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Social Policy, Education,
Employment, Research and Culture

SEDEC

The local implementation of the Reinforced Youth Guarantee



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Table of contents

Summary 1

Part 1: State of play of the key features of youth guarantee schemes at local level 5

Part 2: Overall assessment of the coherence between key features of local youth guarantees and the Council Recommendation on the Reinforced European Youth Guarantee..... 15

Part 3: Presentation of a selected number of implementation areas through case studies to showcase the diversity of approaches 37

Part 4: Recommendations to local and regional authorities, Member States and the EU regarding the implementation of Youth Guarantee schemes at local level..... 59

Annex I – References..... 65

List of acronyms

ANOFM	Romanian National Employment Agency
CIPE	Spanish Centre for Information and Employment Promotion
CoR/CdR	European Committee of the Regions/ <i>Comité européen des</i>
CV	<i>Curriculum Vitae</i>
EC	European Commission
EMCO	Employment Committee
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ESF	European Social Fund
ESF+	European Social Fund Plus
ESPON	European Spatial Planning Observation Network
EU	European Union
IBBU	Integrated Treatment and Employment /Education efforts
ICT	Information Communication Technologies
IEFP	<i>Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional</i>
LRA s	Local and Regional Authorities
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NEET s	Young people not in education, employment or training
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Pon-IOG	<i>Programma operativo nazionale Iniziativa occupazione</i>
PES s	Public Employment Services
PPAE	Personalised Employment Accompaniment Project
REACT-EU	Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories of
RYG	Reinforced Youth Guarantee
STAR	Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment
UCLM	University of Castilla-La Mancha
VoIP	Voice Over IP
YEI	Youth Employment Initiative
YG	Youth Guarantee

Summary

On 2 July 2020, the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) received a Communication from the European Commission on a ‘proposal for a Council Recommendation on Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee and replacing the Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee’ (COM(2020) 277 final). The proposal was adopted by the Council in October 2020. Its objective is to better support youth employment across the European Union (EU) in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which generated a high youth unemployment rate and increased the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs). The Council Recommendation on Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee (hereinafter referred to as ‘2020 Council Recommendation’) significantly reorganised its guidelines through four different phases: mapping, outreach, preparation and offer. In February 2021, the CoR adopted the Opinion on ‘Youth Employment Support: A Bridge to Jobs for the Next Generation Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee’ (hereinafter referred to as ‘CoR Opinion’), providing a regional and local perspective on the issue of youth unemployment and making specific proposals regarding the 2020 Council Recommendation.

Against this backdrop, the present study aims to analyse the implementation of the 2020 Council Recommendation at local level considering the four phases mentioned above and the core elements addressed by the CoR Opinion, namely cooperation between local or regional authorities (LRAs) and relevant stakeholders, quality of offers, mobility, territoriality, evidence-based policy-making and sustainability of postings through upskilling and re-skilling. More specifically, the study provides an overview of different approaches taken by a representative sample of local providers of Youth Guarantee (YG) schemes (Public Employment Services - PESs) in order to assess the level of coherence with the 2020 Council Recommendation and propose an understanding of the reasons why certain PESs implement YG schemes differently than others. Potential good practices are also highlighted through case studies.

The study is based on two main methodological approaches: desk research and review of available data at local and regional level related to local/regional offices of PESs; and answers gathered from local and regional PESs implementing YG schemes at local level across the EU through a wide consultation launched in the framework of this study. Against this backdrop, a general framework related to the key features of YG schemes implemented at local and regional level across the EU is provided.

The study is structured in four parts. In Part 1, the state of play of the key features of YG schemes at local level is presented. Upon the evidence that YG

implementation plans have been modified or are about to be modified in some Member States in order to take the 2020 Council Recommendation into account, there is less evidence of adaptation of YG schemes at local level. Still, local and regional PESs often implement schemes that already comply with the reinforced approach envisaged in the recommendation. A very simple example is the extension of the age of supported NEETs to 29 years, which was already implemented in several countries well before the adoption of the 2020 Council Recommendation.

Part 2 is focused on providing an inventory of local and regional youth guarantee schemes implemented across the EU, referring to the four phases of mapping, outreach, preparation and offer and to the core elements of the CoR Opinion, i.e., cooperation with LRAs, quality of offers, mobility, territoriality, evidence-based policy-making and sustainability. It presents the diversity of approaches used by local and regional PESs depending on national circumstances. By way of example, if we look at the outreach phase, we can appreciate how the approach of reaching out to NEETs has some degree of flexibility. Digital and user-friendly tools used by young people (e.g., podcasts) can be combined with peer-to-peer strategies involving the presence of youngsters such as street counsellors, youth mediators, youth workers or young ambassadors who work as a bridge with vulnerable NEETs who may face barriers in accessing YG schemes.

In Part 3, specific implementation areas (i.e., ways to identify NEETs, type of approach for NEETs' engagement, type of individualised actions, type of partnership, cooperation with LRAs and quality of offers) are looked into in more detail through the development of ten case studies. These cases provide a better understanding of how different approaches are used in different local and regional realities, showing some innovative ways to implement YG schemes at local level. In some cases, an integrated approach which crosscuts all phases is found (see the cases in Estonia and Bulgaria). In other cases, innovative schemes target a limited number of phases but achieve effective results (as in the cases of France and Denmark).

Finally, Part 4 is divided in two subsections. The first one proposes foresight considerations regarding youth unemployment, indicating that it is necessary to define policy actions which address youth unemployment not only in order to recover from an unexpected crisis, but also to take advantage of some trends which were suddenly put under the spotlight by the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., digitalisation, diversity of skills' requirements, different forms of mobility and globalisation of postings). The second part then presents concrete recommendations to LRAs, Member States and the EU regarding the implementation of Reinforced Youth Guarantee schemes at local level. By way of example, Member States and LRAs shall give more visibility to the Reinforced

Youth Guarantee scheme by duly labelling programmes and initiatives ascribed to it. Member States shall also calibrate adequate financial resources for youth unemployment and encourage the use of structural funds to support long-term and sustainable interventions addressing NEETs, with a special focus on regions where they are most needed. Further to this, they should facilitate partnerships at local level in all the phases of the Reinforced Youth Guarantee scheme in order to leverage multidisciplinary and professional competencies which can be combined to develop specific interventions for addressing NEETs according to their needs.

Part 1: State of play of the key features of youth guarantee schemes at local level

1.1 Introduction

The [Council Recommendation on reinforcing the Youth Guarantee](#) (hereinafter referred to as ‘the 2020 Council Recommendation’) was adopted on 30 October 2020 (Council of the European Union, 2020). The Reinforced Youth Guarantee (RYG) widens the scope of the previous Youth Guarantee (YG) scheme by addressing young people aged up to 29 years. It also supports breaking gender stereotypes and a wider outreach to vulnerable groups, such as youth with disabilities, young people of racial and ethnic minorities and youth living in remote or other disadvantaged rural and urban areas. Also, the RYG aims at better matching the skills needs of the market and providing beneficiaries with tailored support. In addition, with the aim of standardising approaches and performances across the EU, in the RYG Member States are invited to structure their support around four phases: mapping, outreach, preparation and offer.

In its opinion on ‘[Youth Employment Support: A Bridge to Jobs for the Next Generation Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee](#)’ (February 2021), the European Committee of the Regions suggests a series of measures to support the implementation of the RYG at local and regional level along with the four above-mentioned phases (CoR, 2021). For example, it recommends enhanced cooperation between local and regional authorities (LRAs) and relevant stakeholders in order to strengthen the mapping and outreach phase; the use of appropriate technologies and the setting of measurable objectives to make the outreach phase more effective; and the definition of binding criteria for the quality of offers provided to the youth under the RYG, as well as the sustainability of placements. Overall, the opinion stresses the importance of monitoring and evaluating all measures taken under the RYG scheme with a view to learn what works, where and why it is successful and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the scheme.

This study contributes to understanding how the RYG is implemented at local level. In particular, it looks at whether the adoption of the RYG has implied local adaptations of the scheme in comparison with the YG; if there are substantial differences in its implementation across local providers; if the RYG is considered appropriate to address the challenges faced locally by providers; which is the nature of these challenges and the reasons behind possible shortcomings of local guarantee schemes; and the role of partnerships in the implementation of the RYG. The study also investigates other specific aspects of the mapping, outreach, preparation and offer phases and provides evidence of good practices, assessment

and capability of sustainability of placements, monitoring and evaluation activities and inclusion of a mobility dimension in local schemes.

The challenging aspect of this study is that it investigates very recent developments, i.e., those occurring after the adoption of the RYG in October 2020. The study is based on two main methodological approaches: desk research and review of available data at local and regional level for a limited number (10) of local/regional offices of public employment services (PESs); and undertaking of a wide consultation amongst local and regional PESs to build a general framework related to the key features of youth guarantee schemes at local and regional level across the EU.

1.2 Background information on YG schemes and NEET's state of play

Nordic countries were the first to establish youth guarantee schemes at national level (i.e., Sweden in 1984 and Denmark and Finland in 1996). It is only in the 2000s that a common action to fight youth unemployment started being shaped at the EU level. In 2005, the Council decided for employment policies of EU Member States to arrange for a job offer to unemployed young persons before they reached 6 months of unemployment (Council's 2005-2008 [guidelines](#)). In 2008, this timeframe was shortened to four months (Council's 2008-2010 [guidelines](#)). The peak of youth unemployment rate in 2010 called for stronger action at the policy level and in that same year the EC launched the 'Youth on the Move' initiative, which introduced the principle which today forms the basis of the YG schemes: all unemployed young people should be offered a job or a training opportunity within four months of completing their studies (ILO, 2017)¹.

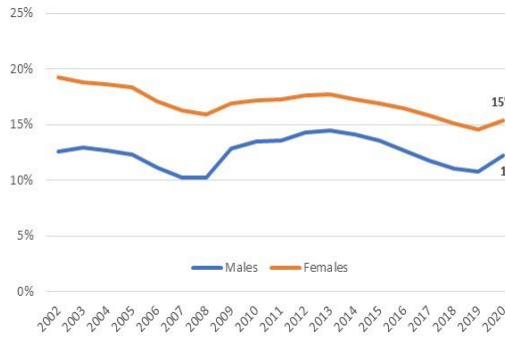
Nevertheless, rising unemployment levels amongst young people in 2011 and 2012 called for more effective and possibly binding interventions by Member States. The idea of a youth guarantee programme funded through European structural funds started being debated amongst European institutions. As a result, in December 2012 the EC launched a new youth employment package, including a proposal for a Council Recommendation on the establishment of a youth guarantee, which the Council then adopted in April 2013. The European YG scheme became operational in 2014, with funding coming from the newly-created (2013) financial instrument 'Youth Employment Initiative' (YEI). Over the period 2014-2020 this type of funding was only available to regions with youth unemployment rates higher than 25% in 2012 and had to be co-funded with their

¹ [ILO \(2017\)](#) provides a detailed history and visual representation of the development of youth guarantee schemes.

own resources². Over the years 2021-2023, EU Member States are allowed to raise their resources for young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs), taking advantage of the additional allocation made by the EC for helping youth affected by the coronavirus crisis under the Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories of Europe (REACT-EU) initiative. For the period 2021-2027, the Youth Employment Initiative has been merged into the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+). EU Member States who had a share of NEETs aged between 15 and 29 above the EU average in 2017-2019 should allocate at least 12.5% of their ESF+ resources to youth (EC [webpage](#) on YEI).

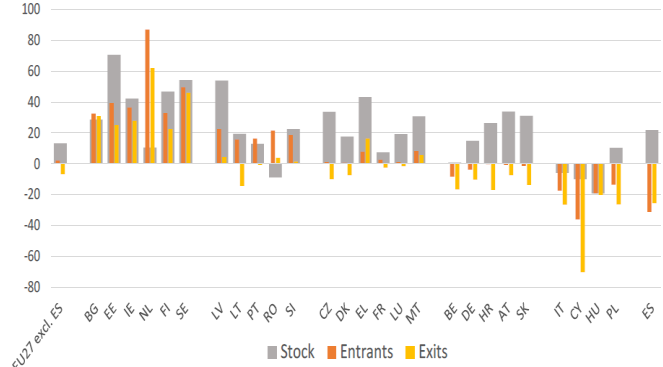
Figure 1 shows how the share of NEETs gradually decreased at EU level from 2013 onwards, which may be considered a positive side effect of the adoption of the YG. The figure also shows the sharp rise in 2020 (the latest available year) as a consequence of the pandemic as well as the enduring structural gap between unemployment levels of male and female NEETs. Figure 2 shows the EU countries' balance of NEETs registered in the YG (stock) from 2019 to 2020, and the details of NEETs' entrants and exits from YG schemes.

Figure 1. Trend of shares of NEETs aged 15-29 years, EU27, by gender



Source: Eurostat data (accessed on January 2022)

Figure 2. Changes in NEETs' stock and flows, 2019-2020



Source: extracted from Council of the European Union (2021a)

EU averages hide important regional differences. In some regions, NEET unemployment shares decreased in 2020 compared to 2019 while in others the increase was significant. Table 1 shows the best and worst changes recorded across European regions from 2019 to 2020 (latest available data). It is important to note that regions belonging to the same country are found in both groups, reflecting the existence of regional disparities not only between but also within EU Member States.

² Half of the Youth Employment Initiative budget is a dedicated budget not requiring co-financing. The other half was sourced from the European Social Fund and had to be co-funded by Member States with their own resources.

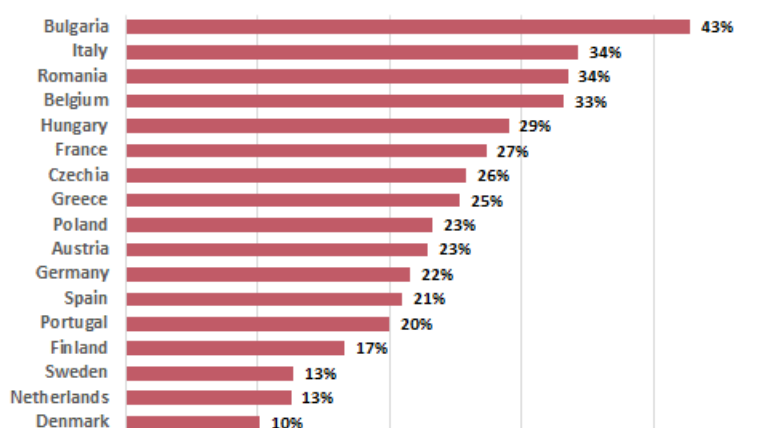
Table 1. Highest and lowest changes of shares of NEETs at regional level, 2019-2020

Regions with decreasing share of NEETs		Regions with increasing share of NEETs	
Basse-Normandie (FR)	-4.1%	Notio Aigaio (EL)	10.2%
Dytiki Makedonia (EL)	-3.9%	Illes Balears (ES)	5.8%
Martinique (FR)	-3.0%	Champagne-Ardenne (FR) & Algarve (PT)	5.5%
Warminsko-Mazurskie (PL)	-2.8%	Anatoliki Makedonia, Thraki (EL)	5.0%
Prov. Oost-Vlaanderen (BE)	-2.2%	Picardie (FR)	4.9%

Source: Eurostat data (accessed on January 2022)

Regional disparities are represented in Figure 3. They are expressed in terms of NEETs' rates in EU countries. Nordic countries have the lowest differences across their regions. The highest differences are found in Bulgaria. Italy, Romania and Belgium follow.

Figure 3. Regional disparities in the rate of NEETs, 2020, by country, %



Source: Eurostat data (accessed on January 2022). No data for CY, EE, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, SI and SK.

1.3 Key features of reinforced youth guarantee schemes at regional and local level

The 2020 Council Recommendation does not require EU Member States to present implementation plans since EU countries are expected to have measures for addressing youth unemployment included in their National Recovery and Resilience Plans as well as in their forthcoming European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) programmes. At EU level, the entity in charge of reporting on the RYG implementation is the Employment Committee (EMCO) of all Member States. In October 2021, EMCO published its first review of the YG schemes further to the

2020 Council Recommendation. Amongst the general conclusions of the review are (Council of the European Union, 2021b)³:

- New implementation plans have been adopted or are about to be adopted **in many** EU Member States *‘towards a more systematic and coherent approach in tackling youth unemployment and inactivity’*.
- Mapping phase. Progress has been registered, *‘notably by making better use of administrative data and of analyses carried out by research bodies’*. Preventive approaches based on mechanisms communicating *‘at-risk-of-leaving students to relevant employment services are in place **in some** Member States, while others rely on softer approaches such as career guidance and counselling in schools’*.
- Outreach phase. *‘...**in some** Member States, the use of more innovative communication and outreach tools (social media, mobile teams, street workers, youth mediators)’* is used to increase awareness on the YG. Still, **in many** Member States the share of NEETs registered in the schemes is considered insufficient.
- Preparatory phase. *‘...**many** Member States have already presented plans’* towards the assessment and provision of digital skills.
- Offer phase. A variety of integrated service delivery models is found across countries but *‘there are still **other** Member States where integrated services are clearly underdeveloped’*. *‘Overall, decentralised service delivery models show several advantages compared to more centralised approaches. Nonetheless, they require careful monitoring and evaluation in order to avoid regional disparities in the provision of support measures’*. Furthermore, *‘the quality of offers has improved **in most** countries, and good outcomes are registered in terms of their capacity to offer stable employment for young people. However, **in some** Member States the recycling rate in the Youth Guarantee remains a concern.’* [...] *‘Finally, post-placement and follow-up services could be improved **in many** Member States’*.

The above first assessment of the implementation of the RYG is referred to EU country level, but it is necessary to emphasise that in several Member States the actual implementation of YG schemes is delegated to the regional and/or local level.

Because of the lack of monitoring exercises focused on the role of local and regional PESs, an online consultation was made available in English, French,

³ Bold is added by the authors; it is not in the original text.

Italian and Spanish from 1 February 2022 to 18 February 2022 within the framework of this study in order to collect primary information. Recipients of such a consultation were PESs operating across the EU at local and regional level. The consultation received a total of 119 contributions from 16 countries⁴, out of which 78 (66%) were from ‘A local office or agency of public employment’, 18 (15%) were from ‘A regional office or agency of public employment’ and 23 (19%) were from ‘Other’ entities. The charts developed on the basis of the study’s consultation are based on the replies received from local and regional PESs. Answers analysed include the feedback provided by local and regional PESs that are either directly involved in the implementation of the RYG schemes or not involved. This latter group of respondents, which represents 19% and 28% of local and regional PESs, respectively, is included in the sample under the ‘No reply’ label. In addition, it is necessary to specify that in the analysis of local PESs, answers provided by Bulgarian local PESs have been analysed separately due to their massive participation in the consultation (i.e., Bulgarian local PESs represent 79% of local PESs joining the consultation) and in order to avoid any bias. Against this backdrop, charts referring to local PESs exclude the answers provided by Bulgarian respondents. Reference to answers provided by this latter group is made as long as there are significant discrepancies to highlight compared to the answers provided by local PESs belonging to other EU countries.

The reason why local and regional PESs were considered separately in the consultation was to detect if there were differences in the way they operate. Desk research shows that the prevailing operational role of local or regional PESs in a territory is determined by the way active employment policies are implemented within individual countries. In some countries, regional PESs have a leading role and may operate directly (e.g., Belgium) or cooperate with local PESs (e.g., Italy). In other countries, local PESs are the main implementers of policies supporting NEETs (e.g., Denmark). With regard to the role of local and regional PESs and the key features of the youth guarantee schemes implemented at local and regional level, the **consultation highlights the following:**

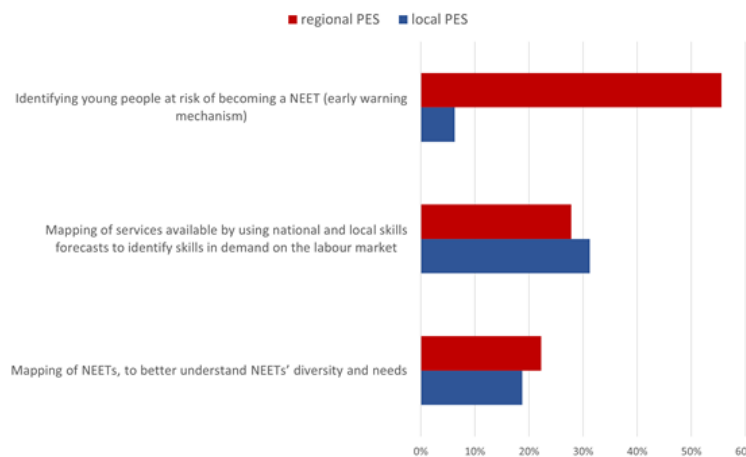
- Local and regional PESs are involved in delivering services across all the phases outlined in the RYG, although to a varying extent.
- In the mapping phase (Chart 1), most of the regional PESs work for the early identification of young people at risk of becoming NEETs. The consultation does not highlight evident differences between the role of local and regional PESs in the mapping of services available and of NEETs. A different situation is found in Bulgaria, as the majority (74%) of the local PESs participating in the consultation indicated involvement in the identification of young people

⁴ BE, BG, CZ, EE, EL, ES, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, PT, SE and SI.

at risk of becoming a NEET – which is a service highlighted by only a few local PESs representing other EU countries.

- In the outreach phase (Chart 3), the use of modern, youth-friendly and other channels is the most commonly implemented service by regional PESs to raise awareness on available support, closely followed by cooperation activities. These are also the two services most commonly selected by local PESs. Thus, the consultation does not highlight evident differences between the role of local and regional PESs in the outreach phase.
- The most common service delivered by local and regional PESs under the preparation phase is counselling (Chart 5). Local PESs are evidently more involved in assessing NEETs’ digital skills than regional PESs.
- In the offer phase (Chart 7), the consultation highlights differences between the role of local and regional PESs. Local PESs are more involved in facilitating young people’s way back into education and training. Instead, regional PESs are more active in strengthening partnerships and improving data collection and the monitoring of schemes. Bulgarian local PESs indicate being importantly involved in particular in strengthening partnerships and in providing post-placement support as specific services of the offer phase.

Chart 1. Share of local and regional PESs involved in specific services related to the mapping phase, %



Source: *The study’s consultation.*

Chart 2. Subnational PESs having modified or planning to modify their mapping services from 2021 onwards

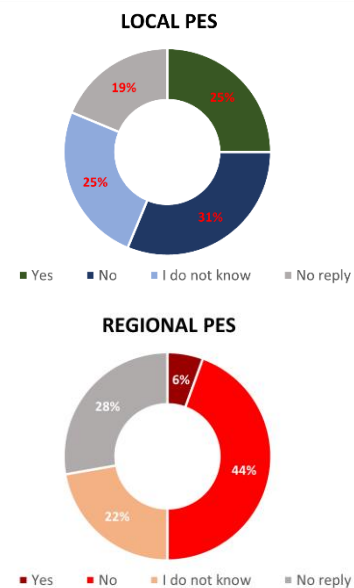


Chart 3. Share of local and regional PESs involved in specific services related to the outreach phase, %

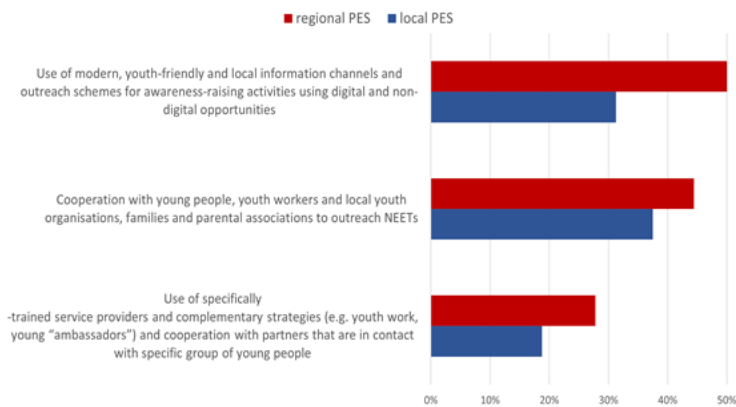


Chart 4. Subnational PESs having modified or planning to modify their outreach services from 2021 onwards

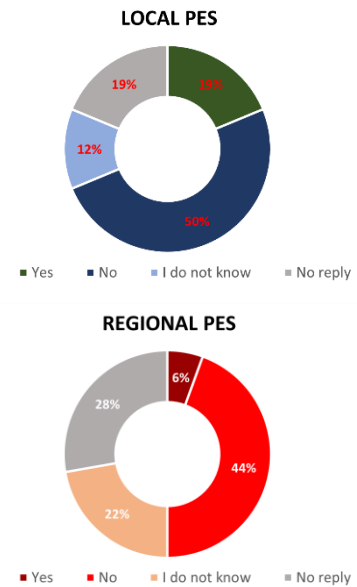


Chart 5. Share of local and regional PESs involved in specific services related to the preparation phase, %

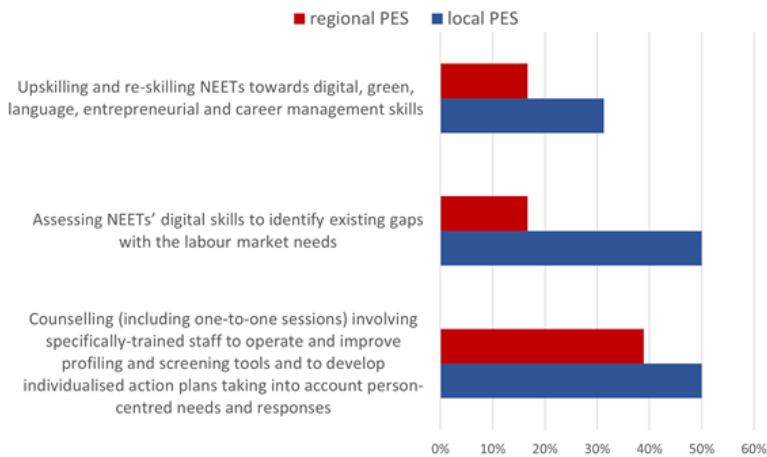
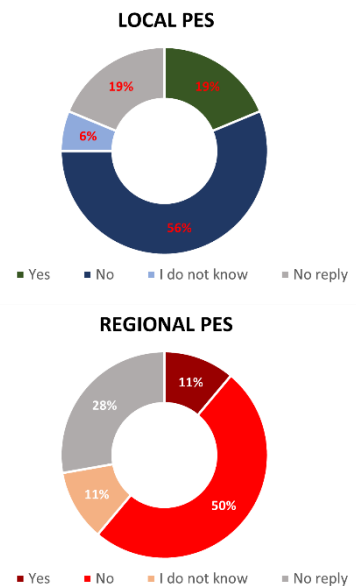


Chart 6. Subnational PESs having modified or planning to modify their preparation services from 2021 onwards



Source: The study's consultation.

Chart 7. Share of local and regional PESs adopting specific initiatives related to the offer phase, %

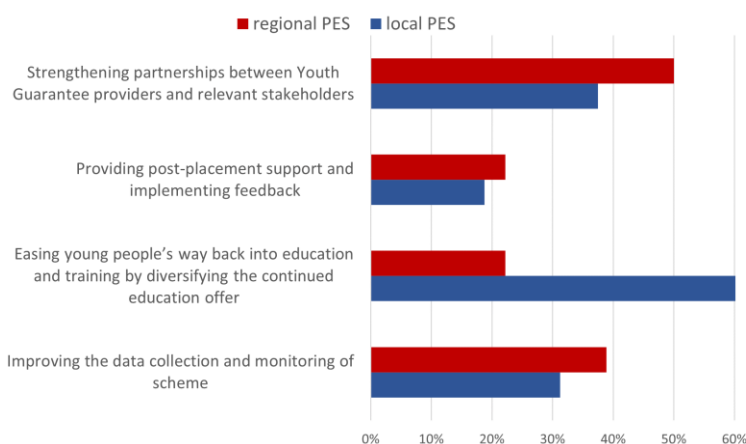
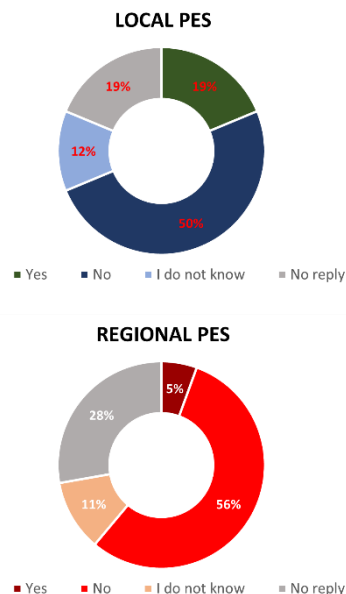


Chart 8. Subnational PESs having modified or planning to modify their offer initiatives from 2021 onwards



Source: The study's consultation.

In addition, according to the results of this consultation, **some changes occurred** in the implementation of the scheme further to the adoption of the RYG. In particular, **preparation services** are those changed the most by regional PESs (11% of the regional respondents). Mapping/outreach services and offer services have been respectively modified by 6% and 5% of regional PESs after 2021. Instead, 25% of local PESs declared to have modified, or were planning to modify, their **mapping services** after 2021; and 19% of them changed their outreach/preparation/offer services (Charts 2, 4, 6 and 8). Mapping and offer services are also those modified or planned to be modified the most by the Bulgarian local PESs (10% and 7%, respectively).

The role of LRAs and their partnerships with local and regional PESs are further outlined in the following Parts 2 and 3. Part 2 briefly describes some 40 initiatives implemented at local and regional level across the EU which refer to the four phases of mapping, outreach, preparation and offer, with the aim of assessing their coherence with the 2020 Council Recommendation. Part 3 focuses on presenting ten case studies to showcase the diversity of approaches local and regional PESs adopt to carry out their RYG schemes, considering the four phases around which they are to be built as stated by the 2020 Council Recommendation.

Part 2: Overall assessment of the coherence between key features of local youth guarantees and the Council Recommendation on the Reinforced European Youth Guarantee

In this part of the study, an inventory of local youth guarantees implemented across the EU is provided, referring to the four phases of mapping, outreach, preparation and offer as described in the 2020 Council Recommendation. An additional focus is made on policy recommendations delivered by the CoR in the Opinion on ‘Youth Employment Support: A Bridge to Jobs for the Next Generation Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee’. This Opinion suggests a series of measures contributing to RYG schemes that have a more effective impact on the local and regional dimension across the EU (i.e., cooperation with LRAs, quality of offers, mobility, territoriality, evidence-based policy-making, sustainability). The main aim of this part is therefore to present the diversity of approaches used by local and regional PESs depending on national circumstances, and their extent of coherence with the 2020 Council Recommendation. It is important to note that the information herein provided is the final result of a desk research and literature review activity as well as of the results of the online consultation launched in the framework of this study.

2.1 Mapping

The 2020 Council Recommendation states that the mapping phase aims to ensure the identification of the target group, available services and skills needs as well as to prevent young people at risk of becoming NEETs using tracking and early warning systems. As already pointed out in Part 1 above, from both the first review of the YG schemes of the EMCO and the consultation carried out in the framework of this study, most local and regional PESs are committed to setting up early warning mechanisms to identifying young people at risk of becoming NEETs. This is done through existing partnerships with schools, youth centres and social services, as well as by using existing supporting databases.

In Portugal, where the national public employment service (IEFP) centrally manages the implementation of the YG scheme and the local and regional public employment services implement their schemes at a decentralised level, the **Directorate of Education of the [Regional Government of the Azores](#)** is responsible for designing, guiding, coordinating and evaluating the Azorean

educational system. In this context, it is also in charge of **mapping young people who drop out of school** in order to implement tailored paths to (re-)engage NEETs either in work or in education. The system is mainly managed by schools triggering an alert in case the student did not attend the beginning of the school year, or when a notification of cancellation from school is submitted. In such a case, the school is normally in charge of contacting the student's family and possibly meeting in order to investigate underlying causes.

In **Estonia**, identification of NEETs is made on a daily basis thanks to the [Youth Prop-Up Programme](#), a project launched in 2015 and renewed until 2022 by the Association of Estonian Open Youth Centres with the Ministry of Education and Research and implemented by the Estonian Youth Work Centre, which maintains regular contacts with several supporting institutions (e.g., municipalities, the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund, local and regional businesses). The objective of the programme is to identify NEETs aged between 15 and 26 through **mobile youth work** (i.e., involving teams of qualified professionals who identify and monitor urban spaces where young people are likely to go) and networking. It makes use of the **Youth Logbook** monitoring system which enables youth centres to gather reliable programme's implementation statistics on a daily basis, allowing interpretation and design of evidence-based actions. The Youth Logbook identifies young people, maps their current situation, monitors their participation in the activities of the programme and, finally, supports the evaluation of the programme's success on the basis of the youth's status after six months. One of the most interesting features of the Logbook is the mapping of the sociodemographic background of the participants – in terms of their education, job experience and household situation. In the Logbook, it is possible to point out the risk factor which best conveys the vulnerability of a youth's current situation (Kasearu and Trumm, 2017).

In Italy, we find both services mentioned above. On one hand, the **Lombardia Region** provides an example of an [initiative aimed at identifying potential NEETs](#) while they are still in school. Upon the evidence of the increase in the number of young (i.e., aged 15-19) NEETs from 12.6% in 2019 to 15.7% in 2020, at the end of 2021 the Region mobilised regional high schools to identify potential NEETs and explain to them the opportunities of getting back into education and/or training in order to obtain a professional qualification. The target group of this initiative are young people with an asymmetrical school performance and/or attendance, marked by failures, at risk of school dropout or with significant skills gaps in different areas. On the other, the **Calabria Region** refers to the databases of regional or municipal offices in charge of providing social services in order to identify disadvantaged families and hence their young members as potential NEETs (this initiative is sourced from the consultation).

2.2 Outreach

According to the 2020 Council Recommendation, the outreach phase is needed to raise NEETs' awareness about the existing youth guarantee schemes by using digital and non-digital modern, youth-friendly and local information channels and outreach schemes. Other strategies for reaching out to a specific group of young people involve the cooperation with young people, youth workers and local youth organisations, families and parental associations, and specifically-trained service providers and complementary strategies (e.g., youth work, young 'ambassadors'). The following mapped initiatives provide examples of all.

The local Youth Work Centre in Tartu, Estonia, managed by the **Tartu City Council**, provides an example of a digital and user-friendly tool to reach out to young people: a podcast. Since 2020, the centre has been running [Noorteaken](#) (i.e., 'Window on young people'), a podcast for young people hosted by young people. The podcast, which receives financial support from the ESF programme 'Involvement of young people at risk of exclusion and improvement of young people's employability', deals with any youth-related issues, including employment, and can be listened to on the Tartu Youth Work Centre's Youtube, as well as on Spotify, Google Podcasts, RadioPublic, Breaker and Pocket Casts apps.

In **Denmark**, youth are supported through municipal [youth guidance centres](#). These centres provide guidance services for youngsters aged up to 25 years for re-entering education or for moving on to the labour market. In addition, they **engage pupils while in school** (prevention) and are responsible for reaching out to NEETs. Still, there is no evidence that these functions changed due to the adoption of the 2020 Council Recommendation.

The **Emilia-Romagna Region**, in Italy, provides an example of a less structured but more flexible approach to communicate on the YG, based on the organisation of a [series of meetings in nine cities](#) across the region to provide information and material on how to get involved in the YG scheme. As these meetings were organised in late November 2021, it appears to be an effort to use youth-friendly approaches for awareness-raising.

According to Nordregio (2019), **Finland** is the only country requiring municipalities to employ **youth outreach workers**. These workers implement a proactive outreach approach by visiting schools, calling parents or contacting youth directly. They are part of a national network focusing on youth work.

A similar but less structured approach – made in principle on a voluntary basis – is offered by the city of **Gijón** in Spain. In order to create a service hub for NEETs

facilitating the school-to-work transition through education, training and employment, the local ‘Youth Employment and Activation Agency’ has created the figure of *dinamizadores de barrio* (i.e., **street counsellors**). These counsellors identify and reach groups at risk (i.e., long-term unemployed and inactive young people) by disseminating information in places where young people hang out. Such a profile has then been replicated in a structural way by the Youth Employment Agencies of the Asturias, Catalonia and Extremadura regions (OIT, 2017).

Finally, the **Walloon region** offers a combined range of services for reaching out to NEETs. Le Forem, i.e., the regional PES, is amongst the partners of the ‘**Coup de Boost**’ project, together with the General Labour Federation of Belgium (FGTB) and the Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (CSC). Amongst the implemented initiatives, there is a wide variety of **outreach strategies**, from the organisation of job and information days about existing working, education and training opportunities in the region to the use of specifically-trained service providers (e.g., **youth work**, **young ambassadors** presenting their personal experiences), including also the **cooperation with partners that are in contact with specific groups of young people**. **Social media** such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and Youtube are also regularly updated and used to maximise the visibility of any significant initiative tailored to young people aged between 18 and 29 years living in the region. In order to also target young people aged between 15 and 18 years, as highlighted in the 2020 Council Recommendation, Le Forem runs *Les métiers vont à l’école*, a 1 hour 30 minute **interactive session** held **at schools** which is aimed at raising students’ awareness on the labour market needs at regional level and on demanded skills so as to support the right choice of their future work.

2.3 Preparation

The 2020 Council Recommendation defines the preparation phase as pivotal for PESs to upskill and re-skill NEETs towards digital, green, language, entrepreneurial and career management skills. This phase is also a time to assess their digital skills so as to identify existing gaps with the labour market needs and to provide them with counselling services supporting their choices to (re-)enter education, training or the labour market. The initiatives and programmes ascribed to this phase present a wide and heterogeneous diversity of approaches, also depending on national, regional and local circumstances. It is evident how local and regional PESs offer tailored individualised support to NEETs.

In a **French** local youth centre called *La Mission Locale ‘Jeunes’ Saint-Marcellin Vercors Isère*, a **personalised accompaniment measure** has been defined to

support unemployed young people towards autonomy. Since 2019 the youth centre has been responsible for implementing and monitoring a Personalised Employment Accompaniment Project (PPAE) for young jobseekers under 26 years of age. The PPAE aims to achieve sustainable professional and social integration by creating proposals which are adapted to each individual according to the problems encountered.

‘Jeunes, Ecole, Emploi... tout un Programme’ ([J.E.E.P.](#)) is a regional scheme implemented in the Brussels region, **Belgium**, offering **training and awareness-raising modules** for an active life to students enrolled in their last level of secondary education in order to accompany them in their transition from school to work. It was created in 1998, but since 1 January 2015, it has been integrated into the Brussels Regional Plan for the Youth Guarantee, co-financed by the ESF. After a 2-year pilot phase, the project gradually spread to different municipalities, given the interest many schools had in participating. Nine local PESs in Brussels have been supporting the implementation of the project for many years.

Lithuania has a National Youth Policy Action Plan for 2021, which was not updated further to the 2020 Council Recommendation. NEETs are addressed through the country’s Operational Programme 2014-2020, specific objective ‘Reduce the number of young people between 15 and 29 years of age not in employment, education or training’ of Priority ‘Promoting Quality Employment and Participation in the Labour Market’. All projects are centrally implemented by relevant ministries and/or the employment service. Amongst the decentralised initiatives is the establishment of the [Alytus Career Centre](#) in 2019. The centre is a **pilot** that is then expected to be rolled out throughout the country. It provides **preparation services** (e.g., profiling, career guidance, individual and group consultation) and opportunities (e.g., internship and volunteering). The centre also reflects a cooperation between the municipality, the Department of Youth Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and companies. In fact, it has signed 17 cooperation agreements with Alytus’ companies and organisations that want to contribute to the vocational guidance of students. Still, this pilot is evidently not a consequence of the adoption of the RYG.

The **Lidköping** municipality in Sweden offers the [‘Ung Arena’](#) initiative. The project is targeted at young NEETs aged 16-29 living in the municipality. It offers a **volunteer activity** where people can get **support** to find out where they want to work and how they can get there. They also help young people with finding an internship, CV writing, cover letter and job interview training. If the young person is not ready for the job market or studies, they then try to support the person along the way, working out a plan together based on the individual’s needs. They also help people to create a network with authorities and other institutions.

Assessing NEETs' digital and language skills in order to identify existing gaps with the labour market needs is amongst the activities carried out in the '[Coup de Boost](#)' project implemented by Le Forem in the **Walloon region**, Belgium. In addition to supporting NEETs living in the region to find the right working, education or training opportunity fitting their needs through one-to-one or collective counselling sessions, the regional PES provides them with **upskilling and re-skilling opportunities** aimed at improving their knowledge in the language and digital domains.

2.4 Offer

According to the 2020 Council Recommendation, appropriate offers must be aligned with existing standards to ensure quality and equity (e.g., as set in the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships) and should be built on strong partnerships between Youth Guarantee providers and relevant stakeholders. Young people should also be encouraged to re-enter education and training by being offered a continued education offer and, in the case of (re-)entering the labour market, being provided with employment and start-up incentives. Further to this, a post-placement support and implementing feedback should be ensured to prevent young people from returning to their NEET status.

The following mapped initiatives are examples of each measure ascribed to the offer phase as detailed in the 2020 Council Recommendation.

The **Region of Madrid** offers **subsidies** (grants) to local entities to provide youth with internship opportunities of at least 6 months as part of the 'Professional Activation Programme for young long-term unemployed people (2021)'. Since this opportunity is addressed to young people with professional accreditation and enrolled in the youth guarantee, the internship has to be in a sector directly related to the degree of the young person hired. The same opportunity is offered to youth without recognised professional accreditation and enrolled in the youth guarantee, but in this case, the internship has to last a minimum of nine months and lead to the obtainment of a certificate of professionalism. The **Region of Murcia** has a similar scheme in place, called the [Mixed Employment-Training programme](#). This scheme provides local entities with resources to implement youth support at local level. An example of this local support is provided by the **Municipality of Murcia**. Through its public employment service [the city is hiring NEETs](#) for a 1-year period to gain qualifications in specific areas such as food, cleaning, bioconstruction and maintenance of green areas ('MURcia SOStenible').

The **County Labour Office in Bolesławiec**, Lower Silesia, Poland, implements projects related to the YG that mostly relate to offer (internships, training),

including by the provision of incentives (e.g., resettlement voucher, one-off funds for starting a business). These projects are funded through the ESF under measure 1.1 ‘Support for young people unemployed in the regional labour market - non-competition projects’ of the Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development 2014-2020, that was extended up to 31 December 2022.

Italian Regions are delegated to implement most of the measures foreseen under the national YG plan. These measures did not change after the 2020 Council Recommendation. An example of continuity is provided by the **Marche Region** that in late 2021 offered NEETs the opportunity to undertake (**paid**) **community services** within several regional entities across a variety of sectors such as culture, sport, tourism, social service and civil protection (project [I NEET you](#)). A [similar initiative](#) was launched by the Region in early 2022. Paid posting for the provision of community services is one of the main measures foreseen by the national YG plan.

In the Brussels region in **Belgium**, through the [Go4Brussels](#) project, the Actiris public employment service provides youth from the Brussels region with an integration contract that allows them to gain access to the labour market. Such a contract lasts 12 months and is fully subsidised by the Region. This contract aims to provide young people with first-hand work experience, which they can use in their future job applications. Young people under the age of 25 who are registered on Actiris, unemployed for at least 18 months, and without more than 90 cumulative days of work experience during that time are eligible for this service. Another initiative managed by Actiris is [Stage First](#), offering young people aged under 30 years with medium-low skills the opportunity to join a three- to six-month initial internship. To be eligible, youths are required to hold the Certificate of Higher Secondary Education, live in the Brussels-Capital region, and not have more than three months of prior work experience. Further to this, they must be registered on Actiris for at least three months after the end of their studies. The internship is arranged through an agreement between the host company, Actiris, and the intern. The company is responsible for paying the expenses of the social secretariat and for providing the young person with a check equal to €200 gross, a travel and stay check, as well as a mandatory insurance coverage. Actiris must provide the trainee with a maximum daily allowance of €26.82.

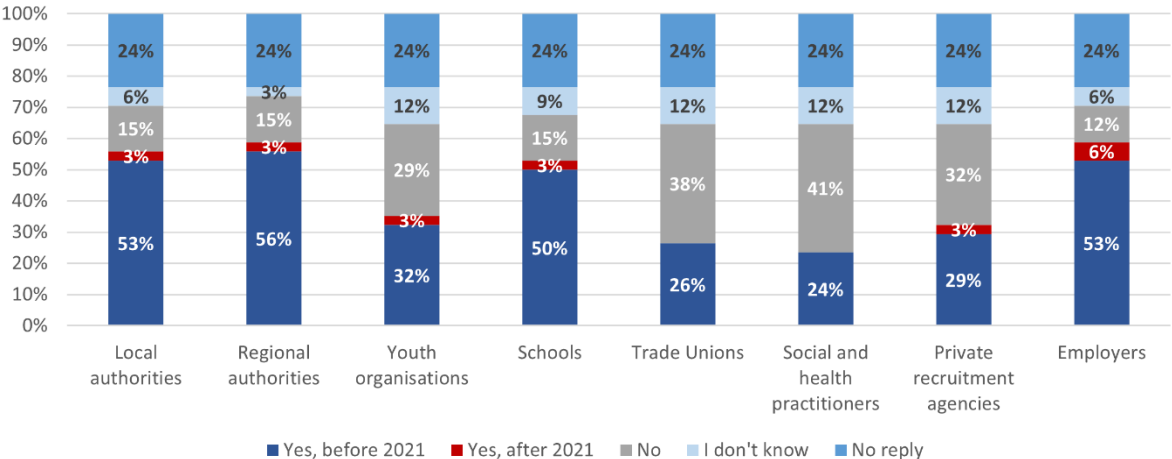
2.5 Cooperation with LRAs

In its Opinion on ‘Youth Employment Support: A Bridge to Jobs for the Next Generation Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee’, the CoR *‘suggests that partnerships in all phases of the Youth Guarantee should include local and regional authorities. This is particularly the case regarding the mapping phase*

and the outreach phase, in which local and regional authorities could be a bridge between different stakeholders such as the social partners, educational institutions, youth organisations, public employment services and the local and regional business sector’ (CoR, 2021).

Before the implementation of the 2020 Council Recommendation, the majority of local and regional PESs across the EU had mobilised multi-stakeholder partnerships involving, amongst others, LRAs. This evidence is reported in the literature review (e.g., European Network of Public Employment Services, 2021), but also in the answers gathered in the consultation launched in the framework of this study. With this regard, Chart 9 sums up the type of partnerships local and regional PESs joining the consultation have in place with relevant stakeholders and the time when they were launched, i.e., whether before or after the adoption of the 2020 Council Recommendation. The vast majority of partnerships that respondents have in place were already established before 2021. The most numerous happened to be with regional authorities, employers, local authorities and schools. According to the consultation, Bulgarian local PESs have a wider range of partnerships in place, which also commonly involve trade unions, youth organisations and social and health practitioners. After 2021, the most significant increase of partnerships for cooperation reported by local PESs representing the other EU countries is with employers (6%). Much higher increases are found amongst Bulgarian local PESs (e.g., 13% with employers, 11% with local authorities and 10% with regional authorities and social and health practitioners).

Chart 9. Partnerships before and after 2021

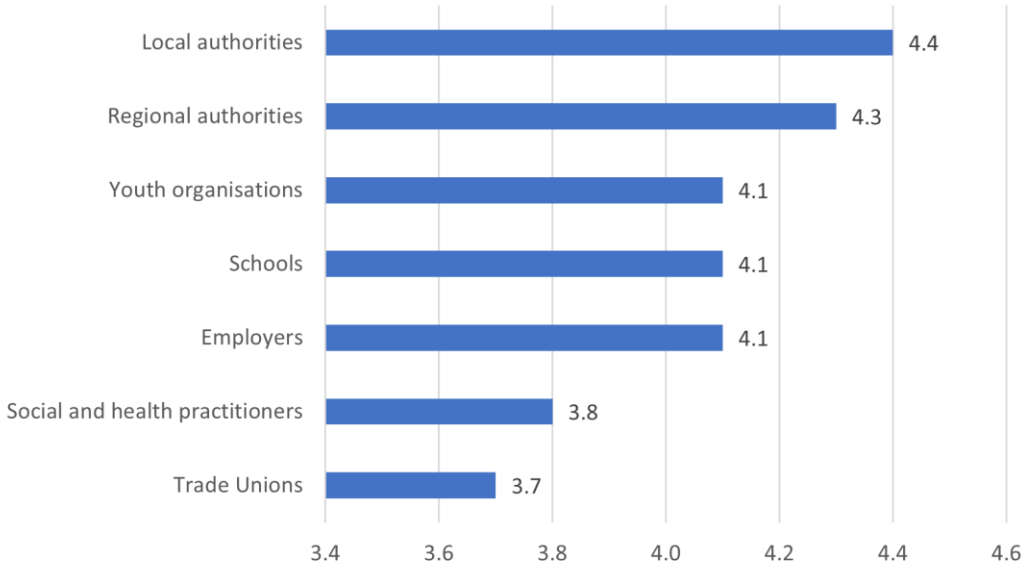


Source: The study’s consultation.

Local and regional PESs were also asked to rate the effectiveness of the mobilised partnerships (Chart 10). Partnerships with local authorities were rated very positively (4.4 out of 5), followed by those established with regional authorities (4.3 out of 5), youth organisations, schools and employers (4.1 out of 5, each).

Finally, respondents were asked to provide feedback regarding how these partnerships could be improved, if needed. Out of the answers collected, 45% of respondents expressed the need for better communication with involved stakeholders, also by using digital means and 6% reported poor engagement, thus suggesting a higher commitment to the implementation of YG schemes. Residual answers called for a heterogeneous range of options (e.g., more human and financial resources, more data and experience exchange, better distribution of responsibilities amongst partners, employee training, set-up of an Advisory Board to periodically report on the activities implemented in the YG schemes with the involvement of all participating local actors).

Chart 10. Average of partnership effectiveness (1 min, 5 max)



Source: The study’s consultation.

The following mapped initiatives exemplify the type of partnerships existing at territorial level.

The **Netherlands** put in place a youth unemployment strategy in response to the COVID-19 crisis, but the country has no specific implementation plan for the YG (OECD, 2021). The [‘Action plan for youth unemployment in the Rivierenland region 2021-2025’](#) is an example of **regional approach** for supporting unemployed young people aged 16-27. With this plan, the ten municipalities belonging to the Rivierenland region emphasise the importance of cooperation amongst all stakeholders concerned with youth; of building on what works well by connecting and strengthening existing successful initiatives; of tackling the regional level for coherence purposes while still paying attention to municipal characteristics; and of implementing short-term actions that are also meant to contribute to the structural improvement and innovation of the regional youth approach. The plan is supervised and monitored by a regional administrative partnership (RW-POA) made up of representatives of municipalities, employer

and employee organisations, educational institutions and other stakeholders. The [Starters Grant scheme](#) is another tool used to support Dutch unemployed youth. The tool is widespread across the country, but its implementation modalities differ according to the municipality. The scheme is based on the **cooperation between the municipality and local companies** searching for potential staff in a low-threshold manner. There is no cost for the municipality as the salary, although low, is fully paid by the company providing the posting. Finally, another Dutch example of cooperation is given by the [Service Centres on Education and Work](#), which are **regional alliances** between schools, institutions for vocational training, business owners and government agencies (municipalities and the PESs).

In **Denmark**, the previously mentioned [municipal Youth Guidance Centres](#) are meant to improve integrated cooperation between all relevant labour market actors and public authorities. By law, they have to closely cooperate with schools and youth education institutions in the area, local businesses and public employment services.

In **Austria**, the YG is implemented at national level, with local and regional PESs managing the scheme at a decentralised level. The [Vienna's Vocational Training Guarantee](#), launched in 2010, supports young people aged 15-24 to ensure qualification and training beyond compulsory school level. It includes a broad range of services such as guidance, counselling and job-finding opportunities in private enterprises which are tailored to any adolescent and young adult. Special reference is given to youngsters with disabilities aged up to 24 years, young people aged between 15 and 17 years dropping out of school, early school leavers aged between 18 and 24 years and NEETs aged between 15 and 24. The programme includes several partners, such as the Public Employment Service of Vienna (AMS), the Federal Office of Social Affairs (BSB), the Municipal Department for Education and Out-of-school activities for Children and Young People (MA 13), social partners, the Vienna employment promotional fund (*waff*) and the Vienna School Board (SSR).

In **Portugal**, the national public employment service (IEFP) established long-lasting agreements with several municipalities and third sector organisations to create the [Gabinetes de Inserção Profissional](#) (GIPs), i.e., professional offices aimed at supporting unemployed young people – with special reference to more vulnerable groups such as NEETs – in entering or re-entering the labour market.

In **Barcelona**, the city council approved in 2016 the [Quality Youth Employment Plan 2016-2020](#), as a result of a participatory process between the City Council's Youth Department, local young people and different employment institutions. The main objective was to tackle youth unemployment, as indicated in the Municipal Action Plan and the Barcelona Employment Strategy, through the

coordination of local employment activities and programmes. Over the years, they have offered different employment services and programmes, such as Barcelona Success Guarantee, Barcelona Connect Youth and Youth Guarantee Programme.

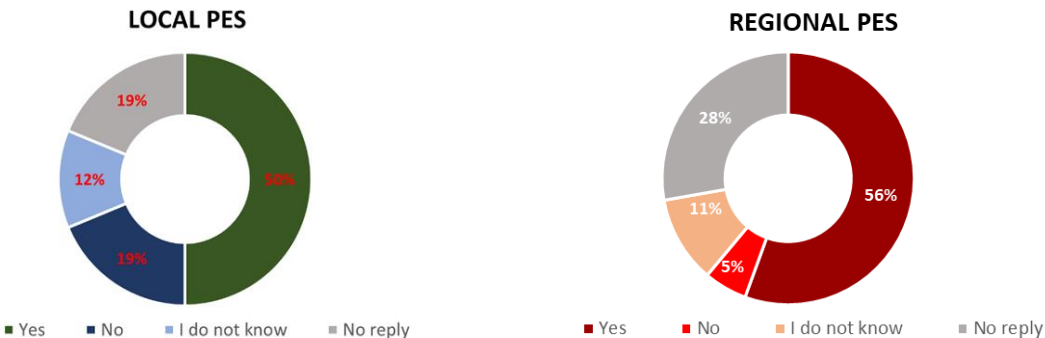
All of these contribute to tackling youth unemployment in several ways, thanks to established partnerships and collaboration agreements amongst, but not limited to, leading organisations in the field of guidance, placement and job training, schools and the Barcelona City Council. By way of example, the [Barcelona Success Guarantee](#) is a multi-stakeholder project offered by the Barcelona City Council together with Barcelona Activa (i.e., the Barcelona City Council's Local Development Agency), the Barcelona Education Consortium (i.e., the legal instrument appointed by the Barcelona City Council and Catalonia for educational management) and Fundació BCN Formació Professional (i.e., a non-profit social service provider promoted by the Barcelona City Council).

2.6 Quality of offers

According to the Opinion adopted in February 2021 on ‘Youth Employment Support: A Bridge to Jobs for the Next Generation Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee’, the CoR *‘considers essential to define clear and precise binding criteria regarding the quality of the Youth Guarantee offers of employment, education, training, and apprenticeships’*.

Despite the fact that the literature review (e.g., European Network of Public Employment Services, 2021) and the answers collected from respondents joining the consultation launched in the framework of this study (see Chart 11 below) confirm the commitment of local providers in getting such data (i.e., assessment of quality of offers is made by 50% and 56% of local and regional PESs joining the consultation, respectively), there is poor evidence of initiatives implemented at territorial level that exemplify this matter.

Chart 11. Implementation of assessment of quality of offers

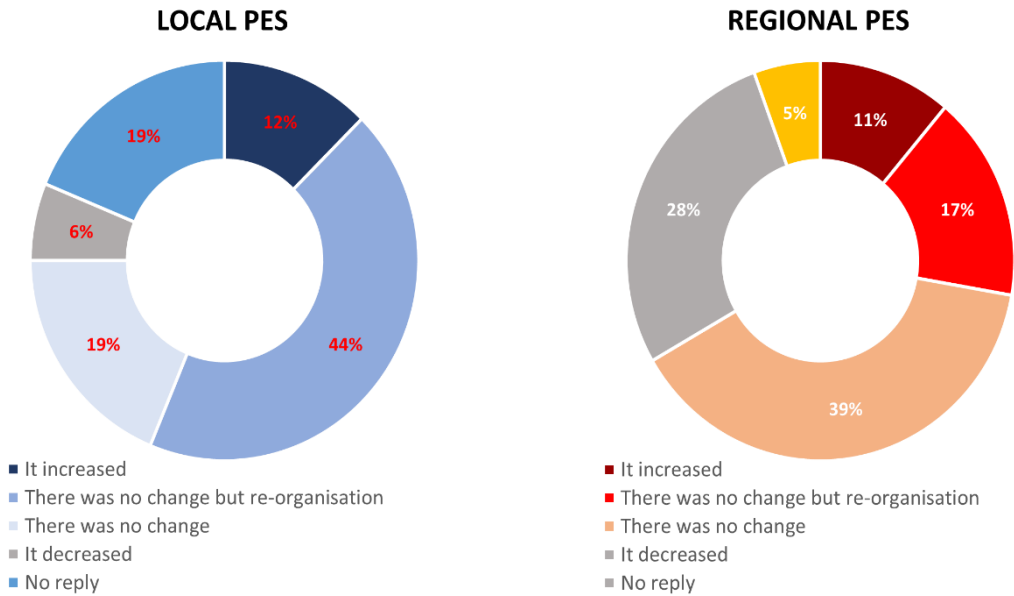


Source: The study’s consultation.

According to the mapped initiatives, however, the most common ways local providers use to assess quality of offers is by getting a **feedback from partners** with whom they cooperate (see case 3.4. referring to Belgium, by way of example) and by **setting tailored goals**.

Quality of offers is also clearly linked to the human resources dedicated to support NEETs. Amongst the questions asked to local and regional PESs joining the consultation launched in the framework of this study was whether they have experienced any change in terms of staff allocated to their YG schemes before and after the adoption of the 2020 Council Recommendation. As shown in Chart 12, since the adoption of the RYG, 19% of local PESs and 39% of regional PESs consulted have not made any change. 44% of local PESs and 17% of regional PESs have respectively experienced no change except re-organisation. Finally, 12% of local PESs and 11% of regional PESs have benefitted from an increase.

Chart 12. Change in terms of staff working on YG schemes before and after the 2020 Council Recommendation



Source: The study’s consultation.

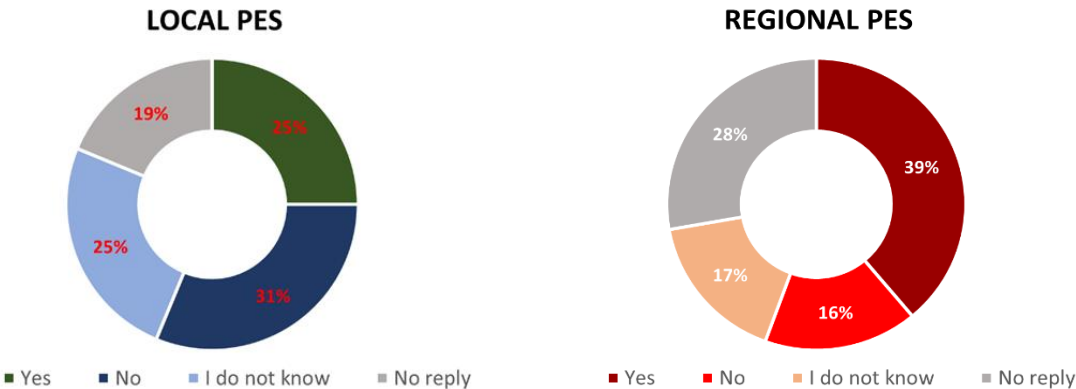
In this latter case, the **Danish municipality of Hjørring** is considered a good example of strengthening its capacity to support the unemployed. The municipality invested €17 millions for the hiring of additional staff dedicated to the provision of social assistance through active market policies. The investment resulted in the reduction of cases per caseworker from 70-80 to 35-40. This, in turn, implied better capacity to provide quality services and establish relationships with beneficiaries (Nordregio, 2019).

2.7 Mobility

In its Opinion on ‘Youth Employment Support: A Bridge to Jobs for the Next Generation Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee’, the CoR highlights the importance of promoting labour mobility through the RYG.

Answers collected from respondents joining the consultation launched in the framework of this study show a small difference between local and regional PESs. In fact, according to Chart 13 below, 25% of local PESs and 39% of regional PESs have implemented mobility as an effective tool to fight unemployment. Bulgarian local PESs represent an exception in this case, as 87% of those participating in the consultation make use of the mobility tool.

Chart 13. Use of youth mobility as a tool to fight unemployment



Source: The study’s consultation.

The following mapped initiatives are examples of how mobility can be framed at local and regional level.

[Gijón Youth Activation Agency](#) was developed in 2014 as a pilot and nowadays is a consolidated approach for mentoring and guiding NEETs in finding a job. The programme is run by the Local Agency of Economic Promotion and Employment of the **Spanish municipality of Gijón**. It offers individualised planning matching the aspirations and profiles of young jobseekers. The programme attracts regional companies to offer internships and also provides mobility opportunities in Europe (initiative sourced from the consultation).

In the **Veneto region**, Italy, the project [Youth Guarantee - Rovigo Una Rete per i Giovani](#) aims at helping young people aged 15-29 to carry out personalised programmes that satisfy the needs of the territorial labour market. The project is implemented by a partnership between the Province of Rovigo, the public employment services, universities, schools, cooperatives and other actors. The project also provides international internships that aim to promote an educational

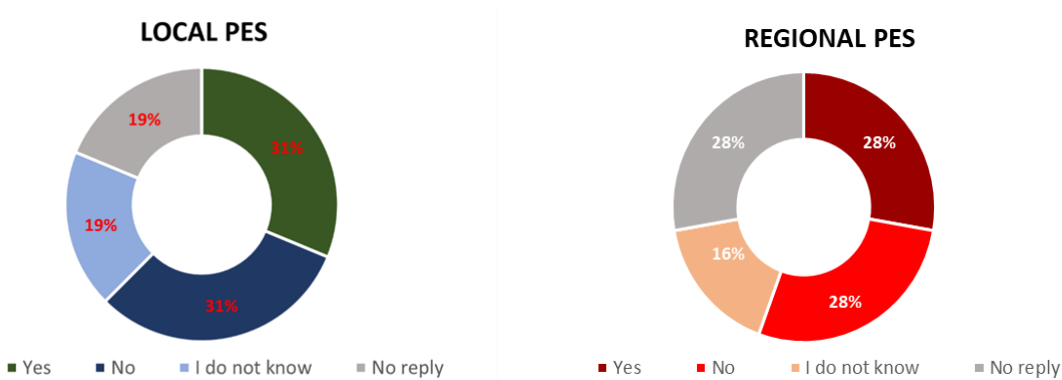
and professional experience outside the region. The aim is to strengthen the skills of young people and to get in touch with dynamic territories and labour markets that can offer employment opportunities.

2.8 Territoriality

In its Opinion on ‘Youth Employment Support: A Bridge to Jobs for the Next Generation Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee’, the CoR also highlights the importance of setting specific support measures that enable young people living in outermost, rural or disadvantaged urban areas to be provided with the same opportunities and services as in any other region.

Also in this case, answers collected from respondents joining the consultation launched in the framework of this study show a different approach used by local and regional PESs. In fact, according to Chart 14 below, data show that 61% of Bulgarian local PESs have implemented specific support measures in remote and rural areas, whereas only 31% of local PESs representing other EU countries and 28% of regional PESs answered positively, respectively.

Chart 14. Provision of specific support measures for youth living in remote and rural areas



Source: The study’s consultation.

The following mapped initiatives show how local and regional PESs implement these support measures.

In **Romania**, the YG is implemented and monitored by the Ministry of Labour and Social Justice and the Public Employment Services, represented by the National Employment Agency (ANOFM) and by the county employment agencies (AJOFM). In the last programming period, Romania set various support programmes for NEETs under the ESF, distinguishing them according to a territorial scope. The [ACTIMOB 3 RMPD - Activation and mobility of young](#)

[NEETs](#) project is currently implemented at the level of ANOFM and of the employment agencies in the **counties** of Alba, Braşov, Covasna, Harghita, Mureş, Sibiu, Bacău, Botoşani, Iaşi, Neamţ, Suceava, Vaslui, Bihor, Bistriţa-Năsăud, Cluj, Maramureş, Satu Mare, Sălaj, Arad, Caraş-Severin, Hunedoara, Timiş. The project [UNIT 2 RMD](#) supports the training and apprenticeship of young NEETs in Bucharest and the Ilfov region and is implemented with the support of the Municipal Agency for Employment - Bucharest and the County Agency for Employment Ilfov. Alternatively, the project [UNIT 2 RMPD](#) focuses on the apprenticeships and internships for young NEETs from less-developed regions and is implemented by the county employment agencies in **Nord-Est, Nord-Vest, Vest and Sud-Vest**. All these programmes target NEETs aged 16-25, even after their extension into 2022.

In **Spain**, the province of Solsonés is responsible for the [Agrotreballa al Solsonés](#) project, which trains young people aged 16-29 who are registered to the YG programme and live in **rural areas**. The aim of the project is to support young NEETs to become self-employed in one of the most strategic sectors of the territory: the agricultural sector. The project organises courses and trainings with institutions and local companies and provides traineeships in the enterprises located in the area.

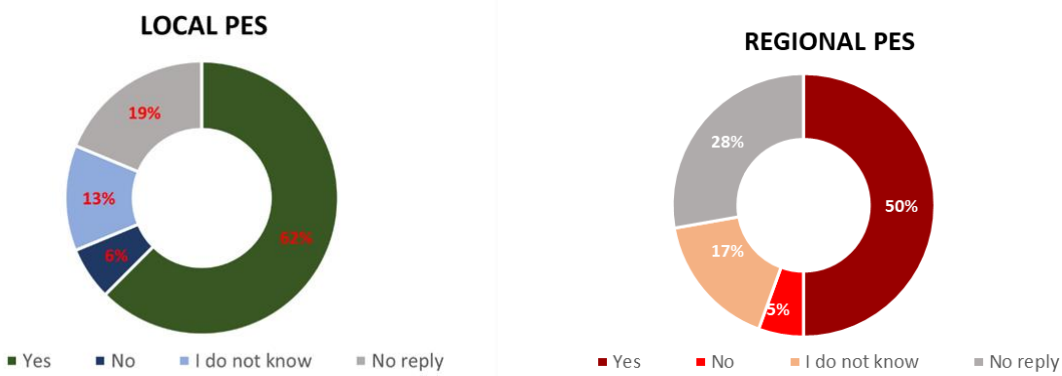
The [Mission locale Nord Atlantique](#) in the city of Nantes, **France**, aims at accompanying young people aged 16-25 in their professional and social integration. As is the case with all the other local French missions, the *Mission locale Nord Atlantique* is the link between the YG and the NEETs. It offers support related to employment, training, housing, health, etc. Each young person can benefit from an individualised support to define their professional objective or training project according to their personal needs and desires. In 2021 the *Mission locale Nord Atlantique* launched a group of young ambassadors, which aims to bring young people from **marginalised urban neighbourhoods** into the labour market. It enables this by using a ‘peer-to-peer’ methodology and by building a network of local partners (e.g., non-profits organisations, associations, etc.).

2.9 Evidence-based policy making

In its Opinion on ‘Youth Employment Support: A Bridge to Jobs for the Next Generation Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee’, the CoR *recommends enhancing the evaluation of all measures taken under the Youth Guarantee schemes, so that more evidence-based policies and measures can be developed on the basis of what works, where and why, thus ensuring an effective and efficient use of resources*.

From the answers collected in the consultation launched in the framework of this study, most local and regional PESs joining as implementers of YG schemes across the EU have evaluation schemes and tools in place to ensure effective and efficient use of resources (62% and 50%, respectively, in Chart 15).

Chart 15. Evaluation of all measures to ensure effective and efficient use of resources



Source: The study’s consultation.

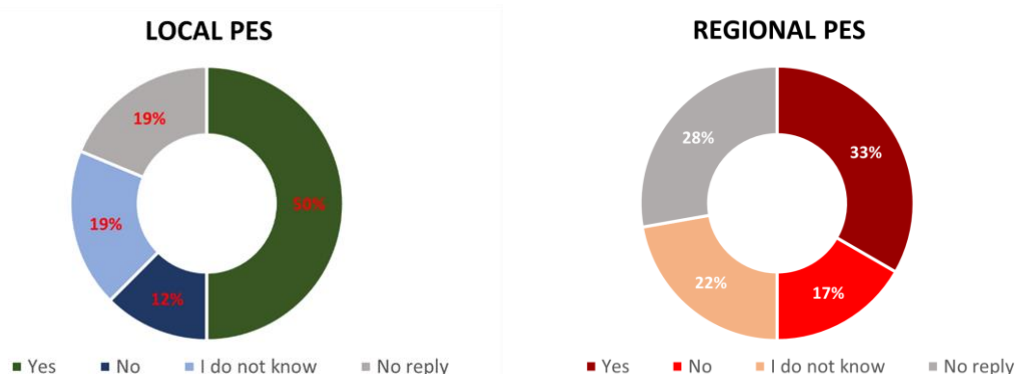
An example of such strategy is provided by the **Danish** Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment (STAR), whose role is to guide municipalities in the implementation of the country’s active labour market policy, which is then administered through local job centres. The Agency has a well-established **monitoring system** in place which is considered an inspiring success story at EU level to inform employment measures. The system is based on a wide knowledge base which relies on the data communicated by local authorities.

2.10 Sustainability

The last main policy recommendation delivered by the CoR in its Opinion on ‘Youth Employment Support: A Bridge to Jobs for the Next Generation Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee’ refers to the importance of providing NEETs with guidance and information after accepting an offer to facilitate their upskilling and re-skilling in order to avoid their return to unemployment.

This process is not frequently implemented by local and regional PESs across the EU, as confirmed by the limited evidence collected through desk research as well as by the answers gathered in the consultation launched in the framework of this study. In fact, as shown in Chart 16 below, only 50% and 33% of local and regional PESs joining the consultation have respectively confirmed their commitment in favouring sustainability of placements.

Chart 16. Favouring sustainability of placements

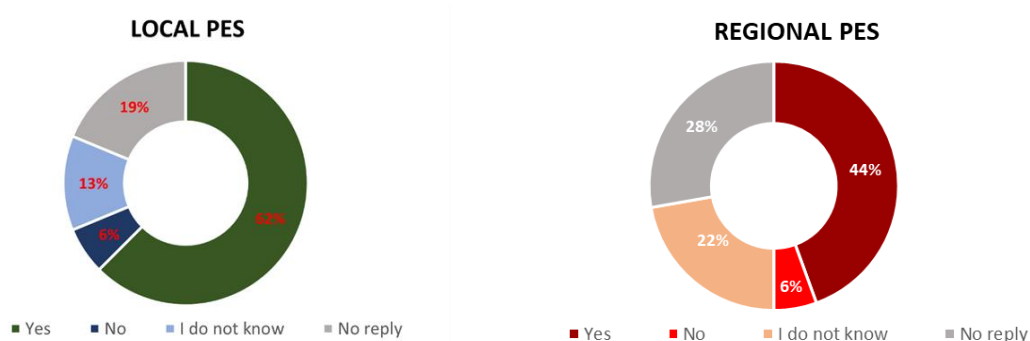


Source: The study's consultation.

In **Slovenia**, the YG scheme is managed and monitored at central level but its implementation is through the Employment Service of Slovenia and its **regional and local employment offices**. In its [Guidelines for active employment policy for the period 2021-2025](#), the Slovenian Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MDDSZ) acknowledges the publishing of the RYG and specifies that active employment policies for NEETs will focus on the type of qualifications required by the labour market, that employment promotion programmes will encourage the employment of young people for an indefinite period and that in-depth counselling and additional individual services will be available to all unemployed young people up to the age of 29 (Slovenian Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, 2020). A resolution for a new National Youth Programme (the current one covers the period 2013-2022) is expected to be prepared in the near future.

From the analysis above, it is evident that **data collection and monitoring** of YG schemes should be established and thus managed on a regular basis to obtain continuous feedback on their adequacy and effectiveness.

Chart 17. Reliable data collection on the implementation of RYG

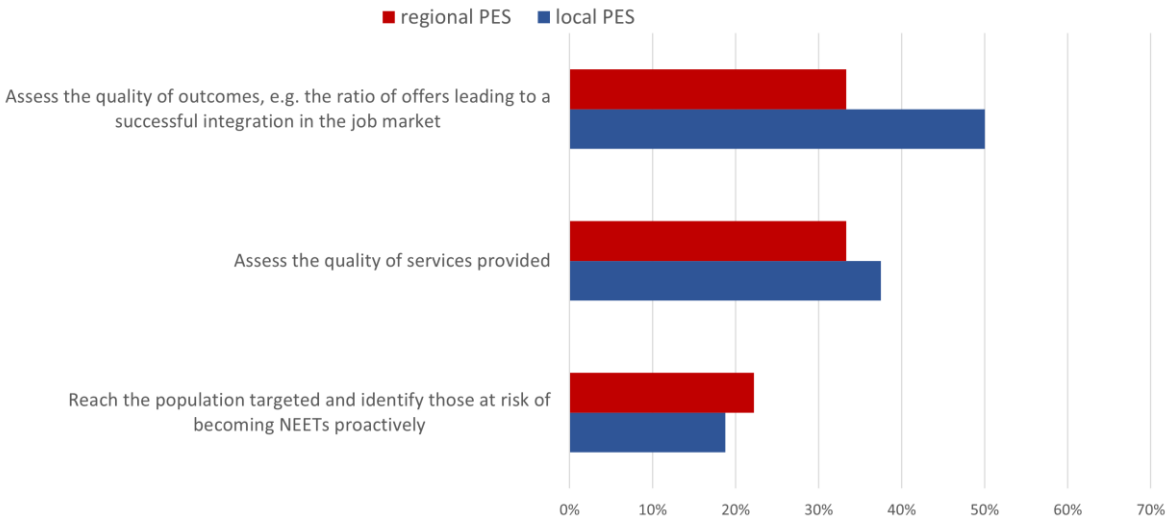


Source: The study's consultation.

According to the consultation launched in the framework of this study, local and regional PESs implementing YG schemes across the EU were asked to confirm whether or not they collect reliable data. Data gathered indicate that the majority of PESs collect reliable data on the implementation of the Reinforced Youth Guarantee (62% of local PESs and 44% of regional PESs) (Chart 17 above). It is worth highlighting that amongst Bulgarian local PESs 87% of the respondents collect these data.

Respondents indicating that they collect reliable data were then asked to provide information about the type of means and indicators at their disposal. As shown in Chart 18 below, a modest share of respondents declared having the means and indicators to assess the quality of outcomes (33% and 50% of regional and local PESs consulted, respectively) and to having set indicators for the quality of services (33% and 38% of regional and local PESs consulted, respectively). Finally, only 22% and 19% of regional and local PESs have, respectively, the means to reach the targeted population and to proactively identify those at risk of becoming NEETs. Notably, Bulgarian local PESs joining the consultation have reported having more means and indicators in place to assess the quality of outcomes and services as well as to reach the targeted population (65%, 73% and 63%, respectively).

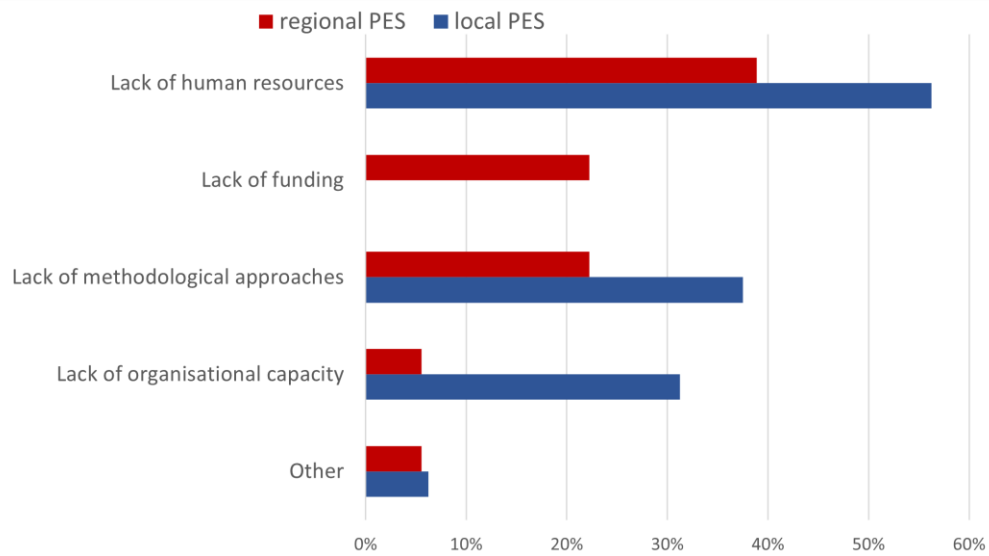
Chart 18. Use of means and indicators



Source: The study’s consultation.

Considering the possible improvements to be made to obtain a more effective data collection, local and regional PESs were finally asked to identify the major challenges faced in collecting reliable data. As shown in Chart 19 below, the main challenges faced are related to the lack of human resources (39% and 56% according to regional and local PESs, respectively) and of methodological approaches (22% and 38% according to regional and local PESs, respectively). Bulgarian local PESs also importantly point to the lack of funding (37%).

Chart 19. Data collection main challenges



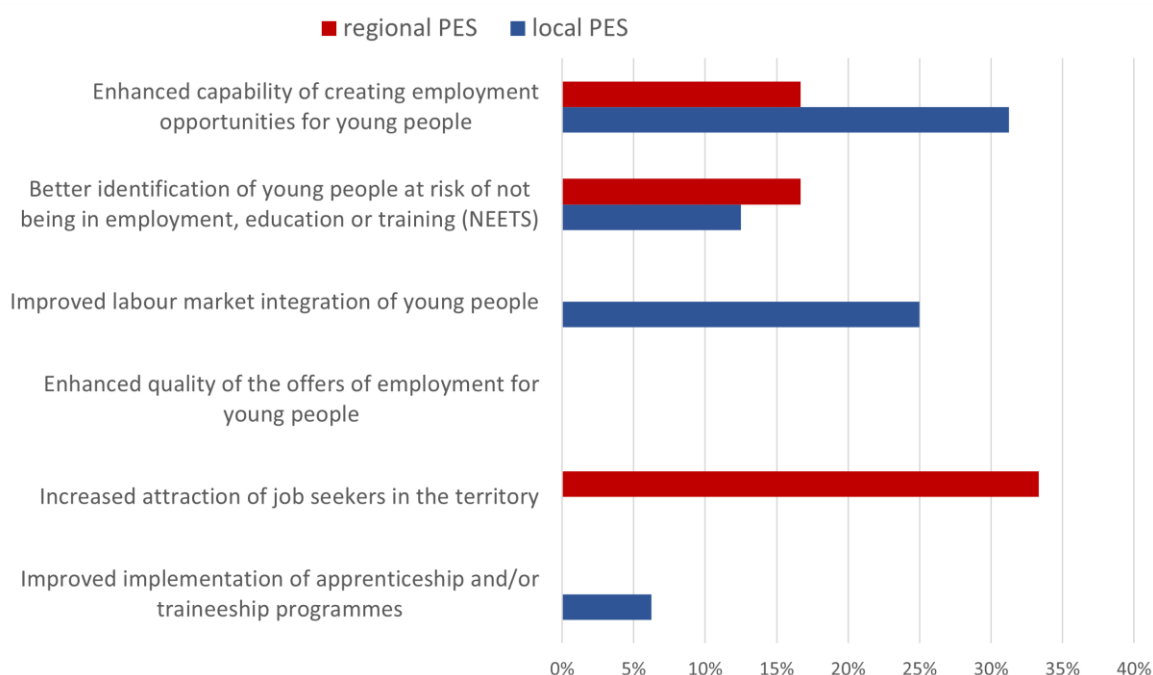
Source: The study's consultation.

2.11 Final remarks

Finally, local and regional PESs joining the consultation were asked an overall feedback on the RYG scheme. The aim was to get pivotal information to be taken into account at the time of proposing concrete recommendations regarding the scheme's implementation at local level.

31% and 17% of local and regional PESs respectively consider the RYG scheme as an effective tool for enhancing the capability of creating employment opportunities for young people (Chart 20 below) and 13% and 17% respectively consider it as an effective way to identify NEETs. After that, replies by local and regional PESs differ. According to 33% of regional PESs, the scheme increases the attraction of job seekers in the territory. Instead, 25% of the local respondents use it to improve the integration of young people into the labour market. Bulgarian local PESs mostly appreciate the scheme for the same reasons (i.e., enhanced capability of creating employment opportunities, better identification of NEETs and increased attraction of jobseekers in the territory) but, differently from the rest of the respondents at local level, they do not deem the scheme relevant for the integration of young people into the labour market.

Chart 20. Main benefits of RYG schemes

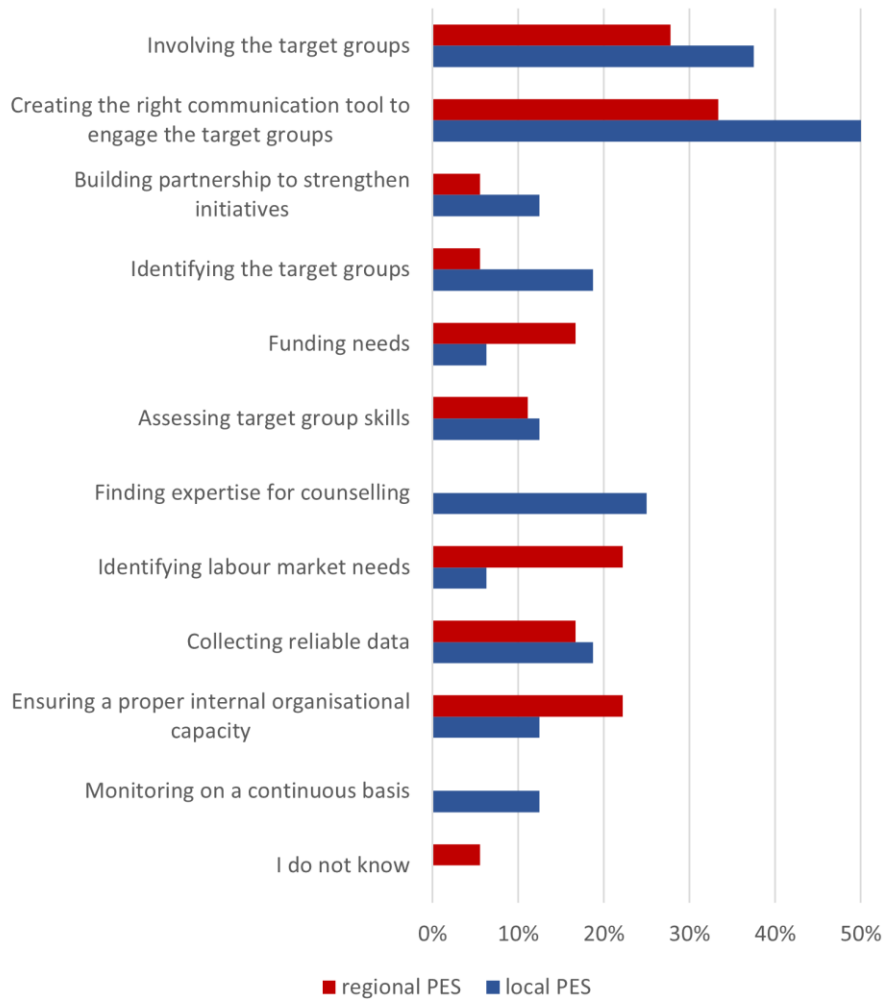


Source: The study's consultation.

Given the wide heterogeneity of answers, local and regional PESs were then asked to select the major challenges faced in implementing the RYG scheme and its shortcomings, if any.

Findings about the main challenges are shown in Chart 21 below and can be summed up as follows: 28% and 38% of the consulted regional and local PESs are respectively concerned about the involvement of target groups. 33% and 50% respectively refer to the creation of the right communication tool to engage the targeted groups. A different consideration is made by local and regional PESs on finding expertise for counselling (considered by only 25% of local PESs), identifying labour market needs (mostly reported by regional PESs) and ensuring a proper internal organisational capacity (reported by 13% and 22% of local and regional PESs, respectively). Bulgarian local PESs also consider involvement and communication as important challenges, but add to the list the building of partnerships, the identification of target groups and funding needs.

Chart 21. Main challenges of RYG schemes



Source: The study’s consultation.

Concerning any possible shortcomings attributed to the RYG scheme, qualitative feedback mainly confirmed the insufficient funding allocated - which also leads to insufficient human resources - as well as the need to invest more in the outreach strategy, in order to properly engage the most vulnerable NEETs.

Part 3: Presentation of a selected number of implementation areas through case studies to showcase the diversity of approaches

In this part of the study, specific implementation areas in each of the four phases envisaged by the RYG are looked at in more detail through the development of ten case studies. The areas are the following:

1. Mapping: ways to identify NEETs
2. Outreach: type of approach for NEETs' engagement (with a focus on innovative actions)
3. Preparation: type of individualised actions (with a focus on locally-relevant skills)
4. Offer: type of partnership (with a focus on other than public-private)

In addition, each case emphasises aspects, if any, related to:

5. Cooperation with LRAs and
6. Quality of offers.

CASE 3.1. HOOG SISSE (Tallinn, Estonia)

Implementation Areas	1. Mapping: ways to identify NEETs; 2. Outreach: type of approach for NEETs' engagement; 3. Preparation: type of individualised actions; 4. Offer: type of partnership; 5. Cooperation with LRAs.
Target groups	NEETs aged 15-26 years.
LRAs	Tallinn Municipality (Tallinn Education and Youth Board).
PESs	-
Funding	'Involving young people at risk of exclusion and improving the employability of young people' programme approved by the Estonian Minister of Education and Research, with co-financing of the ESF.
Timing	March 2019 – 31 August 2022.

Background

In [Estonia](#), the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Research are responsible for the implementation of the YG scheme, which is further supported by national strategies (e.g., the [Youth Work Act](#)) and initiatives funded by the State and the EU (e.g., the [STEP](#) programme, helping youngsters who have committed crimes to get a job with the financial contribution of the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund, the Active Citizens' Fund (2021-2022) and the European Solidarity Corps Programme (2020-2022)). The Estonian YG scheme includes preventive and supportive measures mostly addressing NEETs, which are adopted by local governments

as key players in organising youth work. One of the local initiatives included in the Estonian National Action Plan for the YG scheme is *Hoog Sisse*. Following the adoption of the 2020 Council Recommendation, *Hoog Sisse's* target group of NEETs aged 15-26 has been widened to also include NEETs aged 27-29.

Description of the initiative

Hoog Sisse, launched by the Municipality of Tallinn, is one of the most successful projects implemented at local level in Estonia. Its main objective is to provide support to 2,893 NEETs in order to motivate them to continue their studies or enter the job market.

Mapping: Based on a bottom-up approach, the mapping phase is carried out with the support of the Youth Logbook (Association of Estonian Open Youth Centres, 2018), which was developed in 2013 in collaboration with the Tartu City Government under the leadership of the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research. Almost 200 youth centres across the country are currently using such a tool on a daily basis to collect data about NEETs living in the country in order to keep in touch with them.

Outreach: As of 31 December 2020 (Eesti ANK, 2021), 510 NEETs were reached in Tallinn thanks to the Youth Logbook. To further increase the capability of the municipality in contacting NEETs, a wide range of additional services have been carried out, from mobile youth work (i.e., an innovative outreach strategy involving teams of qualified professionals identifying and monitoring urban spaces where young people are likely to go) to joint networking activities with youth centres, schools and other social services (e.g., camps), all of which shifted online from 2020 onwards due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since March 2019, the Municipality of Tallinn also joined the social services register STAR developed by the Ministry of Social Affairs in order to be able to identify and contact more young people needing support.

Preparation: Six youth work specialists working at the Tallinn Education and Youth Board and committed to the *Hoog Sisse* initiative provide young people with active individual support for up to six months to help them find the most suitable job or educational option to continue their studies or to enter the job market.

Offer: The *Hoog Sisse* initiative is put forward by the Tallin Municipality through its Tallinn Education and Youth Board with the cooperation of schools and educational institutions located in the city. Since its start, 29% of young people who were at risk of becoming NEETs were prevented from dropping out of school thanks to the support of the initiative. 18% of young people who were at risk of dropping out of school were also discouraged from doing so by the

use of additional national and EU funds (e.g., Estonian Unemployed Insurance Fund) (Eesti ANK, 2021).

Cooperation with LRAs: the Municipality of Tallinn is the coordinator of this multi-partner initiative involving the participation of local stakeholders working for young people (e.g., schools, youth centres, etc.).

Evidence of adaptation of the initiative to the RYG

- Adaptation of the initiative to the RYG scheme is confirmed by the change of the target group.
- The initiative covers all the four phases of the RYG as described in the 2020 Council Recommendation, with a special focus on the mapping and outreach phases, where the Municipality plays a pivotal role in collecting data on a daily basis about NEETs living in the city by using national (e.g., the Youth Logbook) and ad-hoc tools (e.g., mobile youth work, joint networking activities with schools and other educational institutions).
- Cooperation of the Municipality with educational institutions plays an important role in enhancing the effectiveness of the early warning mechanism created to prevent young people from becoming NEETs.
- Cross-relation with the 2020 Council Recommendation is also confirmed by the post-placement support the Municipality ensures after six months from the completion of the educational or working experience. This support is aimed at evaluating the quality of offers and preventing the applicant from re-entering their NEETs status in case of need or lack of motivation.

Sources: EC YouthWiki [webpage](#); Youth Work Act [webpage](#); STEP [website](#); Hoog Sisse [webpage](#); Association of Estonian Open Youth Centres (2018); Eesti ANK (2021).

CASE 3.2. Youth Mediators (several municipalities, Bulgaria)

Implementation Areas	1. Mapping: ways to identify NEETs; 2. Outreach: type of approach for NEETs' engagement; 3. Preparation: type of individualised actions; 4. Offer: type of partnership; 5. Cooperation with LRAs.
Target groups	Young people aged up to 29 years.
LRAs	Several municipalities (e.g., Plovdiv, Pernik, Dobrich, Montana).
PESs	Bulgarian Local PESs.
Funding	National programme 'Activation of Inactive Persons' budgeted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.
Timing	January 2015 - ongoing.

Background

Bulgaria joined the implementation of the YG scheme in January 2014 by adopting a [National Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan 2014-2020](#). Its monitoring is managed by the Coordination Council (under the aegis of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy), with the involvement of Ministries in charge of Regional Development, Education and Science, Youth and Sport, Economy and Energy as well as national representative organisations of employers, employees and young people and the National Association of Municipalities. The implementation of the Plan is coordinated at regional and local level through a partnership-based approach. This partnership includes local and regional institutions, social partners and youth organisations who combine efforts in a set of initiatives which are focused on early intervention and activation as well as on supportive measures facilitating NEETs aged up to 29 years to enter the labour market. One of these initiatives is ‘Youth Mediators’, a multi-stakeholder project launched in January 2015 by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy with the cooperation of Bulgarian PESs, local municipalities, regional inspectorates of the Ministry of Education and Science, local schools and universities, information and counselling centres.

Description of the initiatives

The ‘Youth Mediators’ project (EC, 2017) is part of the Bulgarian National Programme ‘Activation of Inactive Persons’ funded by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. It primarily aims at identifying young NEETs aged up to 29 years who are not registered with the Bulgarian PESs. This is done by training and employing young people as youth mediators in order to reach and inform NEETs about careers’ services and opportunities for education, training and employment. This measure is mainly implemented in municipalities with the highest rate of inactive youth (e.g., Plovdiv, Pernik, Dobrich, Montana). To join the initiative as cultural mediators, only unemployed young people (registered with the PES) who have completed university education are eligible to be recruited and hired in the municipalities’ administration, thus receiving a monthly remuneration and social and health insurance coverage. At first, they receive training on how to mediate with other NEETs. Training costs are fully borne by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, including accommodation and transport. Then, they are put in touch with a representative of the local PESs who works as labour mediator and a representative of the local Education Inspectorate in order to assist them in entering into contact with formal institutions. Upon finalisation of the setting – which generally takes five months – youth mediators are responsible for implementing mapping, outreach, preparation and offer activities, as detailed below. Youth mediators are offered a fixed-term contract which is regularly renewed in order to ensure their

participation in the daily work carried out by local institutions. This mechanism allows, on one hand, to increase the employment rate of unemployed young people with tertiary education (i.e., the youth mediators) and, on the other, to offer NEETs with education, training and work opportunities that suit their needs. By way of example, the [Youth Centre of Dobrich](#) in the North-East of Bulgaria aims to activate NEETs in an area with a strong Roma presence and integrate them into the community through their inclusion in the youth centre's activities.

Mapping: identification of NEETs is generally done through informal meetings and partnerships with local NGOs and schools. Participation in the local social life and closeness with young people is the added value of the effectiveness of youth mediators in reaching their peers. Given the strong presence of the Roma community in Bulgaria, youth mediators are also often intercultural mediators.

Outreach: after identification of NEETs, youth mediators are in charge of connecting them with YG institutions. They are thus considered as a 'bridge' between unregistered NEETs and formal institutions. When youth mediators intercept NEETs, they try to redirect them to the services and institutions that could help them most.

Preparation: youth mediators provide NEETs with information, counselling, and individual or group support to help them find the most adequate education, training, or employment option that suits them as well as choosing the best approach to find it. Amongst the counselling and guidance services they deliver are how to build a CV, a cover letter, apply to a job, train or work with NGOs, volunteering, etc. Their work is complementary to the services provided by local PESs and other institutions. In some cities, youth mediators also provide psychological support and motivation throughout the preparation process (e.g., the [Plovdiv Youth Centre](#) provides a good example of the many services offered by youth mediators in terms of trainings, non-formal education activities and neighborhood events). Youth mediators also work with secondary schools to prevent school dropout and NEET status.

Offer: The project is based on cooperation of municipalities with the business and social sectors (e.g., schools and universities, information and counselling centres) as well as with citizens (i.e., youth mediators they employ) in order to enhance its capability to provide NEETs with education, training and work opportunities that suit their needs.

Cooperation with LRAs: Municipalities play a central role in this multi-stakeholder partnership by enabling (i.e., employing) youth mediators in identifying and reaching out to NEETs, with special reference to those

belonging to racial and ethnic minorities, e.g., Roma. Cooperation with Regional inspectorates of the Ministry of Education and Science, local schools and universities, and information and counselling centres further enhances the effectiveness of the initiative at local level.

Evidence of adaptation of the initiative to the RYG

- This initiative covers all the four phases of the RYG as described in the 2020 Council Recommendation. It also targets NEETs aged up to 29 years, but this was the case even before the adoption of the 2020 Council Recommendation.
- It represents an innovative *peer-to-peer* model, considering youth mediation as an effective and inclusive tool to reach out to and activate young NEETs. At the same time, it provides a career option for unemployed young people with tertiary education. This job is aimed at ensuring their participation in the daily work carried out by local institutions in the medium and long term, thus improving the employment conditions of youngsters across the country.
- This initiative offers an individualised type of outreach. Youth mediators get in touch with NEETs and – after being properly trained – they are able to offer tailored support according to NEETs’ individual needs and through different intervention methods.

Sources: Bulgarian Youth Guarantee [webpage](#); [European Commission \(2017\)](#); Plovdiv Youth Centre [website](#); Youth Centre of Dobrich [website](#).

CASE 3.3. Know and Do! project (Tukums, Latvia)

Implementation Areas	2. Outreach: type of approach for NEETs' engagement; 3. Preparation: type of individualised actions; 4. Offer: type of partnership; 5. Cooperation with LRAs; 6. Quality of offers.
Target groups	NEETs aged 15-29 years.
LRAs	Municipality of Tukums.
PESs	Tukums County Social Service.
Funding	Objective 8.3.3 of the Operational Programme ‘Growth and Employment’ ‘To develop the skills of NEET youth and promote their involvement in education, SEA measures in the Youth Guarantee and in the activities of non-governmental organisations or youth centres’. Total budget: €9.96 million (€8.46 million from the ESF and €1.5 million from the State budget).
Timing	January 2017 - December 2023.

Background

According to the OECD (2021), Latvia is ‘*updating its Youth Guarantee-related measures and support towards youth according to the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan, labour market demand and the amendments made in the reinforced Youth Guarantee*’. ‘PROTI un DARI’ (i.e., Know and Do) is one of the most well-known projects of Latvia. Although it is put forward nationally (the beneficiary is the Agency for International Programmes for Youth - AIPY), the project is implemented in collaboration with local authorities and their partners (e.g., NGOs, youth centres, social entities, entrepreneurs). Started in 2014 and originally planned to end in 2020, the project has been extended throughout 2023, also due to the allocation of additional €1.5 million from REACT-EU. It includes outreach, preparation, offer and cooperation components. Its aim is to develop the skills of NEETs and involve them in any of the YG initiatives promoted by central authorities, NGOs and youth centres.

Description of the initiative

Tukums municipality has been involved in the implementation of ‘PROTI and DARI’ since January 2017. After July 2021, the municipality took over the ‘youth quota’ (i.e., the number of target youth to be supported by the project) committed to by the Kandava and Jaunpils county councils, thus quantitatively widening its scope. Over the period 2017 - 2021, the municipality involved 127 young people. Against a new target of 150 young people, at the end of 2021, Tukums was already supporting 127 NEETs.

Outreach: the project is advertised on the municipality’s website.

Preparation: it is characterised by an individualised approach for NEETs’ assistance aimed at lifelong learning competences, social inclusion, development of personality and learning skills. Youth profiling is a key step of the whole assistance process and is done by specialists. It allows for the identification of the skills and competences (e.g., personal, social, professional) required to (re-)enter education, or the labour market. It is followed by the preparation of an individual support programme that fits the beneficiary’s needs and which is then used to identify the specific measures and YG activities implemented by the State Education Development Agency, the State Employment Agency (EC YouthWiki [website](#)) as well as NGOs and youth centres. An individual programme lasts up to 9 months.

Offer: Municipalities are asked to establish partnerships with local NGOs and youth organisations (Latvian Ministry of Welfare, 2021). As part of the programme, the offer includes the following: mentoring and counselling; informal education and learning (e.g., accounting, driving courses);

participation in seminars, cultural activities, sports; volunteering activities; involvement in projects and events of NGOs and youth centres; professional qualification; involvement in local communities' activities; and assistance in finding a job or (re-)entering education.

Cooperation with LRAs: the project is implemented at municipal level, with municipal staff working with young people on a daily basis.

Quality of offers: the national Agency for International Programmes for Youth ensures the quality of services provided to NEETs aged 15-29 by supporting implementing municipalities with methodological advice and organisation of training addressed to the project implementation staff. The Agency also implements **evaluation meetings for the exchange of experiences and good practices amongst municipalities** as well as supervisory visits (EC YouthWiki [website](#)).

Evidence of adaptation of the initiative to the RYG

- The project continued the training of mentors and programme managers in municipalities. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, 21 new staff were trained in remote modality. Since 2016, the project trained 634 mentors and 266 programme managers (government's [news](#) dated 15/07/21).
- New communication strategies are tested for outreach, for example in collaboration with the police to help *'young people with behavioural problems to integrate into education system or employment'* (Latvian Ministry of Welfare, 2021).
- This case study is a good example of a detailed individualised approach which is offered by municipalities according to a common methodology prepared by the Agency for International Programmes for Youth.

Sources: OECD (2021); EC YouthWiki [website](#); Government's [webpage](#); Tukum's County Social Service [webpage](#); Latvian Ministry of Welfare (2021).

CASE 3.4. NEET call for projects (Brussels, Belgium)

Implementation Areas	2. Outreach: type of approach for NEETs' engagement; 3. Preparation: type of individualised actions; 4. Offer: type of partnership; 5. Cooperation with LRAs; 6. Quality of offers.
Target groups	NEETs aged 18-30 years.
LRAs	Brussels-Capital Region.
PESs	Actiris, i.e., Brussels-Capital Regional Public Employment Service.
Funding	Regional and YEI budget, with co-financing of the ESF. Total budget (2019-2023): €3,218,390. Additional budget in 2020: €1,480,000.
Timing	Launched on 01.01.2019, it will be open until 31.12.2023.

Background

The implementation of the Belgian YG scheme is managed at territorial level by four regional employment services: VDAB (i.e., the Flemish Service for Employment and Vocational Training Service), Le Forem (i.e., the Walloon Public Employment and Vocational Training Service), ADG (i.e., the Employment Office of the German-speaking Community of Belgium), and Actiris (i.e., the Brussels-Capital Regional Public Employment Service). Each regional service works autonomously, but in a coordinated way with the others through [Synerjob](#) (i.e., a non-profit association created by the Belgian Public Employment and Training Services). Since 2007, Synerjob aims to improve the cooperation and synergies amongst the regional PESs in order to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and information, the coordination of actions and the adoption of common positions leading to a coherent national policy at territorial level (European Network of Public Employment Services, 2021). This case study presents one of the initiatives carried out by Actiris in implementing the YG scheme (Actiris, 2017), i.e., the NEET call for projects.

Description of the initiative

The [NEET call for projects](#) is a 5-year project launched by Actiris on 1 January 2019 following a pilot carried out from 2015 to 2018 with the Flemish ESF agency and the Brussels Dutch-speaking public training agency (VDAB Brussel). Following the adoption of the 2020 Council Recommendation, the project has been reinforced in order to invest more in the outreach and follow-up activities. Its final aim is to reach out to a wider number of NEETs and to build a wider partnership comprised of local stakeholders working in different settings with young people (e.g., youth centres, street educators) (EC, 2021a). An open call for projects calls upon territorial partners willing to participate in any action which reaches out and offers services to NEETs.

Outreach: Eleven partners involving field and grassroots organisations (e.g., youth centres, street educators) are currently involved in the project in active identification and search for young people who are disengaged from institutions, hard to mobilise, unemployed or inactive, and facing multiple barriers (e.g., having problems at home, drug addiction, psychological problems). The aim is to get back in touch with them and provide them with the services offered by Actiris. Since 2020, partners joining the call for projects quickly adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic by organising outreach activities through the use of digital channels (e.g., VoIP meetings, WhatsApp).

Preparation: a NEET-centred approach is used to meet NEETs' needs. Each partner has space and freedom of methodology to provide each NEET with a

personalised support based on the NEET's needs and desires. Partners are therefore free to develop solutions based on their expertise (e.g., remobilisation through performing sports activities, art projects, exploring nature) in order to renew NEETs' contact and confidence in themselves and in the institutions, with the final aim of starting a new working, educational or training experience. Offer: A multi-stakeholder approach entailing different territorial partners under the coordination of a Youth Guarantee Regional Steering Committee is at the core of the project.

Cooperation with LRAs: The Brussels-Capital Region funds this initiative and mentions the YG in its [Go4Brussels 2030 Strategy](#) whose aim is to enable an ecological and social transition of the Brussels region. Within this strategy, the Objective 2.1 aims to pursue the Youth Guarantee by involving several actors (e.g., the Brussels Formation Service, the European Social Fund Agency). Further to this, the document also makes reference to the Reinforced Youth Guarantee and to some guidelines to consider for the years to come.

Quality of offers: Actiris receives regular feedback from its partners on the projects it carries out. It conducts a monthly evaluation based on a set of indicators not only assessing the extent of positive outcomes achieved (e.g., number of NEETs (re-)entering education, employment, training and internships), but also the coherence between the output and performance objectives achieved, on one hand, and the methodology and target NEETs reached, on the other. With respect to the [NEET call for projects](#), a final evaluation will be made before the end of the project to understand whether to renew or not depending on the results achieved.

Evidence of adaptation of the initiative to the RYG

- The 2020 Council Recommendation did not affect a radical change in Actiris' work, but it unlocked new opportunities of funding – as confirmed by the fact that in 2020 a new budget allocation was made available to this project to invest more in the outreach and follow-up activities by using the YEI budget and the ESF co-financing.
- This project is an example of *'Find (outreach activities) – Mind (remobilisation, support and personalised guidance) – Bind (aftercare and follow up support) method with a selection of employment operators'* contributing to the implementation of the Belgian YG scheme at regional level (EC, 2021a).
- The 'Go4Brussels 2030 Strategy' explicitly mentions the 2020 Council Recommendation and confirms the commitment of the region in making use of the YG scheme to reduce the number of NEETs living in the territory.

Sources: Synerjob [website](#); Actiris (2017); European Network of Public Employment Services (2021); EC, 2021a; Actiris [webpage](#); Go4Brussels [website](#); answers provided in the online consultation carried out for this study.

CASE 3.5. PROJOVEM (Madeira, Portugal)

Implementation Areas	2. Outreach: type of approach for NEETs' engagement; 4. Offer: type of partnership; 5. Cooperation with LRAs.
Target groups	NEETs aged 18-29 years.
LRAs	Autonomous Region of Madeira.
PESs	Employment Institute of Madeira.
Funding	Employment Institute of Madeira (IEM); co-financing of Madeira 14-20, Autonomous Region of Madeira, Portugal 2020, ESF.
Timing	Launched on 10.09.2020, it is open until 31.03.2022.

Background

Following the 2020 Council Recommendation, on 30 December 2021 the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of Ministers approved the amendment to the National Plan for the Implementation of a Youth Guarantee (PNI-GJ) (Presidência do Conselho De Ministros, 2021). Such a modification takes into account the four phases entailed in the RYG scheme and cross-cutting enablers contributing to tackle youth unemployment (e.g., mobilisation of local partnerships, data collection, effective and combined use of funds). It mandates that to be effective, partnerships are to be deployed at a decentralised level, with the involvement of local and regional stakeholders (e.g., educational and training institutions, municipalities, civil partners, social workers, businesses) contributing to map NEETs and provide them with concrete educational, working, apprenticeship or traineeship opportunities. Against this backdrop, Portugal has put in place a wide range of initiatives within its YG scheme coordinated and managed at a decentralised level, amongst which is PROJOVEM, a programme supporting youth employment in the Autonomous Region of Madeira (EC, 2020a).

Description of the initiative

[PROJOVEM](#) is an initiative implemented in 2020 by the Autonomous Region of Madeira helping NEETs aged 18-29 years to gain hands-on experience in a real-life work environment that helps them complement their training and promotes their entry into the labour market. It therefore provides NEETs with two different opportunities, i.e., 'Guarantee Experience' and 'Guarantee Internship'. The former addresses NEETs registered to the Employment Institute of Madeira having a level 2 or 3 of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) who are looking for their first or new job. They are offered a nine-month job experience

with a food and transport allowance and a work accident insurance. The latter addresses NEETs meeting the same requirements of the previous measure, except for their educational level – which is required to be of EQF levels 4, 5, 6, 7 or 8. In such a case, beneficiaries are offered a twelve-month internship experience and are paid with a scholarship that is subject to Social Security contributions and IRS taxation. In order to tackle youth unemployment, the programme also provides businesses with a financial support granted by the Employment Institute of Madeira in case of permanent and fixed-term contracts (of not less than 12 months) signed with NEETs joining the scheme.

Outreach: informative sessions providing NEETs with information about the range of opportunities ascribed to the programme are held in the region with the cooperation of local PESs, universities, etc. Regular emails are also sent to NEETs registered on the web portal of the Employment Institute of Madeira who are therefore kept updated about the opportunities they can apply for.

Offer: the Employment Institute of Madeira implements the programme in cooperation with attendance partners (e.g., local employment and training services; Centres for Qualification and Vocational Education) and registration partners (NGOs, municipalities, youth associations, etc.) to provide NEETs with a wide range of opportunities to apply for.

Cooperation with LRAs: this programme is fully managed by the Employment Institute of Madeira as regional PES through a multi-partner approach.

Evidence of adaptation of the initiative to the RYG

- This programme specifically addresses the outreach and offer phases as described in the 2020 Council Recommendation.
- Mobilisation of local partnerships enables a better outreach of NEETs and a wider range of opportunities to help young people leave their NEET status.

Sources: Presidência do Conselho De Ministros (2021); EC (2020); PROJOVEM [website](#).

CASE 3.6. RE-WORK (Umbria, Italy)

Implementation Areas	3. Preparation: type of individualised actions; 4. Offer: type of partnership; 5. Cooperation with LRAs.
Target groups	Unemployed people living in the region, amongst which is specified the target group of NEETs aged 18-29 years.
LRAs	Umbria Region.
PESs	Regional Agency for Employment Active Policies, five Centres for Employment.
Funding	Regional Operational Programme – ESF 2014-2020. Total budget: €10 million (€9 million to beneficiaries, €1 million to enterprises).
Timing	Launched on 15.09.2021, it is open up to 31.12.2022.

Background

In Italy, the YG is implemented through the national operational programme (Pon) ‘Iniziativa Occupazione Giovani’ (IOG) which was not updated further to the 2020 Council Recommendation. The Pon-IOG is centrally managed, but with the exception of some national projects, its implementation is delegated to regional authorities. Each Italian Region plans, delivers and coordinates projects according to a regional plan and through regional offices or entities/agencies dedicated to employment. These, in turn, rely on a number of local employment centres and private service providers which are often required to work in partnership. Regions updated their plans in 2021 to accommodate the funding extension of the YG scheme into 2022, the use of resources allocated to fight the consequences of COVID-19, and adjust (i.e., simplify and innovate) the processes so as to improve projects’ accessibility by NEETs during the lock-down. In 2020, Italian Regions published 53 initiatives related to the implementation of the Pon-IOG, for a total of €640 million (ANPAL, 2021). Still, there are other initiatives targeting NEETs that are funded through different sources. The Umbria’s RE-WORK is one of these initiatives.

Description of the initiative

RE-WORK is aimed at the employment of NEETs through the provision of individualised services and measures. The beneficiary is given a financial bonus, the so called ‘Umbrian bonus for work’, whose size ranges from €4,400 to €9,400 depending on the estimated (profiling) low/high level of difficulty for the beneficiary to re-enter the labour market. The beneficiary ‘spends’ the bonus to access services and measures. Financial incentives are also provided to the organisations who ultimately employ the NEET as a result of the support received under RE-WORK.

Preparation: support is individualised through the beneficiary’s profiling and screening of needs and skills. Potential gaps to be filled are also identified. This first assessment is translated into work orientation which takes into account local labour market demand and/or internship/employment opportunities put forward by enterprises.

Offer: NEETs may benefit from both individualised training and internships. These measures are offered through the five centres for employment of the Region and/or partnerships of entities accredited by the Region dealing with work and training. These entities are required to be organised into ‘temporary business/scope associations’.

Cooperation with LRAs: this initiative is fully managed by the Region and its implementation is directly participated in by its five Centres for Employment located in Perugia, Foligno, Città di Castello, Terni and Orvieto. This network is further widened by the presence of 14 territorial Employment Points representing the PESs.

Evidence of adaptation of the initiative to the RYG

- There is no direct link of this initiative with the YG scheme. Its innovative character lies in the fact that NEETs are supported as a well-defined target group within a wider ESF-funded intervention. In addition, this initiative is systematically structured around the preparation and offer phases envisaged by the 2020 Council Recommendation.
- The work of the PESs is financially supported through the distribution of a bonus to beneficiaries which is to be spent for the services rendered by the PESs.
- The work force capability of PESs is strengthened by involving a number of entities accredited by the Region in the provision of services and measures.

Sources: [RE-WORK](#) webpage; RE-WORK [Public Call](#); ANPAL (2021).

CASE 3.7. One-Stop Guidance Centre (Helsinki, Finland)

Implementation Areas	3. Preparation: type of individualised actions; 4. Offer: type of partnership; 5. Cooperation with LRAs.
Target groups	Youth aged 15-29 years.
LRAs	Municipality of Helsinki.
PESs	Helsinki Employment Services.
Funding	Municipal, national and ESF funding.
Timing	Launched in 2015 - ongoing.

Background

Finland has in place a National Youth Work and Policy Programme covering the period 2019-2023. ‘...local government pilots on youth employment were already launched in March 2021 as part of implementing the reinforced Youth Guarantee’ (OECD, 2021). Since 2014, Finnish one-stop guidance centres were developed and rolled out across the country as an instrument to implement the YG scheme. Roll out was supported by the ESF, but some centres were also established independently by local authorities. One-stop guidance centres provide young people aged under 30 years with a single point of access to information, advice and guidance. They operate on the basis of partnerships with a wide range of actors, including youngsters benefitting of the services, thus ‘creating new forms of public-private-people partnership’, or 4P (Kettunen and Felt, 2020).

Description of the initiative

The one-stop guidance centre in Helsinki, or Juhjaamo Helsinki, opened in 2015 with the support of the ESF which lasted up to 2018. Since then, the centre has been part of the city of **Helsinki’s employment** services for young people. The Helsinki City Strategy 2017–2021 outlines the objective to support every young person and prevent social exclusion, pointing to the Juhjaamo model as a way to tackle this objective. Juhjaamo Helsinki provides guidance services, but it also arranges recruiting events with businesses, support groups and leisure activities. It is based on a multi-sectoral cooperation amongst service providers from the public, private and third sector. By bringing these services together under one roof, it aims at increasing accessibility, flexibility and opportunities for solutions, to the benefit of the young beneficiaries.

Preparation: solutions to the problems, challenges, issues raised by the young person walking into the centre are worked out together by the beneficiary and the service providers. Support is individualised. Experts available at the centre come from a range of organisations and cover various areas from housing to business/career, employment, social and healthcare (including mental health), refugee matters, finances and debt, social insurance and special needs.

Offer: Juhjaamo Helsinki works in cooperation with the Employment and Economic Development Offices (state offices), the Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela), the City of Helsinki’s social work and healthcare services, student counselling and different educational institutes.

Cooperation with LRAs: the centre is coordinated by the municipality of Helsinki. It has agreements in place with the partner organisations specified

above which send their staff to the centre on a temporary basis.. Decisions related to the centre are taken jointly by the city and the partners in a committee that meets quarterly.

Evidence of adaptation of the initiative to the RYG

- *The OECD (2021) reports that in Finland €45 million were allocated in 2020 to strengthen employment services for young people further to the COVID-19 crisis. As part of this support, in 2021, pilots involving 118 municipalities were initiated ‘to strengthen the role of local governments in organising employment services and improve co-ordination of services with the national government’.*
- *‘One-stop youth centres known as Ohjaamo centres are also being expanded to increase multidisciplinary support available to young people under the age of 30, and to lower barriers to enter the labour market for young people. Employment services also received additional funding to maintain free training available to new entrepreneurs’ (OECD, 2021).*

Sources: Kettunen and Felt (2020); OECD (2021); Juhjaamo Helsinki [website](#); Guiding cities’ best practice: [City of Helsinki](#); Erasmus+ [case study](#).

CASE 3.8. Active Talent Programme CLM (Castilla La-Mancha, Spain)

Implementation Areas	3. Preparation: type of individualised actions; 4. Offer: type of partnership; 5. Cooperation with LRAs.
Target groups	100 graduated NEETs registered in the Youth Guarantee System.
LRAs	Castilla La-Mancha Region.
PESs	Centre for Information and Employment Promotion of the University of Castilla-La Mancha.
Funding	European Social Fund – Youth Employment Initiative. Total allocated budget: <i>not available</i> .
Timing	Starting in January 2022.

Background

Spain is one of the EU countries having updated its YG plan further to the adoption of the 2020 Council Recommendation. The Youth Guarantee Plan Plus 2021-2027 for decent work for young people (BOE, 2021), approved in June 2021, will be primarily funded under the EFS+ (almost €3.3 billion) but also from recovery and other funds for a total allocation of almost €5 billion (Spanish Government [website](#)). The new plan is the result of a consensus of the central government with regional authorities that are, by law, responsible for employment policies; and of social dialogue with trade unions, youth entities and business organisations. The plan is still structured around the same six axes

of its predecessor - that do not reflect the four phases recommended by the 2020 Council Recommendation -, but is explicitly meant to apply the RYG by 1) increasing accessibility to the plan and tackling a wider dissemination of the plan amongst inactive, poorly qualified and more vulnerable young people; 2) improving inter-institutional coordination and exchange of information at all levels (centrally, with regard to finances and harmonisation of interventions across regions; regionally, with regard to their competence in terms of active employment policies; and locally, as the preferential level for the implementation of measures) while encouraging the involvement of social partners; and 3) ensuring the consolidation of the relationship with the private sector and with local entities as well as involving all those dealing with youth, such as public employment and education authorities, private and public companies, business and trade union organisations, third sector, cultural, academic or civil society (BOE, 2021).

Description of the initiative

The main objective of the Active Talent Programme is to adapt the skills of recent graduates who are unemployed and registered in the Youth Guarantee System to the needs of the regional business sector. The focus is on personal skills of a transversal nature such as languages, ICT and entrepreneurial spirit. The target is to support about 100 young people, organised in five multidisciplinary groups (i.e., coming from different university disciplines). Support will be provided in the University campuses of Albacete, Cuenca, Ciudad Real, Talavera de la Reina and Toledo.

Preparation: An individualised support is provided in orientation, job-searching and build-up of transversal personal skills such as autonomy, maturity and responsibility, as well as horizontal skills required in the labour market such as creativity and innovation, communication, conflict management, collaborative work and time management. This support is then associated to language training, ICT training and training in entrepreneurship in order to develop a culture of self-employment.

Offer: This is a joint initiative by the Government of Castilla-La Mancha with the General Foundation of the University of Castilla-La Mancha (UCLM) and the Centre for Information and Employment Promotion ([CIPE](#)) of the UCLM. UCLM plays the main role. The General Foundation of UCLM has amongst its objectives the transition of students and graduates into work, and CIPE is the service made available by the University to its students and graduates to help them enter the labour market.

Cooperation with LRAs: The regional government is a partner of the initiative, although its role is not clearly specified.

Evidence of adaptation of the initiative to the RYG

- Support is individualised and aimed at overcoming barriers to employment of qualified NEETs.
- The initiative enhances the digital skills of beneficiaries in line with the requirements of the regional labour market.
- The initiative is fully implemented by the university, which takes its education responsibility a step further to ensure the employment of its graduates.
- Territoriality. Castilla La-Mancha is one of the most sparsely populated regions of Spain and the initiative is explicitly meant to retain highly qualified NEETs in the region by making them match the needs of regional businesses.

Sources: Spanish Government [website](#); CIPE [website](#); Active Talent Programme [webpage](#); BOE (2021).

CASE 3.9. IBBU-Nord project (North Jutland, Denmark)

Implementation Areas	3. Preparation: type of individualised actions; 4. Offer: type of partnership; 5. Cooperation with LRAs.
Target groups	Mentally vulnerable young people.
LRAs	Municipalities of Vesthimmerland, Thisted, Jammerbugt and Morsø.
PESs	Job centres of the involved municipalities.
Funding	AP Moller Support Fund. Total budget: DKK 6 million, equivalent to some €806,000.
Timing	January 2022 – August 2025 (2 years and 8 months).

Background

The term ‘Youth Guarantee’ is not commonly used in Denmark, but the country has a range of dedicated initiatives for youth since 1996 which often imply early intervention and mandatory activation (Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment [website](#)). Danish active labour market employment policy is set and monitored at the central level, but municipalities are responsible for the policy’s implementation which is administered through local job centres. Towards this responsibility, Danish municipalities are also used to team up to implement youth re-engagement projects. For example, in North Jutland, Morsø, Thisted and Jammerbugt municipalities have a long track record of cooperation in supporting unemployed youth. Over the period 2010-2018 they worked together to identify long-term unemployment risk groups of youth aged

18-30 (Nordregio, 2019). More recently, they teamed up again (adding the municipality of Vesthimmerland to the partnership) into the IBBU project to support young people with mild mental problems to get back in education, or re-enter the labour market.

Description of the initiative

IBBU is the acronym for the Danish translation of ‘Integrated Treatment and Employment / Education efforts for young people with mild mental disorders’. In fact, the project is addressed to mentally vulnerable young people unable to find their way in the labour market or in the education system. It is led by the Social Medicine Unit at Aalborg University Hospital, i.e., an entity which is daily cooperating with North Jutland’s municipalities and their job centres to provide health professional advice in the field of employment. The other project partners are the municipalities of Vesthimmerland, Thisted, Jammerbugt and Morsø, and a consultancy firm.

Preparation: screening of young people showing symptoms of depression, anxiety or stress.

Offer: The offer combines different types of support for those young people considered eligible to participate in the project after the health screening. Education and employment support is provided together with health support that takes the form of a treatment plan. At the core of the provided support there are interdisciplinary teams of professionals (e.g., psychologists), municipal staff (e.g., youth counsellors) and care staff (e.g., social workers) and a continuous collaboration between the medical staff provided by the Social Medicine Unit, the municipalities and the job centres.

Cooperation with LRAs: The four involved municipalities decided to secure funding for the IBBU project to replicate a similar project still financed by the AP Moller Support Fund and carried out in the Central Jutland region.

Evidence of adaptation of the initiative to the RYG

- The innovative character of this initiative lies in the fact that it is addressed to a vulnerable group of young people that is not reached by means of other initiatives, and in doing so it implies the participation of a medical unit.
- If the project achieves the expected results, the four involved municipalities have already agreed to keep the collaboration ongoing.

Sources: Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment [website](#); Nordregio (2019); Municipality of Morsø’s project [webpage](#); IBBU [vacancy notice](#) dated 08/01/22.

CASE 3.10. Garantie Jeunes (Local Missions, France)

Implementation Areas	3. Preparation: type of individualised actions; 4. Offer: type of partnership; 5. Cooperation with LRAs
Target groups	NEETs aged 16-25 years.
LRAs	-
PESs	Local Missions.
Funding	National budget (French Ministry of Labour); YEI budget; co-financing of the ESF.
Timing	Launched in October 2013, it has been closed on 28 February 2022.

Background

In France, the YG scheme is implemented at local level by the Local Missions. These are local PESs specifically established to support the social and professional integration of young people. Since 1982, 436 Local Missions yearly support 1.1 million youth with nearly 13,600 professionals by providing them with work and training opportunities. This is done in partnership with Pôle Emploi (i.e., the national French PES), regional and local authorities and voluntary organisations through special committees in charge of selecting the recipients who are more likely to benefit. These missions are structured at regional level into Regional Associations of Local Missions, and at national level into the National Union of Local Missions. Local Missions are specifically responsible for implementing actions tailored to the NEETs as they are in charge of guidance, training, employment, health, housing, mobility, citizenship, sports, leisure and culture. The YG is one of the main schemes they implement at local level.

Description of the initiatives

By signing a reciprocal commitment agreement with the Local Mission located where they live, NEETs aged 16-25 years enter a process that can last from twelve to eighteen months depending on the beneficiary's case.

Preparation: Each Local Mission is provided with a one-page informative document (i.e., the so-called '*kit de déploiement de la Garantie Jeunes*') listing some guidelines to follow, but has flexibility and freedom of methodology in order to use the most innovative approaches fitting the beneficiaries' and local needs. Regardless of the approaches and methods used by any Local Mission, the preparation phase consists in two stages: after an initial support lasting six weeks and delivered during collective informative sessions and workshops aiming at presenting the scheme and explaining how to write a CV or apply for a job, an individual and personalised counselling service is offered to each

beneficiary by a group of counsellors working on the scheme full-time. Each support is therefore person-centred, thus ensuring the most effective action to meet the beneficiary's needs.

Offer: Thanks to a multi-partner local approach (Farvaque *et al.*, 2016) involving not only local businesses, but also social work organisations and associations (e.g., the French Judicial Protection of Young People (PJJ), the penitentiary service for integration and probation (SPIP)), as well as accommodation homes and social workers, beneficiaries are offered a monthly guaranteed income and a set of education, traineeship, apprenticeship or working experiences. Mobilisation of local partnerships is one of the most effective approaches *Garantie Jeunes* implements to facilitate vulnerable NEETs to gain their autonomy.

Cooperation with LRAs: Local Missions are at the core of multi-stakeholder partnerships and, as main implementers of the French YG scheme, are supported by the State, the regions and the departments.

Evidence of adaptation of the initiative to the RYG

- *Garantie Jeunes* is quite innovative as it has a dual approach consisting of providing vulnerable NEETs with a monthly guaranteed income – which is not generally offered in other YG schemes – and a guided personalised support tailored by Local Missions according to their needs.
- Mobilisation of local partnerships coordinated by Local Missions is one of the most effective approaches making the YG scheme NEET-centred.
- From 1 March 2022, *Garantie Jeunes* has been replaced by the [*Contrat d'engagement jeune \(CEJ\)*](#), which will not differ substantially from the previous scheme, but will provide NEETs aged 16-25 years (up to 29 years in case of NEETs with disabilities) with more focused measures to broaden the scope of *Garantie Jeunes* and ensure NEETs' participation in the labour market in the long term. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that NEETs currently involved in *Garantie Jeunes* will complete their experience in it without switching to the new scheme. Such a change will not affect the work of Local Missions implementing the new scheme.

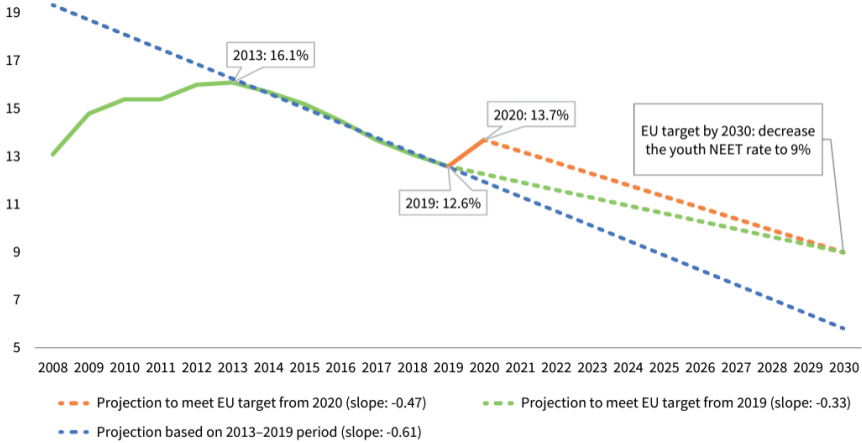
Sources: Farvaque et al. (2016); French Public Service [webpage](#).

Part 4: Recommendations to local and regional authorities, Member States and the EU regarding the implementation of Youth Guarantee schemes at local level

4.1 Foresight considerations regarding youth unemployment

At the end of 2020, with the European Commission’s 2020 Strategic Foresight Report (COM(2020) 493 final), foresight takes a key role in policymaking with the aim to strengthen EU’s social and economic, geopolitical, green and digital resilience to unexpected shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic (EC, 2020b). Short-term initiatives should contribute to target long-term objectives taking into account the actual trends. Concerning unemployment in Europe, in May 2021, the EU and its social partners committed to the Commission’s European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan. Importantly, this commitment was framed into the current context of the pandemic and of its socio-economic impact. The Action Plan sets three main targets, one of which relates to employment. The employment target says that at least 78% of people aged between 20 and 64 years should be in employment by 2030. As part of this target, the Action Plan specifies that the rate of NEETs has to be lowered to 9% ‘namely by improving their employment prospects’ (EC, 2021b). Eurofound evaluates that, starting from 2020, the share of NEETs is due to decrease by 0.47 percentage points per year in order to achieve this 2030 target. Figure 4.1 shows the impact that COVID-19 had on the projection and the results that could have been theoretically achieved by 2030 if the 2013-2019 trend was continued.

Figure 4.1 – Eurofound’s calculation of unweighted average youth NEET rate to meet the Action Plan’s target for NEETs.



Source: extracted from Eurofound (2021), Figure 52 at p.74.

In its Employment Outlook 2021, the OECD estimates that the euro area will take 2.75 years to get back to pre-pandemic employment rates, that this slow recovery increases the risk of long-term unemployment and that many countries are experiencing an increase of the employment gap between youth and adult⁵ (OECD, 2021). Although the COVID-19 pandemic confirmed the fact that vulnerable groups are hit particularly hard by crises, Eurofound points to the evidence that the coordinated response at EU level and the measures put in place by Member States prevented a much more severe impact (Eurofound, 2021). Still, a recent working paper of the OECD highlights how policy responses were less relevant for young workers *‘given their over-representation among non-standard workers and less-tenured workers, who tend to have lower levels of social protection. Young workers tend also to be over-represented in industries most affected by the lockdowns, such as restaurants, leisure and hospitality’* (Causa et al., 2021).

After the 2008-2009 economic downturn, a 2018 analysis (EC-DG EMPL, 2018) notes that youth unemployment followed different trends than before the crisis. For example, it remained concentrated in some Member States but reflecting a *‘diverging trend in the youth unemployment gap between Member States...’* and showed a differentiated impact on specific groups of youth as, for example, *‘highly educated young people were affected more strongly by the economic shock, and their labour market position has recovered more slowly since then’*. It is further noted in the study that there are also new developments affecting employability such as technological change (e.g., advancing technologies and automation/digitalisation); increasing prevalence of non-standard forms of work (i.e., changing nature of work); increasing unstable employment situations and precarious school-to-work transitions; and changing relevance of specific skills and uncertainty about skill requirements (i.e., widening of skills gap and mismatch). In addition, it is necessary to also consider some trends that were accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic such as rethinking of mobility (e.g., remote work positions) and globalisation (e.g., the virtuality of the workplace), and other trends that influence demographic changes, namely population ageing. For example, ESPON (2020) notes that the demographic structure is one of the factors affecting youth unemployment as *‘younger’* territories may have difficulties in creating sufficient demand for young workers in the labour market. In this case, population ageing works towards the decline of youth unemployment.

In conclusion, it is necessary to define policy actions addressing youth unemployment not only to recover from the unexpected crisis, but also to take advantage of some trends which were suddenly put under the spotlight by the COVID-19 pandemic, such as digitalisation, diversity of skills’ requirements, different forms of mobility and globalisation of postings.

⁵ With youth being considered aged between 15 and 24 years and adults between 25 and 54 years.

4.2 Recommendations to local and regional authorities, Member States, and the EU regarding the implementation of Youth Guarantee schemes at local level

The following recommendations are grounded on the assumption that the EU and Member States acknowledge and support the role of LRAs in contributing to the development of policies and interventions ascribed to the fields of employment, training, education and youth that are addressed by the 2020 Council Recommendation. Suggestions for LRAs are meant for those LRAs acting as PESs concerned with the implementation of the YG.

Recommendation 1. Member States and LRAs shall give more visibility to the RYG scheme by duly labelling programmes and initiatives ascribed to it.

Information and data gathered through desk research, as well as answers provided by local and regional PESs consulted in the framework of this study highlight that there is not always a clear evidence of the cross-relation between the YG (and RYG) scheme and the interventions carried out at local level. With this regard, the EU may support Member States and LRAs by providing some guidelines to follow to comply with a set of visibility rules referring to the RYG scheme.

Recommendation 2. Member States shall provide LRAs with specific guidelines and tools to use for data collection and monitoring of RYG schemes in order to establish and manage a continuous feedback on their adequacy and effectiveness on a regular basis.

According to the initiatives mapped through desk research and the answers provided by the local and regional PESs joining the consultation launched in the framework of this study, there is a clear fragmentation between local and national tools and systems aimed at data collection and monitoring of YG schemes. These tools are of pivotal relevance when identifying NEETs and assessing the quality of offers and services provided to beneficiaries in order to shape and eventually calibrate interventions addressing them. Against this backdrop, Member States shall provide LRAs with adequate guidelines and possibly digital means to set a national framework fed by subnational subsystems – at least at regional level - contributing to having an updated overview of the presence of NEETs in the territory, as well as of the quality of offers and services delivered to them. To do so, Member States shall also ensure adequate training to the dedicated staff in order to be upskilled in the digital domain.

Recommendation 3. LRAs shall enhance their capability to reach out to NEETs with the presence of complementary figures (e.g., young ambassadors, youth mediators and street counsellors) as examples of peer-to-peer strategies.

According to the initiatives mapped in this study (e.g., the cities of Gijón and Tallinn, the Brussels-Capital region, Bulgarian municipalities), an effective outreach strategy is the involvement of young people, youth workers and young ambassadors working as a bridge connecting with NEETs. LRAs should, in this regard, offer subsidies or hire young people to play this role as a supporting peer-to-peer strategy to be coupled with the more ordinary channels used to reach out to NEETs (i.e., social media and other digital tools). These profiles play an important role with special reference to vulnerable NEETs (e.g., young people with disabilities, belonging to ethnic minorities as Roma) that are likely to face language or cultural barriers in accessing these services.

Recommendation 4. LRAs shall set up additional tools to quantitatively and qualitatively assess the offers and the post-placement support to prevent young people from re-entering their NEET status.

According to the mapped initiatives and the answers provided by local and regional PESs joining the consultation launched in the framework of this study, there is poor evidence of the use of structural tools and methods assessing the quality of offers and providing young people with a post-placement support preventing them from re-entering their NEET status. A good example is provided by the Brussels-Capital region, which has set up additional indicators, not only assessing the extent of positive outcomes achieved (e.g., number of NEETs re-entering education, training, employment and internships), but also the coherence between the output and performance objectives achieved, on the one hand, and the target NEETs reached, on the other.

Recommendation 5. Member States shall facilitate partnerships at the local level in all the phases of the RYG scheme to leverage multidisciplinary and professional competencies.

Based on the success stories gathered in this study – through the initiatives mapped through desk research and the results of the consultation launched - multi-stakeholder partnerships shall be ensured in all four phases of the RYG scheme. Member States shall, in this regard, facilitate partnerships at local level by suggesting to those implementing YG schemes (i.e., LRAs and/or PESs) the involvement of a minimum number of stakeholders representing different categories (e.g., local businesses, schools or other educational institutions, youth centres, NGOs). Multi-partner initiatives are more likely to be effective as different stakeholders can contribute to both the co-creation process of YG schemes fitting NEETs’ needs and their implementation in terms of the financial and human efforts required.

Recommendation 6. Member States and LRAs shall dedicate more efforts in supporting vulnerable NEETs (e.g., women, young people living in rural and outermost areas, NEETs of ethnic minority or with disabilities) within RYG schemes.

According to the initiatives mapped through desk research, there is poor evidence of initiatives ascribed to YG schemes at local level which address vulnerable groups of NEETs, in particular those with disabilities and with multidimensional problems – which are specifically mentioned in the 2020 Council Recommendation. Member States and LRAs shall in this regard dedicate more efforts in tailoring specific programmes – as experienced with other funding programmes (see case 3.9 related to Denmark) to provide a diversified intervention supporting NEETs according to their nature. Considering the structurally higher rates of NEETs amongst women, it would also be appropriate to include gender quotas or gender-specific interventions, of which no evidence was found during the desk research carried out in this study.

Recommendation 7. Member States and LRAs shall dedicate more efforts in upskilling and re-skilling NEETs mainly towards digital, green, language, entrepreneurial and career management skills, using existing competence frameworks, assessment, self-assessment and validation tools.

Given the digitalisation and the new trends emerging on the labour market, Member States and LRAs shall dedicate more efforts in upskilling and re-skilling NEETs mainly towards the future needs that will be demanded by the labour market. There is poor evidence of interventions paid in this regard, which are important preparation tools to provide NEETs with before entering an offer. Use of existing competence frameworks, assessment, self-assessment and validation tools – as DigComp is in the digital domain – are suggested to be used to implement a standardised approach across the EU.

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