



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 5 December 2012

Youth employment: Commission proposes package of measures

Measures to help Member States tackle unacceptable levels of youth unemployment and social exclusion by giving young people offers of jobs, education and training have been proposed by the European Commission.

"High youth unemployment has dramatic consequences for our economies, our societies and above all for young people. This is why we have to invest in Europe's young people now" said European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion László Andor. "This Package would help Member States to ensure young people's successful transition into work. The costs of not doing so would be catastrophic".

As requested by the European Council and European Parliament, the Commission's Youth Employment Package includes a proposed Recommendation to Member States on introducing the Youth Guarantee to ensure that all young people up to age 25 receive a quality offer of a job, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of leaving formal education or becoming unemployed.

The proposed recommendation urges Member States to establish strong partnerships with stakeholders, ensure early intervention by employment services and other partners supporting young people, take supportive measures to enable labour integration, make full use of the European Social Fund and other structural funds to that end, assess and continuously improve the Youth Guarantee schemes and implement the schemes rapidly.

The Commission will support Member States through EU funding, by promoting exchanges of good practice among Member States, monitoring implementation of Youth Guarantees in the European Semester exercise and awareness-raising.

To facilitate school-to-work-transitions, the Package also launches a consultation of European social partners on a Quality Framework for Traineeships so as to enable young people to acquire high-quality work experience under safe conditions. Furthermore, it announces a European Alliance for Apprenticeships to improve the quality and supply of apprenticeships available by spreading successful apprenticeship schemes across the Member States and outlines ways to reduce obstacles to mobility for young people.

Some 5.5 million young people on the labour market (more than 1 in 5) cannot find a job, and 7.5 million young people aged 15-24 are NEETs - not in employment, education or training. The economic cost of not integrating young people into labour market has been [estimated by Eurofound](#) at over €150 billion per year, or 1.2% of EU GDP. Some countries, such as Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia and Poland, are paying 2% or more of their GDP. Avoiding these economic costs now and in the future outweighs by far the fiscal costs of the proposed Youth Guarantee.

Background

The youth unemployment rate has reached more than 25% in 13 Member States, with Greece and Spain experiencing rates of over 55% and Italy, Portugal, Ireland, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Latvia, Hungary and Slovakia with rates around or above 30%. More than 30% of unemployed people under 25 have been unemployed for more than 12 months – 1.6 million in 2011, compared to 0.9 million in 2008. .

Overall employment rates for young people fell by almost five percentage points over the last four years — three times as much as for adults. The chances for a young unemployed person of finding a job are low: only 29.7 % of those aged 15-24 and unemployed in 2010 found a job in 2011, a fall of almost 10 % in three years.

Young people are those most at risk in the European labour market, and increasingly run the risk of being marginalised. This fact has immediate consequences, but also medium and long-term implications. The deepening labour market crisis can scar a large part of an entire young generation, damaging employment, productivity and social cohesion now and in the future.

The proposed measures in the Youth Employment Package build on the actions of the '[Youth Opportunities Initiative](#)', launched in December 2011 (see [IP/11/1568](#) and [MEMO/11/928](#)). With the help of Commission Action Teams, the eight Member States with the highest youth unemployment rates are re-allocating EU structural funds to boost youth employment, develop youth jobs plans and step up education and training programmes.

The Commission also uses other policy instruments to address youth unemployment, such as the Country-Specific Recommendations (CSRs). In July 2012, nearly all EU Member States received [Recommendations](#) aimed at improving the situation of young people. CSRs, adopted by the EU's Council of Ministers on the basis of Commission proposals, are a policy coordination tool to strengthen governance and reinforce coordination of economic policies at EU level in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy.

The 2013 [Annual Growth Survey \(AGS\)](#), launching the European Semester for 2013, stresses that Member States should do more to fight unemployment, improve employability and support access to jobs or a return to the world of work for young people

For more information

[MEMO/12/938](#)

News item on DG Employment website:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1731&furtherNews=yes>

Youth Employment Page: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/youthemployment>

László Andor's website: http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/andor/index_en.htm

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