Resolution on the Youth Guarantee

2020/2764(RSP) - 08/10/2020 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 574 votes to 77, with 43 abstentions, a resolution on the Youth Guarantee.

Since 2013, the Youth Guarantee has helped over 24 million young people (aged between 15 and 24) to find employment or to participate in a continuing education, apprenticeship or traineeship programme.

With the youth unemployment rate at 17.6% in the EU in August 2020 (up from 14.9% before the COVID-19 crisis), Parliament called for an enhanced Youth Guarantee scheme for 2021-2027.

Binding instrument

Firstly, Members deplored the voluntary nature of the Youth Guarantee (currently a Council recommendation) and called on the Commission to propose a Youth Guarantee instrument that is binding for all Member States.

Reinforced Youth Guarantee

Parliament stressed that a reinforced Youth Guarantee should overcome the shortcomings of the previous approach, which was based on employability, and must be conceived as a path aimed at ensuring, within a reasonable time, quality and permanent jobs for all young people involved.

The Youth Guarantee has been extended to cover a wider age bracket to include all people under 30. The resolution also welcomed the inclusion of a gender dimension in the Youth Guarantee, however, the gender gap still remains.

Parliament also suggested adopting a differentiated approach vis-à-vis longer-term NEETs, who often come from a disadvantaged socio-economic background and face intersectional discrimination in education and employment, among other areas of life, and for whom effective outreach programmes should be launched.

Quality employment and fair remuneration

Member States are urged to ensure that young people who register for the Youth Guarantee schemes are proposed good-quality, varied and tailored job, training, apprenticeship or internship offers, including fair remuneration, fair and equal treatment as regards working conditions, including ensuring a work environment adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities, and probation periods of a reasonable duration, as well as prohibiting abuse of atypical contracts.

Parliament insisted that under no circumstances should offers under the reinforced Youth Guarantee contribute to social dumping, wage dumping, in-work poverty or precariousness for young people. Internship contracts should take the form of written, legally binding agreements.

The Commission is called on to review existing European instruments such as the Quality Framework for Traineeships and the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships and to insert quality criteria for the offers made to young people, including the principle of fair remuneration for trainees and interns, access to social protection, sustainable employment and social rights.

In this regard, the Commission and the Member States, in collaboration with Parliament, and while respecting the principle of subsidiarity, to propose possible ways forward for the introduction of a common legal instrument ensuring and enforcing fair remuneration for internships, traineeships and apprenticeships in the EU’s labour market.

EU portal

Parliament called on the Commission to explore the idea of an EU web portal specifically dedicated to traineeships and apprenticeships in the EU, bringing together all existing EU initiatives in a visible, accessible and user-friendly portal. This portal shall be adequately publicised through appropriate channels to target its audiences, with a view to putting it in the spotlight for young Europeans, educational institutes and companies throughout the EU.

Financing

During the next programming period, 2021-2027, the Youth Guarantee shall be financed through the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), now encompassing the Youth Employment Initiative, which is the main funding programme of the Youth Guarantee.

The Commission's amended proposal of 28 May 2020 on the ESF+ obliges Member States whose NEET rate exceeds the EU average rate in 2019 to allocate at least 15% of their ESF+ resources under shared management to targeted actions to promote youth employment. Parliament deplored the fact that, in its conclusions of 21 July 2020, the European Council significantly reduced this amount to 10%, which is wholly contradictory to the Union's ambition to invest in youth.

The resolution insisted that the financing for the Youth Guarantee should be strengthened, by means of an increased ESF+ and adequate thematic concentrations. It stressed the importance of maximising potential synergies between the Youth Guarantee and other relevant EU funds and instruments.