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SOCIAL AGENDA



Youth Guarantee

Releasing its full potential

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Modernising data
collection



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EUROPEAN SOCIAL PILLAR

The context



Social Europe



Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion come under the remit of European Commissioner Marianne Thyssen.

The website of Commissioner Thyssen:
ec.europa.eu/commission/2014-2019/thyssen_en

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

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

A good quality offer for a job, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education: such was the ambitious "Youth Guarantee" commitment taken by the EU Heads of State and governments in 2013.

Today, there are 1.5 million less young unemployed people in the EU. 14 million young people have entered Youth Guarantee schemes and around 9 million took up an offer. In 2015, almost two-thirds of young people who left such a scheme took up a job, education, traineeship or apprenticeship offer.

"Releasing the full Youth Guarantee potential"

However, the situation is still critical. In September 2016, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker called upon the EU countries to continue to "roll out the Youth Guarantee across Europe and reach out even more to the regions and young people most in need".

And European Commissioner Marianne Thyssen pleaded for "continued political commitment, sufficient resources and strong resolve" on behalf of the Member States to broaden and deepen the way they implement the Youth Guarantee.

While it has improved more than expected, the global EU youth employment rate has still not reached pre-crisis levels.

The European Commission proposes to increase the budget resources for the Youth Employment Initiative: alongside the European Social Fund, it provides funding to implement the Youth Guarantee in those regions worst hit by youth employment, focusing on young people neither in employment, education nor training.



To rise fully to the challenge, the EU Member States need to broaden the partnerships between all the actors concerned by youth employment, and to deepen the structural reforms which the Youth Guarantee and the Youth Employment Initiative are driving, as evidence collected in 2014 and 2015 shows. And this, together with the figures quoted above, is the really good news: the direction is correct, let's accelerate.

Michel Servoz

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

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NEWS IN BRIEF

28 October: second FEAD Network meeting

The first two Fund for European Aid to the Most deprived (FEAD) Network meetings were held in Brussels on 26 September and 18 October 2016. The events allowed delegates to hear from projects and managing authorities in different countries and to discuss innovative ways of delivering accompanying and social inclusion measures. The first meeting focused on accompanying measures, the second one on the delivery of social inclusion measures (see p.24).



Deprived: FEAD delegates discussed innovative ways of delivering social inclusion measures.

26 October: stronger job creation

Job creation continued to be stronger in 2015 and at the beginning of 2016 than could be expected based on economic growth, according to the findings of the European Commission's 2016 Labour Market and Wage Developments in Europe report. This outcome can be linked to stronger job

creation in the services sector, which is more labour intensive and more reactive to the dynamics of consumption, as well as to supportive labour cost developments and to the materialisation of the effects of structural reforms enacted since the onset of the crisis (see p.28).

25 October 2016: Social enterprises gaining ground

The number of social enterprises in Europe is increasing and they are engaging in new fields. Many countries are introducing new legislation as well as new support schemes to boost their development. Both public and private markets offer new opportunities for social enterprises to start up and grow, reveals a new report published by the European Commission. Both social economy and social enterprises have shown resilience and job retention during the economic crises and beyond. Because they respond to concrete societal needs and are often locally rooted, they are not exposed to speculative risks or job losses due to relocations.



On the rise: The number of social enterprises is increasing in the EU, such as this community garden and social enterprise in London.

4 October: Youth Guarantee achievements

The European Commission adopted a Communication that highlights the main achievements of the Youth Guarantee and Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) since their launch in 2013 and draws lessons on how to improve the EU and national efforts on deploying national Youth Guarantee schemes. It shows that although youth unemployment remains a key concern in many

Member States, young people's labour market performance in the EU has overall surpassed expectations since 2013. The Youth Employment Initiative, a €6.4 billion targeted financial source mobilised at EU level, has been central to the swift set-up of national Youth Guarantee schemes (see p.14).

NEWS IN BRIEF

4 October: A New Europass Framework

The Commission adopted a proposal to revise the Europass Decision. Europass is a suite of tools and services which support the transparency of skills and qualifications across the European Union. With this revision, the Commission aims to simplify and modernise these tools for the digital age and to add a new feature using big data to map and anticipate labour market trends and skills needs. Europass is one of Europe's most used and well-known skills resources. Since it was established in 2005, more than 60 million Europass CVs have been created and hundreds of thousands of learners across the EU receive Diploma and Certificate Supplements every year which help to make their qualifications more readable and easily comparable abroad; backed-up with advice and support services on the ground in Member States.



CV success: Since 2005, more than 60 million Europass CVs have been created.

15 September: A European Solidarity Corps

European Commission President Juncker announced the creation of a European Solidarity Corps during his State of the Union speech in September 2016. The Corps would offer people under 30 the chance to support a non-governmental organisation (NGO), local authority or private company active in addressing challenging situations across the European

Union. It will develop its own distinct identity, rooted in the core EU values of engagement and solidarity. By supporting others, including the most vulnerable, young people will also acquire skills and experience, including language skills, that can be valuable when looking for a job or considering further education and training (see page 17).

24 August: towards better social statistics

The Commission adopted a proposal for a framework Regulation on new, integrated ways to collect and use data from social surveys so as to better support social policy making. A more solid evidence base in terms of social indicators will improve the analysis of social developments and contribute to a social triple-A for Europe. The proposal will allow data to be published faster, increase the comparability and coherence of EU social statistics and provide a richer and broader data set (see p.6).



What impact on households? Proposals for new ways to collect and use data from social surveys are in the pipeline.

SOCIAL
ANALYSIS

More evidence-based policy making

Things are moving in the area of social statistics and tax-benefit microsimulation modelling

Back in 1996, a group of academics from some of the 15 (at the time) EU Member States started working on a simulation model called EUROMOD, to assess the impact on households across the EU of changes in tax and social benefits systems.

Today, EUROMOD is used by several European Commission services and covers all 28 EU countries. The Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL) takes advantage of this model also to contribute to the European Semester annual cycle of economic policy coordination.

In 2015, the European Commission used EUROMOD to assess the potential impact of the third Stability Support Programme for Greece on Greek households. "Adjustments in public finances that were made necessary by the crisis can be achieved in more or less fair ways", European Commissioner Marianne Thyssen, in charge of Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, explained on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of EUROMOD, in September 2016.

Essex University

EUROMOD celebrated its birthday at the British university of Essex, where its core team is based. Having been there from the very beginning, EUROMOD Director Holly Sutherland remembers: "We wanted to do some comparative work, using national models which already existed in some countries. However, we found that their assumptions were very nationally specific. Even comparing the UK and the Republic of Ireland involved a tremendous amount of work".

An economist by training, Holly Sutherland first worked on income distribution. This led her to reflect about the underlying policies. "I have always had a concern about poverty and inequality. And once I got involved in comparing the effects of policies between EU countries, I found this collaborative form of European enterprise very rewarding: making people's very different starting points, in the various countries, inform something bigger! Cultural and institutional differences mean



There from the beginning: Holly Sutherland, Director of EUROMOD which has been simulating the impact of policy changes on households across the EU since 1996.



Connecting household surveys: the European Commission proposes a common framework for statistics bringing together seven household surveys.

that you get different perspectives about things you would normally take for granted”.

Bottom-up

A key characteristic of EUROMOD, Holly stresses, is that it was “a bottom-up academic initiative, taken by researchers from various universities who were already working together”, at a time when there was no demand within policy institutions for internationally comparative evidence on the distributional effects of social and fiscal policy. “In our academic situation, it is possible to have some kind of foresight. But also we needed suitable micro data on households to exist and be made available to people outside the national/European statistical offices”.

The EU statistical office Eurostat launched statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC) in 2003. “With EU-SILC, we have a common starting point. Before that, we had to negotiate different contracts with each national statistical office as well as do more on harmonising the national data”, Holly explains.

Another stabilising factor was the decision taken in 2008 by DG EMPL to financially support the up-dating of EUROMOD, which until then had been occasionally supported within research funded by the EU’s research and development framework programme, now called Horizon 2020. “From then on we could really plan on up-dating the model each year, and concentrate on how best to do so and how to develop it further”.

Nowcasting

One such development is the running project on nowcasting: estimates of income distribution and poverty for the current period, which “you can’t do with micro data because

it takes time to produce”. Combined with employment estimates, it will give a clear indication as to whether poverty is going up or down and as a result of which policy measures or other changes.

Another major development was “policy swap”: “That allows you to take policies in a particular area from one country and see what would happen if you applied them in another country”, Holly explains. “You get to understand much more about the interaction between policies and the underlying labour market, demographics etc. It helps to realise what would happen if things were done differently”.

So what is the new frontier for EUROMOD? “Expanding its policy scope”, Holly replies, “trying to bring in data from other sources in order to simulate policies such as indirect taxes or taxes on property. And making simplified interfaces that would be accessible via the web to anyone, without the need for permission to access household micro data, and produce tables and graphics that they could analyse. More people producing analyses can only help understanding what is going on and possibilities for change”.

“The analysis of poverty and inequality remain two crucial policy challenges at the EU level”, Commissioner Thyssen stated at the EUROMOD anniversary. “We will need to understand how benefits, in kind or cash, and taxes can be redesigned in a way that more people can participate in, and benefit from, our high-performance economies (...) By looking at the impact of tax and benefit systems and related reforms, from a variety of perspectives – be it from the fairness perspective, the work incentives one, the demographic one or the financial angle, EUROMOD can make an important contribution in this area”.

SOCIAL ANALYSIS



Poverty and inequality: Eurostat launched EU-wide statistics on income and living conditions, based on micro data collected from household samples, in 2003.

A common framework

However good a model such as EUROMOD may be, it can only be as good as the available data! With a view to modernising social statistics, the European Commission put forward on 24 August 2016 a proposal for an EU law on new, integrated ways to collect and use data from social surveys – from samples of households and individuals. The proposal is currently being discussed at EU Council of Ministers and European Parliament level. Once adopted it will become a Regulation (i.e. directly applicable EU legislation).

The proposed law would establish “a common framework for European statistics relating to persons and households, based on data at individual level collected from samples”. It would try to ensure a good balance for users of social data and its producers. It would aim to increase relevance of social surveys to users, for instance to speed up the publication of social indicators and to increase the comparability between countries and the coherence of EU data. It would also aim to contain costs for national statistical authorities: for instance, it would encourage innovation and the combination of data from several (including administrative) sources.

The Regulation would bring together seven existing household surveys – the Labour Force Survey, the European Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC), the Adult Education Survey, the European Health Interview Survey, the Survey on Information and Communication Technologies usage in households, the Household Budget

Survey and the Harmonised European Time Use Survey – and harmonise variables that are common to two or more of them.

Timeliness

Timeliness of social statistics, especially on income, poverty and inequality from the EU-SILC, is of course one of the key challenges which the Regulation seeks to tackle. Currently, the data collected through EU-SILC is published in the autumn of the year after its collection (although some countries already provide it at the beginning of the year) and its income information dates from the year before collection. That makes a total lag of 1.5-2 years! A two-pillar strategy is foreseen to improve timeliness: flash estimates six months after the reference period; and final data analysed and published twelve months after the reference period (i.e. around ten months faster) so that they may be used during the European Semester.

Comparability between Member States and coherence of EU data is another important challenge. Technical terms such as definitions, variables and quality requirements will be further harmonised at EU level and several key variables will be the ‘same’ across all surveys, which will make it possible to better link up data between surveys and facilitate its analysis. For instance, it will make for better analysis of the relationship between income and health, including for children, young people and the elderly.



A third challenge is coverage or scope: encouraging innovative approaches and methods and the use of data from several sources will make for a richer and broader set of data. Administrative data would be used more extensively. For example, it would be possible to reuse the growing set of data on education, health, social security and social benefits that are already collected for administrative purposes.

More information:

On the proposed framework regulation:
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newSId=2600&furtherNews=yes>

On Euromod:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1050&intPageId=1959&langId=en>

A wide range of domains

Social statistics cover demography, employment, income and consumption, well-being and quality of life, education, health etc. They are taken from data on persons and households collected at individual level from samples, population censuses, aggregated administrative data and data from businesses.

A European Statistical System produces the statistical data used to assess EU countries' performance in the framework of the European Semester annual cycle of economic policy coordination. It is also used to monitor key targets of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, implement the European Commission's evaluation frameworks on employment and social developments, and to pave the way for a future strategic vision for Europe beyond 2020.

SOCIAL
RIGHTS

The future European Social Pillar in context

Allan Larsson is Special Adviser to European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker for the European Pillar of Social Rights

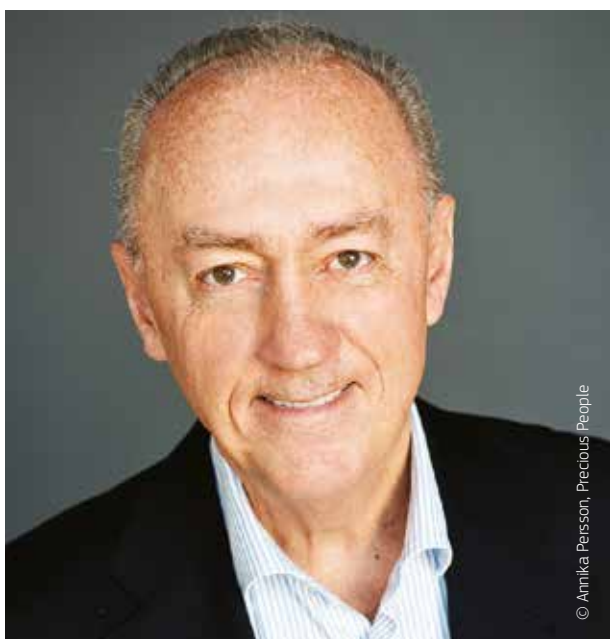
From 1995 to 2000 you were Director General of the European Commission's Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities Directorate General (see box). Your main task then was to implement the new Employment title of the Amsterdam Treaty, in effect connecting social and economic policy.

Yes, the Amsterdam Treaty itself was inspired by former Commission President Jacques Delors' White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment of 1993. Straight after the adoption of the Single European Act in 1986, he had started working simultaneously on an economic and monetary union (EMU) and on a social agenda. Committed as he was to strengthening growth, employment

and the social dimension, he was convinced of the need to introduce active labour market policies as a tool to fight against unemployment.

From then on, employment became a declared EU objective, not a residual side effect of economic policy?

Yes, you can't have a good employment policy without having a good economic policy. Economic and social policies are two sides of the same coin. Both have to be integrated. Straight after the adoption of the Amsterdam Treaty in 1997, the Commission drew up a European Employment Strategy (EES). The EES was implemented using the new method of coordination of several policy fields introduced by the Treaty of Amsterdam which gave



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Long term: "The European Pillar of Social Rights is not going to be a quick fix (...) We are talking about an evolving process" - Allan Larsson.

Breaking the economic and social divide

Swedish Finance Minister from 1990 to 1991 and Social Democratic Member of the Swedish Parliament from 1991 to 1995, Allan Larsson was Director General of DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities of the European Commission from 1995 to 2000. There he developed and implemented the European Employment Strategy, stemming from the new Employment Title inserted into the EU Treaty in 1997.

Allan Larsson then chaired the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation and held several assignments at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the International Labour Organisation and the United Nations Secretary General's High Level Panel on Youth Employment. Between 2004 and 2012 he was chairman of the Lund University board.



I, robot: "One cannot go against the digital economy, which introduces more flexibility, but you have to accompany it with new security arrangements".

birth to the "Open Method of Coordination" (OMC) in the year 2000, with the preparation of the Lisbon Summit. The OMC is a way of addressing together the areas of social and employment policy, for which the Member States and the EU institutions have mixed responsibilities.

The EMU came into force in 1999 and the European Semester annual cycle of economic policy coordination started in 2011...

Yes, and I think that the European Pillar of Social Rights will also shape things for the years to come but it is not going to be a quick fix: it should go deep and have an impact over a long period of time. It is significant that the European Commission and its President, Jean-Claude Juncker, who played such a decisive role in launching the European Employment Strategy back in 1997, have established the priorities included under the European Pillar of Social Rights.

Concretely, what is the European Pillar of Social Rights about?

It is a way of bringing together what we do already – the EU "acquis", the rights and principles already at work in the field of social policy – and some new elements, addressing new needs and challenges facing the EU, the euro area and their Member States, upon which we are consulting other European institutions, social partners, stakeholders and the public at large. Four of the major challenges we have identified are: the



Changing realities: European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker called for a European Social Pillar taking into account the changing realities of Europe's societies and the world of work.

impact of the 2008 financial crisis; the way the digital economy is affecting working life; the EU's demographic ageing; and economic and social convergence between EU countries, in particular within the EMU. After the consultation, the European Commission will draw conclusions, organise a high level conference in January (see box) and present a policy document on the European Pillar of Social Rights, probably in spring 2017. We are talking about an evolving process: Nothing has been decided once and for all at this stage.

Inequality: "Inequality is not just a social but also an economic problem: it is an obstacle to economic growth. Social policy has to be strengthened". >>

SOCIAL RIGHTS

Why such a gradual and long term approach?

Take the digital economy: We can see that the traditional labour contract is being challenged by technology but we don't know yet what will come instead. New digital technologies will allow for a more flexible working life. The question is: how to allow for more flexibility which we appreciate as consumers, while continuing to fulfil the need for security that we all have as workers? The key question is to assess the problems and challenges we are facing; the kind of response we are giving and how to strengthen it and make it more fitted to these challenges. It has to be, necessarily, a forward-looking, future-oriented approach.

More generally, how do you see the future?

I share the views of historians, identifying long political waves and that we now have seen the end of a long wave emerging in the 1970s and 1980s. The financial crisis in 2007-2008 marks the end of that: the basic economic theory behind the wave imploded – the theory that deregulated markets are stable markets. Since then also, the "trickle down" theories, as a concept for

income distribution, have been put in question. Now, we are living in "an empty room". In the absence of a clear vision, nationalism and xenophobia are gaining ground. This is a dangerous situation.

Globalisation is being questioned today...

We have witnessed progress, with millions of people who have been lifted out of poverty worldwide. However, many people in the United States, Europe and elsewhere, feel left behind and turn against free trade and migration, for example. The social systems and the organisation of labour markets have to be reformed to give to all a fair share of economic progress.

Work today is much more fragmented?

Certainly, compared to the times when people did 40-hour weeks with the same employer for most of their working life. Where will you get your security from, today? Who will pay for your pension? One cannot go against the digital economy, which introduces more flexibility, but you have to accompany it with new security arrangements. The existing EU principles and rights are the starting



Who will pay for the pensions? The EU's demographic ageing is one of the four challenges identified by the outline of the future European Social Pillar.



point of the European Social Pillar. The question is: what could be added to them?

The European Social Pillar was initially meant to be first and foremost for the EMU/euro countries?

Europe needs unifying projects and the European Pillar of Social Rights should be so attractive that all EU Member States would want to join it! A consensus is emerging today - including at the International Monetary Fund, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the World Bank and the International Labour Organisation - on the fact that governments should focus more on inequality. Inequality is not just a social but also an economic problem: it is an obstacle to economic growth. Research and evidence collected by all these institutions point to the fact that social policy has to be strengthened. It is therefore exactly the right time to launch an initiative like the European Social Pillar. It addresses the concerns of the people who have been left behind, in such a way that it will be beneficial for the whole economy.

More information:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/social-pillar>

Social Agenda on line: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/socialagenda>

A gradual process

On 9 September 2015, European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker said in his State of the Union speech that, to step up the work for a fair and truly pan-European labour market, he wanted "to develop a European Pillar of Social Rights which takes account of the changing realities of Europe's societies and the world of work".

On 8 March 2016, the European Commission launched a vast consultation of EU authorities, social partners, civil society and citizens on a preliminary outline of the future European Pillar of Social Rights. The consultation ended on 31 December 2016 and at the time of printing the Commission was due to organise a high level conference on 23 January 2017, in Brussels, with all the relevant actors and stakeholders.

Based on all this, the Commission is due to propose in spring 2017 a series of policy documents and initiatives, a blueprint which will start to give shape to the European Pillar of Social Rights.

The whole process is designed to contribute to modernising, broadening and deepening existing EU social rights at work and in society, by questioning their take-up in practice and taking better account of the multiple opportunities and challenges arising from diverse employment and social situations.

SPECIAL
FEATURE

Youth Guarantee – releasing its full potential

After a promising start, EU countries need to accelerate the implementation of their Youth Guarantee plans



Strong resolve: "With continued political commitment, sufficient resources and strong resolve, we will reap the benefits of the work carried out so far" - European Commissioner Marianne Thyssen.

"I cannot and will not accept that Europe is and remains the continent of youth unemployment", European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker stated in his State of the Union speech to the European Parliament on 14 September 2016. "I cannot and will not accept that the millennials, Generation Y, might be the first generation in 70 years to be poorer than their parents[...] We will continue to roll out the Youth Guarantee across Europe, improving the skillset of Europeans and reaching out to the regions and young people most in need".

Three weeks later, the Commission adopted a Communication highlighting the main achievements of the EU Youth Guarantee (YG) and Youth Employment Initiative (YEI, which complements the European Social Fund for implementing the YG by funding activities to directly help young people not in employment, education or training. Both were launched in 2013.

On this occasion, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility Marianne Thyssen

explained that "the measures and reforms implemented under the YG have made a difference in the lives of more than 9 million young people. The YG has supported important reforms to countries' educational systems, employment services, and partnerships to deliver better opportunities for young people. I am confident that with continued political commitment, sufficient resources and strong resolve, we will reap the benefits of the work carried out so far and have the results we are all striving for".

She also highlighted the fact that "the Commission had recently proposed to increase budget resources for the Youth Employment Initiative until 2020".

Already, back in early 2015, Marianne Thyssen had fought successfully to make € 930 million from the YEI available during that year still, increasing by up to 30 times the pre-financing EU countries receive to boost youth employment. "Our young people need jobs and they need them now, she said at the time. "It is unacceptable that today more than one young person out of five on the labour market cannot find a job".

Previous special feature on this issue:
Social Agenda n°36 on youth employment



Generation Y: it must not be the first generation in 70 years to be poorer than their parents.

SPECIAL FEATURE



Persistence: As the Youth Guarantee is only just beginning to have an impact, continued political commitment is required.

Driving structural reforms

The Youth Guarantee and the Youth Employment Initiative are proving to be formidable drivers for reforms

There are the figures: 1.5 million less young unemployed people in the EU since the Youth Guarantee was launched in 2013. 14 million young people have entered EU Youth Guarantee (YG) schemes since January 2014. Around 9 million young people took up an offer. The majority of these were employment offers. In 2015, almost two-thirds of young people who left the YG took up an offer of employment, education, traineeship or apprenticeship. This is all the more impressive that the YG is particularly ambitious: it is a political commitment made by the EU and its Member States to give every young person (under the age of 25, although countries may extend coverage to those under 30 and 13 have done so) a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education

But there is also the less spectacular part- the YG is proving to be a formidable driver for reform. It helps EU countries visualise in a comprehensive way the whole issue of youth employment, with two major concrete effects: bringing together a number of

policies - and therefore different national ministries but also regional and local actors - that play a part in fighting youth unemployment; making them work in partnership; and getting the public employment services to consider youth as a specific group, with its own problems, in a customised pathway approach.

More efforts

In the Communication it adopted on 4 October 2016, the European Commission indicates where more efforts are required to ensure that the national implementation plans are fully and more quickly rolled out so that the YG may reach its full potential.

This involves reaching out even more to unregistered youth, who are presently under-represented among the beneficiaries, and offering them a broadened set of offers, in partnership with a greater range of actors to better address their specific needs and complex situation.

SPECIAL FEATURE

It also requires greater internal coordination, including between labour ministries and education and/or youth authorities, and capacity-building, in particular of the public employment services. Strengthening cooperation between education providers and employers is key to expanding the pool of good-quality offers: In particular, it would improve the way future skills shortages are anticipated.

Quality

Quality is indeed a key word in the YG. It has to do, for example, with the duration of offers and the fact that offers of continued education should ensure that a learning outcome has been achieved (e.g. a minimum level of basic skills) or lead to a recognised qualification.

In spite of the adoption of an EU Quality Framework for Traineeships to improve the quality of traineeships in March 2014, traineeship offers in the open market are often not transparent enough for youth to make an informed choice (see page 20).

As far as apprenticeship systems are concerned, reflection is on-going on the creation of a Quality Framework for Apprenticeships. A European Alliance for Apprenticeships was launched in July 2013, bringing together governments with business, social partners, chambers, vocational education and training providers, regions, youth representatives and think tanks. It has mobilised so far 250 000 training and job opportunities.



Promising start: 14 million young people have entered EU Youth Guarantee schemes since January 2014 and around 9 million took up an offer.

In 2015, the European Commission, together with companies, launched the European Pact for Youth: A mutual engagement of business leaders and the EU to create a culture of business-education partnerships, to improve the chances for young people of getting a job. Initiated by the European Business Network for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR Europe), the Pact is an appeal to all business, social partners, education and training providers and other stakeholders to develop or consolidate partnerships in support of youth employability and inclusion. It will support the creation of 10 000 quality business-education partnerships, with the shared target to establish at least 100 000 new good quality apprenticeships, traineeships or entry-level jobs.

Monitoring

Good quality monitoring is also crucial to ensure that an outcomes-based approach such as the YG delivers its full potential. A common Indicator Framework for Monitoring the YG was created, within which two rounds of data collection have been undertaken to date (in 2014 and 2015) and which have served as a basis for the 4 October Communication.

Figures show that 40% of YG beneficiaries took up an offer within four months, 33.4% after four months, 10% became unemployed or inactive after having gone through the scheme and 26.5% went to an unknown destination. EU countries must connect different sets of data, including the figures provided by the public employment services, to get a complete picture. But analysing YG implementation has to be really country/context-specific (see box).

On a more political level, the YG is monitored via the European Semester (ES) of economic policy coordination. As a result, YG-related country-specific recommendations are addressed every year by the European Council (Heads of State and governments) to particular EU countries, for example on improving school-to-work transitions.

Accelerating

Three years on from its inception, the challenge for the YG is to accelerate implementation in a context where the overall figures of youth unemployment are going down but are still above pre-crisis level.

Minds have started to focus, administrative silos have been broken, partnerships have been created. Although many young people have already been supported by the YG, it is only beginning to have an impact. Now that a lot of the behind-the-scenes preparatory work has been achieved in most EU countries,

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A driver for reform: the Youth Guarantee is helping public employment services consider youth as a specific group, in a customised pathway approach.

continued political commitment to the YG as a long-term, structural reform is required in order to effectively reap the benefits of the work carried out so far.

Indeed, the European Commission intends to step up its efforts in support of youth more generally, for instance by establishing a European Solidarity Corps which would offer socially-minded young people under 30 the opportunity to help and support others and acquire new skills and experience, either in their home country or in another EU country. Within this broader set of measures, due to be adopted at the end of 2016, the YG will play its full part.

More information:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=2629&furtherNews=yes>

Spain and France

The Spanish experience shows how the Youth Guarantee (YG) may effectively act as a driver for reform. There, the apprenticeship system has undergone significant structural reforms. These have led to an increase in the number of apprentices from 4 000 to 15 000 between 2013 and 2016. During that same period, the number of enterprises participating in apprenticeship training grew from barely 500 to 5 660.

On outreach, France stands out as a good example. In 2015 it is estimated that almost 80% of the YG target group (young people neither in employment, education nor training aged up to 25) were registered in the YG scheme. This figure is all the more impressive that France has a high rate of youth unemployment (24.4% in the second quarter of 2016, above the EU average of 18.8%).

SPECIAL FEATURE

A financial booster called YEI

The Youth Employment Initiative has helped kick-start the Youth Guarantee and should be prolonged until 2020



Emergency: the Youth Employment Initiative is helping young unemployed people directly and quickly in the worst hit regions.

The Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), which the European Council (Heads of State and governments) launched in February 2013, has become a key EU financial resource to support the provision of offers of employment and education in the context of Youth Guarantee (YG) schemes (see page 15). The YG Council Recommendation was adopted by the EU in April 2013.

The YEI total budget of €6.4 billion consists of €3.2 billion from a new YEI-specific EU budget line, matched by another €3.2 billion from the European Social Fund (ESF). It directly helps young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) living in regions experiencing youth unemployment rates above 25% in 2012. Thus it aims at tackling the immediate effects of the economic crisis on youth unemployment. Currently 20 of the 28 EU Member States are eligible for YEI support.

The YEI was committed upfront in 2014-2015. Member States could invest in implementing it retrospectively from 1 September 2013. Moreover, in 2015, the European Commission decided to forward € 930 million, in the form of advance payments, in an unprecedented response to a call by a number of YEI beneficiary EU Member States for more financial liquidity to get YEI actions going on the ground.

Mega-booster

As a result of all this, the YEI played the role of a mega-booster for the YG take-off. It helped implement some of the short-term aspects of the YG – directly helping young unemployed people as quickly as possible. As for the more medium to long-term

structural reforms which the YG entails, these receive substantial support under the ESF which targets not only people but also structural and systems reform.

Concretely, YEI direct support to young people is mostly contributing to training and support to gain a job, a qualification, apprenticeships and traineeships, short-term work placements and internships, job-seeking support, guidance and counselling, self-employment and entrepreneurship support, second chance education.

More than half of the eligible EU countries devote some YEI resources to supporting young entrepreneurs or offering job and training geographical mobility measures. And in some countries, the YEI is supporting the provision of loans and guarantees to young people so that they may become self-employed and set up their own business.

1.4 million young people

14 million young people have entered YG schemes since January 2014 and YEI actions had directly supported 1.4 million of them by July 2016. In several countries, people who have completed a YEI intervention have significantly improved their chance of finding a job or continuing their studies afterwards. In some countries, YEI measures are in higher-than-expected demand due to increasing interest on behalf of young people.

And this, despite the fact that the YEI implementation was somewhat held back at first by delays on the side of the

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Member States, to do with responding to the new legal requirements introduced in 2014 for the management of the European Investment and Structural Funds, including the ESF (as YEI money is managed in the framework of the ESF).

Of course, more needs to be done. Until now, EU countries have tended to focus on highly educated NEETs instead of low-skilled ones. Some have started to put in place additional measures to identify and engage with vulnerable groups (the low-skilled, people with disabilities, Roma people, refugees etc.), who may be harder to reach, by collaborating with NGOs or launching further activities targeting those groups more specifically. The quality of job and training offers must also be improved.

A second jolt

In October 2016, Marianne Thyssen, European Commissioner for employment, social affairs, skills and labour mobility, proposed to prolong the YEI budget by injecting a further €2 billion for 2017-2020.

Indeed, even though the employment situation of young people has improved overall, there remain a substantial number of regions which have high youth unemployment rates, some reaching as high as 50-60%.

More information:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1176>

Direct help to young people

Greece is financing two voucher schemes to provide young people aged up to 29 with first work experience, including theoretical training, and up to six months of work experience placements, including guidance/counselling.

In Italy, a partnership between the ministry of labour and social policy, the chamber of commerce, industry, handicraft, agriculture and Google developed a scheme called "Growing Digital". It included online training sessions, laboratory sessions and paid traineeships. Companies could receive incentives up to €6 000 for providing internship places. 3 000 such traineeships were planned.

Latvia is implementing until 2018 some initial Vocational Education and Training (VET) programmes for young people. They can participate in a second chance VET programme and acquire a second vocational qualification within one and a half years.

Poland has run the "Idea for Yourself" programme for NEETs aged 15-17 to return to education and training and help them acquire professional qualifications.



More vulnerable: Some countries have started to put in place additional measures to identify and engage with vulnerable groups, such as refugees.

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Traineeship – the quality challenge

The implementation of the Youth Guarantee is having an impact on traineeship quality in some countries

In half of the EU Member States, the quality of traineeships has been given a boost while the EU Youth Guarantee (YG, see page 15) was starting to be implemented: many of the YG schemes foresee traineeships as one of the four types of offers for young people, alongside employment, continuous education and an apprenticeship; and the YG Recommendation of 2013 insists that these offers must be of high quality.

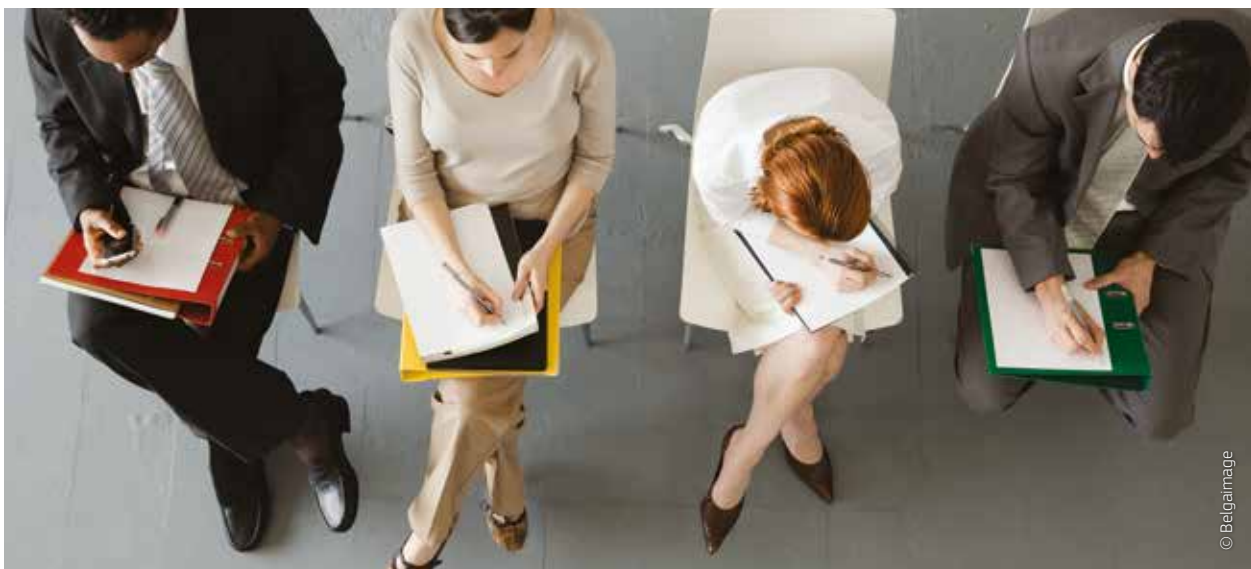
Quality in the context of traineeships applies to having a written traineeship agreement, having learning and training objectives, decent working conditions, transparency regarding financial conditions and hiring practices, a reasonable duration (ideally no more than six months) and proper recognition of what was achieved and learnt during the traineeship: 22 criteria altogether, which are listed in the EU Recommendation for a Quality

Framework for Traineeship (QFT) of 2014 and can be directly transposed into national legislation or social partner agreements.

A recommendation might sound like a “weak” instrument. However, the YG itself is also a recommendation and it is nevertheless being actively applied by all EU countries, driving important structural reforms in the process (see page 15). The QFT Recommendation has therefore benefited from the YG momentum. This is crucial as almost every second young person aged 18-35 had at least one traineeship experience in 2013.

Active labour market

YG implementation also means that a push was given to traineeships proposed by intermediary bodies like public employment



Speed dating for an internship: the EU Recommendation for a Quality Framework for Traineeship has benefited from the Youth Guarantee momentum.

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services, as part of active labour market policy measures. This has at least two advantages: such bodies can ensure the quality of the traineeships offered; and they can provide data on them.

Quality and data are more difficult to ensure when it comes to the second type of traineeships covered by the QFT Recommendation: “open market” ones, stemming from direct contact between an employer and a young person.

Insufficient learning content, lack of transparency (on financial conditions as well as concerning the number of trainees who are ultimately recruited by a company) and substandard working conditions: those three criteria alone are all the more an issue that traineeships are a crucial means for companies to test potential employees before recruiting them for good.

But reality is ruthless: the demand for traineeships on the part of young people far exceeds companies’ offer. For apprenticeships, which need to be much longer and combine full education with first work experience, it is the other way around: there are not enough young people.

EU help

Between 2013 and 2015, the European Commission undertook a series of initiatives to strengthen EU countries’ commitments to use ESF co-funding to support quality traineeships schemes during the new programming period 2014-2020 (see box).

Through Your First EURES Job and the Drop’pin platform, it is providing support for employment and training across borders, knowing that less than 10% of those who undertake a traineeship do so in another EU country.

Traineeship opportunities are also a part of the European Youth Portal, which is evolving into a platform for young people to engage with policy-makers and have their say on the issues that affect them. In 2015, the European Youth Forum, together with major businesses, launched an Employers’ Guide to Quality Internships.

Mind the gap

Three major challenges are still facing EU countries, two years after the adoption of the QFT. Regulating open market traineeships is one of them. Filling the remaining gaps in traineeship regulation is another, especially as far as the lack of transparency, the duration and the recognition of traineeships are concerned – as well as learning content, in the case of open market traineeships. And a third challenge is to improve cooperation with social partners.



Activation: a push was given to traineeships proposed by public employment services, as part of active labour market policy measures.

14 countries are moving

Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Spain France, Lithuania, Portugal and Sweden have undertaken legal changes to strengthen their national frameworks for traineeship along the lines of the EU Recommendation since it was adopted in 2014. And six others have reported that they plan to do so.

Some EU countries have programmed using ESF funds to support training. Under the Employment objective (€30.8 billion, 37% of ESF resources), over a third of the programming includes traineeships. This includes over €6.3 billion of ESF resources specifically dedicated to the sustainable integration of young people into the labour market.

Traineeships and apprenticeships represent a major share of actions directly supported by Youth Employment Initiative (YEI, see page 18) funding, which targets young people not in employment, education or training. Over 70% of the EU countries eligible to the YEI are implementing traineeships and apprenticeships measures.

Wage subsidies and measures to reduce non-wage labour costs are currently implemented with YEI support in over half of the Member States.

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Changing young people's lives

The stories of Evita (Latvia), Eduard (Romania), Elisa (Finland) and Nikolay (Bulgaria)



Assembling marble: Eduard came across a paid apprenticeship offer with a marble assembly company, attended stonemason classes and started working for the company.

Evita is from Latvia and dreamt of setting up her own accountancy company. “The Youth Guarantee study programme I am following gives me the tools I will need in the future”, she explained.

She wanted to go to college but could not afford the tuition fees. Fortunately, the Youth Guarantee (YG) stepped in, providing support which has enabled her to enroll in a course at a vocational High School.

The one-and-a-half year study programme will help Evita join the accountancy profession. As well as learning core accountancy skills, she is taking modules in economics, business management and finance. With YG support, she can now focus on a long-term professional career.

“Things are going great, and I’ve even received job offers, but my long-term goal is to start my own business.”

Evita learned about what the YG can offer by browsing the Latvian State Education and Development Agency website. The YG provided Evita with funding for the course, as well as general advice and help with filling in the application forms.

Marble stonecraft

“The Youth Guarantee was a real chance for me to reconsider my life and career choices,” says Eduard, who is from Romania. “It helped me step outside my comfort zone and become more independent.”

While Eduard was visiting the local employment office, a careers adviser explained to him what the Youth Guarantee was all about and the opportunities it could provide.

When he came across a paid apprenticeship offer with a local marble assembly company, Eduard applied immediately – and got the post! He attended stonemason classes and then started working for the company.

Before this, Eduard had been sending his cv to various employers and asking friends for references, but without success. He could not find work due to his lack of experience and education, since he had also dropped out of high school.

Currently Eduard has no job... but only temporarily! Now he can concentrate on the Baccalaureate. After that, he will go back to

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work in the company thanks to his supportive boss. The whole experience has filled Eduard with new-found confidence: not only did he learn new things but he even managed to save money for a new apartment.

Day care centre

A Start Workshop, an initiative supported by the YG in Finland, helped to make a huge difference in Elisa's life. Her therapist told her about this opportunity when she was suffering from depression and was unemployed for 1.5 years.

These workshops offer a flexible service to young people who need assistance and training to improve their educational attainment or find a job.

This experience led Elisa to secure a job trial at a day care centre, where she is now working as an apprentice.

"Although I had the strength and the will to take on more meaningful activities and to change the rhythm of my daily life in the final stages of rehabilitation, I still lacked the mental resources to work or to study," she says. "The Start Workshop was the right choice for me."

"I believe it has played a significant role in my rehabilitation. The fact that I've been forced to get out of the house several days a week to meet people, and practise my social skills, has been a vital part of the process."



Goldsmith craft: the Youth Guarantee can lead to a traineeship with a goldsmith.

In Finland, Start Workshops give participants the opportunity to learn new skills and build self-confidence. In addition, youth outreach workers are on hand, to guide young people to the services that are most appropriate to their needs.

Goldsmith

The area where Nikolay grew up in Bulgaria is dominated by the agriculture and service industries. Having studied music at school, and with his only work experience being at a petrol station, he struggled to find a permanent job and soon found himself unemployed.

Nikolay discovered the YG scheme after registering with Bulgaria's Labour Agency. The programme that caught his eye was called "New Opportunity for Youth Employment". It offers six-month traineeships tailored to the needs of the individual and is funded by the ESF and the YEI.

"I was quite intrigued by the scheme because it was a chance for me to find a job," he says. "There was the opportunity to learn a trade and have a profession I could develop further. There was also the chance to become more competitive in the labour market."

Nikolay spent his traineeship at Borisov 71, a goldsmith. There he assembled parts for various pieces of jewellery and decorative items. "I worked with a supervisor," he explains. "I learned the intricacies of the craft and how to make items from precious metal. I also learned how to work as part of a team."

He made a positive impression on his employers. "After my traineeship was finished, they offered me a permanent job. Since then I've really gained in confidence and self-esteem."

Nikolay's experience with the YG scheme has made the benefits for young people clear to him. "The scheme gives young people a chance to receive training and find a job," he concludes. "They can get support from a professional in the workplace, gain experience of a certain trade and gain confidence."

More information:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=669&langId=en>.

See also pages 27 and 28.

FUND FOR EUROPEAN AID

Plugging a gap in EU cohesion policy

The number of deprived people supported by FEAD in 2014 significantly exceeds the initial forecast

25% of Europeans are at risk of poverty. In 2014, the year the EU Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) was created, they were 122.3 million.

By the end of 2014, on the basis of EU Member States' estimates, almost 11 million people had benefited from FEAD. 51% of them were women and approximately a quarter (3 million) were children aged from 0 to 15 years. 1.2 million were people aged 65 plus. 621 979 were people with disabilities, 719 708 were people with a non-EU background, including refugees, or belonging to minorities and 69 451 were homeless people.

Still in 2014, eight EU countries (Belgium, Spain, France, Lithuania, Romania, Poland, Portugal and Slovenia) distributed 228 707 tonnes of food, with Romania accounting for 42.3% of this amount, France for 28.8% and Spain for 21.3% (new figures are coming in for 2015). And there is evidence that most EU Member States implemented FEAD programmes in 2015.

Outreach

€3.8 billion have been earmarked for FEAD co-funding with EU countries until 2020. Within these budgetary limits, FEAD programmes are designed to immediately alleviate the worst forms of poverty, experienced by the people who are the most difficult to reach.

It is up to each country to decide who it wants to target in particular and how to go about it, either directly or through partner organisations, whether public or non-governmental. They can also decide whether to provide material (food, clothes, shoes, shampoo...) or non-material assistance – or both, so long as the latter does not overlap with measures co-funded by the European Social Fund (ESF).

However, FEAD beneficiaries can be informed about training programmes funded by the ESF and how to access them. Indeed, EU countries must combine FEAD-funded assistance with social integration measures, such as guidance and support: helping people

managing their family budget, have a balanced diet, referring them to the appropriate social services, providing individual counselling and workshops on available programmes for a healthy lifestyle and coping with stress, providing psychological and therapeutic support and generally help them get within reach of labour market inclusion measures of the type supported by the ESF.

24 Member States have chosen to implement food and basic material assistance programmes and four (Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden) use FEAD to co-fund social inclusion activities.

Capacity-building

For those countries that work in partnership with non-profit organisations, FEAD supports capacity-building within those organisations in the area of social policy, to make them better equipped to help the most deprived persons. In the majority of countries, assistance purchase is organised centrally, through procurement procedures, and the assistance itself is delivered and distributed by partner organisations.



11 million beneficiaries: By the end of 2014, almost 11 million people had benefited from FEAD, according to EU countries' estimates.



More than just food: The provision of food can be an opportunity to establish other forms of support and initiate social integration.

In 2014, in the majority of cases, the most deprived people were identified on the basis of strictly economic criteria, as a way of preventing discrimination based on gender, origin, religion or belief, disability or sexual orientation. Bulgaria and Malta also included social criteria, such as families with children and single parents.

Complementarity

FEAD took over from the food distribution programme for the Most Deprived Persons (MDP) which, since 1987, had made the EU agricultural surpluses available to EU countries wishing to use them as food aid. But successive reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy led to the end of MDP.

By contrast, FEAD involves all 28 EU Member States. Its multi-annual character allows for a more strategic approach. It is also much more flexible in terms of procuring the food to be distributed. And its “social inclusion” dimension makes it a useful complement to the EU’s cohesion policy and its other co-funding instruments, which is key considering FEAD’s modest budget.

Complementarity with the other aspects of cohesion policy is all the more important that FEAD provides dedicated support to people who may not be in a position to directly access, and benefit from, other EU funds.

More information

(easily accessible via the on-line version of Social Agenda):
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1089>

FEAD in France

In the country where comedian and actor Michel Colucci (known as Coluche) created the “Restos du Coeur” (the Restaurants of the Heart) back in 1985, 8.5 million people were living below the EU poverty threshold in September 2014, according to the national statistical office Insee (8.7 million people in 2011, according to Eurostat). In 2014-2015, the “Restos du Coeur” distributed 128.5 million meals (over 1 billion, in total, since 1985).

Eurostat research in 2012 found that 8.2% of the French population were unable to finance a meal which included meat, fish or a vegetarian equivalent every two days. The FEAD programme in France therefore focuses on providing food assistance to people in need. It finances the purchase, storage and transport of food aid which is then distributed to the most deprived people through partner organisations.

It distributes food for free to the most deprived (including migrants and refugees) in many forms: e.g. in the streets, in shelters or hostels, and at food distribution premises. The provision of food also offers an opportunity to establish other forms of support and, when appropriate, initiate social integration.

OTHER
VOICES

A stronger Youth Guarantee needed to make the difference for young people



Priority to quality: "The quality of offers must be a priority if young people are to be guaranteed a real opportunity to enter and stay in the labour market"- Marianna Georgallis.

Europe will only thrive if all young people have access to quality jobs. Currently, this is not the case with nearly 1 in 5 young people out of work. This has huge economic and social costs for European states, now and in the future. Failure to reduce inequalities in society harms the whole economy and impacts social cohesion. At this critical time, Europe cannot afford this risk.

Investment in quality job creation is the key to addressing youth unemployment. Yet, successful policies that support young people's transition from school to work are equally necessary. The European Youth Forum fully believes in the potential of the Youth Guarantee as one such policy. We call for continued investment, politically and financially, in the scheme so that it can make more of a difference to the lives of all young people.

The Youth Guarantee has to continue so that it becomes a long-term, sustainable and preventative measure for youth employment. The European Commission's report on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee shows clear progress. With 9 million young people having taken up an offer of a job or further training, it is clear that it is starting to reap rewards.

The Youth Guarantee is changing the way countries tackle youth unemployment. The European Commission's report shows that in many Member States it has triggered a rethink of traditional approaches, through its emphasis on early intervention, targeted measures, and the importance of partnerships.

Quality a priority

But more must be done to make the Youth Guarantee the real success it has the promise to be; the quality of offers must be a priority if young people are to be guaranteed a real opportunity to enter and stay in the labour market. 4.2 million young people (under 25) are still unemployed in the EU whilst 6.6 million young people are not in education, employment or training. But there are also many more that are at risk of poverty and social exclusion. The Youth Guarantee is not doing enough to reach these excluded groups, such as young migrants and those stuck in long-term unemployment. The Commission's own report highlights this as a gap in implementation and echoes the recommendations of the Youth Forum when it comes to the inclusiveness of the scheme. Targeted measures to reach these young people as well as the involvement of Youth organisations, in a consistent and comprehensive way, are necessary to ensure the scheme reaches all.

EU funding in the form of the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) is instrumental in achieving all this. EU financial support makes a difference and the revision of the EU budget currently taking place is the opportunity to ensure this support continues. The European Commission's proposal for the YEI in the revision of the Multi-Annual Financial Framework of 1 billion euros is not enough. We call on the European Union and its Member States to add to this in order to reach at least the same amount that was available in the first two years (3.2 billion euros YEI and European Social Fund per year).

Changing mentalities, implementing structural reforms and building partnerships takes time and investment and not continuing EU funding adequately now risks losing all the work already done.

Marianna Georgallis

Policy and Advocacy Coordinator, European Youth Forum

INTERVIEW



Social innovation: "We will be asked to deliver more, using fewer resources; social innovation is one way to do that"~ Loris di Pietrantonio.

Loris Di Pietrantonio is head of the European Commission's ESF and FEAD policy and legislation unit

Linking funds to policy objectives

In 2013 you published a book called "If this is a son", echoing the title of a book written by Nazi concentration camp survivor Primo Levi, "If this is a man". You are an economist by training: A humanist economist?

I started writing it as a diary in 2006. It was a letter to my father about issues such as rising inequalities and increasingly precarious labour markets, two elements that in my view were to weigh well into the future. I was lucky enough to grow up in a society which provided opportunities at a time of economic growth. Now I am worried for the young who have to make their way in a society where opportunities need to be reinvented. The book was about how can both our generations strike a new deal, make sacrifices, come together to support sustainable changes and reinvent opportunities. I have always been concerned by the concrete outcome of economic decisions on real people. Coming from a small village in the Italian Apennine Mountains, this has always meant for me a seasonal reality check with small numbers, knowing whether less lucky friends and acquaintances have lost jobs, moved out or completely reinvented themselves, often thanks to our programmes. Whatever I do at work, I always think of what it might mean to individuals.

Your present challenge has very much to do with making EU funds respond to policy goals...

This is becoming more evident in the discussion on having a budget focused on results. In the current socio-economic context we will be asked to deliver more, using fewer resources. Innovation –and particularly social innovation– is one way to do that. Our funding can be a powerful incentive for EU countries to renew their social models, so that they may both address today's challenges and carry on supporting their people. Targeted approaches are crucial to both actively include people into the labour market and ensure the effective use of resources. For example, the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI, see page 18) and the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD, page 24) are extremely targeted and therefore make a visible difference in people's lives. The YEI is also having a structural impact: it provides financial incentive to countries which did not have a culture of activation – to reform structures, reach out to the most excluded people and channel them through employability pathways (see page 14 onwards). The key question for the future is how to further strengthen delivery by our funds, given social, employment and economic expectations. I'm glad to be part of this adventure.



Labour Market and Wage Developments in Europe - Annual Review 2016

The Labour Market and Wage Developments in Europe report analyses the labour market from a macroeconomic perspective. It provides an analysis of recent employment and wage developments, looking at the euro area and the EU as a whole in comparison with its global trading partners. The 2016 edition shows that job creation continued to progress in 2015 and 2016 and analyses the reasons behind this improvement. The report also focuses on the macroeconomic implications of statutory minimum wages in the EU and surveys the institutional minimum wage setting mechanisms in place in EU Member States.

Catalogue N° KE-BN-16-001-EN-N



Updating of the Labour Market Model

The aim of this study is to allow the Commission to update the calibration and further operationalize the existing Labour Market Model. This model has been set up by external experts in order to improve the European Commission's understanding of transmission mechanisms of labour market policies in the context of the European Employment Strategy. The Labour Market Model is used to provide a theoretical and empirical basis for identifying the possible direction and intensity of the effects of labour market policies. It uses actual economic data to estimate how an economy might react to changes in labour market policies or other policy reforms or external factor.

Catalogue N° KE-06-16-072-EN-N



First results of the Youth Employment Initiative - Final Report

The Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) launched in 2013 provides funding of €6.4 billion to support youth employment by targeting young people aged below 25 years (or below 29 in some Member States) who are not in employment, education or training and who reside in the regions of the European Union particularly affected by unemployment. This study provides an overview of the implementation progress of the YEI from September 2013 to the end of November 2015 across the 20 eligible Member States. It also includes an in-depth analysis for a sample of countries and key points from the national evaluations. An executive summary is also available in English and in French.

Catalogue N° KE-01-16-710-EN-N



How are refugees faring on the labour market in Europe? Working Paper 1/2016

This paper is a joint effort by the OECD and the European Commission to make a first evaluation of the situation of refugees in the labour market. It is based on the 2014 EU Labour Force Survey. Available evidence confirms that refugees are one of the most vulnerable groups when it comes to labour market integration but shows, however, significant differences across European countries..

Catalogue N° KE-EW-16-001-EN-N

Useful websites

The website of Commissioner Thyssen: http://ec.europa.eu/commission/2014-2019/thyssen_en

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>

To subscribe to the 'Social Agenda' magazine or to other publications of DG Employment,

Social Affairs and Inclusion, please fill in the registration form available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=740&langId=en>

