

Background note for the LI COSAC

Youth Employment Package, Youth Employment Initiative and Youth Guarantee

Introduction

The European Commission adopted the **Youth Employment Package** on 5 December 2012 with the objective of tackling the high levels of youth unemployment in the EU. According to statistics provided by the European Commission at the time of the adoption of the Package: a) more than 1 in 5 young people on the labour market could not find a job, b) 7.5 million young people, aged 15-24, were not working and were neither in school nor in training, c) 30.1% of the unemployed under 25 had been out of work for more than a year. The Package includes a proposal for a Council Recommendation on establishing a Youth Guarantee, launches a second-stage consultation with social partners on a Quality Framework of Traineeships, announces a European Alliance for Apprenticeships and proposes ways to reduce obstacles to mobility for young people.

Youth Employment Initiative

The European Council of 7-8 February 2013, "recognising the particularly difficult situation of young people in certain regions", proposed a **Youth Employment Initiative** "to add to and reinforce the very considerable support already provided through the EU structural funds". This initiative covers the period between 2014 and 2020 and concerns regions with particularly high youth unemployment rates and young people aged between 15-24 not in employment, education or training. Its budget amounts to €6bn; half of this amount comes from a dedicated Youth Employment budget line and the remaining half comes from the European Social Fund.

The objective of the initiative is to provide financial support facilitating the implementation of measures promoting youth employment set out in the Youth Employment Package and, in particular, the Youth Guarantee. EU regions with youth unemployment rates above 25% are to be the first recipients of the financial support. The European Council agreed to frontload the funding during the first two years.

Youth Guarantee

The European Council of 24-25 October 2013, underlining that the fight against youth unemployment remained a key objective of the EU strategy to foster growth, competitiveness and jobs, recalled "the need for the Youth Employment Initiative to be fully operational by January 2014" and called on Member States "to mobilise all necessary efforts necessary to this end". It also called for "rapid implementation by the Member States of the Youth Guarantee and the Council declaration on the European Alliance for Apprenticeships". Member States benefitting from the Youth Employment Initiative needed to adopt plans, including through the implementation of the **Youth Guarantee**, before the end of 2013. All other Member States were encouraged to submit plans in 2014.

On 22 April 2013 the Council adopted a Recommendation on establishing a Youth Guarantee. The term 'Youth Guarantee' (para. 5) refers to a situation in which young people receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education.

The Youth Guarantee should be implemented by a scheme consisting of supportive measures and geared to national, regional and local circumstances. These measures, according to the Recommendation, should be based on six axes: 1) building up partnership-based approaches, 2) early intervention and activation, 3) supportive measures enabling labour market integration, 4) use of Union funds, 5) assessment and continuous improvement of the scheme, and 6) swift implementation of the scheme. The European Commission is helping Member States to develop their plan and set up a Youth Guarantee Scheme facilitating also the sharing of best practices between governments.

Issues for discussion

- Have national parliaments participated in the designation of implementation plans in Member States?
- How can Parliaments be involved in awareness-raising regarding the necessity of developing as soon as possible a Youth Guarantee across Member States?

- Through which means and in which fora should Parliaments engage in sharing best practices as to their contribution in the designation of such plans?
- What best practices would you share in this regard?