

YOUTH FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP

VIENNA, AUSTRIA / 8-9 NOVEMBER 2018

EASTERN PARTNERSHIP
YOUTH CONFERENCE



Held under the auspices of the Austrian Presidency of the Council of European Union, the second [Eastern Partnership Youth Conference 2018: "Youth for Entrepreneurship"](#) took place on **8-9 November 2018 in Vienna, Austria.**

Organised by **Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF)**, the conference brought together **130 young activists and entrepreneurs from the Eastern Partnership countries, Russia, Turkey and the EU.** Together with trainers, entrepreneurs and stakeholders from all over Europe, young entrepreneurs discussed and developed key competences that can help them to boost competitiveness and growth in their regions.

The President of the Federal Republic of Austria, **Alexander Van der Bellen** greeted the participants in a special video address – highlighting that Austria has always been interested in developing close relations with all the EaP countries, wherever people share the same aspirations for Europe.

In the opening remarks, the Federal Minister for Women, Family and Youth of Austria, **Juliane Bogner-Strauß** expanded on the role of the state in supporting social entrepreneurship projects. The Minister highlighted the importance of Erasmus+, the key EU programme for young people and a strong driver of what is European identity today. Moreover, Minister Bogner-Strauß passed a special message for girls and women: she encouraged them to believe in themselves and continue to fight discrimination.

Jeroen Willems, DG NEAR, European Commission, pointed out that youth is at the heart of the EaP policy initiative.

This is an important part of 20 Deliverables for 2020, especially in the context of addressing skills “mismatch” – and promoting

“Providing young people with entrepreneurial skills is one of the best ways to fight unemployment and boost creativity.”

Jeroen Willems

entrepreneurial potential of young people, education and vocational training. Willems recognised that conferences, such as this one, serve as an important

platform for young people to speak out and share their experiences.

“Young people, who have a drive to start a business, make me hopeful. It is more than starting a career; you want to contribute to society as a whole.”

Minister Juliane Bogner-Strauß



Reflecting on the idea behind the conference, EaP CSF Steering Committee Co-chair **Aleksandra Kalatozishvili** emphasised that this is a chance for participants to learn about new models of entrepreneurship – a “lesson” that could be



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💡 #YouthForEntrepreneurship mini-quiz continues online! Three quick questions for those following us on Twitter:

- ✓ Most business-friendly country in #EaP?
- ✓ ...with the highest number of female entrepreneurs?
- ✓ What is #Entrepreneurship for you? 🌱 "Freedom" topped our list !!

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taken and applied back home. The Conference aims to enable youth to identify and adopt a proactive attitude to emerging challenges, added Kalatozishvili.



During the Panel on the “**State of youth entrepreneurship in the Eastern Partnership**”, participants and guests discussed the most pressing issues, which should be addressed at international, national and local level. **Goda Neverauskaite**, EaP CSF Working Group 5, European Trade Union Confederation mentioned that governments of the EU member states and EaP countries should commit to improving skills of young people, particularly in the context of transition from formal education to work.

As further noted by **Willems**, SME – small and medium enterprises’ sector has a lot of unexplored potential and there is much room for improvement in the EaP countries.



Within the framework of the Conference, a number of recommendations were developed. While talking to stakeholders and experts, young entrepreneurs highlighted the importance of EU support, relating to capacity building and funding. The development of entrepreneurial competences should be an integral part of education, together with opportunities to exchange experiences, access to relevant support from experts, as well as mentoring and coaching programmes, some core issues to young people starting out today.



90 participants



from 21 countries



7 inspirational
talks



4 workshops



15 project ideas



2 winning
teams

YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN EASTERN PARTNERSHIP COUNTRIES: THE WAY FORWARD

Penta

EUROPEAN
Civic
Initiatives
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Key findings:

- “Young people are the driving force that can push the development of economies in the EaP countries into a new level, drive the innovation and even make systemic changes”
- “Governments are lacking a strategic approach and structured support mechanisms for the development in these fields, especially social entrepreneurship”

The recent research paper, “**Youth Entrepreneurship in Eastern Partnership Countries: The Way Forward**”, which came out as part of EaP CSF Working Group 4 Re-granting Project, highlighted that youth unemployment is a key driver, forcing young people to leave their countries and seek work abroad. Youth must be recognised as a driving force behind economic development, it is argued. In this context, government of the EaP countries should adopt a more, long-term strategic mind-set.



The discussion gave way to success stories and case studies – ways in which entrepreneurship can engage not only youth, but also other groups in society: seniors, women and rural populations, for example. Digitalisation, and digital tools, that are available to entrepreneurs today, proved to be another popular topic.

It is crucial for young people to be engaged in advocacy, one of the main findings of the research, at the both local and international level. The EaP governments should include youth entrepreneurship in their countries' priorities and pay particular attention to

fostering entrepreneurial activities in rural areas. Among concrete, practical steps for national governments and local authorities, young people suggested providing tax incentives for SMEs, revising existing legal framework in the EaP region, creating better micro-finance opportunities, as well as establishing free “hubs” for social entrepreneurs.

4 thematic workshops were offered to participants, covering:

- Competences for success
- Tools for green approach to business
- Digital tools for entrepreneurs
- Investment frameworks,

The workshops focused on practical aspects of entrepreneurship – providing overview of strategies and tools available for social enterprises and start-ups.



TEDx-type case studies highlighted examples of EU programmes for young entrepreneurs and personal stories of successful social enterprises from five EaP countries. Speakers from the EU and wider



While young people were working together with experts in various workshops, the EaP CSF team collected their thoughts and impressions on the conference. In a new format "[Youth Kaleidoscope](#)", you can hear the voice of young people on the spot.



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🧠 #YouthForEntrepreneurship – more pitches: ♻️ Recycling textiles 🏡 Farm stories – urban consumers, rural producers 🧑 Talentport – young people's journey to work 🍷 Foonder, food production in #EaP/EU countries 🎮 Games for learning 🌍 Mobilising diaspora from #EaP countries

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EaP region inspired participants with their example of hard work and dedication – as they gave practical tips on how to succeed and deal with common challenges. Case studies also provided some reflection on the difficulties faced by young entrepreneurs and crucial points to consider, when setting up a social enterprise.



Big Fish roundtable provided the perfect opportunity to engage with potential partners and investors. Six experts from the EU, EaP countries, Turkey and Russia shared their experience on how to find funding for social enterprises and more effectively engage with partners and stakeholders. The format of the session was rather informal, encouraging a more spontaneous exchange of ideas. This was one of the many opportunities for networking, which was encouraged in the breaks and **two networking dinners**.

The **pitching competition** drew roughly 15 teams, which were grouped according to topics and personal preferences. The results of their joint work were presented in front of a jury, which was tasked with

providing feedback and selecting the most promising ideas. The jury consisted of five experts, representing the main partners of the conference: EaP CSF, DG NEAR, European External Action Service (EEAS), Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and Salto Youth.

Finally, at the **awards ceremony** the jury announced the best two business ideas. The "formulas" devised by the winning teams were: tackling food production in rural areas – a project linking the customer with organic farmers online, and empowerment of disabled people – an "emotional intelligence app" for those suffering from autism.



Most teams decided to concentrate on combating social exclusion and finding solutions to shared problems – in a socially conscious, environmentally friendly way.

More information and interactive content:

<http://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-youth-conference-2018-youth-for-entrepreneurship/>



twitter.com/EaPCSF



facebook.com/EaP.Civil.Society.Forum



youtube.com/watch?v=J_l1d75Y3BU

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