

## PRESS RELEASE

### Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs reaches 15,000 business exchanges, strengthening Europe's SME ecosystem

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The Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs (EYE) programme has reached a major milestone, surpassing **15,000 business exchanges** between aspiring entrepreneurs and experienced business owners across Europe and beyond.

In Slovenia, the programme is supported by several organisations, including Regional Development Centre Koper, which has helped more than 200 entrepreneurs participate in cross-border business exchanges.

Since its launch in 2009, the programme has supported **30,000 entrepreneurs across 43 countries**, fostering cross-border collaboration, accelerating business creation, and strengthening the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

SMEs represent **99% of all EU businesses** and are central to innovation, employment, and economic growth. By enabling entrepreneurs to learn from each other, EYE supports the creation, development, and internationalisation of these businesses.

#### Tangible results for entrepreneurs and businesses

Through hands-on exchanges, participants gain practical skills, expand networks, and access new markets. Participant feedback points to consistent benefits for both new and host entrepreneurs:

- **88% of new entrepreneurs** report improved understanding of SME management
- **83%** built new business contacts
- **64%** expanded into international markets
- **72% of host entrepreneurs** improved their business through new ideas and know-how
- **90%** of hosts report a perceptible or significant contribution from new entrepreneurs to their business

#### Driving competitiveness and inclusion

By enabling knowledge exchange among businesses with **social, digital, and green impact**, EYE helps

SMEs adapt and grow in a changing economy. The programme also strengthens cross-border cooperation, contributing to a more integrated and resilient European Single Market.

EYE supports more inclusive entrepreneurship, with women representing **52%** of new entrepreneurs.

#### Looking ahead

Building on this milestone, the EYE programme will continue expanding its reach and impact, empowering the next generation of entrepreneurs and supporting a competitive, innovative, and sustainable European economy.

#### What participants say

[Niko Bucalo](#), *EYE New Entrepreneur*, scaled his company Textiloop thanks to the programme:

“If you also want to grow your business idea and work with inspiring peers across Europe, I truly recommend the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme.”



The programme is implemented by a range of [intermediary organisations](#) across Europe. Information on eligibility and participation is available on the [programme website](#).

Applications for entrepreneurs are open all year round! Visit [www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu](http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu) for more details and information on how to apply.

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