Implementation report on the EU youth strategy

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The Committee on Culture and Education adopted an own-initiative report by Eider GARDIAZABAL RUBIAL (S&D, ES) on the implementation of the European Union's youth strategy.

This implementation report aims to provide ideas for a **more coordinated and focused EU strategy for sustainable youth**.

Giving a voice to young people in the EYS: Members recommended that the future EYS should be participatory and **centred around young people**.

The EU should express **solidarity** with young people and continue to empower them to participate in society by developing specific measures, such as mainstreaming volunteering, supporting youth work, developing new tools – especially those involving new technologies – and promoting exchanges based on solidarity, community engagement, free space and democratic dialogue.

In this regard, Members stressed the importance of **non-formal and informal learning**, as well as participation in sport and volunteering activities, in stimulating the development of civic, social and intercultural competences and skills among young Europeans.

Young people, especially young people with fewer opportunities, should be able to play an **active role in public life** and participate in decision-making processes at EU level. In parallel, social partners, civil society organisations and the education sector should be widely consulted.

Furthermore, Member States should encourage the participation of national, regional and local decision-makers in the structured dialogue with young people. The latter should systematically reach an increasing and diversified number of categories of young people, and sufficient financial support should be provided to national and European working groups for this purpose.

Equal opportunities for securing sustainable inclusion in the labour market: in view of the persistent high youth unemployment rates throughout the Union, Members recalled that **employment and the creation of quality jobs** should be guaranteed and remain among the key commitments towards young people. In this regard, they called for measures to facilitate the transition of young people from education to work by ensuring **quality internships and apprenticeships**.

The Commission and the Member States should:

- promote **structural reforms of the labour market** as well as fair working conditions and pay;
- encourage cross-border professional and vocational opportunities, to expand and increase investment in the VET sector;
- support regional and local authorities and to invest in **new life opportunities for young people**, to support youth entrepreneurship and to foster the social inclusion of young people for the benefit of their communities;
- supervise establishments that repeatedly offer consecutive internships without following them up with jobs;
- establish innovative and flexible grants for nurturing talent and artistic and sporting ability in the field of education and training.

Members welcomed the fact that the **Youth Employment Initiative** (YEI) measures have supported more than 1.6 million young people. More effort and financial commitments are necessary.

The report stressed the need to improve the awareness of **young people who are not working, studying or training**, as well as the quality of youth guarantee offers, by setting clear quality criteria and standards, including access to social protection, minimum income and employment rights.

Sustainable development: the future of youth: Members considered that access to quality education at all levels should be guaranteed for all Europeans. Furthermore, the inclusion of new skills and competences in education - such as citizenship, critical thinking and entrepreneurship - should be encouraged.

Deeply concerned at the particularly acute problem of **child poverty**, which affects up to 25 million children in the EU, Members called on the Commission to develop a Child Guarantee as a long-term tool to offer equal opportunities to all children in the EU. Solutions should also be adopted to address the phenomenon of **early school leaving**.

The Commission and the Member States are invited to:

- support initiatives which aim to **foster active and critical citizenship**, respect, tolerance, values and intercultural learning;
- encourage initiatives with formal education and informal learning to support young people's innovation, **creativity and entrepreneurship** and to promote cohesion and understanding between young people of different groups;
- take measures to stop **cyberbullying**, which affects the mental well-being of young people, in particular by developing appropriate digital skills starting from primary school;
- invest in **mental health programmes** and encourage relevant actors to help young people who suffer the adverse effects of stress on their well-being, whether at school, in training or in the labour market;
- promote **sports activities** in extracurricular programmes and raise awareness among young people through nutrition campaigns;
- promote **intercultural dialogue in sport**, in particular through the creation of platforms involving young people, refugees and migrants.

Stronger alignment and support from funding instruments: European programmes should be strengthened, improved, promoted and well financed with a long-term and coordinated vision in order to deliver strong results.

Members also called for a **significant increase in the YEI allocation** under the next multiannual financial framework (MFF) and on the Member States to make provisions for youth employment schemes in their national budgets Lastly, they underlined the need to extend the eligible age limit from 25 to 29.