

# EU youth guarantee doesn't go 'far enough'

EESC calls for more action from EU and the member states to help tackle youth unemployment

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The European economic and social committee (EESC), which advises EU institutions on behalf of organised civil society, believes the vicious circle of youth unemployment that risks compromising the future of an entire generation must be broken. We warmly welcome the latest EU policy initiatives – in particular the 'youth guarantee' – but insist they don't go far enough. For example, intervention after four months is too late. The youth guarantee should take effect as early as possible, ideally when registering at a job centre. The committee also wants the age limit to be extended to 30 years, for those who leave uni later.

At the same time we stress that a real growth strategy at EU and national level is needed to support the creation of more and more stable jobs, because they are a pre-condition for the success of measures to bring young people into employment. However, it must be taken into account that special attention should be directed towards the member states, who are the main actors in the field of youth employment and are expected to take subsequent action within the next few months. For this reason we propose that the implementation of the youth guarantee be included among the indicators in the European

semester process.

Training and apprenticeships must meet high standards: quality traineeships can facilitate young people's access to employment and help businesses to find potential skilled workers. Close cooperation between educational institutions and businesses, as well as policymakers, practitioners and youth representatives, is essential for the success of vocational education and training. The EESC insists that young people themselves, represented by youth organisations, as well as employers and trade unions – the 'social partners' – must be directly involved in designing, implementing and monitoring various initiatives.

Reforms of the EURES job mobility portal services, and, where necessary, of public employment services in member states, should also actively support young people and adapt their services and approaches in order to make them more accessible – and to offer them real solutions, not just to register them for unemployment payments, as is, unfortunately, the case in many places today. Personalised career counselling and guidance must be put in place already in schools.

We should also look beyond formal qualifications, which are rapidly changing and are not sufficient anymore for the success on the labour market. One in five Europeans does some sort of voluntary work. These people engaged in volunteering, for instance youth leaders, give their time, talent and heart for free, but not for nothing. They are active citizens developing our society and our children in the same way. And they constantly develop their skills and qualifications, transferable to other spheres of life. This so called "non-formal learning" is a good qualification matching with the needs of employers, bringing the practical experience which is often required when one applies for a job right after finishing studies. Therefore, the issue

of recognition of skills and qualifications acquired through non-formal learning is becoming more and more acknowledged by national governments as well as by EU institutions. National systems of qualifications are being put in place, helping not only young people to get validated for what they have learned outside of school. Through this, we can increase the chances of young people getting a job. ★



*"We should... look beyond formal qualifications, which are rapidly changing and are not sufficient anymore for the success on the labour market"*

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