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- Country-specific conclusions

With a view to the Council (EPSCO) on 11 March 2024, delegations will find attached the country-specific conclusions of the review of the implementation of the Youth Guarantee as transmitted by the Employment Committee (EMCO).

The Key Messages from EMCO on its review of the implementation of the Youth Guarantee can be found in document 6831/24.

The data collection for monitoring of Youth Guarantee schemes in 2022 as transmitted by EMCO can be found in document 6831/24 ADD 2.

EMCO PAG Review on Reinforced Youth Guarantee

Country-specific conclusions

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BELGIUM

Overall Belgium is well advanced in the implementation of the YG. The country shows very high YG coverage rate of all NEETs demonstrating a well-functioning outreach system. With the support of ESF+ projects integrated and coordinated services towards NEETs have been reinforced; these could be targeted to the outreach and enrolment of young dropouts from vulnerable groups, with especially adapted attention to non-EU born youngsters and most vulnerable NEETs. One-stop-shops allow YG beneficiaries to receive efficient services in preparation of a later offer. In this context, specific attention to young persons with disabilities is important.

The collaboration of a wide range of stakeholders in all regions and across regions is an asset. The cooperative platform SynerJob whereby all PES are playing an active role should be mentioned here. Digital-skills assessment for all NEETs registered in the Youth Guarantee scheme is well in place in all regions, by PES or self-assessment.

However, some challenges remain mostly linked to the need of continued emphasis on proper coordination also to ensure same levels of implementation in all Regions. Belgium is also encouraged to continue the cooperation with education and training services to reinforce the declining number of early leavers from education and training and incorporate this in its NEETs policy measures. Finally, data protection rules hamper combining and comparing of data sets. Further efforts are needed both by the side of regions and at central level.

BULGARIA

Bulgaria is applying policies and implementing measures to address remaining challenges in the framework of Youth Guarantee. The share of NEETs remains high, however there is a positive development regarding the youth employment rate.

The YG monitoring indicators show that the Bulgarian YG scheme is less successful compared to the EU average on several key parameters. The NEET coverage is very low in Bulgaria and figures are also below average on positive and timely exits from the YG preparatory phase.

Amendments to the Employment Promotion Act aim to identify and register the inactive. They also include the data exchange module between the institutions with information on the population to improve the outreach and coverage which is action in the right direction.

Outreach and activation measures are established (including Roma mediators, activation specialists and Mobile labour offices), yet more efforts would be needed for specific groups of NEETs (i.e. Roma) and also those who live in rural areas.

Efforts to increase digital skilling would be essential. In this regard, with the support from ESF+ and RRF, the provision of digital skills training and the creation of an adult learning platform are well noted. In addition, the enhancement of infrastructure (digital clubs across the country) would aid the provision of more quality services and targeted programmes and contribute to better outreach and coverage of the NEETs.

CZECHIA

Czechia has made progress in the implementation of the reinforced Youth Guarantee. The NEET rate is at the level of the EU average but has increased moderately since 2018 while the YG monitoring data shows that the NEET coverage has declined in recent years and is now only about half of the EU average. A challenge appears to be the effective enrolment of young NEETs in the YG scheme. Cooperation of the PES with schools, education providers and NGOs, is in place, however it could be further enhanced and coordinated.

Similarly, there is room for improvement in the access by YG providers to information about young people's educational performance and linking of relevant databases.

Czechia has taken steps to unlock the potential of women in the workforce with the support of EU funds also by creating additional places in childcare facilities. However, action is still needed to tackle the specific multiple vulnerabilities of this target.

The possibility to use administrative data for research and evaluation purposes is still limited.

The delivery of the Youth Guarantee relies heavily on ESF-financed projects. This approach raises questions regarding the sustainability of the interventions.

Among the best practices is the implementation by Czechia of the ALMA initiative from 2023. Monitoring and evaluation on the efficacy of this initiative in support of disadvantaged young people will be relevant.

Concerning the monitoring of YG beneficiaries, a better alignment of data with the specifications of the Youth Guarantee Indicator would be useful.

DENMARK

Denmark has a well-established Youth Guarantee and strong capacities for providing effective active labour market policies. The Country shows improvement in implementing employment and social security policies. The figures show a considerable improvement in the youth unemployment and the NEET rate, yet the Youth Guarantee could be further improved in specific dimensions.

With regard to mapping, the decentralized system facilitates flexible and tailor-made services to job seekers. However, the provision of meta data could be very useful for the assessment of the implemented approaches.

Denmark improved its prevention measures due to the creation of a mechanism to support young NEETs in education for which the skills development and continuous training of teachers are encouraged. The Building Bridge programme is highlighted.

Denmark made efforts to enhance the outreach activities to young persons, however measures to address the most vulnerable groups, including those with migrant background could be further strengthened. The Danish YG scheme is less successful in reaching out to certain groups of young people who often drop out of training or employment offers.

Regarding the offer, youth entrepreneurship programmes with the support of the growth fund and innovations funds are particularly welcomed. Furthermore, the cash benefit scheme-agreement for youth is positively noted. There is a wide range of active labour market policies under implementation, however efforts to address the labour shortages should continue.

Denmark is well advanced in digital skills and highly ranked among MS of the EU, hence Denmark can continue in a more ambitious direction and place more emphasis on advancing digital skills relevant to emerging sectors like green economy.

GERMANY

The implementation of the reinforced Youth Guarantee in Germany is well developed, and the country commitment is visible. The NEET rate is among the lowest in the EU and the youth unemployment rate is the lowest in the EU. The NEET coverage in the German YG scheme is particularly high and Germany also record above average follow-up situations of participants.

A main improvement since the last review in 2021 is represented by the activation of one-stop-shops for NEETs and Young adults (the “Youth Employment Agency”) all over the country with the direct involvement of all relevant stakeholders (PES, Job Centres and Municipalities).

Data exchange is an issue and still needs more efforts by the side of the central and local institutions to be accessible by the side of all relevant stakeholders. The creation of a national statistical education register is welcome.

Career guidance and support in secondary and tertiary education are well established in Germany, including the youth at risk educational performance and provision of preventive measures.

The employment and training offers are well developed however monitoring and arrangements enabling regular review of jobseekers' progress towards re-integration could be further improved.

Regarding outreach, rural areas may need further attention, and a more targeted counselling would be beneficial for young NEETs from vulnerable backgrounds (such as women and young persons with a migrant background) also with the support of ESF+ funds (the use of translation should be more developed).

The vocational training guarantee expected in 2024 could support all these dimensions of the reinforced YG.

ESTONIA

Estonia is taking steps to improve the implementation of the Youth Guarantee scheme, the NEET rate is below the EU average while the youth unemployment rate remains a challenge. The YG monitoring indicators show that the Estonia YG scheme is above the EU average on most key parameters, notably with high and improving NEETs coverage in recent years and good results on positive and timely exits.

Outreach activities would need to accelerate to tackle inequalities in accessing the labour market or education, particularly for youth with disadvantaged backgrounds or those who live in rural areas. With regard to the offer, state-aid programmes have been presented, including measures to support start-up incentives which are welcomed.

However, the labour and skills shortages diagnosed in specific sectors and occupations would need increased efforts to provide targeted upskilling and reskilling combined with employment programmes that could close these labour market gaps. In this spirit, the improvement of skills assessment system can play a significant role.

Furthermore, efforts need to be made to enhance cross sectoral coordination and between central and regional authorities.

IRELAND

The implementation of the reinforced Youth Guarantee is well advanced in Ireland and the NEET rate lies below the EU average. It is noted that the PES is engaging on a voluntary basis with young inactive NEETS (such as young people with disabilities and lone parents) to provide employment supports and training opportunities to facilitate entry to the labour market. However, there is still a relatively high proportion of inactive NEETs not benefiting from the YG. and the indicator on positive and timely exits from the Youth Guarantee as well as the indicator on follow-up situations have deteriorated recently.

A well-developed nationwide mapping system to identify NEETs amongst jobseekers and those receiving social benefits is in place. Ireland should reflect on the risk for inactive NEETs and ensure they can avail of the appropriate employment, education and training opportunities under the Youth Guarantee.

A wide range of prevention programmes are available for young people at risk of becoming NEETs. However, improving the cooperation between schools, employment services and employers could be beneficial.

Among outreach activities a growing number of programmes are targeted at inactive and hard-to-reach youth (such as young Roma and Traveller communities). Ireland could positively scale up and reinforce these measures also by involving Young Ambassadors.

Ireland relies on the one-stop-shop services arrangement for the offer to job seekers, that are available also for young NEETS. Furthermore, PES work in partnership with specialized organizations assisting the most vulnerable beneficiaries.

Financial incentives for employers taking-up young people and mentoring for those who want to become self-employed are in place. More attention should be devoted to the quality of the offer, as well as to routinely standardized digital skills assessment and financial compensation for traineeships.

Ireland takes advantage of the available EU funding to address the needs of young NEETs. The ESF+ supports relevant programmes such as Youthreach, JobsPlus or Back to Work Enterprise Allowance.

GREECE

Greece is advancing in the implementation of the YG. The NEET rate and the youth unemployment, although declining, remain substantially above the EU average. The NEETs coverage though, increased significantly. The follow-up situations of participants in the Greek YG scheme reports below EU averages, although the situations of self-employment and education currently cannot be monitored.

The organizational modernization and digital transformation of PES (DYPA) contributes to the mapping of the NEET population as well as the implementation of specific projects. The introduction of the Digital Individual Action Plan is an important development.

Integrated service delivery shows improvement in Greece thanks to, inter alia, the new Community Centres that could provide a tailored approach to NEETs. There is however room for improvement via multidisciplinary schemes and more partnerships with other public and private local service providers.

As regards the outreach, a coordinated street-based work could be helpful as well as mobile units in remote/ rural areas also with a larger involvement of NGOs and other stakeholders that work with vulnerable groups. However there has been good use of specifically trained mediators, and young ambassadors will also play a role.

On the prevention measures there is still the room for better career guidance in schools and for a more developed use of early warning systems.

There is the need to improve the timeliness and quality of offers as well as complementary activation measures. A positive development is the “work allowance” which has the potential to incentivize the (re)integration of NEETs into the labour market especially if accompanied by activation measures included in the activation pathway developed for each participant. Also strengthening apprenticeships and VET and revamping the life-long learning system could help improving YG results. Digital skills of youth entering the YG scheme should be more systematically assessed. Important investments in all these areas are planned in the NRP and ESF+ Programmes. A swift and effective delivery is key to ensure their success.

SPAIN

Spain is making progress in the implementation of the reinforced Youth Guarantee. The Spanish NEETs rate is slightly above the EU average while the youth unemployment rate remains one of the highest in the EU. The monitoring indicators show certain challenges when it comes to ensuring a take-up of an offer within 4 months (although the comparability with other Member States is limited) while the NEET coverage remains slightly below EU averages.

All the Spanish regions have committed to implement the comprehensive 2021-2027 YG+ Plan. This should help address NEETs challenges, tackle persistent regional disparities and improve support to vulnerable groups. Yet, its implementation is at very early stage and any assessment of its effectiveness is premature. In this context, it will be beneficial to ensure coordination with the relevant training initiatives under the Recovery and Resilience Facility and the Just Transition Fund.

The public employment services can leverage their strong regional presence and harness the potential of their databases and digital tools to individualise services for NEETs. Increasing collaboration with education and training institutions and social services in all Spanish regions can improve the outcomes of more successful prevention initiatives, such as career guidance and tailored support for students at risks of early school leaving. The assessment of the digital skills of registered NEETs remains low and an important part of it depends on self-assessments.

Spain should enhance the weak and uneven cooperation with local employers across the territory. This remains essential to provide timely and relevant offers that match the aspirations of young people, especially in view of the higher share of unemployed NEETs. There is room to reach out to the most vulnerable NEETs, which remain underrepresented, and to increase the number, relevance and quality of traineeships and apprenticeship offers. Tackling these challenges can help increase enrolment rates in VET degrees and attract more SMEs to the VET system, where more and better trained counsellors in public employment services could play a key role.

Boosting the limited use of integrated delivery models, such as one-stop-shop services or single contact persons, may contribute significantly to addressing this challenge, including in rural and remote areas.

Many of the above-mentioned aspects are tackled in the aforementioned Youth 2021-2027 YG+ Plan and will be addressed and improved as it is implemented.

FRANCE

France is well advanced in the implementation of the reinforced Youth Guarantee. Despite a decreasing trend, both the youth unemployment and NEET rates in France are slightly above the EU average. The NEET coverage in France is particularly high and has almost doubled since 2017 while challenges remain to respect the 4 months target for making an offer to beneficiaries.

The centralisation of all youth-related measures on the “1 jeune, 1 solution” platform is a positive step, which allows young people to easily find available support. However, this approach seems not proactively reach out to “invisible” young people in difficulties, who are often unknown to employment services. Further efforts could be dedicated to ensuring outreach to vulnerable groups, young people with a migrant background and those furthest away from the labour market.

Several measures have been put in place by the French authorities to contribute to prevention of young people becoming NEETs, such as the training obligation for people aged 16 to 18 and the reform of the apprenticeship system. Also, the reform of vocational education is promising.

Very positively the links within the French PES, and between the Pôle Emploi and the local missions, have been reinforced during past years for a better integration of services in the YG. France is encouraged to pursue these efforts and to ensure strong cooperation and information-sharing between all actors involved. The recently decided structural reform of the French PES is expected to contribute to a better coordination also in the framework of the reinforced YG.

One of the key issues remains the timeliness of the offer to beneficiaries. To improve the effectiveness of the actions in the area of provision of the offer, France could enhance the matching between the young NEETs’ profile and the offer, as well as the follow-up after the offer. To improve the evaluation on the efficiency of the YG measure, quality data reporting is key.

CROATIA

Croatia has advanced in the implementation of the Youth Guarantee. The mapping of NEETs is based on a consolidated agreement between the relevant administrations and agencies to facilitate the collection and exchange of data on young NEETs characteristics. Formal partnerships have been established between employment services, education and training institutions, career guidance centres and youth associations to reach out and improve school to work transitions of NEETs at regional and local level.

The YG monitoring shows that the NEETs coverage decreased since 2014 and now fell below the EU average. It underlines the increased importance of reaching out to the inactive part of the NEET population through the provision of integrated support and better identification of skills need. Also, greater involvement of NGO representatives and people working directly with NEETs is recommended to increase the coverage of the YG scheme for the most vulnerable NEETs and the inactive. The recent constitution of local “Youth Council” looks a first step in this direction.

Furthermore, data collection and exchange with local authorities and stakeholders should be reinforced aiming at preventing the fall into the NEET status of young people. The introduction of Skills Vouchers for the unemployed and those from vulnerable groups, including NEETs, to foster lifelong learning/upskilling opportunities to support green and digital transition, is welcome. The use of ESF+ and RRF to reinforce the implementation of the YG measures is to be continued suitably.

The monitoring data show very positive results in terms of sustainability of the offer with a high share of exits known to be in a positive situation six months after leaving the YG. Evaluation on the effectiveness of YG measures should be performed more regularly.

ITALY

Italy is showing progress in the implementation of the Youth Guarantee with a view to addressing the persisting challenges. The NEET rate decreased recently but remains significantly above the EU average while the youth unemployment rate is with 23,7% the third highest in the EU. The YG monitoring indicators show that Italy ranks below the EU average on most key indicators with a particular low NEET coverage.

There is a wide range of active labour market policies in Italy, however delivery needs to be enhanced, through better coordination across the central authorities and the regional services. There is an overall need to strengthen interventions through stronger partnership with institutions, employers, services, and individuals at the local level GOL. programme could be valuable to improve such coordination, in complementarity with investments under ESF+.

Green and digital programmes have been put in place to address the existing labour shortages, yet their impact could be assessed at a later stage as they are at an early implementation phase. The National Plan on Youth Women and Work for the programming period 2021-2027 is significant, as it foresees the creation and improvement of mapping and forecasting tools as well as the enhancement of the outreach policies and the increase of the offer.

Actions would be needed to advance training and education methods for young students and proactively address their educational needs, focussing on –among others– the early school leavers. Furthermore, raising awareness and the organization of communication campaigns would contribute to outreach NEETs.

Policies should be further streamlined to decrease the share of NEET rate in the southern regions and islands through targeted, tailor-made measures for those regions. To this end an improved coordination mechanism that would connect more adequately the regional and the central authorities can play a crucial role.

CYPRUS

Cyprus is making progress in implementing the reinforced Youth Guarantee. Cyprus shows high overall employment rate, yet the share of young NEETs and the youth unemployment rate remain above the EU average. The key monitoring indicators shows that the NEET coverage is very low and the indicator on take-up of an offer within 4 months only improved recently while follow-up situations of participants are above EU averages.

Efforts have been made in implementing the Youth Guarantee, by promoting active labour market policies and outreach to youth. Mapping is advanced, thanks to well-developed data collection at local, regional and national level.

Prevention activities rely on systematic provision of career guidance in secondary and tertiary education, yet an ‘alert mechanism’ to inform YG providers on pupils at risk of drop-out is missing. Implementing the digital module “Early Warning System” planned in the context of the RRF could significantly contribute to timely supporting early leavers. Greater collaboration between employment agencies, young ambassadors’ programmes, social partners and more support in foreign languages could help increase outreach to different types of NEETs, especially those in rural areas.

Employment schemes that are combined with training could be expanded and better targeted to specific groups of NEETs based on their particular needs such as persons with disabilities, women and third-country nationals. In addition, Cyprus could consider putting in place more centrally imposed standards for the level of remuneration of employment offers, the weekly hours dedicated to work/training and on the job training.

Cyprus should swiftly implement the actions that target the youth through the European Social Fund Plus, such as training schemes and reinforced guidance/counselling measures for NEETs which are currently in the planning phase.

LATVIA

Latvia shows good results in implementing the Youth Guarantee, which is also reflected by the significant progress made in reducing the share of NEETs in recent years, which is now below EU average.

However, the youth unemployment rate has now moved slightly above the EU average. The YG monitoring indicators also show that the Latvian YG scheme consistently performs below EU average when it comes to NEET coverage as well as when it comes to positive and timely exits from the YG preparatory phase.

Individualised support programmes, supported by EU funds, demonstrate a collaborative approach by the key institutions and bodies involved in the process, which together provide services that are well equipped to meet the needs of the NEETs. Overall, the available support is efficient, well-regulated, and of a high calibre, both in terms of training and job offers.

The YG implementation would further benefit from an improved collaboration with the employers in creating a job offer for the NEETs, from better data collection, follow-up and sharing between key stakeholders and from improved support coverage in rural areas.

LITHUANIA

The implementation of the reinforced Youth Guarantee in Lithuania continues to progress. Both the NEET rate and the youth unemployment rate is below the EU average with the NEET rate declining to the pre-pandemic levels. The Youth Guarantee scheme coverage of NEETs in Lithuania and the percentage of NEETs who remain registered for more than 4 months in the YG are significantly better than the EU average, pointing to the effectiveness of the tools used in the scheme.

However, the percentage of unknown timely exit destinations from the YG was high in 2022, indicating that Lithuania could step-up the monitoring in this respect. Lithuania could also take efforts to explore mechanisms to enable Youth Guarantee providers in Lithuania to get access to information about young people's attendance in schools and educational performance, as well as mechanisms for schools to communicate on "at risk cases", which could further boost mapping and especially prevention aspects of the YG.

Additional efforts on how to improve the outreach to the youngest NEETs aged 15-19 could also be explored. Lithuania should also consider making a digital skills assessment mandatory for NEETs registering in the YG scheme, given the digital transition goals and the need to monitor their attainment.

Finally, Lithuania could consider additional incentives to boost traineeships and apprenticeships, as these are significantly underrepresented in the overall offer basket. A wider use of wage-subsidies for NEETs in the older age brackets could also bring positive change and is worth considering.

LUXEMBOURG

Luxembourg is advancing well in the implementation of the YG. The Luxembourg NEET rate is well below the EU average and has remained rather stable in recent years, but the youth unemployment rate remains above the EU average.

All measures and activities undertaken in previous years have been consolidated. The National Youth Service is offering a wide range of services for young NEETs with the aim of helping them in developing a personal and/or professional project. Digital skills assessment is fully implemented.

Among the prevention measures, the introduction of systematic exit interviews with early school-leavers is positive since it can improve information on the causes for leaving education. The extension of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age, which will come into force in 2026, will offer young people more opportunities to obtain a qualification also in VET.

Luxembourg should improve access to information about young people's educational performance by the side of Youth Guarantee providers, as well as coordination and exchange of information between stakeholders before NEETs' registration.

The recent set up of one-stop-shop services (SIA) that will provide systematic, holistic care for all newly arrived pupils in the country is very positive. Still, translation into languages other than the national languages is still lacking while it could increase NEETs with migrant background entry to the scheme.

The link of relevant databases between the relevant institutions and administrations could help in the outreach and in the follow up of those leaving the scheme. Luxembourg shows still important percentage of unknown exits and young NEETs in an unknown situation six months after exiting (in 2022), further efforts are needed in this field.

HUNGARY

Hungary is taking steps to implement the Youth Guarantee. Both the youth unemployment rate and the NEET rate are around the EU average, but YG monitoring indicators show that the NEET coverage of the Hungarian YG scheme is extremely low. The Hungarian YG scheme is a highly centralised system with drawbacks. More cooperation on a central level could be beneficial. The Hungarian YG is very efficient in providing timely and positive exits for those entering the system, but less successful in providing sustainable prospects for young people.

Measures to enhance the mapping and outreach of NEETs have been presented, yet there is a further scope for improvement in terms of reaching out the inactive and in particular some vulnerable categories. In this regard, coordination between central and regional public services and stakeholders can play a key role in the improvement of the quality delivery. The active labour market policies that are under implementation are promising. However, more and a quality choice of Youth Guarantee training offer that increase long-term employability need to be ensured. The effects of the legislative reform of PES on the Youth Guarantee implementation should be assessed. Hungary should continue the efforts to promote more digital training programmes and digital skills assessment are necessary. The considerable high early school leavers and drop-out rates would need further long-term policies which will require better coordination among the educational providers, institutions and services, including exchange of data. Also, the impact of the structural changes of the VET and adult learning system on YG as presented should be further assessed.

MALTA

The implementation of the Youth Guarantee scheme in Malta is progressing with respect to the outreach, the launch of employment and skills policies. The youth unemployment rate and the NEET rate are below the EU average. Nonetheless, monitoring indicators show that the coverage of YG stands very low compared to the EU average. Malta needs to place more emphasis to tackle this issue.

Malta has presented measures to increase outreach activities. However, efforts need to continue to further improve the labour market participation of the most vulnerable, notably people with disabilities, women NEETs, providing adequate and timely support to the low skilled and people with migrant background. Communication and raising awareness activities as presented are welcomed. Further organization of such activities to better and more effectively reach out the aforementioned categories are encouraged.

Life Skills Boot Camps, digital training modules, as well as the digital profiling and assessment tool are highlighted. ALMA pilot project and “at-work-for-neets” project are also positive developments.

Efforts need to continue to address the remaining challenges concerning the early school leavers by providing more quality educational programmes and by increasing training of teachers and trainers. In this direction, improving coordination and synergies with educational providers and public authorities and timely communication actions could be very helpful.

NETHERLANDS

The Netherlands is very well advanced in implementing the (reinforced) Youth Guarantee. . The NEET rate remains the lowest in the EU and the youth unemployment rate is also only half as high as the EU average. However, the coverage of NEETs only recently went above the EU average while the indicator on positive and timely exits from the YG preparatory phase remains consistently below EU averages.

Some concerns remain as young people in a less favourable labour market position and/or vulnerable social situation, in particular the lower skilled, those with a migrant background and/or with disabilities, may face a higher risk of unemployment and may have less access to skills development opportunities effectively. Therefore, ensuring effective delivery of the necessary services remains vital in particular with respect to disadvantaged groups. The decentralization of the social domain has a number of advantages and proved effective, including in reaching out to vulnerable youth.

It is essential to carefully monitor the developments at local level in order to avoid differences in the quality of services and support across regions and across municipalities.

AUSTRIA

Austria is well advanced in the implementation of the reinforced Youth Guarantee. Both the NEET rate and the youth unemployment rate in Austria is well below the EU average and all key monitoring indicators, and particularly the NEETs coverage, stands out above EU averages.

Mapping shows advancement in all sources and instruments foreseen by the recommendation (participation with local and regional stakeholders, NGOs, PES, research and education centres). The country can also rely on a solid network of data collection instruments that have been further developed.

Austria consistently improved the implementation of the YG thanks to the effective collaboration among stakeholders and the efficient partnership with education institutions, regional and local administrations, and providers of YG measures, including in the provision of preventive additional services (coaching support for young people in danger of dropping out, inclusion of PES in the in-company apprenticeship). However quantified data on the effectiveness of this system is not available.

Austria improved the provision of digital skills assessment for all young people signed-up to the Youth Guarantee scheme.

The outreach activities are developed, in particular the street-based outreach to intercept young NEETs not registered as jobseekers in the PES. However, a more specific attention could be given to outreach vulnerable groups (such as women and young persons with a migrant background) as well as NEETs in the rural areas, also by creating devoted one-stop-shop services. The provision of additional childcare facilities could facilitate women uptake in the reinforced YG scheme.

POLAND

The implementation of the YG in Poland is showing positive developments in all key dimensions of the Guarantee/scheme. The 2022 NEETs coverage is above the EU average but has deteriorated since 2016. The follow-up situation of participants improved significantly since 2019 and have reached EU average levels.

Poland devoted to the reinforced YG over 610 million, within 16 regional programmes, with 5% of the ESF+ devoted to youth employment. In 2022, the YG Implementation Plan was updated focusing on four target groups of NEETs, one of them being young women raising children. It should be ensured that offers are attractive also to young parents, particularly women, who require employment and training arrangements that allow them to balance work and family life.

Poland has started several projects addressing the challenges identified in the YG EMCO review held in 2021, among which a dedicated tool for digital skills validation for YG participants to assess their digital skills before taking up an offer. Similarly, a pilot for one-stop-shop services (Time for youth) launched in 2023 is going to test more coordinated services for the youth employment.

The ESF+ National Programme will finance reforms to improve the capacity of PES to reach out to NEETs; to provide a better analysis of the situation of young people in the labour market; and to monitoring Youth Guarantee participants (follow-up). Active involvement of NGOs and relevant stakeholders in these projects should be ensured. Furthermore, the efficiency and efficacy of these projects should be constantly monitored as well as their outcomes on beneficiaries carefully assessed.

As regards the offer, there is still room for improvement in the timeliness and quality since fewer participants in 2022 were known to be in a positive economic situation six months after the offer (slightly lower than in 2021 and 2020).

PORTUGAL

Youth Guarantee in Portugal is advancing, as improvements have been made in several aspects, such as mapping, prevention and outreach policies. The Inclusion Axis as depicted at the Reinforced Youth Guarantee with a view to addressing young NEETs seems promising.

The implementation of the reinforced Youth Guarantee is effective. Portugal records very low NEETs rates (8,4%) and the recent 2022 YG monitoring data confirm that Portugal performs better than the EU average on all 4 key monitoring indicators. Although Active labour market policies have been well developed, there is further scope to improve the impact evaluations of these policies.

With regard to skills, Portugal applies a number of measures to address the challenges in the labour market and the labour shortages, however further efforts could focus on reaching out the inactive NEETs. To this end, collaboration with the ILO is particularly welcomed.

To decrease the early school leaving, Portugal introduced the “Integrated and innovative Plan to Combat School Failure” and it seems promising; the Plan would be interesting to be assessed at the next review.

In addition, the continuation of actions to improve the offer and delivery to the most vulnerable or the most disadvantaged is of utmost importance. In that sense Portugal is encouraged to address any remaining bottlenecks concerning data protection legislation and the sharing of information about disadvantaged youth among different public service providers.

ROMANIA

The implementation of the Youth Guarantee in Romania is advancing, and some progress has been made since the last review in 2021. Nonetheless, the NEET coverage remains very low showing a possible lack of targeted approach in mapping and outreach measures especially for young people living in rural, remote, or disadvantaged areas. The PES counselling services addressing prevention are welcome. YG providers should access information about young people's educational performance to contribute to the prevention of young school-leavers falling into the NEET status.

A number of bottlenecks and challenges remain. The capacity of PES remains limited which hampers the delivery of quality targeted activation measures. PES is still lacking adequate IT tools for anticipating and evaluating the labour market needs and for providing their services to employers. Nonetheless, ReCONNECT and eSPOR projects are in the pipeline and are expected to address these issues once completed in December 2023. At the same time the development of a case management approach and the update of the profiling procedures can be considered as positive developments.

The assessment of digital skills for all registered NEETs does not appear to be an established practice all over the country. Timeliness and quality of the offer are still lacking and should be taken care by Romania to avoid hampering the overall implementation of the Youth Guarantee.

It must be highlighted that Romania has programmed to use ESF+ resources to implement activities targeted to overcome some of the current challenges. Improvements are expected by their introduction and efforts should be put into stepping up the implementation of these funds which forms the bulk of the youth-relevant measures planned in Romania. The regular monitoring of these activities should be performed as well as evaluations specifically on their efficacy for young NEETs. Romania participation in the Interreg project @Work4NEET is expected to improve data collection and analysis for policy making related to NEETs.

SLOVENIA

Slovenia is progressing well in the implementation of the reinforced YG. Overall, Slovenia has a comprehensive support system to support young people in school as well as young NEETs, still there is some room for improvement. Both the Slovenian NEETs rate and the youth unemployment rate are well below the EU average and monitoring data confirms that the Slovenian YG scheme performs particularly well as what concerns the NEET coverage and the follow up situation of participants.

Slovenia has been actively implementing measures to prevent school dropouts and to reduce youth unemployment, both through national as well as EU co-funded measures. However, there is the need of a more developed information sharing about young people at risk of becoming NEET (early school leavers) among institutions at central and local level, NGOs, and YG providers.

Slovenia has a very comprehensive database of NEETs registered with the PES, nonetheless more than half of all Slovenian NEETs are not registered. Data on youth at risk of becoming NEET should be available to PES (overcoming the obstacle of the data protection legislation).

Concerning vulnerable groups, Slovenia has been addressing Roma, young mothers, and migrants with several projects and programmes; still further efforts are needed with regards to identifying individual specificities and facilitating coordination between the YG scheme and these projects. Outreach measures to NEETs non-registered in the PES could be improved especially in rural remote areas.

Slovenia has been implementing social support programmes for encouraging SMEs to employ young with disabilities and to ensure on the job trainings for young adults; this good practice continues.

Despite some improvements, ensuring timeliness of the offer and NEETs swift activation remain challenges. Positively, Slovenia is implementing measures to address rather high level of precarious work among youth with the support of EU funds.

SLOVAKIA

Slovakia made some progress in the implementation of the Reinforced Youth Guarantee, in particular by implementing a new law revising the counselling system and by defining a strategy on lifelong learning. Yet, the issue remains of high share of NEETs, especially among young with disadvantaged background and women.

The Youth Guarantee monitoring shows that Slovakia is below the EU average on all key monitoring indicators. The NEET coverage has remained below the EU average since 2016 and the follow-up situations of participants in Slovakia are also worse than the EU average. The measures introduced in the new programming cycle are promising, yet their impact on persisting challenges should be carefully assessed.

Integrating a gender dimension into actions, as well as attention on regional and local disparities and the Roma communities, as well as the adoption of the Lifelong learning act could help address the current weaknesses of the Slovakian Youth Guarantee programme. The pilot approach of integrated delivery of services through one-stop shops needs to be scaled up and there is also room for improvement in terms of the quality and design of offers, including return and second chance education.

FINLAND

Finland is well advanced in implementing the reinforced Youth Guarantee. Both youth unemployment rate and NEETs rate declined in recent years. The coverage of NEETs remains very high in the Finnish YG scheme while the indicator on positive and timely exits from the YG preparatory phase situates Finland below EU averages.

The multidisciplinary cooperation facilitates effective and coordinated services for young people, especially for those in vulnerable groups such as NEETs.

The extension of the compulsory education age from 16 to 18 in 2021 (under the RRP) and the strengthened career guidance have contributed to prevention.

There is a high level of partnerships with NGOs and other stakeholders that work with vulnerable groups contributing to high coverage of the scheme in Finland.

Several reforms coming into force between 2022 and 2023 might foster better implementation of the reinforced YG.

The transfer of the PES from the State to the municipalities in 2025 is expected to further integrate the employment services with the education institutions and youth organizations, thus improving the mapping at the local level.

There are no quality standards for traineeship or employment offers, these could be beneficially introduced. Similarly coaching and entrepreneurship training as well as devoted incentives for self-employment and business start-up.

The possibility to link relevant databases is still an issue and doesn't allow to have a more integrated approach. Thus, follow-up data to assess the sustainability of outcomes are not available, whilst being key to identifying what should be improved or changed.

SWEDEN

In Sweden the YG is well-functioning and based on long established existing policies. Sweden has recorded a very positive increase in the NEET coverage in recent years which is now well above the EU average while data shows a deterioration since 2016 in the follow up situation of young people, with results now below EU averages. A strong mapping and outreach system for young people under the age of 20 is in place with the active involvement of municipalities with the main scope of resuming them to upper secondary education. Yet the mapping of young people over the age of 20, but under 29, who are not registered with the PES is still lacking.

As regards prevention measures, all students have the right to study and to career guidance. However, coordination among different schools concerning drop-out rates and absence can be improved; privacy legislation plays a role in hindering the identification of young people at risk of becoming NEET.

Integrated service delivery involving multi-disciplinary teams and specific agencies are in place in the outreach dimension. PES could be more actively involved in these activities. Further improvements are awaited through the implementation of some pilot projects, such as those aiming at involving vulnerable youth with disabilities in the YG scheme while transitioning from school to work/higher education. PES do not offer digital skills assessment and training for YG beneficiaries.

As for PES subsidized employment offers, many quality aspects as the duration, the remuneration or the social protection are fully implemented. In cases of offers of employment without a subsidy, PES does not control conditions such as salary and social protection. Follow up of NEETs exits could be improved.
