



## **RESOLUTION**

# **TIME TO ACT: MORE QUALITY EMPLOYMENT!**

COUNCIL OF MEMBERS/  
EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
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The economic and financial crisis has had a significant negative effect on the people of Europe, but young people have been hardest hit<sup>1</sup>. In January 2015, the youth unemployment rate was 21.2% in the EU28 and 22.9% in the euro area<sup>2</sup>. These figures have been worsened by austerity measures meant for fiscal consolidation as a result of the crisis. Cuts to public budgets, especially to education, greater flexibility of employment protection regulation and age-based cuts to minimum wages and unemployment benefits, have all contributed to elevating young people's risk of falling into poverty and social exclusion. We recognise that in disadvantaged neighbourhoods the situation is even more difficult for young people, often being the second or third generation without work (meaning that their precariousness existed before the economic crisis). The consequences of the current development have an impact on the individual as well as the whole society.

The Investment Plan for Europe, proposed by the European Commission, is promising to unlock public and private investments of at least €315 billion over the next three years (2015-2017). **It is now time to ensure that this very welcome and necessary shift towards investment in Europe includes a strong focus on the creation of quality jobs for young people in a long-term perspective.** Investment in the real economy and not only in financial instruments must be complemented by policies that ensure a better transition to the labour market and access to quality jobs. Strong action against discrimination leads to further economic development and is key for sustainability. This should be complemented by youth policies in order to promote the participation of young people and youth organisations in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the aforementioned policies. Political commitment and innovative approaches are crucial to improving the situation.

**Sustainable growth, job creation and fair working conditions** are at the heart of the solution for young peoples' access to quality jobs - providing not only jobs for today but also investing in a stable future. The following elements are key to realising this:

*Entrepreneurship*<sup>3</sup>: Acknowledging that entrepreneurial ideas can be one part of generating more jobs and making Europe an attractive investment zone, we call for:

- The creation of support mechanisms to incentivise young entrepreneurs.
- Easier access to credit for start-ups and young entrepreneurs, with governments guaranteeing the loans.
- Young entrepreneurs to have full access to social protection keeping with ILO Recommendation 202<sup>4</sup>.
- Support from the educational system at all levels, with young people to be provided with relevant information, financial literacy, and development of skills, competences and attitudes to set up their own businesses.
- A specific focus on supporting social entrepreneurship and the social economy due not only to their ability to create jobs but also to their contribution to the development of communities, supporting environmental sustainability and ensuring social resilience in times of crisis.

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<sup>1</sup> European Youth Forum, 2014, Youth in the Crisis, What went wrong, <http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2014/11/YFJ-Publication-Youth-in-the-Crisis.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> European Commission January 2015, Unemployment Statistics [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Unemployment\\_statistics#Youth\\_unemployment\\_trends](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics#Youth_unemployment_trends)

<sup>3</sup> European Youth Forum 2011, Position Paper on Youth Entrepreneurship [http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2014/04/0451-11\\_YFJ\\_PP\\_Youth\\_Entrepreneurship-FINAL1.pdf](http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2014/04/0451-11_YFJ_PP_Youth_Entrepreneurship-FINAL1.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> International Labour Organisation (ILO), 2012, Social Protection Floors Recommendation [http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100\\_ILO\\_CODE:R202](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:R202)

- The creation of one-stop-shops to deal with all relevant administrative procedures related to setting up and running their business and simplification of administrative procedures in European states.
- An effective support of green and sustainable entrepreneurial projects.
- Measures to prevent forced entrepreneurship and the misuse of subsidies for self-employment and young entrepreneurs.
- The promotion of sustainable alternative models such as cooperatives, which are based on a democratic decision process and try to have an impact on the local community.

*Emerging and potential sectors:* Acknowledging that fields such as information and communication technologies, clean technologies and green jobs have great potential to create jobs both in private and public domains, we call for:

- The public sector to invest more in information and communications technology, both internally and through targeted programmes.
- The development of initiatives to boost enrolment in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

*Research and development (R&D):* Acknowledging that young people today are the most educated generation and that their skills touch upon new areas of job creation, including “green” jobs, we call for:

- National governments to implement incentives for investors to entrust young people to manage and receive large scale R&D projects and grants.
- Specific support for sustainable and emerging sectors.
- More private and public investments in both fundamental and applied R&D, including funding for PhD and post-doc positions for young people.
- The results of research and development to be used to implement and assess policies based on evidence.

*Investment in the public sector, infrastructures and welfare state services:* Acknowledging that the public sector is an important provider of jobs, we call for:

- High and effective investments in the public sector.
- The public sector to invest in up-to-date infrastructures to support both public and private sectors to develop.
- Employment services to have the human and financial resources to support individual pathways that enable each individual to successfully pursue their own projects and to gain access to a decent job, particularly through the provision of services to the least qualified individuals.

**An inclusive labour market** is only achievable with a growing number of quality jobs. The any-job-will-do approach is not sufficient: we want jobs that allow young people to become autonomous, as well as a system that is sustainable and continues to invest in a supportive welfare state. We call for public and private stakeholders, together with youth and youth organisations, to strive for the realisation of the following elements:

*Social inclusion.* We acknowledge that young people are employed under precarious conditions (42% of young people on temporary contracts versus 11% of the rest of the population) and that this is leading to social exclusion and poverty. We call for:

- Wider recognition of the European Youth Forum's definition of quality jobs<sup>5</sup>.
- Strong legislative measures and enforcement to address multiple discrimination.

*Non-Discrimination.* We acknowledge that young people and other disadvantaged groups face discrimination on different grounds in accessing and staying in the labour market. We call for:

- Equal pay for equal work and specifically to end discrimination in the workplace.
- A holistic and inclusive approach to antidiscrimination policies in the labour market.
- Shared parental leave and appropriate support for young parents.
- A stricter enforcement of 'Directive 2000/78 for equal treatment in employment and occupation'<sup>6</sup> on violations of age-based discrimination.

*Labour mobility:* Acknowledging that young people face multiple obstacles to getting a job in other countries as well as that young people are increasingly forced to leave their countries to find a job, or even a better quality job, we call for:

- The portability of social rights across the EU, ensuring a genuine freedom of movement.
- The promotion of exchange of students at all levels, including vocational training level.
- Policies ensuring that there is no social rights dumping or a race to bottom of employment rights among European countries.
- A facilitation of access to work permits for all young people present in Europe.
- More common recognition of qualifications across Europe.
- Promoting the use of and improving the already existing tools for labour mobility (e.g. EuresJobs and EU Skills Panorama).

**The transition from education to the labour market** has become longer as well as more challenging for young people. We call for measures to protect young people from abusive situations. The following elements are key to realising this:

*Youth Guarantee:* We acknowledge that the ambition of the Youth Guarantee is to provide all young people, especially the most disadvantaged, with a quality and accompanied transition to the labour market. We furthermore acknowledge its current limits such as the lack of funding, national measures of implementation, misinterpretation of its purpose, and misuse of funds. To make the Youth Guarantee work beyond mere festive declarations of intent, and in order to avoid it becoming a wasted opportunity, it must have clear definitions, the goals of the funding schemes have to be stated and a monitoring system has to be implemented. We therefore call for:

- A genuine implementation of the provisions of a quality youth guarantee across Europe.
- Tailored career guidance for every young person going through the measure.

<sup>5</sup> See European Youth Forum 2012, Quality Jobs for Young People, [http://issuu.com/yomag/docs/yfj\\_qualityjobs\\_en\\_issuu](http://issuu.com/yomag/docs/yfj_qualityjobs_en_issuu) and European Youth Forum 2013, Policy Paper on Youth Employment [http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2014/06/0166-13\\_PP\\_Employment\\_Final1.pdf](http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2014/06/0166-13_PP_Employment_Final1.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32000L0078:en:HTML>

- A private-public partnership in the implementation at national level, especially in order to provide ICT trainings.
- Strengthening and implementing the role of public and private employment agencies as one of the crucial stakeholders for the success of the Youth Guarantee programme.
- The involvement of youth organisations in its design and implementation.
- Continuous funding of the measure at European and national levels.
- Continuous evaluation and improvement of the programme and measures based on the results.
- Special attention should be given to young people further away from the labour market, and usually not registered in the Youth Guarantee system.

*Quality internships<sup>7</sup> & apprenticeships:* We acknowledge the importance of quality internships and apprenticeships. We recognise that quality internships and apprenticeships, especially internships during studies, provide an opportunity for young people to gain a wider understanding of the skills required to enter the labour market. We acknowledge the general poor quality and conditions of young interns and apprentices in Europe, where for example only 30% of interns are paid. We call for:

- The endorsement of the European Quality Charter on Internships and Apprenticeships<sup>8</sup> by more companies and public employment services as well as by institutions of the Council of Europe, European Union or the United Nations.
- A new EU recommendation outlining the criteria for quality internships and apprenticeships leading to legislative national frameworks, with impact also beyond the EU.
- The encouragement of increased voluntary monitoring of internship quality.
- The role of social partners in the control of quality of the internships and apprenticeships programmes to be recognised and promoted. At the same time we raise awareness on the importance of youth employment policies within the companies, turning them into an essential part of the collective bargaining agreements.

*Skills development:* We recognise the value of skills, encompassing competences, knowledge and soft skills for the employability of young people when entering the labour market and for life long learning. We call for:

- Investment in inclusive opportunities providing Non Formal Education (NFE) and for recognition of the impact and value of experience, skills and competences gained from there.
- Educational systems to be an integral part of society through greater and better dialogue, to ensure that these systems serve the community with knowledge, technology, and skills, envisioning its development.
- Stronger public responsibility and increased support to facilitate a paradigm shift towards a learner-centred approach in education systems, where the focus is the learning outcomes of the educational process.

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<sup>7</sup> The definition of internships used by the European Youth Forum also includes traineeships. See European Quality Charter for Internships and Apprenticeships <http://www.youthforum.org/quality-internships/>

<sup>8</sup> European Youth Forum 2012, European Quality Charter on Internships and Apprenticeships, <http://www.youthforum.org/quality-internships/>

- Incentive measures to promote entrepreneurship especially in the zones where unemployment is high and to make entrepreneurship training and support accessible for young people coming from disadvantaged areas.
- Recognition and strengthening of dual learning as a qualitative tool to provide professional skills as well as education at all levels.
- Ensuring that training programmes are accessible to those most vulnerable to poverty and unemployment, and tailored to their needs.
- The guaranteeing of conditions and opportunities of life-long learning, enabling the continuity of education and training of young professionals.