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ANNEX 1

of Commission Implementing Decision on the ENI East Regional Action Programme 2020 part 4,
to be financed from the general budget of the Union

Action Document for EU4Youth phase III

ANNUAL PROGRAMME

This document constitutes the annual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation and action programme/measure in the sense of Articles 2 and 3 of Regulation N° 236/2014.

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| 1. Title/basic act/ CRIS number | EU4Youth – Phase III CRIS number: 2020 / 042-751 financed under the European Neighbourhood Instrument | |
| 2. Zone benefiting from the action/location | Eastern Partnership region The action shall be carried out at the following location: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eastern Partnership countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine; • EU Member States. | |
| 3. Programming document | Regional East Strategy Paper (2014 - 2020) and Multiannual Regional Indicative Programme 2017 - 2020 for the Neighbourhood East | |
| 4. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) | Main SDG Goals: 4 - Education; 8 –Economic growth and decent work; 5 - Gender equality | |
| 5. Sector of intervention/ thematic area | Youth, education, human capital development, employment | DEV. Assistance: YES |
| 6. Amounts concerned | Total estimated cost: EUR 16.92 million Total amount of European Union contribution: EUR 16.2 million Co-financing by Central Project Management Agency (Lithuania), for an indicative amount of EUR 0.72 million | |
| 7. Aid modality(ies) and implementation modality(ies) | Project Modality Direct management through: - Procurement Indirect management with: - Central Project Management Agency (Lithuania) | |
| 8 a) DAC code(s) | 11230 - Basic life skills for youth and adults 11330 - VET 11420 – Higher Education | |

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|---|---|--------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| | 16020 – Employment policy and administrative management | | | |
| b) Main Delivery Channel | 13000 - Third Country Government (Delegated co-operation) | | | |
| 9. Markers (from CRIS DAC form) | General policy objective | Not targeted | Significant objective | Principal objective |
| | Participation development/good governance | <input type="checkbox"/> | x | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Aid to environment | <input type="checkbox"/> | x | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Gender equality and Women's and Girl's Empowerment | <input type="checkbox"/> | x | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Trade Development | x | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Reproductive, Maternal, New born and child health | x | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | RIO Convention markers | Not targeted | Significant objective | Principal objective |
| | Biological diversity | x | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Combat desertification | x | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Climate change mitigation | <input type="checkbox"/> | x | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Climate change adaptation | x | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Internal markers | Not targeted | Significant objective | Principal objective |
| Digitalisation | <input type="checkbox"/> | x | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| COVID Response | <input type="checkbox"/> | x | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| 10. Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) thematic flagships | N/A | | | |

SUMMARY

An **Eastern Partnership (EaP) Youth and Education package** for 2017 – 2020 worth EUR 340 million was announced at the Eastern Partnership summit of 2017. As key part of this package, the **EU4Youth initiative** was deployed to support skills development and employability assistance to over **18,000 young people** in the Eastern Partnership countries by 2020 - the majority from disadvantaged backgrounds and/or women. It also supported around **125 youth organisations** directly (and many more indirectly), in addition to fostering the development of more effective **policy responses** to challenges for youth.

Building on progress achieved under previous phases, the present action constitutes **phase III** of the EU4Youth initiative. While completing the EU's financial commitment to youth support under the Youth and Education package, this new phase of EU4Youth will already contribute to achieving the objectives relating to youth under the March 2020 **Joint Communication on the Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020**, which retains, with its **New Deal for Youth**, support to youth employment and entrepreneurship as well as youth participation and leadership in the focus of EaP cooperation.

The proposed action comprises the following four components:

1. A next generation **grants scheme on youth employment and entrepreneurship**, with a focus on fostering young people's **digital skills, skills needed for green transition**, alongside **entrepreneurial and career management skills**.
2. The EaP countries will be supported in developing and/or implementing active labour market policies through adopting suitable elements from the **EU Youth Guarantee**, with the aim of integrating young people into the labour market, particularly targeting disadvantaged youth.
3. Extra scholarships will allow more students from the EaP countries to study at the **College of Europe**, to increase the understanding of EaP youth of European politics and governance and foster multi-cultural learning.
4. Support for **EU4Youth horizontal coordination** will enter a new phase to ensure a coherent implementation of EU4Youth programme and its individual components.

1. CONTEXT ANALYSIS

1.1 Context Description

The six countries in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) region are diverse in size, political systems, demography and social and economic terms, but they share some **common challenges**. They have been undergoing **socio-economic transformation** towards the market economy, with significant differences in terms of economic development between the countries and within them, with capital regions and big cities being the most developed.

Global trends are also affecting these countries, with **globalisation, demographic shifts, digitalisation, technological and climate change** being the most prominent. EaP countries are open to **international trade**, with Belarus and Georgia highly dependent on exports, having Russia as the main partner. At the same time, all the countries rely strongly on **remittances**, with a high share of **labour force migrating** to EU countries or Russia. Furthermore, there is a noticeable increase in the contribution of services to GDP, which also translates into **changing employment structure**. However, employment in low-productive agriculture remains substantial, except in Belarus. The shift is illustrated by the growing **labour productivity**, but still at relatively low levels. In this respect, there is also room to improve EaP economies' **competitiveness and innovation capacity** as they rank on the middle range of Global Competitiveness Index¹ and Global Innovation Index².

The positive 2020 economic outlook for EaP countries has radically changed following the global spread of the **COVID-19**. The expected GDP contractions will put additional burden on public finances and policy implementation. The crisis has not only very serious **economic repercussions**, it has also emphasised the **importance of digital skills** in order to continue functioning in today's world.

The transformation EaP countries are going through in relation to socio-economic and global trends require proper **human resources for socio-economic development and growth**. However, the **human capital potential is still not fully utilised**. The **youth population is declining** in most of the countries due to an overall ageing population which is caused by an increasing life expectancy and a low fertility rate. This in consequence will affect the composition of labour force and will influence the education and training system. The **share of the working age population** is estimated to decrease by 20% in comparison to the total population by 2050.³ **Migration** aggravates the demographic decline. Already, over the past five years, the absolute numbers of students in VET

¹ World Economic Forum, 2019 Global Competitiveness Index 4.0 http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_TheGlobalCompetitivenessReport2019.pdf.

² <https://www.globalinnovationindex.org/Home>.

³ UN Population Division, World Population Prospects 2019.

and higher education in the region dropped by 25%.⁴ Demography aside, the **labour force is highly underutilised**. Too many people are inactive, in vulnerable jobs or unemployed, while also many of them are overqualified for the jobs they are performing. Inactivity reaches 39% of the working age population in Armenia and 57% in Moldova.⁵ Self-employment in most cases is vulnerable employment. The future for many people is uncertain and problems are most serious for the young entering the labour force as well as older workers over 50. There are huge variations between the countries but the general trend that labour is getting scarcer and that the countries **need to make better use of the human capital** they have is valid for all countries.

Youth unemployment rates are consistently higher than overall unemployment rates, reaching 38.4% in Armenia (2017) and 29.9% in Georgia (2018).⁶ This points to a **difficult school to work transition**, mainly due to **weak (quality) jobs creation**, but also insufficient **quality of education and training**. Overall, EaP countries continue to face challenges in creating **quality jobs with decent conditions and wages**. Lack of domestic and foreign direct investment, restrictive or inefficient business environment, as well as political instability and uncertainty all contribute to the **weak job creation**. In this context, **young people** are more likely than adults to accept jobs that are low paid and offer limited employment stability, social protection and opportunities for career progression. The consequences of **COVID-19** may also disproportionately hit young people, particularly the most vulnerable ones. Most EaP countries (except Belarus) experience a high number of **young people neither in education, employment nor training (NEETs)**. The numbers reached, for example, 28.5% of youth 15-24 years old in Armenia, 24.8% in Georgia or 20.2% in the Republic of Moldova in 2018, with young women being the most affected. More **vulnerable youth** is facing particular challenges in the society, education and labour market. Disadvantages linked with social background, geographical location, sex, ethnic origin, learning difficulties or early leaving from education aggravate already difficult situation of a young person. Addressing the main challenges for disadvantaged young people through increasing their educational, training and/or employment opportunities is essential for social cohesion, inclusion and **reduction of inequalities** in EaP societies. Promoting the inclusion of **young women** with the final objective of achieving gender balance is a key part of this endeavour.

1.2 Policy Framework (Global, EU)

In its 2015 European Neighbourhood Policy Review, the EU highlights **youth as a priority area** for cooperation, and improving prospects for youth as a key to stabilise societies. This is why the **5th Eastern Partnership (EaP) Summit** of November 2017⁷ endorsed a new **Youth and Education Package** as one of the key **EaP 20 Deliverables for 2020**, aiming to create the conditions for youth to study, work, participate in society and fulfil their potential. The 2019 EaP 10th Anniversary High Level Conference also emphasised the need to focus on supporting and empowering the young generation, equally the 2015, 2017 and 2019 **EaP Youth Fora**.

Most recently, the March 2020 Joint Communication on the **Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020 - Reinforcing Resilience - an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all**⁸ outlines the new long-term policy objectives for the Eastern Partnership beyond 2020. This document sets out the measures that aim to strengthen resilience, foster sustainable development and deliver tangible results for society. A key element of this policy is a **New Deal for Youth** with a focus on **youth education, employment, and political engagement**. Support will foster youth education, employability and employment, in particular through modernisation and innovation at all levels of education and training, addressing the gap between the labour market and the education sector, and

⁴ ETF calculations based on change in participation 2013/2014 -2018/2019.

⁵ ETF KIESE 2019 after National Statistical Offices.

⁶ ETF KIESE 2019.

⁷ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/31758/final-statement-st14821en17.pdf>.

⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/joint_communication_on_the_eap_policy_beyond_2020.pdf.

active labour market measures, such as elements of the EU the Youth Guarantee. Furthermore, youth political engagement will be strengthened through setting up a structured youth policy dialogue within a network of EaP youth councils, modelled on the EU-internal youth dialogue. The July 2020 EaP **Youth Engagement Summit** brought around 450 active youth leaders and youth workers together for a dialogue with EU and EaP policy makers on ongoing EU - EaP cooperation and on the future support to youth under the New Deal for Youth.⁹

Youth is also a general priority for the EU, which has developed a youth policy at EU level since 2001¹⁰. In May 2018, the Commission proposed a **new EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027**¹¹, building on the EU Youth Strategy 2010-2018¹². In particular, the strategy aims to: foster youth participation in democratic life; bring young people together across the EU and beyond to foster voluntary engagement, connect youth through learning mobility, online collaboration through Erasmus+ Virtual Exchanges, solidarity and intercultural understanding; and support to youth empowerment through quality, innovation and recognition of youth work.

Under the previous EU Youth Strategy, the **Youth Guarantee**¹³ and the **European Alliance for Apprenticeships**¹⁴ have been rolled-out to support young people's successful transition into work. In July 2020, the European Commission published a Communication on **Youth Employment Support – a Bridge to Jobs for the next Generation**¹⁵, together with a proposal for Council recommendations, reinforcing the Youth Guarantee, as well as a Communication on the **European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience**¹⁶ which advocates for a paradigm-shift on skills to support in turn the delivery on a bold skills agenda for jobs, addressing the needs related to the COVID-19 recovery in line with the priorities of the digital and green transitions. Whilst these policy initiatives are not directly applicable to EU Neighbourhood countries, their objectives and approaches as well as best practice examples from implementation can be an inspiration for the Neighbourhood countries.

The **COVID-19 situation** and the experience of **Erasmus+ Virtual Exchanges** offer as well as a basis for **strengthening connectivity and digital exchange**.

Finally, both the **European Green Deal**¹⁷ and the **Digital Agenda**¹⁸ impact the EU's cooperation with its Eastern neighbours.

1.3 Public Policy Analysis of the partner country/region

Youth employment, employability and skills development are priorities of national governments' youth policies in all Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries. All have specific policies in place, targeted **strategies and programmes up to 2020/2025**, and state structures responsible for youth affairs.

⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/news_corner/news/eastern-partnership-youth-engagement-summit-unique-virtual-event-discusses-new-deal_en.

¹⁰ European Commission White Paper "A New Impetus for European Youth", COM(2001)681, 21.11.2001.

¹¹ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, "Engaging, Connecting and Empowering young people: a new EU Youth Strategy", COM(2018) 269 final.

¹² Council Resolution of 27 November 2009, Official Journal of the European Union, C311, 19.12.2009.

¹³ Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee (2013/C 120/01).

¹⁴ Launched in July 2013 with a joint declaration by the European Social Partners (ETUC, Business Europe, UEAPME and CEEP), the European Commission and the Presidency of the Council of the EU; see also Council Declaration, 18 Oct. 2013.

¹⁵ Commission communication and proposal for Council Conclusions of 1 July 2020 on A Bridge to Jobs -Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee and replacing Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee (COM(2020)276 and COM(2020) 277 final).

¹⁶ Commission communication of 1 July 2020 on European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience, COM(2020) 274 final.

¹⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en.

¹⁸ <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/64/digital-agenda-for-europe>.

Countries have put in efforts to build modern education and training policy frameworks, paying attention to quality improvements.

Armenia is currently reviewing its **education strategy** and **employment strategy** to set the agenda beyond 2020 and implementing an **action plan for the vocational education and training** sector for the period 2017-2023. The country is setting up an **Integrated Social Service Model** in order to assist young people with appropriate comprehensive and individualised solutions.

Azerbaijan has adopted a new **employment strategy** for 2017-2030 with clear targets to reduce the number of NEETs and unemployment among young women. A large-scale **self-employment programme** and a **youth employment scheme** focus on job creation in the regions.

Belarus' guiding strategy for the education sector and youth policy is the **State Programme on Education and Youth Policy 2016–2020**, which is currently being reviewed towards 2025 objectives. The **State Programme on Social Protection and Employment Promotion** for 2016-2020 (SPSPEP 2016-2020) with its sub-programme "Promoting the employment of the population" includes activities supporting youth employment, including provision of career guidance, monitoring and adaptation of graduates of institutions of higher, secondary specialised and vocational education on the first workplace. Particular attention is paid to disabled people and other groups of the population who are not able to compete on an equal basis in the labour market.

The '**Georgia 2020**' strategy sets out an overall policy framework for employment with actions to develop labour market intelligence, ensure effective communication between employers and jobseekers; develop public and private job mediation services, create a system for retraining unemployed people and jobseekers and launch programmes to promote self-employment and entrepreneurial activities. It will further be complemented by a new **National Strategy of the Labour and Employment Policy** for 2019-2023. At the same time, the unified **Education and Science Strategy** for 2017-2021 is the main guiding document for education. The new Youth Agency of Georgia has started systematic support for building a youth policy ecosystem.

Important steps have been taken in the Republic of **Moldova** to improve the legal and institutional framework governing the labour market through the implementation of the National Employment Strategy 2017–21. A **youth employment programme**, 'Start for Young People', and the **action plans of the public employment services** pay special attention to improving work-based learning and career guidance. The '**Education 2020**' and **VET Development Strategy 2013–20** focus on modernising and optimising the education and training systems for high-quality lifelong learning, with particular attention to the relevance for the labour market.

The 2017 **Framework Law on Education of Ukraine** endorses the concept of the 'New Ukrainian School', which develops modern standards for education with a competence-based approach and a more effective governance. The '**Modern Professional Education until 2027**' plan sets objectives for a systemic VET reform, which implies decentralising the governance and financing, quality assurance and public-private partnership. While **employment policies** are being redesigned focusing on improving their effectiveness, the youth policies are governed by several acts, including the **Youth Policy Development Strategy 2016-2020**.

According to the 2020 Small Business Act assessment¹⁹, most countries of the Eastern Partnership (except Belarus) have developed **entrepreneurial learning** and entrepreneurship key competence as part of their national education policies or programmes. Policy instruments range from the inclusion of entrepreneurial learning in the national curriculum (e.g. **Armenia, Georgia**) or as part of education legislation (e.g. **Azerbaijan, Ukraine**) to a more comprehensive, cross-policy package (e.g. **Moldova**). The value of a cross-policy approach – as in **Moldova**, where entrepreneurial learning is an integral feature of the national Education Code and SME strategy and enshrined in

¹⁹ OECD, ETF, EBRD 2020: SME Policy Index: Eastern Partner Countries 2020. Assessing the Implementation of the Small Business Act for Europe <https://www.oecd.org/science/sme-policy-index-eastern-partner-countries-2020-8b45614b-en.htm>.

SME legislation – is that a mutually-reinforcing package of education and economic policies facilitates implementation in areas such as school-business co-operation. It also prompts diverse stakeholders (e.g. education authorities, SME agencies, schools, businesses) to cooperate in the development of entrepreneurial learning, ensuring that economic and education policies are consistent, coherent and complementary. **Armenia and Georgia** introduced a compulsory entrepreneurship module for all VET students in 2019/2020, which teaches them basic entrepreneurial skills.

While young people's education and employment is high on the political agenda, **school to work transition** is not yet sufficiently addressed. Budgetary resources are **prioritising higher and general education over Vocational Education and Training (VET)**. Participation in VET has dropped significantly despite shortages of skilled labour force. Furthermore, policy attention is put primarily to **formal education**, while the potential of **non-formal and informal learning** is not yet tapped into. Investments in quality and accessibility of education and training are slowly bearing fruits in some countries, which is visible in the students' assessment (e.g. PISA²⁰), but the **substantial dropouts from education** as well as **skills mismatches** call for further action.

The EaP countries have taken some steps towards integrating **environmental considerations** into the economic and social reforms. This is in particular important to decrease the countries' dependency on energy imports, decrease pollution and promote more sustainable societies. The overall **greening of the economies** and upgrading the environmental standards go in line with the EU and other important trade partners' requirements. Reducing the impact of the carbon footprint is an issue of awareness and individual and corporate responsibility. Generic skills as autonomy and communication skills are seen as critical as well as generic green skills in areas as waste reduction, energy and resource efficiency. There are specialised **green skills** for some occupations but in most cases, it concerns topping up existing profiles.²¹

In line with the strategic frameworks, all EaP countries are designing and delivering **specific active labour market policies (ALMP) targeting youth**. Comprehensive schemes similar to the very successful set of ALMP initiatives under the **EU Youth Guarantee**, however, are not in place in any of the EaP countries. What seems to be lacking for the success of similar measures is an **integrated and cross-sectoral approach to youth policy** formulation and implementation, which would take into consideration the complexity of youth challenges. There are many actors active in the field of youth employment, however their capacity is still limited in view of existing challenges and platforms of cooperation at national level are limited.

Not all young people have the same chances, and there is clear evidence that those from smaller rural localities, minorities, internally displaced persons or those affected by any other form of vulnerability, are more likely to face poverty, have less learning and work opportunities and need a special support adapted to the needs of **disadvantaged youth**.²²

To sum up, notwithstanding the comprehensive strategic and policy frameworks, there is a **gap between policy intentions and realities** on the ground in all EaP countries. Existing **policies** need further elaboration and more stringent implementation to address the main challenges for school to work transition and youth unemployment. Moreover, weak **coordination** of education, employment and youth and policies weakens positive effects already achieved.

1.4 Stakeholder analysis

Key stakeholders include *inter alia*:

²⁰ OECD, PISA 2018 results <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/publications/pisa-2018-snapshots.htm>

²¹ <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/skills-green-economy>. There is no internationally accepted definition of green skills.

²² ETF 2019, Policies supporting youth transition to work in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2019-04/Youth%20transition%20EaP_0.pdf.

- public/private and civil society organisations targeting youth: youth workers, youth centres, youth advice centres, youth councils (national and sub-national), youth/youth-led organisations,
- schools and educational institutions, out-of-school educational establishments, VET centres, training providers, agencies involved in shaping learning processes,
- businesses (including social enterprises), business associations, professional organisations, social partners (trade unions and employers organisations) and clusters,
- public employment services, private job agencies and portals,
- relevant national, regional and local authorities, including from rural areas,
- EaP Youth Councils set up modelled along the EU Youth Dialogue structures²³,

Key target groups include *inter alia*:

- young women and young men, in particular disadvantaged youth, low achievers, early school leavers, NEET's,
- young leaders and entrepreneurs,
- youth organisations and youth workers,
- relevant national, regional and local authorities, including from rural areas.

Available information shows that institutions dealing with youth issues – notably youth organisations, employment services, local authorities - often have insufficient capacity and knowledge to develop or implement appropriate responses or to engage with other actors. Moreover, actions targeting youth are often fragmented, while there is a need for a cross-sectorial approach to achieve results in such complex area.

1.5 Problem analysis /priority areas for support

Within the context set out above, this action will contribute to **human capital development, transformation in the education system, a systematic approach to lifelong learning, and it will propose active labour market measures – all with a focus on youth.** Moreover, with its focus on employment, digitalisation and green transformation, the action will also contribute to the EU's COVID-19 recovery support to EaP countries.

Upskilling the workforce is important for improving **innovation, productivity and diversification** of goods and services, especially to support the growth potential of SMEs.²⁴ Current trends such as **greening, digitalisation** and dealing with the **fall-out of the COVID-19 crisis** have a big impact on training and learning. **Active labour market measures** will increase the employment opportunities and help improving to match the demand (jobs vacancies) with the supply side (job seekers).

Human capital development refers to the creation of **lifelong learning systems** that provide opportunities and incentives for people to develop their competences (i.e. the interplay of knowledge, skills and attitudes) throughout their lives for the sake of employment and realisation of their potential, and as a contribution to prosperous, innovative and inclusive societies. There is a **need for different forms of learning**, including on-the-job work-based learning and blended learning, and focused short and individualised programmes to activate these learners. **Lifelong learning systems** would need to **connect all these different forms of learning**. This means that different types of providers, local authorities and enterprises need to work closer together. **Young people** should be able to navigate job and training opportunities and to combine these. There is a need to improve information on skill needs, job opportunities and learning and more opportunities to recognise skills and qualifications. While the number of **youth in VET and higher education** declines, the attention has to shift gradually to **adult learning**. In most countries access to adult learning is very limited, reaching, for example, only 1% of the labour force in Georgia and 0.8% in

²⁴ OECD, ETF, EBRD 2020: SME Policy Index.

Ukraine, and the participants are often the most educated. Existing education providers are poorly equipped to provide flexible training for unemployed NEETs and young people in vulnerable jobs. The economic transformation requires also a set of **new skills**, for instance relating to entrepreneurship in green and digital economy, career management skills as well as leadership to guide the change.

In terms of **digital readiness** all EaP countries are in the middle stage (the accelerate stage), however with substantial disparities in terms of infrastructure, technology adoption and internet users. **COVID-19** has exposed the **importance of digital skills and connectivity** for societies, education and the labour market. Many **young people** (and especially in rural areas and smaller towns that are not well connected) have reached a seemingly hopeless situation, cut off from lifelong learning and employment opportunities. They often lack the devices to learn online, even if there is connectivity. **VET** was particularly effected, not only because practice was interrupted, but also because there are few online learning applications existing for VET in the countries. **Blended learning** combining face to face with online learning and connecting different learning environments beyond schools is expected to develop. With blended solutions becoming more common in the future, youth should be able to benefit from new opportunities through better online tools provided access is improved.

Active labour market measures are mainly implemented by **Public Employment Services (PES)**, but their **outreach is very limited and registration rates across countries are low**. A general lack of trust of young people in public institutions is exacerbated by a limited financial and staff capacity of PES to deliver quality services. Active labour market measures are generally underfunded, limiting their coverage among inactive, unemployed and job seekers. Despite the efforts to improve PES effectiveness, they are overburdened with administrative work, which limits the capacity to outreach to employers and thus offer mainly unattractive low-skilled and low-paid vacancies. The lack of attractiveness and awareness among young people about the existing youth employment policies and measures further reduces their effectiveness.

A comprehensive capital development approach requires **engagement from governmental, non-governmental and international stakeholders** across all relevant domains (education, employment and social inclusion) working closely together to develop and supervise capacities and policies affecting young people, in particular to reach out to disadvantaged groups in rural areas/regions. Actions should focus on activating and strengthening the skills of youth that has left the education system as well as the less advantaged and still part of the education system.

Building on **substantial EU support**, provided mainly through bilateral VET support programmes, under the **employability and career development objective of this action** an innovative component taking inspiration from best practice examples of the Youth Guarantee implementation in EU Member States will be introduced. This component will focus on building a comprehensive approach to mitigate the impact of different youth vulnerabilities and disadvantages by building cross-sector partnerships between public, non-governmental and private institutions. The **Youth Guarantee** in the EU and pilot actions in the Western Balkans are offering some tested conceptual and practical examples as well as policy frameworks that can be a starting point for developing appropriate policy response options in the EaP countries. **Peer learning and piloting of best practice examples** will be the main elements to share experiences and tested solutions within the EaP region and for exchanges of good practices from the EU and other countries. The EaP countries have already developed and piloted special measures for out-of-school youth, including NEETs and jobseekers. Building on these measures as well as the work carried out under the ‘Youth Engagement Roadmaps’ project under EU4Youth phase II, stock-taking of systems, capacities and practices, including through self-assessment will contribute to further knowledge sharing. **Virtual exchanges** could be created to activate the disengaged youth and support them in navigating career opportunities and in developing career management skills. The programme will support partners, including the **Public Employment Services, education and social services, civil society, social partners, relevant business organisations** and others so to enhance the capacities for outreach,

guidance and coaching offers oriented towards young NEETs, early school leavers and other vulnerable youth. It will focus on building capacities to provide both preventive and activation measures based on individual needs of young people and with the support of professional guidance and intermediation. Within this component the programme will seek to build the basis for a more structured answer based on the examples under the EU-wide **Youth Guarantee**. Networking between PES from EaP countries could be supported to foster mutual learning, and experience sharing. By providing an institutionalized regional platform, such a network would facilitate cooperation with established PES networks in the EU and in the Western Balkans.

Grants projects under the EU4Youth scheme phases I and II will have **successfully reached out to up to 18,000** youth strengthening **employability and entrepreneurial skills** - the majority from disadvantaged backgrounds - and building capacities among youth related organisations. The **phase III grant scheme** will build on this success by empowering young people's ideas and projects, in this phase, in the areas of **green and digital** entrepreneurship, as well as fostering **green and digital skills** acquisition among young people. **Disadvantaged youth** in particular in rural areas and small cities need to remain in the focus of attention.

Finally, **higher education** is a building block for providing young generations the tools, skills and values to work for a modern, prosperous and peaceful society. Erasmus+ programme supports academic and youth mobility and cooperation projects. The provision of **scholarships for the College of Europe**, Natolin campus will be part of the EU's broader regional efforts in this sector. Graduates will be encouraged to join the EU4Youth alumni scheme and become active ambassadors for youth opportunities in their regions of origin.

2. RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

| Risks | Risk level | Mitigating measures |
|--|------------|---|
| The COVID-19 crisis impacts the socio-economic situation in EaP countries - higher unemployment rates, pressure on education and training systems to modernise and go digital, increased poverty rates and vulnerable groups | High | Coping with the economic consequences through focussing on education and 21 st century skills development, youth employment and sustainable livelihoods in particular for vulnerable groups is at the centre of this action and directly contributing to EU COVID-19 recovery support to EaP countries. |
| The low level of commitment by EaP national and local institutions may lead to low participation from EaP institutions in the activities promoted by this action. | Low | Policy dialogue in the various fora of the EaP architecture and on bilateral level will ensure activities are relevant to the needs of public officials and ensures political commitment of national officials. |
| Difficulties in reaching out to disadvantaged young people, risking that the programme will not be able to involve them. | Medium | A focus on disadvantaged youth will be ensured, notably by fostering social entrepreneurship to reach out to disadvantaged youth, enhancing relevant public institutions and promoting local/regional partnerships involving key stakeholders with experience in targeting disadvantaged young people, as well as the early engagement of representatives of the main beneficiaries of the programme. |
| Uneven participation across the region and | Medium | Equal access and opportunities will be ensured |

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|--|------|---|
| within countries, due to variations in the capacity and commitment of authorities and civil society organisations. | | and monitored by the EU4Youth coordination component (component 3 under EU4Youth – Phase I) as well as through the steering committee and other policy dialogue fora (e.g. Platform 4 and Panel on Education, Culture and Youth). Grants will require participation from a minimum number of EaP countries (ex. 3) and/or participation of local authorities/organisations. Countries with weak participation in the grants scheme may get extra support under the service component. |
| The political situation in Belarus will seriously hamper project implementation or even lead to a freezing of cooperation with authorities. | High | All reasonable and appropriate efforts will be undertaken to implement in BY the actions implemented by EU and/or Belarusian civil society organisations and in addition the ones on campaigning and awareness raising. |
| Other political and social unrest, including related to unresolved conflicts. | High | Flexibility to allocate resources to other countries and other components of the programme |
| Assumptions | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There is some degree of political stability in the region; ➤ Youth employment, employability and participation are key priorities for public authorities; ➤ The COVID-19 situation allows for in situ, hybrid or at least virtual work; ➤ Key stakeholders, notably private sector, can be mobilised if interested in partnerships; ➤ It is possible to reach out to disadvantaged youth, amongst other in rural/remote areas. | | |

3. LESSONS LEARNED AND COMPLEMENTARITY

3.1 Lessons learnt

The proposed programme is phase III of the **EU4Youth programme** launched in 2017 (€36.2 million 2016 - 2020) as one of the building blocks of the EaP Youth and Education Package. EU4Youth fosters the active participation of young people in society and their employability, by supporting youth participation, active citizenship, mobility, human capital development, employability and employment. At the same time it focusses on **disadvantaged young people** and regions and aims to establish cooperation and partnerships amongst different stakeholders.

EU4Youth Phase I and phase II have the following three components:

- **Capacity Building:** comprises grants for **Civil Society Fellowships** and for **Partnerships for Entrepreneurship**, to empower young people with skills for their active participation in democratic life:

So far, 101 projects (59 CFS and 42 PE) were selected, supporting 267 coordinating organisations and partners from the EaP region (AM 53, AZ 22, BY 14, GE 80, MD 40, UA 58) plus 305 from 30 EU (and other E+ Programme countries). Assuming that at least three Fellows were trained by each organisation participating in CSF (154) the number of Fellows would be around 462.

The demand for this **small grants scheme** has been very high and beneficiaries' feedback is generally positive. Sustainability of relations established will, *inter alia*, be pursued through the EU4Youth alumni network. Challenges to be addressed in the next phase include the need for an

enhanced capacity to monitor the projects, including financial controls, and ensure their visibility. This will need to be ensured by EACEA implementing these grants, with possible support through the EU4Youth coordination service contract.

- **Grant Scheme:** comprises grants for capacity building projects with a systemic impact addressing **youth employability and entrepreneurship, including social entrepreneurship**, with a focus on improving the employment perspectives of **disadvantaged young people**:

The ten selected projects (nine still ongoing - May 2020) involve 44 different organisations (either as coordinators or as partners) from 12 EaP and EU countries (EaP: one coordinator each from Belarus and Georgia; partners from Armenia (7), Belarus (3), Georgia (5), Moldova (6) and Ukraine (7)). The demand for this large grants scheme has been very high (more than 100 concept notes received per call), and beneficiaries' feedback is very positive.

The value added of these grants consists in: the creation of innovative and inspiring activities to increase employability and entrepreneurial skills of young people; the increased capacity of civil society / local level organisations to contribute to the socio-economic resilience of their societies, and the focus on youth, in particular disadvantaged young people while involving relevant stakeholders such as local administration, business community and training institutions/providers. Visibility, sustainability and impact look promising, and outreach after the end of the projects will, *inter alia*, be ensured by the EU4Youth alumni network. In a next phase, even more endeavours will be undertaken to reach out to the less advantaged part of the population. The consequences of the COVID-19 crisis will impact project results. And more efforts to link these grants to ongoing bilateral support need to be made.

- **Coordination and Support:** phase I) brought **coordination and support** to the EU4Youth programme and all its components; phase II) supported EaP partner countries in developing and implementing comprehensive, more effective, evidence-based **policy responses to challenges to youth**, notably in the fields of employability, employment and entrepreneurship; fosters the involvement of **young people in policy-making**:

Phase I has proven instrumental in ensuring the effective overall functioning, coordination, results orientation as well as coherence for communication and visibility of the programme with its ongoing grants and service contracts. Phase II started in the beginning of 2020, but is expected to advance important ground work, for instance as regards awareness raising and capacity building around the topics of Youth Dialogue and the EU Youth Guarantee.

While **scholarships to study at the College of Europe** are a new element under the EU4Youth phase III, Statistics show that about 46% of CoE graduates from EaP countries of the last 12 academic years took their first and/or current job in the public or private sectors in their countries of origin while 54% found their first or current employment outside their country of origin.²⁵

3.2 Complementarity, synergy and donor co-ordination

EU4Youth phases I and II

EU4Youth phases I and II will have provided skills development and employability assistance to over **18,000 young people** from the EaP region, more than 60% women and more than 45% were disadvantaged youth. Around 120 structures promoting youth integration and engagement have been established/supported. The programme is well on track to support a total of 27 structures promoting youth integration by June 2022. An **EU4Youth Alumni Network** was launched to streamline all beneficiaries of EU mobility programmes and youth networks in the EaP countries to increase the outreach and inclusion of disadvantaged youth groups.

²⁵ Figures provided by the College of Europe.

Building on these lessons learned, **phase III** will continue its focus on **disadvantaged youth and less privileged regions**. The large grants scheme will focus this time on two sectors of particular attractiveness for youth and employment potential, also in line with EU and EaP policy strategies, i.e. **digital and green** economies and society. Piloting youth employment support services based on best practice examples from the **EU Youth Guarantee** will be a new element, based on needs identified in the EaP and inspired by the successful EU model which will have been further explored under EU4Youth phase II. **Coordination and support** to the EU4Youth programme and all its components will continue. As all EU4Youth components are partially overlapping in time, synergy and coordination among the components, a coherent communication approach and good visibility under the common brand EU4Youth remain essential. Scholarships to study at the **College of Europe** will complement the large EAC grant to the operation of the College by offering scholarships to EaP students.

Erasmus+ Programme

The **Erasmus+ Programme** is the EU programme supporting education, training, youth and sport in Europe. Its budget of EUR 14.7 billion for 2014 – 2020 provides opportunities for more than four million Europeans to study, train and volunteer abroad. 10% of the budget is allocated to youth **non-formal learning activities**, including in Neighbourhood countries. In the Erasmus+ programme, Eastern Partnership countries participate in **Higher Education International Credit Mobility**, Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees, Capacity Building in Higher education and Jean Monet activities. In the **youth strand** of the Erasmus+ programme, countries participate in youth mobility projects (both for young people and staff) and Capacity building for youth. Cooperation with Erasmus+ bodies - e.g. **EACEA** and the SALTO Youth Eastern Europe²⁶ - will be ensured.

European Training Foundation

The **European Training Foundation (ETF)**'s expertise in promoting human capital development policies through education and training systems reform is key for this action. In 2018, the ETF carried out a regional report on the **policies supporting youth transition to work** in EaP countries, which can support these in developing more comprehensive youth policies/strategies. In 2019, the **Torino Process** has been implemented: the regular policy assessment for human capital development in the Eastern Partnership Countries (both in terms of country self-assessment and ETF independent assessment). Furthermore, the ETF undertook an analysis of policy and ecosystem support for the development of **entrepreneurial learning** across the education system as part of the Small Business Act (SBA) assessment. In addition, the ETF **Make-It-Match Network** and **Work-Based Learning Annual Fora** are platforms for multi-stakeholder dialogue among Eastern Partnership Countries, with a focus on **skills anticipation and matching** issues.

Bilateral and regional VET/skills development/employment/entrepreneurship programmes

Complementarity will be sought with ongoing and recent VET/skills development/employability/entrepreneurship actions implemented as part of **EU bilateral programmes**, aiming to address challenges such as skills anticipation and matching, employment and employability, work-based learning, private sector involvement in VET, modernisation of VET systems and increase of VET attractiveness. While bilateral support mainly focuses on reforms on government level and the work force in general, the added value of this regional action is its focus on youth, in particular disadvantaged young people. In addition, it supports initiatives on civil society / local level thus raising the capacity of non-state organisations to contribute to the socio-economic resilience of their societies. Finally, the role of public employment services has so far not played a sufficient role in bilateral support and the piloting of elements of the EU wide Youth Guarantee also merits a region-wide approach.

²⁶ SALTO EECA currently located within the Polish National Agency Foundation for Development of Education System (FDDES) which also deals with the eTwinning National Support Service (NSS), within the eTwinning Plus Programme.

Synergies will also be sought with actions under **EU4Business**, **EU4Innovation** and **EU4Digital**, which can further support young people in making direct use of their entrepreneurial potential and skills.

Coordination with other international organisations

Coordination with other international organisations - in particular the **United Nations** (UN) (i.e. the UN Youth Envoy), the **International Labour Organisation** (ILO), the **United Nations Development Programme** (UNDP), the **World Bank** (WB) and the **International Organisation for Migration** (IOM) – may be sought were relevant.

Linkages with political dialogue

The range of issues that affect youth calls for cross-sectoral approaches and coordination with all relevant sectors. The role of the EaP **Platform 4** is instrumental in enhancing coordination and coherence among actions and stakeholders in different areas. The biannual **EaP Youth Forum** is a great opportunity to deepen the dialogue on youth matters, at the presence of young people, youth workers and policy makers.

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

4.1 Overall objective, specific objective(s), expected outputs and indicative actions

Overall objective: to foster **active participation of youth in both democratic life and in the labour markets of the beneficiary countries**, with a focus on disadvantaged youth, thus contributing to sustainable and smart growth, social cohesion and reduction of inequalities in EaP societies. Specific objectives and related components:

SO1. To foster young people's digital skills, skills needed for green transition, alongside entrepreneurial and career management skills

Expected outputs of SO 1:

- 1.1 **Formal and non-formal education and training** initiatives, with a focus on **upskilling and reskilling** in particular **disadvantaged youth**, and that relate to the **digital and green transformations**, are enhanced or set up
- 1.2 **Youth entrepreneur start-ups** in the field of **digital and green** economies supported and information about and **access to existing business support** schemes available for young entrepreneurs
- 1.3 **Networks and partnerships for youth entrepreneurship** strengthened with regard to the digital and green transformations, involving relevant private and public actors, education and training institutions and representative youth organisations

Indicative actions under SO 1:

- Capacity building, training and mentorship activities with focus on **digital skills, skills needed for green transition and skills** crucial for developing entrepreneurial potential, provided in formal and non-formal education and training contexts;
- Promotion of **effective and adapted approaches for work-based learning** (WBL) in domains relevant to the digital and green transformations, including, for example, apprenticeships, traineeships, quality assurance, coaching, awareness raising of companies to host learners;
- **Awareness raising** amongst young people on the **potential of digital and green development** for personal career development;

- Support to **youth entrepreneur start-ups** that have potential for realising innovative solutions in the areas of **digital and green economy**, including through training, mentoring, coaching and sub-granting as well as through targeted awareness raising to strengthen connections with existing business support schemes;
- **Strengthening of networks and partnerships for youth entrepreneurship** with regard to the **digital and green transformations**, through studies, workshops and other activities, involving private and public actors such as business membership organisations, specialised civil society organisations, ministry departments, education and training providers and National Youth Councils.
- Promotion of transnational **exchange of experience and best practices between EaP countries** with regards to digital upskilling and reskilling of disadvantaged youth as well as to youth entrepreneurship, including social entrepreneurship.

SO2.1 To develop cross-sector partnerships between public, private and non-governmental institutions in the area of employability and career development for youth, in particular disadvantaged

SO2.2 To build structural capacities of key institutions for mapping, outreach, preparation and offers in view of employment, continued education, apprenticeships or traineeship (piloting of EaP Youth Guarantee – type schemes)

Expected outputs of SO 2:

- 2.1 Cross-sector multi-stakeholder **partnerships for policy dialogue and coordination** on youth employment are strengthened, and related capacity built to **support the design and piloting of Youth Guarantee-type initiatives** at regional and national levels
- 2.2 National **public employment services** together with other key institutions are supported to develop **strategies for integrated youth activation measures** as well as supported for tailored Youth Guarantee-type **pilot actions related to mapping, outreach, preparation and offers to NEETs** and other disadvantaged youth groups
- 2.3 **Employers and young people** have increased **awareness about decent work standards**, incl. about labour legislation, rights and obligations, health and safety at work
- 2.4. Creation of a **network of Public Employment Services from EaP countries** and EaP stakeholders' **participation in other relevant transnational networks for peer learning and information exchange** with EU Member States, the Western Balkans and Turkey enhanced.

Indicative actions under SO 2:

- Organisation of roundtables, policy labs, workshops and similar to strengthen **cross-sector multi-stakeholder policy dialogue** about Youth Guarantee-type actions at regional and national levels, and organising trainings, facilitating national and international experts' inputs in view of strategic planning capacities.
- Build **institutional capacities of public employment services** and other key institutions through trainings and support their strategy updates and action planning through targeted consultancy on specific aspects of the youth guarantee, i.e. related to mapping, outreach, preparation and offers to NEETs.
- Support **employment services** (public and private) to implement new innovative actions for **effective youth activation measures**, including sharing of information on vacancies e.g. online (sub-national, national and cross-country levels) as well as on career development opportunities; and on the provision of career information and guidance and career management skills, in cooperation with relevant training providers;

- Enable **training and service providers and public employment services** for delivering innovative learning provision: competence development and other support for teachers and trainers; work-place simulators, online training offer and mentorship programmes in partnership with employers' organisations and for employers to enhance apprenticeships, traineeships and other work-based learning opportunities for youth;
- Support regulatory initiatives to advance in line with European best practice **validation and certification of skills** acquired through diverse learning and work experiences beyond formal educational qualifications e.g.: volunteering, community work, international mobilities, and other informal and non-formal learning settings;
- Carry out **awareness raising activities for young people** on labour legislation, rights and obligations, health and safety at work.
- Create opportunities for increased involvement of EaP stakeholders in mutual exchanges of good and innovative practices with public employment services within the region and with EU countries, e.g. by organising events and conducting studies in cooperation with ETF, the European network of Public Employment Services and/or other regional networks and other relevant actors.

SO 3. To strengthened understanding of European politics and governance among EaP youth

Expected outputs of SO 3:

3.1 Indicatively 75 EaP students have been granted **scholarships to study at the College of Europe**

Indicative action under SO 3:

- Design, launch, run and monitor indicatively **75 scholarships** over three academic years for a selected and geographically balanced number of students from all six EaP countries covering tuition, boarding and other study and relocation related fees.

SO4. To ensure the effective overall functioning, coordination and visibility of the programme with its ongoing grants and service contracts as well as the alignment of the EU4Youth with relevant policy dialogues and actions

Expected outputs of SO 4:

3.3 EC supported in EU4Youth programme design, management, monitoring and reporting, communication and visibility and related expertise;

3.4 EC supported in the overall strategic steering and coordination function for all components of the programme and ensure linking up with other relevant initiatives and EU/EaP policy dialogues.

Indicative action under SO 4:

- **Overall strategic steering and coordination** function for all components of the programme; explore **synergies and coherence** among their different actions;
- Support to the **coordination, management, supervision and implementation** of all issues related to the management of ongoing grants;
- Organisation of **networking/peer learning activities** aiming at exchange of best practises and preparation of policies/strategies on youth²⁷;

²⁷ In coordination with ETF.

- Provision of **information, data and analysis** on relevant youth and relevant sector situation and policies;
- Support to **communication and visibility** of the EU4Youth programme, including close liaison with DG NEAR's Neighbours East service contractor as well as capacity support for grantees and other contractors of the different phases and components.
- Maintaining of contacts with **other key implementing institutions**, such as in particular ETF, EACEA;
- Ensuring buy in and **ownership** of all actors to guarantee the maximum sustainability of EU4Youth in the region by **engaging with various stakeholders**, such as education institutions, youth organisations, other relevant non-state actors, business associations, SMEs, etc.;
- **Support to the EU/EaP policy dialogue**, in particular under EaP Platform 4 and the corresponding panel;
- Keep the EU4Youth intervention logic and results framework up to date and support monitoring, including follow up on **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** of the different components implemented under the programme.

4.2 Intervention Logic

Intervention logic for Component 1

This component serves the general objective of further increasing active participation of youth in both democratic life and in the labour markets by supporting young people in developing their **digital skills, skills needed for green transition, alongside entrepreneurial and career management skills**, thus creating new value for the young people themselves and impact in their communities and networks, notably with a focus on upskilling and reskilling in particular **disadvantaged youth**.

Intervention logic for Component 2

This component serves the general objective of further increasing **active participation of youth in both democratic life and labour markets** by supporting cross-sector multi-stakeholder partnerships for policy dialogue and coordination on youth employment and by enhancing the potential of the human capital development of youth through lifelong learning. This is to be done by increased cooperation with public employment services, other relevant private, public and civil society actors, and by facilitating transfer of knowledge about and best practice examples from the EU Youth Guarantee. As for the Youth Guarantee's training aspects, fostering the key competence acquisition by youth and supporting the capacities of relevant national agencies to implement activation and skills acquisition measures, and recognition and validation of skills are important aspects.

Intervention logic for Component 3

The vision of the College of Europe is to provide students with a specialised grounding in the European dimension of their fields of study as well as an in-depth understanding of Europe in all its complexity. Providing additional grants for students from EaP countries contributes to the EU's objective to promote **high quality education** to young people from partner countries, increase their educational and employment opportunities, foster multi-cultural understanding, and promote a better understanding of the EU and its engagement in the region.

Intervention logic for Component 4

Additional horizontal coordination and support will be procured to ensure the effective overall functioning of the programme with its ongoing grants and service contracts, including coordination support on monitoring along the EU4Youth results framework and for communication and visibility

in line with DG NEAR's strategic orientations. Furthermore it will create **synergies** with other relevant programmes, including bilateral EU assistance, for mutual reinforcement and to avoid duplications. It will also support alignment of EU4Youth with relevant policy dialogues and actions.

Actions foreseen in the New Deal for Youth not covered by this Action Document

It is envisaged that the set up and strengthening of a **network of EaP youth councils**, modelled after the EU youth Dialogue and foreseen in the New Deal for Youth, will be covered by the next programme phase. A following action could also include a mobility **job shadowing component for young civil servants**, depending on the conclusions of the planned Taiex pilot action.

4.3 Mainstreaming

The third phase of the EU4Youth will contribute to the EaP priority of **good governance**, by including a broad range of societal stakeholders in the programme activities, and by promoting youth active participation in policy-making and community-based projects.

The projects funded under this action will be designed and implemented in line with the rights-based approach methodology, as per the 2014 Tool-box "a Rights-Based Approach, encompassing all human rights, for EU development cooperation"²⁸. The projects will give due regard to the working principles of applying all rights, participation and access to the decision-making process, non-discrimination and equal access, accountability and access to the rule of law, transparency and access to information.

Gender equality and women empowerment is identified as a priority and **key cross-cutting theme**. Young women from the EaP region tend to face problems during their transition from education / parental leave to work, *inter alia* due to gender stereotypes and lack of childcare opportunities. As a consequence, in some partner countries there is still a statistically significant employment gap between young men and women, and women are often the first to face unemployment when jobs are lost. The EU4Youth – Phase III will support gender equality and women empowerment through i) actions identifying young women as a priority target group; ii) aiming at gender balance among the participants to the various actions; iii) mainstreaming gender in all components and actions.

Disadvantaged youth²⁹, will be a key target in all the actions of the programme and notably in the grants scheme of specific objective 1 on digital skills, skills needed for green transition and youth entrepreneurship as well as under the specific objective 2 with the piloting of Youth Guarantee-type actions which per se focus on NEETs and other disadvantaged youth.

4.4 Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

This intervention is relevant for the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It contributes primarily to the progressive achievement of the following **goals and targets**:

4.4 Increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant **skills**, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.

4.5 Eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure **equal access to all levels of education** and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations.

²⁸ Tool-box "A Rights-Based Approach, encompassing all human rights, for EU development cooperation" and the respective Council Conclusions of 19 May 2014, available here: https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sectors/rights-based-approach-development-cooperation_en.

²⁹ See definition in footnote 4.

4.7 Ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote **sustainable development**, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace.

5.5 Ensure **women's** full and effective participation and **equal opportunities** for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life.

8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, **decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation**, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.

8.5 Achieve full and productive employment and **decent work for all** women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.

8.6 Substantially reduce the proportion of **youth not in employment, education or training**.

5. IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Financing agreement

In order to implement this action, it is not foreseen to conclude a financing agreement with the partner countries.

5.2 Indicative implementation period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 4 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is **72 months** from the date of adoption by the Commission of this Financing Decision.

Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's responsible authorising officer by amending this Decision and the relevant contracts and agreements.

5.3 Implementation modalities for an action under project modality

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures³⁰.

5.3.1 Procurement (direct management)

| Subject | Indicative type | Indicative trimester of launch of the procedure |
|---|-----------------|---|
| Specific objective 4 – EU Coordination and Support | service | 2/2021 |

5.3.2 Indirect management with an entrusted entity (Member State Organisation)

A part of this action may be implemented in indirect management with Central Project Management Agency (Lithuania). The entrusted entity would carry out the following budget-implementation tasks: implementation of technical assistance and policy advice, procurement

³⁰ www.sanctionsmap.eu Please note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website it is the OJ version that prevails.

and grant award procedures, management of corresponding contracts and payments, monitoring and reporting. The management of grants procedures will in particular entail the organisation of an **open call for proposals under SO1** and the implementation of a **scholarship scheme under SO3**.

This implementation entails the implementation of **specific objectives 1 and 2 and 3**. The Member State organisation has been selected using the following criteria:

- Specific experience and continued presence in the EaP region,
- strong operational and financial project management experience,
- the capacity to provide European/international expertise in the required sectors.

If negotiations with the above-mentioned entities fail, that part of this action may be implemented in direct management in accordance with the implementation modalities identified in section 5.3.1.

5.3.3 Changes from indirect to direct management mode due to exceptional circumstances (one alternative second option)

If the preferred modality cannot be implemented due to circumstances outside of the Commission's control, the components relating to Specific Objectives 1 and 3 shall be implemented via grants and those relating to Specific Objectives 2 and 4 via service contracts under direct management.

5.4 Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

The geographical eligibility in terms of place of establishment for participating in procurement and grant award procedures and in terms of origin of supplies purchased as established in the basic act and set out in the relevant contractual documents shall apply.

The Commission's authorising officer responsible may extend the geographical eligibility on the basis of urgency or of unavailability of products and services in the markets of the countries concerned, or in other duly substantiated cases where the eligibility rules would make the realisation of this action impossible or exceedingly difficult.

5.5 Indicative budget

| | EU contribution (amount in EUR) | Indicative third party contribution (amount in EUR) |
|---|--|--|
| Objective 1: “Grant scheme on youth employment and entrepreneurship” | | |
| - Indirect management with MS Organisation, cf. section 5.3.2 | 8.000.000 | 400.000 |
| Objective 2: “Support to human capital development” | | |
| - Indirect management with MS Organisation, cf. section 5.3.2 | 4.400.000 | 220.000 |
| Objective 3: “Scholarship for the College of Europe” | | |
| - Indirect management with MS Organisation, cf. section 5.3.2 | 2.000.000 | 100.000 |
| Objective 4: “EU4Youth Coordination and Support” | | |
| - Procurement (direct management) – cf. section 5.3.1 | 1.800.000 | N.A |

| | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|---------|
| | | |
| Procurement – total envelope under section 5.3.1 | 1.800.000 | N.A. |
| Audit/Expenditure verification (cf. section 5.7) | will be covered by another Decision | N.A. |
| Communication and visibility (cf. section 5.8) | N.A. | N.A. |
| Contingencies | N.A. | N.A. |
| Total | 16.200.000 | 720.000 |

5.6 Organisational set-up and responsibilities

A project steering committee will be created and **meet twice per year**, including representatives of relevant **Commission** services (DG NEAR, DG EAC, DG EMPL), of the **EACEA** and the **ETF**. **Authorities from Partner Countries** will be invited on a needs basis. The projects will be implemented in close cooperation with the **EU Delegations** in the Partner Countries. Results achieved will be presented at the EaP platform and panel meetings, as well as in other high-level meetings. The steering committee will be **organised by the EU4Youth coordination component**. Given its role as Contracting Authority and final monitoring body, DG NEAR will chair the steering committee and discuss with implementing partners issues and concerns regarding their activities within this action.

The **steering committee** shall: (a) provide an opinion on the work programmes of the components of the action; (b) discuss objectives, activities and expected results; (c) discuss progress, impact, and challenges to implementation; (e) share information on other relevant actions in the region and on Partner Countries' efforts to reform their policies, in line with policy recommendation provided within the action; (f) ensure donors and stakeholders coordination. The components work programmes will be presented by the implementing partners and approved by the Commission, in line with discussions at the steering committee.

5.7 Performance and Results monitoring and reporting

Reports shall be laid out in such a way as to allow monitoring of the means envisaged and employed and of the budget details for the action. The final report, narrative and financial, will cover the entire period of the action implementation.

The Commission may undertake additional project monitoring visits both through its own staff and through independent consultants recruited directly by the Commission for independent monitoring reviews (or recruited by the responsible agent contracted by the Commission for implementing such reviews).

Monitoring and Evaluation of the programme will be conducted based on the proposed **Logframe** which shall include **measurable indicators** for all objectives, with clear **baselines** and **targets**. The logframe indicators have been aligned to the extent possible with the EU4Youth results framework which has been developed based on the first two phases of the programme. The implementers should report on the achievement of the indicator presented in the Logframe linking to sources of verification and provide data for the overall EU4Youth results framework monitoring.

More specifically, for **component 1, 2 and 3**, performance monitoring will be supervised by the EU4Youth coordination component which is also in charge of keeping the overall programme's intervention logic and results framework up to date. The European Training Foundation, and as part of its core functions, will exercise a complementary monitoring role for **component 2**, including the participation as observer in the Steering Committee. **Component 4** has its inbuilt reporting and monitoring procedures as per contractual obligations.

5.8 Evaluation

Having regard to the nature of the action (phase III of an established project, a final evaluation will not be carried out for this action or its components. Instead, the Commission will contract a mid-term evaluation of the entire EU4Youth programme, phases I, II and III.

The evaluation reports shall be shared with the partner country and other key stakeholders. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, in agreement with the partner country, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

5.9 Audit

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for the implementation of this action, the Commission may, on the basis of a risk assessment, contract independent audits or expenditure verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements.

The financing of the audit shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing Decision.

5.10 Communication and visibility

Communication and visibility will be given high importance during the implementation of the action. Communication and visibility of the EU is a legal obligation for all external actions funded by the EU. All necessary measures will be taken to publicise the fact that the action has received funding from the EU in line with the EU communication and visibility requirements in force.

The implementation of communication activities shall be the responsibility of the implementing partners under the respective agreements, and it shall take into account the EU's overall strategic communication approach for the Eastern Partnership region. Implementation of communication activities shall be funded from the amounts allocated to the action. Appropriate contractual obligations shall be included in, respectively, the financing agreement, procurement and grant contracts, and delegation agreements.

The Communication and Visibility Requirements for European Union External Action (or any succeeding document) shall be used to establish a Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action and of the contracts developed thereunder. These Plans will be elaborated at the start of implementation, need to be in line with the EU's overall strategic communication approach for the Eastern Partnership region, and shall identify communication objectives, target groups, key messages, and communication products and tools to be used. Communication campaigns will be promoted through the existing communication tools and channels of the EU Delegations as well as those of the EU regional communication programme 'EU Neighbours East'. The Plans will also be aligned with set communication narrative and master messages of the EU for the EaP region while being customised for the different target audiences (stakeholders, civil society, general public, etc.).

Communication measures shall ensure effective means to increase the awareness of the target audiences on the goals and benefits for citizens of the EU assistance provided in the framework of the Action. Visibility and communication measures will aim to show the results or individual actions and beneficiary level, as well as at the broader country and regional level. This will include the promotion of representative examples illustrating how the joint activities are bringing tangible benefits to the lives of citizens. Visibility and communication measures should also promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds. Effectiveness of communication activities will be measured inter alia through public surveys in the beneficiary countries on awareness about the programme and its objectives, as well as the fact that the programme is funded by the EU.

The implementing partners shall keep the Commission and concerned EU Delegations as well as the service contractors supporting its strategic communication approach 'EU Neighbours East' fully informed of the planning and implementation of specific visibility and communication activities

before work starts, in order to ensure greater outreach and impact. The entrusted entities will ensure adequate visibility of EU financing and will report on its visibility and communication actions as well as the results of the overall action to the relevant monitoring committees.

The implementing partners shall include identical visibility and communication requirements in any contracts that they will use for Action implementation.

Should the political sensitivity of the action risk of endangering the security of the beneficiaries, visibility of the Action may be reduced or waived with prior approval by the European Commission.

APPENDIX - INDICATIVE LOGFRAME MATRIX³¹ "EU4YOUTH»

| | Results chain | Indicators (all disaggregated by sex and rural/urban area when possible) | Baselines (incl. reference year) | Targets (incl. reference year) | Sources and means of verification | Assumptions |
|--|---|--|---|---|--|--|
| Overall objective: Impact | The overall objective is to foster active participation of youth in both democratic life and in the labour markets of the beneficiary countries, with a focus on disadvantaged youth | II.1. NEET rate (15-24) (%) Number of people aged 15–24 not employed and not in any further education or training / Number of people aged 15-24 ³² | <i>To be set during inception phase.</i> | <i>To be set during inception phase.</i> | II.1.-II.4. <input type="checkbox"/> EaP governments' statistics <input type="checkbox"/> ETF analytic reports | <input type="checkbox"/> There is some degree of political stability in the region (that allows for continued cooperation under the Eastern Partnership) |
| | | II.2. Employment rate of young people aged 15-24 (%) Number of people employed aged 15-24 / Number of people aged 15-24 ³³ | | | | |
| Specific objective(s): Outcome(s) | SO 1 - To foster young people's digital skills, skills needed for green transition, alongside entrepreneurial and career management skills | II.3. Youth unemployment ratio 15-24 (%) Number of unemployed aged 15-24 / number of people aged 15-24 | <i>To be set during inception phase.</i> | <i>To be set during inception phase.</i> | OI.1.1.-OI.1.5. EU4Youth results framework, data collected and analysed by EU4Youth coordination and | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth employment, employability and participation are key priorities for public |
| | | II.4. Ratio of youth unemployment ratio (15-24) to adult unemployment ratio (25-74) | | | | |
| | | OI.1.1. Number of targeted youth who report improved employability OI.1.2. Total number of unemployed targeted youth who became (self) employed OI.1.3. Total number of start-ups created, related to digital and green, that are still running after 1 year of being opened OI.1.4. Number of accepted legislative | <i>To be set during inception phase.</i> | <i>To be set during inception phase.</i> | | |

³¹ The baseline and targets are presented as they are available from the last Torino Process reports 20XX-20XX and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) National reports 201X.

³² From Indicator Framework for Monitoring the Youth Guarantee (Revision of 2017)

³³ From Indicator Framework for Monitoring the Youth Guarantee (Revision of 2017), Indicator 8.3.1. SDGs 201X National Reports section Decent Work and Economic Growth

| | Results chain | Indicators (all disaggregated by sex and rural/urban area when possible) | Baselines (incl. reference year) | Targets (incl. reference year) | Sources and means of verification | Assumptions |
|--|--|---|--|--|---|---|
| | | recommendations to improve youth education, entrepreneurship and participation OI.1.5. Number of targeted youth who report improved knowledge of youth employment policies, labour legislation, rights and standards | | | support contractor OI.2.1. <input type="checkbox"/> Interim reports from implementing partners | authorities; <input type="checkbox"/> The COVID-19 situation allows for in situ, hybrid or at least virtual work; |
| | SO 2.1 - To develop cross-sector partner-ships between public, private and non-governmental institutions in the area of employability and career development for youth , in particular disadvantaged SO 2.2. – To build structural capacities of key institutions for mapping, outreach, preparation and offers in view of employment, continued education, apprenticeships or traineeship (piloting of EaP Youth Guarantee – type schemes) | OI.2.1. Cross-sector multi-stakeholder partnerships for policy dialogue and coordination are set up and function in all EaP countries OI.2.2. Number of youth (age 15-24) registered with employment service providers OI.2.3. Youth Guarantee type sub-actions carried out in relation to mapping, outreach, preparation and offers <i>Qualitative indicator - sub-actions as recommended under COM(2020)277final</i> | <i>To be set during inception phase.</i> | <i>To be set during inception phase.</i> | O I.2.2. <input type="checkbox"/> EaP governments' statistics <input type="checkbox"/> ETF Programme analytic reports OI.2.3. <input type="checkbox"/> Fact-sheets for every component's activity. <input type="checkbox"/> Interim reports from implementing partners | <input type="checkbox"/> Key stakeholders, notably private sector, can be mobilised if interested in partnerships; <input type="checkbox"/> It is possible to reach out to disadvantaged youth, amongst other in rural/remote areas. |
| | SO 3. To strengthened understanding of European politics and governance among EaP youth | OI.3.1. Number of young people that successfully completed high quality studies in European politics at the CoE | <i>Zero</i> | <i>Indicatively 75</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Reports from EU Delegations OI.3.1. <input type="checkbox"/> College of Europe Enrolment and Graduation statistics <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| | SO4. To ensure the effective overall functioning, incl. monitoring of results | OI.4.1. EC supported in EU4Youth programme design, management, monitoring, reporting, communication and visibility and related | <i>To be set during inception phase.</i> | <i>To be set during inception</i> | OI.4.1+OI.4.2. <input type="checkbox"/> Progress reports | |

| | Results chain | Indicators (all disaggregated by sex and rural/urban area when possible) | Baselines (incl. reference year) | Targets (incl. reference year) | Sources and means of verification | Assumptions |
|--|--|---|---|---|---|--------------------|
| | framework, communication and visibility of the programme with its ongoing grants and service contracts as well as the alignment of the EU4Youth programme with relevant policy dialogues and actions. | expertise; OI.4.2. EC supported in the overall strategic steering and coordination function for all components of the programme and ensure linking up with other relevant initiatives and EU/EaP policy dialogues. | | <i>phase.</i> | from service contractor <input type="checkbox"/> EU4Youth Steering Committee | |

| | Results chain | Indicators (all disaggregated by sex and rural/urban area when possible) | Baselines (incl. reference year) | Targets (incl. reference year) | Sources and means of verification | Assumptions |
|----------------|--|---|---|---|--|--|
| Outputs | <p>1.1 Formal and non-formal education and training initiatives, with a focus on upskilling and reskilling in particular disadvantaged youth, and that relate to the digital and green transformations, are enhanced or set up</p> <p>1.2 Youth entrepreneur start-ups in the field of digital and green economies supported and information about and access to existing business support schemes available for young entrepreneurs</p> <p>1.3 Networks and partnerships for youth entrepreneurship strengthened with regard to the digital and green transformations, involving relevant private and public actors, education and training institutions and representative youth organisations</p> | <p>OI.1.1.1. Number of capacity building, training, mentorship and awareness raising activities provided for learners in formal and non-formal contexts with a focus on digital and green skills</p> <p>OI.1.2.1 Number of young entrepreneurs who received financial assistance related to digital and green economy</p> <p>OI.1.3.1 Number of youth entrepreneurship networks and partnerships supported in the areas of digital and green economy</p> <p>OI.1.3.2. Total number of people who have participated in inter/intra-regional mobility activities other than trainings</p> | <i>To be set during inception phase.</i> | <i>To be set during inception phase.</i> | <p>OII.1.1. - OII.4.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> EU4Youth results framework, data collected and analysed by EU4Youth coordination and support contractor <input type="checkbox"/> Programme and project reports from implementing partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The COVID-19 situation allows for in situ, hybrid or at least virtual work <input type="checkbox"/> Key stakeholders, notably private sector, can be mobilised if interested in partnerships <input type="checkbox"/> It is possible to reach out to disadvantaged youth, amongst other in rural/remote areas |

| | Results chain | Indicators (all disaggregated by sex and rural/urban area when possible) | Baselines (incl. reference year) | Targets (incl. reference year) | Sources and means of verification | Assumptions |
|--|---|---|--|--|---|---|
| | <p>2.1 Cross-sector multi-stakeholder partnerships for policy dialogue and coordination on youth employment are strengthened, and related capacity built to support the design and piloting of Youth Guarantee-type initiatives at regional and national levels</p> <p>2.2 National public employment services together with other key institutions are supported to develop strategies for integrated youth activation measures as well as supported for tailored Youth Guarantee-type pilot actions related to mapping, outreach, preparation and offers to NEETs and other disadvantaged youth groups</p> <p>2.3 Employers and young people have increased awareness about decent work standards, incl. about labour legislation, rights and obligations, health and safety at work</p> <p>2.4 Creation of a network of Public Employment Services from EaP countries and EaP stakeholders' participation in other relevant transnational networks for peer learning and information exchange with EU Member States, the Western Balkans and Turkey enhanced.</p> | <p>OI.2.1.1. Number of cross-sector multi-stakeholder partnerships meetings</p> <p>OI.2.1.2. Number and profile of representatives participating in cross-sector multi-stakeholder partnership meetings at regional national levels</p> <p>OI.2.2.1. Number of integrated youth activation strategies developed or updated in line with actions proposed under the EU Youth Guarantee</p> <p>OI.2.2.2. Number of PES staff trained on selected Youth Guarantee-type measures</p> <p>OI.2.2.3. Number of competence development activities focusing on teachers and trainers</p> <p>OI.2.2.4. Number of regulatory initiatives for validation and certification of skills acquired through diverse learning and work experiences beyond formal educational qualifications introduced/enhanced</p> <p>OI.2.3.1. Number of awareness raising activities for employers and young people on decent work</p> <p>OI.2.4.1 Number of peer learning and information exchange activities on transition to work, youth employment and youth entrepreneurship with EaP participation through transnational networks supported</p> | <p><i>To be set during inception phase</i></p> | <p><i>To be set during inception phase</i></p> | <p>OI.2.1.1-OI.2.4.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Programme and project reports from implementing partners <input type="checkbox"/> Participant lists and related statistical analysis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Youth employment, employability and participation are key priorities for public authorities; <input type="checkbox"/> The COVID-19 situation allows for in situ, hybrid or at least virtual work; <input type="checkbox"/> Key stakeholders, notably private sector, can be mobilised if interested in partnerships; |

| | Results chain | Indicators (all disaggregated by sex and rural/urban area when possible) | Baselines (incl. reference year) | Targets (incl. reference year) | Sources and means of verification | Assumptions |
|--|---|--|---|---|--|--------------------|
| | 3.1 Scholarships to study at the College of Europe have been granted to students from EaP countries | OI.3.1.1 Number of EaP students enrolled at the College of Europe through the scholarship scheme of the EU | <i>Zero</i> | 75 | OI.3.1.1. <input type="checkbox"/> College of Europe Enrolment and Graduation statistics <input type="checkbox"/> Project reports from implementing partner | |
| | 4.1 EC supported in EU4Youth programme design, management, monitoring and reporting and related expertise; 4.2 EC supported in the overall strategic steering and coordination for all components of the programme and liaison with other initiatives and EU/EaP policy dialogues. | <input type="checkbox"/> Quality of strategic steering and coordination function for all components of the programme <input type="checkbox"/> Quality of information, data and analysis on relevant youth and relevant sector situation and policies <input type="checkbox"/> Quality of engagement with various stakeholders <input type="checkbox"/> Follow up on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of the components implemented under the programme | <i>To be set during inception phase</i> | <i>To be set during inception phase</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Project reports from implementing partner <input type="checkbox"/> Grants fact-sheets <input type="checkbox"/> Training participation statistics and assessment forms | |