Promoting youth entrepreneurship through education and training

2015/2006(INI) - 22/07/2015 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Culture and Education adopted an own-initiative report by Michaela ŠOJDROVÁ (EPP, CZ) on promoting youth entrepreneurship through education and training.

Members recalled that in February 2015, 4.85 million young people were unemployed in the EU-28, which is unacceptably high, and although youth unemployment is diminishing – it has decreased by 494 000 compared with February 2014 – this is taking place at too slow a pace. They recalled that the fiscal consolidation of the Member States mainly affected by the crisis should not be carried out at the expense of jobs occupied by young people.

Emphasis on entrepreneurial skills and competences: acknowledging the important role of lifelong learning and international mobility, Members called on the Member States to **promote entrepreneurial skills for young people through legislative action** aimed at ensuring quality traineeships focusing on quality learning and adequate working conditions. They stressed the need for a broad and clear definition of the key competence ‘a sense of initiative and entrepreneurship’, which involves fostering an entrepreneurial mind-set characterised by pro-activeness, creativity, innovation and risk-taking. They also stressed the need for a broad approach to entrepreneurship as a set of transversal key competences for personal and professional purposes.

Members are convinced that entrepreneurial skills and competences as well as transversal, cross-sector, occupation-specific and job-specific skills and competences should be promoted in order to **increase the rates of youth self-employment** and to provide the young generation with a real opportunity to **start their own businesses**.

The next step needed is to specify in detail how the key competences framework can be further implemented appropriately at each level of education. At all levels and types of education the teaching of practical entrepreneurship skills and the fostering of motivation, sense of initiative and readiness should be provided, along with a sense of social responsibility. Modules in basic finance, economics and business environment should be integrated into school curricula, and should be accompanied by mentoring, tutoring and career guidance for students, including disadvantaged learners.

Members emphasised the need to: (i) develop innovative **pedagogies** that are more participative and learner-centred, (ii) encourage dual training and company-sponsored study programmes; (iii) encourage full engagement and partnership among all stakeholders, and in particular local entrepreneurial organisations, businesses and educational institutions, as well as the **private sector**.

Members emphasised the importance of equipping all young people with ICT competences and with transversal and entrepreneurial skills enabling them to fully exploit the potential of the digital world.

They also stressed the need to:

- improve the entrepreneurial culture within tertiary education by supporting and facilitating the creation of new companies by young people on the basis of academic research;
- highlight the crucial role played by various associations of young businesspeople in fostering entrepreneurship among young people.

Role of the EU institutions – coordination, methodology and financial tools: Members called on the Council and the Commission to develop methodological support and tools to encourage youth entrepreneurship.

In particular, **the Commission is called upon to**:

- increase the amount of support for young entrepreneurs under the European Structural and Investment Funds;
- establish entrepreneurial traineeships and exchange programmes, in order to give young people opportunities to gain hands-on experience;
- elaborate a comprehensive strategy for developing transversal skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, initiative, collaboration, cooperation, self-direction, planning, leadership and team-building;
- increase the focus on improving the development and assessment of transversal skills, including entrepreneurship and digital competence, within the Erasmus+ programme;
- support the monitoring of ICT skills, problem-solving skills and financial literacy;
- support partnerships between educational institutions and companies via the use of the European Fund for Strategic Investment and, in particular, the European Social Fund;
- support a European Entrepreneurship Education Network, on lines such as those of the European Entrepreneurship Education NETwork (EEHUB).

The future Erasmus+ programme should contain the following elements in the next financial period (post2020) in all its actions:

- promotion of better-defined learning contents and tools for formal and non-formal education targeting all students;
- support for the initial qualifications of teachers, educators, youth workers, coaches and education leaders;
- promotion of partnerships between educational institutions, enterprises, non-profit organisations, regional and local authorities and non-formal education providers, in order to devise suitable courses;
- development of skills in the areas of entrepreneurial processes, financial literacy, ICT literacy and skills, creative thinking, creativity, creative utility, problem- solving and an innovative mindset;
- highlighting of non-formal and informal learning as a privileged environment to acquire entrepreneurship competences.

Overall, the Commission is called upon to encourage better cooperation and exchange of good practices between Member States.

Role of the Member States: Members stated that Member States should endeavour to promote the development of training for launching and managing start-ups, including expert mentorship, incubators and accelerators, social enterprise projects working with local communities, and all entrepreneurship-friendly environments which will facilitate young people's start-ups (including disadvantaged young people).

Measures have been taken to promote **access to finance** at every stage. Members called on the Member States, as well as regional and local authorities, to use all existing EU-level funding resources, such as the European Social Fund, the European Youth Employment Initiative, the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI), the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme and the EU programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (COSME), to encourage and support initiatives.

Member States are encouraged to involve private partners in entrepreneurship education, through funding or providing training, as an aspect of their corporate social responsibility.

Member States should endeavour to eliminate bureaucracy regarding the implementation of business plans by young people, and consider tax relief measures and measures to encourage them to create their own business ideas. Access to credit and special grants should be facilitated.

Initiatives should be taken to offer innovative students increased access to scholarships and micro-loan schemes.

Member States are called upon to increase awareness of self-employment and business creation for **young people with disabilities**, through actions such as promoting the career paths of people with disabilities who have already been integrated into the labour market.

Follow-up steps: Members called on the Commission to submit an evaluation report to Parliament by the end of its term on the progress achieved in promoting youth entrepreneurship through education and training and how much it managed to reach out to **members of vulnerable social groups**.