



YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN SEET: A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITIES

16 OCTOBER 2020 (10.30-12.30 CET)

Online Event

In cooperation with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the Western Balkans Six Chamber Investment Forum (WB 6 CIF)

Background

With the support of the EU, the countries in the Enlargement region have carried out reforms to make education and training more responsive to the needs of businesses and contribute to socio-economic development. Over the past decades, cooperation between education and the world of work has seen various modalities for providing young people with the right skills. As per recent EU policies, the business sector is called upon to renewed commitment for creating alliances with education. The European Training Foundation (ETF) works closely with its partners in South Eastern Europe and Turkey (SEET) in this endeavour.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has hit the young generation in their strive for employability. It is understandable that at this moment, young entrepreneurs might be discouraged to become self-employed or to start a new business. Governments should not lose them and keep encouraging and supporting youth entrepreneurship. What we can see from the current crisis is the importance of the entrepreneurial mindset amongst youth. Entrepreneurial competences such as creativity, seeking new opportunities and building resilience seems more important than ever before.

In response to the crisis, the EU has prioritised IPA funding to support SMEs and entrepreneurs in the Enlargement region. Intermediary organisations like the Western Balkans Six Chamber Investment Forum (WB 6 CIF) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) support the businesses for becoming more competitive, resilient, inclusive and ready for digital and green economies. Furthermore, the post 2020 Multi-Annual Action Plan for a Regional Economic Area (MAP REA) and the South East Europe (SEE) 2030 strategy, including regional and country investment and industrial policies are being developed.

Youth entrepreneurship can be a key factor for successful labour market integration of youth, and in particularly those with vulnerable socio-economic background. This is confirmed through the Small Business Act (SBA) assessment 2019 and the priorities under the “Berlin Process”, a process aimed at stepping up regional cooperation in the Western Balkans. There are plenty of examples to be shared to mutually inspire innovation in COVID-19 times, where a repositioning of forces in the global market is taking place.

Objective of the meeting

This webinar is part of 2020 ETF's regional research action focusing on transition from school to work and labour market integration of young people through more responsive skills development, employment and social inclusion measures. A component of this action looks at the role of the private sector and foremost youth entrepreneurship in raising youth employability.

The main objective of this online event is to make available the findings of the new ETF study *“Unlocking Youth Potential in South Eastern Europe and Turkey: Skills development for labour market and social inclusion”* with a focus on youth entrepreneurship. We give the floor to young entrepreneurs, representatives from governments, businesses and intermediary institutions at country and regional level, international financial institutions and regional bodies. Experiences from young entrepreneurs in their road to success will be shared and examples of relevant youth entrepreneurship programmes will be presented.

Key questions

- What are success factors for Youth Entrepreneurship in COVID times and in preparation for a digital and green economy? Do we need new business models?
- Are young entrepreneurs sufficiently equipped with the entrepreneurial competences received through education and training? Are new skills required for COVID-19 economic and social context? Can mentorship schemes help young people build their entrepreneurial skills and human capital?
- How do intermediary organisations and other bodies support the young generation to be a winner in a new global market? What are viable solutions?
- Is there a role for established businesses in supporting youth entrepreneurship? For example, through supply chains, outsourcing, or otherwise.

Participants include: Businesses, intermediary institutions, young entrepreneurs, education, labour and economy ministries and/or agencies of the SEET countries, EU Delegations or offices in SEET, European Commission, EU agencies, IFIs, regional and international organisations.

AGENDA (Friday, 16 October 2020)

10:30 – 10:50 – Opening session (welcome and introductory remarks)

Xavier Matheu de Cortada, Head of Policy Unit, Operations Department, European Training Foundation (ETF)

Barbara Rambousek, Director for the Gender & Economic Inclusion team, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)

Safet Gërxhaliu, Secretary General, Western Balkans 6 Chamber Investment Forum (WB6 CIF)

10:50 – 11:00 – Entrepreneurial learning in SEET: key messages from the forthcoming ETF report “Unlocking Youth Potential in South Eastern Europe and Turkey: Skills development for labour market and social inclusion”

Kristien Van den Eynde, ETF, Specialist in Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Skills

11.00 – 11.35 Session one: The voice of young entrepreneurs

Key topics: Examples of success stories during Covid-19 crisis: How the business survived? What support do you need? What skills are important as a young entrepreneur? How do you develop those skills? Did you receive any support during the crisis?

Young entrepreneurs and representatives of companies to present their experiences

Presentations

Vladimir Grabovac, BIONA&BEYOND, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Nikola Stanojevic, Founder of SOMA, Serbia

Dorjana Ferati, Manager, Ferati Sh.p.k., Albania

Emin Okutan, Co-Founder of Viveka Incubation Center, Turkey

Questions and Answers; Discussion

11.40-12.10 Session two: Efficient youth entrepreneurship programs

Key topics: Strategies and programmes that support youth entrepreneurship. How do intermediary organisations and other bodies support the young generation? What are the success factors and challenges?

SME and investment agencies, business and non-governmental organisations to present entrepreneurship support actions, success factors and challenges.

Presentations

Uros Bulatovic, Montenegro Association of Young Entrepreneurs, Montenegro

Kreshnik Thaqi, Head of Investment Promotion Sector, Kosovo Investment and Enterprise Support Agency, Kosovo (KIESA)

Jovan Despotovski, Director, North Macedonian Fund for Innovations

Questions and Answers; Discussion

12:15 – 12:30 Concluding session

Youssef Tadros, Policy Officer, and Fanny Seree, Policy Assistant - Economic Governance, Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), Unit A3, European Commission – *Potential of EU support in promoting youth entrepreneurship*

Ulrike Damyanovic, Country Coordinator for Montenegro, Focal Point for South Eastern Europe and Turkey, ETF – *Key concluding messages of the event*