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O1 Local Context – Survey on the Entrepreneurial Environment
CO-OP For Empowering Youth

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Content

Executive Summary

The Co-op project aims to study and share knowledge and experiences on start-ups, thereby developing tools to foster the entrepreneurial attitude in young people and empower them through support, training and guidance activities.
More than 5 million young people aged 15-24 are unemployed in the EU today and we help develop a new approach to entrepreneurship considered as a key competence that can boost competitiveness and growth, and contribute "to the general good of society."
However, recent data are not positive and according to OECD studies, one third of new European enterprises do not survive their first year of life, because of the lack of sound management and funding, among the other things. Therefore, to counter the high failure rate of small start-up companies, the European Commission (2000) suggests the nurturing of start-up firms in business incubators.
At the initial stage of the project, a mapping was performed to explore the current situation in the partner countries with respect to the economic and legal status of entrepreneurial activities, as well as to the support tools provided to start a new business, especially those designed to help young people have access to the labour market.
All these data are summarised in this report to allow a comparison among different national situations.
The first fact-finding output was a research activity performed through delivering three different surveys targeted at young people, start-ups and public and private entities providing support to start-ups, SMEs and VSMEs, based in the reference territories of 6 partner countries: Romania, France, Turkey, Italy, Spain, and Slovakia.

The goals of the survey activity were different, namely:

- To have a general overview of the inclination of the interviewed young people to start a business activity and their knowledge of the entrepreneurial framework (information and support services, certificates, licences, and other compulsory requirements, etc.), based on which a special training program/pilot training courses would be designed to facilitate the creation of start-ups and young people's entry into the labour market;
- To have knowledge of the problems and obstacles faced by business incubators and the major causes of death of start-ups and/or their needs in terms of fiscal benefits, banking/credit advantages, financial subsidies, etc., as well as to collect data on service-providing organisations and the typology of initiatives to support entrepreneurship;
- To identify strengths and weaknesses, envisioning the potential difficulties that might arise for SMEs and VSMEs, as well as the elements considered as crucial for their operability and health.

The Italian partner, **Promidea**, who coordinated the mapping, the formulation of the survey questionnaires, as well as the elaboration of this report, surveyed a total of **50 young people, 20 start-ups/entities supporting start-ups and 21 SMEs/VSMEs.**

The Lead partner, **Pro Vocatie, from Romania,** surveyed a **total of 63 of young people, 15 start-ups/entities supporting start-ups and 20 SMEs/VSMEs.**

The Slovakian partner, Agentura RRI, reached a **total of 54 young people, 20 start-ups/entities supporting start-ups and 21 SMEs/VSMEs.**

Red2Red, from Spain, reached a **total of 50 young people, 20 start-ups/entities supporting start-ups and 20 SMEs/VSMEs.**

The Turkish partner, T.R. Governorship of Kocaeli - Bureau for EU and Foreign Affairs, surveyed a **total of 50 young people, 13 start-ups/entities supporting start-ups and 20 SMEs/VSMEs.**

Petra Patrimonia, from France, surveyed a **total of 58 young people, 20 start-ups/entities supporting start-ups and 4 SMEs/VSMEs.**

The data of the second survey activity, related to start-ups and entities supporting start-ups, need a brief clarification on the methodology used to carry out all the activities. Only one questionnaire was administered based on the nature of the entity involved: a start-up or an organisation dealing with starting up and providing a number of services to support the creation of new companies.

The Co-op project is a small-scale initiative and thus the number of the respondents in each analysed country is not high; the overall number of respondents is representative of the project’s target groups and exceeds the expected data in the application form, i.e. 237.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

This Report was drawn up by comparing the final results of the questionnaires administered in each partner country.

The three questionnaires administered to:

- Young people
- Start-ups and start-up supporting organisations
- SMEs and VSMEs

were organised as structured questionnaires, formulated with precise questions and answers, in order to obtain the maximum number of possible responses from the interviewees and collect all the necessary information in line with the project objectives.

Questions are positioned in a functional order, according to the target groups, and are functionally related to each other. By this method, the responses given by the interviewed young people on their type of qualification, for instance, helped us better understand and assess their possible motivation to follow a specific training program leading to a professional qualification. The answers given by start-ups, in relation to their reference market, helped us analyse the economic sector to which the start-up belongs.

The three questionnaires begin with general classifying questions, and then continue with more complex questions that go into the substance of personal decision-making drivers.

The questionnaires respond to the logic of a Diagnostic Report method, and therefore:

- Data are collected to analyse, measure and assess the degree of openness/closeness of certain realities to business creation and the resulting entrepreneurial capacity/ability, and should in no case be considered as having statistical significance;
- The total sample and the sample for each country are not representative samples;
- The survey is targeted at three different categories, and within each category the respondents are highly diversified and heterogeneous (young people with previous experience and with no experience, skilled and unskilled young people, young people with a structured and clear motivation and young people

without any kind of business idea, agricultural enterprises, leading-edge tertiary-sector enterprises, etc. ...)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CURRENT SITUATION ACROSS THE PARTNER COUNTRIES

SPAIN

In **Spain**, according to the Eurostat data, as of 2014, **the employment rate among citizens aged between 15 and 64 years was 56%,** having sharply decreased from a level of 66% in 2007; the **same trend is observed for the unemployment rate that decreased to 20.9%** in the last quarter of 2015 from its peak of 26.9% in 2013, yet remaining too high, above all considering the significant inter-regional differences. In fact, unemployment in southern regions (Andalusia, 29.8%) is higher than in the north of the country (Basque Country, 12.9%). **The Spanish economy is dominated by services, such as commerce, transport and hostelry, as well as the public administration, which account for 79% of employment**; followed by the manufacturing sector with 12% and a marginal role of agriculture. **83% of the labour force is employed in the private sector and the remaining 17% in the public sector.** The rate of unemployment among the active 16-to-29 year olds corresponded to 35% in the last quarter of 2015.

ROMANIA

In Romania, the active population is 9,172 million people, more than half (56.8%) are men.

Young people represent 72% of the active population, more than half (60.2%) residing in rural areas. **Data on employment show that the largest share is held by people aged 35-44 years (29%), followed by those aged 25-34 years (24.1 %) and young people account for 5.9 % of total employment.** Of the employed population, 52.8% are secondary and vocational education graduates, 18.7% are people

with a university degree and 24.9%, people without secondary or primary education, and with no education.
People employed in services represent 57.9% of the total employed population, 39% of the employed work in the manufacturing and construction sectors and only 3.1% in agriculture. The distribution of the number of employees reveals that most (98.6 %) employees are permanent employees.
The unemployment rate of young people aged 25-29 is 17.9% - very close to the official statistics in Europe

SLOVAKIA
Slovakia ranks among the first EU countries as for the youth unemployment rate. According to the Eurostat data, the **employment rate stood at 61% in 2014, and at 65% according to the official data of the Slovak statistics office**. In 2014, **the unemployment rate was 12.3%, of which 31% involving young people up to 29 years of age.**
The predominant sectors (by the number of inhabitants) in the national economy are the manufacturing sector, **mainly the automobile, engineering and chemical industries** (390,000 workers) followed by the retail and whole sale sector (196,000 workers); the education sector (131,000 employees), the public administration (119,000 employees), and health and social service sector (98,000 workers). **In 2014, the share of workers in the private sector was 67.8% of the total 1,199,586 employed people.**
In Slovakia, **small and medium-sized enterprises represent the vital power of the economy, providing employment opportunities for 72.7% of the active labour force and generating a 53.3% added-value share**.
In 2014, there were 565,241 functioning small and medium-sized enterprises (companies and self-employed people). 96.9% of them were microenterprises (0-9 employees), 2.5% small enterprises (10 – 49 employees) and 0.5 % medium-sized enterprises (50-249 employees). Of these, 195,727 are legal entities (34.6%), 337,182 self-employed, 24,483 freelancers, and 7,849 independent farmers (total 65.4%). **More than one quarter of the self-employed work in the field of commerce, 22.8% in the construction industry, and 16.4% in the manufacturing sector.** Up to 72.6% self-employed are men and only 27.4% women (the average in the EU is 31.6 %). Among all self-employed, 12.9% are aged below 30.

FRANCE

With a population of 64.2 million inhabitants, **France is the only major Eurozone country in which the unemployment rate continues to rise.** In Q3 2015, it rose to 10.6% of the active population.

Currently, **services are the main contributor to the country's economy, with over 70% of GDP stemming from this sector**. Furthermore, France has a highly educated labour force and the highest number of science graduates per thousand workers in Europe.

In France businesses are divided into five different categories:

• **Commercial or manufacturing businesses**, such as shops, cafés or factories;

• **Trade/craft businesses**, which include construction firms, other manual jobs, some manufacturing businesses;

• **Independent or freelance professionals** – working independently and providing a services;

• **Commercial agents**, working on behalf of a third-party company;

• **Agricultural businesses**.

The legal company form needed to start and run a business in France may be an *Entreprise Individuelle*, identified with the acronyms *EURL* and *SARL* and corresponding to the common limited company and the *Entreprise individuelle à responsabilité limitée (EIRL*).

Of the three million enterprises in France, 95% are micro-enterprises employing 20% of payroll workers. In addition, large enterprises employ 25% of payroll workers, non-microenterprise SMEs and intermediate-sized enterprises (ISEs) employs 29% and 26% of payroll workers respectively.

New enterprises created in the first half of 2014 ("2014 cohort"), excluding the auto-entrepreneur regime, **were most often set up by private sector employees and unemployed**, mainly **working at local level** and **in the sectors of trade, construction and specialized scientific and technical activities.**

TURKEY

According to an OECD report (Employment Outlook 2015), with a figure of 50.1% in the first quarter of 2015, **Turkey's employment rate remains well below the OECD average**. However, **the unemployment rate was 10.1% in Q1 2015**, well above the OECD average of around 7%.

At the same time, **the share of young people not in employment, education or training (the NEET rate)** has fallen steeply in Turkey over the past few years; this rate **stood at 28.4% in 2014**, remaining the highest among the OECD countries.

There are 26,448,000 active workers, of which 22,920,000 are employed in the private sector and 3,528,000 in the public sector.

The **predominant economic sectors** in the Turkish national economy are:

- **Garment and ready-to-wear industry**
- **Automotive**
- **Steel**
- **Jewellery**
- **Chemicals industry**

In terms of employment, **50% of people aged 15 to 64 in Turkey have a paid job,** compared to the OECD employment average of 65%. At the same time, 34% of adults aged 25-64 have completed upper secondary education, much lower than the OECD average of 75% and the lowest rate among the OECD countries.

ITALY

The economic situation of the Italian system in 2015 showed a slight improvement over the previous years and, **in the last twelve months, there were almost 400,000 new initiatives**. However, for those who do business, the uncertainties of the economy indicate the urgency of completing the economic reforms (from labour to taxation simplification) in order to facilitate the launching of new initiatives. In **Italy, businesses with a number of employees up to 10 and an annual turnover of up to 2 million Euros are over 4,100,000, i.e. 95% of all firms, and employ 47% of the total private non-farm workers,** as compared to 39% in the European Union. **Micro businesses have increased in Italy in the last decade, both in absolute and relative terms; Italy holds the absolute record in terms of their density.**

In Italy, after two years of decline, **employment started to rise in 2015 with a 0.4% increase of the employed**, **and a 0.2% increase of the employment rate (55.7%),** even if **the employment level is still low and the regional disparities continues unabated:** a growth in the employment has taken place only in the central and northern part of the country, while **the southern part has experienced a loss of half million jobs since the beginning of the crisis (-9.0%).**

Another negative result stemming from the crisis period was the steep drop of youth employment. **During the 2008-2015 period, the number of young employed aged below 35 fell by almost two million units (-27.7%).**

Education still played a key role as a protective factor against the crisis. Indeed, **although the reduction in the employment rate was recorded in all levels of education, it was milder for graduates. Easier access** to the labour market **for those with a PhD confirms the importance of holding a qualification**.

1.2 LEGAL ENVIRONMENT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND POLICIES AND TOOLS SUPPORTING THE STARTING UP OF BUSINESSES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO YOUNG PEOPLE

SPAIN

In Spain, as of 2015, there were 3,119,310 businesses. Out of these, **99.8% were small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) operating in the sectors of retail trade, construction, wholesale trade and land transport, together accounting for 35% of self-employed.**

The legal framework of entrepreneurship in Spain is mainly defined by three laws. The latest one, Law 31/2015, of 9th September, revises the previous provisions put in place by Law 11/2013 and Law 14/2013, promoting measures for entrepreneurs and job creation, by expanding the benefits for entrepreneurs and disadvantaged people.

The Spanish system of public institutions providing financial support, mainly to SMEs, is composed by the ICO, that currently supports SMEs and self-employed individuals, providing funding for investments in Spain and for liquidity needs. Support is also provided through **the system of the Regional Development Agencies**, one for each regional government, which are now **committed to fostering entrepreneurship structurally** (support to investments, promotion of R&D, development of the industrial and technological infrastructure, internationalisation of businesses and advice about financing opportunities).

In Spain, youth unemployment is the main challenge for the politics and the government. In this respect, **in 2013 the Ministry of Employment and Social Security launched the Youth**

Entrepreneurship and Employment Strategy (Estrategia de Emprendimiento y Empleo Joven), with different provisions, tools and measures targeted to qualified or not qualified, qualified and seeking their first employment people; unemployed receiving a subsidy, and young unemployed aged 18-29.

ROMANIA

In Romania, the company forms are governed by Law no. 31/1990, with its subsequent amendments, and are **differentiated as follows: Public limited companies (SA); Companies limited by shares (SCA); Limited liability companies (LLC); Cooperatives; Authorised natural persons (PFA); Sole proprietorships; and Family businesses (IF)**

For 2016, the Romanian government will allocate 159.5 million lei to support 10 programs for small and medium-sized enterprises and funding for young people, through the budget of the Ministry of Economy. As for the youth population, **the percentage of people aged 25-29 willing to start a business is 30% and the trend is growing.**

In this respect, **within the second phase of the 2013–2020 programming period, young people willing to set a business will receive financial support through the new 2014-2020 Human Capital Operational Program** (POCU), which consists of two special programs:

The SRL-D program, launched to stimulate the creation and development of microenterprises belonging to young entrepreneurs (SRL-debutants) and develop the entrepreneurial skills of young people to involve them in private economic structures.

The START program, aimed to develop entrepreneurial skills among young people and facilitate their access to financing, but addressed only to small start-ups, with more than two years of activity.

SLOVAKIA

In Slovakia, at national level, the Ministry of Economy is responsible for the policy-making initiatives shaping the entrepreneurial environment for small and medium-sized enterprises. The Ministry provides **support to SMEs through the National Agency for SMEs Development**, established in 1993, **the National Network of Regional Consultancy and Information Centres (RCIC),** and **the Business and Innovation Centres (BICs),** that since

1993 have intensively prepared the unemployed to entrepreneurship.

To complement this network, there are the labour offices providing non-repayable grants to young would-be entrepreneurs. **Again, another entity fostering the creation of the entrepreneurship environment is the Slovak Association of Self-employed** that works alongside ministries and the government. As for young people and start-up funding, **a wide range of tools have been deployed to support access to the labour market and encourage business start-ups, namely**: **graduate practice programs for high school and college graduates**; **programs fostering employment opportunities for young people** by encouraging the creation of jobs within existing companies; the **national project for the creation of jobs**, aimed at supporting employment of people aged up to 29 years, and again, **start-up initiatives providing financial support to innovative business plans** submitted by young people aged up to 25 years, and **job creation/self-employment subsidies**, providing partial coverage of start-up costs for the operation of newly established enterprises.

FRANCE

In the last years, **the French government has deployed five different measures to foster the increase of enterprises and start-ups**:

- **Tax incentives for start-up businesses**;
- **Governmental and public sector funding, especially through business accelerators and incubators under the "La French Tech" umbrella**, designed to support the growth of digital companies;
- **New crowd-funding legislation;**
- **Centres of excellence or France's pôles de compétitivité** (competitiveness clusters), that are currently 71, aimed at creating an ecosystem around a niche initiative or a shared theme and connecting start-ups with SMEs, other entrepreneurs and larger companies within the same space;
- **French Tech Ticket**, a new visa package designed to encourage non-French entrepreneurs to launch tech start-ups in Paris and funded by the French Ministry of Digital Economy.

As regards young unemployed, considering the French youth unemployment rate, which stood at 23.50% in April 2016, **the Comité interministériel de la Jeunesse (CIJ – the Cross-ministerial**

Committee for Youth) adopted the new "Priority: Youth" policy on 21 February 2013, aiming to encourage the access of young people to the job market through different programs and measures such as:
- **The Contrat de Génération** (the Generation Contract), a subsidy to companies hiring young employees while keeping the older ones;
- **The Creation of youth enterprises**, in particular in the social and inclusive economy (third sector economy), through the access to microcredit, loans, and guarantees;
- **Partnerships involving higher education institutions**, the French public employment service and the business sector in order to improve the employability of young people;
- **Reduction of social charges** for 2,000 jobs as part of a three-year pilot program in 10 areas, for combating discrimination against the young people from the designated priority areas.

TURKEY

In Turkey, the establishment of enterprises is regulated by the Turkish Commercial Code (TCC). Under the TCC, the forms of business include corporate and non-corporate entities. Corporate entities consist of the **Joint Stock Company (JSC), the Limited Liability Company (LLC), and Cooperative Company**, while the non-corporate entities include the **Collective Partnership and the Commandite Partnership**.

The **task of enhancing the entrepreneurship environment in the country is entrusted to national, regional and local institutions and networks, included the "Turkish Investment Support and Promotion Agency"** (www.invest.gov.tr) that is an official agency operated under the direction of the Prime Ministry; the **KOSGEB** (the Small and Medium-sized Industry Development Organisation), one of the major organisations responsible for the SMEs policy-making in Turkey, that provides services as Screening, Strategic Road Map, Support Implementation, and Monitoring; **Development Agencies**, for each region of Turkey, to foster the regional development of the country; **The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK),** an autonomous institution running operational programs to promote and facilitate entrepreneurship, and research and development activities especially in the scientific and technological sectors.

As regards the improvement of youth employment in the country, **the Turkish Government has urged some measures including a "National Youth Employment Action Plan",** in 2011, **within the framework of a UN Joint Programme**, and organisations and mechanisms have **also developed special programs and support tools specifically targeted to youth employment and young entrepreneurs,** such as: **internship training programs for university graduates**, designed to facilitate the transition process of young human resources to qualified employment opportunities; **in-service training/vocational training programs**, providing a variety of public informal education courses; **Vocational Trainings Centres** (CTC) providing re-qualification or upper qualification courses for both NEETs and people in employment; a **special on-the-job training program for young unemployed** with no previous job/entrepreneurial experience; **special programs** involving NGOs, the Association of Chambers of Commerce and Chambers of Industry, and bodies **providing support and counselling to young entrepreneurs, as well as programs implemented by development agencies**.

ITALY

The support measures for business creation and for the development of existing enterprises are provided by the Ministry of Economic Development and the Ministry of Labour. The regional policies are developed and negotiated with the national-level government: they may be active to a greater or lesser extent and contain proposals depending on the economic availability of each region. **As for the creation of new businesses, the deployed measures are the following:**

- Legislative Decree 185/2000, Title I, on entrepreneurship, laying down the rules for the grant of incentives to young people and women, aged below 35, who want to start a business.
- Law No. 221/2012, implementing the so-called Decreto Crescita 2.0 (Growth 2.0 Decree), which for the first time introduced the definition of innovative enterprise and innovative start-up in the Italian law system; "**Compact Investment" decree**, amended and converted into Law 33/2015, a large part of the existing measures supporting the innovative start-ups were extended to innovative SMEs, i.e. all the small and medium-sized enterprises operating in the field of technological innovation; **"Smart &**

Start Italy" tool provides for grants to innovative start-ups throughout the national territory.

As regards employment in Italy, the **tools supporting employment and youth employment** are the following:
- **The Jobs Act,** the reform of the labour system based on recruitment workforce on a permanent-job basis and reductions in social contributions;
- The so-called "**Garanzia Giovani**" (**Youth Guarantee**) scheme offering a range of benefits and incentives based on the type of contract, fixed-term employment or indefinite employment contracts
- **Internships**; **apprenticeships**; **grant-assisted traineeships training and guidance programs, integration or reintegration training programs** that still remain a good option to gain knowledge of the business world and learn new skills to enter or re-enter the labour market

2. Evaluation of the questionnaire-based survey – the young unemployed

2.1 Profiles and personal characteristics of the surveyed young people

The Co-op Project focused on young people aged between 18-25 years old who are unemployed, including those who are still engaged in education or in vocational training.
In particular, the total number of young surveyed people was 327. The data on distributed and returned questionnaires by each partner are shown in the table below.

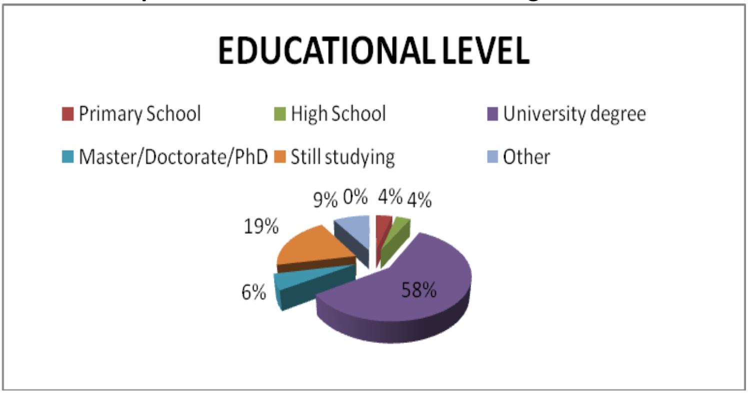
No.	PARTNER	COUNTRY	No. OF DISTRIBUTED QUESTIONNAIRES	No. OF RETURNED QUESTIONNAIRES
1	PRO VOCATIE	ROMANIA	150	63
2	PROMIDEA	ITALY	50	50
3	AGENTURA	SLOVAKIA	52	54
4	GOVERNORSHIP OF KOCAELI	TURKEY	80	50
5	PETRA PATRIMONIA	FRANCE	60	60
6	RED2RED	SPAIN	50	50

PROFILE OF YOUNG UNEMPLOYED

According to the survey method adopted by the Co-op Project, all respondents basically represent heterogeneous groups. A large proportion of them have a **university degree** (**44.4%)** and a **high school diploma (26,7%)**, but it is pretty difficult to clearly define what education field prevails, probably because of the different national backgrounds and the specific characteristics of the national labour markets.

__EDUCATION__

Chart 1: Comparison of educational levels among 6 EU countries



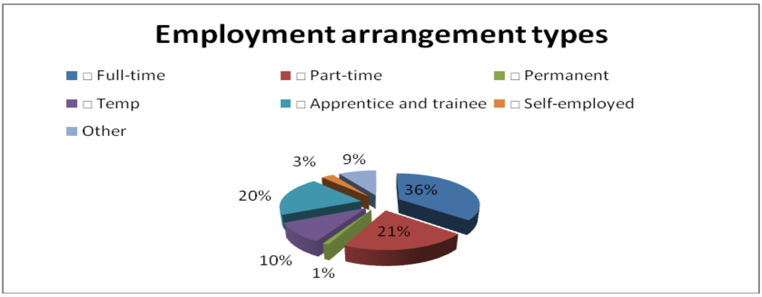
Source: Co-op survey

As regards education, the values are extremely heterogeneous, with the majority of respondents holding a degree in social sciences or in economic and financial sciences (over 15%), followed by those having a technical or engineering background.

This confirms that, along with the necessary entrepreneurial aptitude, the basic skills that a diploma or a degree can provide are considered extremely useful to start a business. Moreover, holding a secondary-school diploma or a university degree ensures a more effective implementation of the expertise related to the identified economic sector.

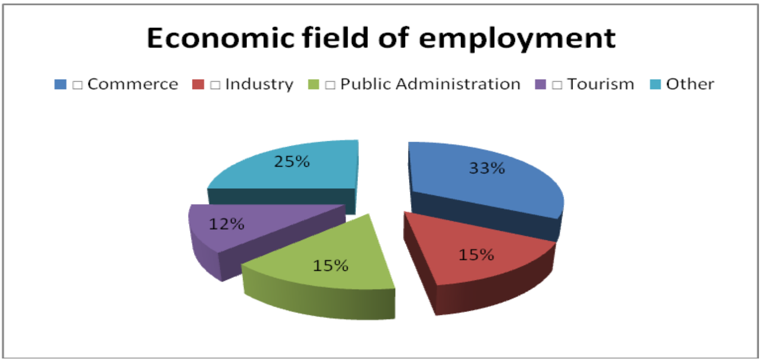
According to the survey performed across the 6 EU countries, 69% of the respondents reported that they had some work experience, consisting of a full-time employment (almost 25%), a part-time employment (15%), or an apprentice/trainee program (14%).

Chart 2: Aggregate data among the 6 EU countries about the type of contract in relation to previous work experiences



Source: Co-op surveys

Chart 3: Aggregate data among the 6 EU countries about the economic field in relation to previous work experiences



Source: Co-op survey

Work experience is surely a further positive element. A potential evaluation of young people with respect to their ability for entrepreneurship has to take into account the specific skills, competencies and professional experience gathered in the workplace, as well as any previous internships. In fact, regardless of the type of contract (full-time, fixed-term, internship, etc. ...) and the economic sector, this kind of experience allows the youth to have an overall idea of how to run a company (organisational structure, production process, input, output, management aspects, and relations with suppliers and customers). Prospective entrepreneurs should be able to not only supervise a company but also to envision any critical issues and potential improvements.

ENTREPRENEURIAL BACKGROUND

The data about previous entrepreneurial experiences are not promising. Only 30% of the respondents have run a business in the past, mainly in the trade sector (33%) and in the service sector (26%), in particular in the wellness and personal care industry.
As regards the motivation to start a business, responses are uniformly distributed across the answer choices.

Chart 4: Motivation to start a business

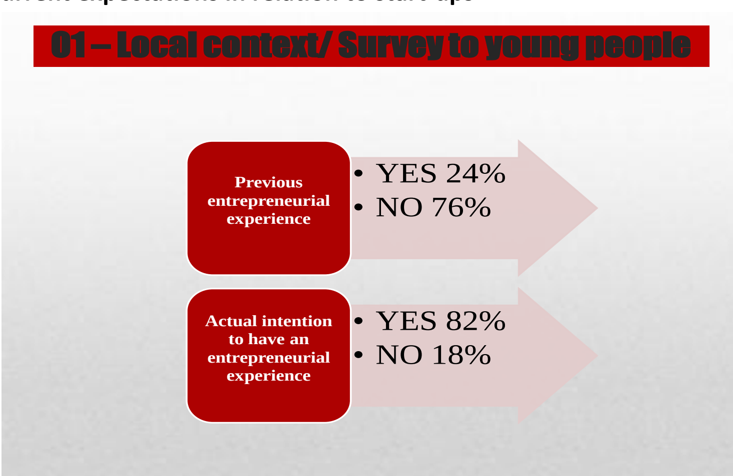
Source: Co-op survey

CURRENT INTEREST IN HAVING AN ENTREPRENEURIAL EXPERIENCE

The data about the interest of the respondents to have an entrepreneurial experience in the future are positive. More than 82% of respondents intend to become an entrepreneur, showing preference for the trade sector (29%) and service sector (31%), such as Human Resource Management, Communication, Research, ICT, Sports and Wellness services, Education and Training…

From a comparative point of view, as showed in the following tables, a small proportion of respondents had previous business experience; businesses had been run for an unquantified period of time and then closed down for personal or organisational reasons, or due to the economic downturn (e.g. lack of financial resources, tax-related reasons, inadequate assistance in promoting, maintaining and modernising the business, bad or poor operation due to insufficient experience or unskilled personnel, low demand and scarcity of customers). On the contrary, the majority of respondents showed an interest in being an entrepreneur, divided up among those who would like to test their own business idea, continue the family activity, or have access to the labour market.
Interestingly, the majority of those who had a previous experience would like to restart a business, although in a different sector.

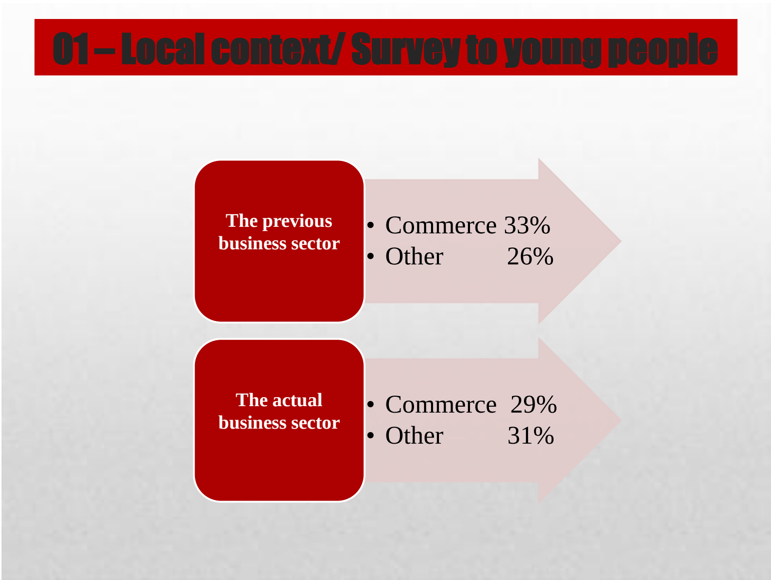
Chart 5: Comparison between previous business experience and current expectations in relation to start-ups



Source: Co-op survey

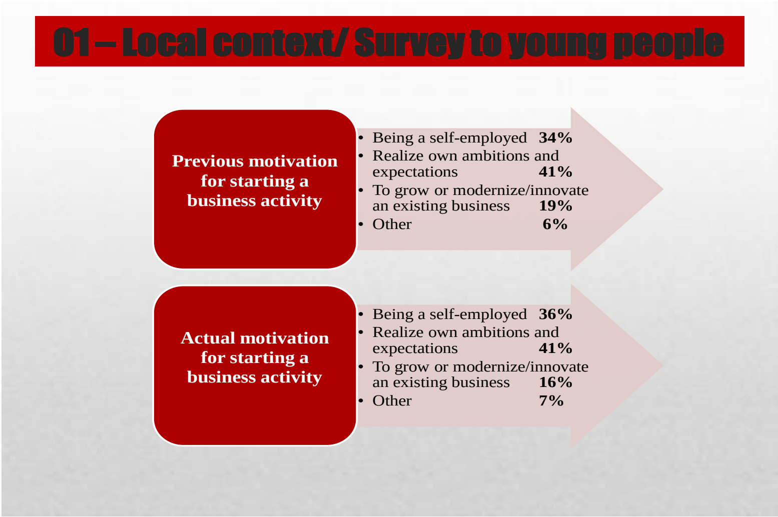
The comparative figures in relation to past entrepreneurial experience and to the future intention to start a business are very similar. In both cases the majority of respondents indicated "Trade" as the preferred business field, followed by the generic "**Other**" option, especially in the field of social services, wellness, communication and training.

Chart 6: Business field of reference - previous entrepreneurial experience vs. future entrepreneurial expectations



Source: Co-op survey

Chart 7: Motivations/reasons for the business activity: comparison between previous and future entrepreneurial activity



Source: Co-op survey

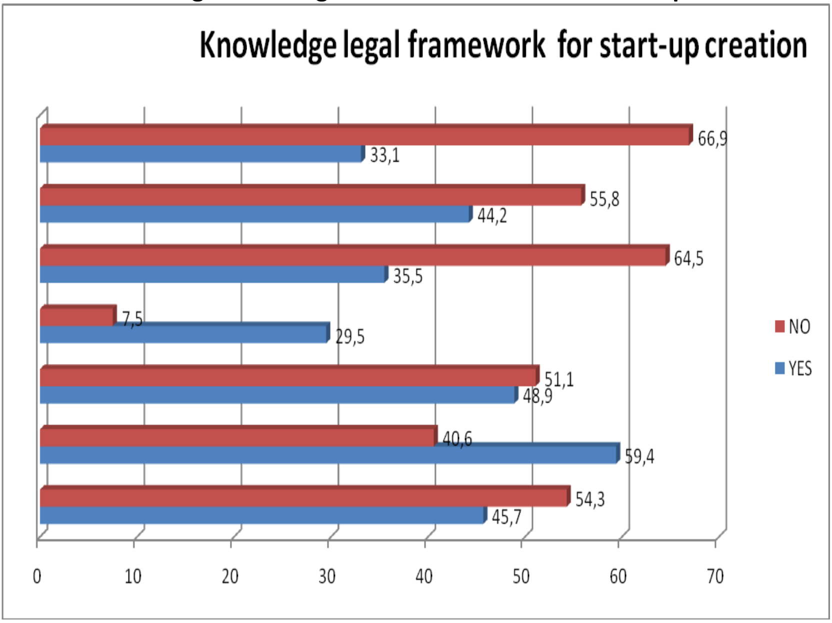
The two charts ***previous motivation to start a business*** **and** ***present motivation to start a business*** point out that the percentage figure of the previous work experience in the trade sector is not different from the sector choice in terms of expectations.
The choice of the trade sector is based on a generic *motivation to realize ambitions and personal expectations* and the *motivation to fulfil personal growth needs*. On the contrary, the identification of a specific economic sector (apart from the service sector) is referred to previous business experiences and to entrepreneurial expectations, mainly related to growth and/or differentiation or a modernization of an existing business.

ATTITUDE ANALYSIS
To make a qualitative analysis of the supporting data, we should highlight two features showing unclear, inconsistent and conflicting responses given by the total sample:

1. **Mismatch between a level of education consistent with the starting up of a business and the interest in starting up a business** (only 2% of those who expressed their intention to start a business have industry-specific education or training);
2. **Contradictory relation between specific education and knowledge of the business environment and start-ups**
(70% of the sample report that they do not hold specific qualifications, nor completed vocational training in the business field, indicating, at the same time, that they have an understanding – and in some cases, even a deep understanding – of the start-up landscape,.

The quantitative data on the level of awareness of the respondents about their business idea and all the compulsory activities to be fulfilled before starting up a business are generally positive; the youngest respondents answered YES to the questions about the *product/service to provide*, the *geographical area where the business is to be established* and the *compulsory fulfilments to carry out*, while values are evenly balanced between both options (YES and NO) in relation to the *choice of the reference market*. In contrast, the values regarding the *ownership of the property where the business would be located* and the *hiring of a start-up consultant* are extremely negative.

Chart 8: Knowledge of the legal framework related to start-ups



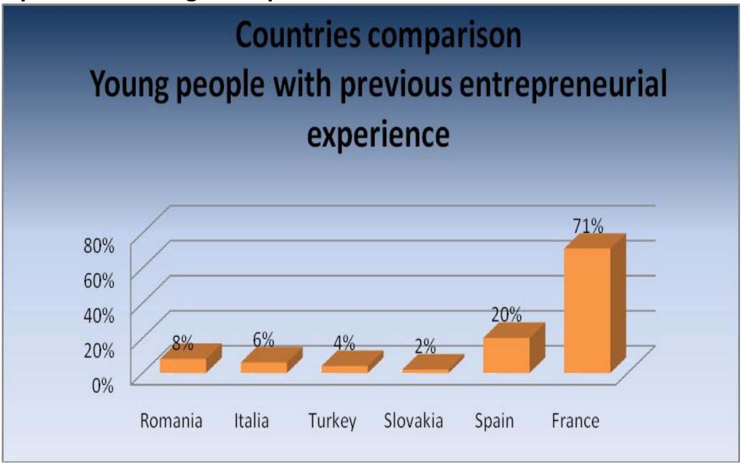
Source: Co-op survey

DEFINITION OF BUSINESS IDEA		
	YES	**NO**
Have you already decided what product/service to make/provide?	**57.20%**	**42.80%**
Have you ever conducted the necessary proceedings to start a business?	**53.60%**	**46.40%**
Do you know the reference market?	**49.60%**	**50.40%**
Do you own any property where the business would be located?	**12.80%**	**87.20%**
Have you ever hired a consultant to support you in starting your business?	**17.00%**	**83.00%**
Have you decided the geographical area?	**69.5**	**30.5**

	0%	**0%**

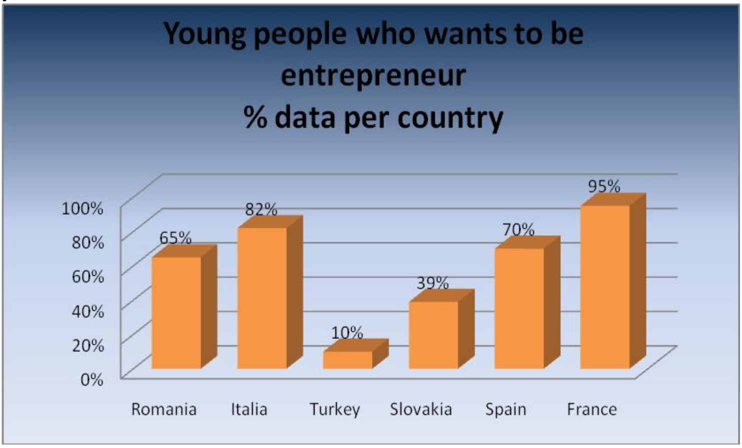
Comparing the data of the partner countries, the figures on young people with previous entrepreneurial experience reveal that France has the highest value of young people with entrepreneurial experience and Slovakia has the lowest percentage.

Chart 9: Percentage of young people with previous entrepreneurial experience among the 6 partner countries



Source: Co-op survey

Chart 10: Percentage of would-be entrepreneurs among the 6 partner countries

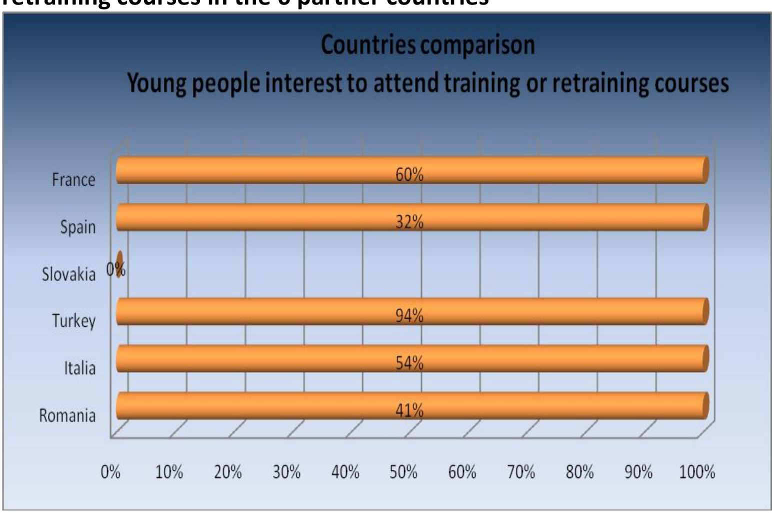


Source: Co-op survey

Chart 11, presenting the figures on young people who want to pursue an entrepreneurial career, does not show strongly different values, but a homogenous distribution among the project countries. In fact, while the Slovakian partner has a low percentage (39%), the other partners reach very high rates, from 65% (Romania) to 100% (Turkey).

The Turkish value in the last chart, compared to the values of the previous charts, is worth a more detailed read: while only 2% of respondents stated that they had had entrepreneurial experience in the past, 100% of the sample stated that they would like to start a business activity in the future, and the same sample declared that they had attended entrepreneurial training provided by Regional or Provincial Agencies in 2015 [1]

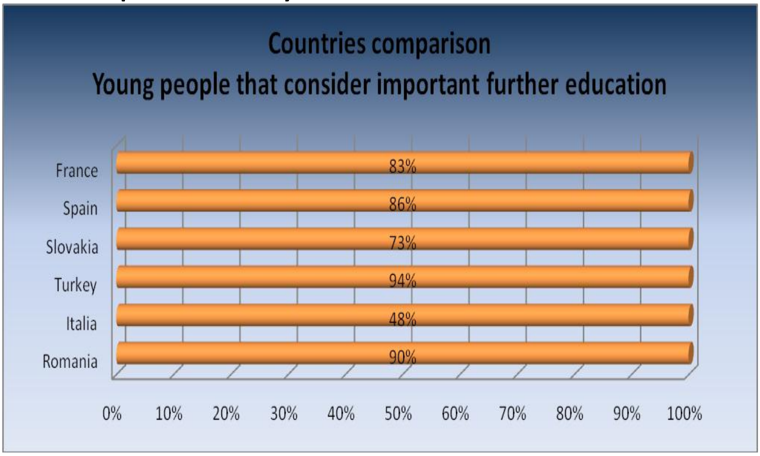
Chart 11: Number of young people interested in training and retraining courses in the 6 partner countries



Source: Co-op survey

[1] Regional Development Agency (MARKA) and Provincial Agency (ISKUR)

Chart 12: Importance of further education for target young people from each partner country



Source: Co-op survey

The chart regarding the interest of young people to participate in training courses to gain a professional qualification highlighted how Turkish youth show special attention to training paths.

The figure somehow strengthens the previous values in that it shows, in theoretical terms, that the entrepreneurial attitude goes hand in hand with parallel continuing training. As to the other percentage data, even if not negative in general terms, we have to consider the high level of education of the youth (diploma or degree). The Spanish value is somewhat contradictory as compared to the previous chart on the importance of further education.

FRANCE

"The large majority of respondents consider further education as important (83%) and 60% are thinking to attend some retraining courses convinced that it could help them find a job (70.45%). However, very few respondents prefer the theoretical aspects of courses. One third are willing to train only in practical activities and one third are willing to receive balanced training comprising both theoretical and practical aspects."

ITALY

"Attending training and re-training courses could be a key element to face a globalised market with its complexities and competitiveness, and the majority of respondents are willing to attend further training programs, convinced that training courses are useful and helpful to find a job”.

TURKEY

Particular attention is drawn to the Turkish case. “As many as 76% (38x) of respondents indicated that they have some requirements for establishing and managing an enterprise (authorisations, certifications, qualifications, professional practice). Moreover, 40% received training or a certification on business creation during the second semester of 2015”.

ABOUT THE BUSINESS IDEA - IDENTIFIED NEEDS OF ASPIRING YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

A Training and Guidance program for young new entrepreneurs should be based on the real needs and interests of the target groups. Thus, the Co-op initiative focused on the identification of the most common needs/interests of young unemployed adults and the on the relevant mapping. The four resulting needs/interests may be summarised as follows:

1. Need for key consultancy services (Turkey);
2. Interest in training and/or education courses (Turkey and Spain, Romania, Italy);
3. Interest in guidance and information (Spain, Italy);
4. Need for services facilitating access to credit (Spain);

In the Slovakian case, the target group did not express any needs, but the lack of knowledge of the legislative and general conditions to establish an enterprise associated with an unclear idea of the services needed to start a business, would suggest that they need different services or an integrated service solution (training and information; information and guidance; guidance and training).

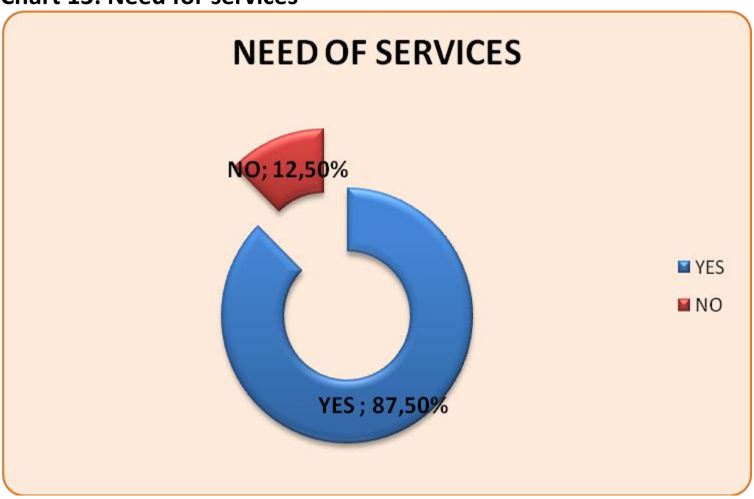
The same consideration may be applied to the Italian respondents.

Some of above-listed needs basically reflect the reasons for the failure of the previous entrepreneurial experience; however, they should also be considered as a good indicator in a short-term perspective. Nearly all respondents are well aware of their situation and most of them have a clear vision of themselves, and a sense of where to be and what to do in the future, however, they usually don´t know how to achieve their goals and fulfil their expectations.

As regards the future, in fact, the majority of interviewees expressed an interest in running a business and the need for more support to start it, such as guidance, information and training.

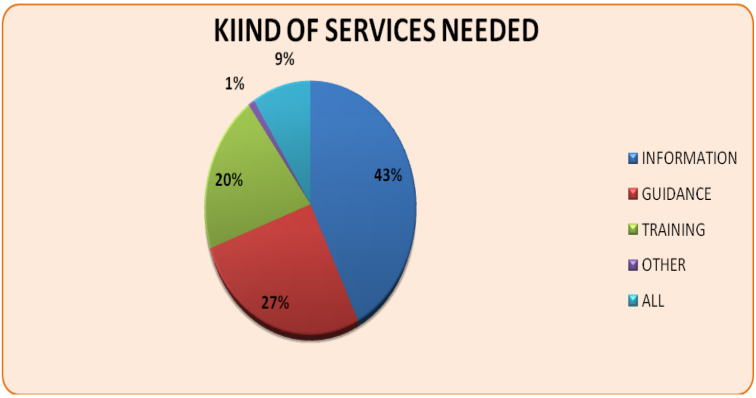
Before commenting the chart on the need for specific services, we should focus on the chart showing the generic need for business support.
The figure is very positive and shows that 87.5% of the overall sample need support services; it is associated with the questionable value of 12.50% of young people who stated that they do not need any kind of help with respect to business creation. A possible explanation could be the presence of an existing business team whom respondents can rely on, or the previous activation of a variety of recognized services for business start-ups.

Chart 13: Need for services



Source: Co-op survey

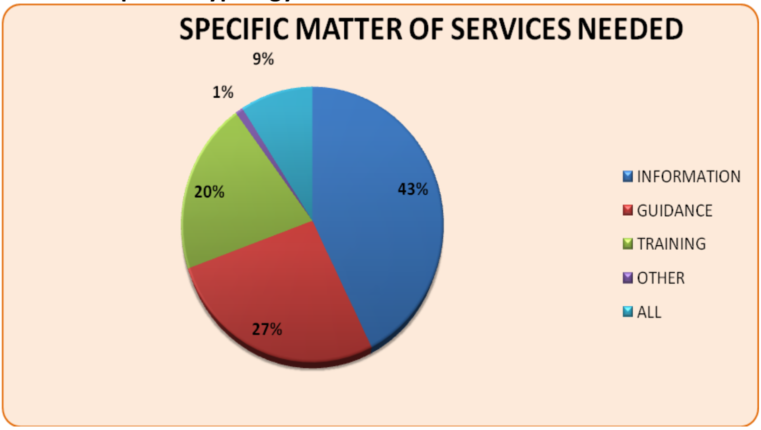
Chart 14: Identified services needed by young people



Source: Co-op survey

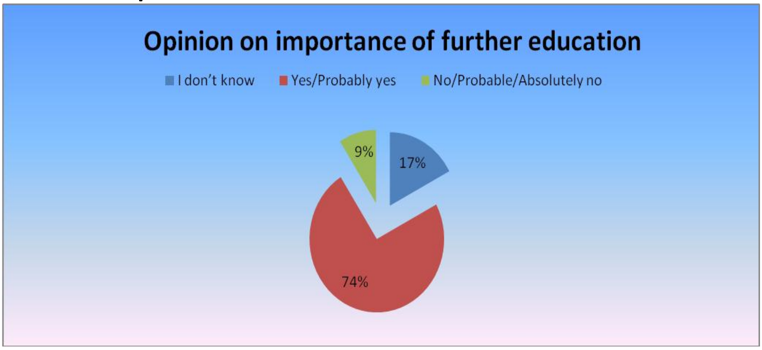
Data show that 9% of the sample who expressed the need for more than one service indicate a business idea that is not perfectly structured yet: they have an idea, but they do not clearly know how to turn it into a concrete business project.
All the other services requested are as specific as the expressed needs.
Therefore, the data on training, fully in line with the data for each partner country shown in the previous chart, highlight the need to acquire technical and specialist skills in relation to the identified economic sector/productive process; to specific regulatory and/or economic and financial aspects; to marketing strategies or to the managerial and organisational nature of the youth enterprise. Moreover, the data on young people who have benefited from services in support of entrepreneurship, show that most respondents have no awareness of the existence of services for the youth or of public and private initiatives for social and youth enterprises; this might be mainly due to the lack of visibility and the inadequate promotion of the existing specific services. On the other hand, the respondents who made use of these services in the past, or are perfectly aware of their existence, do not consider them very helpful.

Chart 15: Specific typology of the needed services



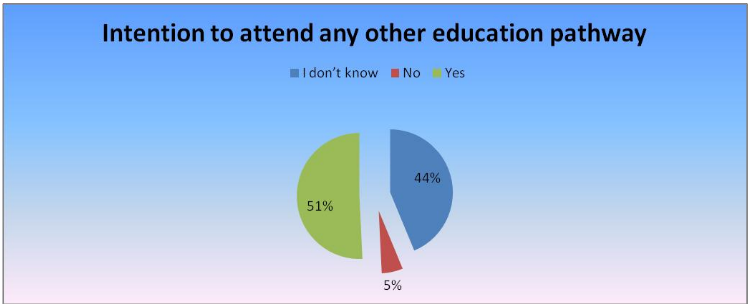
Source: Co-op survey

Chart 16: Importance of further education



Source: Co-op survey

Chart 17: Intention to attend further education



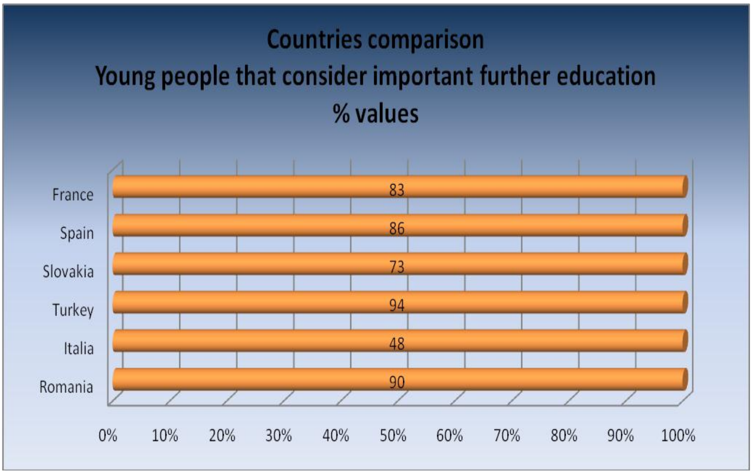
Source: Co-op survey

The percentage figures on the importance of higher education are very high with respect to the *yes/probably yes* option. As many as 90% of the total sample of young respondents, believe that it is important to continue an education or training path, regardless of the feasibility of their business idea, or their chance to enter the labour market as entrepreneurs. Further education represents a growth opportunity that allows young people to validate and strengthen their existing skills.

2.2 Training and Retraining courses

As regards the need to attend retraining courses, respondents have not expressed a clear opinion on the usefulness of retraining courses. As we can see in the chart below, most respondents stated that attending a training program is important and useful for them, but they are not able to determine whether a retraining course would help them start a business activity and, in general, find a job. This indecision might mainly be due to respondents' low awareness of the advantages and the real benefits brought by retraining courses.

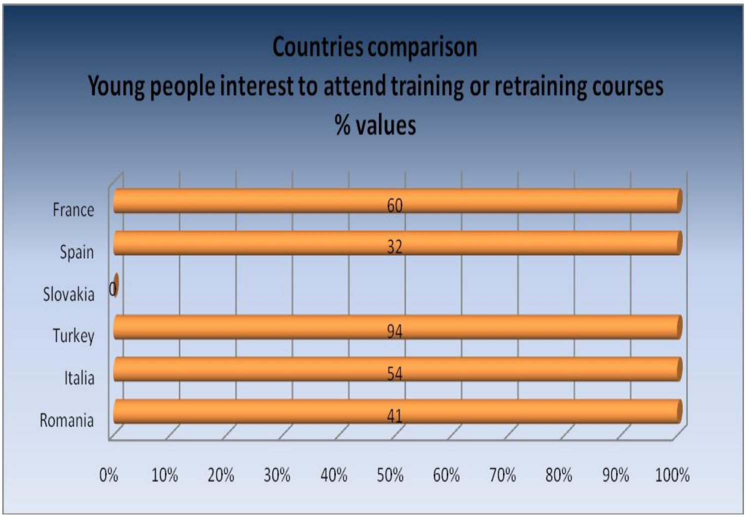
Chart 18: Cross-country comparison on the importance of further education



Most young people who seriously consider participating in some retraining course are from France, Italy and Turkey. The Spanish case is unclear, as the majority of respondents declare that they do not want to attend a course and do not see any added value in participating in it. Similarly, less than half of Romanian respondents stated that they would like to attend a training or retraining program[2].

[2] No data from the Slovak partner

Chart 19: Cross-country comparison on the intention to attend further education

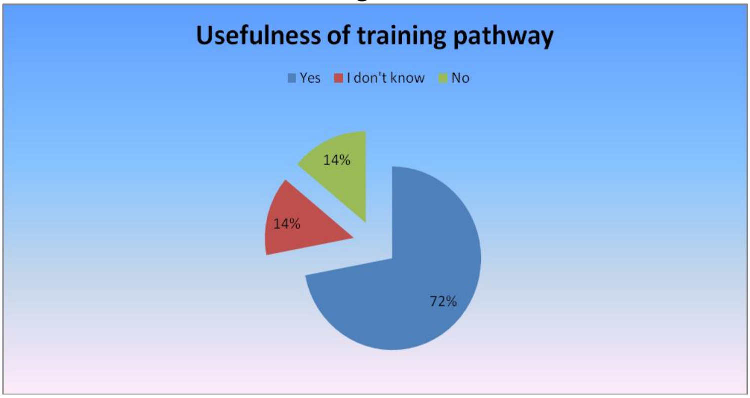


However, it is necessary to stress that the majority of respondents do not have any retraining experience (83% in Romania, 80% in the Czech Republic, 69% in Italy and 54% in Spain), these values being in line with young people's indecision about the usefulness of such courses. On the other hand, French and Turkish respondents have some experience, although different in terms of results: while in France "the majority of respondents (60%) hold a licence/certification/qualification, which is useful to start a business, more than 40% had already attended a course completed six months prior to questionnaire date or earlier, and the remaining 19% had attended a course completed one year prior to the questionnaire date"[3], in Turkey "nearly all respondents had attended some kind of training on business management, entrepreneurship, etc.." Therefore, the general results in the responses seem to be positive"[4].

[3] Ref. Page 11 Overall Report France

[4] Ref Page 17 of Overall Report Turkey

Chart 20: Usefulness of retraining courses



Source: Co-op survey

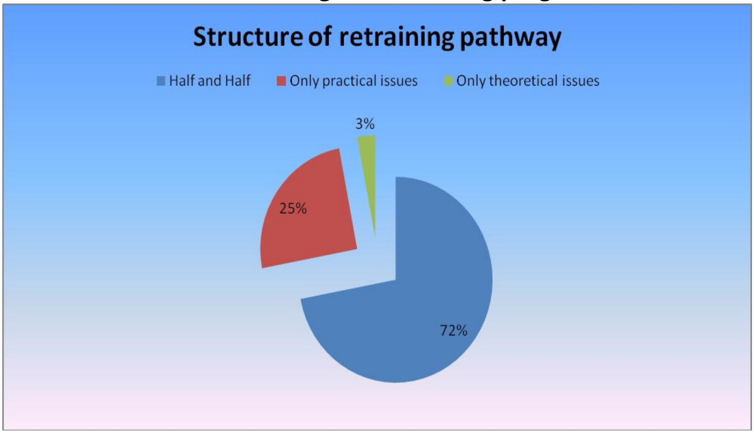
Other data show respondents' willingness to attend a training program specifically designed for would-be young entrepreneurs. A share corresponding to 72% of the sample are potentially willing to attend a training program of this type.

Only 14% of respondents have not decided the subject yet, while another 14% indicate that they have no plans to attend a training course.

However, the next chart on the structure of the training program does not take into account the results of the previous sets of questions on the needs expressed by their reference target group, the legal framework of reference, the offered opportunities, as well as the specific operability limits; therefore, it is difficult for the partners to design an effective and well-targeted counselling and guidance program within their pilot activities.

In fact, among those potentially interested in attending a training program, only 3% indicated an interest in a theory-based structure of the training program. The remaining share of the sample (97%) is interested in a structure combining practical and theoretical training (25%) or a purely practical training structure (72%).

Chart 21: Structure of training and retraining programs



Source: Co-op survey

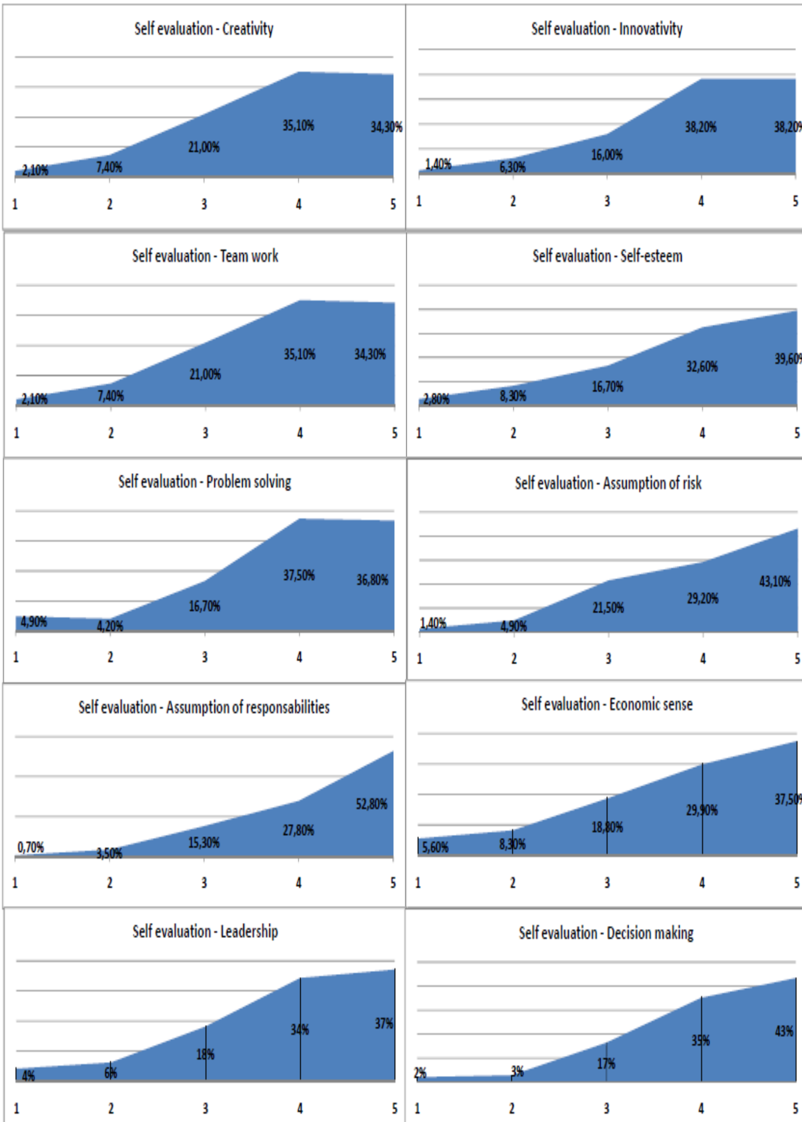
With respect to self evaluation, the chart below presents an overview of the aggregate data for all the countries. In some cases, rates are very high (between 4 and 5) and fairly in line with those on the intention to start a business and on the need for more support and assistance

Chart 22: Aggregate data on self evaluation of the overall target group

Source: Co-op survey

As for the individual characteristics, the Turkish respondents stand out from the remaining five surveyed partners, indicating very high values in their self evaluation. Similar values were indicated by the Spanish group.

In the Romanian group, as in the Spanish one, a large proportion of respondents have indicated that they are innovative and creative, able to work in a team, recognize risks and take responsibility, and,



furthermore, a good level of self esteem; only the economic awareness is considered poor. Within the French group, respondents have expressed a more balanced self evaluation, showing very high creativity and focus on innovation, ability to work in a team and risk awareness. With respect to the remainder of the items on personality requirements (self esteem, problem solving, decision making and leadership), the values are evenly distributed among *good (3), very good (4), and excellent (5)*. Only the Slovakian group reveals a more prudent self evaluation: the majority of respondents expressed high rates for each personality requirement item, except for the “taking of responsibility”, “leadership” and “decision making” items.

It is impossible to state whether respondents were really aware of their personal abilities and whether such self-assessed abilities were actually so high. However, their qualifications may be a good starting point for a successful career as entrepreneurs.

3. Evaluation of the questionnaire-based survey – companies established during last year

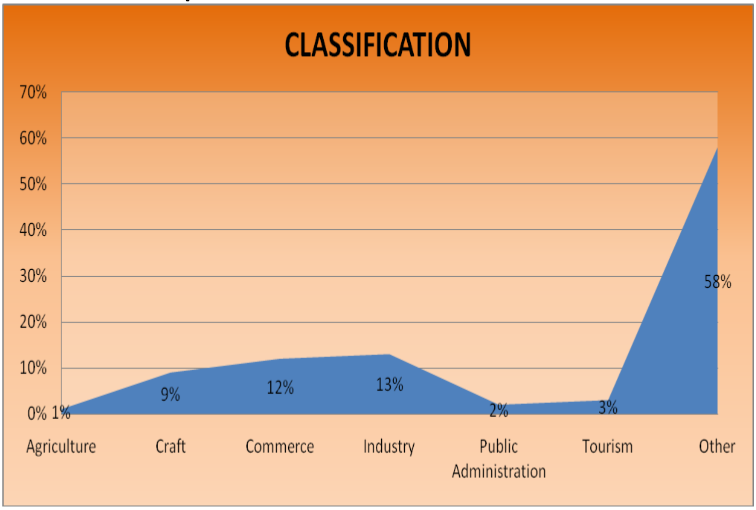
3.1 Quantitative analysis

A brief overview of the start-ups reached by each partner.

Country	No. of completed questionnaires
Romania	**20**
Italy	**12**
Turkey	**13**
Spain	**9**
Slovakia	**15**
France	**20**

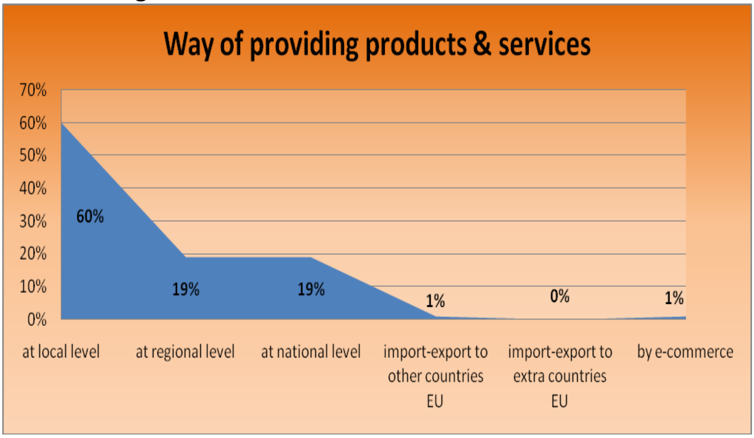
The surveyed companies belong to the economic sectors indicated in the chart below, with most of them operating in the service sector (generally included in the *OTHER* category):

Chart 23: Start-up business sector



Source: Co-op survey

Chart 24: Organisation scale of reference

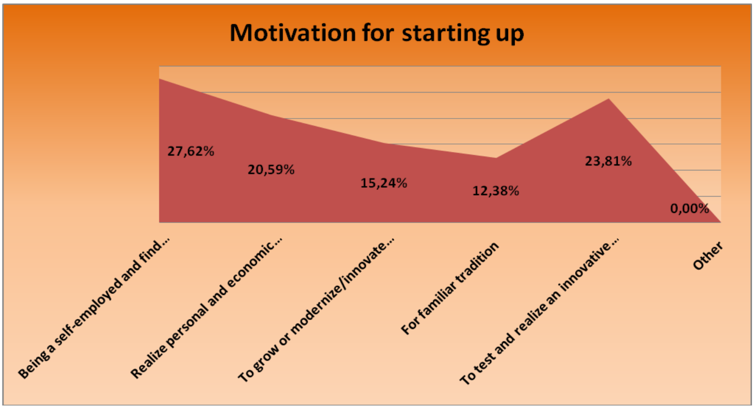


Source: Co-op survey

The overall sample of the selected start-up enterprises are local players, but we find very high values also for the regional and national levels.

A very small percentage of them conduct business at European level, maintaining working relationships with third countries or using the e-commerce channel.
The last figure can be analyzed only in relation to the identified field. In fact, while it is unlikely that a business of the manufacturing, agricultural or craft sector has a global-scale profile, at least at its initial stage, hi-tech enterprises can develop globally within the first few years of operations.
For that reason, the figures referred to the local market are to be considered as the absolute value, since very few hi-tech companies have participated in the survey.

Chart 25: Motivation to start a business

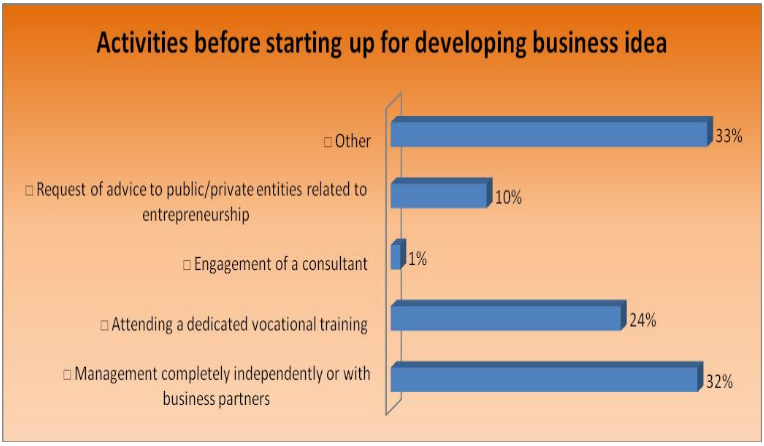


Source: Co-op survey

As regards the motivations underlying the decision to start a business, the highest percentage value (49%) is obtained by aggregating the two categories of motivations included in the questionnaire, namely "*to have access to the labour market*" and "*to gain personal and economic fulfilment*", followed by the "*possibility to put into practice an experimental idea*". The last figure is clearly attributable to leading-edge tertiary-sector enterprises, service companies and other similar companies). Finally, for only 12% of respondents continuing a family tradition is the major drive to start a business.

3.2 Qualitative analysis

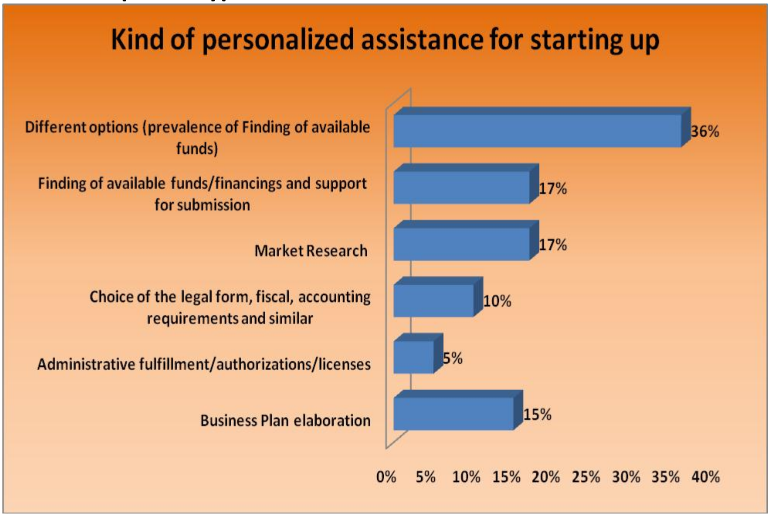
Chart 26: Activities before starting up for developing the business idea



Source: Co-op survey

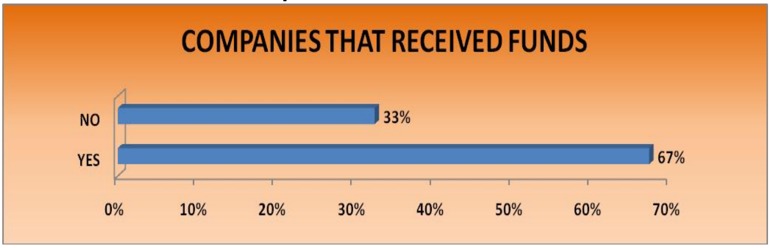
Only 1% of the total sample has formally hired a consultant for all the formalities related to starting up a business. The data are referred to the next chart – *specific type of services received* – showing that the majority of the sample requested support for a wide range of services aimed at starting up a business. Only small percentages are evenly distributed according to the specific services (market, elaboration of business plans).

Chart 27: Specific type of services received



Source: Co-op survey

Chart 28: Number of companies that have received funds

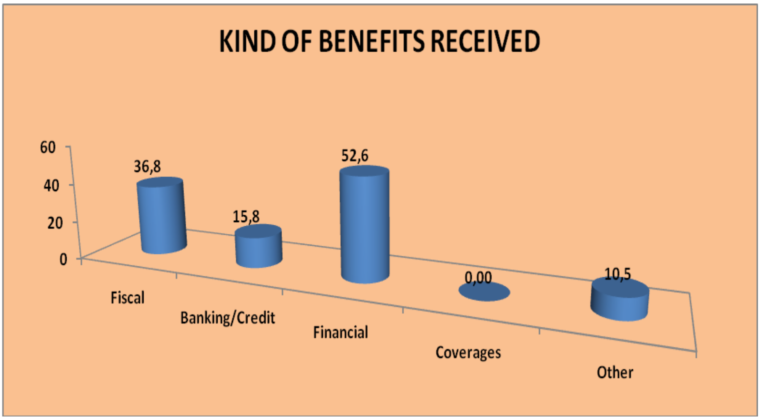


Source: Co-op survey

According to the aggregate data on the form of funding, the majority of companies have been started through self financing. The second source of financial support is represented by public funds – all the surveyed Romanian companies and over half of the surveyed Italian companies). Especially noteworthy is the data about France, indicating that 53% of responding entreprises received funds through organisations known as "couveuses" and CAE Cooperatives. Public funds are indicated as a possible source of financing for new businesses in Corsica.

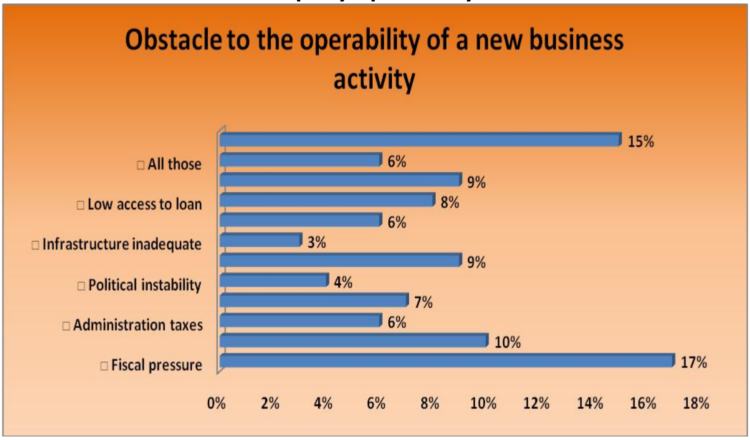
In relation to new opportunities in terms of subsidies and other facilities for business start-ups, the report analyses and compares the obstacles encountered at the start-up stage and during the first year of activity, in order to have an extensive overview of the services already available in the examined territories (with a focus on the different approaches adopted and on the different standards applied) and any other possible solution to be implemented to support the launch of new business projects.

Chart 29: Facilities obtained



Source: Co-op survey

Chart 30: Obstacles to company operability



Source: Co-op survey

In general terms, the obstacles to operability identified by the responding companies relate to the items "Easier access to external funding **(bank loans)"; "**Setting up of funding facilities with lower interest rates for beginning enterprisers"; "More effective public assistance, guidance and support for entrepreneurs" **and "**More helpful attitude by officials towards the needs of future entrepreneurs".
The emerged needs are basically two. The first one was indicated by the Slovakian partner who remarked the need to promote Business Angel as a financing model and all the related operating procedures to allow start-ups to enter and remain in the market, as well as the connected duties and benefits. The second need was identified by the Turkish partner and relates to increasing the impact of funding facilities and actions to support entrepreneurship, mainly through KOSGEB[5] and Development Agencies.[6]
In overall terms, the fiscal pressure represents the highest percentage value. Although the figures/rates recorded in each country differ, tax burden reduction remains a common expectation. Similarly, but with varying rates among the different countries, infrastructure inadequacy of the local context remains a transversal and common limit to the operability of start-ups.

3.3 Qualitative analysis of the organisations dealing with starting up

The total number of involved organisations is 51, namely:

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[5]Small and Medium Industry Development Organisation engaged in supporting competitiveness of SMEs, entrepreneurship and innovative start-ups.
[6]Agencies located in each Sub-regions of Turkey providing funds, technical assistance and interest-free loans to promote entrepreneurship

Country/No. of organisations dealing with starting up

Country	No.
Romania	**0**
Italy	**8**
Turkey	**10**
Spain	**11**
Slovakia	**5**
France	**18**

According to the results of the survey, the main issues and needs indicated by the surveyed companies may be listed as follows:

- Lack or low availability of capital resources to finance the initial start up costs and survive the first year of business; (mainly identified in France, Italy, Romania, Spain);
- Difficulty in being able to meet domestic and international demand (identified in France, Italy, Romania);
- Lack of research and analysis of the reference market in terms of competitiveness level, potential competitors and customer groups (identified in France and Italy);
- Low qualification and skills levels of new entrepreneurs, especially young entrepreneurs, with a related negative impact on the company's financial management and the cost-benefit strategy, especially during the first strategic months of activity; (identified in France, Italy and Spain);
- Difficulty in accessing to funds and long-term financial benefits (identified in France, Italy, Romania and Spain);
- Achievement of a critical mass of customers (identified in France, Italy, Romania and Spain).

4. Evaluation of questionnaire-based survey – Small and Very Small-Enterprises

4.1 Quantitative analysis

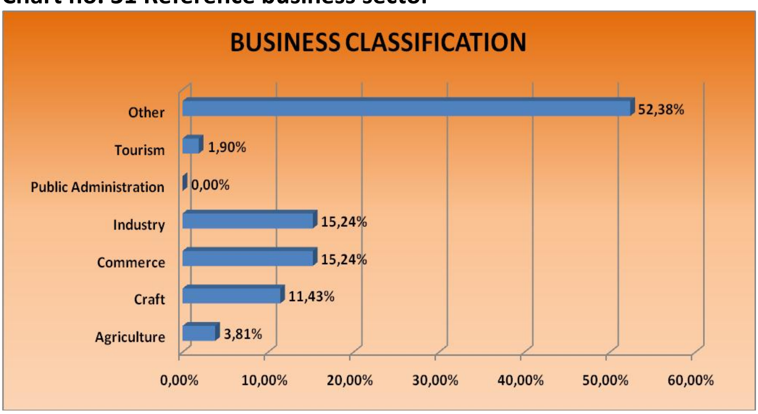
A brief overview of the small and medium-sized enterprises reached by each partner.

Country	No. of companies
Romania	20
Italy	20
Turkey	20
Spain	20
Slovakia	21
France	4

With a total number of 105 surveyed companies

The surveyed companies belong to the following business sector (insert chart)

Chart no. 31 Reference business sector



Source: Co-op survey

As explained in the methodological notes, the contacted and selected companies are from different business sectors. The table shows the distribution of the surveyed companies across the different sectors in terms of absolute and percentage values. As can be seen, the companies from the manufacturing and trade sectors represent the largest share of the surveyed sample, while the companies in the tourism and agriculture sectors rank last (respectively 2% and 4%). The following table enables a comparison between the responses of this group of companies and the responses given by the start-up companies to the same questions. The number of surveyed small and very small enterprises operating in the European and non-European marketplace is more significant as compared to start-ups, and up of 5% of them use an e-commerce channel. In terms of comparative analysis, we can see that, regardless of the reference sector (trade, manufacturing, services), small and very small companies operated for more than one year have more chances to stay in the market and develop in the medium- to long-term, as compared to start-ups.

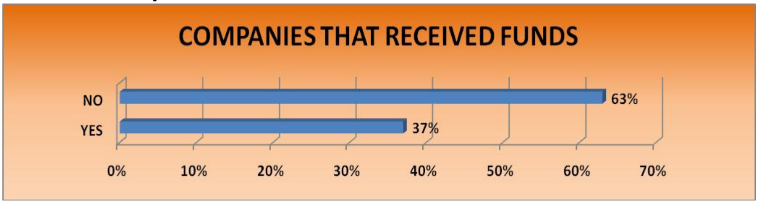
DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL

Reference Market	Absolute value	% value
local level	**44**	**29**
regional level	**27**	**18**
national level	**42**	**28**
import-export to EU countries	**16**	**10**
import-export to non-EU countries	**16**	**10**
e-commerce	**7**	**5**

4.2 Qualitative analysis

When asked whether they had or had not received any form of funding, 38 companies out of the total sample responded to the question, and 24 of these indicated that they had received some form of funding, or benefits and grants.

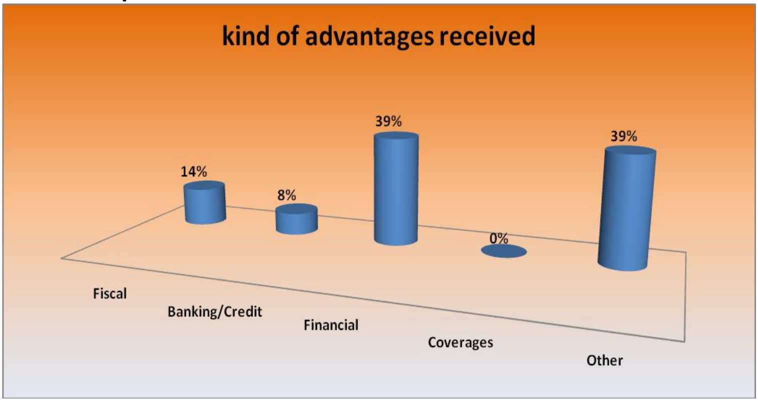
Chart 32 Companies that received funds



Source: Co-op survey

The specific benefits received by the 24 aforementioned companies appear to be mainly financial, banking and tax (4 out of 24) benefits. The remaining 11 responses were highly fragmented.

Chart 33: Specific funds received



Source: Co-op survey

As regards the intention to apply for funding, as many as 60% indicated that they do not intend to apply for funding, as they want to operate independently also in the implementation of their investment policies (by means of self-financing, profit reinvestment, etc....).

A qualitative analysis of the data shows what kind of subsidies and/or benefits, not provided yet, are considered useful by the companies for their business; however, only the Italian and Spanish companies have responded, indicating specific types of local programs and national entities providing aid/financing (see PIA):

a) To have access to PIA INNOVAZIONE OR ATTIVA L'INNOVAZIONE programs (specific Italian programs);
b) To obtain funds for alternative energies and funds for training and innovation (Italy);
c) To simplify the relationship with public administration and tax rationalization (Spain)
d) Aids to attend fairs abroad and for advise, CEO and training in social networks (Spain)
e) Financing/Grants for R&D (Spain)
f) Opening up to new markets (Spain)
g) Aids to reduce social security contributions burden, financial aids, interest-free loans (Spain)
h) Incentives and support to internationalization, to R&D and

repayable financing (Spain)

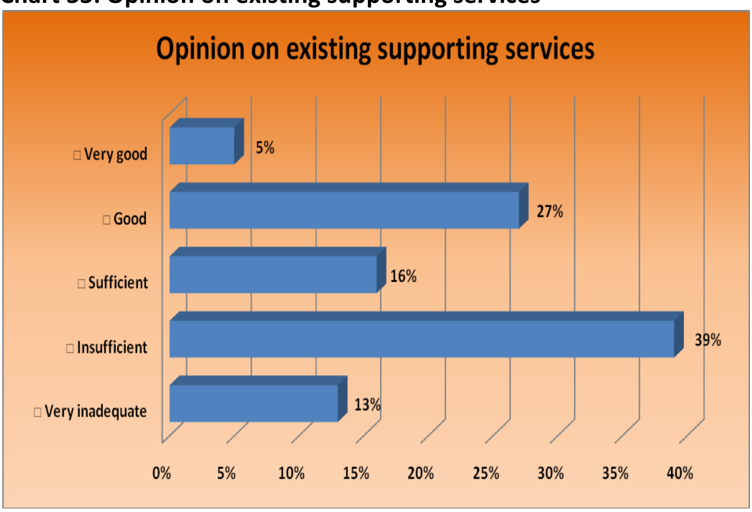
i) Support to labour market (Spain)

j) Grants for machinery (Spain)

As many as 39% of the total sample expressed a negative opinion (*insufficient*) with respect to the **existing services in support of business activities**. The specificity of these services is very heterogeneous and includes infrastructure, logistics, and tax legislation aspects. Contrariwise, only 5% of the sample expressed a very positive value (*Very good*).

As regards the question on evaluating the **existing support and guidance services to *companies*,** respondents answered as follows.

Chart 33: Opinion on existing supporting services



Source: Co-op survey

However, it is worth considering the issue raised by an Italian company – the effectiveness of support services depends on their costs; in that sense, costs increase with the quality of support, and this makes them inaccessible.

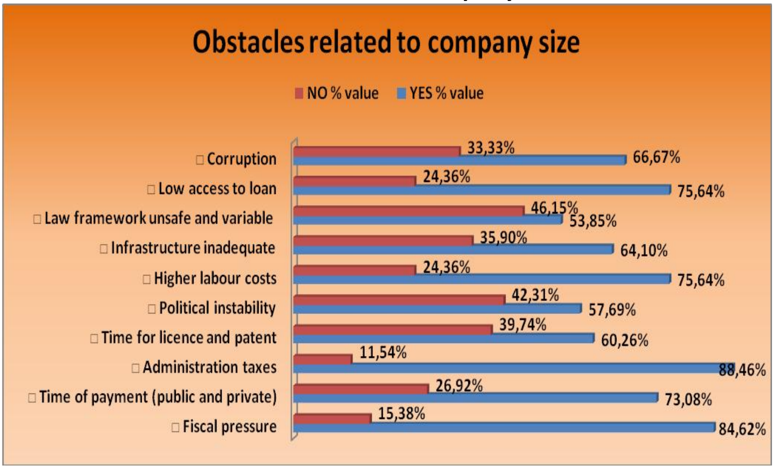
The next table and charts show:

- the obstacles perceived by the company;

- the difficulties encountered by the companies in relation to their size.

It is not surprise that the vast majority of respondents highlight the tax burden (*fiscal pressure*) as the major obstacle related to the company size. In this respect, a more specific indication is given by 88.46% of respondents who consider administrative fees an additional obstacle related to the company size.
The multiple choice question includes taxes, tax burden, labour costs and access to credit among the items. A further item is the timeliness of payments from both public and private sector customers.
In conclusion, economic and financial issues are those of greatest importance and concern for the surveyed companies.

Chart 34: Obstacles in relation to the company size



Source: Co-op survey

Recommendations

The questionnaires administered for this survey and the resulting data presented in this Report aims to provide an overview of the main difficulties of small and medium-sized companies and start-ups operating in different local contexts and of the major motivations underlying the decision of young people to start a business. The Report presents the gathered data with the aim to provide a comparative analysis, highlighting some differences and/or similarities among all the countries, and to make possible recommendations.

YOUNG PEOPLE

The evaluation of the questionnaires for young people brings out some common and cross-sectional data for all the countries. A thorough analysis of these data, which at first sight may appear contradictory, allows the detection of the needs of the reference target groups.

The surveyed young people have a high educational profile (high percentage of graduates, although with heterogeneous and differentiated typologies of diplomas and degrees). Although the figures on past work experience are not promising (in all items categories, such as combined school/work programs, internships, training, fixed-term or indefinite employment), in most cases young people show some reluctance to undertake further training and/or vocational training; at the same time, they indicate a need for a whole range of services, including guidance services, in order to put into practice their business idea. In this respect, the most evident challenge is to be able to properly contextualize their business idea, by combining some fundamental aspects that are preliminary to business creation with the necessary guidance and counselling:

- Real motivations of the would-be young entrepreneur and possession of entrepreneurial skills (authority, problem solving, decision making, economic awareness, innovation, creativity, spirit of initiative, leadership);
- Concreteness, feasibility of the business idea;

In this regard, as a recommendation, we suggest to promote the activation of a business creation module in secondary schools and the arranging of funding dedicated to guidance and information advice in universities, through the organisation of interactive lectures with the presence of mentors, coaches and successful young entrepreneurs.

SME & VSME

The surveyed small and medium sized enterprises show a significant level of uncertainty and concern about the economic situation and complain about a strong presence of obstacles to a necessary and ongoing process of innovation and change. Obstacles, objective or just perceived, are all external to the company and commonly refer to taxation or access to credit or to administrative and regulatory requirements that the companies have to comply with. In this view, it would be appropriate to provide customized counselling, case by case, trying to fully understand the real impact of the identified obstacles on business activity and bring out any other type of critical elements within the company (development plans, personnel training, optimizing production processes, technological innovation, etc. ...).

START-UPS

The most evident aspect that emerges from the analysis of the questionnaires concerns the distribution and marketing channels used by the interviewed European start-ups. The percentage of start-ups that have decided to operate in the global marketplace is really low. Without going into the details of the sample makeup of the surveyed businesses and the different business sectors – already indicated in the methodological notes and –, we need to highlight, in terms of recommendations, how it is important and necessary to implement the existing measures for funding and facilities provided in favour of enterprises – especially start-ups – that invest in e-commerce and/or participate or would be interested in participating in national and international fairs and markets. This is important not only for the acquisition of new customers outside their reference region, but also for the creation of networks, alliances, partnerships and for a prompt response to the continuous changes imposed by the market.