



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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Youth Employment Initiative: €620 million to tackle youth unemployment in France

The European Commission has adopted today the French national Operational Programme for the implementation of the [Youth Employment Initiative](#) (YEI). This is the first Operational Programme to be adopted as part of the €6 billion Youth Employment Initiative, for which 20 Member States are eligible.

Under this Operational Programme, France will receive €432 million from the YEI and the European Social Fund (ESF) to help young people not in employment, education or training (the so-called NEETs) to find a job in those regions with youth unemployment rates over 25%. The national Operational Programme will be complemented by 12 regional Operational Programmes which will include YEI funds for a total of €188 million, thereby using the total YEI resources available to France i.e. €620 million.

"I warmly congratulate France for making use of the possibility to launch a programme for youth employment ahead of all other programmes to be co-financed by EU funds in 2014-20. The Youth Employment Initiative will directly benefit around one million young French people currently out of employment, education or training, and support the implementation of the Youth Guarantee", Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, László Andor, commented.

Commissioner Andor took part today in a conference organised by the French government in Paris on the [Youth Guarantee](#), the ambitious EU-wide reform aiming to ensure that every young person up to 25 years is offered a quality offer of employment, education or training within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. 13 French regions, namely Aquitaine, Auvergne, Centre, Champagne-Ardenne, Guadeloupe, Guyane, Haute-Normandie, Languedoc-Roussillon, Martinique, Nord-Pas de Calais, Réunion, Mayotte, Picardie, are eligible for YEI funding, which includes matching funds from the European Social Fund (ESF). France has also chosen to allocate 10% of its YEI resources to sub-regions of its Ile de France, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur and Midi-Pyrénées regions.

The [Youth Employment Initiative](#) in France will support the implementation of the national Youth Guarantee to help those young people with worse chances in the labour market. Actions include counselling and training the less-skilled; enabling mobility of apprentices at regional, national and in some cases cross-border level; helping to prevent early school-leaving and better identify young NEETS, and giving a second chance to those who left school without any diploma or qualification to gain a foothold in the labour market through work experience or traineeships. Public Employment Services have a crucial role to achieve these aims and this operational programme will be an opportunity to improve their outreach to young NEETS.

Background

Currently, around 5.6 million young Europeans are jobless, of which 650,000 in France. Around one million young French people are currently out of employment, education or training (NEETs).

To avoid the risk of a lost generation, the Commission proposed the [Youth Guarantee](#) in December 2012 (see [IP/12/1311](#) and [MEMO/12/938](#)), which was formally adopted by the EU's Council of Ministers on 22 April 2013 (see [MEMO/13/152](#)) and endorsed by the June 2013 European Council. All 28 Member States have submitted their Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans and are making the first steps to set up their Youth Guarantee schemes (details available [here](#)).

The [European Social Fund](#), providing more than €10 billion every year in the 2014-2020 period, will be a key source of EU funding to implement the Youth Guarantee.

To top up available EU financial support to the regions where individuals struggle most with youth unemployment and inactivity, the Council and the European Parliament agreed to create a dedicated [Youth Employment Initiative](#) (YEI) for Member States with regions where youth unemployment exceeds 25%. The YEI funding comprises €3 billion from a specific new EU budget line dedicated to youth employment (frontloaded to 2014-15) matched by at least €3 billion from Member States' European Social Fund allocations. This will amplify the support provided by the European Social Fund for the implementation of the Youth Guarantee by funding activities to directly help young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) aged up to 25 years, or where the Member States considers relevant, up to 29 years. These activities include job provision, traineeships and apprenticeships, business start-up support, etc. The YEI will be programmed as part of the [European Social Fund](#) in 2014-20.

In order to draw down Youth Employment Initiative funding as quickly as possible, Member States can make use of several special rules. Where YEI assistance is programmed through a specific Operational Programme, as in France, such programme can be adopted even before the Partnership Agreement which lays the basis for the use of all EU Structural and Investment Funds in the country in 2014-20. Moreover, the Youth Employment Initiative can reimburse expenditure incurred by Member States as of 1 September 2013, i.e. even before the programmes have been adopted. In addition, the EU's top-up funding under the YEI does not require any national co-financing; only the ESF contribution to the YEI needs to be co-financed.

For more information:

[News item on DG Employment website](#)

[László Andor's website](#)

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