

NEWS RELEASE

Supporting employment for young people

The European Labour Authority is launching a five-month EURES campaign, focusing on students' employment. During the campaign, EURES will raise awareness for the many opportunities that can be offered to tackle the issues university and vocational training students, NEETs, apprentices and young graduates face when entering the labour market.

Starting a career is not always easy for a young university student, someone in vocational training or a young graduate. They are exposed to risks of exclusion, short-term, unstable and precarious employment, and demanding living and working conditions like high housing costs, as highlighted in the 'Annual Report on Intra-EU Labour Mobility – 2024 Edition'.

The EURES network can bridge the gaps and offer solutions to tackle the challenges faced by these young potential EU movers. For this reason, the European Labour Authority (ELA) is launching the EURES campaign 'Your career takes you places'.

The aim is to raise awareness among 18–24 and 25–35 age groups about employment opportunities, traineeships, apprenticeships and the EURES available services that will help them find their way and start their careers in another European country. 'With EURES, build your skills, gain confidence, and start your career in another EU or EEA country,' said Cosmin Boiangiu, ELA Executive Director.

Why students need EURES support?

For the 18–24 age group, early school leaving is a pressing issue. In 2022, 22% of young EU movers in this age range were early leavers from education and training, nearly three times the rate of nationals (8%). This puts them at risk of limited employability, precarious jobs, and social exclusion. The lack of qualifications makes it harder for them to access stable employment and creates a need for targeted communication on re-entry into education, apprenticeships, and vocational training.

The next age group, 25–35 years old, though generally better integrated, still faces challenges in educational attainment and lifelong learning. Tertiary education levels among movers aged 30–34 rose to 39% in 2022 but remain below the 43% of nationals. Participation in adult learning is also low, with only 3% of movers engaged in training, compared to an EU target of 60% adult participation by 2030. This stagnation risks locking young adults into mid-skill jobs without pathways for progression. Also here, EURES can provide better communication on recognition of qualifications and re/upskilling options to prevent career stagnation.

In a more demanding situation are the NEETs — youth neither in employment, education, nor training. Among 18–29-year-old movers, in 2022, 14% were NEETs, compared with 11% of nationals. While this rate has improved since 2017, the persistent gap signals integration barriers in host countries. EURES can provide information on available training, mobility schemes, and job search support, to help this group connect to the labour market in a new country and reduce the risk of long-term detachment.

Employment quality also matters. EU movers aged 20–34 experience higher unemployment (8%) compared to older cohorts. Moreover, they are more often employed under fixed-term or part-time contracts, leaving them vulnerable to insecurity. Tailored communication, by EURES Advisers, and clear information on the EURES portal can help raise awareness of labour rights, EU protections, and mobility programmes that support transitions into permanent work. Both age groups are also disproportionately affected by housing cost burdens. In 2022, 19% of EU movers spent more than 40% of their income on housing—more than double the rate of nationals (8%). For young people trying to establish themselves in a new country, this is an extra financial pressure. EURES can provide them with information about housing rights, subsidies, and employer-linked housing support could alleviate one of their main barriers to integration.

Social exclusion is another common thread. In 2022, 27% of EU movers were at risk of poverty or social exclusion, compared with 19% of nationals. For younger movers, who often lack established support networks in host countries, this risk is particularly serious. EURES can alleviate this by providing not only employment opportunities but also information on access to social protection, welfare services, and integration support.

What has EURES been doing so far?

EURES has played an important role in supporting young people aged 18–24 and 25–35 during the 2022–2024 period. With a focus on easing their entry into the labour market, improving mobility opportunities, EURES also has been supporting integration across borders. According to the 'EURES Biennial Report 2022-2024', its initiatives have targeted both early career starters and young adults seeking stability or advancement, recognising the unique challenges both groups face in today's labour market.

For the 18–24 age group, EURES has expanded access to apprenticeships and traineeships. Between July 2022 and June 2024, the EURES portal listed circa 470 000 apprenticeships and 27 000 internships, nearly doubling the previous reporting period. This expansion provides younger movers with practical opportunities to build skills, gain experience abroad, and make the transition from education to employment smoother.

Moreover, for all age groups, the EURES portal displays around 3 million job vacancies in all 31 EURES countries. Young movers can apply, and many of these job vacancies are starting positions where no or little experience is required.

For those aged 25–35, EURES has supported career progression and stability through its Targeted Mobility Scheme (TMS). This scheme directly benefits young adults looking for sustainable employment abroad by funding relocation, language courses, and integration support. During the reporting period (June 2022 to July 2024), the scheme enabled nearly 5 000 placements and supported 400 SMEs, showing its relevance in matching labour demand with a mobile, younger workforce.

Post-recruitment assistance has also been strengthened. Young movers often face practical barriers—housing, social security, or access to education for accompanying family members. EURES Advisers provided counselling and, in some cases, access to free language courses and e-learning tools. This support is particularly valuable for 25–35-year-olds seeking to establish longer-term residence abroad and avoid short-term, precarious contracts.

EURES also invested in European (Online) Job Days (EOJDs), recruitment and information events, often attended by younger candidates, allow direct interaction with recruiters across borders. Between 2022 and 2024, 70 EOJD events were organised with 105 000 participants, showcasing their growing importance as a youth-friendly entry point into mobility opportunities.

In addition, Cross-border partnerships (CBP) have also provided more local support for young people. By addressing practical challenges such as taxation, social security, and regional labour shortages, they help youth in border regions find work more easily. Innovative examples, such as the 'From the stadium to the job' initiative in the Upper Rhine, used creative methods to connect young jobseekers with employers, making cross-border recruitment less intimidating and more engaging.

Overall, both 18–24 and 25–35 age groups are at a crossroad: the first group risks being left behind due to early school leaving and weak labour market entry, while the second risks stagnation without further training and stable employment opportunities.

Contact information:

For any more general information about the campaign, or any specific requests for material, please email EURES at press@ela.europa.eu.

Throughout the campaign, EURES is posting on social media using #withEURES alongside the classic hashtag #EURESjobs.

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