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SOCIAL AGENDA



Youth employment

I focus on

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STRESS AT WORK

*Better implementation
of EU law*



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EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

*Employment
in the forefront*



EDITORIAL



Youth employment is the major challenge which the European Union institutions and Member States are facing today.

It is not exaggerated to say that Europe is faced with the prospect of a lost generation of young people: People who have not been able to enter the labour market - or so late that it will have lasting effects on their professional and private situation. And there is no need to expand on the losses for society both in economic terms and in terms of missed opportunities, not to mention the political consequences.

One thing is certain: unemployment in general will not go down significantly if youth unemployment, which is twice as high at EU level, is not properly addressed.

Acting in favour of youth employment must be considered as an investment. It has indeed become a specific European Social Fund investment priority for the seven years to come. And the concept of a Youth Guarantee - ensuring that within four months of leaving school or becoming unemployed, every young person will be offered a quality employment, training or educational programme - which some Member States have experimented over the last few years, has now been adopted at EU level.

*“Acting
both urgently
and in depth”*

The EU Youth Guarantee gives extra focus, purpose and thrust to the fight against unemployment. It is an operational concept, bent on producing a measurable and concrete outcome. For this outcome to happen, Member States need to state concretely how they plan to achieve this aim: how they are going to get different national administrations to work together and break the divide between the worlds of education, of social and health services, of public employment services, of the business community, of the employers and trade unions and of civil society - breaking the walls between the national, regional and local levels of governance in the process.

Because this is an EU Youth Guarantee, they are not alone. As this issue of Social Agenda shows, they can count on EU-level financial support and expertise at every stage: when drawing up their implementation plans, when experimenting different ways of applying the Youth Guarantee and when up-scaling the successful ones.

What is new about the Youth Guarantee is not its building blocks - apprenticeship, traineeship, vocational training, second chance education ... Rather, it is the way of assembling these blocks into a new architecture. This requires mentality shifts and thinking outside the box... In policy terms, it means engaging structural reforms - but with a sense of absolute emergency.

Koos Richelle

*Director General of the European Commission's Employment,
Social Affairs and Inclusion department*

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NEWS IN BRIEF



Strengthened: EURES to provide more job offers, increase the likelihood of job matches and help employers fill job vacancies faster and better.

17 January: Improving the EURES job search network

Under a proposal presented by the European Commission, the pan-European job search network EURES would be strengthened to provide more job offers, increase the likelihood of job matches and help employers (notably small and medium businesses) to fill job vacancies faster and better. The proposal would help citizens to make the most informed choice possible when it comes to moving abroad for work (see page 21).

16-17 January: Social entrepreneurs have their say

The European Commission, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the City of Strasbourg hosted a large European event on social entrepreneurship and the social economy. This

two-day event used a collaborative, participatory approach: The participants themselves drove the issues to be debated and identified together the way forward for the social entrepreneurship sector.

15 January: Implementing the Youth Guarantee

17 EU Member States have already submitted to the European Commission their final plans to implement the EU Youth Guarantee. Regions from 20 Member States are eligible for additional funding from the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) due to their high youth unemployment rate (more than 25 % in at least one region), and their governments were requested to submit their Youth Guarantee implementation plans by the end of 2013. Member States with no regions eligible for the YEI are due to submit their plans by early 2014 (see page 15).



Waiting: 17 EU countries had submitted their Youth Guarantee implementation plans by the time of printing.

7 January: Boosting partners' role in structural funds

A common set of standards was adopted by the European Commission to improve consultation, participation and dialogue with partners such as regional, local, urban and other public authorities, trade unions, employers, NGOs and bodies responsible for promoting social inclusion, gender equality and non-discrimination during the planning, implementation, monitoring

and evaluation of projects financed by the European Structural and Investment Funds. This European Code of Conduct on the Partnership Principle requires Member States to strengthen cooperation between their authorities responsible for spending EU structural and investment funds and project partners to help to ensure that this money is spent effectively.

NEWS IN BRIEF

13 December: Reducing the social impact of restructuring



Anticipating: the European Commission proposes an EU Quality Framework for anticipation of Change and Restructuring.

Best practices for anticipating company restructuring and minimising their impact on workers and social conditions were outlined by the European Commission in the form of an EU Quality Framework for anticipation of Change and Restructuring (QFR). The Quality Framework offers guidance to companies, workers, trade unions, employers' organisations and public administrations in order to facilitate the process of restructuring for businesses and workers via better anticipation and investment in human capital, while minimising the social impact.

9 December: Enforcing posted workers' safeguards

The EU Council of Employment and Social Policy Ministers agreed on a "general approach" on the proposal for a Directive on the enforcement of the posting of workers legislation: new rules to enforce the safeguards against social dumping laid down in the posted workers Directive. There is an urgent

need to reinforce the safeguards in EU rules to ensure that posted workers' rights are respected in practice, and to allow European businesses to operate with more legal certainty and transparency. The European Parliament and the EU Council of Ministers now have to definitively adopt the Directive.

9 December: EU legal instrument for Roma inclusion

All 28 EU countries committed to implementing a set of recommendations, proposed by the European Commission, to step up the economic and social integration of Roma communities. The Council Recommendation was adopted unanimously by ministers meeting in the Council less than six months after the Commission's proposal. It is the first ever EU-level legal instrument for Roma inclusion



Stepping up: first EU legal instrument on Roma recommends stepping up economic and social integration.

5 December: At risk of poverty or social exclusion

In 2012, 124.5 million people, or 24.8% of the population, in the EU were at risk of poverty or social exclusion, compared with 24.3% in 2011 and 23.7% in 2008. This means that they

were in at least one of the following three conditions: at-risk-of-poverty, severely materially deprived or living in households with very low work intensity.

EU MULTIANNUAL FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

Employment and social affairs save the day

A slight increase in investments within a reduced overall EU budget



Lower budgetary ceiling for 2014-20: But for employment and social affairs, it is slightly superior in constant 2011 euros compared to the previous period.

More than two years after the European Commission presented its proposal for the 2014-2020 EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), the European Parliament agreed on 19 November 2013 to an MFF package of legislation. It includes a regulation on the structure and functioning of the MFF for 2014-2020 and another one on how to improve the procedure by which the EU budget is decided every year during that period.

The MFF provides a framework for financial programming and budgetary discipline. It defines how much and in which areas the EU should invest over seven years and thereby allows the EU to carry out common policies over a period that is long enough to make them effective.

Smart and inclusive growth

As far as employment, social affairs and inclusion are concerned, most of the programming takes place under the first

category laid down by the MFF regulation: smart and inclusive growth. This category is subdivided into two parts: competitiveness for growth and jobs (1a), which covers policy areas such as labour mobility within the EU, social dialogue, demography and the Employment and Social Innovation programme (see the previous issue of *Social Agenda*); and Economic, social and territorial cohesion (1b), which covers the European Social Fund.

The new MFF regulation lays down ceilings for each category and sub-category, limiting the amounts of money that can be spent from the EU budget on each category (see box).

As for the regulation on the procedure for laying down the annual budgets from 2014 to 2020, it further specifies some of the provisions in the MFF regulation, such as the modalities of mobilizing the Special Flexibility Mechanisms which are kept *outside* the MFF. One of those mechanisms is the European Globalisation Fund (EGF), which helps workers reintegrate into



Commissioner Andor making a point on the free movement of workers:
labour mobility within the EU falls under the "smart and inclusive growth"
EU budgetary programming category.

the labour market after they have been made redundant as a result of major structural changes in world trade patterns (i.e. delocalisation, financial and economic crisis).

The novelties

For the first time in the history of the EU, the MFF lays down a global ceiling which is inferior by 3-4% to that of the previous period (2007-2013). However, in constant 2011 euros, the ceiling for employment, social and inclusion affairs is slightly superior compared that of the preceding period.

Putting an end to a downward trend, the new MFF requires the Member States to devote at least 23.1% of their share of the EU Cohesion Funds to the European Social Fund. This will finance training and life-long learning, fight poverty and promote social inclusion. It will also help people find a job. It also transfers EU funding for the most deprived from the agricultural policy area to that of employment, social affairs and inclusion.

Unexpected situations

The new MFF allows more flexibility to better react to unexpected situations. In the area of growth and employment (youth employment in particular), commitment appropriations left unused in 2014-15 will form a reserve for additional expenditure in 2016-20. In order to concentrate a maximum of funds where they are most needed as early as possible, up to € 2.1 billion can be brought forward to 2014-15 for the Youth Employment Initiative.

Three programmes managed directly by the European Commission (the Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity, the European Employment Services network EURES and the European PROGRESS Microfinance facility) have been brought together into a single Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) programme. In the process, the scope of this new single programme has been extended, as it will provide funding to social entrepreneurship.

At the time of writing, the European Parliament and the EU Council of Ministers still had to agree on some of the sectoral regulations which concretely govern the funding programmes.

The one for the Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived is not expected to be fully adopted before March.

More information:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/mff/index_en.cfm

Over € 450 billion for growth, jobs and cohesion

For the 2014-2020 period, the EU multi-annual financial framework (MFF) sets a maximum amount of € 960 billion for commitment appropriations (legally binding promises to spend money which will not necessarily be paid out in the same year but may be disbursed over several financial years) and € 908 billion for payment appropriations (the actual amounts authorized for disbursement in a given year).

Under the "Competitiveness for growth and jobs" heading (i.e. social policy, research, innovation, education, training, trans-European networks in energy, transport and telecommunications, development of enterprises etc.), the ceiling for commitment appropriations is set at € 125 billion (2011 prices).

Under the "Economic, social and territorial cohesion" heading (to deliver the EU-wide goals of growth and jobs, as well as tackling climate change and energy dependence, regional policy and the European Social Fund), it is set at € 325 billion (2011 prices), including around € 70 billion for the European Social Fund.

These investments are to be complemented by national funding in order to produce a leverage effect. For example, the € 325 billion invested in cohesion policy will in turn leverage national and regional resources worth at least € 100 billion, for an overall expected investment of more than €400 billion.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Stress at work – mind the gap

A campaign addresses the gap between EU legal obligations and observed practice

“Healthy workplaces manage stress” is the name of a campaign launched by the EU’s Occupational Safety and Health Agency (OSHA). It advocates that workers and management both need to play an active role and work together to tackle psychosocial risks and work-related stress effectively.

A one-year long good practice competition will be launched on 28 April 2014. The campaign itself will end in November 2015 with a health workplaces summit.

Work organisation

Psychosocial risks relate to work organisation management and to the social context of work. They lead to work-related stress, the negative outcomes of which are emotional (with irritability, anxiety, low mood, sleeping problems), cognitive (difficulty in concentrating, learning new things, making decisions, negative thinking), behavioural (making errors, becoming withdrawn or aggressive, substance abuse) and physical and mental ill health (depression, burnout and cardiovascular diseases).

From 1999 to 2007, 28% of EU workers reported exposure to psychosocial risks affecting mental wellbeing. 14% of those reporting work-related health problems suffered from stress, depression or anxiety. Today, stress is the second most reported work-related health problem in the EU, after musculoskeletal disorders.

The most common cause of work-related stress nowadays is job reorganisation or job insecurity (72%), hours worked or workload (66%), being subject to unacceptable behaviour such as bullying or harassment (59%), lack of support to fulfil your role from colleagues or superiors (57%), lack of clarity on roles or responsibilities (52%) and limited possibility to manage one’s own work patterns (46%).

Estimates of the cost stemming from stress and psychosocial risks at the workplace to business and to societies at large run into billions of euros per country. Between 50% and 60% of all lost working days are related to them.

Moreover, employees affected by stress are not in a position to deploy their full potential and contribute as much as they



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Billions of euros: Estimates of the cost stemming from stress and psychosocial risks at the workplace, run into billions of euros per country.

could to the development of the company for which they work. Not to mention the human costs and lifelong repercussions of psychosocial diseases for the employees concerned and their families.

Bad implementation

Since 1989, employers in the EU are obliged to manage stress and psychosocial risks at the workplace according to the requirements of a framework directive on the introduction



of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work.

This law was followed up by two agreements concluded by the EU trade union and employers' organisations: in 2004, on work-related stress and in 2007, on harassment and violence at work.

Yet almost 25 years after the adoption of the 1989 framework directive, psychosocial risks are still not included in the EU list of diseases which have been scientifically recognised as being occupational in origin, are liable for compensation and must be the subject of preventive measures. This list is annexed to a European Commission Recommendation on the EU schedule of occupational diseases adopted in 2003.

In practice, less than 30% of organisations in Europe have procedures for dealing with psychosocial risks. Over 40% of European managers consider that psychosocial risks are more difficult to manage than "traditional" occupational safety and health risks, due to the "sensitivity" of the issue and to lack of expertise. And in 40% of enterprises, there is a need for information or support on how to design and implement preventive measures for psychosocial risks.

Mental health

To say the least, there is a gap between the legal obligations of employers in the EU to assess occupational psychosocial risks and the practice observed. And yet, numerous practical but isolated examples throughout the EU confirm that work-related stress can be dealt with in the same logical and systematic way as other health and safety issues.

If correctly interpreted and implemented, the existing EU legislation in this area can help identify and solve such problems.

Recently, the Senior Labour Inspectors' Committee carried out a European enforcement and information campaign on psychosocial risks, which gave rise to a common European inspection toolkit.

And presently, the European Commission is undertaking a study on mental health at work. Its aim is, inter alia, to draw attention to the fact that existing EU legislation on occupational health and safety covers psychosocial risks and to help employers and workers interpret it in the light of the encompassing concept of mental health. The study should be published in the middle of 2014.

Around the same time, the European Commission may submit for consultation an essentially practical draft guidance document on how to interpret and apply EU occupational health and safety legislation to prevent psychosocial risks effectively.

More information:

<https://osha.europa.eu/en/topics/stress>

Stressful national figures

In 2009:

- 42% of all early retirements of white collar workers were caused by work-related psychosocial disorders in Austria.

In 2010:

- mental health problems were the main reason for long term sick leaves in the Netherlands (55 days on average);
- more than 1 out of 10 employees went on leave over the previous five years because of work-related stress or burnout in Malta;
- and within just three months, more than a thousand new workers were diagnosed with burnout by general practitioners or occupational physicians in Belgium.

UNDECLARED WORK

Enhancing EU-wide cooperation

European Commission to propose the creation of a European platform

A “scourge” is how László Andor describes undeclared work. In the words of the European Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, undeclared work “puts workers at greater risk of poverty and potentially dangerous working conditions. It undermines workers’ job security, access to pensions and health care. It deprives governments of tax and social security revenue.



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Formal or informal? Transforming informal work to promote quality of work and create formal jobs.

Governments, employers and trade unions should work together at EU level to prevent and deter undeclared work”.

It is in fact a multi-faceted problem. There are indeed many drivers for undeclared work, ranging from high tax wedge and labour costs to too much red tape, low trust in government, lack of controls and lack of regular jobs on the labour market... These drivers vary from country to country but are taking on an increasingly across-borders, and therefore EU, dimension.

At least three types of enforcement authorities are concerned by undeclared work: labour inspectorates, in the face of abusive behaviour regarding working conditions and/or health and safety norms; social security inspectorates, who deal with fraud on social insurance contributions; and tax authorities, who grapple with tax evasion. Enhancing EU-level cooperation between them would greatly improve the situation.

Bringing the actors together

In 2012 and again in 2013, a number of EU Member States received country-specific recommendations concerning the prevention of undeclared work but also on the shadow economy and tax evasion or compliance (see box).

In July 2013, the European Commission consulted the EU social partners on the idea of creating a European platform comprised of representatives of the abovementioned authorities effectively dealing with undeclared work in each EU country. This idea was contained in the package of measures on employment adopted by the Commission in April 2012.

And in the first half of 2014, the European Commission is due to put forward a legislative instrument to create such a platform. As it fine-tunes its proposal, the Commission is looking at the most appropriate participation modalities.

The platform would seek to improve cooperation at EU level by bringing together Member States’ enforcement bodies – labour



inspectories and social security, tax and migration authorities – with social partners' representatives and other stakeholders, in order to tackle undeclared work more effectively and efficiently.

11 % of the EU population

At European level, undeclared work is defined as “any paid activities that are lawful as regards their nature but not declared to public authorities, taking into account differences in the regulatory systems of the EU Member States”.

Due to its very nature, it is very difficult to quantify. A first Eurobarometer survey was carried out in 2007. It found that the level of participation in undeclared work is relatively low overall, with just 11 % of the EU population admitting to having bought goods or services that involved undeclared work and 5 % of citizens reporting having engaged in undeclared work themselves in the previous 12 months.

However, there was significant variation from country to country. A survey carried out in 2013) shows that the proportion of people paying for and providing undeclared work remains consistent, overall, with 2007.

Deterrence and preventative approaches

Studies also show that all EU countries pursue a deterrence approach, seeking to increase the actual or perceived likelihood of detection and penalties, though some Member States also use a preventative approach.

At a learning exchange conference between the Czech Republic, Estonia and Lithuania which took place in October 2013 in Tallinn, examples were given of what a preventative approach to undeclared work can involve in practice: taking information and awareness-raising initiatives to remind employees and employers of their duties and responsibilities, developing well-functioning e-services to facilitate and support tax law compliance, increasing the availability of personalised

support by phone, interconnecting the ICT systems of the different enforcement authorities...

Social justice

Although the European Commission has been addressing undeclared work since 1998, the 2008 financial crisis and its on-going economic and social shock-waves have brought this issue to the forefront of EU countries' concern, as they strive to reduce their budgetary deficit.

However, for the European Commission, transforming informal work into formal work is first and foremost a matter of promoting quality of work and creating formal jobs. It is also a matter of social justice and solidarity.

Home renovations and cleaning

Home renovations/repairs and cleaning are the most common type of undeclared work provided, with some geographical variation: repairs and renovations in Eastern and Central European and Nordic countries; cleaning in Southern Europe.

More fundamentally, variations between countries are linked to cultural differences, especially in the perception of what citizens get back from the State through paying taxes.

In 2013, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Spain, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia received country-specific recommendations on either undeclared work, the shadow economy or tax compliance, as part of the European Semester EU-level economic policy coordination process.

EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

“It’s employment, stupid!”

Youth Guarantee features prominently in European Parliament information campaign

ACT. REACT. IMPACT. is the name of an awareness-raising and information campaign which the European Parliament launched on 10 September 2013. It encourages EU voters to exercise their power through the ballot box during the 22-25 May 2014 European elections and thereby determine the future shape of Europe. The campaign will last until a new college of European Commissioners is voted in by the new European Parliament.

The EU Youth Guarantee, adopted by the EU in April 2013 after repeated calls from the European Parliament, is particularly prominent in the European Parliament’s campaign. The Guarantee, which the Member States now have to implement on the ground (see p.15), will ensure that within four months of leaving formal education or becoming unemployed, young people up to the age of 25 receive a good quality offer for employment, continued education an apprenticeship or traineeship.

Employment kick-off

Significantly, the first major event of the European Parliament’s campaign, in Paris on 15 October 2013, focused

on employment and social affairs. It was the first in a series of five interactive conferences taking place throughout Europe, with experts sharing their ideas and debating them with citizens at large.

In Paris, the experts were entrepreneurs Jean-Marc Borello (SOS Group) and Alexander Malsch (Média Melty Network group), economist Pierre Cahuc (Ecole Polytechnique) and the President of the European Parliament’s Employment commission, Pervenche Berès.

The Paris conference became a “trending topic” on Twitter. During the duration of the conference, the “#ReACTParis” hashtag was one of the three topics most commented upon in France. More than 1 200 reactions and questions were posted during the afternoon. Some of them were taken up by the journalist moderating the debate, economic and social affairs specialist Véronique Augier, who could see the tweet wall on her monitoring screen.

The website and YouTube accounts of the European Parliament’s office in Paris hosted 6 045 visits, which peaked



Politicisation: 73% of people believe that more information about candidates’ European political affiliations would encourage people to vote.



during Pervenche Berès' initial intervention. The audience was evenly spread between Paris and the 21 major French cities. The 27 publications linked to the conference generated 200 000 interactions on Facebook and the number of friends of the European Parliament in France jumped by 10% within one week.

Politicising the elections

From 62% in 1979 to 41% in 2009, the rate of voter participation in European elections has been steadily going down from one election to the next, ever since the European Parliament has been elected directly by the people.

According to a Eurobarometer survey published in March 2013, 73% of people believe that more information about candidates' European political affiliations would encourage people to vote, while 62% of people think that having party candidates for European Commission President, and a single voting day, would help bolster voter turnout.

Just when the survey was being published, the European Commission recommended that the European political parties nominate a candidate for European Commission President and display their European political party affiliation. The aim is to better inform voters about the issues at stake and encourage a Europe-wide debate.

Parliament's new powers

In fact, the Lisbon Treaty, amending past treaties on the European Union, explicitly states that the European Parliament "elects" the President of the European Commission on the basis of a proposal by the European Council (Heads of State and governments of the EU countries), taking into account the results of the European elections.

Moreover, the Lisbon Treaty makes the European Parliament a stronger lawmaker by bringing over 40 new fields within the "co-decision" procedure, under which Parliament has

equal rights with the EU Council of Ministers (Council). These areas include agriculture, energy security, immigration, justice and home affairs, health and structural funds.

The European Parliament's agreement ("consent") is also required for a whole range of international agreements negotiated by the Union, in areas such as international trade. The European Parliament now decides on the whole of the EU budget, together with the Council (see page 6).

The Lisbon treaty came into force on 1 December 2009, a few months after the previous European Parliament elections. In many respects, the 2014 elections will therefore be a first.

More information:

<http://www.elections2014.eu/en>

Beyond the European elections

The European parliament's information campaign proper started in February 2014. It focuses on the election dates: 22-25 May 2014. It follows two preparatory phases: one which explained the European Parliament's new powers and their implications for people living in the EU; and one which highlighted the issues of jobs, the economy, quality of life, money and the EU in the world.

After the elections, the final phase of the campaign will focus on the way the newly-elected European Parliament elects the next European Commission President and then the new College of European Commissioners as a whole.

SPECIAL FEATURE

Youth employment

Taking ownership of the Youth Guarantee concept

In May 2014, voters will elect a new European Parliament which, in turn, will scrutinise and eventually vote-in a new President of the European Commission and a new college of European Commissioners.

Spring 2014 is also the ultimate deadline for the governments of the EU countries to deliver their implementation plans for the EU Youth Guarantee.

A new concept

The Youth Guarantee concept is new to the vast majority of EU countries. This special feature explains how the EU institutions have taken ownership of this concept and how they can help the Member States implement it.

Key role for ESF

It also explains the key role which the European Social Fund is due to play in implementing the Youth Guarantee as well as the Youth Employment Initiative put forward by the European Council - and how it is well placed to do so, in view of what it has been doing in favour of youth employment since its very inception.

Your First EURES Job

Finally, it puts the spotlight on an EU-wide pilot action that has been going on since 2012, "Your First EURES Job". It has the potential of giving an international dimension to national Youth Guarantee initiatives.

"Your First EURES Job" is symptomatic of the gradual transformation of EURES, the European job mobility network of public employment services, into a virtual self-service employment mobility agency for job seekers and employers alike... A crucial step towards a more integrated single EU labour market.

Beyond the special feature

Other articles in this issue also relate to youth employment: In particular one on page 24 which is devoted to the story of a young skateboarder who has found a job connected to his passion thanks to a project supported by the ESF; while on page 26, *Social Agenda* gives the floor to Giuseppe Porcaro, Secretary-General of the European Youth Forum.



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In all EU countries: The Youth Guarantee concept is new to the vast majority of EU Member States.



Where is our future? 7.5 million people in the EU aged 15-24 are neither in employment nor in education or training.

A new approach

All EU countries are committed to implementing a Youth Guarantee scheme for a smoother transition from school to work

True, Finland, and to some extent Austria and Sweden, have already operated Youth Guarantees. However, what is new today is that all 28 EU countries are now involved in putting in place a comprehensive scheme, as required by the EU Council of Ministers on 22 April 2013. An EU initiative that takes into account lessons learnt in the pioneering countries.

Indeed, the EU Youth Guarantee seeks to ensure that all young people up to 25 years old, including those who are not registered by the employment services, receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship, within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education.

The EU countries are implementing this scheme on the basis of commonly agreed principles and guidelines. They can benefit from EU co-funding for experimenting and developing the schemes, the implementation of which will be supervised through the European Semester, the EU's joint economic policy enforcement process.

National plans

By December 2013, most EU Member States were due to submit to the European Commission their national Youth Guarantee

implementation Plans (YGIP), setting out the respective roles of public authorities and other organisations, how the Youth Guarantee will be financed, the measures to be put in place, how progress can be assessed and the timetable. The Member States with lower rates of youth unemployment should submit their plan by spring 2014.

The European Commission provides practical support to the EU countries in the form of working seminars, a Youth Guarantee hotline and website (<http://europa.eu/social/youthguarantee>) and Frequently Asked Questions. It also organises Member State peer learning (e.g. to help countries benefit from Finland or Austria's experience).

In each EU country, new partnerships will need to be fostered between national ministries, central and local government as well as between the worlds of education, business, youth organisations, employment agencies, social and health services... For the EU Youth Guarantee is all about structural reforms: reform of education at large, including apprenticeship and vocational education and training, to provide the skills that are needed on the labour market; introduction of second chance education and of a much more comprehensive outreach to early school leavers; much closer cooperation between employment agencies and other actors...

SPECIAL FEATURE

More apprenticeships and better traineeships

Following the Commission's Youth Employment Package of December 2012, two initiatives are being taken at EU level to promote the development of apprenticeships and improve the quality of traineeships, which strongly contribute to the implementation of the Youth Guarantee.

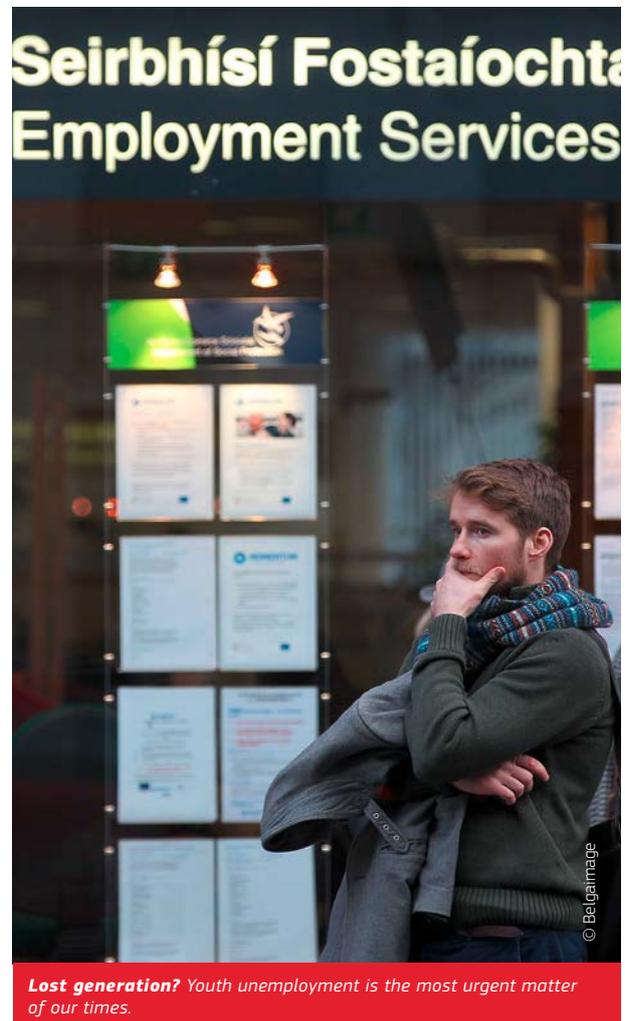
On 2 July 2013, a **European Alliance for Apprenticeships** was launched in Leipzig, Germany. It is a platform that brings together different public and private actors that wish to improve the quantity, quality and image of apprenticeships. At the time of printing, the Alliance was 30 "pledgers" strong, plus a network of "business ambassadors".

Together they coordinate and upscale different initiatives for successful apprenticeship type schemes and promote national partnerships for dual vocational training systems, combining apprenticeships and vocational education. An emphasis is placed on knowledge transfer and making smart use of EU funding and resources.

In December 2013, the European Commission proposed a **Quality Framework for Traineeships (QFT)** to ensure that traineeships may indeed be stepping stones for young people onto the labour market.

Currently, one in three traineeships is substandard with regard to working conditions or learning content, according to a recent Eurobarometer survey. Many of these substandard traineeships are used by employers to replace entry level jobs, a practice which the QFT aims precisely to reduce.

For example, the Commission suggests that traineeships have to be based on a written traineeship agreement covering educational objectives, supervision, limited duration, working time, a clear indication whether trainees would be paid or otherwise compensated and whether they would qualify for social security.



Lost generation? Youth unemployment is the most urgent matter of our times.

Emergency measures

The perspective of the Youth Guarantee is definitely an in-depth and long term one. It comes after a series of emergency measures that were taken at EU level following the outbreak of the economic crisis in 2008.

Nearly €16 billion of EU funding, especially from the European Social Fund (ESF), have been re-allocated to specific actions for the most vulnerable groups - among them young people - in the areas of education, access to employment, guidance, practical training in companies and prevention.

SPECIAL FEATURE

In the face of the prospect of a lost generation, a further boost was given after European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso sounded the alarm in September 2011: In his State of the Union address to the European Parliament, he stated that youth unemployment was “the most urgent social matter” of our times.

Following this call, European Commission Action Teams were sent in 2012 to the eight Member States with the (then) highest level of youth employment (Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovakia and Spain). Their task was to help those countries to further mobilise EU funding, including from the European Social Fund, still available in the 2007-2013 EU financial programming period, to urgently combat youth unemployment .

The YEI booster

In February 2013, the European Council (EU Heads of state and Governments) agreed to a Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) which will focus EU funding on regions experiencing youth unemployment rates above 25 % and on young people not in employment, education or training: €3 billion from a specific new EU budget line dedicated to youth employment, matched by at least €3 billion from the European Social Fund.

YEI funding will amplify the support provided by the ESF to youth employment and training policies, in the context of the setting-up and the implementation of Youth Guarantee schemes. It will fund activities providing direct help to young people in terms of job provision, traineeships and apprenticeships and business start-up support.

In the negotiations between the EU institutions on the European financial framework for 2014-2020, it was agreed that YEI funding would be front-loaded in 2014 and 2015.

The YEI will be programmed as part of the ESF. In the spirit of the Youth Guarantee, Member States will have to complement YEI funding with substantial additional ESF and national investment in structural reforms to modernise employment, social and education services for young

persons, and by improving education access, quality and links to labour market demand.

The Youth Guarantee is a new, more comprehensive and EU-wide approach to youth employment: an all-encompassing umbrella concept.

More information:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/youthguarantee>

Over 13 % of EU youth not in employment, training or education

- *The youth unemployment rate is more than twice as high as the rate for adults (23.6% in comparison to 9.5%, in November 2013).*
- *Women, young people with disabilities and youth from a migrant background are particularly exposed to the risks of unemployment, long-term unemployment, early school leaving or inactivity.*
- *7.5 million people in the 15-24 age group are neither in employment nor in education or training (NEETs). In 2012, 13.1% of youth were NEETs (provisional figure), 2.2 percentage points more than four years earlier, representing an increase of more than 20%.*
- *Long-term youth unemployment is on the rise: In 2012, more than 32% of unemployed people under 25 had been unemployed for more than 12 months.*
- *Young people are over-represented in temporary and part-time work.*
- *Since 2010, high unemployment co-exists with increased difficulties in filling vacancies.*

SPECIAL FEATURE

A priority for ESF investment

Young people are clearly identified as a specific priority target group in the new European Social Fund

From 2014 to 2020, more than €80 billion will be invested in upgrading the skills of Europe's population and increasing employment under the European Social Fund (ESF), to be completed by national funding. 20% of each EU country's ESF allocation will have to be spent on social inclusion projects and the ESF should account for at least 23.1% of the global EU cohesion policy funding at EU level, which will finally shape the total volume of ESF funding across Member States.

In parallel, in February 2013, the European Council (EU Heads of State and Governments) put forward a Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) which will be co-financed by the ESF as a dedicated funding source to support specific measures to place young people in the regions worst affected by unemployment

who are neither in employment, education or training, into (or as close as possible) to the labour market.

The YEI budget consists of at least 3 billion euros from the ESF national budget allocations and 3 billion from a special EU budget line. The youth Employment Initiative will be managed under the rules relevant to the ESF for 2014-20.

The youth guarantee

The ESF will be instrumental in holding together two aspects of the youth unemployment problem: that of the Youth Employment initiative, providing a focused response to acute situations in certain parts of the EU particularly hard hit by youth unemployment; and a more strategic,



Holding everything together: the ESF will be instrumental in holding together the Youth Employment initiative and structural reforms of the public employment, education and training systems.

SPECIAL FEATURE

comprehensive and structural approach to youth employment policies, e.g. by supporting the necessary reforms of the public employment and education and training systems, etc..

This in-depth and all-encompassing structural approach to young people has always been that of the European Union but it has gained more visibility and focus since the EU Council of Ministers adopted the Youth guarantee concept on 22 April 2013, ensuring that young people below the age of 25 are offered a good quality job, education or training within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving school (see p.15).

Unregistered young people

As the EU's main financial instrument to support young people, the ESF will have a crucial role to play in implementing the EU Youth Guarantee.

For example, reaching out to young people who are not registered by a country's public employment services is essential for the success of the Youth Guarantee. EU countries can use ESF funding to deploy or enhance the coverage of their outreach strategies and create focal points for young people. This could involve funding more effective and better targeted public employment services for young people, modernising schools, training teachers and developing specialised youth services in partnership with employers. ESF money can also go to improving access to and the use of the internet and social media, designing data-gathering systems and carrying out communication campaigns.

Another example of how to use ESF money to implement the Youth Guarantee is to offer early school leavers and low-skilled young people different ways of re-entering education and training, address skills mismatches and improve their digital skills. This can be done by developing second chance programmes, language training, counselling and extra teaching support to keep or bring youth back into education or training, work-based learning and apprenticeships...

Since 1957

Supporting youth is something the ESF has been doing since its inception in 1957. During the 2007- 2013 programming period, 68% of the ESF budget went towards projects for labour market integration where young people are one of the target groups. By the end of 2012, 21 million young people

under 25 years benefited from ESF-supported actions. In Germany, France and Hungary, young people account for 40% or more of all participants in those actions.

Most of the time, ESF projects are oriented towards keeping young people in education, by combating early school leaving and providing opportunities for re-entry into formal training or education. They aim to facilitate transition from school to work through personal advice, additional training and work placements, including traineeships and apprenticeships. Many countries used ESF investment to modernise education and strengthen vocational training. Social inclusion projects address the integration of young people from disadvantaged groups into the labour market or the education system (see box).

ESF and YEI complementarity

The programming and management of EU funding for the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) is fully integrated into the European Social Fund (ESF) legal and financial framework of shared management between the European Commission and the EU countries.

The Member States' programming documents must clearly state how much ESF and YEI money they plan to devote to young people and other ESF investment priorities, within what policy framework and for what strategic purpose.

YEI funding is restricted to direct support to individuals and should be spent during the first few years of the 2014-2020 programming period. It can also be used to kick-start interventions in parts of the EU worst affected by youth unemployment, that can later be continued under the ESF. In turn, the ESF can embed a YEI-funded measure into a longer term social inclusion or structural reform measure.

Beyond the YEI, the ESF can provide funding for up-scaling and trying out elsewhere successful local experiments in implementing the Youth Guarantee approach, and help EU countries engage the longer term structural reforms which the Youth Guarantee entails.

SPECIAL FEATURE

A dedicated priority

When the European Commission started preparing the 2014-2020 EU financial framework, the full extent of the economic and social tidal wave created by the 2008 financial crisis had become plainly apparent. In particular, the danger of ending up with a “lost generation” of young people partially or totally excluded from the labour market, or integrated too late within it, with all the long term psychological, societal, financial and political consequences this entails.

This dramatic context has combined with the overall ambition of the new EU Structural and Investment Funds regulatory framework 2014-20 to have a more focused, strategic and result-oriented EU structural funding, better aligned to the EU's overall strategic objectives for 2020.

This is reflected by the increased focus on turning the sustainable integration of young people – especially those who come from marginalised backgrounds and who are excluded from school and the labour market - into a dedicated, specific and detailed ESF investment priority for the new 2014-2020 programming period.

More information:

<http://ec.europa.eu/esf/home.jsp>

Skateboarding into the labour market

The XtraVert course, a project backed by the European Social Fund and run by the Real Ideas Organisation, helps young people in the United Kingdom who have lost their way in education or who are struggling to enter the jobs market. It aims to offer 16-19 year-olds the chance to learn new skills and gain qualifications in an exciting and stimulating environment.

Course participants train in carpentry in order to build skateboard ramps. They follow a 12-week learning programme, three days a week. They develop hands-on experience building the ramps, as well as other items such as lockers, chairs and jigsaw puzzles.

At the end of the course, the young people get to keep their own tools and safety equipment. They also receive an employability award as well as certificates and qualifications in health and safety, fire safety, manual handling and customer care.

(See p.24 the story of James, who was able to turn his skateboarding passion into a job thanks to this project).



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Reaching out: EU countries can use ESF funding to deploy or enhance the coverage of their outreach strategies to young people who are not registered by their public employment services.

SPECIAL FEATURE

Your First EURES Job

An experiment in helping both young people and employers across borders



Helping both sides: My First EURES Job seeks to provide matching and recruitment services, combined with financial support, both to young job-seekers and to employers.

Until 2015, the European Commission is running a pilot scheme on the mobility of young people in Europe which could provide national Youth Guarantee schemes (see page 15) with a much needed cross-border dimension.

Named “Your first EURES Job” (YFEj, EURES being the European job mobility network of employment services), it seeks to provide matching and recruitment services, combined with financial support, both to young job-seekers willing to work abroad and to employers recruiting such mobile workers.

In so doing, it is testing a new way of delivering customised job mobility services for specific groups: young people up to the age of 30, to start with.

YFEj covers all EU countries, either through a project beneficiary or one of its partners. It is also open to employment actors from the private sector and civil society.

Job seekers can receive financial support if they are aged between 18 and 30 years old and have the nationality of a Member State. There are no rules regarding the level of qualification, work experience or economic and social background. Financial support is provided in the form of lump sums to the individuals concerned, to be used for interviews abroad, trainings and as a contribution to relocation costs.

YFEj covers work which is provided by employers which are legally established businesses in an EU country and offer a contract with a minimum duration of six months, with pay and conditions compliant with the labour law of that country. Once a job match has been made, small and medium size enterprises (SMEs, with up to 250 staff members) can also apply for a financial contribution to an integration programme for their newly recruited employee from abroad.

SPECIAL FEATURE



5 000 jobs: The Your First EURES Job experiment aims to facilitate 5 000 job placements of young people by 2015.

Alexandros in Finland, Laura in Germany

After his native Greek and English, Alexandros Giannoulakis did not imagine that Finnish would be his third language. Now he is one of eight Greek nurses who have moved to Tampere, Finland. A large healthcare provider in this country, Mainiovire, had already used the European job mobility network of public employment services, EURES, to hire nurses from Spain. In the face of a new labour shortage, Mainiovire got in touch with the closest Your First EURES Job (YfEj) service, the Employment Service of the city of Aarhus, Denmark, which advised them to contact EURES in Greece, where there was a surplus of young healthcare professionals.

Laura Gallego Muñoz was one of 20 newly qualified nurses who started a six month intensive German course in Spain. She has now moved to Germany with five other classmates to start working at Vivat, a German residential healthcare provider. All in all, 11 of the 20 nurses are now working in Germany, while another 3 carry on working in Spain. YfEj helped Laura and the other nurses arrange language lessons and connecting them with German employers. When they moved countries, YfEj provided funding for their move and supported the SMEs that were providing the jobs in the form of a one-off payment per employee to help fund the company's integration process.

Three waves of projects

A first wave of four 18-months long projects was launched in 2012 with the employment services of Denmark, Italy, Germany and Spain. A second wave of projects, this time lasting twelve months, started in the second quarter of 2013 with another five employment services from Sweden, the Netherlands, Italy and Denmark but also, for the first time ever, project organisations from the private sector.

In September 2013, the European Commission published the third call for proposals, for which the deadline was 10 December. What is new about this call is that it includes the possibility of extending support measures to trainees and apprentices. It also contains an enhanced mobility package and new tailor-made allowances for participants, which complement other EU educational programmes fostering young people's employability.

Countries like Germany and Austria have shown that work-based training can be a stepping stone for sustainable youth employment: it facilitates quicker transitions from school to work amongst apprentices and trainees.

5 000 placements

The European Commission is currently evaluating the scheme. The findings will be used to further develop similar schemes beyond 2014 as part of the new EU programme for employment and social innovation (EaSI, see *Social Agenda* n°35).

For the time being, YfEj aims to facilitate 5 000 job placements of young people by 2015. The ongoing projects aim to

SPECIAL FEATURE

achieve 3 500 placements. By the end of September 2013, they had met 35 % of their combined target and 25 % of the overall YfEj target, with the total number of job placements exceeding 1200. The average cost per placement amounted to approximately €1660. The third call for proposals aims at achieving quality placements for at least 1 500 young people.

Projects learn as they evolve. After an initial set-up phase, they tend to gain momentum and cater for more and more young people and SMEs. A good partnership between employers and employment agencies is a key success factor.

Contributing to the reform of EURES

YfEj accompanies the reform of EURES, to make it more market-oriented and efficient by placing greater emphasis on recruitment, matching and placement activities. Better and more advanced digital services on the EURES portal will help it to become an EU-wide virtual self-service employment tool. Employers and job-seekers will be able to pick and choose from a variety of on-line services managed by the European Commission.

As of 2014, national activities carried out by EU countries under EURES are eligible for funding under the European Social Fund. Within the EURES axis of the European Commission's Employment and Social innovation programme, the EU budget now supports the use of targeted

mobility schemes inspired by YfEj. This should allow Member States to experiment more tailored programmes, according to the specificities of national labour markets.

These schemes will focus on specific beneficiary groups, sectors, occupations and countries, according to market needs, but youth employment will remain a priority.

More information:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/yourfirsteuresjob>

Service, shop and market sales workers

During the third quarter of 2013, projects funded by YfEj filled 416 job vacancies altogether, supported 262 job interviews in another EU country, provided 384 relocation allowances to help young job-finders settle in another country, supported 442 preparatory trainings and also 95 SMEs for integration trainings.

For the first time, the share of male job finders was greater than that of females. The majority were younger than 27 years old and had finished at least secondary or vocational education.

Jobs such as service workers and shop and market sales workers proved the most popular. They account for one third of all jobs, followed by technicians and high skilled professionals. Although manual and elementary occupations made up around 15 % of all vacancies filled, they increased significantly from previous quarters.

More than a quarter of the job-finders lived in Spain and many also originally lived in Sweden, Poland, Denmark and Italy.

The most popular destinations for job-finders are Germany and the UK, followed by Italy, the Netherlands and Ireland which complete the top five destination countries of the third quarter of 2013.



Across borders: Your First EURES Job accompanies the EURES reform which places greater emphasis on recruitment, matching and placement activities.

EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

James, skateboard ramp designer

Making a living out of his passion thanks to the ESF



Do you want to skate at work? "After college, I didn't know what to do – I was sort of lost. Then my auntie said 'Look at this' – which was the first XtraVert course".

James is from the seaside town of Newquay in the United Kingdom and loves skateboarding. He has been able to take his passion and turn it into work as well as play, thanks to a project backed by the European Social Fund.

At school, he found it hard to concentrate because he is dyslexic. He studied tourism because he wanted to see the world but he did not stick to the course. There was too much theory. He then learned how to cook because he wanted to work as a chef at a snowboard resort. He worked in a big hotel in Newquay. But the hours did not suit him. He then worked in bars and shops for a while. He felt a bit lost, without any real qualifications.

At this time, his father suggested he could give him a hand building a wooden house, all by himself. It was a chance to learn about joinery. Finally, his aunt told him about the XtraVert course, run by the Real Ideas Organisation, which helps young people who have lost their way in education or who are struggling to enter the jobs market.

XtraVert aims to offer 16-19 year-olds the chance to learn new skills and gain qualifications in an exciting and stimulating environment. Course participants train in carpentry in order to build skateboard ramps. The teens follow a learning programme which lasts for three days a week for 12 weeks. They develop hands-on experience building the ramps, as well as other items such as lockers, chairs and jigsaw puzzles.

At the end of the course, the young people get to keep their own tools and safety equipment. They also receive an employability award as well as certificates and qualifications in health and safety, fire safety, manual handling and customer care.

In the case of James, he was offered a full-time job to build skate ramps. He also teaches at XtraVert.

Over to James:

"I got a skateboard at a really young age – from then on it's just become a lifestyle for me. I think just having the passion for skating kept me going through the day.



Passing the torch: "The young people I teach remind me of myself. At the beginning, they never have much self-confidence. But then they make progress quickly".

After college, I didn't know what to do – I was sort of lost. Then my auntie said 'Look at this' – which was the first XtraVert course. It said 'Do you want to skate at work?' and that just sold it to me.

You can build anything you want. You can use wood from foreign countries. You've got to have imagination, and the skills to turn it from just a design to an actual skate product at the end of it.

We've sent skate ramps all over England and run skate parks. I love living in Newquay and being able to skate and surf, and being able to make a living from my passion. It just makes me really happy.

Design and creativity

I wasn't all that interested in joinery at the start. I thought it was a boring job. But I've really taken to it. Joinery is not just carving and assembling pieces of wood. First and foremost, it's got a lot to do with design and creativity. It's also crucial to choose the right kinds of wood. We use a specific type of multilayer wood which is both flexible and very strong.

Matt, Jack, who took part in the first courses, and I are really passionate about skateboarding. But finding a job linked to skateboarding seemed like an unattainable utopia to me and my skateboarding friends.

Across the UK

After the XtraVert course, the project founders realised that the skateboarding ramps we made were popular and that there was a chance to turn it into a business. They hired us. We successfully rose to the challenge. Nowadays we sell our ramps all across the United Kingdom, to both individuals and communities.

The young people I teach remind me of myself. I see myself in their questions and their mistakes... At the beginning, they

never have much self-confidence. But then they make progress quickly. Some even choose to go on to university. We teach them the basics of joinery. They begin by making a chair all by themselves which they can then take home with them. The fact that I'm just a few years older than them is a big advantage.

Letting loose

Building something new is always very exciting. When we come to the end of a project, we can't wait to get back on our skateboards and test it out for ourselves. The experience is always different: it's always a new feeling. The best part of my job would have to be this final test: it's at this point that everyone in the team gets to jump on their boards and just let loose.

Without the European Social Fund, I have no doubt that I would not be where I am today... I would probably never have even studied joinery. Everyone, including my colleagues, Matt and Jack, who took part in the first courses, has been able to make something of their lives. The XtraVert programme changed several people's lives. Lots of young people and adults want to do something with their life but never get the opportunity to".

Taken from:

"Seven lives – on the road to success with the European Social Fund", ISBN 978-92-79-30126-1

Video:

<http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=564&langId=en&portaitId=256>

More information:

<http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=564&langId=en>

OTHER
VOICES

A holistic approach to youth unemployment



Giuseppe Porcaro, European Youth Forum Secretary-General:
"we need to take a holistic approach and deal with all the factors that impact young people's professional opportunities".

Despite the renewed political focus on the need to create jobs for young people, accessing the labour market remains a daunting prospect for millions of young Europeans. The latest figures from Eurostat tell the harsh truth that almost one in four young EU citizens is unemployed. This persisting youth unemployment crisis has huge consequences for young people in terms of their quality of life, autonomy and levels of social inclusion, and urgent action is now needed to tackle this problem. European leaders need to address the different facets of this complex problem by encouraging EU Member States to adopt and implement the necessary measures to create and sustain quality jobs for young people in Europe.

EU institutions and national governments have already taken a number of concrete steps. With the flagship Youth Guarantee scheme, EU member states have committed to ensure that all young people up to the age of 25 receive a

high-quality offer of a job, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. However, beside several limitations of the proposal which the Youth Forum repeatedly highlighted (such as lack of credible resources and the need to extend the guarantee to people under 30 years old), to strengthen their credibility and effectiveness, this and other schemes, such as the Youth Employment Initiative or the European Alliance for Apprenticeships, need to be rapidly and thoroughly implemented by EU Member States.

Youth unemployment is far too complex a problem to be addressed with short-term solutions. If we wish to ensure that the next generation of Europeans is prepared to face the challenges of an ever more competitive labour market, we need to take a holistic approach and deal with all the factors that impact their professional opportunities. In this regard, providing young people with skills that match the needs of the market should be a priority.

Against the backdrops of the dramatic figures, it is encouraging that policy-makers in Brussels and national capitals across Europe have pledged to tackle youth unemployment and that the issue has become part of the current discourse on the solutions for the current crisis. However, in order to really address the disenchanted youth, now is the moment to move from rhetoric to action and mobilise political, human and financial resources to implement the Youth Guarantee and move forward the European Framework for Quality Traineeships.

Europe stands at an important crossroads with regards to youth employment. To go forward, particularly in the aftermath of the high-level summit that French President François Hollande hosted in November 2013, only serious, concerted EU-wide actions will ultimately solve the problem of youth unemployment in Europe. Europe's leaders must act to provide young people with the opportunity to make a decent life for themselves and their families. They deserve no less.

Giuseppe Porcaro

Secretary-General of the European Youth Forum

Egidio Canciani: "We need to become stronger from within and build a Europe with a human face".

INTERVIEW



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Egidio Canciani is head of the ESF Unit for France, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg, in the European Commission's Employment and Social Affairs department, since 1 June

From far out to deep within

Your working life has always been centered on the people the most in need of solidarity.

I studied economics and I wanted to focus more on development and third-world issues. I was looking for an entry point and I found it by dealing with refugees, first for the NGO Caritas, then with the United Nations before ending up joining the European Commission. All in all, I spent ten years outside the EU as it was then, including six in Africa, in refugee camps and capital cities. My first job with the Commission was in Sudan, during the long-standing war there, before the country was split between North and South. The projects funded by the Commission in the South were inaccessible. The team was very small, with only two expatriates. Sometimes I was alone. Getting a telephone connection was the most complicated thing. But all this was the whole point of the job!

Then you moved on to EU enlargement to Central and Eastern European countries.

I spent four years in Bulgaria, probably the most fascinating of my entire career. I witnessed a society changing from A to Z. Then I followed Hungary but from Brussels, this time. This is where I got involved with the management of EU funds. From there, I moved on to neighbourhood policy, a spin-off from enlargement! When I see what is going on in Ukraine, I think we have been doing the right thing. There are two tracks: one where you negotiate with governments and one where you speak to civil society and do "public diplomacy". One thing is to talk about money but when you ask people if they want to live in a country managed like a European one, it is fascinating to see how positive their answer is!

Then you joined the Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, dealing with the European Social Fund (ESF).

When I first joined the European Commission, it was clear that the challenges were outside, at the "frontier" of the EU: how do we enlarge, interact and become a global player? With the economic crisis, I measured how Europe went from being a sort of hope or dream for everybody to a system which raises a lot of questions. In order to be credible outside, we probably need to work more on ourselves: The challenge is now inside! We need to become stronger from within and build a Europe with a human face. The more you liberalise, and deregulate, the more you have to consolidate the basic and non-disposable rights that have to be respected throughout the EU. So I am quite happy to be where I am now!

First Slovakia, Poland and the Czech Republic and now France, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg...

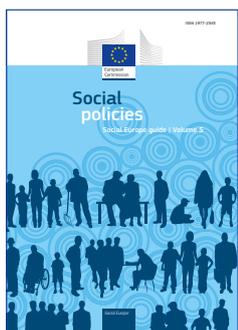
Yes, I am now dealing with countries for which the ESF is not the biggest part of their social budget but where it can really be a catalyst for a different way of doing business. We are sometimes perceived as very cumbersome and complicated. Indeed, simplification is crucial. But in a lot of cases, we are doing an excellent job. I went recently to Guyana and Guadeloupe, where the ESF is co-funding labour inclusion projects for young people. In some cases, 80% of the young were serving alternative sentences and wearing electronic bracelets. There, the ESF is where it should be. There are many examples like that. Many dedicated people are involved in ESF projects on the ground, in the Member States, and have a demand for more Europe.



EaSI - New EU umbrella programme for employment and social policy

EaSI, the new pan-European programme for employment and social policy, will help the EU deliver more coherent policy, encourage job mobility and provide targeted microfinance to the more vulnerable. Merging PROGRESS, EURES and PROGRESS Microfinance into one umbrella programme, EaSI will help deliver new jobs and sustainable growth more efficiently by putting the emphasis on social innovation. Find out how in this brochure, which will be available in printed format in all EU official languages.

Catalogue No: KE-03-13-702-EN-C



Social policies - Social Europe guide - Volume 5

The Social Europe guide is a bi-annual publication aimed at providing an interested but not necessarily specialised audience with a concise overview of specific areas of EU policy in the field of employment, social affairs and inclusion. It illustrates the key issues and challenges, explains policy actions and instruments at EU level and provides examples of best practices from EU Member States. It also presents views on the subject from the Council Presidency and the European Parliament. This fifth volume in the series of Social Guides sets out how the new challenges facing EU countries call for a rethink of our approach to social policies. It outlines the functions of social policies and recent initiatives by the European Commission to support increased 'social investment' – benefits and services that improve people's skills and capabilities and support people's inclusion in society. This guide also sets out how the European Union's social policy guidance is designed and delivered, and how the Commission is supporting Member States in making reforms to improve the adequacy and sustainability of their social policies. The guide is available as an e-book and in printed format in English, French and German.

Catalogue No.: KE-BC-13-001-EN-C



Policy Brief on Evaluation of Inclusive Entrepreneurship Programmes - Entrepreneurial Activities in Europe

The OECD and the European Commission have produced a new brief on evaluating policy actions for inclusive entrepreneurship. The brief covers the reasons for evaluating inclusive entrepreneurship policy, how evaluation fits into the policy cycle, and relevant tools to use in evaluation. It gives examples of real evaluations, showing how information was obtained and what conclusions could be drawn. This brochure is available online in English, German and French.

Catalogue No: KE-BE-13-001-EN-N

Useful websites

The website of Commissioner Andor: http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/andor/index_en.htm

The home page of the Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/>

The website of the European Social Fund: <http://ec.europa.eu/esf>

To download or to order these publications, please go to <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en>

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