasing youth participation in society.

¹ Statistics in Rural areas, on-line publication Eurostat: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Statistics_on_rural_areas_in_the_EU

The CAP support to young people in the agricultural sector and in rural areas: tools

Young Farmers Scheme

Direct payment under the **first Pillar of the CAP (European Agricultural Guarantee Fund - EAGF)** was introduced for the first time in the current programming period. It is compulsory for MS.

Objective: to facilitate the first phase of establishment of young farmers into the sector and the structural adjustment of their holdings after the setting-up.

Beneficiaries: Young farmers who are no more than 40 years of age and who set up an agricultural holding for the first time.

Implementation: Annual 25% top up to basic payment for a period of five years after the setting-up.

Budget: ≅ €3 million for 2014-2020. MS are obliged to allocate up to 2% of their financial envelope.

Start-up aid for young farmers

Introduced by the **rural development policy (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development - EAFRD)**. The **start-up aid for young farmers (M6.1)** is a sub-measure of M6 “Farm and Business development”, envisaged under FA 2B.

Objective: Support generational renewal of farmers and the creation of viable and sustainable agricultural businesses.

Beneficiaries: Young people who are no more than 40 years of age who set up for the first time.

Implementation: flat-rate payment, amounting to a maximum of €70,000, paid in at least two instalments

over a maximum of five years, and conditional upon the submission of a business plan.

Budget: €5.4 billion and ≅ 177,000 young farmers expected to be supported across Europe for 2014-2020.

Other relevant RDP measures often combined with M6.1 to support young farmers:

- ✓ M1 “Knowledge transfer and information actions”
- ✓ M2 “Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services”
- ✓ M4 “Investments in physical assets”
- ✓ M16 “Cooperation”

Support to young people in rural areas, including non-farmers (EAFRD)

- ✓ **M19 of the RDPs supporting LEADER:** Local Action Groups often identify support to youth as a priority of their Local Development Strategies.
- ✓ **M6.2 “Business start-up aid for non-agricultural activities”.** Supported by EAFRD and introduced for the first time in this programming period. It consists of a flat-rate payment of maximum €70,000 upon a submission of a business plan. This support is granted for activities related to rural tourism or territorial economic development; construction, re-construction or establishment of factories or premises for various activities; production or processing of non-agricultural goods; social services and provision of services to other sectors; crafts and handicraft activities.
- ✓ **M6.4 “Support for investments in creation and development of non-agricultural activities”.** This sub-measure provides investment opportunities to people living in rural areas. Beneficiaries under this support are: non-agricultural micro and small enterprises in rural areas; natural persons living in rural areas; and farmers and/or their household members diversifying into non-agricultural activities, living both in rural and urban areas. This support does not target young people specifically, but they can benefit from this opportunity.
- ✓ **M7 “Basic services and village renewal” (EAFRD).** Supported by EAFRD, contribute to improve quality of life in rural areas. It does not target youth directly, but it can improve services available in rural areas that can benefit also young people.
- ✓ **M16 “Cooperation”.** Under the cooperation measure young people can benefit from new cooperation possibilities including support for innovation.

Other support to young people in all regions: instruments, tools and programmes

Youth Guarantee (YG) - It consists of a commitment by EU MS to ensure that all young people under the age of 25 years receive a good quality offer of employment, education, apprenticeship or traineeship, within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education.

Financial support: ESF and the Youth Employment Initiative. ≅ **€15.1 billion for 2014-2020 invested in youth employment and labour market measures.**

Achievements so far: more than 5 million² young people registered in the YG schemes each year since 2014; more than 3.5 million young people registered have received an offer each year (employment, education or training).

Youth Employment Initiative - Adopted by the Council in 2013, it provides support to young people living in regions where youth unemployment is higher than 25%.

Beneficiaries: young people not in employment, education and training (NEET).

Actions supported: provision of apprenticeships, traineeships, job placements and further education leading to a qualification and acquisition of specific skill.

Financial support: 8,8 billion euro (half from ESF, half from a YEI budget line), topped up by the national co-financing of eligible MS.

Achievements up to November 2015: 18 out of 22 MS had launched actions under the YEI; almost 320 000 young people supported.

Other support from the European Social Fund - The ESF funds projects and programmes across Europe help young people get the know-how and opportunities they need to find a job. They offer training to acquire skills highly demanded in the job market; individual careers guidance; CV writing; internships; short-term work placement, etc.

Some achievements: 2.1 million participants younger than 25 years of age; 427.495 Inactive NEET (not in employment, education and training) supported. Other initiatives, specifically targeting youth, are related and funded to the ESF.

ERASMUS + (2014 – 2020)

EU programme for education, training, youth and sport, with a stronger focus on improving young people's job prospects, to tackle youth unemployment and to facilitate the transition between education and work.

Objectives: reduce unemployment; promote adult learning; encourage young people participation in the society; support innovation and reform of education and cooperation; reduce early school leaving; promote cooperation and mobility with EU partner countries.

Budget: €14.7 billion for 2014–2020. 2/3 dedicated to learning opportunities abroad for individuals; 1/3 supports reforms of the education and youth sectors.

Beneficiaries: overall 4 million people (of which some 3.7 million young people).

Opportunities offered: higher education; vocational training and training for students; volunteer and youth exchange schemes; master's degree loan guarantee scheme; joint master's degrees; creation of strategic partnerships between schools, education and training institutions.

Erasmus + targets young people in general, but some of them are implemented in rural areas and young people are their final beneficiaries. The project Beekeeping European Environmental Sustainability, implemented by the Polish association for regional development ARID (www.arid.org.pl), in partnership with other associations from Belgium, Hungary, Italy and Turkey, gave the opportunity to people already in the business to improve their holding and to young people who wanted to enter the sector to acquire information and skills useful to set-up their farms. Some of these

projects are implemented by partnerships including actors in different MS and they provide young people and potential young farmers with the possibility to visit other entrepreneurs or education institutions in other countries.

Projects/actions supported under the regional policy – European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

The regional policy supports several measures and actions that can indirectly improve the situation of young people, both in rural and urban areas.

Objective: to reduce economic, environmental and social problems in the European regions. Special attention is devoted to urban areas, areas naturally disadvantaged and remote and mountain areas.

Priorities: research and innovation; digital economy, SME competitiveness and low carbon economy.

Budget: €281 billion for 2014-2020 (EU + national contributions; the actual EU budget is 199 billion Euro).

INTERREG – Funded by ERDF, the **European Territorial Cooperation**, better known as Interreg V, is one of the two goals of the Cohesion policy and provides a framework for the implementation of joint actions and policy exchanges between regional and local government actors across Member States.

Objective: to promote a harmonious economic, social and cultural development of the EU.

11 Investments priorities: research and innovation; information and communication technologies; competitiveness of SMEs, low-carbon economy, combating climate change, environment and resource efficiency, sustainable transport, employment and mobility, social inclusion, better education and training, better public administration.

Interreg finances programmes of cross-border (60), transnational (15) and inter-territorial cooperation (4).

Budget 2014-2020: 10.1 BLN€. Some of the projects supported by Interreg, such as those on education and training, support to SMEs and social inclusion, address issues considered relevant for young people.

The European Solidarity Corps (ESC). This EC initiative, launched in December 2016, is conceived to offer young people under 30 in Europe the chance to support a non-governmental organisation (NGO), local authority or private company active in addressing challenging situations across the European Union (addressing social challenges such as social exclusion, poverty, health and demographic challenges, etc.). Young people from 18 to 31 are eligible to register to participate in one of the opportunities offered by the ESC.

Information and communication tools

[The Youth Wiki](#) - Europe's online encyclopaedia in the area of national youth policies. The platform is a comprehensive database of national structures, policies and actions supporting young people. It covers the eight main fields of action identified in the 2010-2018 EU Youth Strategy.

[European Youth Portal](#) - It offers European and national information and opportunities that might be of interest for young people. It covers 34 countries and it is available in 28 languages. It provides information on eight main topics: volunteering; working; learning and education; youth participation in policy making and community life; culture and creativity; social inclusion; sport and fitness; travelling; encourages discovering the World beyond Europe.

[Youth Monitor](#) provides information about the situation of young people in Europe. It groups context and thematic indicators that might be of help at national level to plan policies and strategies to support young people.

[Exchanges schemes for young farmers.](#) This webpage provides information about the opportunities offered to young farmers to gain useful skills and information by participating in an exchange schemes with other farmers abroad.