



CEDEFOP

European Centre for the Development
of Vocational Training

Building Inclusive Futures: VET Solutions for Europe's NEETs

5th webinar for the network of 'Ambassadors
tackling early leaving from VET'

Webinar

Rena Psifidou, Cedefop Expert and Coordinator of the Ambassadors' network
Stefanie Ledermaier, Cedefop Expert
Michail Papazoglou, Cedefop Expert

10th June 2026 | 10.00-11.30 CET



Today's Agenda



10:00 – 10:10

Welcome & latest news from Cedefop

Rena Psifidou, Stefanie Ledermaier, Michail Papazoglou, Cedefop experts



10:10 – 10:50

Presentation of Cedefop's research on NEETs



10:50 – 11:20

Discussion - Q&A

Facilitator: Zoi-Maria Kamopoulou, Cedefop trainee



11:20 – 11:30

Wrap-up and next steps

Cedefop's work on **inclusion**



Carrying out research to address data gaps and inform policy



Online knowledge hub promoting inclusive VET pathways



Leveraging a pan-European network of ambassadors for inclusion



Promoting peer learning through policy learning fora, webinars, conferences

Building Inclusive Futures - VET Solutions for Europe's NEETs

Cedefop. (2026). Building inclusive futures for NEETs: VET solutions for Europe's young people not in employment, education or training. Cedefop research paper. Publications Office of the European Union.
<http://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2801/7473761>

Research paper

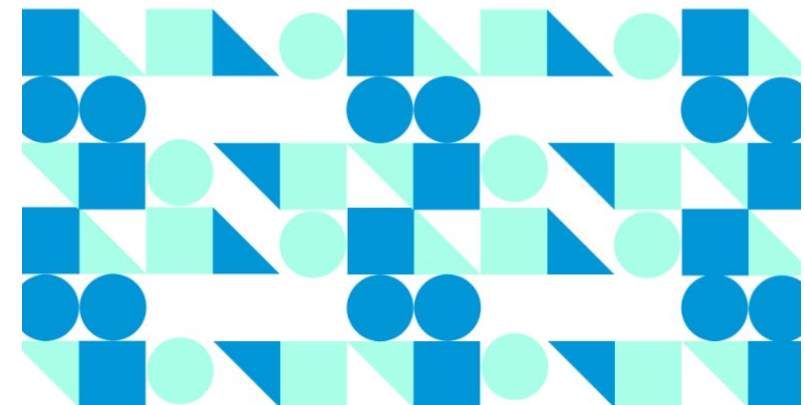
Building inclusive futures for NEETs

VET solutions for Europe's young people
not in employment, education or training

VET4Youth – Teachers and Trainers Team: Rena Psifidou,
Stefanie Ledermaier, Michail Papazoglou

With the help of Zoi Kamopoulou and Maria Toskidou

Peer reviewed by Anthie Kyriakopoulou



Understanding the changing NEET landscape in Europe

The report explores **how VET can contribute to reducing the number of NEETs** across Europe. The analysis combines:

- long-term NEET trends across EU Member States,
- forward-looking projections towards EU targets,
- examination of structural inequalities,
- and evidence on effective intervention approaches.

Key analytical focus: Two cross-cutting dimensions of exclusion

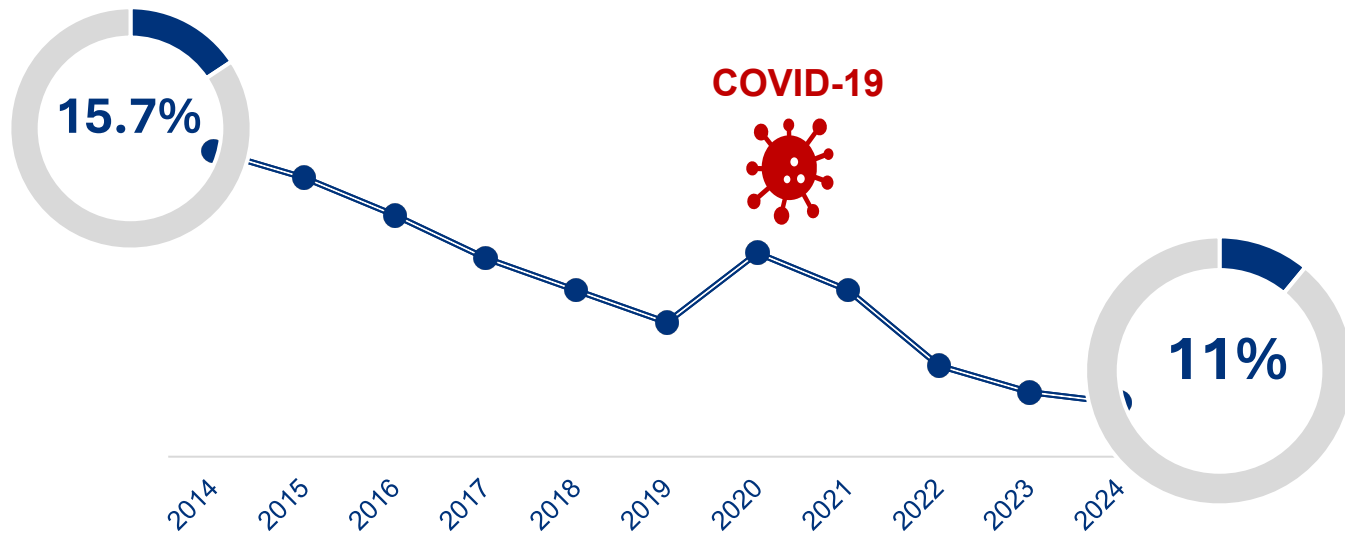
- Gender
- Geography and territorial disparities

The objective is to support more targeted, evidence-based and holistic policies for NEET inclusion.

The magnitude of the NEET phenomenon in the EU



8 million NEETs in the EU in 2024



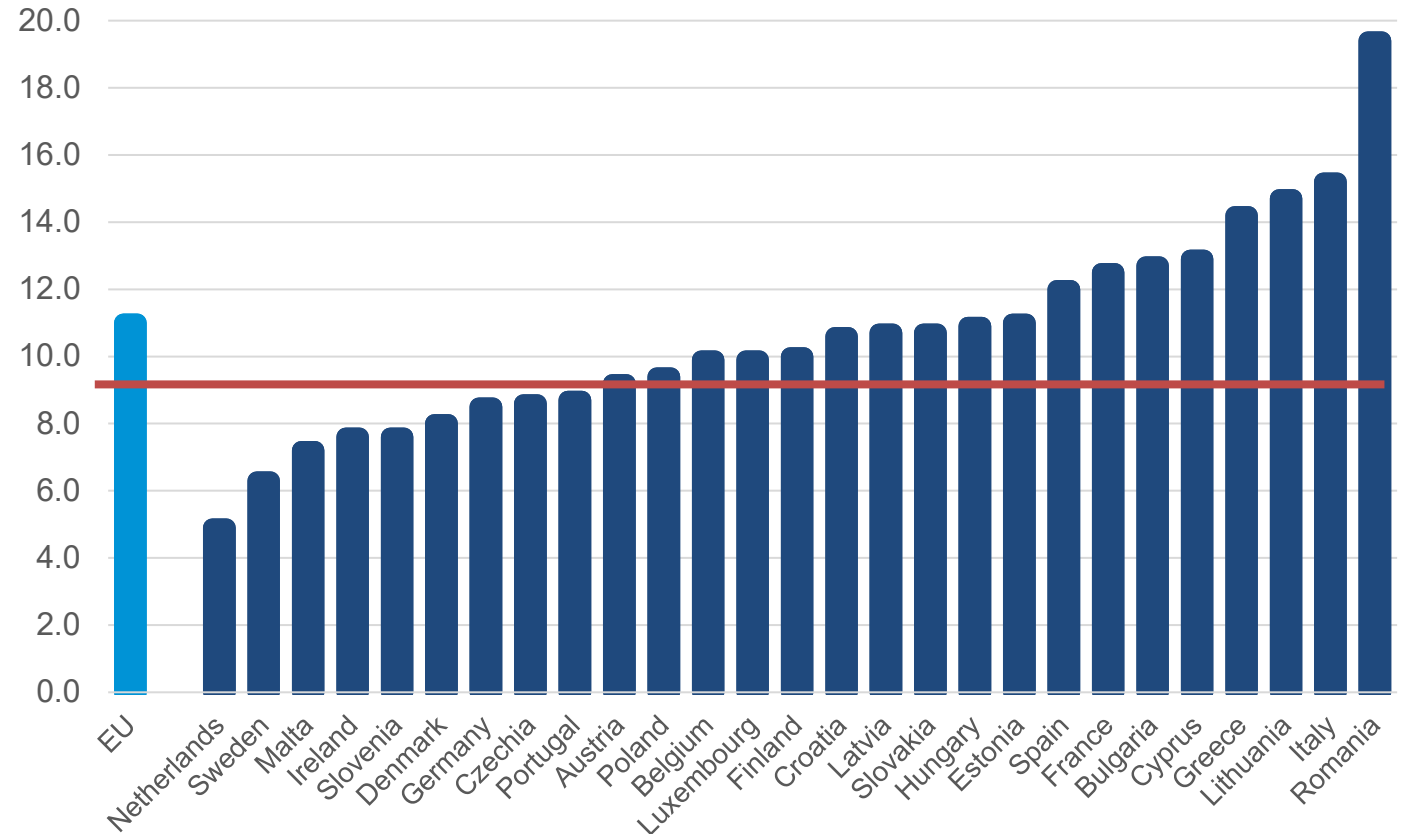
Source: Eurostat, LFS, 2024

- NEET rate **steadily declined** over past decade. **Uneven progress** across Member States and regions.
- Crises e.g. pandemic demonstrate vulnerability of young people to labour market downturns.
- Around **8 million young people** aged 15–29 were still not in employment, education or training in 2024.

Progress made towards the EU target

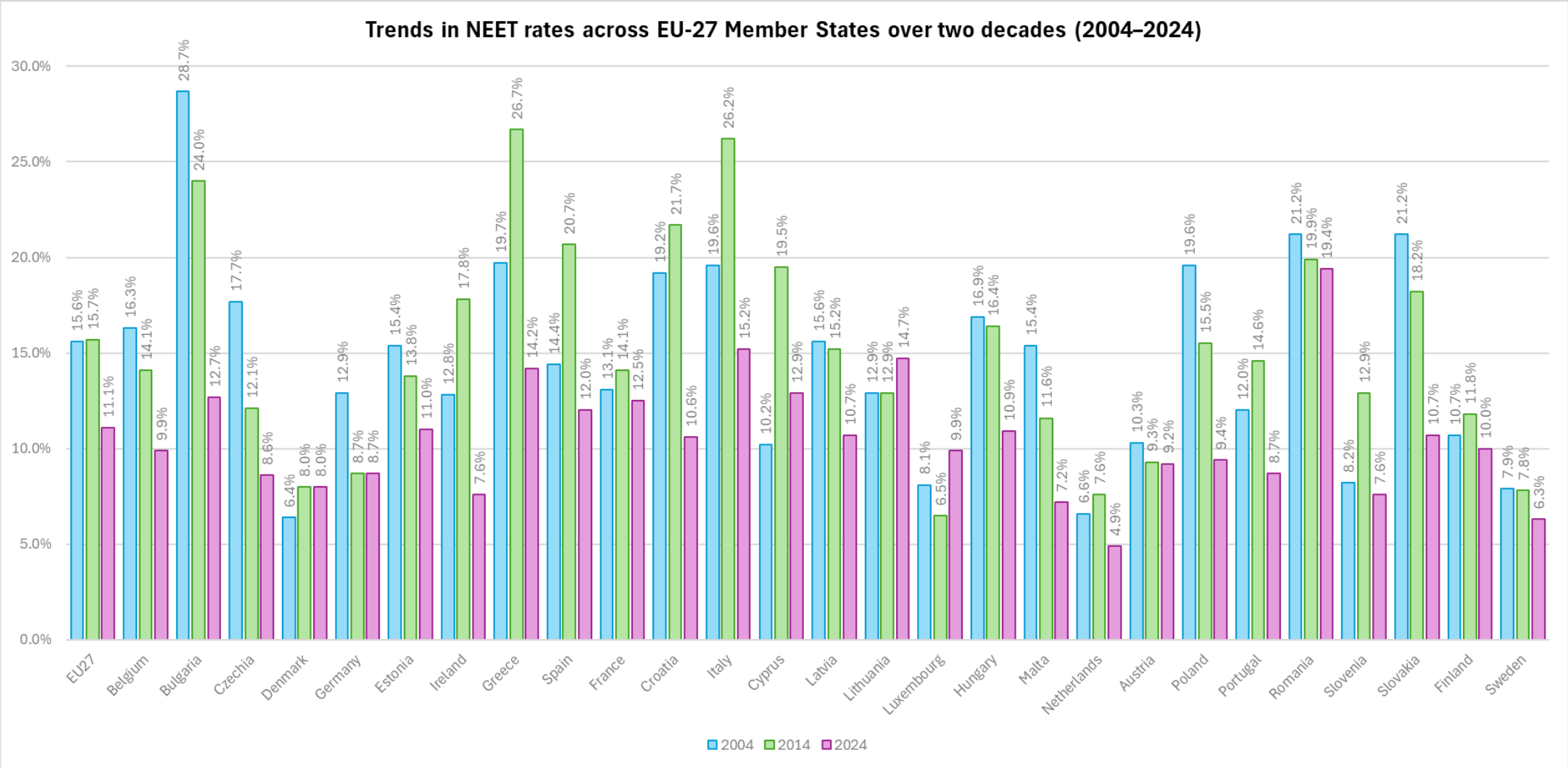
- EU strategic objective: **NEET rate to 9% by 2030**
- **Nine (9)** Member states have already met this goal
- **Five (5)** are close to achieve the target: below 10% as of 2024
- **Eight (8)** are far from reaching it: currently above 12%

Young people (aged 15-29) neither in employment nor in education and training 2024 (%)



Source: Eurostat, LFS, 2024

Trends in NEET rates in EU-27 2004-2024



EU policy framework supporting NEETs

- **2013** Youth Guarantee Council Recommendation
- **2014** Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans
- **2016** Skills Agenda
- **2017** European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR)
- **2020** Reinforced Youth Guarantee and updated Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans
- **2020** New European Skills agenda – Pact for Skills
- **2020** Council Recommendation on VET
- **2020** Osnabrück Declaration
- **2021-2027** European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)
- **2021** ALMA (Aim, Learn, Master, Achieve)
- **2025** Union of Skills
- **2025** Herning Declaration



The gender dimension of the NEET phenomenon

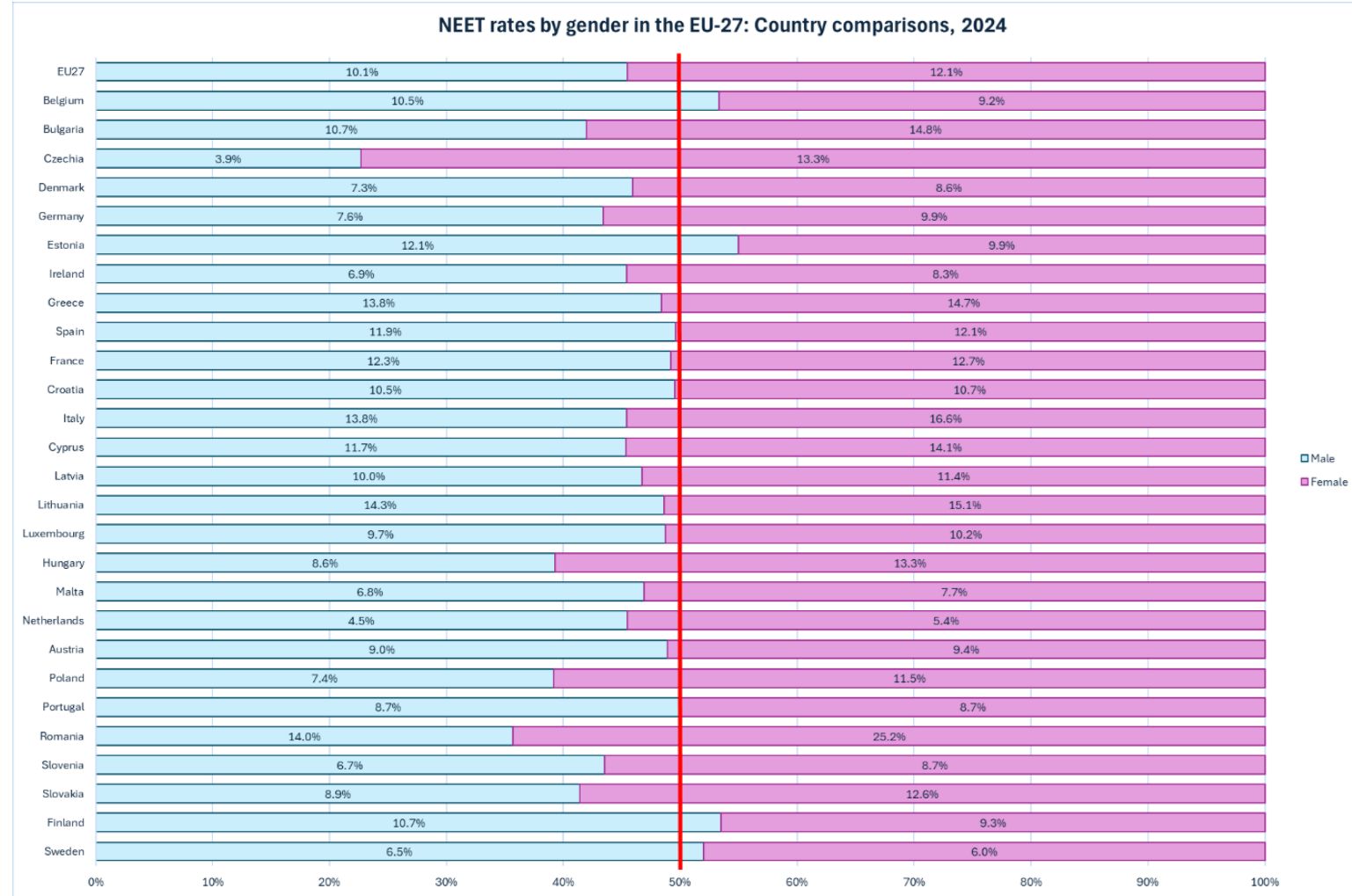


12.1% NEETs are women
vs. 10% men in 2024



Notable gender
disparities within MS

Inverted picture in
four (4) MS

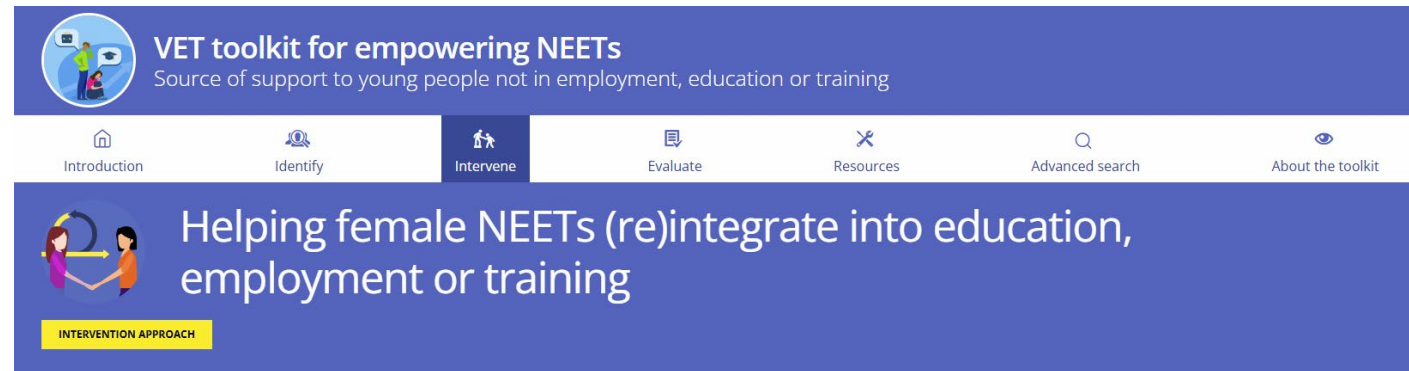


Source: Eurostat, LFS, 2024

Holistic intervention approaches addressing female NEETs

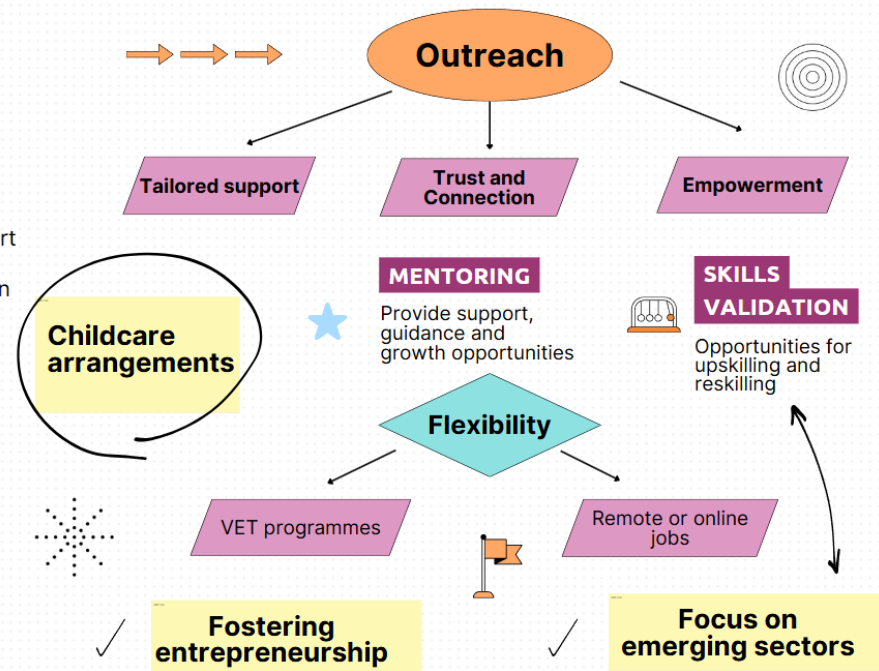
- Usage of **gender-sensitive data**
- Addressing childcare needs systematically
- Improving access to **flexible learning & training** pathways
- Investing in **mentoring & empowerment** initiatives
- Enhancing **outreach** through **trusted channels**

Source: [Cedefop toolkit for empowering NEETs](#)



Helping female NEETs

Comprehensive support for (re)entering employment, education and training



Good practice examples focusing on female NEETs





Polish Outdoor Learning (POL)

Good Practice #1

The POL project *aims* at facilitating the **entry of young women to the labour market** and improving young women's employability and work skills, through an **Outdoor Learning approach**.

It *offers* NEETs, especially women, aged 18-35 a comprehensive set of knowledge, skills, and social competences through **experiential learning methods and outdoor development and learning processes**.

Of the 67 NEET women participants:

-  15 women returned to education
-  18 found employment
-  11 retrained and began working in new fields
-  3 went abroad in search of work

Over 89% of the participants significantly **changed their lives**

89%







DigitHer

Good Practice #2

DigitHer *aims* at increasing the participation of **young women in the tech industry** by providing them with the skills and support needed to launch digital careers.

Developed by the Italian Government's Department for Digital Transformation, DigitHer targets **150 unemployed women aged 18 to 34** and consists of 14-week long **online training programmes for Java Developer and Data Engineering roles**.

Programme effectiveness:

-  2,378 applications received.
-  174 learners enrolled, exceeding the initial target.
-  150 women successfully completed the programme.
-  108 participants placed in digital roles.



100%

100% of the **placement goal in digital roles** was achieved

Regional Inequalities: remote NEETs at greater risk



10%

Cities

→ Significant rural-urban disparities



11.4%

Towns & suburbs

→ In some Member States this divide exceeds 10 percentage points



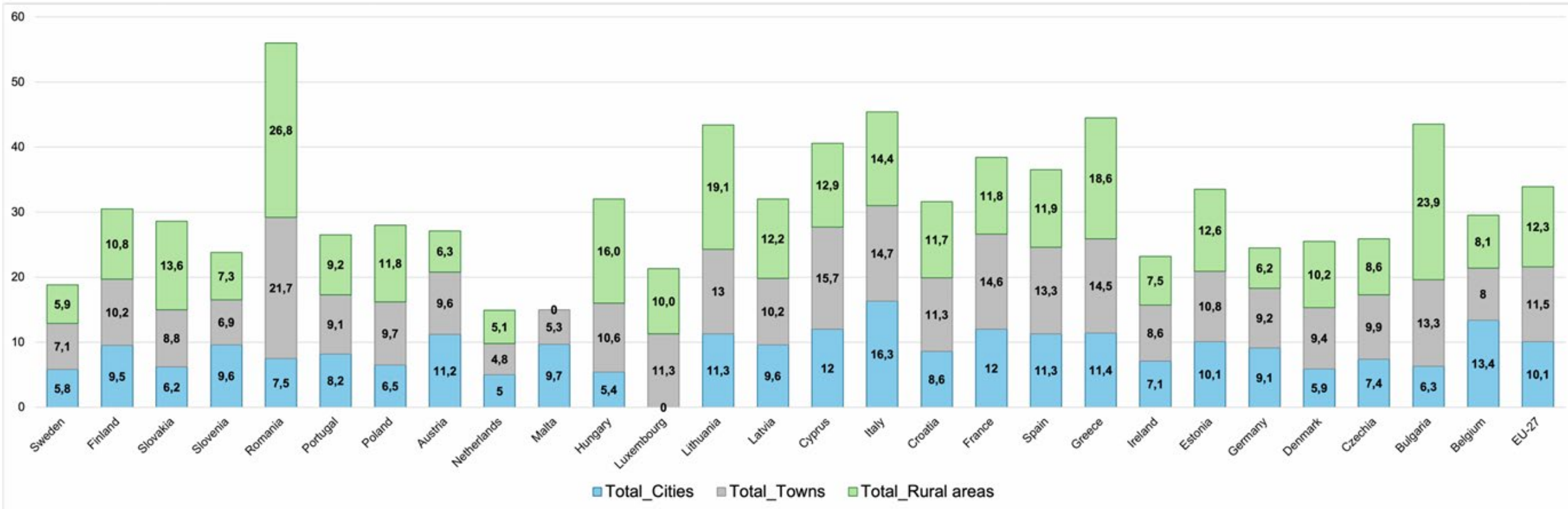
12.3%

Rural areas

→ Rural areas often face structural disadvantages

Source: Eurostat, LFS, 2024

The urban-rural divide: challenges of NEETs in remote areas

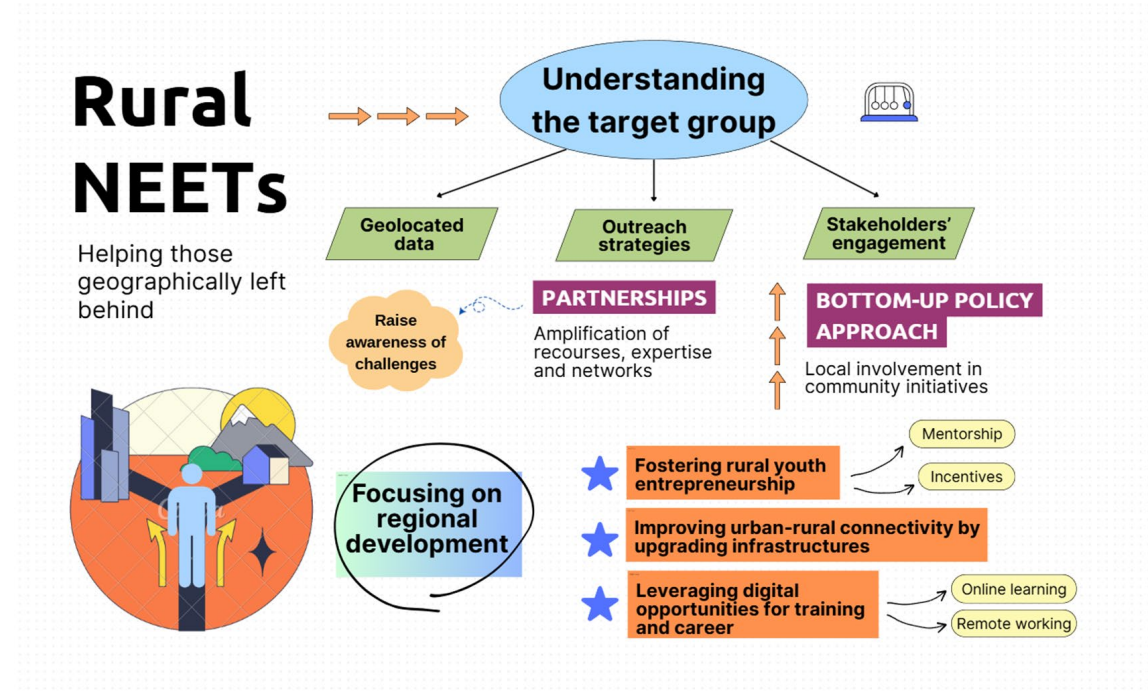
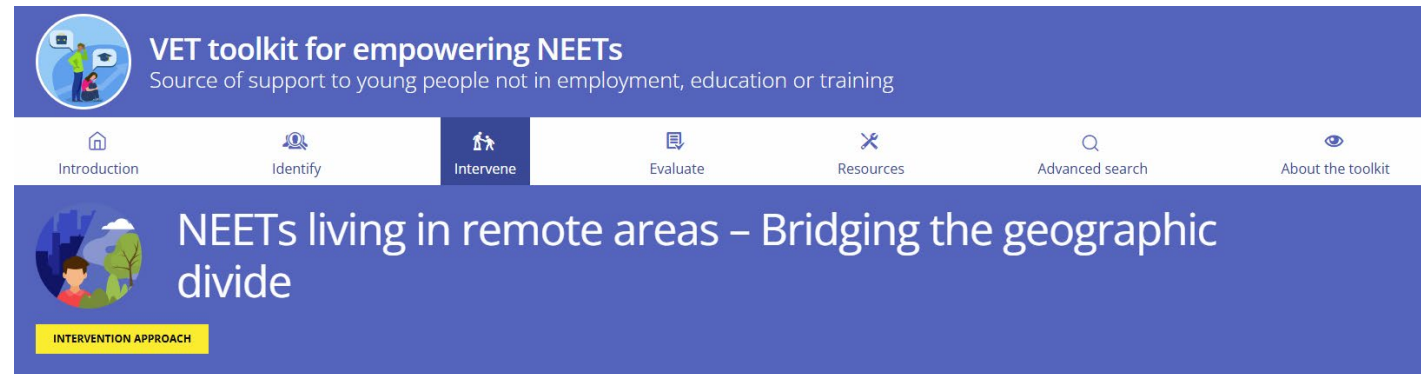


Source: Authors, based on Eurostat data ([edat_ifse_29](#)).

Holistic intervention approaches for remote NEETs

- Supporting **local VET and guidance services**
- Strengthening **digital access & skills**
- Investing in **local partnerships**
- Improving **infrastructure & connectivity**
- Fostering rural **youth entrepreneurship**
- Engaging NEETs in programme design

Source: [Cedefop toolkit for empowering NEETs](#)



Good practice examples focusing on rural NEETs

Back on Track - Support for young NEETs in rural areas

(Re)integrating rural NEETs through skills development and digital inclusion.



Good Practice #4

Back on Track *aims* to integrate **young NEETs in rural areas into VET**, through a **transnational stakeholder network** and **digital training and mentoring programme**.

The programme adopts a **holistic approach** towards rural NEETs, featuring:

- 💡 **A Mentoring programme**, with personalised guidance for disadvantaged NEETs.
- 💡 **Digital Learning modules**, to build digital literacy, communication, and problem-solving skills.
- 💡 **Outreach and engagement strategies**, to understand local needs and build stakeholder networks.



EUR 2,47 million was invested in the project

Go Remote



Unlocking the potential of remote job opportunities

Good Practice #3

Go Remote *aims* to provide **targeted training**, mentoring, and employment support to **young people from disadvantaged backgrounds**, particularly young NEETs, young mothers, and rural youth.

It offers **remote work training programmes**, **job speed dating events**, and soft and technical skills training, and facilitates access to job openings across Europe through a **dedicated job-seeking platform**.

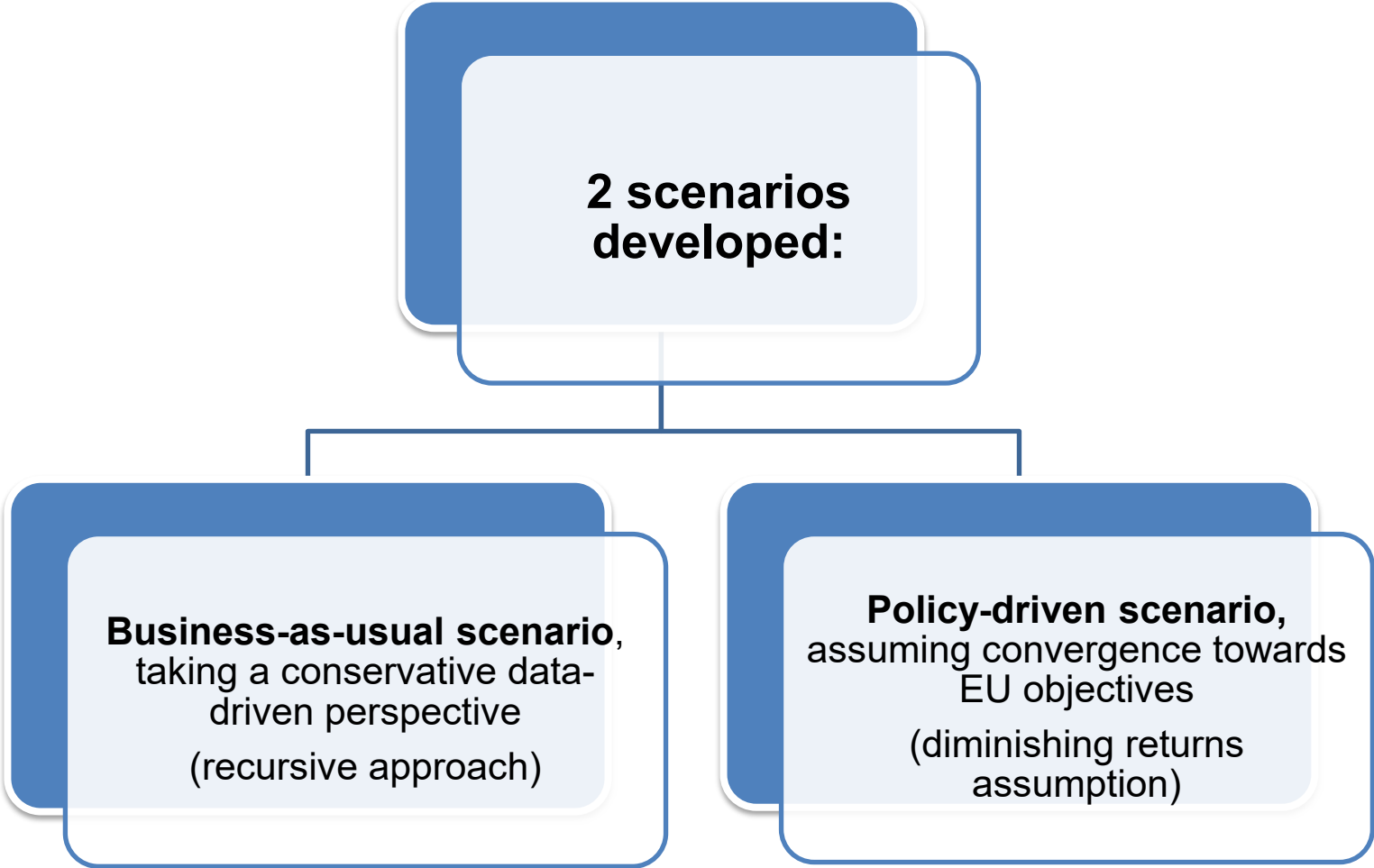
Programme effectiveness:

- 💡 3,941 young individuals were trained in remote work skills.
- 💡 318 SMEs were engaged in remote work practices.
- 💡 74 mentors were trained to support young job seekers.

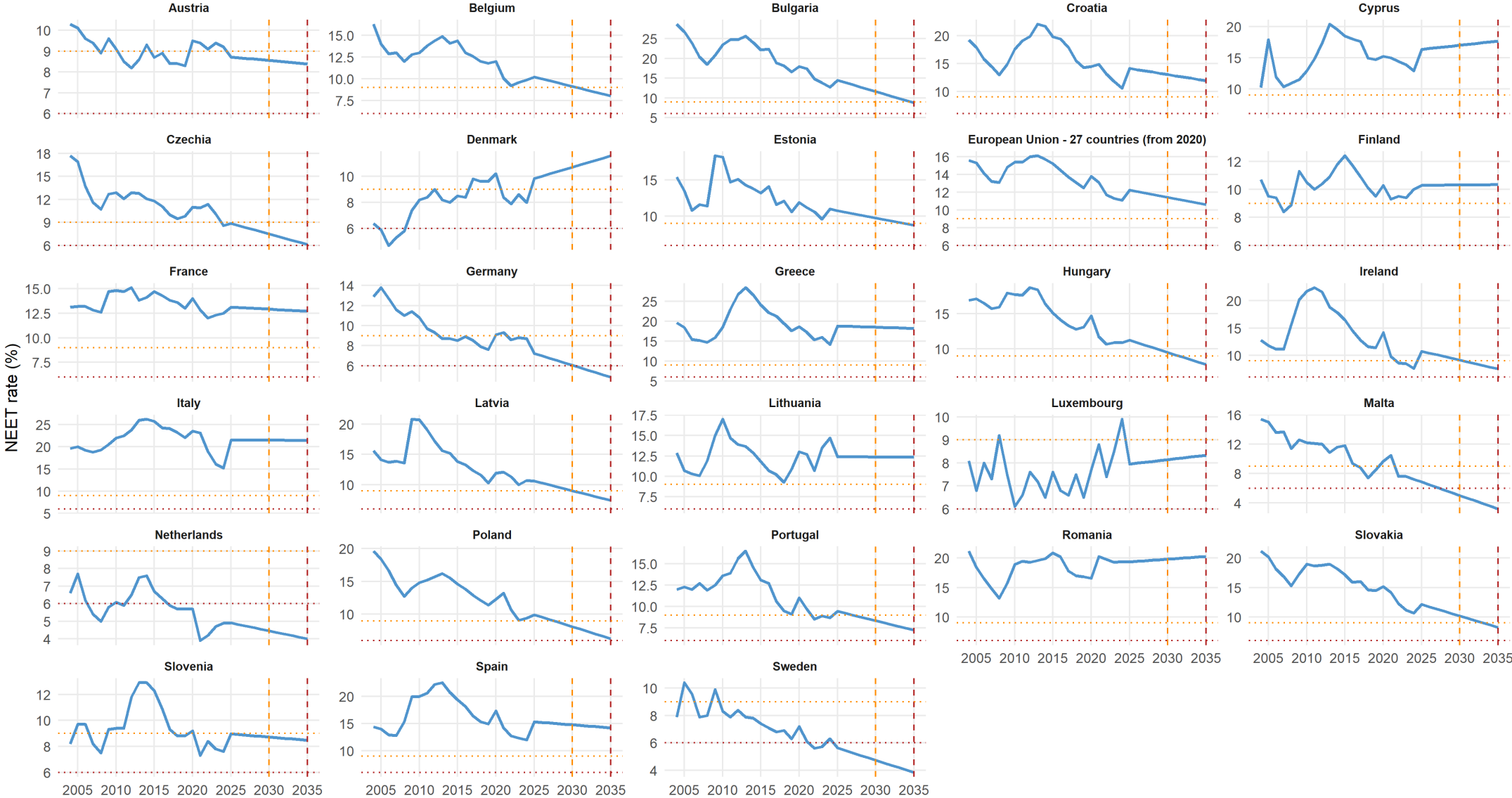


Over 7,000 people were involved in the programme.

Forward looking scenarios projecting NEETs trajectories to 2035

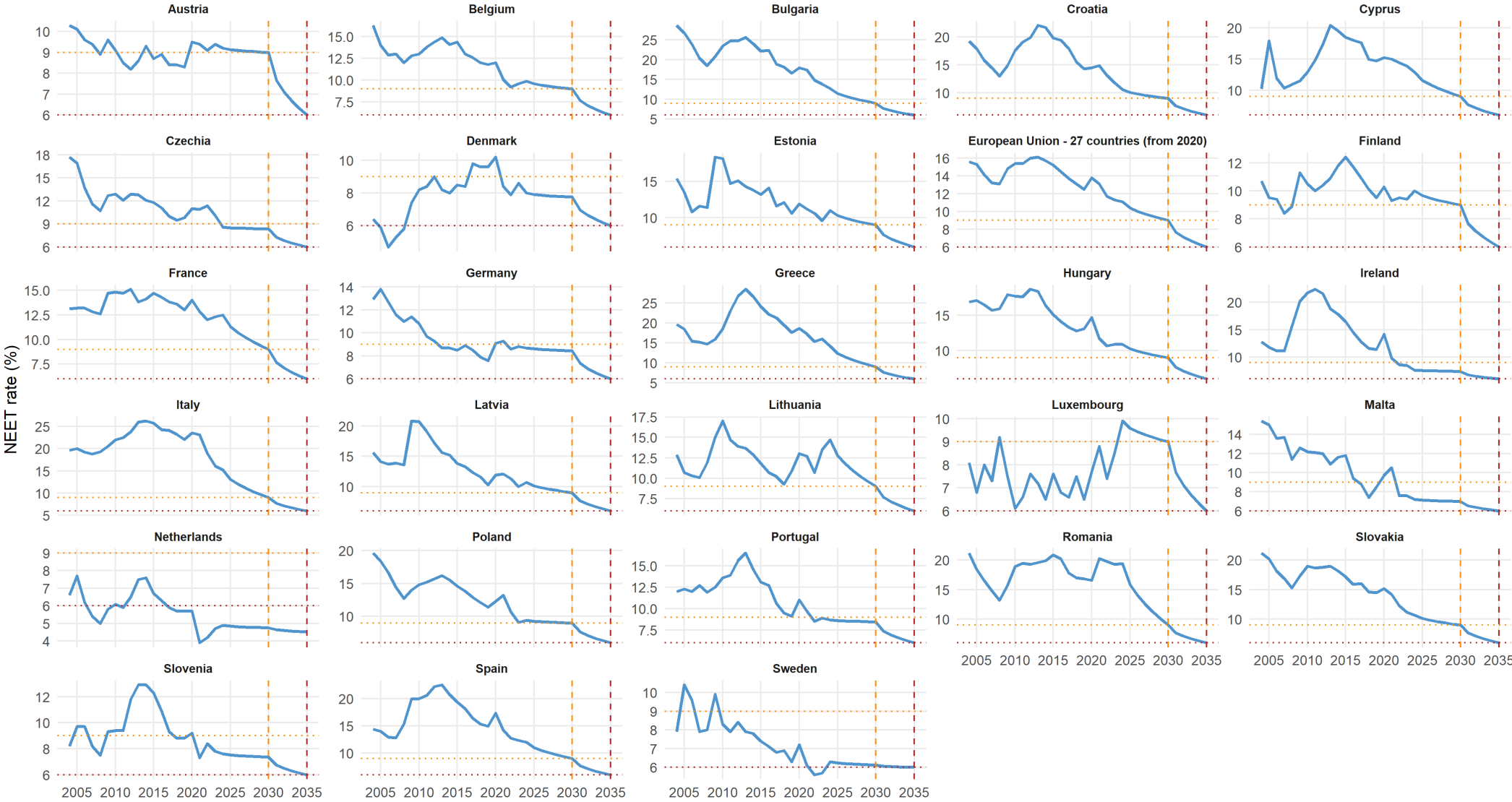


NEET rate trajectories by MS using a Direct Recursive model



NEET rate trajectories by MS using a non-linear diminishing returns model to reach the 6% Target by 2035

Each country follows a decelerating reduction path: 9% by 2030, 6% by 2035



Key policy messages

1. One-size-fits-all policies are no longer viable: disaggregated data and a granular understanding of NEET profiles, risks, and contexts needed to target support more effectively.

2. Prevention and reintegration must be treated as one continuum: early leavers from education and training and NEETs require joined-up VET strategies.

3. The most excluded NEETs (e.g. female NEETs and young people in remote locations) require high-intensity, long-term support.

4. VET should serve as the central link between education, employment, and social policies, becoming a key driver of youth inclusion.

5. Cedefop toolkits provide evidence that supports the development and expansion of effective interventions for NEETs.

Time for Questions & Answers



What is coming next

Toolkits

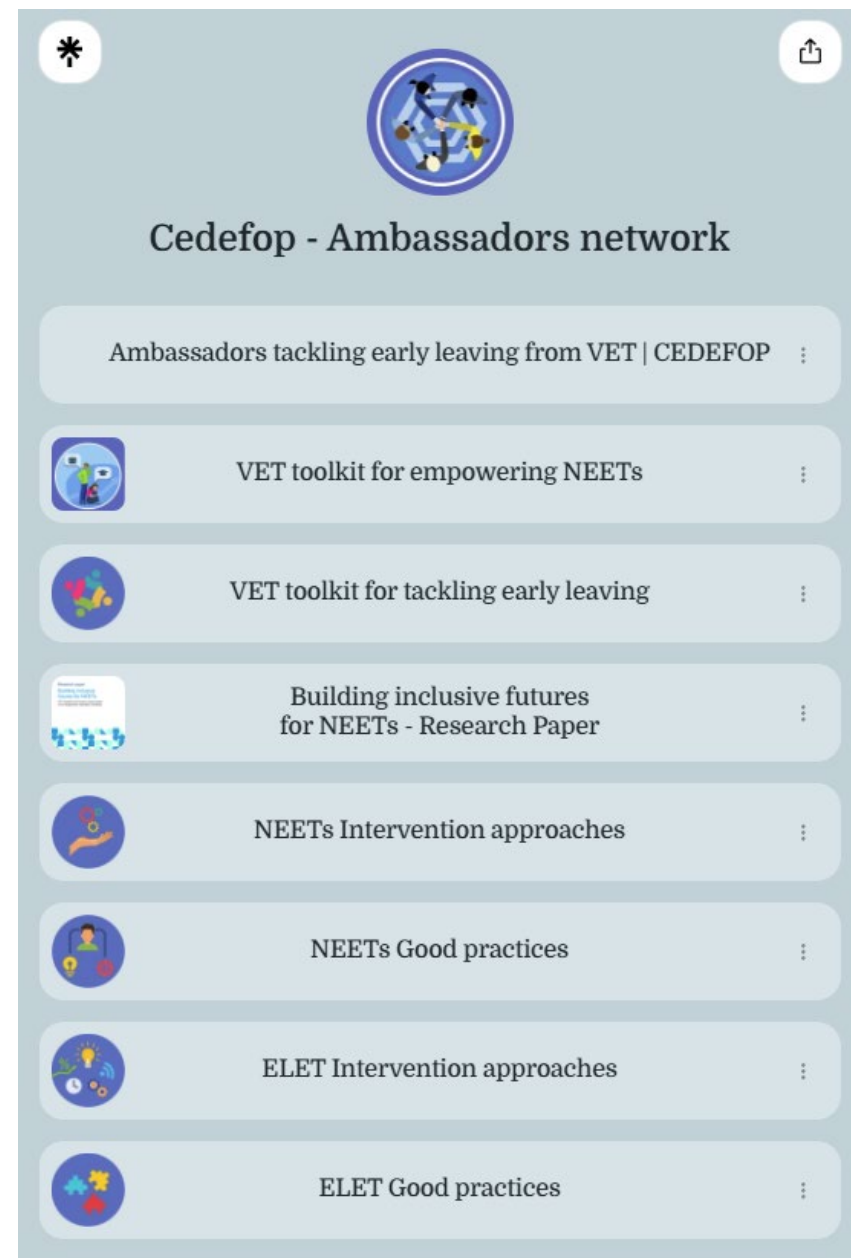
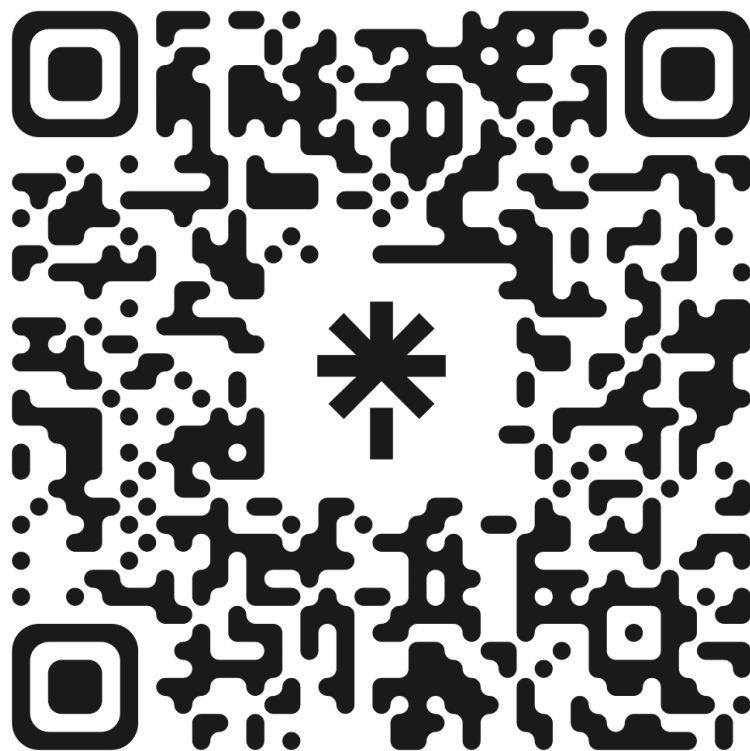
- By mid 2026: Updated 20 existing **intervention approaches on early leaving**
- By end 2026: A total of 20 **intervention approaches on NEETs**
- Throughout the year: continuous enrichment of **toolkits resources**

Policy brief *“From Risk to Resilience: Policy Guidelines for Supporting Learners at-Risk and Early Leavers from Vocational Education and Training (VET)”*, forthcoming **2026**

Policy brief *“Bridging the gap for NEETs: Policy Guidelines for Supporting young people not in employment, education and training (NEETs)”* to be published in **2027**

Thank you for your attention!

A collection of our work on NEETs and early leavers



VET4YOUTH TEAM

PROMOTING INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

#Earlyleaving #NEETs #VETtoolkit #VETTeachersTrainers #EVTS #DigitalSkills

Thank you



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