

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT TRENDS & POLICIES AFTER THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

ITALY



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Youth Employment Trends & Policies After the COVID-19 Pandemic

Country report **Italy**



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ITALY



Overview of key trends¹

1

The situation of young people on the Italian labour market has remained critical over the last decade.² The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic led to the loss of jobs, primarily by young people in the service sectors, such as tourism, hospitality, and services, and affected many young people negatively.³ This has reinforced the negative youth employment situation experienced already since the 2008 economic crisis.

The youth unemployment rate in Italy has increased since the 2008 crisis (from 15% in 2008 to 22% in 2021) to the level where the main issues for young people are related to both **the lack of jobs and employment opportunities and the quality of jobs available**. Italy (together with Spain) continues to have one of the **highest youth unemployment rates** in the EU, which increased in the COVID crisis and does not show signs of improvement since 2020.

Differences also exist between youth employment situation in the northern regions of Italy where the situation is more positive and the areas in the southern regions where fewer good employment opportunities are available to young people.

Even when able to get a job, young people in Italy continue to experience precarious work conditions on the labour market and remain a core group excluded from the regular stable employment.

In this respect, the main problems faced by young people in the Italian labour market include, among other aspects, the transition to working life, the current situation of youth unemployment, the working conditions they face and their inactivity. Starting with the transition to the labour market and their level of education, it has become clear that having a job does not, as a general rule, imply their adequate inclusion in economic and working life.

¹ The detailed statistics are provided in Annex 1.

² Chung H, Bekker S and Houwing H (2012) Young people and the post-recession labour market in the context of Europe 2020. Transfer 18(3): 301–317. Clauwaert S and Schoemann I (2012) The crisis and national labour law reforms: a mapping exercise. ETUI Working Paper 2012/04. Brussels: ETUI. Also Editorial (etui.org) .

³ [ETU BM2021-Chap2-Labour market and social developments crisis further entrenches inequality_0.pdf \(etui.org\)](#); Eurofound (2021), Impact of COVID-19 on young people in the EU, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

Across the EU, over a third of young workers are working on temporary work contracts. This is particularly high in Italy, where **47% of young people were employed on a temporary basis (EU-27 average is 36%, 2021).**

Part-time youth employment is also very widespread in Italy (with 24% of young workers working part-time in 2021) and this has increased since the 2008 crisis. Also, when working part time, many young people in Italy (76% of all part-time young workers, 79% of young men and 75% of young women working part-time) have to work part time so although they do not want to – as full-time jobs are not available (against the European average of 25%). This has furthermore increased between the two crisis periods.

Also high is the proportion of **young people who are self-employed**. In Italy, this was 12% in 2021, against the EU-27 average of 6%. This is one of the highest rates of youth self-employment in the EU. The discussions in the project seminar in Rome highlighted that often such self-employment is involuntary and not fully genuine, as self-employed young people tend to work for the same employer as an alternative to having a regular employment contract.

A key issue in Italy remains significant proportion of young people outside the labour market and formal education and training across the two crisis periods (the so-called NEET rate). The proportion of such young people has increased in Italy, indicating a lack of significant progress (from 19% in 2008 to 23% in 2021). **Italy has the NEET rate of 23% significantly higher than the EU-27 average (13%).**

Wages for young people in Italy have grown over the last decade and have by now exceeded the



KEY TRENDS OF YOUTH IN ITALY

Unemployment rates

 **Highest youth unemployment**
rates in the EU with Spain



22%
in 2021

Employed on a temporary basis

47% 

36% 
EU-27 Average 2021

Part-time youth employment

24%  **76%**  **25%** 
in 2021 Involuntarily

Risk of poverty and social exclusion

13% of employed
in the 16-29 age group in 2021

**One of
highest
rates in EU** 

Weekly working hours

36.6 
hours

36 
hours

EU average. In 2018 (latest data available), young people in Italy earned around EUR 26,000 per year, against the EU-27 average of EUR 22,000 per year.

The over-qualification rate in Italy is similar to the EU-27 average (26% compared to 25%). This means over a quarter of young people in Italy have a higher qualification level than what is required in their jobs.

However, many young people remain at **risk of poverty whilst working** in Italy (13% of employed in the 16-29 age group in 2021), which is **one of the highest rates in the EU**. Moreover, the rate has increased over the last years.

Similarly, 30% of all young people (employed and unemployed) remain at risk of poverty and social exclusion in Italy (2021 data, against EU-27 average of 25%, making Italian youth situation one of the worst in European comparison). This has improved slightly over the last years.

Young people in Italy continue to work a slightly higher than average numbers of **weekly working hours across the EU**. In 2021, this was 36 working hours per week across the EU, whereas in Italy young people worked 36.6 hours per week.



Policies for direct youth employment support

2

Policies adopted in Italy the context of tackling the economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic were not explicitly aimed at young people and young workers, rather at the workers and general population.⁴ Some measures were taken for young people, mainly focusing on the labour market, online education and higher education; with a limited focus on precarious young workers. The main focus of the policies was to preserve the existing employment levels and provide adequate social protection. No explicit focus was put on improving the quality of existing jobs for young people in particular.

The key economic and employment policy instrument used in the COVID-19 context was the short-term work scheme⁵, where Italy spent relatively large resources on the scheme compared to other European countries. In Italy, job retention measures had a significant impact on income stability and unemployment, with more focus was on employers

and employees on standard employment contracts, and also to some extent on other categories of workers such as non-standard workers, self-employed people⁶.

In Italy, exemptions from welfare contributions for employers hiring workers under 35 years of age meant that employers could be exempted from paying 50–100% (depending on the economic situation of the region in question during the pandemic) of social security contributions for all people under the age of 35 hired on an open-ended contract in 2019 and 2020. To support youth employment, only employers who had not undertaken individual dismissal procedures over the six months prior to the hiring of young workers were entitled to apply for the exemption. This legislative provision extended previously existing incentives by introducing changes in the eligibility criteria and temporarily increasing the age limit to include

⁴ Eurofound (2021), Impact of COVID-19 on young people in the EU, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

⁵ [01-ETU BM2021-Chap2-Labour market and social developments crisis further entrenches inequality_0.pdf \(etui.org\)](#) Figure 2.8.

⁶ Baptista, I., Marlier, E., Spasova, S., Peña-Casas, R., Fronteddu, B., Ghailani, D., Sabato, S. and Regazzoni, P. (2021), Social protection and inclusion policy responses to the COVID-19 crisis. An analysis of policies in 35 countries, European Social Policy Network (ESPN), Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

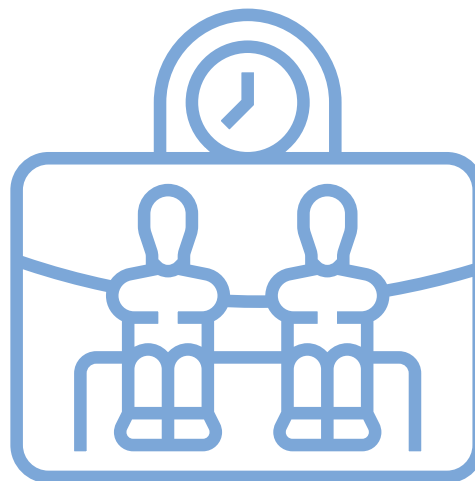
young workers. Nonetheless, the tax exemption did not apply in some cases – for instance, when young people were hired on temporary contracts (including apprenticeships, fixed-term contracts, collaboration and project contracts, intermittent contracts) or to work in public bodies.

Another measure in Italy was the Law Decree No. 18/2020, introduced in March 2020, to provide income support to those workers who were partly or totally prevented from working by the pandemic and who were unprotected by provisions designed to support the majority of the Italian workforce. The law also provided for one-off financial aid to young people enrolled in private social security funds. Amounting to €600 per person, this aid was also available to young professionals and young self-employed workers who had enrolled in a private social security fund in 2019 or during the first months of 2020.

The key policy direction **adopted in the context of the 2008 crisis** in Italy was the budgetary austerity measures.⁷ The public spending containment policies, or austerity policies, applied in Italy in response to the financial crash made it difficult for young people to find work, significantly increasing the risk of youth unemployment or of finding precarious or low-paid employment. Likewise, as part of the effects that these austerity measures had on the socio-economic conditions of young people, during the years of the 2008 economic crisis, unemployment became the main concern of the young population, together with the quality of

employment. The application of these measures and the consequent reduction in social spending not only increased inequalities between different social groups, but also led to a greater vulnerability of young people.

Comparing the measures adopted in the two crisis periods, the measures adopted in the context of COVID-19 pandemic to keep workers in jobs were more successful in supporting the employment of young people too. In contrast, the budgetary austerity measures adopted in the context of 2008 economic crisis had direct negative effect on overall employment levels, as well as increasing youth unemployment and NEET rates



⁷ Chung H, Bekker S and Houwing H (2012) Young people and the post-recession labour market in the context of Europe 2020. Transfer 18(3): 301–317. Clauwaert S and Scho“mann I (2012) The crisis and national labour law reforms: a mapping exercise. ETUI Working Paper 2012/04. Brussels: ETUI. Also Editorial (etui.org)

Policies on social protection

3

Social protection systems should provide protection against the risks and needs associated with unemployment, sickness, parenthood and social exclusion. However, full social protection in Italy is not, due to the various conditions attached, available to young people who have not yet been economically active or who have only recently entered the world of work.⁸ Those employed in the least stable employment situations are mostly young people (platforms, tourism and hospitality, other services) and not all have equal access to social security. The minimum qualifying period to receive an unemployment benefit is 4 months within the qualifying period in Italy. In Italy, the introduction of the Inclusion Income (REI) in 2017, replaced by the Citizenship Income in 2019, marked an important

step forward,⁹ not only for poor households but also for young workers and new entrants to the labour market¹⁰. Around EUR 7 billion were spent on the initiative. Although it was not specifically focused on young people, it did have a direct impact on many young people by providing a basic income level. It also stimulated the debate about the relationship between the universal basic income and the offers made to young people, who were no longer prepared to work under any conditions.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, unemployment benefits remained a difficult social protection scheme to access for some categories of non-standard workers and the self-employed (which are prevalent amongst the young workers).¹¹ Eligibility conditions

⁸ Ghailani, D., Peña-Casas, R., Coster, S. and Regazzoni, P. (2021), 'Access to social protection for young people. An analysis of policies in 35 countries', European Social Policy Network (ESPN), Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

⁹ [What is Italy's new 'Citizens' Income' scheme? | Euronews Answers](#)

¹⁰ <https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&p=2fcc653269ddfb8JmltdHM9MTY4OTU1MjAwMCZpZ3VpZD0yZjEzZmZyZi1hYTEyLTY3MTItMmRkMi0yNmUxYWJmNTY2NzQmaW5zaWQ9NTM0OA&ptn=3&hsh=3&fclid=2f13362f-aa12-6712-2dd2-26e1abf56674&psq=Italy+Citizenship+Income&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly9lYy5ldXJvcGEuZXUvc29jaWFsL0JsY2JlZG90P2RvY0kPTlxNDC2JmxbmdJZD1lcw&ntb=1>

¹¹ Baptista, I., Marlier, E., Spasova, S., Peña-Casas, R., Fronteddu, B., Ghailani, D., Sabato, S. and Regazzoni, P. (2021), Social protection and inclusion policy responses to the COVID-19 crisis. An analysis of policies in 35 countries, European Social Policy Network (ESPN), Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union

related to activity status, and the contributory history requirement, applied, affecting negatively young people.¹²

In Italy, the self-employed (which is a popular choice for young people) can opt to be insured against unemployment. In Italy, ISCRO – the only unemployment scheme existing in Italy designed to cover a (limited group of) self-employed workers – protects those employed as para-subordinate professionals whose labour income drops by a predefined amount.

In the COVID context, Italy has introduced the benefit (Indennità straordinaria di continuità reddituale e operative (ISCRO)) to protect some categories of self-employed: the subordinate collaborators. These are professional workers who are not members of a specific professional association, and who pay social security contributions to the special fund (Gestione Separata) managed by the Italian Social Security Institute (INPS). ISCRO was introduced on an experimental basis for 2021-2023.

Italy has suspended or eased the conditions for accessing the general unemployment benefit scheme (Nuova Assicurazione Sociale per l'Impiego, NASpl). For NASpl claims presented by the end of 2021, the only condition was that the individual must have paid 13 weeks of contributions in the four years prior

to involuntary dismissal. The qualifying period, of 30 actual working days in the twelve months preceding involuntary dismissal, has also been suspended.

Access to healthcare is universal.¹³ Employment status is the main factor contributing to variability of eligibility for maternity, paternity and parental leave.



¹² Baptista, I., Marlier, E., Spasova, S., Peña-Casas, R., Fronteddu, B., Ghailani, D., Sabato, S. and Regazzoni, P. (2021), Social protection and inclusion policy responses to the COVID-19 crisis. An analysis of policies in 35 countries, European Social Policy Network (ESPN), Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union

¹³ Ghailani, D., Peña-Casas, R., Coster, S. and Regazzoni, P. (2021), 'Access to social protection for young people. An analysis of policies in 35 countries', European Social Policy Network (ESPN), Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union

Policies supporting education / training of young people

4

In Italy, in the context of tackling COVID-19 pandemic, new forms of training were also launched. In Italy, as a reaction to the suspension of internships at national level, the regional government of Le Marche launched the New Youth Guarantee, offering internships and apprenticeships. The scheme created opportunities for NEETs to take up paid work during a phase of the pandemic when the labour market was badly affected; it was open to NEETs from other regions, on the condition that they moved to Le Marche for the year of the internship or apprenticeship.

Large-scale youth events were successfully delivered online during the COVID-19 pandemic. In Italy, Job & Orienta – a national annual event organised by the Ministry for Labour and Social Policies, focusing on schools and universities, orientation, school-to-work transition, training and work inclusion for young people – was delivered online. This online version was adapted in terms not only of delivery mode but also of content, with particular attention paid to

the relevance of digitalisation in relation to youth, employment and mobility.

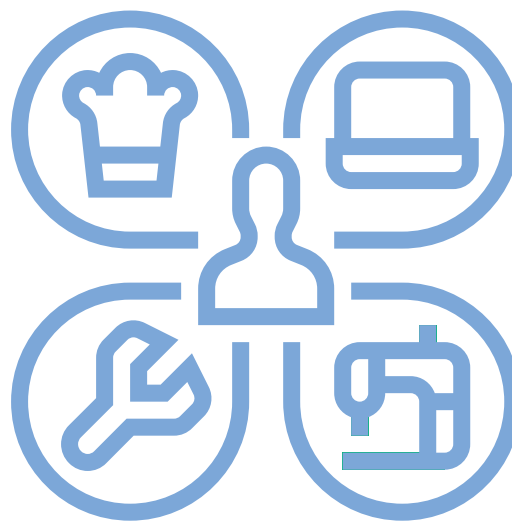
In a critical phase during the COVID-19 pandemic, the risk that a significant share of potential new university students would decide not to enrol in a university degree programme was high. In response, the Ministry for Education, University and Research in Italy allocated extraordinary special funding to support and incentivise students to enrol. Some €40 million was allocated to extra university scholarships and €165 million to expanding the number of students exempted from the payment of university fees. The main goal was to financially support young people in economic need who wished to enrol in a university programme but who were unable to afford the fees.

Italy has no legal definition of open-market traineeships but has adopted national guidelines by a State-Region-Agreement which cover a minimum set of requirements.¹⁴ The regulatory framework

¹⁴ European Network of Public Employment Services (2021) Study on Remuneration of Open-Market Traineeships in EU-27.

is complex because the traineeships fall under the competency of the Regions and Autonomous Provinces. In 2013, the federal government together with the Regions and Autonomous Provinces adopted national guidelines which set minimum standards for traineeships (updated in 2017). These guidelines explicitly cover trilateral agreements, involving a promoting entity (Public Employment Services, universities and schools, authorized agencies, etc.) in addition to the trainee and her/his employer.

The minimum requirements set by the State-Region-Agreement include, among others, a minimum traineeship allowance per month. This minimum allowance, as well as other minimum requirements, can be increased by the Regions and Autonomous Provinces. Among the other minimum requirements for (open-market) traineeships, the employer has to provide accident insurance for the trainee. Even though minimum standards are set by the national guidelines, trainees do not receive regular social security coverage because a traineeship is not considered as official employment situation. The National Labour Inspectorate, however, increasingly investigates abuses of traineeships as replacement for regular employment.



Youth Guarantee policies and youth policies in the National Recovery and Resilience Plan

5

The Youth Guarantee (YG) scheme in Italy was developed from 2013. The Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan was presented in 2013, and the scheme started in 2014. It committed the government to provide registered young people with a good offer of employment, education or an internship within four months of becoming unemployed or finishing their education. Around EUR 910 million were allocated to the YG scheme in the 2014-2020 period.

Since mid-2017 it has been co-ordinated and managed by the National Agency for Active Labour Policies (ANPAL), in conjunction with the regions coordinating the public employment services (PES) at local level. ANPAL is also responsible for the national YG database, which brings together data collected by the PES at local level.¹⁵

More than 1.5 million young NEETs registered in the Youth Guarantee (YG) scheme in Italy (2020 data)¹⁶. By the end of 2019, about 1.2 million were referred

to the services. Around 60% of them completed a YG pathway, with an average positive outcome (situation better than previously) of 55.5%. In terms of outcomes, large disparities persist between the North and the South, where caseloads with difficult profiles of more disadvantaged young people are more frequent. Reaching out to the most vulnerable young people remains a challenge. Traineeships are the most implemented measure, with the risk of traineeships being misused as an alternative to employment contracts.

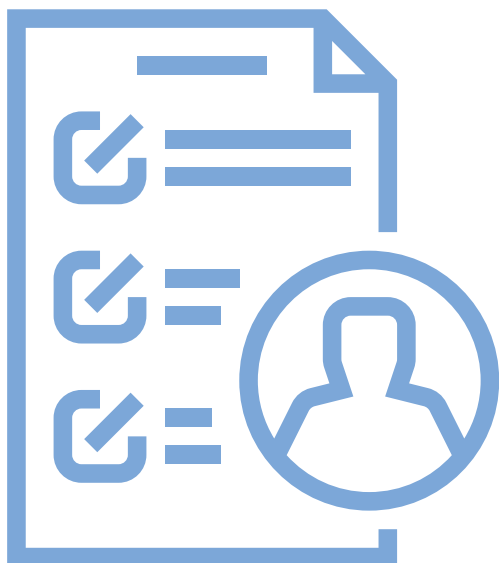
The assessment of the implementation of the Youth Guarantee by the European Commission noted good progress in reaching out to a larger proportion of NEETs and attracting them to the national scheme¹⁷. The system for implementing the Youth Guarantee is very comprehensive, with a wide range of stakeholders and efforts made to include them all in the process.¹⁸ Under the Youth Guarantee, there is a

¹⁵ <https://garanziagiovani.anpal.gov.it/>

¹⁶ [The Youth Guarantee country by country - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)

¹⁷ [The Youth Guarantee country by country - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)

¹⁸ Ibid.



need for greater outreach to the inactive, low-skilled and most vulnerable, and addressing the remaining disparities in implementation across the country, especially regarding the use of an individualised approach and the quality of measures. Problems arise regarding information sharing and coordination of efforts between different stakeholders at state, regional and local level. Improvement might be needed in the areas of providing mentors, limiting the duration of traineeships, ensuring transparency

with regard to hiring practices, and better adapting the offers to employer and target group needs.

Over three-fifths (61.1%) of those leaving the scheme in 2018 were known to be in a positive situation 6 months afterwards. The proportion is however understated because certain positive situations (e.g. non-subsidised education and self-employment initiated without public support) cannot be monitored. Long-term follow-up data for those leaving in 2017 show the proportion known to be in positive situation falls significantly 12 and 18 months after exit (38.6%, and 30.2% respectively for participants leaving the YG in 2017). This decline at least partly reflects the end of offers recorded in the 6-month situation and increased numbers in an unknown situation.¹⁹

The National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR) for Italy envisages a significant overall financial expenditure of around 10.79% GDP.²⁰ Policies in Pillar 6 of the Plan dedicated to children and youth, and education and skills, represent around 11.72% of the total Plan expenditure. However, the project seminar discussions in Rome highlighted the recent information showing that the initial Plan allocated expenditure to youth has been reduced by around 40% in the most recent budgetary planning for the NRRP. This is an issue warranting further attention.

Specific quality youth employment measures are foreseen in the NRRP for Italy.²¹ Targeted investments

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ [Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/economic-finance-and-recovery/recovery-and-resilience-scoreboard/)

²¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021SC0165&from=EN>; also Simoes (2022) School to work transition in the Resilience and Recovery Facility framework. Youth oriented active labour market policies under Pillar 6. Study for the European Parliament, [School to work transition in the Resilience and Recovery Facility framework \(europa.eu\)](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/working-groups/docs/20220610/20220610_School_to_work_transition_in_the_Resilience_and_Recovery_Facility_framework_europa.eu).

seek to improve the situation of young workers, who are more often affected by precariousness and poverty due to the high unemployment rates. Reforms and investments included in the “employment policy” component, aim at increasing long-term employment, employability and labour productivity through labour market reforms, modernising active labour market policies (including measures targeted to the young unemployed individuals and women), strengthening vocational training, increasing up/re-skilling services, and building capacity for the Public Employment Service. Young people’s integration in the labour market is also supported through e.g. enhancing the “Universal Civil Service” initiative and strengthening the dual apprenticeship system. These reforms and investments are related to the goals and priorities of the National Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan. Still, according to the European Commission’s assessment:

“Italy foregoes a substantial part of its labour force potential and entrenched youth unemployment (or underemployment) prevents many young people from building up necessary skills and improving their employability. Nevertheless, an overall comprehensive strategy on women and young people is still missing while additional reforms remain needed.” p. 14²²

The project seminar discussions in Rome also highlighted the value of Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes funded by the EU to young people. They support learning pathways of young people, and offer transnational opportunities to acquire lifeskills, or soft skills such as teamwork,



leadership, intercultural awareness and a sense of European identity. Research conducted in Italy showed that young people participating in such programmes report positive impacts themselves, including acquiring new perspectives, or learning new skills in different environments. Transnational experiences also support young people in finding jobs, as many employers value such experiences and young people are able to market their transnational experiences successfully.

²² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021SC0165&from=EN>

Conclusions and policy pointers

6

The project seminar discussions in Rome also highlighted the need to improve the participation of young people in the trade unions, as well as political structures where they remain unrepresented. The experience of the National Youth Council in Italy (where the trade unions also participate) showed how young people can directly participate to influence the issues directly relevant to young people, such as affordable housing, the remuneration in apprenticeships or campaigns to raise the awareness of young people about their rights. It has campaigned to reorganise the youth policies and defining a specific law on youth policies, argued for policies to have an ex-ante evaluation of their impacts on youth, argued

for reforms of social security systems to improve the pension arrangements for young people, guaranteed minimum income for young people in fragmented labour markets.

From the perspective of trade unions, whilst there is no readymade recipe to address the young people needs, a number of ideas highlighted in the discussions included ensuring young people are represented in the trade union structures and leadership, offering training courses specifically for young trade unionists, including information about labour market and trade unions in the education curricula.

MAIN POLICY PRIORITIES TO PROMOTE QUALITY JOBS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



▶ Developing a comprehensive strategy for addressing youth unemployment and underemployment in a systemic perspective, based on consultation with social partners and youth representatives.



▶ Improving the quality of offers, outreach and outcomes under the Youth Guarantee, making it more available and accessible to the more and especially vulnerable young people. Social partners should receive more information about the quality of its offers, and longer term monitoring and evaluation information.



▶ Making good use of funds available under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan for Italy for supporting youth.



▶ Trade unions need to engage more young people, as they are perceived as old rigid organisations which do not offer added value to young people. The ideas discussed at the seminar included nominating more young people to unions' positions, instituting specific quotas for young people, communicating the unions to young people in a positive and modern way, including the information about trade unions and labour rights in the educational curricula. Trade unions can highlight the concrete positive results from their work to young people, such as affirming the labour rights of workers and securing a series of benefits in employment. Important is also to demonstrate that trade unions also engage with the new forms of employment such as platform work or digital economy, especially popular amongst young people. Trade unions also need to offer open spaces for young people to discuss their problems and rights. In this respect, the experience of RUGE in Spain as a cross-union initiative specifically focussed on youth can be interesting to other countries to exchange practice and learn from.

Annex 1

Detailed picture on young people situation on the labour market

In the two crises, many young people were left out of the labour market. Youth unemployment rates across the EU-27 have not declined when comparing the two crisis periods. On the contrary, in 2021, youth unemployment rate in the EU-27 at 13% was higher compared to 12.3% rate in 2008. The situation in the individual project countries is as follows. Spain and Italy continue to have the highest youth unemployment rates in the EU, which increased in the COVID crisis and do not show signs of improvement since 2020. Romania and Slovenia have lower overall rates, but they have increased in 2020-2021 compared to the 2008-2010 period. Here the situation is also not showing signs of improvement. In contrast, youth unemployment declined in Hungary and Romania, however, the rates are relatively high.

FIGURE 1 YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, ALL, EU-27 AND SELECTED COUNTRIES, SELECTED YEARS



Source: Eurostat, Youth unemployment by sex, age and educational attainment level [YTH_EMPL_090_custom_3603201], aged 15-29, accessed 17/10/2022.

Youth unemployment has also a gender dimension. In the project countries, consistently, more young women remained unemployed compared to young men, comparing both crisis periods.

TABLE 1 YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, MEN AND WOMEN, EU-27 AND SELECTED COUNTRIES, SELECTED YEARS

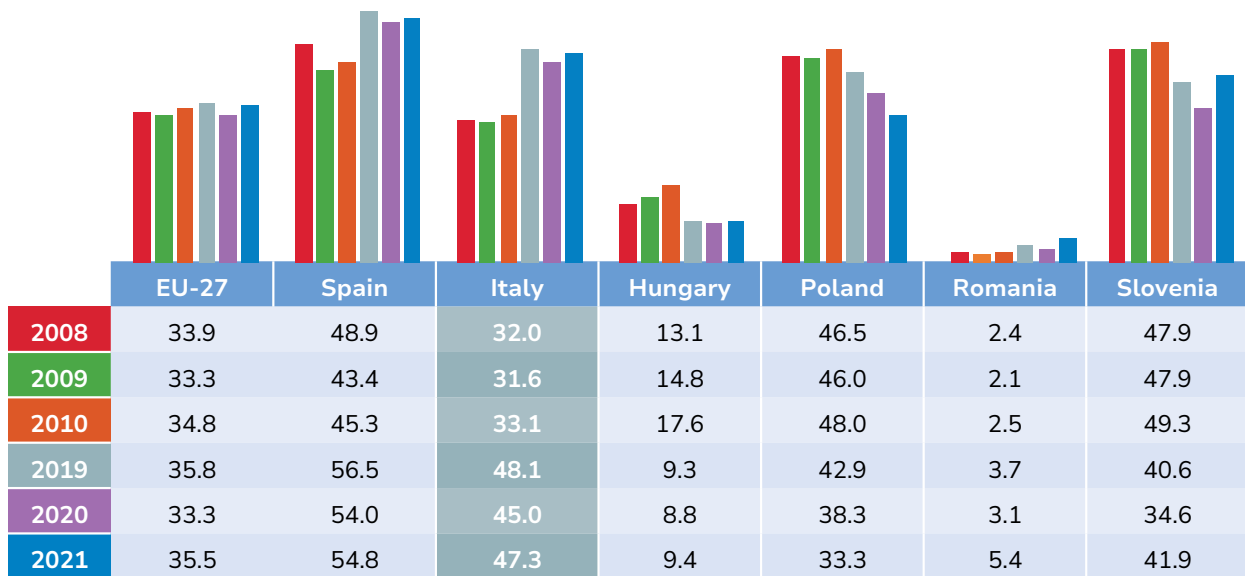
Gender	2008		2009		2010		2019		2020		2021	
	♀	♂	♀	♂	♀	♂	♀	♂	♀	♂	♀	♂
EU-27	12.8	11.9	15.3	16.4	16.6	17.5	11.8	12.0	13.3	13.3	13.0	13.0
Spain	18.5	17.9	26.6	30.2	30.0	33.3	25.4	24.1	29.9	28.5	27.2	26.8
Italy	17.7	13.5	20.4	16.8	21.8	19.2	23.9	21.2	23.6	21.0	23.5	21.4
Hungary	13.2	12.3	16.2	18.1	17.6	19.7	6.9	7.6	9.3	8.2	8.6	7.9
Poland	13.5	10.7	15.0	13.6	17.7	16.2	7.2	6.0	7.3	6.9	7.3	7.2
Romania	10.3	13.0	12.0	15.2	14.2	15.5	9.4	10.8	11.1	11.9	12.4	13.6
Slovenia	9.7	7.2	12.2	11.2	13.5	13.9	9.0	6.3	11.0	8.7	11.4	8.3

Source: Eurostat, Youth unemployment by sex, age and educational attainment level [YTH_EMPL_090_custom_3603201], aged 15-29, accessed 17/10/2022.

Even when able to get a job, young people continue to experience precarious work conditions on the labour market.

Across the EU, over a third of young people employed are working on temporary work contracts. This is particularly high in Spain, Italy, Slovenia and Romania, where almost half of young people are employed on a temporary basis. The situation is somewhat better in Hungary and less of an issue in Romania (albeit on a rise).

FIGURE 2 TEMPORARY YOUTH EMPLOYMENT RATE, ALL, EU-27 AND SELECTED COUNTRIES, SELECTED YEARS



Source: Eurostat, Youth employment by sex, age and educational attainment level [YTH_EMPL_090_custom_3603201], aged 15-29, accessed 17/10/2022.

Also, part-time employment amongst young people is on the rise. This is the case across the EU and in the selected countries. Part time employment is especially high amongst young people in Italy, Spain and Slovenia.

FIGURE 3

PART-TIME YOUTH EMPLOYMENT RATE, ALL, EU-27 AND SELECTED COUNTRIES, SELECTED YEARS



Source: Eurostat, Part-time employment as percentage of the total employment for young people by sex, age and country of birth [YTH_EMPL_060_custom_3604126], accessed 17/10/2022.

Furthermore, when working part time, many young people have to do so although they do not want to – because full time jobs are not available. The situation has not improved significantly between the two crisis periods. On the contrary, involuntary part time employment for young people has risen substantially in Italy and Spain. Only minor declines are observed in Hungary and Romania (which has the highest rate in the EU at 60%).

FIGURE 4

INVOLUNTARY PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT AS PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, ALL, EU-27 AND SELECTED COUNTRIES, SELECTED YEARS



Source: Eurostat, Involuntary part-time employment as percentage of the total part-time employment for young people by sex and age [YTH_EMPL_080_custom_3604033], accessed 17/10/2022.

Next, a significant proportion of young people has remained outside the labour market and formal education across the two crisis periods. Across the EU, this figure has remained similar both in 2008 and 2021, indicating a lack of significant progress. The rate remains high especially in Italy and Romania, and has declined only slightly in Spain, Hungary and Slovenia. The proportion of such young people has risen in Romania.

FIGURE 5 YOUNG PEOPLE NEITHER IN EMPLOYMENT NOR IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING, EU-27 AND SELECTED COUNTRIES, SELECTED YEARS



Source: Eurostat, Young people neither in employment nor in education and training by sex, age and labour status (NEET rates) [EDAT_LFSE_20_custom_3605489], accessed 17/10/2022.

Also, the proportion of young people experiencing poverty whilst working has remained unchanged in the EU. It is particularly high in Romania, Spain and Italy. Whilst lower in Slovenia, Romania and Hungary, the trend of decrease has not been significant.

TABLE 2 IN-WORK AT-RISK-OF-POVERTY RATE, PROPORTION OF EMPLOYED 16-29 AGE GROUP, EXPERIENCING POVERTY

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
EU-27	9.3	9.8	11.1	10.8	11.0	10.5	10.4	9.8	9.8	9.7
Spain	9.8	9.9	16.2	15.8	15.1	20.0	16.3	16.7	10.9	13.0
Italy	11.8	11.5	12.2	12.6	12.0	12.4	13.1	12.0	11.4	13.1
Hungary	4.8	7.6	6.3	9.5	9.2	6.6	4.4	5.9	5.4	8.5
Poland	8.4	8.7	8.5	10.0	9.0	7.7	8.8	8.3	6.6	7.2
Romania	21.0	21.7	22.6	22.4	23.9	19.0	16.2	16.7	18.4	15.8
Slovenia	7.1	7.2	6.5	7.4	8.2	6.3	5.6	5.5	4.6	4.2

Source: Eurostat, In-work at-risk-of-poverty rate by age and sex - EU-SILC survey [ILC_IW01_custom_4422115], accessed 09/01/2023.

Similarly, the proportion of young people at risk of poverty and social exclusion remains high in the EU, affecting around a quarter of young people. This is particularly high in Romania, Italy and Spain, less so in Hungary, Romania and Slovenia.

TABLE 3 PROPORTION OF PEOPLE IN THE 16-29 AGE GROUP, AT THE RISK OF POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
EU-27	28.1	28.3	26.7	25.5	24.3	25.3	25.3
Spain	36.7	36.6	34.4	33.3	31.3	28.6	31.3
Italy	33.3	32.7	30.9	31.2	28.4	29.9	30.2
Hungary	32.6	30.9	26.6	21.9	19.7	18.0	20.3
Poland	24.4	23.1	19.4	19.9	19.2	18.0	17.6
Romania	47.7	48.3	45.9	39.8	37.2	37.6	36.1
Slovenia	19.0	18.2	15.5	14.1	12.3	12.2	11.5

Source: Eurostat, Persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion by age and sex [ILC_PEPS01N_custom_4441552], accessed 09/01/2023.

Earnings data available for young people show a slow increase in the wages for young people across the EU, over the years. In 2018, on average the annual earnings for young people were around EUR 22,000. Young people in Italy, Spain and Slovenia were earning wages around the EU average. In contrast, earnings for young people in Romania, Hungary and Romania were twice below the EU average, around EUR 11,000.

TABLE 4 MEDIAN ANNUAL EARNINGS, FOR PEOPLE AGED BELOW 30, IN EURO

	2002	2006	2010	2014	2018
EU-27	:	:	18,912	20,274	22,402
Spain	15,462	17,375	20,274	20,697	21,203
Italy	:	21,151	23,291	25,649	26,001
Hungary	4,960	6,543	8,113	8,415	11,103
Poland	5,522	6,747	8,353	9,079	11,297
Romania	1,732	3,345	5,093	5,699	10,424
Slovenia	9,787	12,467	16,876	17,802	19,608

: missing data

Source: Eurostat, Structure of earnings survey: annual earnings [EARN_SES_ANNUAL_custom_4442459], accessed 09/01/2023.

TABLE 5**AVERAGE NUMBER OF USUAL WEEKLY HOURS OF WORK IN MAIN JOB, YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 15-34**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
EU-27	36.7	36.5	36.4	36.4	36.3	36.3	36.2	36.2	36.1	36.0
Spain	36.8	36.2	36.0	36.0	35.9	35.8	35.8	35.6	35.7	35.3
Italy	36.5	36.3	36.3	36.3	36.3	36.4	36.6	36.4	36.3	36.6
Hungary	39.5	39.6	39.9	40.0	39.7	39.8	39.7	39.7	39.5	39.4
Poland	40.4	40.4	40.4	40.5	40.4	40.2	40.2	40.2	40.0	40.1
Romania	40.4	40.3	40.3	40.0	40.1	39.8	39.7	40.0	39.8	40.2
Slovenia	38.0	38.1	37.7	37.7	38.0	37.5	37.7	38.2	38.6	38.3

Source: Eurostat, average number of usual weekly hours of work in main job, by sex, age, professional status, full-time/part-time and economic activity (from 2008 onwards, NACE Rev. 2) [LFSA_EWHUN2_custom_4444349], accessed 09/01/2023.

TABLE 6**SHARE OF SELF-EMPLOYED WITHIN TOTAL EMPLOYMENT, 2021**

	15-29 age group	15-64 age group
EU-27	6	13
Spain	5	6
Italy	12	20
Hungary	6	11
Poland	10	18
Romania	9	11
Slovenia	5	12

Source: Eurostat, accessed 09/01/2023.



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