



DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES
POLICY DEPARTMENT B: STRUCTURAL AND COHESION POLICIES

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

HOW TO PROMOTE THE ROLE OF YOUTH IN RURAL AREAS OF EUROPE?

NOTE

This document was requested by the European Parliament's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development.

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Abstract:

This report provides an overview of the situation of young people in rural areas of the EU. Young people's social inclusion is multi-dimensional, and often characterised by individualisation. The report offers an assessment of the effect of rural development policies on young people's integration into rural social and economic life. In short, most rural policy ignores young people, and most youth policies neglect the rural dimension. Finally, the report suggests some possible ways to improve youth integration in EU rural areas in the context of policy reforms post-2013.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CEC	Commission of the European Communities
EDORA	Economic Development Opportunities for Rural Development (ESPON project). Final report September 2010.
DG EMPL	Directorate General for Employment and Social Affairs, CEC
ESPON	European Spatial Planning Observation Network
EU15	The 15 member states of the EU before 2004.
EU27	The enlarged European Union of 27 member states
LAGs	Local Action Groups established under the LEADER programme.
LEADER	Liaisons Entre Actions Developpement de l'Economie Rurale. The Community Initiative for territorial rural development in four phases: LEADER1 (1988-93), LEADER2 (1994-99), LEADER+ (2000-06) and 'new LEADER' under Axis 4 of the RDR (2007-13).
MS	Member States
NAPs	National Action Plans to address employment, developed by each member state in accordance with the European Employment Strategy of 1997.
NEET	(Young people) Neither in employment, education nor training.
NMS	The 12 New Member States joining the European Union since 2004.
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics, used by Eurostat.
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PaYPIRD	Policies and Young People in Rural Development (EU Framework Project FAIR6 CT-98-4171), coordinated by Mark Shucksmith.
RDR	Rural Development Regulation, comprising Pillar 2 of the CAP.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For many in rural communities, and for those concerned with rural policy, one of the most pressing issues for the future sustainability of rural communities is the exodus of young people. Young people's migration decisions are influenced by the geography of the locality, the social setting, the level of infrastructure, the provision of social services, the degree of accessibility, the condition of the local labour market and the role of family, friends and social networks. Often it is in the best interests of young people to move away, for their education and for better employment prospects, and this presents a dilemma for European policy. The agrarian regions and deindustrialising regions of central and eastern Europe offer very different prospects for young people than the more prosperous 'consumption countryside' or rural areas diversifying into service industries.

In either case, the concept of the 'youth transition' has been fundamental to understanding young people's situation. The world into which children and young people grow is changing in many ways, as a result of globalisation and other processes of restructuring. Studies of young people have emphasised the protracted and complex nature of youth transitions. This is related to 'individualisation' as greater responsibility is increasingly placed on young people to create their own pathways in an uncertain world. This 'freedom' may be both a boon and a curse, and remains differentially constrained by class and gender. Thus, even at times of rising youth unemployment, social exclusion is "collectively individualised" with young people tending to blame themselves for any perceived failures.

Youth unemployment is particularly relevant to understanding the situation of young people in rural areas. Young people are more than twice as likely to be unemployed than the workforce as a whole, and by 2010 there were 5.2 million youth unemployed, or 20.4% of the youth labour force. Many of those in work have only temporary contracts. Moreover, youth unemployment appears to be slightly higher in rural regions of Europe.

Young people seek to manage and cope with the uncertainties of the risk society, drawing on social networks, civil society, state and markets. But this management of risk and welfare is a task not only for young people themselves but also for those people and institutions which constitute the structures of opportunities within which young people must act – eg. offering guidance and education. Several studies reveal a discrepancy between young people's wish to be able to count on the assistance and support of institutions during their period of transition and the inability of those institutions to meet young people's needs. Young people may seek independence but they also want dependability around them. Flexibility to suit each person's circumstances will be essential. The briefing note draws attention to a number of model initiatives in EU countries.

There appears to be very little involvement of young people in decision-making. Little account is taken of young people's 'voices' in formulating rural development policies or employment policies, nor in the evaluation of these policies' success. Young people feel unhappy with the institutional frameworks provided for youth "participation". A key issue appears to be the lack of feedback mechanisms to show young people who do participate that their ideas have been taken into account. Fundamentally there is an issue of accountability to young people, with both the state and civil society generally failing to seek young people's voices or to consider their rights as citizens.

Furthermore, while there is a range of EU and national policies for young people concerned with employment issues, such policies tend to neglect the rural dimension. At the same time, where policies and programmes focus on rural development, young people are often ignored. In other words most youth policies ignore 'rural', and most rural policies ignore 'youth'. A search of several recent EU policy documents found no mentions of rural youth

and no recognition of the specific challenges of addressing youth unemployment in rural contexts. The LEADER+ initiative seems also to have been largely unsuccessful in piloting innovative ways of engaging with young people in rural development.

This briefing note concludes with a number of specific policy recommendations.

DG Agriculture:

- The Rural Development Regulation remains focused almost entirely on agricultural producers to the neglect of territorial rural development. Promotion of the role of youth in rural areas and young people's economic and social integration requires greater attention and funding to be devoted to rural development in this sense.
- Young people considering entering farming are unlikely to simply follow traditional practices, but will also experience individualisation in forming their own strategies for diversification, off-farm employment, or intensification: these choices should be informed by individual guidance and support. They will also require lifelong training, education and retraining, and appropriate institutional support. There is an opportunity for these issues also to be addressed post-2013 through the implementation of the RDR and through the extension and broadening of the New Entrants' Scheme.
- Partnerships have become a central element in the approach to rural development, and much more could be done to involve young people. We recommend that the Commission funds research to learn the relevant lessons of LEADER+ and 'new LEADER' (Axis 4) and commits funds to piloting and then mainstreaming innovative ways of involving and benefiting young people in local rural development action.

DG Employment and Social Affairs.

- DG Employment and Social Affairs won praise for commissioning and launching the report on Poverty and Social Exclusion in Rural Areas. Further work on the situation of young people in rural Europe, and especially on the challenges of youth unemployment in rural areas might now be commissioned as a follow-up.
- Although National Action Plans and their successors were effective in fighting youth unemployment, until 2008, the method of evaluation could not reveal the impact on youth unemployment in rural areas and suggestions are made to address this.
- DG Employment and Social Affairs shares responsibility in preparing young people for a precarious, non-linear transition to adulthood and work. Among other elements this requires connection of (supply-side) labour market policies with (demand-side) job development policies; and integration of these with welfare systems, with education and lifelong learning, and with careers and guidance services. It is especially important to design flexible, creative support structures which can address each young person's individual and diverse needs, beyond suiting the service providers' convenience.

DG Regional:

- Cohesion policy has been refocused towards the New Member States, reflecting both their lower GDP/head and their territorial potential. There is a tendency for cohesion funds to be directed towards cities as the supposed engines of economic growth, but this risks neglecting the rural areas where living standards are lowest. Such strategies will encourage out-migration of rural youth, so the challenge for DG Regional is to develop a coordinated policy in relation to young people which promotes balanced territorial development of rural and urban areas alike in the NMS.
- Remoteness, accessibility and migration are central issues for young people seeking to access the urban service centres envisaged in the ESDP as meeting rural needs. This should be addressed in territorial cohesion policy and spatial planning.

INTRODUCTION: HOW TO PROMOTE THE ROLE OF YOUTH IN RURAL AREAS OF EUROPE?

Background

In November 2010 the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Parliament will organise a workshop on “The future of EU agricultural policy and the role of youth in rural areas”. The Committee commissioned consultants to provide background papers to inform this meeting. The brief for this paper was to provide an overview of the key elements that characterise the situation of young people in EU rural areas.

Specifically the brief asks that the background paper should cover three elements:

1. Provide an overview of the key elements that characterise the situation of young people in EU rural areas, even making reference to some case studies.

In addition the consultant is also invited to develop the following points in order to provide possible guidelines to support the role of young in EU rural areas:

2. Provide a general assessment of the effect of rural development policies on young people’s integration into the social and economic life in EU rural areas, highlighting the main critical issues of existing policies for rural development;
3. Identify possible approaches and instruments to improve youth integration in EU rural areas in the context of post 2013 CAP, both with regard to rural development and cohesion policy.

This report represents a synthesis of existing research, drawing especially on the EU Framework project ‘Policies and Young People in Rural Development’ (PaYPIRD), as well as more recent studies, evaluations and statistics. The PaYPIRD project specifically addressed how young people today experience rural development and how policy measures might respond more adequately to the threat of social exclusion to which young people (aged 16-25 years) in rural areas are increasingly exposed. Research was conducted in Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Portugal and UK between 1999 and 2002².

For this briefing paper the findings from the PaYPIRD project have been supplemented with a search of the literature pertaining to other countries, and especially the New Member States, as well as general updating in the light of more recent research and evaluations. It is fair to say, however, that this remains a neglected topic for research and policy.

The report is structured along the same lines as the brief. Chapter 1 presents an overview of the key elements that characterise the situation of young people in EU rural areas, with some case studies included. Chapter 2 provides a general assessment of the effect of rural development policies on young people’s integration into the social and economic life in EU rural areas, highlighting the main critical issues of existing policies for rural development. It also touches on broader EU policies, for example for employment. Chapter 3 offers some conclusions and recommendations, including possible approaches and instruments to improve youth integration in EU rural areas in the context of post 2013 CAP, both with regard to rural development and cohesion policy.

² The results of the PaYPIRD project were presented in an interim and a final report to the European Commission, and also appear in a number of more widely available publications including:

B.Jentsch and M Shucksmith (eds) (2004) *Young People in Rural Areas of Europe*, Ashgate.

T Dax and I Machold (eds) (2002) *Voices of Rural Youth: a break with traditional patterns?* Bundesanstalt für Bergbauernfragen, Wien

M Shucksmith (2004) *Young People and Social Exclusion in Rural Areas*, *Sociologia Ruralis*, 44, 1, 43-59.

1. THE SITUATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN RURAL AREAS

1.1. Should I Stay or Should I Go?

For many in rural communities, and for those concerned with rural policy, one of the most pressing issues for the future sustainability of rural communities is the exodus of young people. One leading researcher was asked by a CEC official how to halt the out-migration of young people from rural communities: 'simple', she replied, 'stop educating them'. While this reply may not have seemed of much practical benefit to the official, it does encapsulate a central dilemma for policy between promoting what is best for young people and what is best for rural communities. Often 'getting on' (through education) is undertaken as a means of 'getting out' (of the restricted options available in labour markets in rural areas). But research has shown that many young people might like to stay in rural areas, or at least to return there, but that educational success tends to lead to their being 'educated out' of rural areas, where suitable jobs for the highly qualified are rare. Stockdale has suggested "that it is only by moving away that individuals acquire the key ingredients needed to help the rural community. Out-migration is therefore not the over-arching problem for the future of rural communities, instead it is the small numbers who return."³ These issues are returned to below, but in the meantime we ask what young people like and dislike about rural areas. What is attractive about rural areas to young people?

1.1.1. The attractiveness of rural areas to young people

The positive and negative characteristics of rural areas expressed by the young people interviewed during the PaYPiRD research can be summarised as follows:

Positive

- rural landscapes, natural environment
- calm, peacefulness, security
- existence of attractive towns, nearby
- existence of strong networks
- good housing conditions
- many job opportunities
- large offer of sport activities

Negative

- difficulties of access, remoteness
- lack of activities, isolation
- no public transport
- ageing population, social pressure
- weak offer or high cost housing
- restricted job market
- lack of activities for young women

Despite the differences in the local contexts of the seven study areas in PaYPiRD, there was a large degree of commonality in young people's perceptions of rural areas, and these are confirmed by other studies⁴. Another EU-funded study⁵ found young people in Finland felt the countryside had little to offer beyond low-pay so they wanted to leave, especially girls; in Calabria the unemployment rate for young men was 47%, and even higher for young women at 66%. Issues relating to the geography of the locality, the social setting, the level of infrastructure, the provision of social services, the degree of accessibility, the condition

³ Stockdale (2004), p.188.

⁴ Eg. Glendinning et al (2003) Rural communities and well-being: a good place to grow up? *Sociological Review*.

⁵ Bien et al (2005)

of the local labour market and the role of family, friends and social networks all influence young people's perceptions of their rural area. These perceptions, both individually and collectively, inform important choices young people have to make. But they are also relevant for rural policy because they affect the future social composition of rural areas.

Although some young people reject formal politics, many were concerned that their local area would decline in economic and social terms. There was a sense of frustration that politicians and officials generally were not listening to the 'voice' of young people. They want to play an active role in the rural 'revival' taking place in many areas. By including young people in this process, a more informed understanding of the needs of this key social group would be reached and a more sensitive and responsive approach to other policies that impact on rural youth could be realised. This is pursued in section 1.6 below.

1.1.2. How many young people are there in rural areas?

The statistical information about young people in rural areas of Europe, their economic activities and their migration to urban areas is rather poor, as it is rarely available below NUTS2 level and therefore does not properly distinguish rural areas from urban. However, Eurostat has for this paper kindly applied the OECD's classification of urban and rural regions at NUTS3 level for 2009. Table 1 shows that the highest proportions of young people in rural areas were in Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Ireland, the Czech Republic, Romania, and Slovakia. The lowest proportions are in France, Italy, Germany, Denmark, and Netherlands. The proportion fell markedly between 2000-9 in Portugal, Bulgaria, Spain, Hungary, Ireland and the Czech Republic, but rose in the Baltic States and Sweden.

Table 1: % population aged 15-24, by member state and OECD region type, 2009

	Predominantly Urban	Significantly Rural	Predominantly Rural	All
	% of total population, 2009 (except where another year stated)			
EU24	10.9	11.8	11.9	11.4
Austria	12.1	12.0	12.5	12.2
Belgium (2007)	12.0	12.6	13.1	12.1
Bulgaria	12.4	12.9	12.5	12.7
Cyprus				N/A
Czech Republic	11.6	13.0	13.5	12.8
Germany	11.4	11.4	11.6	11.4
Denmark	11.9	12.4	11.7	12.0
Estonia	14.3	14.4	16.8	14.6
Spain	10.6	11.0	11.5	10.9
Finland	12.6	12.1	12.3	12.4
France (2007)	13.9	13.0	10.9	12.9
Greece (2000)	13.6	14.2	14.1	14.0
Hungary (2008)	10.7	13.0	13.1	12.7
Ireland (2006)	16.2		14.4	14.9
Italy	9.8	10.5	10.6	10.2
Lithuania	14.3	15.9	16.9	15.7
Luxembourg		11.8		11.8
Latvia (2008)	14.0	16.0	16.5	15.6
Malta	14.1			14.1
Netherlands	12.1	12.5	11.2	12.2
Poland	12.9	14.9	16.0	14.9
Portugal	11.0	11.7	10.6	11.1
Romania	13.3	14.6	14.3	14.4
Sweden	12.3	13.4	13.5	13.2
Slovenia		12.4	11.6	12.0
Slovakia	13.0	15.5	14.5	15.0
UK (2000)	12.3	11.8	12.5	12.1

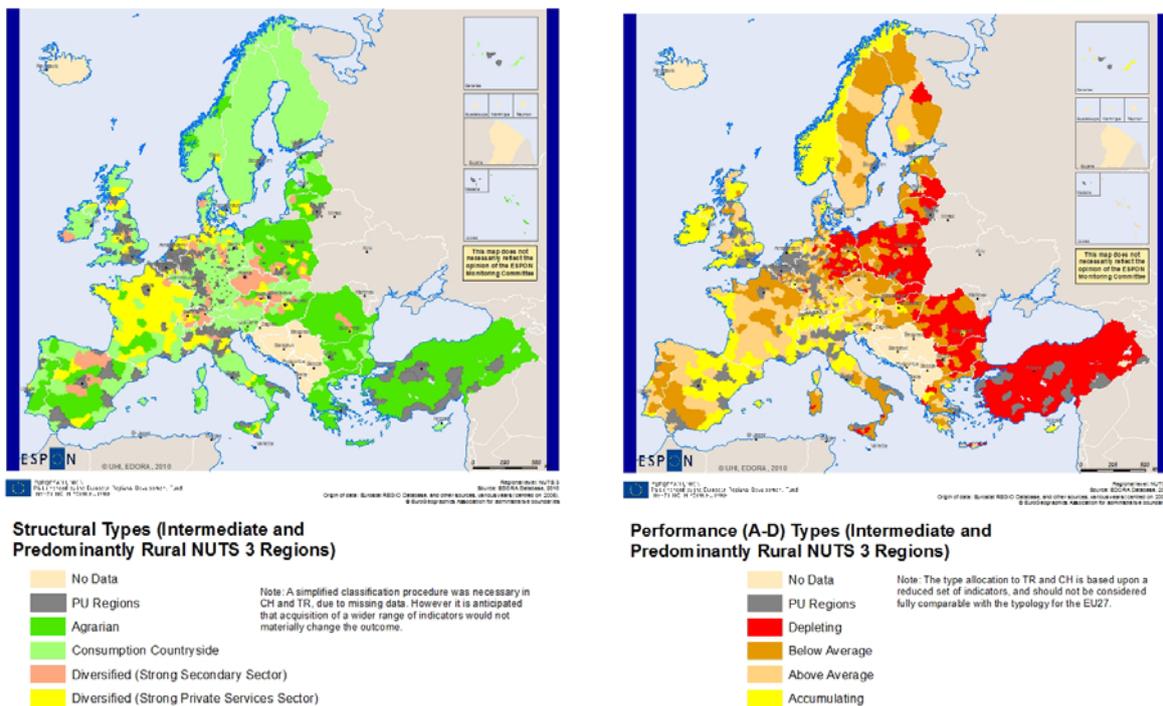
Source: Eurostat

1.2. Context: Rural Areas and Rural Change in the EU

While it is possible to speak generally about rural areas in Europe, it is important to bear in mind the considerable diversity of rural circumstances across the EU27. Particularly significant are the differences between richer and poorer regions, between the New Member States (NMS) of Central and Eastern Europe and the EU15, and between the core of the EU and more peripheral areas of the Mediterranean and the Northern Periphery.

A recent study under the ESPON programme, EDORA⁶, has analysed and mapped the economic development opportunities and challenges facing different rural regions of the EU27, and its results provide a context for understanding the situation of young people in different rural areas of the EU. In general the report highlights the declining importance of agriculture to rural economies and the ascendancy of the service sector, alongside several NMS' experience of deindustrialization of their rural areas. Other dominant narratives of change include the effects of global capital's penetration of product and labour markets; migration out of rural areas (especially of young people); economic migration from the NMS to Western Europe; and counter-urbanisation tendencies in some regions. The spatial pattern of these changes is summarized in the following maps.

Map 1: EDORA Analysis of Rural Regions' Structural Type and Performance



We can observe that the agrarian regions form an arc through central and eastern Europe, and that these and deindustrialising rural regions are performing least well economically and demographically. These contrast with stronger economic and demographic trends in the 'consumption countryside' (attractive to visitors and commuters) and those rural areas diversifying into service industries. Clearly these offer very different contexts for young people to integrate into economy and society, securing a job, finding a home, and generally negotiating the youth transition. Thus, in Poland, young people's "desire to experience life

6 Copus et al (2010) Economic Development Opportunities for Rural Areas (EDORA) Final Report, ESPON, Luxembourg, Sept 2010.

abroad combines with a sense of being 'forced' to leave localities where the transition to a market economy has resulted in a contraction of employment opportunities."⁷

1.3. Youth transitions

1.3.1. What is the youth transition?

A dominant theme in youth studies is the concept of *the youth transition*, from childhood to adulthood, from school to employment, from the parental home to independence, and so on. The world into which children and young people grow is changing in many ways: for example, in rural areas there is a structural decline in employment in agriculture and in other traditional land-based industries, while new jobs arise in the service sector. In this context, many of the old certainties are ebbing away and some writers⁸ have argued that we are now entering into a much more uncertain phase of 'late modernity', during which we live increasingly in a 'risk society', dependent less on traditional institutions such as the family and church but instead on labour markets and the welfare state, which "compel the self-organisation" of individual biographies⁹. Our ability to survive and prosper in this world will be more precarious because of the pace of change and the dependency on such impersonal systems and institutions. Thus, young people are under pressure to make 'the correct choices' at early stages in their lives, for example about which subjects to study at school and in gaining credentials. In the context of high or rising youth unemployment, "young people frequently attempt to resolve collective problems through individual action and hold themselves responsible for their inevitable failure"¹⁰. Social exclusion or structural youth unemployment is "collectively individualised"¹¹. This is an important part of the context for understanding the situation of young people in rural areas of Europe.

Moreover, researchers believe the youth transition is now taking on a different character – specifically, that "the youth phase no longer consists of a standard sequencing of life events which mark transition stages to adulthood. Young people can no longer count on a secure labour market slot, they do not necessarily want to establish a 'conventional' family, and the ages at which the various transitions are accomplished vary widely."¹² Studies note the emergence of *extended transitions* from school to work for some young people, and of *fractured transitions*, which may lead to unemployment, dislocation and homelessness, for others¹³, while individuals are increasingly held accountable for their own fates, however much these continue to be structured according to social class, race and gender.

While the concept of the youth transition originated in western Europe, researchers have found it is equally appropriate to the context of central and eastern Europe¹⁴. A recent review article of youth and social change in post-socialist Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union¹⁵ finds that "the post-socialist period has seen a near-total withdrawal of the forms of authoritarian paternalism that had characterised the socialisation and integration of youth under socialism and, at the same time, a reintegration into the global economic and cultural flows from which socialist youth had for decades been 'protected'. In this

7 White (2010) .

8 Beck 1992, Giddens 1991.

9 Beck 2000,166.

10 Furlong and Cartmel 1997, p.114.

11 Beck 2000, p.167.

12 Chisholm et al 1990, p.7.

13 Coles 1995.

14 Roberts (2003) Change and continuity in youth transitions in Eastern Europe, *Sociological Review*.

15 Walker and Stephenson 2010, p. 522.

context, the chronic stability, predictability and manufactured limitations which characterised young people's transitions and cultural lives under socialism appeared to give way in the early 1990s to a tide of individual choice and responsibility, such that both the pace and depth of processes of individualisation would seem to have been extreme."

1.3.2. Youth transitions in rural areas

The PaYPIRD study highlighted the uncertainties young people in rural areas of Europe face when trying to define their own individual pathways to adulthood and through life. The range of possibilities open to individuals means young people are constantly forced to engage with the likely consequences of their actions on a subjective level. The research documented attempts by young people, and by institutions and others, to manage and cope with these uncertainties, drawing on social networks, civil society, the state and markets. Indeed it should be emphasised that this management of risk and welfare is a task not only for young people themselves (as agents) but also for those people and institutions which constitute the structures of opportunities within which young people must act. The PaYPIRD research revealed a worrying discrepancy between young people's wish to be able to count on the assistance and support of institutions during their period of transition and the inability of those institutions to meet young people's needs. Young people may seek independence but they also want dependability around them.

An important finding was that individualisation amongst young people is highly *uneven*. The individualisation process operates differentially for young people according to their location, class, gender and occupation. Traditional social commitments and assurances persist in many societies. For example, young people often rely on their own or their parents' social networks in locating and accessing employment, and this was particularly emphasised in the Portuguese study area but was also found in UK studies. Those with strong enabling support of social networks might indeed be able to pursue their preferred life-plans. On the other hand, the prominent role of social networks could lead young people, as in the past, to follow in the footsteps of friends or relatives as the safe option, albeit not the most satisfactory. A gender-stereotypical pattern of 'choices' is likely to be reinforced either way, whether following established pathways, or relying on other people's judgement of 'appropriate jobs'. In contrast, young people lacking social networks could find it impossible to access their preferred jobs and to pursue their dreams. In the NMS there may be a further tension between choice and compulsion: while individualisation may be experienced as liberation from the strict social regulation and limited life-choices of socialist modernity, the dearth of local employment prospects now may leave little choice but to live and work abroad¹⁶. Finally, where a context of strong mutual obligations and commitments remains young people often feel obliged to offer their parents support. Hence, in circumstances where parents required help or care, there existed a stronger sense in PaYPIRD's Portuguese study area that parents' needs ought to be put before one's own aspirations. This example illustrates clearly the uneven extent of individualisation (i.e. the degree to which young people could rely on or felt constrained by traditional support mechanisms), as well as the resulting impact on the young person's ability to pursue their life goals.

Individualisation may also differ according to gender and social class. The research found that traditional cultures and social norms forced many young women in the study areas into 'women's work'. In Austria and Portugal this was lamented by several female respondents, and even in rural Finland most young women who stayed in rural areas looked for employment in the public services, the traditional provider of female employment

¹⁶ White 2010, Walker and Stephenson 2010.

opportunities. Young men thus appear often to have more freedom to shape their own biographies than young women, despite women's better educational qualifications. This is not always the case, though. Young men were sometimes expected to follow traditional male pathways into farming or vineyard labour, especially in more agricultural areas, raising the possibility that the degree of individualisation may also vary by occupation.

Social class, though, is probably the most significant dimension of uneven individualisation. Although the data are poor in this respect, it appears that young people from middle class families were more likely to be encouraged, and educated, to formulate and follow safely their own preferred paths, engaging more actively with markets, the state and civil society, as well as drawing on a wider range of role models from their more varied social networks. Several researchers¹⁷ suggest that segmentation of labour markets has allowed the middle-classes to maintain stable, predictable transitions from good schools through higher education to core jobs, such that those occupying advantaged social positions retain the ability to transmit privileges to their offspring. Thus, 'cultural capital' has become increasingly central to the reproduction of social advantage in individualisation.

1.3.3. Implications for policy of complex youth transitions

The process of 'individualisation' impacts on people's lives in complex ways, influenced not least by cultural factors. A crucial conclusion is that people's pathways are rarely linear and planned from beginning to end, and this may be particularly true of the least advantaged young people. Changes of plans, ideas and aspirations are especially likely to occur during the 'youth transition', and therefore social provisions must be able to adjust to individuals' changing needs. The PaYPiRD research emphasised the need for increased flexibility in provisions in the context of the transition from education to employment (see 1.4 below).

The phenomenon of uneven individualisation, and the non-linear complexity of individualised youth transitions, has several implications for policy. In relation to rural economic development it suggests that a long time horizon and continuing animation and work with marginalised young people will be necessary in 'bottom-up' initiatives if they are to build the capacity to act of all young people in an inclusive way.

In relation to social policy, or equality policy, there is a clear message for policies and delivery mechanisms to reflect and address social differentiation: simplistic, off-the-peg approaches tailored only to standard biographies will address very few young people, and instead policies are required which can address their increasingly diverse circumstances and pathways. Flexibility to suit each person's circumstances will be essential. Policies of all types must also be adaptable to varying institutional contexts.

Finally, there is an important role for not only schools and education policy but also for local political structures to foster active citizenship amongst young people so that they are better able to express their needs and shape policy, even if this is through a politicisation of personal moral issues (eg. the environment, animal rights, nuclear power) rather than through the political pursuit of collective goals.

A useful output of the PaYPiRD project was the identification of a number of models which appeared successful in addressing some of these issues. In Austria, *nex:it* offered a model for just such a flexible youth-oriented programme which provided scope for young people to come forward with their own ideas and generated an enormous dynamic for

¹⁷ Olk (1988), Zinneker (1990) .

development. In Ireland, *Mol an Oige* showed how innovative approaches can be developed to address educational disadvantage and early school leaving in particular, again by showing flexibility to individual circumstances. Also in Ireland, the *FORUM* project offers a useful model for involving young people in rural economic development, through a 'bottom-up' partnership seeking to promote opportunities in petty commodity production, and the *Youthreach* training scheme was valued highly by those young people who had failed to gain specific qualifications while at school¹⁸. Some of the most useful models for labour market integration were found in France, notably the *Mission Locale* or *PAO*, and the *Centre de Resource*, which provided information and space for young people as part of a multi-sectoral, holistic approach. These had some similarity to the *Citizens' Shops* found in Portugal. These are described more fully in the PaYPiRD reports, and may offer some transferable ideas to practitioners in other rural areas of Europe.

1.4. The transition from education to employment

1.4.1. The inflexibility of educational systems

All too often, rigid formal education structures seemed to have disadvantaged young people interviewed during the PaYPiRD project. No school appeared to have accommodated the quite frequent cases where personal, unexpected events prevented young people from successfully completing their school qualifications. Young people were expected to "fit in" to a system, rather than a flexible system fitting around these individuals' changing needs. Such a flexible approach, providing greater freedom for service providers to respond to individual needs in creative ways, might have provided these young people with better opportunities and prospects than the difficult dead-end situations in which they often found themselves as a result of unexpected events or just a non-standard, non-linear transition. "The challenge is to develop policies which are based on the different realities of young people's lives, rather than on a fictional mainstream."¹⁹

More flexibility in educational systems, to meet diverse individual needs, will also be beneficial for those who want to come back to education to acquire more qualifications at a later stage in their lives. Especially in the cases of the French and Portuguese interviewees, where early school leavers were well represented, several talked about their regrets at having left school early: many spoke of their intention to go back, if only the 'right circumstances' permitted. Prerequisites regarded as essential here included access to transport, provision of childcare, continued or resumed family support, post-job timetable plus acceptable commuting time, and a course design suited to their personal interests. It was also seen as essential that further education should have positive effects on job performance and pay in current or future employment.

1.4.2. Distance to educational institutions

Perhaps particularly relevant for rural areas is the issue of the 'distance' to educational institutions. Services are often centralised, for reasons of cost as well as of quality, such that even at quite an early age, some children and young people will have to travel considerable distances for their compulsory education, especially for more specialised subjects. There clearly is the question of how far it is reasonable to expect school pupils to travel without the distance having a detrimental impact on their school performance and on

¹⁸ McGrath (2002).

¹⁹ Wyn and White, 1997, p.110.

the general quality of life of youngsters who spend a significant time of each weekday commuting. Moreover, the distance to educational facilities may act as a disincentive for young people to continue their education. A related issue is the availability of broadband in rural areas to enable young people to complete homework and to network with their friends outside school hours. More research needs to be done to provide conclusive answers to these questions, and innovative policy and practice approaches are required to address those issues²⁰. At least from the financial point of view, the families of some pupils will not be able to meet the travel costs involved, or will regard this as a poor investment. Depriving such pupils of public support will mean that even secondary education can become a privilege, rather than a right, and social inequalities will become perpetuated.

Of course, the issue of subsidising (at least some) pupils' travel costs to attend secondary school has a more general application. Once young people reach a certain age, the postponed higher rewards of further and higher education may seem unattractive. More importantly, the financial situation in the family, or pressure from family members, may encourage a young person to enter employment early with few formal qualifications.

1.4.3. Policy implications in relation to education and guidance

There are at least two policy implications here. First, there is the issue of whether public support should be provided for young people's maintenance if they continue their education at a time when they could legally seek employment. While in Portugal, the government provides grants to children with economic difficulties during compulsory education, this could be extended further as a means of addressing inequalities of opportunities. Secondly, easily accessible 'second pathways in' are required for those to whom the idea of further/higher education appeals later on in life. It is clear that such pathways are more attractive when properly funded, organised, and flexible, allowing 'mature' students to combine their responsibilities and commitments with their education. Again in Portugal, provisions exist in the form of a state-sponsored taxi service to overcome the extra difficulties facing those in remoter areas attending evening classes.

Guidance and advice for young people negotiating the youth transition is especially important in the context of increasing individualisation. "There is clearly a continued need for impartial guidance and advice on a myriad of complex career choices now facing young people. If a young person leaves school in the *mistaken* belief that a training programme will lead to work, or conversely, if they stay on and take a course of education in some *mistaken* belief that this will lead to a secure job, then, where they act on *mistaken* beliefs, they suffer welfare harm as a result... The rights to *impartial* knowledge, education, guidance and advice about the implications of different and competing career choices is, therefore, one element which is essential to the welfare of young people."²¹ Yet the experiences of the young people interviewed in the PaYPiRD study suggest that current provision of guidance is deficient in many respects and that this is a crucial issue for policy.

Young peoples' experiences of 'success' and 'failure' during the youth transition, revealed in the PaYPiRD project and in other research, seems to call for the following criteria against which institutions and services should be tested, if they want to promote young people's agency and social inclusion:

20 See, for example, research on pre-school education in rural areas of Scotland reported in M Shucksmith, J Shucksmith and J Watt (2005).

21 Coles 1995, p.55-6.

- Access must be enabled to good quality school/vocational/higher education, which is flexible enough to meet the changing needs of diverse individual young people, each of whom has an unpredictable life course. It should allow young people to achieve what they themselves want from education, while allowing them to take teachers', peers' or relatives' suggestions into account. It should also make information and individual guidance available at various stages to allow young people to prepare themselves for their chosen career when they wish, supporting them in breaking with traditional patterns of reliance on the knowledge and experience of their social network members.
- Access to desirable training places and jobs must be provided, together with information about the range of local and other opportunities, and about strategies for accessing these. This is a necessary precondition for young people's success, on their own terms.
- Different types of state support are required – allowing for 'breaks' in employment when there is a lack of jobs, and providing retraining when there is a mismatch between skills and labour market requirements. Support is needed for those who later on in life realise they would like to change career pathways, which may necessitate further education. It is also important for the labour market to be regulated to ensure a minimum standard of employment rights for young people, including provisions for equal opportunities in training and employment.
- Young people require special protection from exploitation in the labour market. Policies must regulate working conditions and minimum pay for all age groups. Where different provisions apply for different age groups (as with the minimum wage and the absence of income support for 16-18 year olds in the UK), the implications need to be examined.

1.5. The youth transition into farming

This Committee has previously looked in detail at the situation facing young farmers under the ongoing reforms of the CAP, leading to a resolution of the European Parliament²², with the purpose of making it easier for young people to enter the agri-foods sector. For this reason only a brief mention is made in this note.

Only 7.6% of EU farms are run by people under 35 years of age, with the Mediterranean member states having the lowest percentage of young farmers. The biggest obstacle to new entrants is the high setting-up costs, including difficulties in obtaining loans and high levels of indebtedness. Support is available under Article 20 of Regulation 1698/2005 for young farmers setting up for the first time, including a premium of up to €25,000, loans at subsidised interest rates, and vocational training and information. The Parliament proposed that the CAP health check should include aid for young farmers among the compulsory measures of future rural development programmes. Among other proposals, it also called for a land bank to be created to reallocate land vacated through early retirement.

A number of research studies have explored young people's transition into farming, looking at farm family succession in particular²³. Succession is more likely on larger, more viable farms, or where pluriactivity (farming combined with off-farm work) offers a stable future. Many parents on family farms speak of a painful dilemma: they have worked all their lives in the hope of passing on the family farm to their son or daughter but they also understand that taking over the farm may well condemn their potential successor to a life of struggle and poverty, compared to alternative careers open to them following education. Parents speak of 'educating out' their children, encouraging their children to succeed at school while knowing this will lead them out of farming to a better standard of living elsewhere. In

²² European Parliament resolution of 5th June 2008 on the future for young farmers under the ongoing reform of the CAP (2007/2194 (INI)).

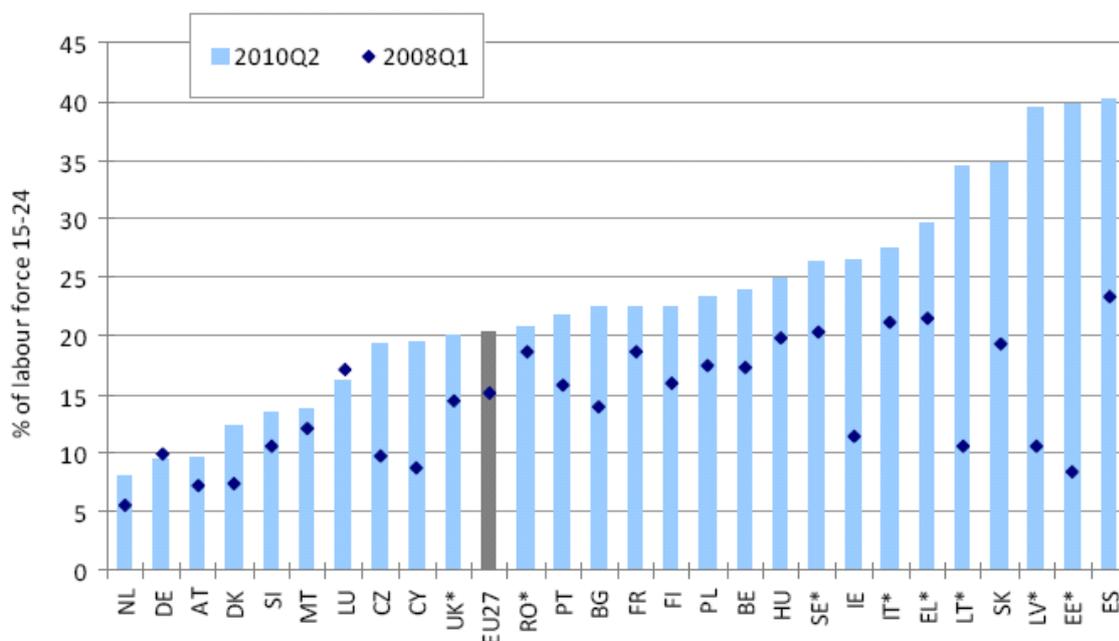
²³ Eg. Bryden et al 1993; Glauben, Tietje and Riess 2002; Corsi 2004.

Greece, for example, Kasimis et al²⁴ found “a rejection by the younger generation of low-status, unskilled and badly paid jobs in rural areas. Improvements in the level of education and the standard of living as well as the spread of urban consumption patterns in the past three decades have led to the creation of high expectations in the younger generation, who have looked for jobs outside agriculture and away from rural areas.” When young people do stay on the farm and ultimately succeed their parents it may be because of an emotional tie to the land rather than in the expectation of a better return for their labour. Schemes to support and assist new entrants to farming may be of crucial importance.

1.6. Youth unemployment

The analysis of youth unemployment is particularly relevant for understanding how the structure of the labour market in rural areas affects young people’s economic and social integration. Young people have a much higher risk of unemployment than other workers. According to the Joint Employment Report for 2008, unemployment in the EU had fallen to 8.2% by 2006, but youth unemployment remained a severe problem in many Member States at 17.4% on average, though this declined further to 14.7% by early 2008. Overall, young people were more than twice as likely to be unemployed than the workforce as a whole. Youth unemployment then rose during the economic crisis, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Youth unemployment rates (aged 15-24) before and after the crisis



Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey. Data seasonally adjusted.

* Data for EE, IT, LV, LT, RO, SE and UK 2009q1 and 2010q1.

Since 2008, the effect of the recession on young people (aged 15-24) has been dramatic, according to DG Employment and Social Affairs²⁵. In the second quarter of 2010 there were 5.2 million youth unemployed, or 20.4% of the youth labour force. While the low-skilled continue to show by far the highest unemployment rates among all young people, there has also been a marked increase in the unemployment rates for medium and high-skilled young people since the end of 2008. Furthermore, the EU average rate of involuntary part

24 C Kasimis, A Papadopoulos and C Pappas (2010), p.261.

25 DG Employment and Social Affairs (2010) Recent developments in the EU27 Labour Market for Young People aged 15-29, Sept 15, 2010.

time employment in 2009 stood at 27.6% of all young part-time workers and exceeded 40% in nine Member States. Equally worryingly, 40% of young employees held only a temporary contract, making them vulnerable to being laid off during the crisis. Finally, in 2009, 12.4% of youth aged 15-24 were neither in employment nor in any education or training (NEET). Young women are more likely to be NEET than young men, but with differences across age groups. At 15-19, female teenagers tend to have lower average NEET rates than their male counterparts, but the opposite is true for the age group 20-24.

According to the recent report for DG Employment on 'Poverty and Social Exclusion in Rural Areas', discussed at a major conference in 2009 in Budapest²⁶, the youth unemployment ratio is usually slightly higher in predominantly rural and intermediate rural regions than in predominantly urban ones, underlining a worse situation in rural areas. The unemployment rate (calculated in relation to the labour force of the same age, rather than the population, and so excluding those in education) was calculated for selected countries according to the OECD rural-urban classification of NUTS3 regions, and is shown in Table 2. Particularly high youth unemployment was found in rural areas of Poland, Italy, Greece, Hungary, France, Spain and Romania, among the countries studied, even before the current economic crisis.

Table 2: Youth unemployment rate (% labour force aged 15-24), by member state and OECD region type, 2005

	Predominantly Rural	Significantly Rural	Predominantly Urban	COUNTRY
Bulgaria				22.4
Germany	13.4	16.0	14.7	15.0
Spain	20.7	22.3	17.4	19.7
France	21.2*	22.5*	24.5*	22.3
Greece	26.7*	27.3*	24.2*	26.0
Hungary	23.5*	18.8*	14.5*	19.4
Ireland	8.6	8.6	8.6	
Italy	29.6	27.4	20.5	24.0
Lithuania	12.1	16.4	15.7	
Norway	11.8	11.2	10.6	11.6
Poland	36.5	38.2	35.0	36.9
Portugal	14.4*	14.0*	18.3*	16.1
Romania	20.0*	19.8*	23.4*	20.2
Slovenia	17.4	13.4	15.9	
UK	7.7	10.2	14.8	12.9

Calculated at NUTS3 level except *NUTS2.

Source: PASERA project's calculations using data from national statistical institutes.

More recent statistics on youth unemployment in rural areas of Europe have been provided specially for this report by Eurostat, according to the region's degree of urbanisation rather than the OECD rural-urban classification used above. These are presented in Annex 1, and show rural youth unemployment above 30% in Spain, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Hungary, and above 25% in Ireland, Greece, Sweden, Estonia and Italy. Speakers at the conference on Poverty and Social Exclusion in Rural Areas in June 2009 lamented the lack of consistent data below NUTS2 level which frustrates analysis of rural social issues. The PaYPIRD project similarly drew attention to lack of data harmonisation, problems of coarse regional units,

²⁶ Fondazione Brodolini (2008) Poverty and Social Exclusion in Rural Areas: final report to DG Employment and Social Affairs, Unit E2. See also the report of the conference on Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in Rural Areas, held in Budapest: June 2009.

aggregated classifications, lack of age-related breakdowns, and differences in national rural definitions. We are therefore especially grateful to Eurostat for their help in this instance.

1.7. Young People's 'Voice' and their impact on policies

A recurrent theme in studies of rural youth is young people's perception that those in authority pay them no attention. The PaYPIRD project therefore investigated what effect young people in rural areas feel they have on policies and decisions affecting them. How 'included' are they in the democratic and political processes in their areas? Do they feel 'citizenship' in this respect? This is another element of the multi-dimensional inclusion of young people in their communities, going far beyond access to 'good jobs', and is implicit in 'bottom-up' approaches to rural development. The PaYPIRD study found little involvement of young people in decision-making. In some countries young people expressed a wish to have a voice and to participate but found a lack of opportunities for youth involvement. In other countries, local authorities had set up 'youth forums' specifically to involve young people in local decision making, but few young people were aware of this. Moreover, several perceived such youth forums to be boring and irrelevant, with little impact on local policies. Problems were perceived with the inclusiveness of the forum, with a suspicion that the congress had a middle-class bias²⁷. Such forums tend to assume certain skills, competencies and material possibilities (access to time, transport, childcare possibilities, etc.) which are unevenly distributed across the population. Young people across all study areas felt unhappy with the institutional frameworks provided for youth "participation". In general, youth organisations (including the youth forums established *for* young people primarily by adult people) were seen in a rather ambiguous way and were rejected as not pertinent to their aspirations and youth cultures.

"Political commentators have frequently drawn attention to young people's lack of political awareness, to political apathy, to a disinterest in politics and to their lack of participation in the political process"²⁸. To some extent, the views found by the PaYPIRD study may also reflect a cynicism and weariness with politics, found too amongst the older generation. Indeed it is important to avoid seeing young people in isolation from adults, society, their culture and history. Yet while many (middle-class) adults are used to reflecting on policies and socio-economic conditions, this is much less the case for young people. Hence, participation provisions for youth need to be properly supported. 'Leaving young people to get on with it' is unlikely to lead to success, nor to encourage those young people who need extra motivation and competencies to come forward. A fine balance needs to be struck if adults' help is to be neither patronising nor inadequate when young people are presented with challenging opportunities to make a contribution as well as for self-development. One example of a successful initiative involving rural youth across Europe, *Community X Change*, is summarised in a box overleaf²⁹.

Amongst the ways in which young people can be supported are the following:

- Better guidance from schools and schoolteachers, from careers services, from training and further education institutions and from local employment services.
- A greater emphasis in schools on developing active citizenship skills and nurturing an awareness and understanding of, and an interest in, local politics (perhaps also through 'kids voting' as used in the US and in certain German *Länder*).

²⁷ Thoughtless pursuit of youth participation may lead to the 'normalising' of certain (middle-class) behaviours and the labelling of other behaviours lying outside these norms as deviant, so actually contributing to social exclusion in unintended ways (Shucksmith J, 2000).

²⁸ Furlong and Cartmel 1997,96.

- Building an explicit youth element into rural community development, with facilitators or animateurs employed to work specifically with young people, especially the least privileged.
- Promoting a local culture which accepts children and young people as social actors and as citizens to be included and valued.

A key issue appears to be the lack of feedback mechanisms to show young people who do participate that their ideas have been taken into account. Of course, continual rejections of suggestions will be demoralising and may signal that such a forum is merely a token gesture. Hence, the importance of raising awareness amongst local politicians of the value of young people's voices, and the need to recognise the potential of their contributions – to the benefit of both young people and politicians. For youth, the rewards can be in terms of their own personal development as well as through improving policies and programmes. Policy-makers can benefit by creating more effective policies and programmes, thereby increasing the public's confidence in them at a time when cynicism is widespread.

Fundamentally there is an issue of accountability to young people, with both the state and civil society generally failing to seek young people's voices or to consider their rights as citizens (although markets, in contrast, pay great attention to young people and their purchasing power). According to many PaYPiRD respondents, this failing is exhibited by local employment services, careers guidance services, training institutions and schools and teachers. One possible course of action would be accreditation of such service providers in which young people played a part. A glaring example of this was in the evaluation and monitoring of NAPs themselves, which relied entirely on analysis of aggregate statistics neglecting both the voices of young people themselves and variations in quality of the services from area to area. High priority should be given in all services to addressing this lack of accountability of professionals and institutions to young people.

29 Another example is "Northern Futures, Young Voices": a comparison of young people's presentations of their communities in Canada, Iceland, Faeroes, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. A report from the UNESCO MOST Circumpolar Coping Processes Project, C Bjorndal, University of Tromso, 2000.

Box 1: The Community X Change Project

The Community X Change project brought together 30 citizens aged between 13 and 83 from rural England to deliberate on the future of rural areas using the Citizens' Jury model, and to attempt to influence local, national and European rural policy. In 2007 the group took part in a European Citizens' Panel, along with counterparts from other EU rural areas to make recommendations for the future of the EU rural areas.

A diverse group of 30 citizens from two of England's most rural counties were selected: adults were chosen at random from the electoral register; young people aged 13-18 were identified through existing youth groups and schools. In recognition of the marginalisation of young people from decision making processes, over half the group were young people. The citizens were otherwise representative of the diversity of the local population (in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, geography, life experience). Over 4 intensive weekends the group came together to share their experiences of rural life and to identify key issues which need to be addressed in order to improve the quality of rural life. An oversight panel of regional decision makers identified 'experts' who presented to the citizens group their opinions on how best to address the issues identified by the citizens. Using a range of tools (including drama, opinion lines, photography, mapping, power analysis) the citizens participated in intensive discussions, ultimately producing a set of recommendations for how to improve rural life.

The group then became part of a European Citizens' Panel which, over a long weekend in Brussels, brought together 90 citizens from 8 countries who had been through a similar regional process. This European panel worked with a team of facilitators and interpreters over 3 days to produce a set of European recommendations on the future of rural areas, and then presented these to the Deputy Director-General of DG Agriculture. A further seminar in Brussels in 2008 was hosted by two MEPs (Stephen Hughes and Christa Prets.) The group's prioritised recommendations were, first, for more youth involvement in rural decision making processes (at local, national and EU levels); and second for the regular and widespread use of deliberative processes (such as Citizens' Juries) by those deciding rural policy. More details and further recommendations are at www.ruralsos.org.uk

2. THE EFFECT OF POLICIES ON THE INTEGRATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN EU RURAL AREAS

2.1. Policies and their Impact on Young People

The PaYPIRD research sought to analyse the effects of policies on young people across rural areas in Europe, using a bottom-up approach (ie. from young people's own perspective). The first thing to note is that young people were largely unaware of existing policies, and especially those of the EU. Of course, this lack of awareness may not be specific to young people and may well be shared by adults. It is sometimes in the interest of member states, local agencies and gatekeepers to obscure the EU's role so that they can themselves take credit and maintain their clientalist relationships. Young people's unawareness of policies appears to derive both from poor access to information (often in faraway urban centres) and from the inaccessible form and content of the information, which could be made more user-friendly and be delivered in more appropriate ways. It would help if there was better cooperation between advisers and a single point of access.

In the process of the research, it also became clear that at European as well as national levels, while there is a range of policies for young people concerned with employment issues, such policies tend to neglect the rural dimension. At the same time, where policies and programmes focus on rural development, young people are often ignored. Section 2.2 below reports the PaYPIRD project's attempt to locate and evaluate local rural development programmes with some youth dimension in its study areas. It proved difficult to identify any such rural development programmes, and even where a youth component could be found, there was a tendency to work *for* young people rather than *with* them. It was suggested in PaYPIRD's recommendations that there was an opportunity for the LEADER+ initiative to help local actors to pilot and then mainstream innovative ways of engaging with young people in rural development. As we will see below, this fell far short of expectations.

While promoting social inclusion amongst young people can arguably be an objective of rural development, it is also clear that the aims of rural development ('retaining local youth' in the rural area) can conflict with those of youth work ('promoting increased opportunities for young people'). We noted above that 'getting on' (through education) is often undertaken as a means of 'getting out' (of the restricted options available in local labour markets in rural areas). This potential conflict was alluded to in section 1.1.1 in the context of the perceived attractiveness of rural areas for young people. Many young people wished to remain in their rural communities, but achieving higher educational qualifications tended to lead to their being 'educated out' of the rural areas, where suitable jobs for the highly qualified are rare. Again, this confirms earlier findings³⁰.

A number of difficult questions seem to arise here. First, to what extent should training and further education opportunities be adapted to local labour market needs, and local youth be encouraged to pursue such routes *in order to increase the likelihood that they will stay*? After all, rural communities tend to regard youth migration as a cause of grave concern. On the other hand, shouldn't we accept, or even encourage, young people's desire to *leave* their community? Leaving their homes may mark an important point in the transition from youth to adulthood, and can aid the process of emancipation from parental authority. Not to take advantage of such a possibility may mean a missed opportunity – itself a form of exclusion. Perhaps this dilemma can only be resolved through providing both 'support to leave' alongside 'support to stay'. Support 'to escape' might include comprehensive

³⁰ For example, by Jones 1992 and Shucksmith et al 1996 among others.

provision of information, and help when the change to a new, competitive environment away from social networks seems a daunting task. Materially, young people would need transport to relevant educational institutions, and perhaps also help with their housing costs. Support 'to stay' might emphasise the creation of 'quality jobs' in rural areas, accommodating the needs of those with high formal qualifications. The lack of such jobs was recognised by those interviewees with better qualifications, and frequent mention was made of the prevalence of poor working conditions, including experiences of pay below the statutory minimum wage. Either way, such 'support' will not be easy to provide.

Alternative approaches to this issue were reported by PaYPIRD, each involving the interaction of civil society with the state in innovative partnerships. One approach, pursued by FORUM in Ireland, emphasised economic development and specifically the promotion of young people's engagement in petty commodity production; while another approach, pursued in Scotland by Moray Youthstart, emphasised the provision of services to young people as the means of inclusion. Such differences in approach reflect the differing institutional contexts in these cases, but often may also reflect compartmentalised policy and funding structures. Earlier research on partnerships has suggested that few embrace both economic and social actions³¹. Too often policies and programmes appear designed for the convenience of the providers rather than to suit the changing and varied needs of individual young people.

Bearing all this in mind when trying to create more opportunities for young people, it seems essential to recognise that 'rural youth' are a diverse group, and interventions are likely to have winners and losers as a consequence. For example, focusing on the creation of 'quality jobs' will mainly benefit those who have gained good qualifications in urban places, and who would like to return to their home communities. However, such an approach is unlikely to help those with few or no educational qualifications, lacking access to adequate housing, and trapped in insecure jobs³², unless linked to training and further education opportunities. It is particularly young people in *rural* areas who suffer low pay. It is perhaps those excluded young people who deserve our main attention.

2.2. The Impacts of Specific Policies on Youth Integration

2.2.1. The Impact of EU Employment and Youth Programmes

While European rates of unemployment and youth unemployment had fallen during the 1990s, the large regional variations and the high figures for youth unemployment in particular ensured that EU policies remained focused on tackling young people's exclusion from the labour market. The Delors White Paper on "Growth, Competitiveness and Employment" (1993) was followed by a debate on 'Employability' at the Essen Summit (1994) and the publication of the first "Joint Employment Report" (JER) in 1995. The launch of the European Employment Strategy at the Luxembourg Summit in 1997 proved vital in creating the necessary framework for the establishment of National Action Plans (NAPs), now National Reform Programmes, in the Member States. The whole process was closely monitored and co-ordinated to ensure that the Employment Policy Guidelines, organised around four main pillars or priorities, were represented in national policies and programmes. The PaYPIRD project considered the effectiveness of these in the context of rural areas, focusing especially on the Joint Employment Reports of 1999 and 2000.

³¹ Bryden 1994; Westholm, Moseley and Stenlas 1999.

³² Dey and Jentsch, 2000, 23.

The Joint Employment Reports then (and still today) make no reference to the rural context and only a few of the National Action Plans mention rural areas. Surprisingly, these tend not to be from the Member States with higher rural youth unemployment but those where a recognition of the distinctive character of rural issues is better established.

The PaYPIRD research did not involve a formal evaluation of the implementation of NAPs in rural areas, but it was clear that these policy innovations made a considerable difference to young people in the period studied, even though the young people themselves were usually unaware of these policies. Although there are signs that the NAPs were effective in fighting youth unemployment, there were sometimes delays caused by the failure to commit national funds. The PaYPIRD report's main criticism, however, related to the method (and especially the aggregated level) of evaluation, which in principle could not reveal the impact on youth unemployment in rural areas. It recommended the strengthening of these evaluations by disaggregating the quantitative indicators regionally, by including qualitative assessments of institutional cooperation within member states and regions, and by incorporating the views of service users and potential users (notably young people). These refinements would enable more effective implementation in rural areas.

In preparing this briefing paper, the draft Joint Employment Report for 2010 was reviewed and again there is no reference to rural areas nor to rural youth unemployment. Similarly, the 2007 document 'Ten Years of the European Employment Strategy' makes no mention of rural youth while confirming that youth unemployment remains a key concern, and that "urgent action is required in the field of educational and labour market policies resulting in improved participation of young people in society" (p.27). The 'Renewed Social Agenda' published in 2008 asserts that "Europe's youth must be equipped to take advantage of opportunities. All Europeans should have access to education and skills development throughout life (for example, second chance schools or life-long learning) so as to be able to adjust to change and start afresh at different points in their life." However there is no recognition of the challenges of meeting these aspirations in the EU's rural areas.

In 2009 the Commission presented an EU Strategy for Youth, which invites both the Member States and the Commission, in the period 2010–2018, to cooperate in the youth field by means of a renewed open method of coordination. It proposes a cross-sectoral approach, with both short and long-term actions, which involve all key policy areas that affect Europe's young people. This was followed by a resolution of the EU Council of Youth Ministers, giving priority to more and equal opportunities for young people in education and in the labour market; and to active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity of young people. No mention of rural areas or rural youth occurs in either document³³.

The Europe 2020 paper does make reference to rural areas, and to young people, but these are never connected so once again there is no mention of rural youth. However, many of the measures proposed in Europe 2020 could be relevant to rural youth, including the targets of reducing the share of early school leavers to under 10% and that at least 40% of the younger generation should have a tertiary degree. The associated 'flagship initiatives' to catalyse progress to targets include "Youth on the Move – "to enhance the performance of education systems and to facilitate the entry of young people to the labour market". This may provide an opportunity for action to address the needs of rural youth. It is remarkable, however, how little recognition is given in EU documents to the situation of rural youth and the specific challenges of pursuing youth and employment policies in rural contexts.

33 CEC (2009) An EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering. COM (2009) 200 final.

Council of EU (2009) Council resolution on a renewed framework for European Cooperation in the Youth Field (2010–2018) (15131/09) .

2.2.2. Rural Youth in Local Community Development

The PaYPIRD project studied the involvement of rural youth in community development, paying particular attention to the role of 'partnerships', reflecting the emergence of 'community-led' development as a response to globalisation pressures. This new institutional approach towards rural development, referred to as a 'partnership' approach, allows rural communities a 'stake' in their own development. PaYPIRD compared the approach to development in NW Connemara with an initiative in Moray, a more populous 'rural' region in Scotland. These were rare instances of rural development partnerships which sought to engage with young people.

FORUM was a model action programme in NW Connemara which focused on natural resource development. The main emphasis was on aquaculture, though other areas have been utilised. The structure of the 'Poverty 3' programme required the model action projects to adopt a 'partnership' approach to development as well as having a multidimensional and integrated focus. The FORUM organisation continued to operate as a 'partnership' with six sub-committees established to target 'un- and underemployment', 'the elderly', 'youth', 'women', 'community development' and 'education', with funding from the Irish Government and the National Training Authority. FORUM's programme of activity related to the implementation of three PESCA programmes, with a total budget of £140,000 (177,800 Euros). FORUM also became involved with the Vocational Education Committee (VEC) and Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) in devising an innovative teaching/training module to trainees of the Youthreach programme.

The **Moray YOUTHSTART** partnership, established in 1999, aimed to provide more effective support for children and young people to prevent social exclusion at the local level. In marked contrast to traditional approaches, the YOUTHSTART programme regarded early, pro-active intervention, backed up with the involvement of community-based groups, as the most effective way to arrest social exclusion before it prevents children and young people from becoming "full and active citizens" in their local area and further afield.

The two case studies were both based on a 'partnership' approach with the stated aim of tackling social exclusion among rural youth, but they differed in the strategies used to pursue that aim and the extent and nature of actual 'community' involvement. For example, FORUM had a broad strategy of 'empowering' local communities through a multidimensional approach, whereas Moray YOUTHSTART took an issue-based focus. These differences reflected the political landscape in the two countries as well as the recent history of community-led activities in the Irish context. Thus, the nature of the 'partnership' arrangements was strongly predicated on the local context of each case study area.

Although some criticisms are levelled at the 'partnership' approach, mainly over the issue of 'empowerment', it does allow for a flexible approach which prioritises the needs of the local community. It can also draw in both financial and human resources to tackle a specific 'problem', and in this regard, the added-value of local knowledge and expertise can alleviate the difficulties sometimes associated with alternative approaches to 'development'. The involvement of young people in the Moray YOUTHSTART partnership was one of the main strengths of the programme as it gave them a sense of 'ownership' in the scheme. The Irish FORUM initiative focused on local ownership and control of economic activities, so minimising the social exclusion sometimes associated with economic restructuring of rural areas. Both schemes offered useful lessons for rural communities across Europe in the area of young people's inclusion into their locality.

2.2.3. Rural Development Programmes and their Impact on Youth Integration

Few attempts have been made to understand the impact of rural development programmes on young people and youth integration. The PaYPIRD project examined numerous rural development programmes in the study areas but found little attention had been given to young people except in the Austrian study area, Murau. Even in this area it was concluded that there was a distinct lack of projects aimed explicitly at young people. From discussions with the youth of Murau, it was surmised that this might just be a reflection of the lack of need for such schemes. Yet, the young interviewees drew attention to what they saw as an unwillingness among sections of the wider community, particularly politicians, to ascertain the specific and varied needs of young people.

Some programmes did focus directly on young people, and these all originated as broad measures targeted at Austrian youth in general. However, some of these programmes, in addressing different territorial contexts, had *de facto* developed a specific rural remit. For example, the youth future programme **nex:it** had certain elements which facilitated youth involvement. Its lack of bureaucratic rigidity and its willingness to allow a degree of experimentation with the existing structures made this programme accessible to young people in the region. This is important because the vast majority of the schemes were located in the more populated areas of the region, with few links to rural youth.

Young people in Murau were also able to participate in programmes aimed at tackling youth unemployment. Some of these programmes were fairly sophisticated content, reflecting the realities of the complex transition from education to employment. Two of these programmes, **Mafalda** and **Now@** focused on the specific needs of young women, a social group which felt particularly restricted in their vocational opportunities and career options. All the programmes emphasised the importance of a sensitive approach to youth development, paying particular regard to the social and cultural environment.

In the other case study areas young people were not a priority group in rural development programmes. The lack of a youth focus in rural development programmes is mirrored in the existing literature on the subject. However, evaluation studies of regional programmes offer some pointers to improving the overall participation of local and regional actors. Some of these concerns relate to the uncertainty and confusion regarding rural development policies, problems exacerbated by complex bureaucratic structures and regulations. Information flows could also be improved and co-operation with different sectors encouraged to build on the synergy associated with existing programmes. Training and educational programmes should be geared more to the needs of the local area and a flexible approach which facilitates linkages between different programmes encouraged. Connections should also be made with regional and national authorities through the use of 'facilitators' as this enhances participation rates and improves the outcomes of rural development programmes.

LEADER+ took some of these concerns on board and LAGs were asked to target specific groups, including young people, to address problems of social exclusion. The PaYPIRD report, acknowledging that it would take time for this shift in priorities to be translated into action, welcomed the explicit targeting of this social group as a useful first step. Out-migration of young people was identified in the design of LEADER+ as detrimental to the goal of rural regeneration generally and this marked a significant shift in EU rural policy. But the data from the PaYPIRD project suggested that greater efforts would be needed to change young peoples' perceptions of local development and to improve their participation rates. Introducing more youth-specific programmes through LEADER+ was felt to be

potentially a useful way of arresting this marginalisation of young people. This new focus would have positive implications for the development of rural areas generally.

In practice, evaluations of LEADER+ reveal that this approach to targeting young people was unsuccessful. The CEC's synthesis of mid-term evaluations of LEADER+ programmes found that "many stakeholders feel that LEADER+ does not respond to the needs and specificities of the priority target groups, particularly young people"³⁴. It found young people received even less attention than gender equality in LEADER+, and that "there seems to be a lack of experience in how to address the youth". Where action was directed towards this priority target group it focused on employment and professional training, but "the direct impact on job creation seems to be rather weak... The implementation of projects targeted at young people is partly hampered by their lack of capital and access to loans, and their mobility (eg. for higher education). All in all a lot is done for the youth, less is done **by** them, and their participation in decision-making bodies is absolutely scarce."³⁵ The report concludes that it is important to enable and encourage self-organised and self-determined action by young people; and accordingly it recommends that the presence of young people (under 20) in decision-making boards should be a selection criterion for LAGs, and that they should also be represented in the selection process itself. Furthermore it recommended "a specific effort to identify, to reflect, to codify and to disseminate good practice examples, as already done by the LEADER Observatory network for LAG good practices in general."

From the ex-ante evaluation of the Rural Development Programme 2007-13 it does not appear that these lessons have been heeded. Although Council, under Axis 3, encouraged member states to address young people's engagement in labour markets, and some mention is made by member states about young people in their descriptive trends and issues sections, there is no evidence of this group having any priority in what they intend to do. The document lists young people among beneficiaries identified as rarely targeted: "young people are hardly mentioned" (p.84).

³⁴ CEC (2006) Synthesis of mid-term evaluations of LEADER+ programmes, p.152.

³⁵ Ibid., p.100.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The world into which children and young people grow is changing in many ways, as a result of globalisation and other processes of restructuring, especially in the New Member States. Yet, while social structures such as class and gender continue to shape young people's life-chances, these structures become increasingly obscure as collectivist traditions weaken and individualist values intensify. Thus, social exclusion is "collectively individualised", with young people tending to blame themselves for any perceived failures.

Young people's pathways are rarely linear and planned from beginning to end, and this may be particularly true of the least advantaged young people. Changes of plans, ideas and aspirations are likely to occur during the 'youth transition', and social provisions must be able to adjust to individuals' changing needs.

Youth unemployment has risen dramatically in the last two years, in rural areas as well as in urban. There is a range of policies for young people concerned with employment, but at EU and member state levels such policies tend to neglect the rural dimension. At the same time, where policies and programmes focus on rural development, young people are often ignored. The LEADER+ initiative seems to have largely failed to help pilot and then mainstream innovative ways of engaging with young people in rural development.

The aims of rural development can conflict with those of youth work, especially where 'getting on' (through education) is a means of 'getting out' (of the restricted options available in local labour markets in rural areas). Perhaps this dilemma can only be resolved through providing both 'support to leave' and possibilities for later return alongside 'support to stay'. Either way, such support will not be easy to provide. Often policies and programmes appear designed for the convenience of the providers rather than to suit the changing and varied needs of individual young people (see below).

Amongst the ways in which young people can be supported are the following:

- Better guidance from schools and schoolteachers, from careers services, from training and further education institutions and from local employment services.
- A greater emphasis in schools on developing active citizenship skills and nurturing an awareness and understanding of, and an interest in, local politics.
- Building an explicit youth element into community development, with animateurs employed to work specifically with young people, especially the least privileged.
- Promoting a local culture which accepts children and young people as social actors and as citizens to be included and valued.

The PaYPiRD study found very little involvement of young people in decision-making. Fundamentally there is an issue of accountability to young people, with both the state and civil society generally failing to seek young people's voices or to consider their rights as citizens (although markets, in contrast, pay great attention to young people). According to many of the young people interviewed during the PaYPiRD research, this failing is exhibited by local employment services, careers guidance services, training institutions and schools and teachers. An example of this, highlighted in the PaYPiRD study, was in the evaluation and monitoring of NAPs themselves, which relied on analysis of aggregate statistics - neglecting both the voices of young people and variations in quality of the services from area to area. High priority should be given in all services to addressing this lack of accountability of professionals and institutions to young people.

This briefing note has highlighted attempts by young people to manage and cope with the uncertainties of the risk society, drawing on social networks, civil society, state and

markets. But this management of risk and welfare is a task not only for young people themselves but also for those people and institutions which constitute the structures of opportunities within which young people must act. There is a discrepancy between young people's wish to be able to count on the assistance and support of institutions during their period of transition and the inability of those institutions to meet young people's needs. Young people may seek independence but they also want dependability around them.

The phenomenon of uneven individualisation, and the non-linear complexity of individualised youth transitions, has several implications for policy:

- In relation to rural economic development it suggests that a longer time horizon and continuing animation and work with marginalised young people will be necessary if local action is to build the capacity to act of all young people in an inclusive way.
- In relation to employment and social policy, there is a clear message for policies and delivery mechanisms to reflect and address social differentiation. Flexibility to suit each person's circumstances will be essential. This briefing note draws attention to a number of case studies, or models, which may offer some transferable ideas to practitioners in rural areas of Europe.
- More flexibility in educational systems, to meet diverse individual needs, would have benefited those young people whose lives took unexpected turns, as well as those who want to come back to education to acquire more qualifications at a later stage in their lives. Young people talk about their regrets at having left school early: many spoke of their intention to go back, if only the 'right circumstances' permitted. Prerequisites here include access to transport, provision of childcare, continued or resumed family support, a timetable at the educational institution which fits with travel possibilities, and a course design suited to their personal interests. Perhaps particularly relevant for rural areas is the issue of the 'distance' to educational institutions.
- The issue of guidance is especially important in the context of increasing individualisation. The experiences of young people suggest that current provision of guidance is deficient in many respects and that this is a crucial issue for policy.

The brief asked for suggestions to improve youth integration in the context of the post-2013 CAP, both with regard to rural development and cohesion policy. Negotiations on the reforms of policies post-2013 are still in their initial stages, as we await the Commission's formal proposals. Referring to the European Parliament's report³⁶ and to the 'leaked' draft of the Commission's proposals³⁷, however, it is possible to make a few comments.

Broadly the Commission is proposing a continuation of the two pillar structure, with the first pillar giving baseline support to all farmers, and the second pillar providing the support tool for community objectives to be pursued by member states in flexible ways which reflect the diversity of rural Europe. Both the Commission's draft and the Lyon report emphasise support for food production and for agri-environmental measures, making few references to territorial rural development. The Commission does note that, "as an integral part of the CAP, rural development has proved its value by reinforcing the sustainability of Europe's farm sector and rural areas – environmentally, economically and socially." It also reports the "strong calls" for the CAP to contribute to "the balanced territorial development of rural areas throughout the EU, by empowering people in local areas, building capacity and improving local conditions." However, no specific proposals are offered in this respect and there is a danger that this crucial element of rural policy (which could help to promote the role of youth in rural areas and improve youth integration in the ways suggested in this

36 The George Lyon Report on the future of the CAP after 2013, adopted 21 June 2010. (A7-0204/2010) .

briefing note) will be neglected to an even greater degree after 2013 than now. If this proves to be the case, then it will be essential for DG Regional to take greater responsibility for territorial rural development after 2013 within the scope of cohesion policy.

This briefing note concludes with a number of specific policy recommendations.

Many of these issues are relevant to **DG Agriculture's** responsibilities for rural development and agriculture, and there are several policy implications here:

- The Rural Development Regulation remains focused almost entirely on agricultural producers to the neglect of territorial rural development. Promotion of the role of youth in rural areas and young people's economic and social integration requires greater attention and funding to be devoted to rural development in this sense.
- Young people considering entering farming are unlikely to simply follow traditional practices, but will also experience individualisation in forming their own strategies for diversification, off-farm employment, or intensification: these choices should be informed by individual guidance and support. They will also require lifelong training, education and retraining, and appropriate institutional support. There is an opportunity for these issues also to be addressed post-2013 through the implementation of the RDR and through the extension and broadening of the New Entrants' Scheme.
- Partnerships have become a central element in the Commission's approach to rural development, and much more could be done to involve young people in these and to make them work more effectively with young people. We recommend that the Commission funds research to learn the relevant lessons of LEADER+ and 'new LEADER' (Axis 4) and commits funds to piloting and then mainstreaming innovative ways of involving and benefiting young people in local rural development action.

Young people are also a concern of social and employment policy and accordingly there are a number of policy implications arising for **DG Employment and Social Affairs**.

- DG Employment and Social Affairs won praise for commissioning and launching the report on Poverty and Social Exclusion in Rural Areas. Further work on the situation of young people in rural Europe, and especially on the challenges of youth unemployment in rural areas might now be commissioned as a follow-up.
- Although the National Action Plans and their successors were effective in fighting youth unemployment, at least until 2008, the method of evaluation could not reveal the impact on youth unemployment in rural areas. Such evaluation might be strengthened by disaggregating the quantitative indicators regionally, by including qualitative assessments of institutional cooperation within member states and regions, and by incorporating the views of service users and potential users (notably young people).
- DG Employment and Social Affairs shares responsibility in preparing young people for a precarious, non-linear transition to adulthood and work. Among other elements this requires connection of (supply-side) labour market policies with (demand-side) job development policies; and integration of these with welfare systems, with education and lifelong learning, and with careers and guidance services. It is especially important to design flexible, creative support structures which can address each young person's individual and diverse needs, beyond suiting the service providers' convenience.

There are implications for **DG Regional** in respect of Territorial Cohesion policy, and in relation to young people's (lack of) involvement in partnerships:

37 CEC (2010) The CAP towards 2020: meeting the food, natural resource and territorial challenges of the future, Brussels 29/09/10 COM(2010) version finale – as posted on the website of Farmers' Weekly.

- Cohesion policy has been refocused towards the New Member States, reflecting both their lower GDP/head and their territorial potential. There is a tendency for cohesion funds to be directed towards cities as the supposed engines of economic growth, but this risks neglecting the rural areas where living standards are lowest. Such strategies will encourage out-migration of rural youth, so the challenge for DG Regional is to develop a coordinated policy in relation to young people which promotes balanced territorial development of rural and urban areas alike in the NMS.
- Remoteness, accessibility and migration are central issues. A key question for young people is how to access the urban service centres envisaged in the European Spatial Development Perspective as meeting rural needs. Young people frequently lack the necessary transport to reach these, and this may force them to migrate from rural areas. There is a danger that this emphasis in spatial planning will lead growth centres to suck in young rural populations and hasten the functional differentiation between urban as the zone of production and rural as the zone of consumption.

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Annex 1: Youth Unemployment 2009 by degree of urbanisation

	Densely populated	Intermediate	Thinly populated	All
	Youth unemployment rate, 2009			
EU27	20.3	17.9	20.8	19.8
Austria	13.9	10.4	6.7	10.0
Belgium	26.1	16.8	22.5	21.9
Bulgaria	12.7	22.4 ^b	18.6	16.2
Cyprus	14.1	13.1 ^b	13.5 ^b	13.8
Czech Republic	15.9	18.2	16.2	16.6
Germany	12.4	10.3	9.6	11.2
Denmark	11.8	10.8	10.9	11.2
Estonia	29.6	27.2 ^a	25.4	27.5
Spain	37.0	39.2	38.2	37.8
Finland	17.7	22.4	23.5	21.5
France	24.2	21.4	20.0	22.6
Greece	23.2	31.7	26.5	25.8
Hungary	21.8	23.5	30.5	26.5
Ireland	20.4		26.7	24.2
Italy	27.6	23.6	25.1	25.4
Lithuania	26.2		31.6	29.2
Luxembourg	17.5 ^b	16.7 ^b	17.4 ^b	17.2
Latvia	33.5	21.0 ^a	34.1	33.6
Malta	14.4	17.8 ^a	10.2 ^a	14.4
Netherlands	7.4	5.2	5.6 ^b	6.6
Poland	19.0	20.3	21.9	20.6
Portugal	23.3	16.8	19.3	20.0
Romania	25.7	14.4 ^a	18.7	20.8
Sweden	22.1	24.1	26.2	25.0
Slovenia	16.8 ^b	12.1	13.5	13.6
Slovakia	15.3	26.9	31.5	27.3
UK	20.5	17.0	14.5	19.1

Table A1: youth unemployment rate (15-24) by member state and NUTS3 region's degree of urbanisation, 2009.

Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey.

Notes: ^a ^b indicate that the figures may be unreliable due to small sample sizes. Further details are given in notes accompanying the Labour Force Survey.

