



**2017/2039(INI)**

9.11.2017

# OPINION

of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

on the implementation of the Youth Employment Initiative in the Member States  
(2017/2039(INI))

Rapporteur: Vilija Blinkevičiūtė

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## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality calls on the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

- A. whereas young people, and young women in particular, were hit the hardest during the recent financial and economic crisis, which had a severe impact not only on young women's economic empowerment and young people's employment, but also on their mental and physical well-being, as well as, in general, on their working environment, demographic situation, living conditions and access to education or training;
- B. whereas, across the EU, women remain considerably under-represented on the labour market and in management, with the overall employment rate of women still being almost 12 % lower than that of men;
- C. whereas 'reducing the gender pay, earnings and pension gaps and thus fighting poverty among women' is one of the priorities defined by the Commission in its document entitled 'Strategic engagement for gender equality 2016-2019';
- D. whereas 31.5 % of working women work part-time compared with 8.2 % of working men, and whereas just over 50 % of women work full-time, compared with 71.2 % of men, representing a full-time employment rate gap of 25.5 %;
- E. whereas, gender balance is an indicator, which is not properly addressed within the objectives of the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI);
- F. whereas Articles 9 and 10 of the TFEU stipulate that, in defining and implementing its policies and activities, the Union has to ensure an inclusive and integrated labour market that is able to address the severe impact of unemployment and secure a high level of employment; whereas the EU must ensure decent working conditions across the Union, including adequate wages, and must guarantee adequate social protection in accordance with labour regulations, collective bargaining and in line with the principle of subsidiarity, as well as a high level of education and training and must combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation;
- G. whereas the situation of young women and men and the reasons why they are not in employment, education or training (NEET) vary;
- H. whereas difficulties in balancing work and life because of inadequate support for care and family responsibilities as well as the paternity leave gap and the gender bias in the labour market as a consequence thereof still restrict women's opportunities as regards education, inhibit their participation in the labour market and affect their career choices and economic activity; whereas, in this connection, in many Member States women represent the vast majority of workers employed in precarious, part-time or mini jobs; whereas all of the above has a negative future impact on their wages and pension-related income;
- I. whereas, for young women in rural areas, irregular employment arrangements or the

failure to register as unemployed renders statistical data imprecise and creates disparities in their pensions; whereas this practice negatively influences society as a whole and, in particular, women's well-being, other forms of social insurance and opportunities for career changes or future employment possibilities;

- J. whereas NEET rates are decreasing, although the YEI cannot take full credit for this;
  - K. whereas NEETS are a heterogeneous group with diverse needs and it is therefore of the utmost importance to take measures in order to make women, young girls and the gender aspect visible throughout an up-to-date YEI;
  - L. whereas, according to national evaluations of the YEI, there are difficulties in involving vulnerable young people in some Member States; whereas, in the first phase of implementation, the YEI most frequently reached the younger age cohort of 15-24 year olds (77 %), young men (51 %), those with at least upper secondary school level qualifications (75 %) and the unemployed (77 %) rather than the inactive, according to a survey of Managing Authorities in late 2015;
1. Welcomes the decrease in the numbers of unemployed young people and of young NEETs in the EU since 2013; underlines, however, the fact that youth unemployment remains a key concern in many Member States;
  2. Highlights the need for a dual strategy approach and methodology based on gender mainstreaming with horizontal implementation across all EU initiatives, policies and measures in the context of the YEI, with special attention for young women and girls;
  3. Stresses that setting and ensuring minimum standards on the quality of employment offered within the framework of the YEI is of the utmost importance, should be safeguarded for all young people (re-)entering the labour market and should not only take account of their professional/occupational profile and labour market demand, but should also include: contract-based employment, decent working and living conditions, decent salaries, social security and pension rights, access to child care facilities, periods of leave, holidays, and permanent employment;
  4. Recognises the success of the YEI in reducing youth unemployment rates and in ensuring the gender balance in particular, with the result that the YEI has reached around 48 % of men and 52 % of women;
  5. Calls for the full implementation of both Directive 2000/78/EC on equal treatment in employment and occupation and Directive 2010/41/EU on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity within the YEI;
  6. Considers it necessary that the Commission and the Member States come forward with positive measures in order to ensure that young women and girls receive good quality offers of employment and are not employed or trapped in precarious, underpaid and temporary jobs with limited or no rights as workers;
  7. Commends the well-focused, targeted approach and the stronger focus on individualised assistance, which contributed to the general success of the YEI and, in particular, to the

success in ensuring gender balance, which has a bigger impact on women's participation in the labour market; encourages the promotion of gender awareness in guidance and lifelong learning with public employment services being made available to sustain women's participation in the labour force and their return to the labour market after career breaks;

8. Calls on the Member States to compile gender-disaggregated statistical data in order for the Commission to launch an impact assessment of the YEI and its influence on gender balance to allow for a thorough evaluation and analysis of its implementation;
9. Calls on the Member States, while also underlining the importance of non-governmental organisations and other relevant actors in this regard, to develop new, innovative and more personalised ways to reach inactive NEETs, who are facing barriers such as poverty, social exclusion, disability or multiple discrimination; as well as to significantly improve communication, which could be easily adapted to different target groups, and to find ways to support young women's re-entry into the labour market, education or training through ensuring gender equality in access to employment, career progression, the reconciliation of work and private life, the provision of childcare and adult care, and through promoting equal pay for female and male workers for equal work or work of equal value;
10. Recalls that effectively challenging gender stereotypes is crucial to increase women's participation in all segments of the labour market; calls on the Union to be a champion in challenging gender stereotypes, especially in the area of education, work, and further training;
11. Stresses the need to focus on the quality and sustainability of offers; encourages initiatives aiming at tackling gender segregation in education, training and on the labour market; points out the importance of supporting, on the basis of targeted policies, the inclusion of girls and young women in all sectors of the economy, including science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and entrepreneurship; calls on the Member States to provide programmes, training courses and education that would boost young people's e-capacity and digital skills, especially among women and those living in rural or remote areas in order to help them to achieve long-term, sustainable economic independence and to become active creators of employment opportunities;
12. Underlines the fact that programmes such as the Youth Guarantee (YG) and the YEI arose as a reaction to particularly adverse circumstances; notes, however, that such programmes cannot be considered as substitutes for systemic solutions to address high levels of youth unemployment in the Member States;
13. Calls on the Member States to continue implementing the YEI, while remedying its weaknesses, and to ensure the continuation of financing YEI during the period of the next multiannual financial framework (MFF);
14. Stresses the need for gender quotas to be introduced by the Member States when implementing the YEI, given that this positive measure has been proven to be one of the most effective tools in addressing inequalities, discrimination and gender imbalances;
15. Calls on the Member States to share best practices among themselves in order to learn

from each other to ensure that the YEI achieves the best effect;

16. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to thoroughly evaluate and consider the future funding of the YG and the YEI in the light of their added value in terms of the long-term sustainable increase in youth employment;
17. Calls on the Member States to promote tailor-made solutions depending on the specific regions concerned and to avoid unproductive 'one-size-fits-all' solutions;
18. Urges the Commission to come forward with an updated proposal for an increased budget for the YEI and the YG tools, given the ongoing European and economic crises and the consequent economic slowdown mean that Member States are still struggling with high unemployment levels, public debt, low growth and insufficient investments, as well as cuts in public expenditure;
19. Calls on the Member States to engage in awareness-raising campaigns that would target all interest groups, especially those living in remote or rural areas, who are less likely to be properly trained and informed.

## INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Date adopted</b>	6.11.2017
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 19 -: 0 0: 3
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Maria Arena, Malin Björk, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, Arne Gericke, Mary Honeyball, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Florent Marcellesi, Angelika Niebler, Marijana Petir, Terry Reintke, Michaela Šojdrová, Anna Záborská, Jana Žitňanská
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Kostadinka Kuneva, Edouard Martin, Jordi Solé, Marc Tarabella, Mylène Troszczynski, Julie Ward
<b>Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote</b>	Ulrike Müller, Gabriele Preuß

## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>19</b>	<b>+</b>
ALDE	Ulrike Müller
GUE/NGL	Malin Björk, Kostadinka Kuneva
PPE	Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Angelika Niebler, Marijana Petir, Michaela Šojdrová, Anna Záborská
S&D	Maria Arena, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Mary Honeyball, Edouard Martin, Gabriele Preuß, Marc Tarabella, Julie Ward
VERTS/ALE	Florent Marcellesi, Jordi Solé, Terry Reintke

<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>

<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>
ECR	Arne Gericke, Jana Žitňanská
ENF	Mylène Troszczynski

**Key to symbols:**

- + : in favour
- : against
- 0 : abstention