



Bridging the Gap: Empowering Young People's #TransitionToWork and Civic Participation

Goethe-Institut, Stiftung Mercator and European Policy Centre are pleased to invite you to an online conference celebrating seven years of *StartNet - Network Transition Education to Work*, with Vânia Neto, Member of the European Parliament, László Andor, former EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, and experts such as Massimiliano Mascherini, Head of the Social policies research unit at Eurofound, Natalia Kallio, Board Member at European Youth Forum, and Paolo Nardi, Director of the European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

Event date: 7 May 2024, 2 to 4 pm (CEST)

Online: <https://tinyurl.com/3aw234fu>

Brussels, 24 April 2024 – StartNet is an initiative to support young people's successful transition from education to employment across Europe. It has been implemented by the Goethe-Institut and Stiftung Mercator from 2017 to 2024. Join the event to interact with high-level EU policy makers, stakeholders, and experts, and discover more about StartNet network's innovations and achievements over the past seven years. Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/3aw234fu>

In Europe, young people are twice as likely to be unemployed as adults: Consistently high rates of youth who are not in education, employment, or training, as well as educational dropouts and skills mismatches and shortages pose significant threats for individuals, economies, and societies. At the closing of the *European Year of Skills* and ahead of the European elections in June, where the voting age has been lowered in five Member States, we will address challenges and future priorities for decision-makers, experts, practitioners, and young people themselves. The conference will provide a space for dialogue on these critical issues and serve as an opportunity to

present StartNet's achievements and learnings, aiming to support young people in their journey towards meaningful employment.

The event will start with an engaging keynote by **László Andor**, former EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. This will be followed by a high-level panel on European policy and practice featuring **Vânia Neto**, Member of the European Parliament, a Director of the European Commission's DG Employment, **Massimiliano Mascherini**, Head of the Social policies research unit at Eurofound, **Natalia Kallio**, Board Member at European Youth Forum, **Tommaso Grossi**, Policy Analyst at the European Policy Centre, as well as the Executive Director of the European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training, **Paolo Nardi**.

Breakout sessions will provide space for interaction and networking, while exploring inspiring practices in young people's empowerment through education and the labour market. These sessions will cover topics such as career guidance, youth participation in cross-sectoral cooperation, skills for the green and digital transition, and European learning mobility.

Bridging the Gap: Empowering Young People's #TransitionToWork and Civic Participation is organised by StartNet, the European Policy Centre (EPC) and Connecting Europe. The online event outcomes will be shared with all participants and decision makers in view of the next legislative period.

Preliminary Agenda:

- 14:00 **Welcome words**
- **Dr Elke Kaschl Mohni**, Regional Director Southwest Europe and Delegate for European Affairs, Goethe-Institut
 - **Wolfgang Rohe**, Chairman Stiftung Mercator (tbc)
- 14:10 **Keynote address**
- **László Andor**, Former EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion and Secretary General at Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS)
- 14:20 **StartNet - Highlights and achievements**
- 14:35 **Panel on European policy and practice**
How to improve young people's transition from education to work? What are recent European achievements and what needs to be prioritised for the next legislative period?
- **Vânia Neto**, Member of the European Parliament
 - European Commission, Director at DG EMPL
 - **Massimiliano Mascherini**, Head of Social policies research unit at Eurofound
 - **Natalia Kallio**, Board Member at European Youth Forum

- **Paolo Nardi**, Director of European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education
- **Tommaso Grossi**, Policy Analyst at the European Policy Centre

15:05 *Coffee break and StartNet highlight video*

15:15 **Breakout sessions**

What are inspiring practices and remaining challenges regarding young people's empowerment through education and for the labour market? Thematic working groups with idea givers and take-away messages for decision-makers on:

1. Addressing skills mismatch through career guidance
2. Youth Participation for Collective Impact
3. Skills for the green and digital transition
4. European (learning) mobility for transition-to-work

15:45 **Presentation of Breakout outcomes & take-aways**

Presentation of graphic recording

15:55 **Closing and outlook**

Event website: [StartNet: Empowering Young People's Transition to Work](https://www.startnet.eu/)

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The [StartNet](https://www.startnet.eu/) project strives for young people's successful transition from education to employment. It gathers all relevant stakeholders in networks for a collective impact in Southern Italy and across Europe. Since 2017 it co-created European partnerships, capacity building, advocacy, a dialogue between policy and practice as well as regional impact projects. StartNet is an initiative of the Goethe-Institut and Stiftung Mercator.

[Connecting Europe](https://www.connecting-europe.eu/) is a joint initiative of the European Policy Centre and Stiftung Mercator. The main objective of Connecting Europe is to connect civil-society organisations with EU decision-makers and to transnationalise EU policy debates. Established in 2017, Connecting Europe has grown into a network of 50+ organisations, which includes a broad range of research institutes, NGOs, think tanks, network projects and fellowship programmes working across Europe.

