



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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C(2016) 1228 final*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senat for its Opinion on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions 'Draft 2015 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field' {COM(2015) 429 final}.

The Commission Communication on the 2015 EU Youth Report is a policy document within the context of the EU Youth Strategy. It evaluates progress made towards the overall objectives of the Strategy, namely to provide more and equal opportunities for young people in education and the job market; and to encourage young people to actively participate in society. It also judges how well the more specific priorities of the previous work cycle under the Strategy have been implemented and helps establish new priorities for the following work cycle.

The Communication draws a picture of contrast: while young people are higher educated, they frequently face difficulties to be included in society – as workers, as autonomous members of their communities and as citizens. Especially some groups have been hit hard: low educational achievers and young people with a migrant background or with health issues are at greater risk of becoming a NEET (neither in employment, nor education or training); and obstacles tend to accumulate for those who struggle with disadvantages in the first place.

The Communication recognises the need to counter the risks of exclusion, marginalisation or violent radicalisation. This is why it calls for giving priority to the inclusion of all young people in all aspects of society, work as well as social and civic activities. The ultimate purpose is to allow all young people to become active and engaged members in society.

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The Council has broadly endorsed the Commission proposal when adopting the EU Youth Report and an EU Work Plan for youth 2016-2018 on 23 November 2015.¹ It has decided that the future work cycle of the Youth Strategy should focus on:

- increased social inclusion of all young people, taking into account the underlying European values;*
- stronger participation of all young people in democratic and civic life in Europe;*
- easier transition of young people from youth to adulthood, in particular the integration into the labour market.*

The target groups to be reached are young people at risk of marginalisation, young people neither in employment, nor education or training, and young people with a migrant background, including newly arrived immigrants and young refugees. The EU work plan for youth foresees quickly setting up an expert group on the contribution of youth work to prevent youth marginalisation and radicalisation; and another expert group will work later on the issue of young migrants and refugees.

The EU Youth Report also underlines the need for a comprehensive approach to match the youth challenges ahead. As underlined by the Senat, this requires backing by all possible instruments and various financial sources, such as the Erasmus+ programme, the Youth Guarantee and EU funding instruments with greater outreach.

The Commission welcomes and shares the views expressed by the Senat in its Opinion, which underlines the need to promote priorities such as social inclusion or labour market integration for all young people. They coincide with the priorities outlined above. The Commission will continue to work with Member States towards their implementation.

The Commission hopes that the clarifications provided in this reply address the issues raised by the Senat and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Tibor Navracsics
Member of the Commission*

¹ 2015 Joint Report and EU Work Plan for Youth 2016-2018 have been published in the Official Journal of the European Union C417 of 15 December 2015.