

# 1 How does the eu budget support young people today?

## Learning, training and exchanges abroad

Erasmus+ is the EU's flagship programme for:

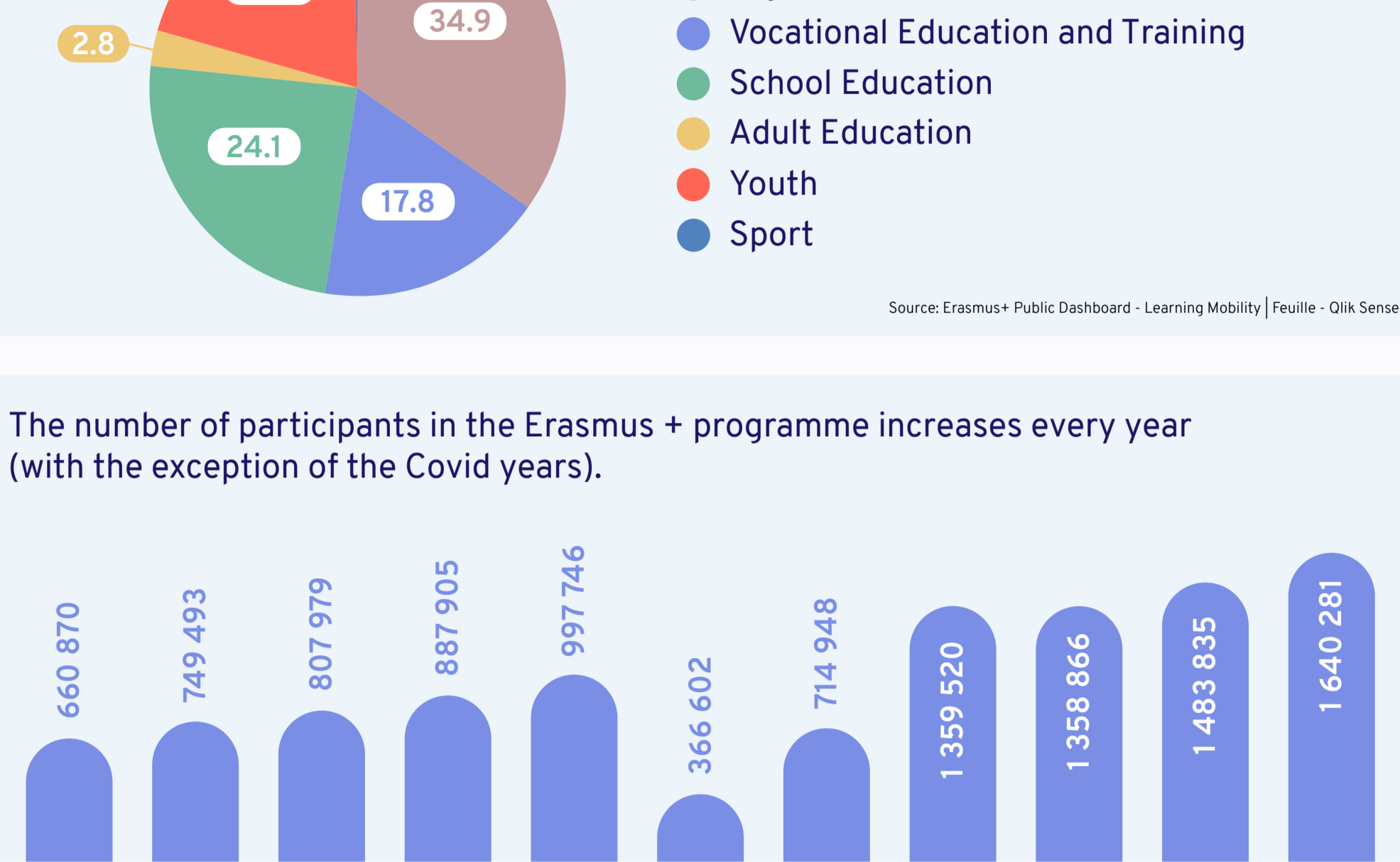
- Education
- Training
- Youth
- Sport

It supports mobility and exchanges across Europe, helping young people acquire new skills, gain international experience and improve their employability.

1987 - Launch of the project

more than 16.5 million people participated in Erasmus+ activities.

In 2025, more than **1.6 million** people participated in Erasmus+ activities.



The number of participants in the Erasmus + programme increases every year (with the exception of the Covid years).



The Erasmus+ programme also includes the action **DiscoverEU**. It gives 18-year olds from all backgrounds the opportunity to travel across Europe by rail, learn from other cultures, build new friendships with fellow Europeans, and explore their European identity.

Since its creation in 2018, more than **470,000 young people** have benefited from a "DiscoverEU" travel pass.

## Encouraging civic engagement and solidarity

The European Solidarity Corps enables young people to volunteer or participate in solidarity and humanitarian projects in Europe and beyond.

Projects range from environmental to humanitarian assistance and support for vulnerable groups.

Since its creation in 2016, more than **150,000 young people** have participated in activities financed by the programme.

Budget of DiscoverEU ≈ **€1 billion**

Source: 2025 European Solidarity Corps call is open: ready to make a change? | Portail européen de la jeunesse

## Supporting young people into employment

**European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)**

Young people continue to face particular difficulties in entering the labour market. In several EU countries, youth unemployment remains significantly higher than overall unemployment.

The Youth Guarantee commits Member States to ensure that every young person under 30 receives a quality offer of:

- employment,
- education,
- apprenticeship,
- traineeship

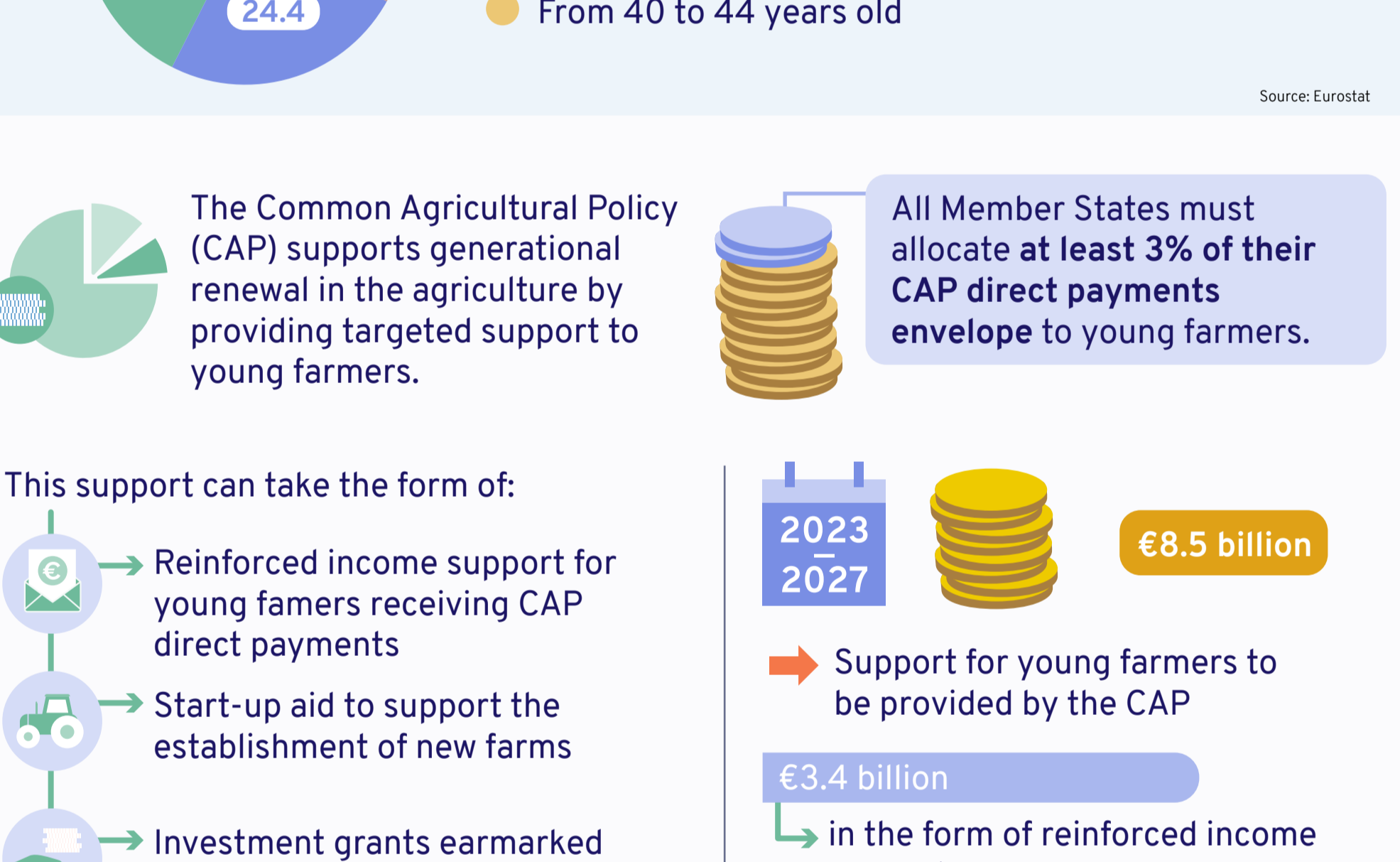
within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving education.

The ESF+ is the EU's main financial instrument supporting the implementation of this commitment.

2021-2027: ≈ **€10.4 billion**

of ESF+ funding is expected to support youth employment measures.

Countries with a particularly high share of young people neither in employment, education nor training (NEETs) must dedicate... **at least 12.5%** of their ESF+ resources to support the implementation of the youth guarantee



## Supporting young farmers and rural communities

**Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)**

Europe's farming population is ageing rapidly.

Farmers under 40 account for only about **12%** of all farm managers in the EU.



The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) supports generational renewal in the agriculture by providing targeted support to young farmers.

All Member States must allocate at least **3%** of their CAP direct payments envelope to young farmers.

This support can take the form of:

- Reinforced income support for young farmers receiving CAP direct payments
- Start-up aid to support the establishment of new farms
- Investment grants earmarked to young farmers

Up to **380,000 young farmers** are expected to receive support through these different measures.

2023-2027: **€8.5 billion**

- Support for young farmers to be provided by the CAP
- €3.4 billion in the form of reinforced income support
- €4.9 billion for installation grants
- €160 million for investments

Source: EU CAP network, Assessment of generational renewal strategies across EU Member States, October 2025

# 2 What could change in the next eu budget (2028-2034)?

The European Commission presented its proposal for the next long-term EU budget. Several changes would affect programmes targeting young people.

**A stronger Erasmus+ programme**

The Commission proposes to merge Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps into a single programme.

2021-2027: **€26 billion**

The new programme would have a budget approximately **30%** larger than the combined budgets of Erasmus+ and the ESC today.

2028-2034: **€40.8 billion**

The proposal also recognises a growing challenge: Erasmus often fail to fully cover living and accommodation costs, especially in expensive cities.

To improve inclusion, national authorities would be given more flexibility to adapt financial support to the needs of participants, particularly those with fewer resources.

**A new framework for supporting youth employment**

The ESF+ will become part of the new **National and Regional Partnership Plans (NRPPs)** which will merge all existing EU cohesion and agricultural funds.

All Member States will have to devote to **at least 14%** of their NRPP budget (excluding -agricultural funding) to social objectives.

When deciding how to spend this 14%, Member States will have to concentrate on four social priorities:

- active inclusion of disadvantaged groups,
- addressing material deprivation,
- implementation of the Child Guarantee,
- implementation of the Youth Guarantee.

When submitting their Plans, they will need to specify the amounts earmarked for each of these four priorities.

However, the obligation imposed to Member States with a high share of young people who are neither in employment, education nor training (NEETs) to dedicate at least 12.5% of their ESF+ budget to youth employment measures will be abolished.

# 3 What do young people want from the eu budget?

**Young people are more supportive of a larger EU budget**

According to the latest Eurobarometer, young Europeans are the age group most likely to agree that:

*The EU should have greater financial means given its political objectives.*



**Young people have different spending priorities**

The top five areas where the youth would like the EU budget to be spent are:

- Employment, social affairs & public health
- Security & defence
- Housing
- Education, training, youth, culture & media
- Climate change & environmental protection

Compared with the EU population as a whole, young Europeans are more likely to favour spending on:

- Education, training and youth
- Climate action and environmental protection

And less likely to prioritise:

- Agriculture and rural development
- Security and defence

