



## Promoting Youth Labour Mobility and Tackling Youth Unemployment in Europe

Resolution submitted by: Political Commission 2 - Internal European Policies

*Following the international financial crisis, rampant youth unemployment has become one of the most urgent challenges Europe is currently facing. The statistics show that in comparison to previous years, our generation is encountering difficulties in entering the labour market and finding a job. In parallel to this context, precariousness and degrading work conditions of existing labour markets remain an unsolved problem. In the long run, cross-border employment and mobility inducements at the EU level may alleviate these problems and amend the downward trend in youth employment to a greater extent. JEF-Europe urges all involved actors, including Member States, EU institutions and non-governmental organizations to take a firm stand on further European mobility and jobs via significant reforms.*

JEF Europe,

- *Reiterating* the free movement of workers as a fundamental principle of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), enshrined in Article 45, the definition of *decent work* and signatory parties' responsibility to uphold it in Articles 6-7 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Directive 2014/50/EU of the European Parliament on minimum requirements for enhancing labour mobility in regard to supplementary pension schemes;
- *Noting that* employment and social policies are located under Member State competencies, while European institutions such as the European Parliament and the European Commission support and complement the former's efforts with regard to harmonisation of labour market standards;

**Youth unemployment:**



- *Understanding* that the youth unemployment rate is defined by the ratio of the number of unemployed persons between 15-24 years old divided by the total number of people of the same age group in the labour force (the latter being the sum of employed and unemployed persons), as well as being aware of the overlap between education and work for the same age group<sup>1</sup>;
- *Drawing attention* to the importance of cross-border labour mobility in enhancing the efficiency of labour markets, increasing competitiveness and adjusting to asymmetric shocks in an optimum currency area which the Eurozone aims to become<sup>2</sup>;
- *Noting with concern* that youth unemployment on a global scale has recently been on the rise, more specifically in the European context in the aftermath of the Eurocrisis, with an increase in EU-wide youth unemployment levels from 15.2 % in the first quarter of 2008, to a staggering 23.8 % in the first quarter of 2013<sup>3</sup>, as well as the relative levels of poverty among employed youth<sup>4</sup>;
- *Disturbed* by the vast gap between different regions and social in terms of youth unemployment figures, and the resulting regional migration, in consequence leading to an interregional brain drain and regions and perpetuating a downward spiral in the affected economies;
- *Stressing* the concerning figures accounting for more than 17 million young Europeans between 20 and 34 being not employed, not in education and not in training in 2015 (NEETs), who are often forced to work under precarious conditions and are trapped in a state of structural unemployment or underemployment; possibly leading to social exclusion<sup>5</sup>;

### **International & European efforts:**

- *Highlighting* the International Labour Organization's (ILO) focus on *decent work* and the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda - employment creation, social protection, rights

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<sup>1</sup> Youth unemployment rate. Statistics Illustrated - Eurostat. Available online at <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/youth/statistics-illustrated>, checked on 07-Aug-16.

<sup>2</sup> <http://review.chicagobooth.edu/magazine/spring-2016/a-key-to-improving-cross-border-mobility>

<sup>3</sup> Eurostat: Unemployment statistics. Statistics Explained. Available online at [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), checked on 07-Aug-16.

<sup>4</sup> In 2014, 12.9% of employed youth was under risk of poverty, in EU-28. Taken from ILO Youth Employment Outlook Report, 2016

<sup>5</sup> Eurostat statistics. See: [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Statistics\\_on\\_young\\_people\\_neither\\_in\\_employment\\_nor\\_in\\_education\\_or\\_training#Young\\_people\\_neither\\_in\\_employment\\_nor\\_in\\_education\\_or\\_training](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Statistics_on_young_people_neither_in_employment_nor_in_education_or_training#Young_people_neither_in_employment_nor_in_education_or_training)



in the work place, and social dialogue - as integral elements of the new UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals;

- *Underlining* the priority given in the 2016 State of the Union speech by Commission President Juncker to invest in Europe's sources of jobs and growth, most notably through the Single Market, and the importance of tackling youth unemployment;
- *While remaining concerned* by the insufficient funding to the Youth Employment Initiative, through which Youth Guarantee schemes are financed;

#### **Brexit:**

- *Emphasising* the urgent need to tackle the political uncertainty generated in the aftermath of the British referendum and to try to secure the future of cross-border mobility between the EU and the UK;

#### **Social rights and employment:**

- *Observing* the high unemployment rates detected in the Southern European countries that are under severe fiscal pressure and yet complying with budgetary stability rules, in particular Greece, Portugal and Spain, and the negative effects of these policies on the young population of the countries mentioned above;
- *Reiterating* the firm European commitment to fighting discrimination, precariousness, low entry wages and insecure employment conditions in line with the European Pillar of Social Rights in the EU Member States;
- *Drawing attention* to the gender gap both with regard to employment ratios and wages of youth in the European labour market, which has repercussions for employment in adulthood; hence future policies undertaken by Member States regarding creating gender balance in youth employment would also have positive, long-lasting effects on overall gender dynamics in European labour markets;

#### **Initiatives on the European level:**

- *Viewing with appreciation* the record-breaking student mobility and exchange programmes across Europe, notably Erasmus+, wherein around 60,000 students benefited from a traineeship placement and 200,000 from the student mobility scheme, other efforts being the 'Youth Employment Initiative', 'Youth on the Move', 'European Alliance for Apprenticeships' and most recently the 'European Solidarity Corps' that combines volunteering with mobility;



- *Being aware* of the importance of youth mobility schemes outside the higher education framework, such as vocational education, training and traineeships, for the enhancement of European labour markets;
- *Keeping in mind* the ‘New Skills Agenda’ of the European Commission, especially in the emerging digital and technological field, as a top-policy concern of young professionals to ease their transition to the market and stimulate entrepreneurship;
- *Being aware* of the consequences of negative spill over from youth unemployment in national labour markets to the European level;
- *Recognising* the adverse effect that the continuing existence of language barriers has on the international employment prospects of young Europeans, as well as the status of English as the most widely spoken language in Europe<sup>6</sup>;
- *Being deeply convinced* of the European federal project, and most particularly of the Eurozone, which rely on concrete proposals towards a strengthened fiscal union to complement the single currency by increasing the labour demand in the regions more affected by asymmetric shocks;

JEF Europe, therefore;

1. *Urges* Member States to implement policies that engender stable and secure youth employment opportunities in the labour markets, taking into account the expanding qualified labour force, through increased youth mobility programmes, such as Erasmus+, to be continuously used and linked to the market structures in the European Union to encourage cross-country mobility for young workers;
2. *Expects* EU institutions to fully develop the Digital Agenda for Europe, which is part of the Horizon 2020 framework programme, that will facilitate the mobility of young researchers and scientists through eliminating bureaucratic hurdles and supporting innovative projects;
3. *Demands* initiatives that are located under the Europe 2020 Strategy, such as ‘Youth on the Move’ and Youth Employment Initiative to be further supported in terms of increased funding and accessibility;
4. *Asks* Member States to implement policies that will harmonise standards and regulations in labour markets, as well as consider common pension schemes, one possible example being a European Unemployment Benefits Scheme<sup>7</sup>;
5. *Further asks* governments of Member States to pursue the goals outlined in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, especially connected to *decent*

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<sup>6</sup> Special Eurobarometer 386, p. 21 -[http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs\\_386\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_386_en.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.ceps.eu/system/files/CEPS%20SR%20No%20119%20EUBS\\_0.pdf](https://www.ceps.eu/system/files/CEPS%20SR%20No%20119%20EUBS_0.pdf)



*work* and economic growth, wherein reducing the proportion of youth NEETs is stated as a priority, as well as developing a global strategy on youth employment and implementing the Global Jobs Pact of the ILO;

6. *Requests* harmonisation of vocational traineeship schemes, thereby allowing young Europeans to pursue their occupation in all Member States without being hindered by national differences in qualifications and certification regulations;
7. *Asks* for a strong improvement of the EURES service, which should be the primary portal for online job seeking / hiring for European countries, in order to create a single “job offering market”;
8. *Asks* the EU to implement an EU-based special plan for development and employment, funded by a ~~proper~~ sufficient EU budget;
9. *Demands* the European Commission to prepare Europe-wide guidelines—on the teaching of foreign languages, with a view to ensuring that each European student has acquired at least the B2 level on the CEFR scale in their strongest foreign language by the end of their mandatory education.