

# Citizens' summary

## EU Commission proposes Youth Employment Package

### WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

- The youth unemployment situation in the EU is dramatic and shows no signs of improvement:
  - More than 1 in 5 young people on the labour market cannot find a job.
  - 7.5 million young people (aged 15-24) are not working, are not in school or training.
  - 30.1% of the unemployed under 25 have been out of work for more than 12 months.
- In 2011, the Commission adopted the Youth Opportunities Initiative<sup>1</sup> – which called for a stronger partnership between the Commission and national governments, particularly in countries with the highest youth unemployment rates.
- In 2012, the EU Council gave most member countries specific recommendations on how to fight youth unemployment.
- The Commission is now proposing a Youth Employment Package that focuses on ways to:
  - smooth the transition between school and work through youth guarantee schemes – so that, within 4 months of leaving school or losing a job, under-25s receive a quality offer of employment, continuing education, an apprenticeship or traineeship;
  - ensure that traineeships offer high-quality work experience under safe conditions;
  - improve the quality and supply of apprenticeships;
  - give young people more opportunities to work and train abroad.

### WHAT EXACTLY WILL CHANGE?

- EU countries will be asked to set up a Youth Guarantee scheme with EU funding help.
- Traineeships will be of better quality in terms of learning content and social protection.
- European Alliance for Apprenticeships will expand successful apprenticeship schemes across the EU.
- It will be easier for young Europeans to find a job, traineeship or apprenticeship in another EU country.

### WHO WILL BENEFIT AND HOW?

**More young people** will have easier access to jobs, education & training and therefore a better quality of life. Of course employers will also benefit through better-qualified job candidates and hiring support.

### WHY DOES ACTION HAVE TO BE TAKEN BY THE EU?

The EU level can provide both financial means, in particular through the European Social Fund<sup>2</sup>, and policy guidance to Member States to fight high youth unemployment.

Under the 2011 Youth Opportunities Initiative, €10 billion still available was targeted in the 8 EU countries with the highest youth unemployment rates, covering job subsidies, vocational training, and early-school-leaving prevention. At least 658000 young people and 56,000 small businesses are likely to benefit.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1006&langId=en>

<sup>2</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=325>

Interaction at EU level allows member countries to learn from each other about what works and what doesn't. The EU can point up existing policies or systems that are successful, such as company-based apprenticeships or quality traineeship programmes.

Because only a limited number of EU countries have begun implementing comprehensive Youth Guarantee schemes, the Commission will issue a formal recommendation that they do so.

The Commission is working on a quality framework for traineeships to allay concerns that traineeships might be misused as a source of cheap or free labour, that they fail to provide adequate learning content and that they might lead to a vicious circle of precarious employment. Employer and employee organisations will be invited to negotiate such a framework. Otherwise the Commission will propose one on its own.

Efforts to encourage young people to study and/or work in another country – giving them more job, apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities – are most effective at EU level.

#### **WHEN IS THE PACKAGE LIKELY TO COME INTO EFFECT?**

- **February 2013**
  - National governments are expected to have adopted the recommendation and begun implementing a Youth Guarantee scheme.
  - Employer and employee organisations might begin negotiating the quality framework on traineeships.
- **Summer 2013**
  - European Alliance for Apprenticeships will promote successful apprenticeship schemes and develop common curricula for professions & ways to recognise apprenticeships undertaken abroad.
  - Depending on the outcome of any negotiations, the Commission will propose a quality framework for traineeships.