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Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

2010/2307(INI)

21.3.2011

OPINION

of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

for the Committee on Culture and Education

on Youth on the Move: a framework for improving Europe's education and training systems
(2010/2307(INI))

Rapporteur (*): Jutta Steinruck

(*): Associated committee - Rule 50 of the Rules of Procedure

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs calls on the Committee on Culture and Education, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Emphasises that the objective of all initiatives must be to direct all young people so they are successfully integrated into society and to prepare them on a continuous basis for the Europe of the future, which means giving them also opportunities to engage in social activities and help shape society and making it possible for all young people to enjoy the benefits of schooling, of higher and non-formal education, vocational education and training and of further training that lays stress on meeting the requirements of a modern, competitive, inclusive and sustainable society, in order to make it easier for them to gain access to the labour market; stresses that no young person who has had problems in his or her educational career, for whatever reason, must be lost to working life, but that such young people must instead receive targeted support; points out that access to education must not be contingent on the social background or financial situation of a young person's parents; emphasises the importance of horizontal mobility at all levels of education, both at school and during vocational training;
2. Recognises the role of local and regional authorities in the field of training and mobility; takes the view that their competences and experience should be seen as complementary to EU action; emphasises that, in order to achieve its goals, the EU should develop a partnership approach, particularly with local and regional authorities;
3. Stresses that the employment situation for young people is dependent upon overall economic policies; urges the Member States to shift towards investments and job creation; points out that austerity measures with, for example, cut backs in the educational system and job creation will not help young people and could potentially damage society and the economy in the longer term;
4. Emphasises the need to reduce early school leaving with a special focus on disadvantaged areas;
5. Emphasises that, as a result of the economic and financial crisis, youth unemployment – the causes of which the ILO does not consider lie in income and non-wage labour cost levels, participatory rights and social protection standards – became a major challenge across the EU and has not so far been sufficiently addressed by the EU and Member States; stresses that unemployment at a young age puts the individual at a very high risk of poverty in the long term; emphasises the need for quality jobs in order to prevent young people from falling into the category of working poor; stresses that employment and traineeship contracts should provide social rights for all from day one of the contract; rejects any proposal to deviate from this principle; stresses that periods of notice must not be shortened, arrangements laid down in collective agreements and statutory provisions must apply as they do to regular employees, and participatory rights and freedom of association must be enjoyed without restriction from day one; calls for an EU framework laying down rights and protection arrangements for atypical and insecure jobs while respecting the principle of subsidiarity; emphasises that young people must be protected

from discrimination in the workplace, especially on the grounds of age and professional experience through the effective implementation of Directive 2000/78/EC; calls for all Member States to set up a national strategy to tackle youth unemployment;

6. Emphasises that the main concern of young people is to be autonomous and to have access to healthcare and decent accommodation at a reasonable price while being able to train, work and develop themselves; calls therefore on Member States to remove age-related discrimination in regard to access to social welfare schemes;
7. Reiterates the importance of specific, verifiable objectives associated with adequate financial means for implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy and the integrated guidelines to reduce youth unemployment; emphasises, therefore, that the Member States in their National Reform Programmes should commit themselves to raising the employment rate for young people between the ages of 15 and 25 by 10% by 2014; to increase the youth employment rate (for those not in education) to 75% by 2020; notes that, since some 35% of all jobs that will become available between now and 2020 will require high qualifications combined with the ability to adapt and innovate, intensive efforts must be made to increase the proportion of people aged between 30 and 34 with a university degree or equivalent qualification to at least 40%; recognises that implementation of the integrated guidelines is the responsibility of Member States, while the Commission should support and control action at national level through the open method of coordination (OMC); takes the view that the target groups and indicators proposed by the Commission in the initiative should be monitored and that the progress made during implementation should be measured by means of clear indicators;
8. Takes the view that mobility for the acquisition of new skills is a strong tool for improving the skills and competences, personal development and active citizenship of young people; takes the view that voluntary mobility in the framework of schooling and vocational training, further training and higher education should therefore be promoted for all young people, irrespective of their financial, social and ethnic background, the type of education or training in which they are engaged, and of their disabilities, health problems or geographical situation, and should be encouraged by professional guidance and counselling made available throughout the process; emphasises that mobility must not lead to a lowering of the social standards in the host country; emphasises the importance for increased mobility of the mutual recognition of school, vocational training and university diplomas and further training qualifications obtained within the EU; calls for proper implementation of ECVET, EQF and ECTS; makes it clear that proofed mutual recognition must be granted within 12 months of the date on which the qualification was obtained; points out that Parliament is kept regularly informed by means of the mobility indicators;
9. Stresses that the attraction of mobility should be enhanced and that financial support should be wide and sufficient, with a special focus on the most disadvantaged; reiterates that this position should be reflected in the next financial perspectives; calls, in order to enhance training mobility, for the share of the budget dedicated to the Leonardo Programme to be increased;
10. Calls on Member States to promote learning and employment mobility by: a) increasing

awareness and making information easily accessible to all those young people interested, b) highlighting the added value of mobility at early stages of education, c) ensuring that learning outcomes from mobility experiences between Member States are validated, d) reducing administrative burdens and stimulating cooperation between the relevant authorities across the Member States;

11. Calls on the Commission to facilitate learning and employment mobility by: a) strengthening the EU's education and youth programmes, such as Erasmus, Leonardo and Youth in Action, b) enhancing the implementation of existing European instruments and tools, such as the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and Europass, c) developing the new tools that it has already examined, such as the Youth on the Move website, the Youth on the Move card, the European skills passport and the pilot project 'Your first EURES job';
12. Emphasises that adapting education systems and vocational training to the future skill requirements of the labour market is one of the keys to combating youth unemployment, and therefore the transition from school, vocational education and training or higher education to employment must be better prepared and must follow on directly from education or training; takes the view that better cooperation needs to be encouraged between educational establishments, youth organisations, the various labour market sectors and employers, for example with specialists in various fields giving lectures or seminars to familiarise students with their future work; underlines therefore the major importance of implementing effectively the 'European Youth Guarantee' initiative and making it an instrument for active integration into the labour market; stresses that Member States have not so far made any convincing commitment to implementing the European Youth Guarantee and calls on them to do so speedily; emphasises that a close link needs to be established between the flagship initiatives which aim at tackling unemployment, such as 'Youth on the Move' and the 'New Skills for New Jobs' initiative; believes that social partners, business representatives, local and regional authorities, and youth organisations should be involved in the development of a sustainable strategy to reduce youth unemployment, in which there must be EU-wide mutual formal recognition and certification of the skills recognised in formal and informal qualifications – in line with the EU's EQF system – and acquired in formal, non-formal and informal learning situations;
13. Takes the view that measures must be taken by Member States to provide as much information, choice and training as possible to help young people fulfil their potential, but strongly believes this is best delivered by people working on the ground at a local level in each Member State;
14. Takes the view that quality career and vocational-orientation guidance services must be further developed; stresses the importance of involving social partners in their design, organisation, delivery and funding in order to ensure labour market relevance and efficiency;
15. Stresses the importance in terms of corporate social responsibility of helping young people make sound career choices, taking account of the needs of both the national and the European employment market, and points out that such initiatives could be

accompanied by work experience placements;

16. Takes the view that occupational choices are still strongly gender-based and that this is a component adding to gender inequality; stresses that this has an impact both on female unemployment and poverty; stresses that such gender-based discrimination needs to be overcome; stresses that measures must be taken to present a comprehensive overview of possible educational and training paths and later career choices, for example with the help of equality advisers, and that an attempt must be made from an early age to interest and support girls, in particular, in MINT (Mathematics, Informatics, Natural sciences, and Technology) and areas of strategic importance in professional development terms, and boys in teaching, caring and social professions; emphasises that, in the light of the future shortage of skilled workers, specific measures must be taken to foster the potential of girls and women with in particular, specific support programmes which encourage the preparation of girls for scientific and technical professions;
17. Emphasises that young people are being forced to choose from an ever growing range of training possibilities; takes the view that they must be kept regularly informed about developments on the labour market, so that they can concentrate on developing skills which are actually needed, the aim being that no young person completing school or training should be left without a job and that the transition between education and working life should be a smooth one;
18. Calls on the Member States, in cooperation with the social partners, to incorporate vocational training more effectively into secondary education, given the major disparities between the Member States regarding the level of participation and organisation in this field; notes that this could contribute significantly to achieving the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy by reducing school dropout rates and unemployment levels; stresses the need to encourage exchanges of good practice by means of open-ended coordination;
19. Stresses the importance of flexible training arrangements such as open universities and greater use of online further education facilities, thereby giving all young people access to a high standard of education to an advanced level and ensuring that they are not deprived of this opportunity for reasons of distance or scheduling; considers that, given the delayed entry of young people on the employment market and the problems in ensuring the sustainability of social security schemes, it is extremely important to create suitable conditions for combining study and work;
20. Emphasises that the EU's coordinated active labour market measures such as publicly funded work programmes for young people, and the creation of new, sustainable and good jobs – which are properly remunerated – and new businesses, as well as the promotion of a business culture in schools, incentives for new initiatives, technical assistance for start-ups, administrative simplification to speed up formalities, local service networks to facilitate management, and links with universities and research centres to promote product and process innovation, recognition of voluntary work as professional experience and the promotion of entrepreneurship are essential elements for successfully tackling youth unemployment and supporting inclusive growth; emphasises that EU funding available for young people from instruments such as the European Social Fund, the mobility programmes (Erasmus, Socrates, Leonardo) and the YOUTH programme should be used

in a more effective, accessible, transparent and coordinated way, because the diversity of funding makes it difficult for youth organisations to access funding that answers their needs; stresses the need for funding for young people that is easy accessible, can be managed by volunteers and small organisations where applicable, and allows overarching measures to be funded that integrate several dimensions such as employment, mobility, social integration and cultural activities;

21. Welcomes the greater role played by the EIB in setting up financing programmes for students as well as in supporting young people setting up their own businesses; believes that the EIB should play an even greater role by investing selectively in high added value sectors in the Member States and particularly in enterprises that are making the most effort to hire young people and provide them with quality training;
22. Emphasises that young people who have a poorer chances of getting started in life, placing a special emphasis on the NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) group, must be supported or even mentored with respect for their individual needs and focusing on increasing their integration into the labour market and their access to quality jobs; considers that free publicly funded training places and a standardised system of training assistance can be one effective instrument for integrating particularly disadvantaged young people; stresses however that integration into the first labour market is essential and that any integration measures should aim to access the regular labour market from an early stage onwards as a prerequisite and that they need to be accommodated by support measures focusing on the needs of individuals; stresses the specific difficulties of poor young people to enjoy an experience abroad because of financial and linguistic constraints, and in some case spatial discrimination; is convinced that financial support must address especially the needs of the most disadvantaged;
23. Stresses the importance of creating employment opportunities for disabled young people, by establishing suitably adapted training programmes, and of encouraging more employment grants for this important sector of young people in the interests of their greater inclusion and achievement in society; calls on the Member States and the Commission to support information campaigns about education and training possibilities for young people with disabilities, such as the Exchange Ability project developed by the European Disability Forum and the Erasmus Student Network;
24. Emphasises that Eurofound's work programme 2009-2012 includes the specific project 'Active inclusion for young people with disabilities or health problems' and points to the crucial role of training centres offering social and professional skills training for youngsters with disabilities and those who grew up in institutional care; requests support for the development and use of these training centres where needed;
25. Stresses the need for measures to clarify fully the situation at national and European level regarding young people who are unemployed and not taking part in education or training; calls on the Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, to identify the reasons for the marginalisation of young people and recommend ways of reintegrating them, as well as of taking action to remedy the problem through achievement of the relevant objectives over the next ten years with regard to the employability and competitiveness of the European workforce and a reduction in school dropout rates;

26. Emphasises that traineeships are an appropriate aid in making the right career choice at all stages of the process of choosing an occupation, reiterates the necessity of setting out minimum standards for traineeships such as income and social rights, including social protection and social security arrangements, in order to improve the quality of traineeships and to ensure their educational value; restates that traineeships must not replace actual jobs and must be strictly limited in duration; stresses that a legally-binding European quality framework for traineeships covering all forms of education and training is urgently needed in order to prevent trainees from being exploited and that the Commission should present an action plan with a timetable including an outline of how this quality framework would be implemented;
27. Calls for the educational programmes aimed at promoting mobility to be extended beyond 2013 and asks the Commission to increase the funding allocated to such programmes when future framework programmes are drawn up;
28. Emphasises that young people must be given access to vocational education and training once in work, enabling them to accumulate training while at work, and that continuous training and a lifelong learning approach and professional development must be supported from the very first job and that the Member States must be called upon to establish independent systems for the provision of advice on further training with a view to guaranteeing that further training becomes the norm;
29. Urges the establishment of a single list of accredited universities and specialisms, which will guarantee the recognition of qualifications throughout the EU;
30. Emphasises that high-quality initial education and vocational training covering all trades and professions increases young people's job opportunities and guarantees businesses a supply of skilled employees; calls on the Member States to establish appropriate supervisory bodies in order to ensure that such education and training is provided;
31. Welcomes the 'Your first EURES job' initiative to promote professional mobility, which should be closely linked with the European Vacancy Monitor so that workers and employers have a comprehensive, transparent overview of the EU job market and vacancies can be filled by suitable persons as quickly as possible; points out, however, that this must not lead to a brain drain away from certain parts of the EU;
32. Underlines the importance of promoting entrepreneurship and helping young people to start their own business and of promoting and extending the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme; recommends, therefore, implementing an EU information campaign in education institutes that covers entrepreneurship, start-up capital, taxation on start-up businesses and continuous training support;
33. Emphasises the importance of non-formal and informal learning and education for the development of young people, as well as voluntary work; stresses that the skills gained not only offer young people opportunities for their entry into the world of work, but also enable them to be actively involved in society and to take responsibility for their lives, while also stimulating their entrepreneurial skills;
34. Emphasises the importance of youth being included not only in the labour market and the

economy, but also in the shaping and governing of Europe's future; asks the Commission to draw up a Green Paper on Youth Participation;

35. Calls on the Commission to maintain a separate Youth in Action Programme for the upcoming multi-financial framework;

36. Calls on the Commission to increase and widen participation in mobility programmes and to improve their visibility, notably those targeting young people, for instance by using a single name to denote all mobility programmes while preserving the specificities of each of them.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	16.3.2011
Result of final vote	+: 41 -: 4 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Regina Bastos, Edit Bauer, Jean-Luc Bennahmias, Pervenche Berès, Mara Bizzotto, Philippe Boulland, Milan Cabrnock, David Casa, Alejandro Cercas, Marije Cornelissen, Frédéric Daerden, Karima Delli, Proinsias De Rossa, Frank Engel, Sari Essayah, Richard Falbr, Ilda Figueiredo, Thomas Händel, Roger Helmer, Nadja Hirsch, Stephen Hughes, Liisa Jaakonsaari, Danuta Jazłowiecka, Martin Kastler, Ádám Kósa, Patrick Le Hyaric, Veronica Lope Fontagné, Olle Ludvigsson, Elizabeth Lynne, Thomas Mann, Csaba Óry, Rovana Plumb, Konstantinos Poupakis, Sylvana Rapti, Licia Ronzulli, Elisabeth Schroedter, Jutta Steinruck, Traian Ungureanu
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Georges Bach, Raffaele Baldassarre, Sven Giegold, Antigoni Papadopoulou, Evelyn Regner,
Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote	Diana Wallis, Janusz Wojciechowski