Assessment of the EU youth strategy 2013-2015

2015/2351(INI) - 27/10/2016 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 432 votes to 131 with 55 abstentions a resolution on the assessment of the EU Youth Strategy 2013-2015, in response to the 2015 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018).

To recall, the EU Youth Strategy (2010-2018) has **eight main fields** of action in which initiatives should be taken – education and training, employment and entrepreneurship, health and well-being, participation, voluntary activities, social inclusion, youth and the world as well as creativity and culture.

General recommendations: Parliament recommended making sure that the different programmes at EU level dealing with youth policies are well communicated, implemented, coordinated, in order to respond to new needs with a view to the social and educational challenges to come. It views the **open method of coordination** as an appropriate but still insufficient as a means for framing youth policies that needs to be complemented by other measures. Members reiterated their call for **closer cooperation and exchange of best practices** on youth issues at local, regional, national and EU level, as well as **clear indicators** and benchmarks in order to allow for monitoring of progress.

Priorities for the next cycle (2016-2018): given the EU's **alarmingly high youth unemployment**, the high percentages of young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs), and the challenges of youth poverty and social exclusion, Parliament stressed that the next cycle (2016-2018) should contribute to the two objectives of the EU Youth Strategy:

- by identifying and tackling the causes of youth unemployment, such as **early school leaving** (the Europe 2020 headline target whereby the proportion of early leavers from education and training should be less than 10 %);
- by **fostering entrepreneurship** among young people;
- by investing in **education, internships, apprenticeships** and vocational training in the skills that reflect labour market opportunities, needs and developments;
- by facilitating the **transition to the labour market** in terms of measures ensuring better coordination of education programmes, employment policy and labour market demands.

The resolution also stressed the importance of the following:

- guaranteeing that young people are either in employment, in education or undergoing vocational (re) training **at the latest, four months** after leaving school;
- ensuring that the next cycle Strategy includes **young refugees and asylum seekers** under its objectives;
- ensuring the inclusion of youth with **disability** in employment;
- lifting as many young people as possible out of **poverty** and social exclusion;
- high-quality cooperation, geared to the needs of the individual child or young person, including between families, religious communities and schools, and local communities, in **guiding young people towards full integration** in society;
- strengthening **dialogue with young people and their capacity to participate in society**, and involving young people and youth organisations in shaping the priorities and drafting a new EU Youth Cooperation Framework after 2018;
- promoting a **EU dimension in education** with the aim of preparing learners to live and work in an increasingly complex and integrated Union.

Employment and education: Parliament called on Member States to make the best use of available EU and national policies and financial frameworks in order to promote appropriate investment in young people and the creation of quality and secure jobs. It insisted on the need to:

- fully implement the Erasmus+ programme, especially its apprenticeships facet;
- improve opportunities for vocational education and training (VET) students to do **work placements in neighbouring countries** ;
- **boost information and communication technologies (ICT) training** in order to equip all young people with the relevant skills and basic digital skills useful for the labour market;
- pursue youth and education programmes that **empower young women and girls** in traditionally male-dominated sectors where they are under-represented, such as entrepreneurship, ICT, and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM);
- continue the **Youth Employment Initiative** (YEI) and ensure better coordination at all levels between education and training curricula and the needs of the changing labour markets;
- ensure better coordination at all levels between education and training curricula and the needs of the changing labour markets;
- implement measures to facilitate young people's **transition from education to work**, including by ensuring quality internships and apprenticeships;
- take measures to **incentivise entrepreneurship in all forms of education** by creating a more entrepreneur- and start-up-friendly environment for the launch of business start-ups, and enhance the role of the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme;
- encourage Member States to establish quality dual education and vocational training systems.

Financial resources: Parliament underlined the importance of strategic investment, including from the **European Structural and Investment Funds**, in particular the European Social Fund, for regional development, competitiveness and the creation of high-quality traineeships, apprenticeships and sustainable jobs.

Members called for **targeted and simplified measures** to enhance Member State capacity to make use of available funding through the European Structural Funds, the European Social Fund, the European Regional Development Fund, the European Cohesion Fund, the European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI), the Youth Employment Initiative, Youth on the Move, Your First Eures Job, Horizon 2020 and programmes and actions in the area of citizenship.

Member States were urged to fully **implement and monitor the effectiveness of the Youth Guarantee**. This guarantee should also focus on education and training for unskilled or low-skilled unemployed young people, so as also to cover young graduates and those who have completed vocational training. The age limit under the Youth Guarantee should go from 25 to 29.

Lastly, Parliament felt that the European Job Mobility Portal (EURES) required changes, in order to improve youth employment opportunities and achieve greater social cohesion.