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## EMERGING ADVANCED SKILLS YOUTH (EASY)

# WHITEPAPER

*Stimulate employability and talent development in disadvantaged communities to train at least 4,000 young people in the 10 skills needed by 2025 to get a decent job.*

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## 1. Summary

Youth unemployment remains a significant challenge across the European Union, with complex causes and far-reaching implications. This whitepaper delves into the current state of youth unemployment in the EU, providing a comprehensive analysis of the underlying causes, regional disparities, and the skills mismatch that plagues young job seekers. The document highlights the critical need for educational reform, particularly in aligning vocational training with the demands of the modern labour market, and emphasises the importance of practical experience for young people entering the workforce.

The whitepaper also examines successful initiatives and best practices from various EU member states that aim to tackle youth unemployment. These include targeted support for rural areas, programs to reduce the skills gap in digital and green sectors, and efforts to improve job security for young workers.

This whitepaper aims to provide policymakers and stakeholders with actionable insights and practical starting points to create a more inclusive and dynamic labour market for Europe's youth.

This text was written in 2024 and is based mainly on data from that year.

## 2. Cross-Country Comparative Analysis

### 2.1. Overview per country

#### 2.1.1. Austria

##### Causes

Austria's youth unemployment, while relatively low compared to the broader EU, is significantly influenced by a persistent mismatch between what the educational system delivers and what the labour market demands. This issue is particularly acute in rural areas, where access to quality education and vocational training is far more limited than in urban centres. The dual education system, although a strong asset, struggles to keep pace with the rapid changes in the digital economy, leaving many young people underprepared for the evolving job market. Regional disparities exacerbate the problem, with rural and industrial regions such as Upper Austria and Styria bearing the brunt of higher unemployment rates among the youth.

##### Implications

The disconnect between education and employment not only hinders the economic prospects of young Austrians but also poses broader social challenges. Long-term unemployment among youth can lead to increased risks of poverty and social exclusion, particularly for those outside the traditional apprenticeship system. Marginalised groups, including young immigrants and refugees, face even steeper obstacles due to language barriers and potential discrimination, further entrenching their difficulties in accessing stable employment. These factors combine to create a cycle of disadvantage that is difficult to break.

##### Trends

A notable trend in Austria is the significant decline in apprenticeships, especially in sectors like tourism, where the number of young people entering these roles has dropped sharply over the last decade and a half. The COVID-19 pandemic has only accelerated this decline, disrupting traditional pathways into the workforce. At the same time, the digital skills gap is becoming increasingly evident, particularly in less urbanised areas, as the economy leans more heavily into technology-driven roles. This gap threatens to widen the divide between those who can adapt to new job requirements and those left behind.

### Ongoing Efforts

Austria is actively addressing these challenges through initiatives such as the "Youth Employment Package" and the "Training Guarantee," which aim to ensure that every young person up to 18 years old has access to vocational training or further education. The "NEBA" program, which offers tailored support for marginalised youth, including those with disabilities, plays a crucial role in integrating these young people into the labour market. Efforts are also underway to enhance vocational training programs by embedding digital competencies, ensuring that young Austrians are better prepared for future job markets.

### Practical Starting Points

Tackling youth unemployment in Austria requires a multifaceted approach. Strengthening vocational training with an emphasis on digital literacy is vital, particularly in ensuring that young people are equipped for the jobs of tomorrow. Expanding educational opportunities in rural areas is equally important to close the regional gap. For marginalised groups, targeted support is necessary to help them overcome barriers to employment. Moreover, adapting the dual education system to be more responsive to the rapidly changing economic landscape will be key in ensuring that young Austrians can thrive in a competitive global market.

## 2.1.2. France

### Causes

Youth unemployment in France, currently at 17.2%, is largely driven by a persistent mismatch between the skills that young people acquire through education and those demanded by the job market. This gap is particularly evident in the digital and technological sectors, where rapid advancements outpace the ability of the educational system to adapt. Young people entering the workforce often lack the practical experience that employers seek, making it difficult for them to secure stable employment. Regional disparities further compound this issue, with areas like Nouvelle-Aquitaine and the Landes department suffering from higher unemployment rates due to fewer job opportunities and limited access to specialised training.

### Implications

The high level of youth unemployment in France carries significant economic and social risks. Many young people find themselves in a cycle of temporary or precarious jobs, which limits their financial stability and future prospects. This situation not only impacts their immediate quality of life but also contributes to broader social challenges, such as increased poverty and social exclusion. The regional divide adds another layer of complexity, as young people in less developed areas struggle even more to find meaningful employment, perpetuating a cycle of disadvantage that is hard to break.

### Trends

In France, there's a growing demand for workers in digital and technology-driven fields like cybersecurity and AI, yet the education system has been slow to catch up. This disconnect has led many young people to turn to informal and non-traditional education methods to gain the skills they need. Meanwhile, the reliance on these alternative learning paths underscores the inadequacies of the formal education system, particularly in rural regions where access to cutting-edge training is limited. As a result, the job market increasingly favours those who can self-educate or access non-traditional training, leaving others behind.

### Ongoing Efforts

To combat these issues, France has rolled out initiatives such as the "1 Jeune 1 Solution" program, designed to support youth employment in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. This initiative offers a mix of recruitment incentives, training opportunities, and tailored support for those facing significant barriers to employment. There's also a push to modernise vocational training to better align with market needs, especially in high-demand sectors

like technology and healthcare. However, for these efforts to be effective, they must evolve alongside the fast-changing economic landscape and the shifting expectations of the younger workforce.

### **Practical Starting Points**

Addressing youth unemployment in France requires a more dynamic approach to education and training, particularly in aligning these systems with the needs of the digital economy. Expanding access to modernised vocational programs and ensuring they are relevant to current market demands is crucial. Tackling regional disparities will also be essential, making sure that young people across the country have equal access to opportunities. Building stronger collaborations between schools, employers, and local governments can help create a more flexible and responsive system that truly prepares young people for the workforce of the future.

### 2.1.3. Greece

#### Causes

Greece's youth unemployment, one of the highest in the EU at 28.4%, is deeply rooted in the economic aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis. The crisis triggered severe austerity measures, which in turn crippled job creation and limited investment in training programs. Additionally, there's a significant disconnect between the qualifications young people receive and the skills employers need, a gap exacerbated by inconsistencies in national apprenticeship and vocational programs. Cultural factors also play a role, as a strong societal preference for university education over vocational training leads to an oversupply of graduates in some fields and a shortage in others.

#### Implications

The implications of high youth unemployment in Greece are profound, extending beyond the immediate economic impact to broader social consequences. Many young Greeks are caught in a cycle of precarious employment, often accepting poor working conditions due to a lack of better options. This precariousness not only limits their financial stability but also contributes to a widespread sense of disillusionment among the youth. Moreover, the ongoing brain drain—where skilled young Greeks emigrate in search of better opportunities abroad—further weakens the country's economic potential and exacerbates the existing skill shortages.

#### Trends

Recent trends show a persistent regional divide in youth unemployment rates, with rural areas like Thessaly and West Macedonia facing particularly high levels of joblessness among young people. These regions often lack the infrastructure and economic opportunities found in urban centres, making it harder for young people to find work without relocating. Additionally, the rise in informal employment and the underreporting of such jobs distort official unemployment statistics, masking the true extent of the problem. The pandemic has only intensified these issues, highlighting the urgent need for targeted regional interventions.

#### Ongoing Efforts

Greece has launched several strategic initiatives to address these challenges, most notably the "National Strategy for Youth Employment" and the "Youth Guarantee" programs. These initiatives aim to enhance employability through training in high-demand sectors, support for new business ventures, and improved vocational guidance. The implementation of the Digital Labor Card also represents a significant step toward ensuring fair labour practices and protecting workers' rights. However, these efforts need to be continuously adapted to the rapidly changing economic landscape and the specific needs of Greece's diverse regions .



### Practical Starting Points

To effectively tackle youth unemployment, Greece must focus on bridging the skills gap by aligning educational outcomes with labour market demands, particularly in emerging sectors like digital technology. Strengthening vocational training and reducing the stigma associated with non-university education are critical. Additionally, targeted support for rural regions is essential to create more balanced economic opportunities across the country. Addressing the brain drain by creating more attractive job prospects domestically could also help retain skilled labour which is crucial for the country's recovery and long-term growth .

## 2.1.4. Lithuania

### Causes

Youth unemployment in Lithuania, currently at 15.2%, stems from a complex web of factors, the most prominent being the mismatch between the educational system's output and the labour market's needs. Many young Lithuanians are graduating with qualifications that do not align with the demands of the job market, particularly in digital and STEM fields. The vocational education system has struggled to adapt to these changing needs, resulting in a shortage of skilled workers in high-demand areas like information and communication technology (ICT). Additionally, the economic incentives for businesses to offer traineeships are weak, making it difficult for young people to gain the necessary experience to enter the workforce .

### Implications

This mismatch between education and employment opportunities has significant socio-economic implications for Lithuania. Many young people are forced into jobs unrelated to their field of study, which can lead to dissatisfaction and lower productivity. The lack of alignment between skills and market needs also hinders the country's economic growth, as industries face ongoing difficulties in finding qualified personnel. Moreover, the situation is particularly dire in rural areas, where opportunities are even more limited, exacerbating the urban-rural divide and contributing to the depopulation of less developed regions .

### Trends

In recent years, there has been a noticeable increase in the unemployment rate among young males, particularly in urban areas, while females have experienced slightly better employment outcomes. The gender gap in employment is widening, with males facing higher unemployment rates, especially in rural areas where job opportunities are scarce. This trend is alarming, as it suggests that traditional male-dominated industries are not providing enough opportunities for young workers, possibly due to economic shifts away from sectors like manufacturing and towards services and ICT, where females are more represented .

### Ongoing Efforts

Lithuania is taking steps to address these challenges through several initiatives, most notably the "National Youth Policy Development Programme" (2023-2027). This program focuses on aligning educational outcomes with labour market needs and has led to the establishment of 14 new regional career centres designed to provide targeted support and guidance for young people, particularly in rural areas. Additionally, the "New Generation Lithuania"

project, funded by the EU, is focused on improving vocational training and fostering collaboration between municipalities and education centres to enhance skill acquisition across the country .

### **Practical Starting Points**

Addressing youth unemployment in Lithuania requires a multifaceted approach. Enhancing the relevance of vocational education and expanding access to digital skills training are crucial steps. Special attention should be given to bridging the rural-urban divide, ensuring that young people in all regions have equal access to education and employment opportunities. Furthermore, strengthening partnerships between schools and industries can help create more practical and aligned training programs, providing young Lithuanians with the skills they need to thrive in a rapidly evolving job market.

## 2.1.5. Romania

### Causes

Romania's youth unemployment, currently at 15.3%, is largely due to a persistent mismatch between what schools teach and what the job market needs. This issue is especially pronounced in rural areas, where educational resources and vocational training are often lacking. Many young people struggle to acquire the digital skills that are increasingly essential, and inadequate career guidance makes it harder for them to transition from school to work. These challenges are further compounded by economic instability and a labour market that hasn't fully recovered from past economic downturns.

### Implications

This skills gap has serious consequences. Many young Romanians end up in jobs that don't match their qualifications, leading to dissatisfaction and underemployment. In rural areas, the lack of opportunities pushes young people to migrate to cities or even abroad, which only deepens the demographic and economic decline of these regions. The failure to integrate youth into the workforce not only stunts individual potential but also drags on the country's overall economic growth.

### Trends

There's a growing divide between urban and rural areas when it comes to youth unemployment. Regions like Suceava are particularly hard hit, with joblessness among young people significantly higher than the national average. As the economy shifts towards digitalization, traditional industries that once provided stable employment are shrinking, leaving many young people unprepared for the new opportunities—or lack thereof. Long-term unemployment is also on the rise, reflecting the challenges young people face in gaining relevant work experience.

### Ongoing Efforts

Romania has launched several initiatives to tackle youth unemployment, including expanding dual education programs and offering tax breaks to companies that hire young workers. The "Start-Up Romania" program is encouraging entrepreneurship by providing financial support and mentorship to young people with innovative business ideas. Local efforts, such as those in Suceava, focus on creating practical training opportunities through internships and apprenticeships. However, these programs need to keep evolving to stay in step with the fast-changing job market.

### Practical Starting Points

To make a real dent in youth unemployment, Romania should focus on improving vocational education and making

it more relevant to today's job market, especially in the digital and tech sectors. Expanding access to quality training in rural areas is crucial for bridging the regional divide. Stronger partnerships between schools, businesses, and local governments could help create more practical training programs, giving young people the skills and experience they need to succeed. Reducing the digital divide and enhancing career guidance services would also go a long way in helping Romanian youth make a smoother transition into the workforce.

## 2.1.6. Slovenia

### Causes

Youth unemployment in Slovenia, currently around 10%, is largely due to a significant disconnect between what schools teach and what the job market actually needs. Many young people enter the workforce lacking practical experience and the relevant skills, particularly in digital areas where the job demand is growing. The education system, while robust in some areas, has been slow to adapt to these changes. The situation is even more challenging in rural areas, where limited access to quality education, training, and infrastructure makes it difficult for young people to compete with their urban counterparts.

### Implications

The impact of this skills gap is profound. Many young Slovenians find themselves either unemployed or working in jobs far below their qualifications, leading to frustration and wasted potential. This issue is particularly acute in rural regions, where job opportunities are scarce, often pushing young people to migrate to larger cities or even abroad. This migration further drains these areas of their youthful energy and potential, deepening economic and social divides. Long-term unemployment becomes a serious risk, threatening not only individual livelihoods but also broader social cohesion.

### Trends

A clear trend in Slovenia is the rising demand for digital skills, which the education system is struggling to meet, especially in less urbanised areas. The urban-rural divide is growing as urban centres better equip young people with the skills needed for today's job market. Meanwhile, precarious employment—temporary, low-paid jobs with little security—is becoming more common among young workers trying to get a foothold in the labour market. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these issues, disrupting traditional employment paths and underscoring the need for more resilient and adaptable training programs.

### Ongoing Efforts

Slovenia is taking steps to address these challenges through various programs. The dual education system, which blends academic learning with real-world experience in companies, is designed to better prepare students for the workforce. Active employment policies (APZ) are also in place, offering subsidies to employers who hire young people, alongside training programs aimed at improving employability. Initiatives like “PUM-O” (Project Learning for Young Adults) are particularly valuable, providing young people with practical skills and boosting their confidence through personalised mentoring and hands-on training.

### Practical Starting Points

To tackle youth unemployment effectively, Slovenia needs to focus on making educational programs more relevant, with a strong emphasis on practical experience and digital skills training. Improving access to quality education and job opportunities in rural areas is crucial to closing the regional gap and reducing youth migration to cities. Building stronger partnerships between schools and businesses can ensure that young people graduate with the skills and experience that employers are looking for. Additionally, increasing support for entrepreneurship and offering more comprehensive career guidance can help young Slovenians navigate the transition from school to work with greater confidence and success.

## 2.2. Shared issues and best practices

### 2.2.1. Shared Issues in Youth Employment

Youth unemployment is a persistent challenge across Europe, impacting countries like Austria, France, Greece, Lithuania, Romania, and Slovenia. Despite the different circumstances in each nation, young people face some common hurdles when it comes to finding and securing stable jobs.

One of the biggest issues is the **skills mismatch** between what students learn in school and what employers actually need. This gap is evident in countries like France and Lithuania, where digital skills are in short supply, and in Romania and Slovenia, where vocational training doesn't always align with market demands. The rapid pace of technological change only makes this problem worse, as educational systems struggle to keep up.

Another widespread challenge is the **lack of practical experience** that many young people face. Even in countries with strong education systems, such as Austria and Slovenia, graduates often enter the job market without the hands-on skills that employers value. The scarcity of apprenticeships and internships compounds this issue, making it harder for young people to transition smoothly from school to work.

**Regional disparities** also play a significant role in youth unemployment. In Greece, Lithuania, and Romania, for example, there's a clear divide between urban and rural areas. Rural regions often have higher unemployment rates because of fewer educational and job opportunities, driving many young people to move to cities or even leave the country in search of better prospects. This migration drains these areas of young talent and deepens economic and social divides.

The rise of **precarious employment** is another troubling trend, especially in countries like Slovenia and France. Many young workers find themselves stuck in temporary, low-paying jobs with little security. The COVID-19 pandemic has only worsened this situation, disrupting traditional career paths and pushing more young people into unstable work or prolonged periods of unemployment.

For marginalised groups, **economic and social barriers** add another layer of difficulty. In Austria, for instance, young immigrants and refugees often face language barriers and discrimination, while in Romania, those from rural areas struggle with poor access to education and job opportunities. These barriers make it even harder for them to break into the labour market and build stable, long-term careers.



## 2.2.2. Best practices in tackling youth unemployment

Addressing these challenges calls for a mix of targeted strategies and the adoption of best practices that have been successful in different contexts.

To tackle the **skills mismatch**, it's crucial that educational programs align more closely with what the job market needs, especially in high-demand areas like digital technology and STEM. Expanding vocational training and incorporating digital skills into school curricula are important steps. Austria and France have made some headway in this regard, but these efforts need to continue evolving to keep pace with the changing economy.

Providing more opportunities for **practical experience** is key to boosting employability. Strengthening dual education systems, as seen in Austria and Slovenia, offers a valuable model. Expanding apprenticeships, internships, and other work-based learning opportunities, particularly in rural areas, can help young people gain the hands-on experience they need to transition from school to work more effectively.

Addressing the **urban-rural divide** involves making a concerted effort to improve access to quality education, training, and jobs in rural regions. Investments in infrastructure, like better transport and internet connectivity, are crucial, as is supporting local economic initiatives that create jobs. Lithuania's regional career centres provide a good example of how to encourage young people to stay in or return to rural areas after completing their education.

Combating the rise in **precarious employment** requires policies that promote job security and fair working conditions for young people. This includes enforcing labour standards, offering incentives for employers to provide stable contracts, and supporting young entrepreneurs through programs like Romania's "Start-Up Romania." It's also important to focus on developing industries that offer sustainable, long-term jobs.

Lastly, **supporting marginalised youth** means offering targeted education and training programs, as well as mentorship and career guidance, to those who face the most significant barriers. Inclusive hiring practices are essential. Austria's "NEBA" program, which supports marginalised youth, is a great example of how to help these young people overcome obstacles and build successful careers.



## 3. European Situation Analysis

### 3.1. Youth unemployment in EU

Youth unemployment in the European Union (EU) has seen improvements over recent years, but it remains a significant issue that demands ongoing attention and innovative solutions. By mid-2024, the youth unemployment rate had dropped to 14.4%, a notable reduction from the peak of 25.2% in 2013. However, this figure still reflects deep-seated economic and social challenges that vary widely across the EU. This discussion explores the key factors contributing to youth unemployment and critically examines the EU's efforts to address this persistent problem.

The decline in youth unemployment across the EU is encouraging, but the progress is unevenly distributed among member states. This disparity underscores the complexity of tackling youth unemployment on a regional level, where economic conditions play a crucial role. Regions hit hardest by the financial crisis or those experiencing slower economic recovery continue to struggle with higher unemployment rates among young people. Sectors such as retail and hospitality—industries that traditionally employ many young workers—have been slow to recover, further exacerbating the problem in economically weaker regions [Eurofound](#).

A significant challenge contributing to youth unemployment is the **mismatch between education and labour market demands**. This issue is particularly pronounced in areas where educational institutions and employers are not sufficiently aligned. As a result, young people often graduate with qualifications that do not meet current job market needs, leading to high levels of unemployment or underemployment among the youth. This is especially problematic in countries where vocational training is undervalued, or where opportunities for apprenticeships are limited OECD.

The transition from education to employment remains a difficult period for many young people across the EU. Without sufficient work experience, they face intense competition for entry-level positions. This situation is worsened by inadequate career guidance and a lack of internships or apprenticeships that could provide practical skills. In countries where job placements are heavily influenced by informal networks, those without connections—often young people—face additional barriers to entering the workforce, European [Commission](#).

To combat youth unemployment, the EU has implemented several initiatives. The **Youth Guarantee**, launched in 2013, aims to ensure that all young people under 25 receive a quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship, or a traineeship within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. Although the program has had some success in reducing youth unemployment rates, its effectiveness has varied across

different member states. Implementation challenges, particularly in regions with fewer resources or tougher economic conditions, have limited the full potential of this initiative [European Commission](#).

The **European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)** is another key instrument in promoting employment and social inclusion by supporting projects that help young people develop the skills and qualifications needed for the labor market. While ESF+ is a valuable tool, concerns remain about whether these projects lead to sustainable employment or merely provide temporary relief. The success of ESF+-funded initiatives often hinges on their ability to address the specific needs of local labour markets and align with the long-term economic strategies of member states [European Social Fund Plus](#).

The **Youth Employment Initiative (YEI)** targets regions where youth unemployment exceeds 25%. It funds activities like apprenticeships, job placements, and further education opportunities, specifically for young people who are not in employment, education, or training (NEETs). Despite its focus on high-unemployment regions, the YEI has faced criticism for not being sufficiently adaptable to the unique needs of different regions, leading to mixed results across the EU [European Commission](#).

The EU has also placed significant emphasis on **apprenticeships** as a way to bridge the gap between education and employment. Through the **European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EaFA)**, the EU promotes partnerships between governments, businesses, and educational institutions to increase both the quality and availability of apprenticeships. However, ensuring that these apprenticeships translate into permanent employment remains a challenge. Additionally, there is a need to make these opportunities accessible to a broader range of young people, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds [European Alliance for Apprenticeships](#).

The **Skills Agenda for Europe**, launched in 2016, is a comprehensive strategy to address the skills mismatch that contributes to youth unemployment. It focuses on ensuring that individuals across the EU develop the right skills to meet labour market demands, especially in light of rapid technological change and the growing importance of digital skills. The agenda includes 12 key actions aimed at enhancing the quality, relevance, and accessibility of skills development:

1. **Improving the quality and relevance of skills formation** to align education and training with labour market needs.
2. **Making skills and qualifications more visible and comparable** to help employers better understand job seekers' competencies.

3. **Improving skills intelligence and information for better career choices** by providing better data on labour market trends.
4. **Supporting vocational education and training (VET)** to equip young people with practical, job-ready skills.
5. **Boosting higher education** to ensure that universities and colleges deliver the skills needed in today's labour market, particularly in STEM fields.
6. **Promoting lifelong learning** to encourage continuous skills development in a rapidly changing job market.
7. **Increasing digital skills** to meet the growing demand for digital literacy in the modern economy.
8. **Improving entrepreneurship skills** to foster innovation and job creation, equipping young people to start their own businesses.
9. **Supporting the development of skills for the green economy** to prepare the workforce for jobs in sustainability and environmental protection.
10. **Fostering innovation in education and training** by encouraging the adoption of new teaching methods and technologies.
11. **Improving the governance of skills systems** to ensure that policies are effectively coordinated and implemented across the EU.
12. **Strengthening the role of stakeholders in skills development** by emphasising collaboration between governments, employers, and educational institutions [European Commission](#).

The Skills Agenda for Europe represents a forward-looking approach to addressing the root causes of youth unemployment by equipping young people with the skills needed to thrive in a rapidly evolving labour market.

## 3.2. Challenges and opportunities

Despite the significant challenges in reducing youth unemployment in the European Union, there are several promising opportunities that could improve the situation. These opportunities arise from ongoing economic changes, new policy initiatives, and the evolving job market, all of which can be leveraged to help young people secure meaningful employment.

The **digital transformation** reshaping industries across Europe is one of the most significant opportunities. As more businesses move online and adopt digital technologies, there is a growing demand for workers skilled in areas like coding, cybersecurity, data analysis, and digital marketing. This shift is opening up new career paths for tech-savvy young people who are willing to learn and adapt. Programs like the EU's Digital Education Action Plan aim to equip young people with these essential skills, preparing them for jobs that are expected to grow in the future.

Another significant opportunity lies in the **green economy**. With the EU pushing for climate neutrality by 2050, there is an increasing demand for jobs in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and environmental protection. Young people, who are generally more aware of environmental issues and eager to contribute to a greener future, are well-positioned to take advantage of these emerging job opportunities. The EU's Skills Agenda for Europe also focuses on developing the skills needed for these green jobs, ensuring that the workforce can meet the demands of this sector.

**Entrepreneurship** is another key area where young people can find opportunities. The EU has been actively encouraging entrepreneurship through initiatives like Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs and funding from the European Investment Fund. By supporting young people who want to start their own businesses, the EU is helping to create new jobs and foster innovation. This not only addresses unemployment but also drives economic growth and offers young people a chance to be their own bosses and create something new.

The **gig economy** and **flexible work arrangements** present another set of opportunities, particularly for young people seeking experience or supplemental income. While the gig economy has its challenges, such as job insecurity and lack of benefits, it can offer valuable work experience and a flexible schedule. With the right regulations and support, the gig economy could become a more sustainable option for youth employment, providing young people with more choices in how they work.

Finally, **lifelong learning and reskilling** are essential in today's fast-changing job market. As technology evolves, so do the skills required for many jobs. The EU's Skills Agenda emphasises the importance of continuous learning, encouraging young people to keep updating their skills throughout their careers. This approach ensures that they can adapt to changes in the job market and take advantage of new opportunities as they arise.

In conclusion, while the challenges of youth unemployment in the EU are significant, there are also many opportunities that can be leveraged. By focusing on digital skills, green jobs, entrepreneurship, the gig economy, and lifelong learning, the EU can help young people find meaningful and sustainable employment, paving the way for a brighter future for the next generation.

## 4. Resources

1. Eurostat - Unemployment statistics  
[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Unemployment\\_statistics](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Unemployment_statistics)
2. European Commission - Youth Guarantee  
<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079&langId=en>
3. European Social Fund Plus - Home  
<https://ec.europa.eu/european-social-fund-plus/en>
4. OECD - Youth Employment  
<https://www.oecd.org/employment/youth.html>
5. European Alliance for Apprenticeships - EAfA  
<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1147&langId=en>
6. European Commission - Skills Agenda for Europe  
<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1223&langId=en>
7. European Commission - Youth Employment Initiative  
<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1036>



# Emerging Advanced Skills Youth

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