

























# **Policy Framework**

Programme Slovakia 2021–2027

# **Policy Objective 4**

A more social and inclusive Europe implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights

> Priority Youth Guarantee









# **Policy Framework**

 Council Recommendation (EU) 2020/1228 on A Bridge to Jobs – Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee

 National Plan for Strengthening the Youth Guarantee in the Slovak Republic until 2030









# **Priority 4P4 Youth Guarantee**

- Covers:
  - Employment and socio-economic integration of young people
  - Equal access to education and training
  - Social integration of young people at risk of exclusion
- Shared responsibility: Ministry of Labour & Ministry of Education
- Main target group: Young people under 30
  - Focus on NEETs (not in employment, education, or training)
  - Vulnerable youth (Roma, young parents, youth with disabilities, migrants, refugees)
  - Children in need
- Main goal: individualised, tailor-made services for every young person









# Why? (reasons)

- High youth unemployment (above the EU average)
- Growing number of inactive young people,
- Growing number of drop-outs
- Missing complex information about situation of young people
  - (types of NEET, reasons, geographical concentration, etc.)
- Outflow of the youth labor force form regions
- Brain drain
- Insufficient interest of local governments in addressing youth employment
- No/low cooperation between actors at the regional level









# How?

- Measures aimed at:
  - Individualised counselling
  - Creation of sustainable jobs for young people
  - Several types of financial contributions
  - Supporting reskilling and upskilling, including digital and green skills









# How?

- Measures aimed at:
  - Development of early warning before school leaving
  - Mentoring and tutoring
  - Career guidance
  - Non-formal education programs in youth work aimed at developing skills and key competences
  - Second-chance programs









# How?

- Measures aimed at:
  - Regional analyses about the youth in all regions
  - Mapping NEET population and risk factors
  - Tailored recommendations
  - Regional action plans
  - Creating of regional partnerships (cooperation among local stakeholders working with youth)
  - Identification of locations for One-Stop Shops
  - Providing integrated information and consulting services for NEETs in One-Stop Shops









# One-Stop Shops

- Safe space for young people to meet
- Services provided under one roof and in youth friendly language
- Open space for cooperation of all actors in youth field in the region
- Example of services: Career guidance, counselling, training and employment services in one place









# **Coordinated Support to One-Stop Shops**

- Increasing the competences of one-stop shops employees
- Methodological support, as manuals, materials, instructions and recommendations
- Defining of the role and competencies of the One-Stop Shops
- Modern online tools and programs for making information about One-Stop Shops activities available (e.g. a unified web portal, mobile









# **Coordinated Support to One-Stop Shops**

- Information and advisory programs designed to activate vulnerable groups of young people
- Existence of networks connecting One-Stop Shops with organizations active in the field of youth work, employment, in the social field, etc.
- Existence of systematic cooperation between One-Stop Shops
- Creation of a framework for monitoring One-Stop Shops activities and assessing the quality of their









# **Support to Regional Youth Policies**

- Coordination of self-governing regions in the area of strategic planning and implementation of the Youth Guarantee
- Creation of a communication platform for selfgoverning regions (organization of workshops, training and exchange of experiences)
- Evidence-based policy, Data processing
- Cooperation with coordinators of One-Stop Shops
- Creation of a modern nationwide online digital tool for the Youth Guarantee and ensuring its functioning









# **ALMA Mobility Programme**

- Aim, Learn, Master, Achieve (ALMA)
- EU initiative to support disadvantaged young people (18–29)
- Combines counselling, training and work placements abroad
- Helps build self-confidence, skills and employability
- Pilot project already tested through a European call









# Thank you for your attention

### **Contact:**

### **Marek Korec**

Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic

Email: marek.korec@employment.gov.sk







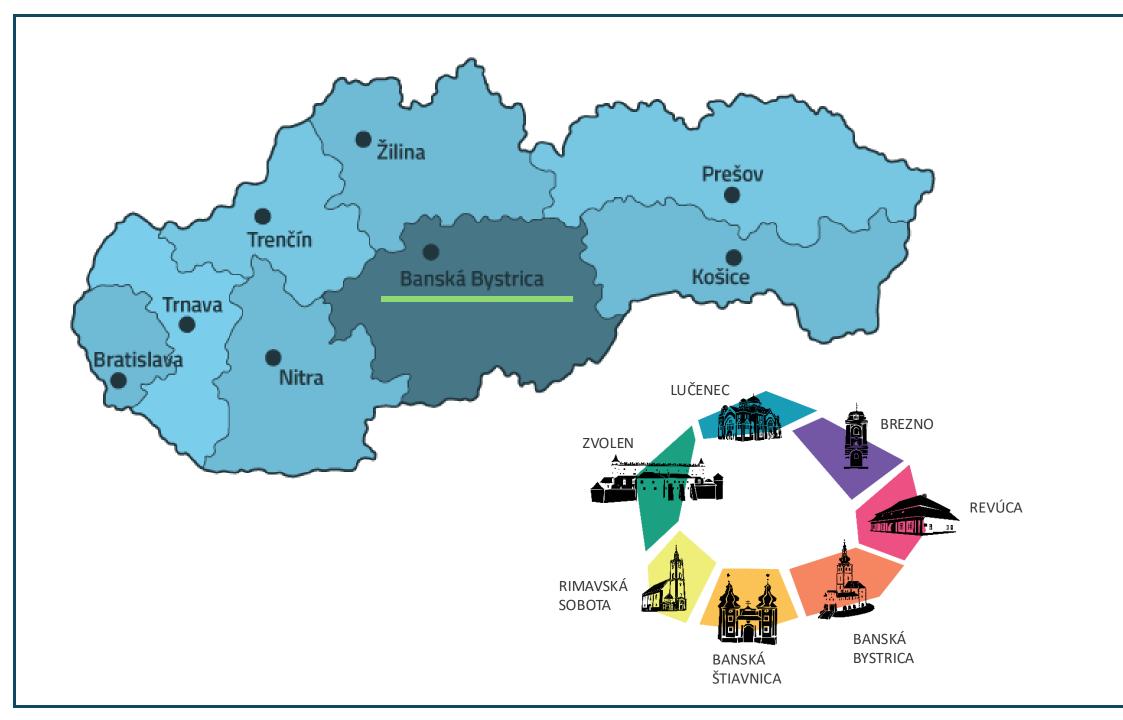
# SPACE ONE-STOP-SHOPS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN BANSKÁ BYSTRICA REGION

The project from the call "Development of one-stop shops Guarantees for young people in the regions of Slovakia" is implemented thanks to support from the European Social Fund plus within the Slovakia Program.









# THE GOAL OF THE CURRENT PROJECT



- to support the increase of regional employment of young people,
- □ to support them in building their skills necessary for the changing labour market
- □ through the provision of coordinated and individualized services in one place SPACE, one-stop shops in the region
- by implementing the proven Finnish model
- Also an implementation of Youth Guarantee in Slovakia

# THE TARGET GROUP OF THE PROJECT

young people in a NEET situation, under the age of 30, who are neither employed nor in education or training;

- young people at risk of the NEET situation: students of primary and high schools, including students with SEN; young people with disabilities; young people from MRC, nationals of third countries, including migrants; young people who have attained an education lower than secondary vocational education; young parents; young adults leaving foster homes; young people after completing their prison sentence.
- □ children in need (In accordance with the Council Recommendation establishing the European Guarantee for children)

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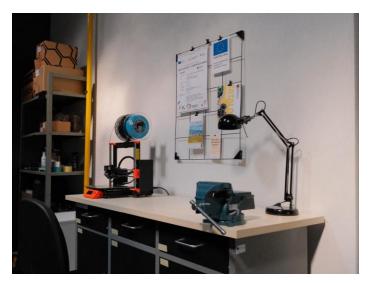
NEET 1 224

IN THE RISK OF NEET 6 100

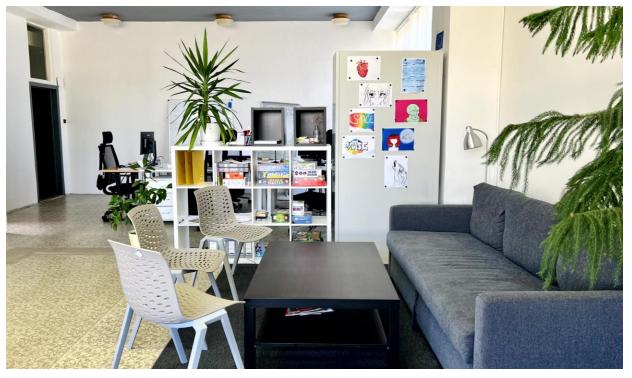
CHILDREN IN NEED 79

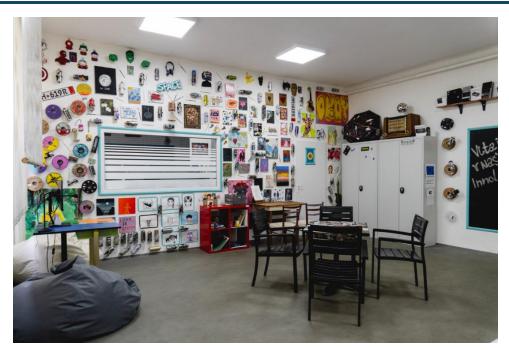


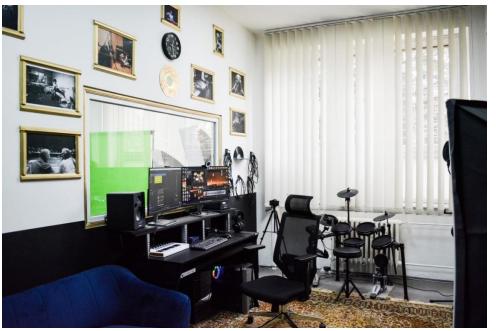
















## MAIN PILLARS OF OUR WORK



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS KNOWING THE NEEDS

**HUMAN BEING** 

COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES

PARTNERSHIPS AND COOPERATION

## **COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES**



- Outreach work, mapping the needs/ the localities / the background/ the environment;
- Career counseling (group, individual)
- Innolabb technology room
- Psychological counseling (group, individual)
- Coaching (group, individual)
- Mentoring (group, individual)
- Social counseling
- Nonformal education activities
- Development, interest activities, and clubs
- Volunteering, service learning
- ☐ Life skills development programs
- Our own services or in cooperation with partners;
- Building network with key partners in region to secure a support network for clients who have a complex life situation that requires the involvement of several key actors.











# WHY WE BUILD PARTNERSHIPs



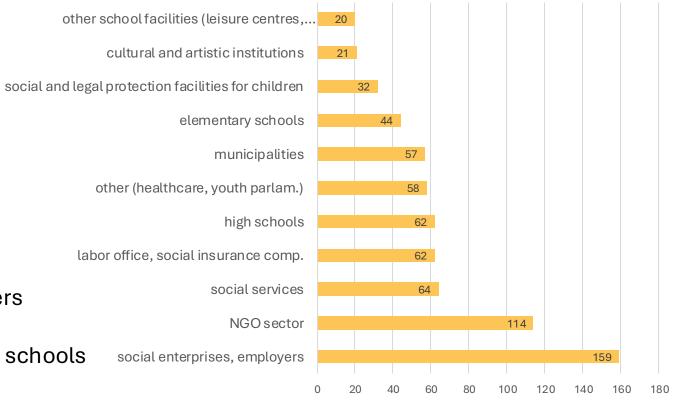
- Search and distribution of clients
- Employment and return to the labor market
- Education and prevention
- Housing and social stabilization
- Additional professional services
- Community networking and events

693

### **KEY PARTNERS**

- Labour office ("PES")
- Outreach work services and community centers
- Municipalities and BBSK
- ☐ High schools/vocational schools /elementary schools
- NGOs
- Other Specific partners (Red Cross ...)

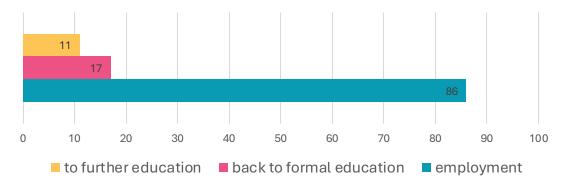
#### TYPOLOGY OF SPACE PARTNERS



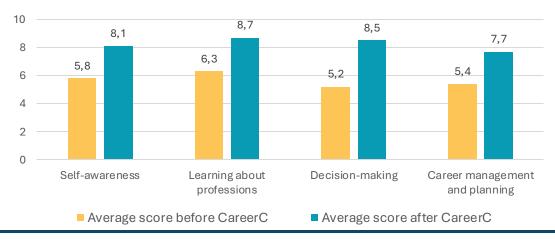
## **OUTCOMES / RESULTS**



#### HARD OUTCOMES OF PEOPLE IN NEET SITUATION



### SUBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUAL AREAS BY CLIENTS BEFORE AND AFTER COMPLETING THE CAREERC CYCLE



- □ "Space taught me to communicate with people and treat them better. It gave me lot of new friends and I was able to meet some wonderful people."
- "We don't have to pretend here. We are happy here because there are great people here and we are a good group."
- "For me, Space is a place full of happiness, where I can be myself. Everyone here is friendly, accepting each other. The activities are a blessing and they are all great. In short, like a second home."
- "I finally had the space to think for myself about what I want; I liked discovering my strengths, I find it difficult to admit them to myself; I felt understanding."
- "It is important to raise these issues in today's society, especially with people our age."



# REGIONAL ANALYSIS AND PARTNERSHIPs Space



January 2024 – June 2025



Creating Regional analysis of young NEETs in the region



Creating functional and sustainable partnership



Creating Regional Action Plan



www.mladivbbsk.sk



### www.tvojspace.sk





SPACE Banská Bystrica, SPACE Banská Štiavnica, SPACE Brezno, SPACE Lučenec, SPACE Revúca, SPACE Rimavská Sobota, SPACE Zvolen



space.bystrica, space.stiavnica, space.brezno, space.lucenec, space.revuca, space.sobota, space.zvolen







### **PILOTING ALMA IN SLOVAKIA**

The project is implemented thanks to support from the European Social Fund plus.



Social Innovation (+) Initiative



# **ALMA:**

# Aim, Learn, Master, Achieve



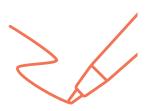
WHO?

Disadvantaged young people in NEET situation



WHAT?

2-6 months long work internship in another EU member state



WHY?

To use this experience in (re)integrating on the job market or returning to education



# **OUR PARTNERSHIPS:**

### International partners:



Trento, IT



Brno, CZ



### Slovak partners:



### Co-financing:





- Individual mentoring
- Language training
- Career counseling
- Group teambuilding
- Informal education
- Psychological support as needed



- 2-6 months long work internship in another EU member state
- Mentor support
- Accommodation, transport, insurance and pocket money covered by project
- Cultural and free time activities



- Individual support in returning to work or education
- Career counseling
- Assistance in searching for work opportunities

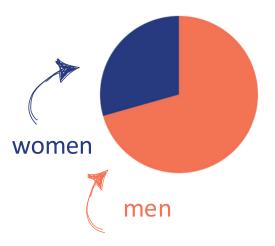
# **OUR PARTICIPANTS**

### Number

21 participants in preparation phase

17 mobility participants

### Gender



### **Vulnerability on the job market**

inactive	62 %
unemployed > than 12 months	57 %
short-term work experiences	43 %
ethnic disadvantage	33 %
care leavers	33 %
health disadvantage	29 %
only primary education completed	24 %
no work experience	19 %
participants experiencing homelessness 10 %	





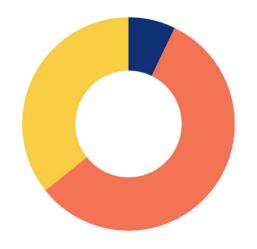






# **OUR RESULTS**

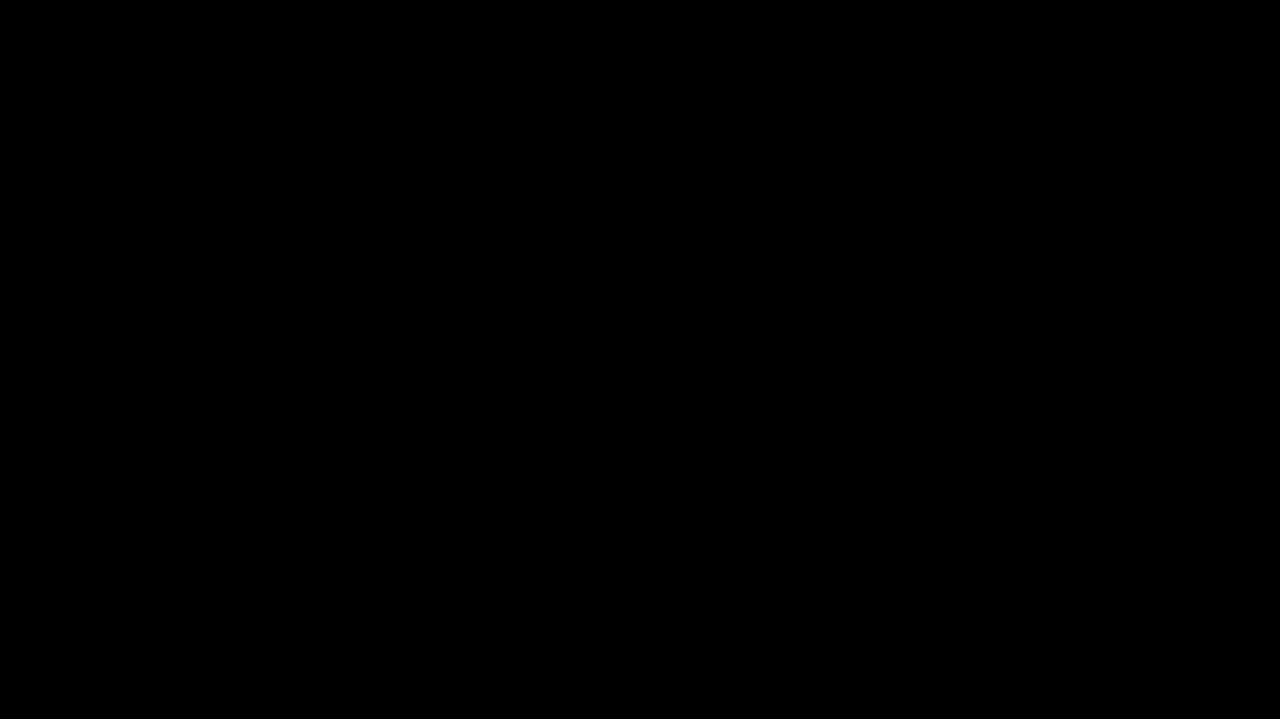
64 % OF **PARTICIPANTS** (RE)ENTERED THE JOB MARKET OR **EDUCATION AFTER THE MOBILITY** 



- return to education
- (re)entering jobmarket
- NEET status

Significant improvement in the areas of:

- Financial literacy
- Life skills
- Education
- Employment
- Communication skills







# THANK YOU

Viera Melagová Kristína Adamovská

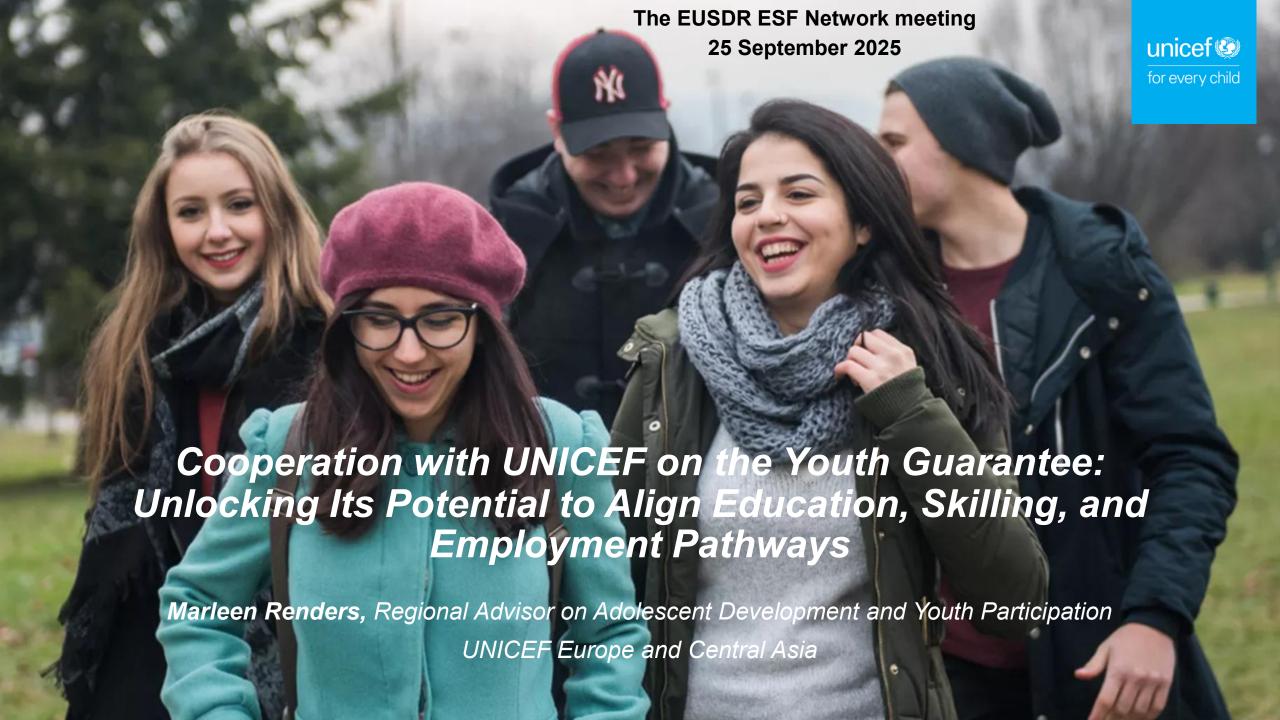
The Development Agency of Banská Bystrica Self-Governing Region







Social Innovation (+) Initiative





# Why invest in young people?

- High return on investment
- Impact of demographic trends

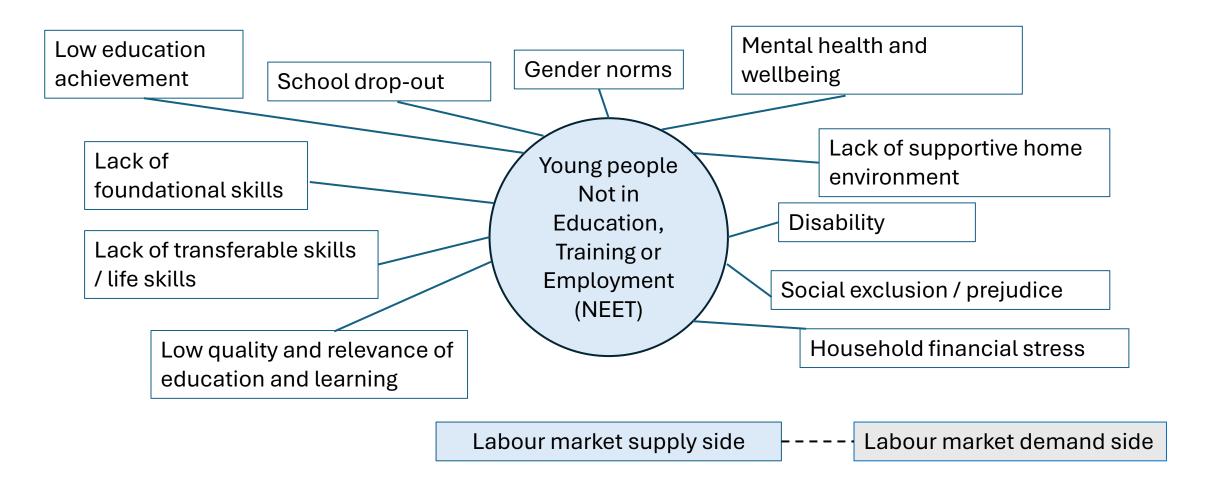
We cannot afford to leave any one behind Need to include the most vulnerable groups

Reinforced EU Youth Guarantee:

Linking young people with learning/training and work experience offers



## Bottlenecks for young people's learning, skilling and transition to work







Inclusive and competencybased curricula reforms (with a focus on skills), teachers, learning assessment, early warning systems, data

EDUCATION SYSTEM (Adolescents In School) EDU Public, private, and youth partnerships

ADAP, EDU, GenU

Career guidance, employability skills development, upskilling, internships, apprenticeships, 1<sup>st</sup> job opportunities LEARNING TO EARNING

(Adolescents In and Out of School)

ADAP

MULTIPLE
FLEXIBLE
PATHWAYS

(Adolescents Out of School)

**EDU-ADAP** 

Digitally empowered alternative learning models such as catch up and accelerated learning to help adolescents (re)integrate into school or labour market

### LOW-THRESHOLD WRAP-AROUND SERVICES ADAP

Low-threshold wrap-around services (reception, accompaniment, referral) for in and out of school vulnerable adolescents on non-education platforms (including youth centers and one-stop-shop centers)

#### **About PATHWAYS**

- A regional initiative to support Ukrainian adolescents and youth (aged 10 to 24) inside and outside Ukraine in accessing opportunities for continued education, skills building and a successful transition to employment.
- Part of Skills Alliance multi-stakeholder alliance to create conditions for Ukrainians to be skilled and trained for the recovery and reconstruction of Ukraine (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany and Ministry of Economy of Ukraine).
- Responds to challenges high vulnerability and risk of losing a generation and opportunities – build human capital to support Ukraine recovery.



## **Three Pathways**



Czechia

Poland

Slovakia

Ukraine

Access to and completion of formal secondary education and/or TVET

Support students to enroll and remain in secondary education or TVET, gaining critical knowledge and skills for their development and future employment.

First job opportunities

Partnering with private and public sectors to provide (paid) internships or apprenticeships for secondary school/TVET students in industries (incl. green jobs) that are aligned with adolescents' job aspirations to prepare them for their future transition to the labor market.

Flexible learning and upskilling

Create opportunities for additional skilling and/or continuation of their regular schooling for those out of school, with a particular focus on youth who are currently working full or part time.

**Wrap around services**: removing barriers to access information and services such as mental health through one stop shop centers, etc.





#### Why MHPSS is Crucial:

- Addresses rising stress, anxiety, and trauma that often hinder learning and growth.
- Strengthens **emotional resilience** to handle challenges in school, life, and future work.
- Prevents school dropout by promoting motivation, persistence, and self-belief.
- Builds life skills and confidence essential for transitioning into the workforce.
- Supports **caregivers and families**, ensuring a stable environment for children and youth.
- Creates an enabling environment where education and employment pathways are sustainable.

#### Key Components:

- Safe Spaces: Dedicated hubs for youth & families to access support.
- Counseling & Support Services: Individual/group sessions, crisis intervention, family counseling.
- Parental & Caregiver Support: Workshops & peer groups.
- Resilience Training: Stress management, selfesteem, growth mindset.
- Digital Support: Online resources & psychoeducational tools.
- Coalition of Schools: Collective action for mental health in education.

Wrap-around services: One-Stop-Shop Centres in Kosice, Slovakia

unicef for every child

To support young people through tailored services that promote continued learning, skills development, and emotional resilience.

#### **Key Objectives:**

- Reach out to and engage young people, connecting them to learning and employment opportunities.
- Support youth to stay in education and build skills for a successful transition into the workforce.
- Provide comprehensive mental health and psychosocial support for children, youth, and caregivers.
- Prevent school dropout and promote long-term academic and emotional well-being.
- Ensure inclusive access, especially for children with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.



#### PATHWAYS Initiative: Documentation of the Pathways model

Supporting Ukrainian refugee youth with their transition from learning to earning in Slovakia



#### **Services and Activities provided on-site:**



- Initial screening, needs assessments, and intake identify individual needs, vulnerabilities, and risks.
- Support to access and remain in formal education, including secondary education and vocational training (TVET).
- Catch-up classes and learning support for those who have missed schooling.
- Language support programmes for non-native speakers to facilitate school integration.
- Career counselling and guidance on learning and professional development pathways.
- Referral to certified skills-building and training programmes based on individual interests and aspirations.
- Peer-to-peer learning and engagement activities that support academic and social development.
- Psychoeducational sessions focused on learning motivation, resilience, and selfregulation.
- Mental health and psychosocial support (individual and group) for children, youth, and caregivers.
- Parent and caregiver support groups to strengthen home-based learning environments.
- Digital platforms and tools offering online learning, mental health resources, and psychoeducational content.





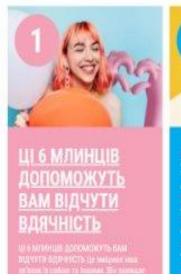


## ВДЯЧНІСТЬ — ЦЕ ЗДОРОВА **ЗВИЧКА**

Вдячність не зітре важкі моменти з вашого життя, але вона створить простір для того, щоб ви могли цінувати більш прекрасні щоденні моменти.

### ТРИНАДЦЯТЬ ПУТІВНИКІВ вдячністю

Ми об'єднали молодих людей з попкультури та психологів, і підготували для тебе ілюстровані та анімовані посібники з вдячності, усвідомленості та психічного здоров'я своїми близькими та навколишнім світом.





### **Digital One-Stop Shop** for Ukrainian **Adolescents & Youth**



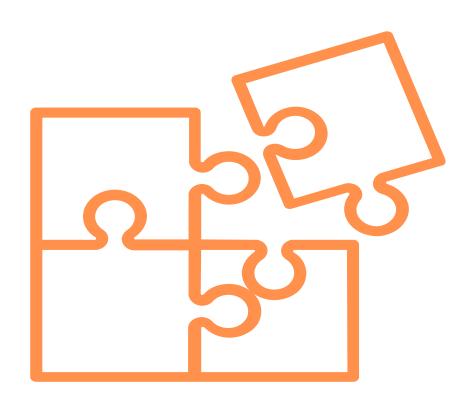
It offers Ukrainian adolescents and youth **24/7 online access** to mental health and well-being resources, career counseling, learning opportunities, and job listings. It currently reaches over 30,000 young people, including many who are NEET or difficult to engage through traditional community channels. Through interactive and relatable content, the platform keeps users informed, connected, and actively involved.

#### **Key Features**

- **Panic Button:** Instant access to UNICEF-supported MHPSS services.
- **Accessibility:** Inclusive for adolescents and youth with disabilities.
- **Youth-Friendly:** Content co-created with psychologists, pop-culture creators, and influencers.
- **Scalable:** Reaches youth across multiple regions efficiently.
- **24/7 Availability:** Immediate support anytime, anywhere.
- **Privacy:** Safe, anonymous space to seek help at one's own pace.
- MHPSS Service Map: Access to 420+ mental health services in Slovakia for youth, parents, and caregivers.



## **Key factors for success**



- Outreach to young people (reach young people where they are with what they need – wrap around / case management)
- 2. Effective **support services** for young people so they are prepared
- 3. Adapted, **inclusive training offer** -- gender responsive, disability inclusive
- 4. Local platforms and coordination
- 5. System strengthening: the **enhanced cooperation** between employment services, support services, the education system and the private sector
- 6. Evaluation (including formative) / research to inform policy and public finance investments
- 7. Young people's **engagement and participation** supports social cohesion and trust.

## **UNICEF Regional Offer**



#### 1. Support foundational learning and relevant skills development

- Ensure adolescents stay in school and complete secondary education.
- Provide access to digital, green, and soft skills.
- · Offer second-chance learning and upskilling for dropouts and precarious workers.
- · Include wraparound services such as mental health support.

#### 2. Facilitate youth transition into the workforce

- Expand access to first jobs, apprenticeships, and self-employment.
- Focus on high-potential sectors: digital, care, green, and construction.
- Respond to youth aspirations: 65.7% want to gain skills or enter reconstruction-supporting professions (UNICEF & ETF survey).

#### 3. Build meaningful partnerships

- Coordinate across government, employers, education systems, civil society, and youth.
- Leverage existing collaborations, e.g., secondary education reform with Ministries of Education.
- Utilize mechanisms like the EU Youth Guarantee.
- Pilot youth development services and NEET profiling at regional level (e.g., Ukraine, Albania).

#### 4. Scale proven models

- UNICEF's Pathways initiative in Ukraine, Poland, Czechia, and Slovakia the documented best practices for dissemination.
- Support includes secondary education enrolment, vocational skills, first job experiences, and mental health.

#### 5. Strengthen the foundation for long-term transformation

- Build on the EU Youth Guarantee and Ukraine's EU accession agenda.
- Engage a growing ecosystem of partners.
- Create an inclusive, future-focused system built with and for every young person (example of Finland).



#### **Contact and further information**

#### **UNICEF Regional Office Europe and Central Asia**

- Marleen Renders, Regional Advisor Adolescents and Youth, <u>mrenders@unicef.org</u>
- Maida Pasic, Regional Advisor Education, <a href="mailto:mpasic@unicef.org">mpasic@unicef.org</a>
- Olena Sakovych, Programme Manager, <u>osakovych@unicef.org</u>









#### **ESF Network in the Danube Region**

## Implementing Simplified Cost Options and Financing Not Linked to Costs

Programme Slovakia (2021 – 2027)

Zoltán Bárdoš, manager of methodology Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic

Wednesday, 26th September 2025



## Simplified Cost Options General rules



- SCOs applied more than 10 years in EU-funds
- Real costs: costs justified and reimbursed by invoices or payment slips
- SCOs: costs reimbursed according condition invoices not required
- SCOs are defined ex ante (percentages or amounts)
- Represent the best approximation of real eligible costs incurred in practice
- Common Provisions Regulation (CPR 2021/1060) Art. 51 and 53
- flat rates (%); unit costs (Eur); lump sums (Eur) own calculation
- based on fair, equitable and verifiable calculation method
- predefined flat rates; CPR Art. 54 56









## Financing not Linked to Costs General rules



- Simplified reimbursement tool where reimbursement is based on meeting specific conditions or achieving pre-defined results in a timeline (Art. 95)
- Financial amount (reimbursement) linked to milestones (indicators)
- Does not require detailed calculation methods to estimate real costs
- Increased flexibility in determining the amounts to be reimbursed
- Enhanced possibilities to achieve challenging results
- Methodology has to be approved by EC ex-ante









## Simplified Cost Options Programme Slovakia



- SCOs widely used in ESF+ operations
- Social Inclusion; Employment; Support of young people, Social Innovations
- All EU-funds concentrated in one general Programme (12,5 mld. eur)
- Forms of SCO: unit costs and "off-the shelf" flat rates
- Financing not Linked to Costs (FNLC): not applied in SK
- Ministry of Labour submitted 2 unofficial proposals to EC for consultation
- Proposals were later recalled and elaboration stopped









#### **Flat Rates**



#### Forms of SCO:

- only "off-the shelf" flat rates predefined in the CPR
- based on individual calculation not applied
- The "top" flat rate:

up to 40% flat rate covering the remaining eligible costs (Art. 56.1 CPR)

basis costs: direct staff costs (on real basis or unit costs)

reimbursable costs: remaining eligible costs

- direct costs (other than staff costs)
- indirect costs









#### **Flat Rates**



- 7% (Art. 54.a) covering indirect costs (basis: all direct costs)
- 15% (Art. 54.b) covering indirect costs (basis: all direct staff costs)

#### Status until 20/09/2025 (Ministry of Labour):

Launched calls: **64** 

7% flat rate: 14

15% flat rate: 3

40% flat rate: 41

N/A or other: 6

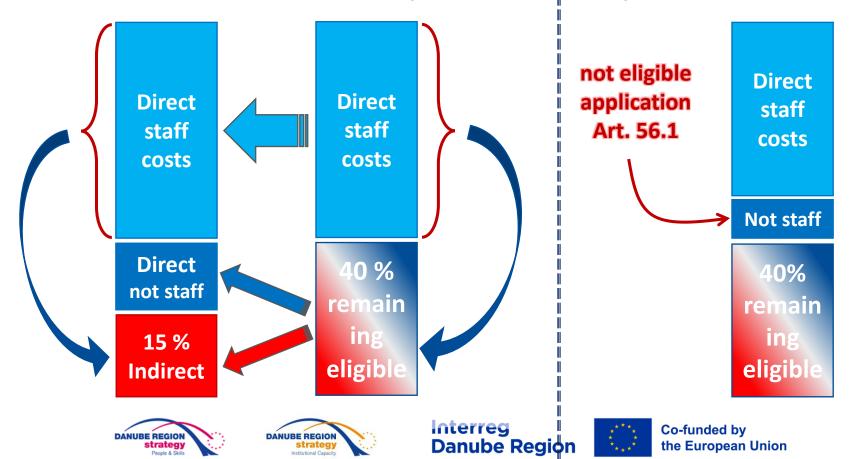




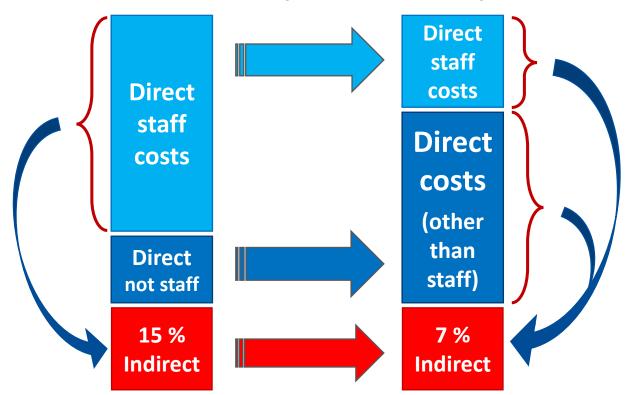




#### Flat Rates (15% and 40%)



#### **Flat Rates (7% and 15%)**











#### **Unit Costs**



- hourly rate of direct staff costs according to Art. 55.2 of CPR
- hourly rate of service-cost (Individual design)
- "off-the shelf" unit costs according to Delegated Reg. Com. 2023/1676

Status until 20/09/2025 (Ministry of Labour):

Launched calls: **64** 

UC Art. 55.2 20

UC Individual: 1

UC off-the shelf: 2

UC not aplied: 43

12 calls with full simplification (100% SCO and Zero real costs)



#### **Unit Costs – basic features**



- national level SCOs only (EU level not applied except off-the shelf)
- process-oriented approach; i.e. input based:
   salary of staff + employer's social contribution (hourly rate)

PROs: effective elaboration – salaries more comprehensible and quantifiable; accessible data (salary statistics)

CONs: lack of focus on result (for example total costs per participant)









#### Art. 55 Unit Costs – data and calculation



- Unit cost (salary) calculated from official statistical data or previous projects
- Calculation based on similar working positions (managers, experts, assistants)
- Art. 55 CPR applied → Result: "hourly rate" per staff person
- Application rules: hourly rate x total hours worked
- Required docs: evidence of hours worked, employment contract (on-the-spot)
- Not required: payslips, evidence of salary transfer









#### **Unit Costs – eligible staff examples**

#### Basis costs for flat rates:

Chief manager or Coordinator

Expert, Manager

Assistant, Peer Employee

Consultant, Advisor, Supervisor

Caregivers

**Fieldworkers** 



















### Thank you for your attention.







## ALMASCO EXPERIENCE AND PROPOSALS

TOMKE TRÁVNÍČKOVÁ

26.9.2025

12th Meeting of ESF Network in the Danube Region



### **ALMA**

- ALMA is an initiative designed for young people aged 18 to 29 who are not currently engaged in employment, education, or training (NEETs)
- The goal of ALMA is to actively include more young people in the job market and society in general, using international mobility as a key tool for their professional and personal development
- ALMA: an active inclusion initiative for young people European Commission
- How to make ALMA work | European Social Fund Plus



## **ALMA Operation**

## PREPARATORY Phase

participants receive intensive tailor-made training and coaching in their home Member State to prepare them for a stay abroad

#### **MOBILITY Phase**

participants spend two to six months in another Member State, integrated into the work environment of a company or institution

## FOLLOW-UP Phase

continued support to the participants to use their newly acquired skills in their home Member State to gain employment or further education







# ALMA - Commission Delegated Regulation

- Off the shelf one fits all solution
- Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2022/2175 of 5 August 2022
- Delegated regulation 2022/2175 EN EUR-Lex
- Reimbursement from COM to Member State
- Based on a Study (Catalog N.: KE-06-21-069-EN-N)

### **ALMA**

PREPARATORY Phase

**MOBILITY Phase** 

**FOLLOW-UP Phase** 

Basic daily unit cost per participant per day – all 3 phases

Top-up for mobility phase (optional)

Top-up allowance for participants in need - all 3 phases (optional)

Top-up for a successful participant (optional)



## Basic daily unit cost

Indicator triggering payment - disadvantaged young persons aged 15 to 29 who participate in an ALMA operation

Measurement unit - number of days participated in any phase of the operation per person

Amounts - the daily unit costs per participant apply for all three phases of the operation equally. The amounts are set with reference to the Member State where the beneficiary implements the operation.



## Top-up amount for mobility phase

A daily top-up amount is applied, for the mobility phase, to participants of an ALMA operation who are spending their work-related stay abroad within a Member State with higher living costs than the Member State where the other phases of the operation take place.

- Incentive to support actions by beneficiary for participants during their work experience abroad (applied on top of the basic unit cost)
- Reimbursed to beneficary
- Can only be reimbursed when participants are in the Host country (countries divided in 3 groups according to cost of living) during their work-related stay abroad



# Top-up amount for participants in need

The amounts are applied for participants who receive the same amount as a daily allowance from the beneficiary. This top-up may be applied to one, two or all three phases of the operation. For the mobility phase, the amount of the host Member State applies. Applied on top of the basic unit cost.

- Participant allowance needs to be PAID DIRECTLY TO THE PARTICIPANTS (allowance to ensure a decent standard of living)
- Optional up to MA to assess whether required or not
- Flexible up to MA to assess whether paid during all or only some phases



# Top-up amount for successful participants

A daily top-up amount is applied for the number of days of the respective individual's participation in an ALMA operation for all participants who find employment, enrol in or re-enter further training, education or a labour-market programme within 6 months after exiting the ALMA operation.

- Reimbursed to beneficary, to be applied on top of the basic unit cost
- To be calculated based on the total number of participant days in the ALMA operation (over the 3 phases)
- Successful participant participant with a positive change in their occupational status (as compared to start of ALMA)



# Problems with Unit Costs and FNLC ALMA Commission Delegated Regulation

- Daily rate not high enough to cover individual approach (projects focus on regular daily attendance rather than on quality)
- Administrative burden on the side of MAs (daily time sheets with signatures)
- Administrative burden on the side of beneficiaries stays the same
- Necessity of strict national/regional rules (ALMA DA is an one fits all solution)
- (Almost) complete resignation on projects outcomes
- No qualitative evaluation of project proposals (we simplify!)



# The calculation of Basic unit costs per day (in EUR)

The amounts are set for those parts of an operation which are carried out during 2022. They shall be adjusted once a year using the MS's Eurostat indices for yearly inflation from the Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices. The new amount shall apply to those parts of an operation implemented in the new calendar year.

Basic unit costs per day

- Romania 38.65 / Spain 109.20 (Slovakia 47.98, Germany 77.61, Sweden 79.64)

Plus daily top-up amount for mobility phase of operations

- Romania to Italy 6.06 / Spain to Germany, Italy and Lithuania 0.00







#### **ALMA Network model**

#### **ALMA Network**

https://socialinnovationplus.eu/network/alma/

#### **ALMA Handbook**

https://european-social-fundplus.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2024-02/ALMA%20Handbook.pdf





#### **ALMA Czech model**

Combination of real direct costs with indirect costs (25% or 20% flat rate)

#### Benefits:

- Reduced administrative burden on the side of MA
- Project applications are qualitatively evaluated
- Beneficiaries are able to include individual tailored (more costly) services for the participants in need
- Project cycle (activities and services) is more flexible
- Reduced perverse incentives (the creaming effect is almost eliminated)



#### **ALMA German model**

JUVENTUS uses a combination of direct costs, flat rate and lump sums / standart unit costs

- Directly accounted costs: Direct staff expenses, expenses for honoraria and a range of "other direct material expenses" related to the project
- Direct costs serve as basis for flat rate by 16% to cover indirect administrative costs
- For the mobility phase, all expenses abroad are settled by mobility lump sums, in the form of 3 different standard unit costs: for participants (all costs incured abroad), for project staff and for transnational partner organization (these include personnel costs of the host partner organization)







## No more real costs in post 2027

- prepared by Luca Santin, Coordinator of the ESF Transnational Network on Simplification
- based on recommendations and proposals shared by representatives of ESF+ managing authorities, audit authorities and national coordination bodies from all (27) EU Member States within the ESF Transnational Network on Simplification (TN)
- published in February 2025



## No more real costs in post 2027

Final Report of the Study on the uptake of SCO and FNLC for the CPR funds in 2014-2020 and 2021-2027.

Position paper on "No more real costs for post-2027"

Roadmap model on "No more real costs for post-2027"

Recommendation paper on Risk-Based Management
Verifications





# POSITION PAPER on 'no more real costs in post 2027'

The paper answers following questions:

- What does 'no more real costs' mean?
- Why 'no more real costs'?
- How to achieve the objective of 'no more real costs'?

'No more real costs' means that all payments related to the implementation of ESF+ programmes will be only made using simplification measures and will no longer be based on the reimbursement of actual (real) costs.

'No more real costs' should be applied to all payments for all operations under ESF+ programmes for post-2027, with no exceptions.







#### **FNLC**

- FNLC is an innovative way of reimbursing grants under the European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds.
- Reimbursement under FNLC is linked to conditions to be fulfilled or results to be achieved
- Focus on achieving specific policy objectives instead of costing of the operation
- Amounts set for reimbursement are not linked to the costs of the operation. The amounts need to be set ex ante and agreed by COM



# FNLC under Article 95 CPR (roadmap model)

- Member State decides to use Article 95
- Member State establishes FNLC scheme based on elements of Article 95(1)
- NO mandatory assessment by Audit authority BUT recommended
- Member State submits Appendix 2 to COM
- COM decision approving programme sets out all elements of Article 95(1)



#### DOUBTS

Result based financing is not really per se a tool for simplification

- If done well, it is actually quite challenging!

FNLC is by definition an overly simplistic approach to results based financing

- All or nothing payments for "lumped together volumes of services" instead of incrementally paying for each additional delivery creates perverse incentives
- All or nothing incentives also generate huge public finance risk the argument that FNLC is an arrangement between the EC and Member State and that the risk does not have to be transferred from the MS is totally naive no normal Ministry of Finance will accept that



#### **EVEN MORE DOUBTS**

- The examples that are typically used are specific cases that fulfill the right conditions for RBF -> a basic uniform service
- The more "complex" operations are the less they lend themselves well to RBF, while "ensuring access to simple, uniform basic services" are more suited to the approach
- Given the perverse incentives identified in the PbR programmes studied, it is suggested that PbR contracts should be utilised carefully when contracting services for groups that face multiple barriers (<u>Study on the benefits of using</u> social outcome contracting in the provision of social services and interventions)



#### THANK YOU!

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# Investing in people

Richard Broos, DG EMPL/Unit G1

**Multiannual Financial Framework 2028-2034** 



#### Content

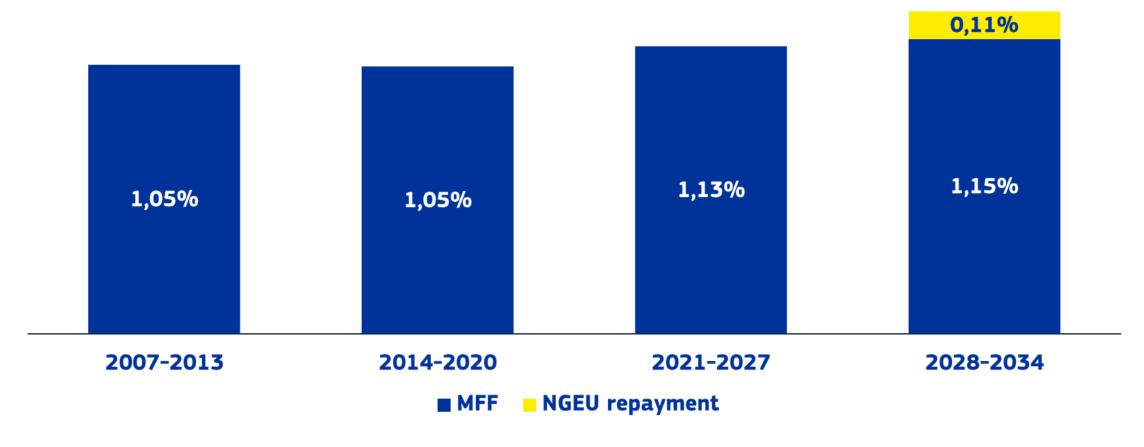
- 1. MFF 2028-2034 package
- 2. Support to the Union's social objectives overview
  - a. National and Regional Partnership Plans
    - i. 14% social target
    - ii. European Social Fund
    - iii. EU Facility
- 3. Negotiations state of play

- Multiannual financial framework defines amounts and rules on financing the EU priorities and policies.
- Duration proposed by the Commission: 7 years (status quo)
- Total amount proposed by the Commission: EUR 2 trillion or 1.26 % of the EU GNI
  - compared to the current MFF, this means an increase from 1.13 % to 1.15 %, with additional 0.11p.p. representing repaying NextGenerationEU loans
- Legislative proposals adopted by the Commission on 16 July and 3 September 2025
  - Horizontal proposals regulation establishing the MFF, interinstitutional agreement on budgetary matters, own resources Decision, regulation on the performance, monitoring and evaluation of the Union budget
  - Sectoral regulations
    - \* National and Regional Partnership Plans and related sectoral regulations incl. the ESF regulation
    - **EU programmes under Headings 2 and 3** European Competitiveness Fund and Horizon Europe, Erasmus+, Connecting Europe Facility, AgoraEU, Global Europe Instrument Single Market Programme etc.
  - Link to the dedicated Commission webpage: <u>EU budget 2028-2034</u>

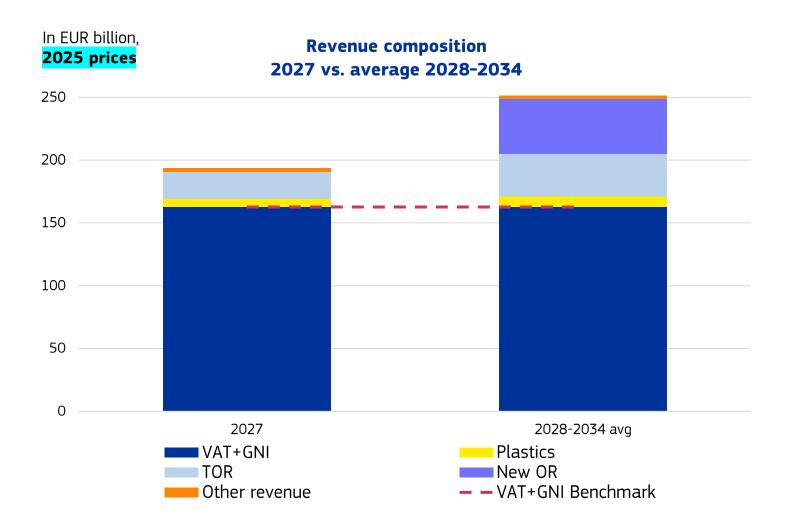


Percentage of GNI of the period concerned

#### **MFF Evolution**









- The MFF is structured along main categories of expenditures (**'headings'**) and provides for a maximum amount for each of them (**'ceilings'**). The Commission proposal includes 4 headings:
  - Heading 1 [EUR 1 trillion] encompasses National and Regional Partnership Plans (NRPP), decentralised agencies and the repayment of NextGenerationEU loans
  - Heading 2 [EUR 589.6 billion] includes EU programmes like European Competitiveness Fund (ECF), Horizon Europe, Connecting Europe Facility, Union Civil Protection Mechanism+, Erasmus+, the new 'AgoraEU' etc.
  - \* Heading 3 [EUR 215.2 billion] hosts **Global Europe** Instrument, as well as the Common Foreign and Security Policy and Overseas Countries and Territories (including Greenland).
  - \* Heading 4 covers expenditures for the European Public Administration and will amount to a stable share of 6% of the MFF.
- Beyond these 4 headings, a 'flexibility instrument' and a 'Ukraine Reserve' can provide additional funds over and above ceilings.
- The Social Climate Fund (SCF) envelope will remain outside the MFF ceilings, financed via externally assigned revenue from the ETS2.

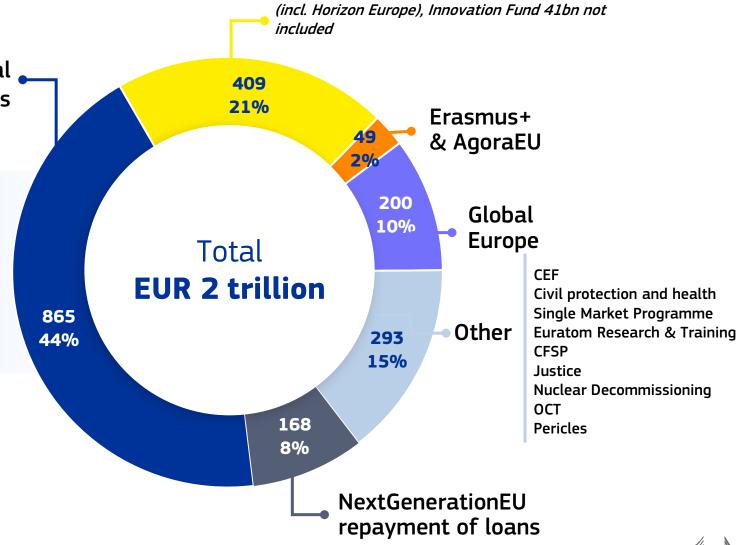


#### **European Competitiveness Fund**





- **Simpler** for beneficiaries
- Results oriented
- More agile





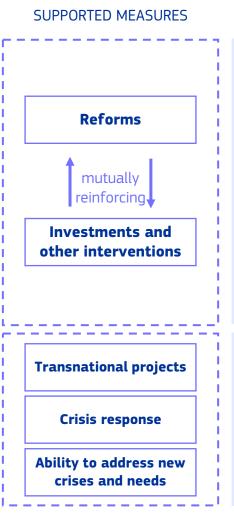
## Support to the Union's social objectives

- Europe faces major transitions green, digital, demographic that reshape jobs, skills and our societies.
- Investing in upskilling and reskilling, childcare, affordable housing or long-term care is essential to improve lives across Europe and achieve social cohesion. Supporting people and strengthening our social model is Europe's trademark.
- Union's social objectives will be supported under:
  - National and Regional Partnership Plans (NRPPs)
    - European Social Fund (ESF)
    - **EU Facility**
    - other funds under the NRPPs
    - ❖ Social Climate Fund (SCF) financed outside MFF
  - European Competitiveness Fund (ECF)
  - Horizon, Erasmus+, Global Europe Instrument, AgoraEU, and the horizontal crisis mechanism (Own resources decision proposal)



MAIN SECTOR-**FRAMEWORK** SPECIFIC RULES Regional development (EFRD & CF) Migration, **EUROPEAN** borders, ECONOMIC, security TERRITORIAL. SOCIAL, **RURAL AND** Social **MARITIME** (ESF+) **SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY AND SECURITY** Common **Agricultural FUND Policy Fisheries** and maritime









- The financial envelope of the NRPP Regulation amounts to EUR 865 bn, split into three parts:
  - Pre-allocated national envelopes of EUR 783 bn divided among individual Member States;
  - **EU Facility** of EUR 72 bn to cover Union actions and emerging challenges and priorities;
  - Interreg of EUR 10 bn.
- In addition, Member States may request **loans** ('Catalyst Europe') up to a maximum of **EUR 150 bn** to support their NRPP implementation.
- In addition, the **Social Climate Fund** will continue to provide EU support of **EUR 65 bn** in years 2026 2032 to ensure that vulnerable groups, small businesses and vulnerable transport users benefit from the green transition linked to the introduction of ETS2.
  - Starting in 2028, EUR 50 bn of the SCF will be integrated into NRPPs (as separate chapter).
- Each Member State should submit to the Commission one NRP Plan which shall support all EU objectives, including the social objectives
  - \* allowing for a more flexible implementation, integrated approach to targeted investments and reforms (comprehensive measures)
  - Member States' total allocations under the NRP Plans are available <a href="here">here</a>.



Facility - EUR 71 933 million million Interreg – EUR 10 264 million 9/0 million CAP income support **EUR 865** Min. EUR 293 700 million Fisheries Min. EUR 2 000 million Financial envelope 798 f which EUR 217 798 million for less developed regions Not ring-fenced in NRP Plans **EUR 452 964 million** Home affairs Min EUR 34 215 million Integration of the Social Climate Fund EUR 50 000 million Catalyst Europe - voluntary policy loans EUR 150 000 million

Unity Safety Net / Agri reserve – EUR 6 301 million

EU Solidarity (eg. natural disasters) – EUR 20 117 million

HOME actions – EUR 25 285 million

Other Union actions – EUR 11 520 million

Budget cushion – EUR 8 710 million

Those amounts are indicatively provided in the LFDS and will be mobilised as part of the annual budget procedure for multiannual and annual programming

Asylum, migration and integration – EUR 11 975 million Border management and visas – EUR 15 397 million Internal security – EUR 6 843 million Possibility for Member States to reallocate amounts between the three priorities



## 14% social target

- At least 14% of the NRPP Regulation financial envelope (including loan support and excluding direct support to farmers, fisheries and the SCF) to be dedicated to meeting the Union's social objectives.
  - This corresponds to at least EUR 100 bn.
  - \* Based on social tracking of the EU social coefficients referred to in Art. 6 (1) and Annex I of the Performance regulation (see also Art. 10 (5) and 22 (3) (q) of NRPP regulation)



## 14% social target

- Illustrative example of calculation under the NRP Plan
  - Member State X receives a total Union contribution of EUR 515 million. According to the policy mix of selected intervention fields, EUR 185 million out of EUR 515 million counts towards the social target approximately 36% of the Union contribution. The MS fulfils the respective requirement.

Intervention field (number, name)	Total investment (in mio EUR)	Social coefficient (in %)	Social expenditure (in mio EUR)
2. Targeted support to farmers income*	150	0%	0
115. Initial vocational education (excluding infrastructures)	50	100%	50
121. Early childhood education facilities, schools and universities – Development and construction of new zero-emission or nearly zero	50	40%	20
175. Electricity generation from offshore wind energy	100	0%	0
192. Energy efficiency in enterprises	25	0%	0
421. Promote citizens' engagement and participation	5	0%	0
443. Specific support to youth employment	20	100%	20
449. Support to social partners	5	100%	5
450. Addressing material deprivation through food and/or material assistance to the most deprived, including accompanying measures (not in case of disasters)	40	100%	40
479. Measures to address child poverty	50	100%	50
488. Direct income support under SCF**	20	100%	0
total	515		185

<sup>\*</sup> Income support to farmers is explicitly excluded from the computation in line with Article 22(2)(q) NRRP Regulation



<sup>\*\*</sup> Measures supported under the Social Climate Fund do not contribute to the target.

- Partnership principle and multi-level governance derived from current CPR
  - Applicable to all Plans (incl. Interreg) + respect of the European code of conduct on partnership
  - ❖ Partners (incl. regional and local authorities and social partners) to be involved throughout the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the chapters, including through participation in monitoring committees and taking into account the corresponding territorial level and geographical coverage of each chapter.
- Horizontal principles derived mostly from current CPR
  - Respect of the **EU Charter** and of the **rule of law** [new] throughout the preparation and implementation of the Plans
  - Prevention of discrimination + accessibility for persons with disabilities
  - Additionality of EU funding, synergies and avoidance of double funding



- **Objective:** continuity with the existing governance structures + coordinating authority to ensure coherence of the Plan
- All institutions, including at regional level will continue to interact with COM
- Coordinating authority
  - submitting payment applications and management declarations, providing payment forecasts, guaranteeing that MAs receive their Union contribution irrespective of the progress made on national reforms (Art. 50(1)g))
- Managing authority
  - sign management verifications to ensure fulfilment of M/Ts and compliance with the applicable law; ensuring timely payments to beneficiaries; submitting information on progress in implementation (Annex IX)
- Paying agencies (CAP)
  - implementation of measures under Article 35(1) and Union actions (h) farm-level data on sustainability and (j) market disturbance; some functions of Managing Authorities
- **Audit authority** audits on M/T and system audits in order to provide assurance on:
  - Fulfilments of M/Ts + effective functioning of M&C system whether it ensures legality and regularity of transactions and effective and timely protection of the Union's financial interests
- Monitoring and coordinating committees



#### **European Social Fund**

- The ESF is set out in its own self-standing <u>regulation</u>, confirming its place as the EU's main instrument to invest in Europe's people.
  - implemented in **shared management** through the National and Regional Partnership Plans in close **partnership** between the Commission, the Member States, regions, local communities, social partners and relevant stakeholders such as social partners and civil society organisations.
  - programming and payments logic inspired by the SCF
    - steered by European Semester and Employment guidelines
    - programmes replaced by national, sectoral and/or regional NRPP chapters (based on each Member State's preference and institutional setup) chapters include measures (investments and reforms)
    - payments based on achievement of milestones and targets
  - no fixed thematic concentration, yet, based on European Semester, Member States need to concentrate resources on:
    - Social inclusion;
    - Food and/or basic material assistance;
    - implementing the Child Guarantee, and;
    - implementing the Youth Guarantee.



## **EU Facility**

- **Objective:** providing flexibility, financing actions of EU importance and related to crisis situations; inspired by Thematic Facility under HOME Funds
- 2 components:
  - Union actions (Annex XV) 63 bn EUR e.g. Unity safety Net, Home affairs actions, LIFE actions, Solidarity Actions, inter alia social innovation and the social window of InvestEU
  - Emerging challenges and priorities cushion (budget cushion) 8,7 bn EUR
- Management mode: Shared, direct, indirect management
- Implementation: grants, procurement, budgetary guarantees and financial instruments, blending, indirect management
- **Adoption**: COM financing decision: annual, multiannual; objectives and actions identified based on objective criteria ensuring balanced distribution; specific rules on allocating HOME affairs funds
- Eligibility: open to participation of third countries



## **EU Facility**

- **Top-up of the NRPP fast track** [Art. 31(7)]: COM allocating the funds to the Plan, new measures by Member States; notification by COM => NO adoption by COM or Council
- Unity Safety Net / AGRI reserve [Art. 31 (2), 32]: based on comitology
- **Solidarity Actions / natural disasters:** [Art. 31 (8), 34) + criteria in Annex XV part 2]: cascade mechanism with 4 stages but 1 Plan amendment
  - 1. Reprogramming
  - 2. Flexibility amount
  - 3. Union actions under EU Facility
  - 4. Budget cushion



## **EU Facility**

- Union actions (Art. 31, Annex XV) supporting employment and social policy actions:
  - social innovation, social experimentation, capacity building of stakeholders (local, national, Union level, inc. transnational cooperation), labour mobility and integrated labour markets, including the cross-border dimension of social security systems [NRPP, Annex XV 1.b]
  - social microfinance, social enterprise finance, social economy, skills, education and training, social infrastructure, inclusion and accessibility [NRPP, Annex XV 1.c]
  - evidence-based policy making in areas related to the European Pillar of Social Rights [NRPP, Annex XV 1.d]



#### Negotiations

- Adoption of the MFF package is a complex process of negotiations which has just started
  - with detailed **examination** of the individual proposals;
  - to be followed by adoption of **negotiating positions** of the co-legislators;
  - and concluded by trilogues.
- MFF regulation and revenue system will be discussed in the Council, acting by unanimity, with the consent of the European Parliament for the MFF, and where relevant ratification by national parliaments for the revenue.
- Sectorial regulations will be negotiated in parallel in a 'nothing is agreed until everything is agreed' approach and adopted in the co-decision procedure by both Council and the European Parliament.
- The Commission will do everything in its power to support a swift agreement.
- In full respect of the partnership principle and multilevel governance, Member States should start preparing the NRP Plans with a view of their submission to the Commission between June 2027 and February 2028.



## Negotiations

#### Working method in the Council

- the key MFF proposals and provisions are discussed in the Ad hoc Working Party for the MFF (AHWP MFF) and its 3 subgroups: NRP, ECF, Global Europe Instrument. The examination started in late July.
- The Performance Regulation is discussed in the Budget Committee (COMBUD), and the revenue system in the Own Resources Working Party.
- The ESF proposal will be discussed in the Structural Measures and outermost regions working party (SMOR).
  - DG REGIO and DG EMPL, respectively, will be in lead for the negotiations in SMOR for the cohesion policy proposals. Examination to start in mid-September.
- On 31 July, the Council Presidency distributed **bracketed proposals.** 
  - The bracketed provisions are most likely to feature in the future MFF Negotiating Box (NB) to be presented to the leaders (EUCO).
  - The AHWP MFF will examine the 'bracketed' parts of the proposals, while the relevant working parties will examine the remaining parts and may not conclude discussions on the bracketed provisions.
- The decision on the working method in the EP is pending.
  - TBD in October





# Thank you

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