



Brussels, dne 6.2.2014
C(2014) 627 final

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senát for its Opinion concerning the Youth Employment Initiative {COM(2013) 144 final} and would like to express its gratitude for the support of the Senát for its initiatives to fight youth unemployment.

The Commission shares the view expressed by the Senát that the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) should be implemented in a speedy and effective manner, ensuring quick disbursement of funds on the ground. As agreed by the European Council on 27-28 June 2013, in order for the YEI to play its full role, the funds allocated to it should be made available during the first two years of the next Multiannual Financial Framework. With regard to alleviating the administrative burden related to the implementation of these actions, the Commission would like to point out that all provisions related to the simplification of the implementation of the European Social Fund in the next programming period will also apply in the context of the YEI. In this respect, the use of simplified cost options such as lump sums and unit scale costs is notable. These improvements should significantly facilitate the implementation of some of the YEI activities such as training and apprenticeship activities.

The Commission would also like to clarify that the European Social Fund already supports the range of measures envisaged under the YEI. However, the Commission would like to ensure that the additional support provided through the YEI targets the neediest and most affected regions, where youth unemployment rates are above 25%. The YEI is therefore intended to enhance and supplement the measures already supported by the ESF and national budgets as part of a comprehensive effort to address youth unemployment.

The Commission fully shares the view of the Senát regarding the important role of education systems in addressing the underlying causes of youth unemployment and the need for such systems to react swiftly to the changing needs of the labour market. Several of the youth initiatives that will be supported by the YEI target the causes of the problem. In particular, the Youth Guarantee is a crucial structural reform to facilitate the transition of young people from school to work and enhance their employability. This requires a strengthening of cooperation between institutions and across policy sectors.

*Mr Milan ŠTĚCH
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The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the concerns raised by the Senát and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*