

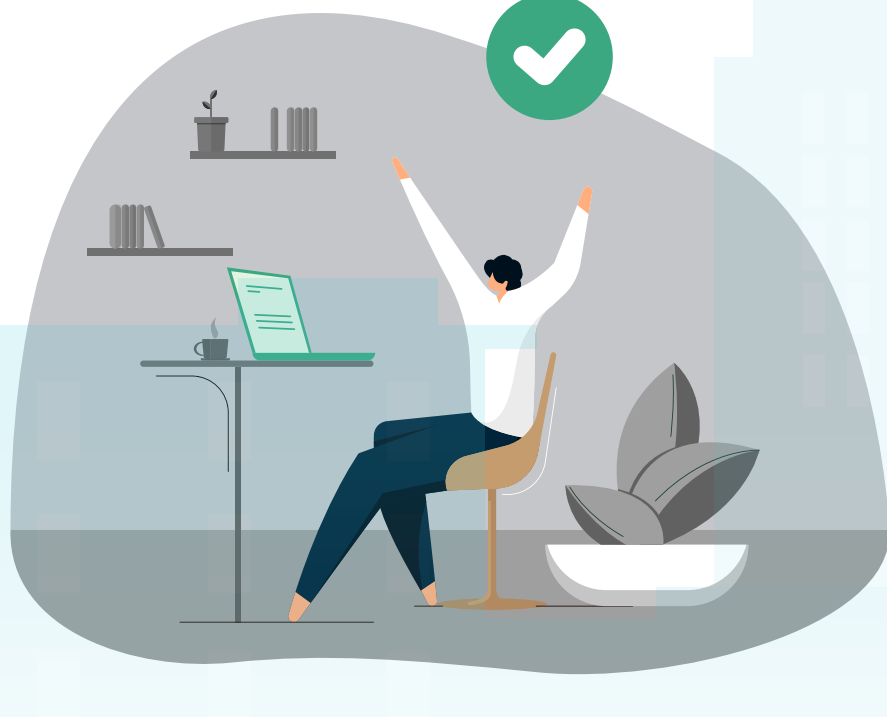
Providing a good environment for young people to grow, learn and work is a key goal for the EU and at national level. But it comes with many challenges.

Key dates for measures to support young people

The economic crisis that began in 2008 had a disproportionate impact on young people, with the worst unemployment rate recorded in 2013.

Youth Guarantee

The Youth Guarantee aims to ensure that young people under 30 receive good quality employment offers, continued education, and apprenticeships or traineeships within four months of leaving school, or becoming unemployed. In 2020, the age range covered under the scheme was extended from 15–24 to 15–29.



2010

European Commission launches **Youth on the Move** initiative to promote the learning mobility of young people aged 15–29

2012

European Commission launches Youth Employment Initiative as one of the **main EU financial resources** to support the implementation of Youth Guarantee schemes

2013

EU Council of Ministers adopts the **Youth Guarantee** to tackle high youth unemployment and reduce the number of NEETs following the economic crisis

2016

European Commission launches **Investing in Europe's Youth** initiative as a renewed effort to support young people in the form of a Youth Package

2018

New **EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027** focuses on three main areas of action around the words 'engage, connect, empower'

2020

European Commission launches a Youth Employment Support package and proposes a Council Recommendation on **'A Bridge to Jobs – Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee'** to tackle the employment and social consequences of COVID-19

2021

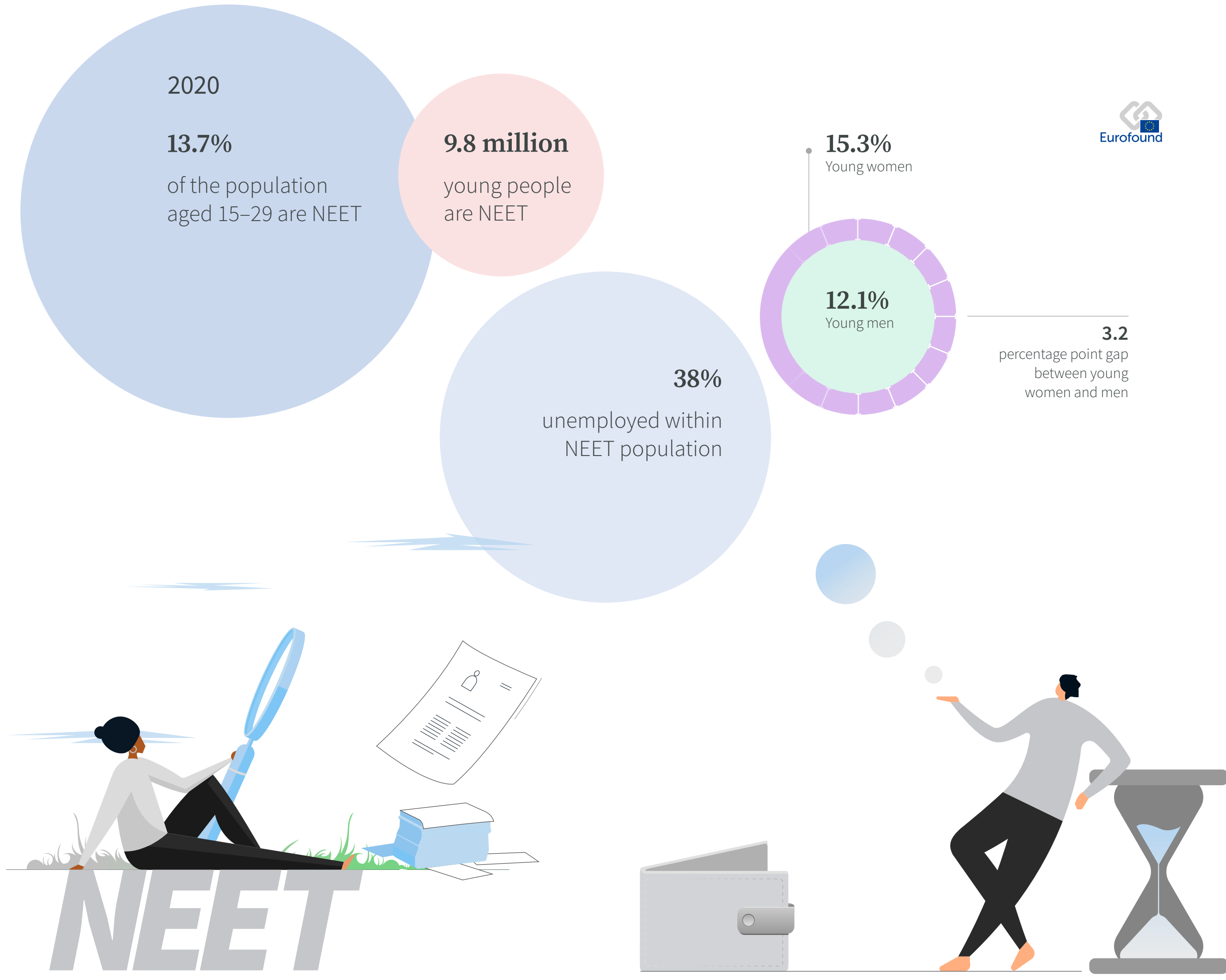
European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan reiterates the EU's commitment to the Youth Guarantee, setting ambitious targets to **reduce the percentage of NEETs from 12.6% in 2019 to 9% by 2030**

2021

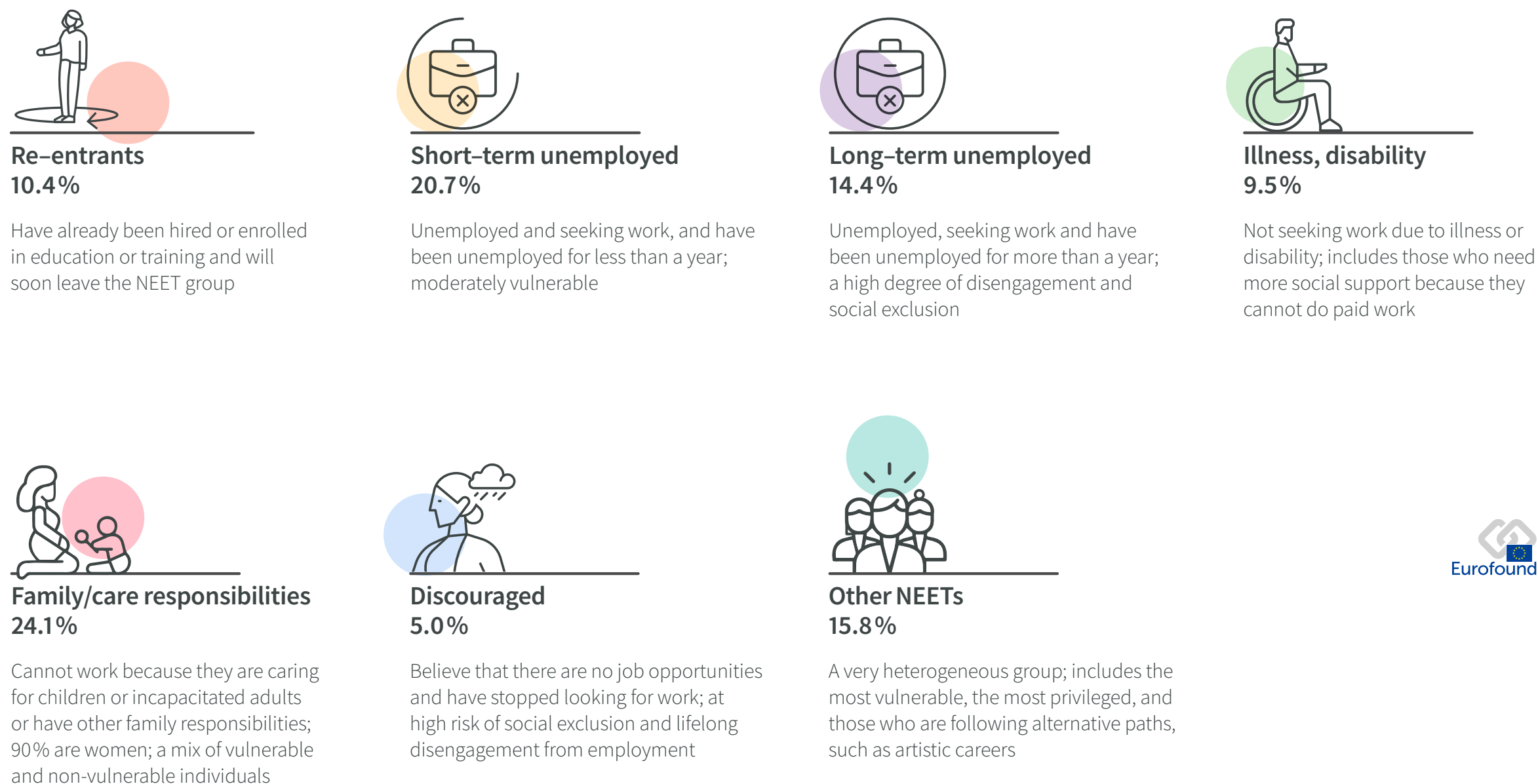
European Commission proposes 2022 as the **European Year of Youth** to go hand in hand with **NextGenerationEU** to give young people more and better opportunities, including quality jobs, education and training

Who are the NEETs?

NEETs emerged as one of the most vulnerable groups following the 2008–2013 economic crisis.



The **NEET** population is a **diverse group** of vulnerable and non-vulnerable young people who are not accumulating human capital through the labour market or education, whether voluntarily or involuntarily.



Challenges facing vulnerable young people

Some young people face particular difficulties in accessing employment: those who have a disability or other health problems are 40% more likely to become NEETs.

NEETs face greater economic and social consequences:

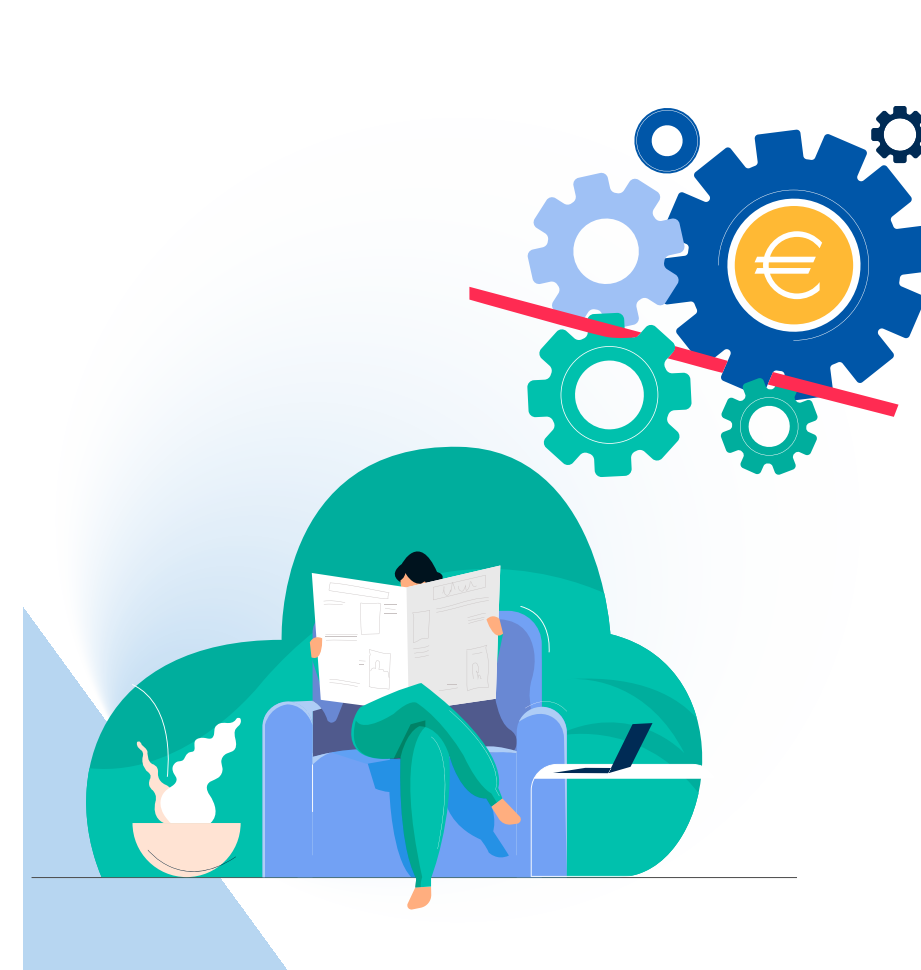
- Higher risk of long-term disengagement from the labour market
- Higher risk of poverty and social exclusion
- Higher risk of impact from economic crises

Unemployment among young people

The 2008–2013 crisis highlighted how young people are more vulnerable to economic recession than other age groups.

Youth unemployment soared above 40% in many EU countries in 2013, with rates of above 50% in Greece and Spain.

In 2015, the economic loss to the EU of youth disengagement was estimated at over **€142 billion a year**.



With the help of the Youth Guarantee and a more positive economic climate, **youth unemployment has recovered** in recent years, reaching pre-crisis levels in 2019.

Impact of COVID-19 on young people

Young people are again being hard-hit by the social and economic impacts of **COVID-19**.

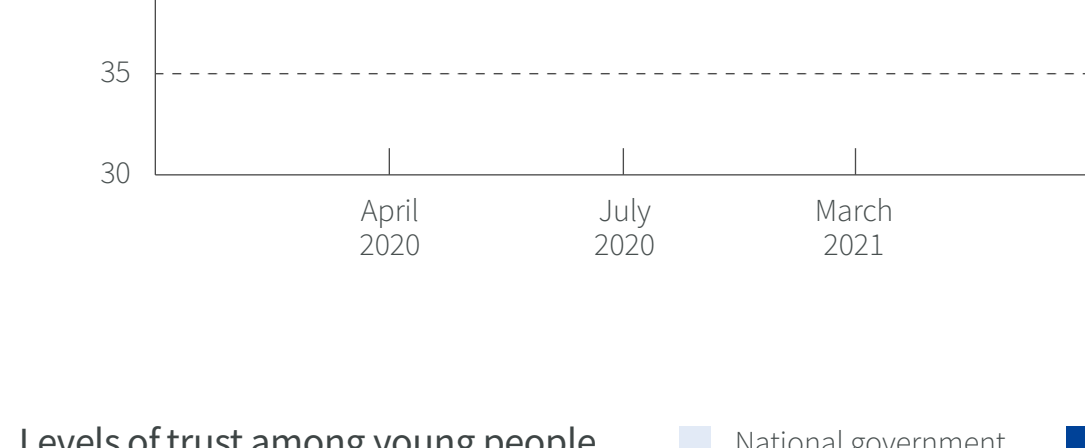
- Young people are **overrepresented in the sectors hit hardest by restrictions**, such as retail, travel and hospitality.
- Young people are also faced with **job loss, a decrease in working time and insecurity about their professional and financial futures**.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, **the rate of NEETs increased to 13.7% (9.8 million) in 2020**.
- **Low levels of mental well-being** are reported among young people, particularly feelings of loneliness and risk of depression. Young people have been the most affected by pandemic restrictions and reduced social interactions.
- The impact of the pandemic on education, apprenticeships and training is **dampening young people's opportunities to gain experience and skills**.

Optimism and trust: The good side of the story?

Despite the crisis, young people remain **slightly more optimistic than other age groups**.



54% in April 2020, 57% in July 2020 and 49% in March 2021 reported feeling optimistic about their future, compared with 43%, 48% and 40%, respectively, among the over-30s.



In March 2021, young people still trusted the EU more than other groups, and more than they trusted their national governments.

Looking to the future

While restrictions on movement were a necessity in response to the COVID-19 health crisis, the effects on young people's employability, quality of life and mental well-being need to be assessed and taken into account by policymakers.

The reinforced Youth Guarantee will be crucial in responding to the COVID-19 crisis and avoiding another sharp increase in youth unemployment.

Youth issues will be an important priority in the debate on the future of Europe.