



ONLINE TRAINING PROGRAMME – MODULE II – GROUP 1 - 06/03/2026

QUOTES FROM PARTICIPANTS

Trainees expressed their thoughts about *The 11 European Youth Goals* and the majority of Portuguese trainees considered the **Goal n. 11 “Quality Employment for All - Ensuring fair, inclusive and quality employment opportunities for young people”** as the most relevant one, motivating that with the following data and explanations:

- ✓ *More than one million Portuguese people live with some form of disability.*
- ✓ *20% of people with disabilities in Portugal live on less than 300 euros per month, which places them at risk of poverty.*
- ✓ *54% of people with disabilities in Portugal in 2024 are long-term unemployed, including young people.*
- ✓ *32% of young people with disabilities neither study nor work.*
- ✓ *Society still tends to focus on young people’s disabilities rather than their abilities and what they can contribute to society.*
- ✓ *Many young people are capable of working but are not given opportunities.*
- ✓ *Young people with disabilities have the same right to work as any other citizen. However, the reality shows that many are still excluded from the labour market and continue to have limited employment opportunities.*
- ✓ *Although quotas exist in both public and private companies, there are often ways to bypass them.*
- ✓ *The jobs they find are often short-term, and young people may remain unemployed for long periods between jobs.*
- ✓ *During interviews, employers often require high qualifications and experience, which many young people do not yet have.*
- ✓ *In 2022, only 0.7% of workers in private companies were people with disabilities.*
- ✓ *Non-profit organisations often provide the best examples of creating inclusive jobs and initiatives.*
- ✓ *There is also a lack of information within companies about support measures that help compensate employers when young people cannot perform certain tasks at 100%..*

Also for some Albanian trainees, this Goal is fundamental, since *“it addresses the core reason why young people emigrate. Quality employment is not just about a pay check; it is about the dignity of knowing that your position is earned through hard work and education, mirroring the European standards I see every day”*.

Concerning the **Goal 5. “Mental Health and Well-being - Supporting young people’s mental health and overall well-being”**, one of the Montenegrin trainees considered it as the most relevant since *“many young people experience stress, pressure from school, social media and personal problems. Mental health is still not talked about enough, and some young people feel afraid or ashamed to ask for help. One challenge is that there are not enough psychologists or support services for young people in schools. Also, many people still think mental health is not a serious topic. To improve this situation, schools and communities could organize workshops about mental health, provide more counsellors in schools, and create safe spaces where young people can talk openly about their problems. Raising awareness and education about mental health would help young people feel supported”*.



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**Goal n. 7. “Quality Learning - Promoting inclusive, high-quality and lifelong learning”** was also considered of high relevance by some Albanian trainees *“because many young people face limited practical education and lack of career guidance, which affects their chances in the job market. Challenges in the case of Albania include outdated education methods, limited internships and fewer opportunities for students. Actions that could help would be improving cooperation between universities and businesses, creating more internship with simpler criteria and providing career training for young people could help advance this goal”*.

According to a Montenegrin trainee, **Goal n. 1. “Connecting EU with Youth- Strengthening trust and communication between young people and the European Union”** is of highest importance *“because young people have little to say in decision that were being made and are being made. Our voice is not seen as relevant because of our age and lack of “experience in real world”. I think that we can bring fresh perspective, because we will be the ones to take over the leadership in the future”*.

In the perspective of one of the Italian trainees, **Goal n. 4. “Information & Constructive Dialogue - Ensuring access to reliable information and meaningful dialogue with young people”** should be taken in high consideration, explaining this position with the following thought: *“I’m concerned about the growing pollution of the digital information environment, especially after the rise of AI generative models and content and the general presence of global actors advocating for. I strongly believe that an effort must be made in order to implement programs, both in schools and workplaces, to educate people on the malevolent use of language and images and to strengthen critical skills. I also believe that debate programs should receive more funding, as I’m concerned that frequent exposition to social media echo chambers may exacerbate political polarisation and weaken useful and civil debate, fundamental in any democratic country”*.

Trainees were also encouraged to think about the main **challenges** existing in their countries in achieving the chosen goals.

For Portuguese trainees, they can be summarized as follows:

- *Greater willingness of organisations to include young people with learning or comprehension difficulties.*
- *Better preparation of support staff to accompany young people entering the labour market.*
- *Creation of more job opportunities and internships, despite existing support measures that encourage companies and public institutions to promote them.*
- *Changing recruitment processes in the public sector, which are not adapted for people with certain difficulties.*
- *Adapting interview formats, which often require previous work experience.*
- *Providing more opportunities to gain work experience.*
- *Giving feedback to candidates after interviews, since many are not told why they were not selected.*
- *Supporting young people to remain in the labour market, even if they change jobs from time to time.*
- *Ensuring that social support remains available or can be quickly restored when employment is unstable.*

Finally, trainees were invited to reflect on possible **actions** or **Measures** that could help advance the chosen goals at local or national level.





Portuguese trainees proposed the following:

- ✓ *In England, there is a measure called “induction”, where for three months a person is prepared for a job with the support of a mentor. This prevents employers from claiming that young people lack experience.*
- ✓ *Measures are needed that do not place excessive responsibility on young people, as this can cause anxiety and frustration.*
- ✓ *Support measures for employability should include more flexible working hours, especially for people with intellectual disabilities who may not be able to work continuous 8-hour days.*
- ✓ *There should be more initiatives and support for youth entrepreneurship, giving young people opportunities for internships and employment.*
- ✓ *The education and cultural sectors should offer more opportunities for youth inclusion, as they promote inclusive values and are often safer environments.*
- ✓ *Companies need more information about available support measures, but also simpler procedures to access them, with less bureaucracy and more flexibility.*
- ✓ *Managers and employees should be more aware of the need for flexible schedules and adapted workplaces and equipment.*
- ✓ *Transport networks should serve more areas and provide better schedules.*
- ✓ *Creating opportunities and breaking prejudices is everyone’s responsibility.*

Then the training session continued with the theme of **EU Accession Process and Procedures** and participants were invited to reflect on the **opportunities that EU membership** could bring or have brought in their countries and on the **challenges** that might arise.

Here follows some points of view of Albanian trainees:

*“When I think about the enlargement of the European Union, I associate it with new opportunities for countries, such as economic growth, better education, and freedom to travel or work in other EU countries. It also requires many reforms, because countries need to improve their laws, institutions, and democracy. EU enlargement also increases cooperation between nations, helping them work together on important issues. At the same time, it brings challenges, such as adapting to EU standards and ensuring that all member states benefit equally”.*

*“EU membership could bring my country more opportunities in youth work and employment! It also brought significant economic modernization, infrastructural development, and political stability and some of challenges that arised is a persistent productivity gap compared to other Eurozone members, partly due to a large service-oriented economy and slow judicial processes”.*

*“For Albania, membership in the European Union could bring economic growth, increased foreign investment, access to EU development funds, and greater opportunities for education, employment, and free movement across Europe. It would also strengthen democratic institutions, rule of law, and cooperation with other European countries. However, challenges may include implementing complex reforms, adapting national laws and institutions to EU standards, and managing economic competition within the EU single market”.*

*“The greatest opportunity is Legal Certainty. Membership ensures a standardized framework that protects investors and citizens alike. For Albania, it means the full integration into the Single Market,*



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*providing our youth and businesses with equal access to the same opportunities found in member states, without the current institutional barriers”.*

And here follows the perspective of one of the Montenegrin trainees:

*“EU membership could help Montenegro develop faster and become more stable politically and economically, also it could make traveling easier for citizens and give students more opportunities study in exchange programs”.*

Concerning the possible **challenges** that this process might arise, an Albanian trainee believes that *“From a legal standpoint, the most critical part of this process is Chapter 23 (Judiciary and Fundamental Rights) and Chapter 24 (Justice, Freedom, and Security). These chapters are the 'heart' of the negotiations because they demand proof of legal certainty and institutional integrity before a country can progress”.*

