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REPORT

on the assessment of the EU Youth Strategy 2013-2015
(2015/2351(INI))

Committee on Culture and Education

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on the assessment of the EU Youth Strategy 2013-2015 (2015/2351(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 165 and 166 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, and in particular Articles 14, 15, 21, 24 and 32 thereof,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing ‘Erasmus+’: the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport and repealing Decisions No 1719/2006/EC, No 1720/2006/EC and No 1298/2008/EC¹,
- having regard to the Council resolution on a European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2016-2018² and the Council resolution of 20 May 2014 on a European Union Work Plan for Youth 2014-2015³,
- having regard to the Council recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee⁴,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 7-8 February 2013 to create a Youth Employment Initiative⁵,
- having regard to the Council resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018)⁶,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (‘ET 2020’)⁷,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 April 2016 on Erasmus+ and other tools to foster mobility in VET - a lifelong learning approach⁸,
- having regard to the Paris Declaration on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education, adopted at the informal meeting of EU education ministers on 17 March 2015 in Paris,
- having regard to the 2015 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the

¹ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 50.

² OJ C 417, 15.12.2015, p. 1.

³ OJ C 183, 14.6.2014, p. 5.

⁴ OJ C 120, 26.4.2013, p. 1.

⁵ EUCO 37/13

⁶ OJ C 311, 19.12.2009, p. 1.

⁷ OJ C 119, 28.5.2009, p. 2.

⁸ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0107.

implementation of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018), adopted by the Council on 23 November 2015,

- having regard to the Commission communication of 15 September 2015 entitled ‘Draft 2015 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018)’ (COM(2015)0429) and to the Commission staff working documents accompanying the Communication from the Commission ‘Results of the open method of coordination in the youth field with a special focus on the second cycle (2013-2015)’ (SWD(2015)0168) and ‘Situation of young people in the EU’ (SWD(2015)0169),
- having regard to the Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 26 August 2015 entitled ‘Draft 2015 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET2020) - New priorities for European cooperation in education and training’ (COM(2015)0408),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 3 March 2010 entitled ‘EU 2020: a European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth’ (COM(2010)2020),
- having regard to its resolutions of 11 September 2013 on the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy 2010-2012¹ and of 18 May 2010 on an EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering²,
- having regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 April 2016 on Learning EU at school³,
- having regard to its resolution of 8 September 2015 on promoting youth entrepreneurship through education and training⁴,
- having regard to its resolution of 28 April 2015 on the follow-up of the implementation of the Bologna process⁵,
- having regard to its resolution of 19 January 2016 on the role of intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity and education in promoting EU fundamental values⁶,
- having regard to the Shadow Report on Youth Policy published by the European Youth Forum,
- having regard to the Council Recommendation of 10 March 2014 on a Quality Framework for Traineeships,

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0364.

² OJ C 161 E, 31.5.2011, p. 21.

³ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0106.

⁴ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0292.

⁵ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0107.

⁶ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0005.

- having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Culture and Education and the opinions of the Committee on Budgetary Control and the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (A8-0250/2016),
- A. whereas young people should be actively involved in the planning, development, implementation, monitoring and assessment of all youth policies;
 - B. whereas young people should be helped and empowered to address the extremely serious problems they currently face and to tackle the challenges they will face in the future through more relevant, effective and better coordinated youth policies and targeted use of economic, employment and social policies resources at local, regional, national and EU level;
 - C. whereas there is a need to reinforce the mainstreaming of youth policy, cross sectorial cooperation, social action within the EU and the synergy between the European Youth Strategy and other European strategies such as those concerning education, training, health and employment, in order to guarantee that both current and future policy making effectively addresses the situations and needs of young people, who are having to deal with severe economic, employment and social problems and whereas in this regard the participation of youth organisations in policy making is crucial;
 - D. whereas the open method of coordination is applied in the youth field, inspired by European cooperation in the field of employment;
 - E. whereas one of the objectives set for the Erasmus+ programme as a whole is to contribute to the achievement of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018); whereas in this regard access to project grants for youth organisations under the renewed Erasmus+ programme as well as removing barriers for the eligibility of small projects must be ensured;
 - F. whereas the EU Youth Strategy (2010-2018) has eight main fields of action in which initiatives should be taken – education and training, employment and entrepreneurship, health and well-being, participation, voluntary activities, social inclusion, youth and the world as well as creativity and culture;
 - G. whereas the third and final three-year cycle of the EU Youth Strategy (2010-2018) will prioritise the social inclusion of all young people, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, stronger participation in democratic and civic life and easier transition into the labour market;
 - H. whereas the EU Youth Strategy (2010-2018) emphasises the need for a continuous structured dialogue between decision-makers and young people and youth organisations; points out however that 57 % of youth organisations in the EU consider that youth expertise is not taken into account when youth policies are being formulated;
 - I. whereas youth policy should be rights-based and support the development of all young people, ensuring the fulfilment of young people's rights and potential, while avoiding stigmatising specific groups;

- J. whereas it is important to underline that young people are politically engaged in many ways, but their participation in elections is decreasing;
- K. whereas it is important to ensure that all young people have access to quality education – both formal and non-formal – and training as today's European youth is facing high unemployment rates in many Member States, unstable jobs and an increased risk of poverty and social exclusion, and in particular young people with poor qualifications, young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) and those with special needs, disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds such as ethnic minorities, refugees, migrants and asylum seekers who are more likely to be unemployed and marginalised;
- L. whereas continued efforts are needed to increase participation levels in the labour markets among young women – particularly after maternity leave and if single mothers – and young migrants, school-drop outs, the low-skilled, young people with disabilities and all youngsters at risk of discrimination;
- M. whereas education and training can contribute to tackling social disengagement, marginalisation and radicalisation of young people and to addressing youth unemployment and to raising young people's awareness of the importance of the fundamental values underpinning the EU; whereas intercultural and interreligious approaches are crucial for building mutual respect and integrating young people into education and social life as well as for combating prejudices and intolerance;
- N. whereas the specific nature of sports activity and its contribution to the social inclusion of disadvantaged young people, especially refugees and migrants, means that it helps to overcome xenophobia and racism;
- O. whereas young people are the future and should be seen as a resource with tremendous potential for the future of European societies;
- P. whereas it is crucial to incorporate a gender perspective into youth policies which takes into account the specific circumstances and challenges faced by young women and girls, at all stages of the policy process; whereas specific gender-sensitive measures must be included in youth policy on issues such as combating violence against women and girls, sex and relationship education, and education on gender equality;
- Q. whereas the needs of young people affected by multiple discrimination, including young people with disabilities or with mental health conditions, and young people identifying themselves as LGBTI, must also be given special consideration when designing and implementing youth policies;
- R. whereas social inclusion and social mobility must be central priorities of the EU Youth Strategy, and it must therefore specifically target young people in vulnerable groups, such as young people facing poverty and social exclusion, young people from isolated rural areas or those from marginalised communities such as ethnic minorities or refugees and asylum seekers;

General recommendations

1. Welcomes the EU Youth Report of 15 September 2015 based on the Commission

communication on the implementation of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018), including the main results of the latest three-year cycle of the EU Youth Strategy and proposing priorities for the next cycle (COM(2015)0429); recommends the EU, national, regional and local authorities to make sure that the different programmes at EU level dealing with youth policies are well communicated, implemented, coordinated, in order to respond to new needs with a view to the social and educational challenges to come;

2. Views the open method of coordination as an appropriate but still insufficient as a means for framing youth policies that needs to be complemented by other measures; reiterates its call for closer cooperation and exchange of best practices on youth issues at local, regional, national and EU level; urges the Member States to agree on clear indicators and benchmarks in order to allow for monitoring of the progress made;
3. Emphasises that inclusion of youth with disability in employment is necessary so they can lead an independent life and be fully integrated in society as active participants and real contributors;
4. Stresses the importance of the Structured Dialogue as a means of involving young people, both those who are involved in youth organisations and those who are not; highlights in this regard the need to increase and improve the outreach, visibility and quality of the process, giving special attention to the involvement of vulnerable and marginalised groups, in order to develop, implement and evaluate youth policies more effectively at all levels and to foster active citizenship among young people; calls for strengthening the Structured Dialogue as a quality participatory tool for young people in the next cooperation framework for youth;
5. Notes the impact of the second cycle of the EU Youth Strategy (2013-2015) in stressing the importance of an adaptable approach to youth policy with cross-sectoral and multi-level involvement; values the Structured Dialogue with youth organisations in this regard; calls on the Commission and the Member States to improve access to high-quality education and training and employment for young people; recalls the eight fields of action being promoted by the EU Youth Strategy;
6. Stresses the importance of the EU Youth Strategy, given the EU's alarmingly high youth unemployment, the high and widely varying percentages of NEETs, and the challenges of youth poverty and social exclusion; stresses that the next cycle (2016-2018) should contribute to the two objectives of the EU Youth Strategy by identifying and tackling the causes of youth unemployment, such as early school leaving, by fostering entrepreneurship among young people, by investing in education, internships, apprenticeships and vocational training in the skills that reflect labour market opportunities, needs and developments, and by facilitating the transition to the labour market in terms of measures ensuring better coordination of education programmes, employment policy and labour market demands; points out that labour market actors must be supported in their endeavours to implement the Youth Guarantee Scheme in an effort to ensure that, at the latest, four months after leaving school, young people are either in employment, in education or undergoing vocational (re)training;
7. Stresses that effective implementation of the EU Youth Strategy should be closely linked to achieving the Europe 2020 headline targets, particularly those of having 75 %

of the population aged 20 to 64 in employment and lifting as many young people as possible out of poverty and social exclusion; notes that although there has been a decrease in some Member States since 2013, there is still a real concern that youth unemployment continues to stand at almost double the overall unemployment rate, with around 8 million young Europeans still unemployed; underlines, therefore, the importance of addressing geographical mismatches between job supply and demand both within and between Member States via the changes made to the European Job Mobility Portal (EURES), in order to improve youth employment opportunities and achieve greater social cohesion;

8. Stresses that it is essential that the next cycle of the EU Youth Strategy includes young refugees and asylum seekers under its objectives and ensures their equal and non-discriminatory treatment, access to education, training and employment and social inclusion, thus helping them build their identity in the host countries and make full use of their talents and potential, and avoid their marginalisation and disenchantment;
9. Expresses its concern at the brain drain and the dangers thereof for certain Member States, in particular those facing difficulties and included in adjustment programmes, where an increasing number of graduates are being forced by massive unemployment to go abroad, depriving the countries concerned of their most valuable and productive human resources;
10. Stresses the potential of new technologies for connecting with young people and calls on the EU and the Member States to take advantage of those technologies to strengthen the dialogue with young people and their capacity to participate in society;
11. Stresses the importance of involving young people and youth organisations in shaping the priorities and drafting a new EU Youth Cooperation Framework after 2018;
12. Recommends that the Member States and the EU implement an impact assessment of policies that are targeted at young people;
13. Considers the sharing of best practices, evidence-based policymaking, expert groups, peer learning activities and reviews to be important tools in result-oriented cross-sectorial cooperation to support young people; stresses the importance of disseminating the results of these activities to maximise the impact;
14. Stresses the importance of cross-sectoral cooperation at all levels and notably between the different EU strategies that affect young people (current and future EU strategies on Youth, Education and Training Strategy, Health, Employment, etc.);
15. Underlines the importance of, and the need to strengthen and further develop strategies and initiatives aimed at preventing violence and bullying in schools;
16. Underlines the importance of high-quality cooperation, geared to the needs of the individual child or young person, including between families, religious communities and schools, local communities, youth organisations, youth workers and formal, non-formal or informal education, in guiding and helping young people towards full integration in society by providing a safe place for growing and learning;

17. Suggests involving local and regional authorities in the area of youth policy, especially in those Member States where they have competence in this area;
18. Stresses the importance of promoting healthy lifestyles to prevent disease, and considers it necessary to provide young people with correct information on and assistance with serious mental health problems such as tobacco, alcohol and drug use and addiction;
19. Recalls the value of including an intergenerational dimension in youth policies and the need to create better dialogue between different generations;
20. Underlines the importance of addressing poverty among young people from socio-economically deprived backgrounds, those with unemployed parents and those who have not managed to break out of their family's socio-economic cycle;
21. Urges the Member States to provide effective training in the national language, in accordance with the principles of multilingualism and non-discrimination and on the basis of national legislation and European principles, and to increase support for educational institutions that teach in the mother tongue of national or language minorities;
22. Recalls the Europe 2020 headline target whereby the proportion of early leavers from education and training should be less than 10 %; stresses the need to combat early school leaving, which is a contributory factor to unemployment, by dialogue between the education sector, public employment services and the social partners, by identifying the shortcomings of the school system and society, by supporting students in finding their own learning methods, by implementing relevant and engaging curricula, by realising a strong and well-developed personalised guidance system with high-quality counselling and orientation services for all students, especially at the first signs of student dropout, by adequately informing students about future labour market opportunities and career paths, including technical and artisanal job profiles, by providing STEM education and dual learning, by ensuring qualitative apprenticeships, internships and work placements, and by offering students a second chance in the form of vocational training;
23. Calls on the Member States to issue knowledge- and evidence-based reports on the social situation and living conditions of young people, and to draw up national action plans and implement them consistently;
24. Stresses that the promotion of more and equal opportunities for all young people, furthering social inclusion, gender equality and solidarity and fighting all forms of discrimination in relation to young people, in particular on grounds of gender, racial or ethnic origin or disability, should be central to achieving the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy;
25. Notes that youth policies and national strategies must be developed with and for young people;
26. Welcomes in particular the usefulness of the Framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018) in its improvement of cooperation between the Member States and the European Union and opening up and developing of the opportunities and

advantages offered by the European integration project to young people, and accordingly calls on the Commission to carry forward and develop the framework beyond 2018;

27. Calls on the Member States to set up the educational structures needed to integrate young refugees, allowing them to learn the language of the country in which they have been granted asylum, to complete their initial training or to bring their existing skills up to European level in order to facilitate their integration into the labour market and European society;
28. Calls for targeted measures regarding early school leavers, who need guidance, skilling and training, and an effective system in early education that identifies those who are at risk of becoming early schools leavers or NEETs, so that they are assisted from a young age and steered away from this disadvantage;
29. Encourages Member States to incorporate the principle of solidarity between generations into their pension policies and to take account of the current and future impact of those policies on young people;
30. Welcomes the European Parliament's resolution of 12 April 2016 on learning EU at school, and calls on the Member States accordingly to promote more extensive knowledge of the EU by means of formal, non-formal and informal education, targeting in particular the cooperation of providers of formal and non-formal / informal education, which can succeed within a continuing EU youth strategy;
31. Calls on the Member States to involve independent organisations more closely in the implementation process, particularly at local level, and to improve coordination between existing procedures in the post-2018 strategy (e.g. by means of EU-wide involvement in youth welfare committees, etc.) so that the EU youth strategy continues to be of use;
32. Highlights the need to equip young people with a solid knowledge and understanding of the EU, including through learning about EU fundamental values, and EU governance and decision-making processes, thereby enabling them to engage in a critical reflection on the EU and to become responsible and active European citizens; calls on the Commission and on the Member States to increase their efforts to promote an EU dimension in education with the aim of preparing learners to live and work in an increasingly complex and integrated Union that they can and are expected to shape;

Employment and education

33. Calls on the Member States to make the best use of available EU and national policies and financial frameworks in order to promote appropriate investment in young people and the creation of quality and secure jobs; insists at all levels on the mobility schemes that result in improving skills and competences for young people, giving them self-confidence, developing their curiosity and interest in other ways of learning and being involved in society; recommends strongly the recognition and assessment of those skills, enhanced through mobility; calls on the EU and the Member States to ensure that young people have better access to information concerning all the programmes and initiatives from which they can benefit;

34. Urges the Member States to fully implement the Erasmus+ programme, especially its apprenticeships facet, thereby promoting and fostering further cross-border training and career and labour mobility among young people and providing them with skills and competences for life, including language skills, while also broadening their opportunities and chances to participate in both the labour market and society, whatever their academic qualifications, skills or education level may be; expresses concern that the mobility of apprentices has not yet achieved the desired levels, and calls on the Commission, the Member States, companies and schools to find ways to overcome the remaining obstacles to the mobility of apprentices; stresses the importance of supporting young people in their mobility projects, given the age factor and their often unstable financial situations, including by removing certain indirect constraints on mobility, such as accommodation and transport difficulties;
35. Calls for improved opportunities for VET students to do work placements in neighbouring countries in order to foster a better understanding of other Member States' labour and training practices, for example by funding the travel costs of students who continue to live in their home country; points out that mobility in training is a vital asset when it comes to entering the job market, but also in understanding and engaging in the European project by experiencing it; emphasises the importance of implementing a European framework to promote mobility as part of apprenticeship and vocational training; calls, moreover, on the Member States to take full advantage of the EURES network so as to support intra-EU youth labour mobility, including mobility in apprenticeships;
36. Highlights the importance of teaching and learning general basic skills such as ICT, maths, critical thinking, foreign languages, mobility etc., which will enable young people to easily adapt to the changing social and economic environment;
37. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to boost ICT training in order to equip all young people with the relevant e-skills useful for the labour market, for example by reallocating funding within the Youth Employment Initiative;
38. Reiterates that information and communication technologies (ICT) have an important role to play in young people's personal and professional development, and acknowledges their potential to empower young people by bringing them together in response to social concerns and by allowing them to connect across geographical, social, religious, gender and economic barriers; calls on the Member States, therefore, to undertake measures to ensure that all young people are well equipped with up-to-date ICT skills and competences;
39. Calls on the Commission and Member States to pursue youth and education programmes that empower young women and girls and facilitate their entry into traditionally male-dominated sectors where they are under-represented, such as entrepreneurship, ICT, and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM);
40. Reiterates the enormous potential of synergies between the STEM and ICT sectors and the fields of arts and design and the creative industries, making STEM into STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, mathematics), and emphasises the potential of such synergies to bring more young people, particularly women and girls, into STEM fields;

41. Calls on the Member States to encourage women to take up training and careers in sectors where they have been under-represented, such as STEM and IT;
42. Underlines the need to ensure that young people have the opportunity to attain at least basic digital skills and acquire knowledge and understanding about the media, in order to work, to learn and to participate actively in modern society;
43. Notes that even if young people overcome the real challenge of finding a job, they do not necessarily secure the means to live above the poverty line in many Member States;
44. Calls for the continuation of the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI); calls for subsequent adjustments to regulation and resources to be proposed in order to overcome the existing impediments to implementation up to the end of the current financial framework;
45. Calls for better coordination at all levels between education and training curricula and the needs of the changing labour markets; calls for campaigns to provide information, raise awareness and enhance mobility programmes to be established in all general and vocational educational establishments in the EU in order to meet the policy objectives of economic, social and territorial cohesion of the EU and in view of the persistent inequalities between urban, suburban and rural areas; stresses, however, the importance of upholding the value of knowledge and of seeking to provide a fully rounded education and a solid academic grounding; encourages the enhancement of dialogue and cooperation between business and the universities with a view to developing educational programmes that equip young people with the right set of skills, knowledge and competencies; calls, in this regard, for closer cooperation between educational institutions, businesses, particularly SMEs, and employment services; suggests that Member States take over best practices from each other in this respect;
46. Underlines the fact that a holistic and inclusive educational approach is essential in order to make all students feel welcome and included and empowered to take decisions about their own education; points to students leaving school with no qualifications as being one of the greatest challenges for our societies – and combating it one of our main goals – as it leads to social exclusion; points out that apart from adjusting training systems, specific measures must be introduced for those in greatest difficulty; recalls that traineeships and apprenticeships should lead to employment and that the working conditions and tasks assigned should enable trainees to acquire the practical experience and relevant skills needed to enter the labour market; believes that, in order to tackle youth unemployment, the involvement of regional and local public and private stakeholders in the design and implementation of the relevant policy mix is fundamental;
47. Calls on the Member States to implement measures to facilitate young people's transition from education to work, including by ensuring quality internships and apprenticeships, giving young people clearly defined rights that include access to social protection, written and binding contracts, and fair remuneration, in order to ensure that young people are not discriminated against when accessing the labour market, and adequately informing students about future labour market opportunities;
48. Stresses that unemployment rates clearly decrease as the level of education attained

risers, and that it is therefore necessary to promote and invest in higher education opportunities for young people in the EU;

49. Points out, however, that education should not only provide skills and competences relevant to job market needs, but should also contribute to the personal development and growth of young people in order to make them proactive and responsible citizens; stresses, therefore, the need for civic education in the whole educational system, both formal and non-formal;
50. Calls on the Member States to provide opportunities for dual careers for young people who are talented at sport, so that they can develop their talent as athletes while still acquiring educational skills;
51. Stresses the need to include elements of entrepreneurial learning at all levels and in all forms of education and training, since instilling entrepreneurial spirit among the young at an early stage is an effective way of combating youth unemployment; in this context, urges active dialogue and cooperation between the university community and business with the aim of developing educational programmes that equip young people with the requisite skills and competences; emphasises, further, the need to promote and uphold policies to foster youth entrepreneurship, especially in the cultural and creative field and in the field of sport in order to create secure, quality jobs and to boost the social development and cohesion of communities; stresses, also, the potential offered by volunteer work for gaining skills, enhancing personal development and enabling young people to find their vocation;
52. Points out that entrepreneurship requires the development of transversal skills such as creativity, critical thinking, teamwork and a sense of initiative, which contribute to young people's personal and professional development and facilitate their transition into the job market; believes there is a need, therefore, to facilitate and encourage participation by entrepreneurs in the educational process;
53. Stresses the importance of investing more in start-ups and in young people taking on entrepreneurship, facilitating their access to initial capital and to experienced business mentor hubs;
54. Recalls that employment and entrepreneurship constitute one of the eight priorities identified in the EU Youth Strategy (2010-2018); stresses that youth work and non-formal learning, particularly via young entrepreneurs' organisations and youth organisations, which offer young people the opportunity to develop innovative projects, gain entrepreneurial experience and acquire the wherewithal and confidence to launch their own businesses, play a vital role in developing young people's creative and innovative potential, including their spirit of enterprise and entrepreneurial and civic skills; stresses the need to create an environment favourable to entrepreneurship and innovative start-ups in the interests of youth employment in Europe; emphasises that all the obstacles which prevent young people from developing their ideas, potential and attitudes must be removed;
55. Recommends a stronger focus on entrepreneurship in the EU Youth Strategy as key to boosting economic growth; notes that in 2014 only one in five young Europeans wishes to start his or her own business, continuing to find the idea difficult; favours prioritising

the development of an entrepreneurial culture at an early age, flexible work regulations allowing the combination of work and studies, dual education, and access to financing;

56. Recalls that the creative industries are amongst the most entrepreneurial and fast-growing sectors, and that creative education develops transferable skills such as creative thinking, problem-solving, teamwork and resourcefulness; acknowledges that the arts and media sectors are of particular appeal to young people;
57. Highlights the importance of social entrepreneurship as a driver of innovation, social development and employment, and calls therefore on the EU and the Member States to promote it better and to strengthen its role;
58. Encourages the Member States to take measures to incentivise entrepreneurship by creating a more entrepreneur- and start-up-friendly environment for the launch of business start-ups, which could include schemes and measures for easy provision of credit by banks, simplified regulation and tax relief schemes and measures enabling young people to go ahead with their own business ideas; advocates training methods that foster an entrepreneurial and creative mentality and recruitment of graduates as young entrepreneurs;
59. Underlines that, in order to tackle youth unemployment, Member States need well-trained career guidance personnel who are knowledgeable about both academic and vocational education opportunities and are aware of the current job market, likely developments in the Member States and the new sectors of their economies;
60. Encourages the Member States to provide support for young people in starting their independent life and establishing their own families with the help of housing allowances, preferential arrangements and reductions in personal income tax, and to provide preferential loans for students;
61. Stresses the importance of the mutual recognition and validation of skills, competences and knowledge that have been acquired through informal, non-formal and lifelong learning, as their validation is crucial in making visible and valorising the diverse and rich learning of individuals, particularly of individuals with fewer opportunities; points out that validation of skills contributes to enhancing access to formal education and to new professional opportunities, while reinforcing self-esteem and the motivation to learn, the development of values, aptitudes and skills for young people, as well as learning about citizenship and democratic involvement at every level; urges the Member States to increase their efforts to set up comprehensive validation mechanisms by 2018, as called for in the Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning, in close collaboration with all the relevant key stakeholders, including youth organisations;
62. Underscores the importance of formal, informal and non-formal learning, including as part of associative activities, for the development of values, aptitudes and skills in young people, as well as for learning about citizenship and democratic involvement; draws attention to the range of training possibilities and models available in the Member States and, in particular, to dual learning, which can soften the transition from education or training to employment; supports the implementation of lifelong learning; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure coherent, valid, Europe-wide

recognition of the skills and competences acquired through formal, informal and non-formal learning and traineeships, with a view to bridging the gap between the skills shortages and skills mismatch observed in the European labour market, and to provide their support for such activities in the framework of the relevant EU programmes; calls, further, for a greater focus on languages, especially neighbouring languages, in the field of vocational education and training (VET) in order to strengthen the position and employability of the students concerned in the cross-border labour market;

63. Notes that owing to the current wave of digitalisation and new trends in the labour market, more and more young people are encountering new forms of employment that balance flexibility with security; stresses the importance of adequate education for young people aimed at emphasising the role of social protection mechanisms in career development;
64. Believes that early intervention and proactive labour market policies represent a shift from dealing with the symptoms of multi-generation deprivation towards identifying and managing risks early in life in order to prevent unemployment and facilitate reintegration; draws attention especially to the situation of those who are most marginalised and at greatest risk of unemployment;
65. Stresses the importance of open and low-threshold programmes for working with young people from less stimulating environments;
66. Stresses the importance for lifelong learning and improving the educational and employment opportunities of young people of guaranteeing the mutual cross-border recognition and compatibility of qualifications and academic degrees in order to strengthen the system of quality assurance; calls for the continuous expansion, evaluation and adaptation to changing training requirements of mutual cross-border recognition of qualifications and degrees, and notes that this should be ensured at European level and in all countries that have joined the European Higher Education Area and those listed in the European Qualifications Framework;
67. Highlights in this regard the important role of non-formal and informal learning, as well as participation in sport and volunteering activities, in stimulating the development of civic, social and intercultural competencies and skills; emphasises the fact that some countries have made significant progress in developing a relevant legal framework, while others have difficulty in creating comprehensive validation strategies; stresses therefore the need to develop comprehensive strategies to enable validation;
68. Emphasises the importance of addressing skills shortages and mismatches by promoting and facilitating mobility for learners and teaching staff through better use of all EU tools and programmes; points out that mobility in training is a vital asset when it comes to entering the job market; stresses the need to implement measures aimed at ensuring coordination, complementarity and coherence between the structural funds for mobility, including the European Social Fund (ESF), for example, and other programmes such as Erasmus+; stresses in this regard the important role of mobility programmes such as Erasmus+ in stimulating the development of horizontal skills and competences and intercultural exchanges among young people; welcomes the transformation of the existing EU Skills Panorama website;

69. Highlights the need to enhance the role of the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme in achieving long-term quality employment; is of the opinion that job mobility is needed in order to unleash the potential of young people; notes that currently there are 217.7 million employed people in the EU, of which 7.5 million (3.1 %) are working in another Member State; notes, in addition, that, according to EU surveys, young people are more likely to be mobile and to bring new skills and qualifications home with them;
70. Calls on the Commission to enhance and support student mobility in the field of education and vocational training (EVT) by promoting the Erasmus for Apprentices scheme;
71. Calls on the Member States to take full advantage of the current reform of the EURES network to support intra-EU youth labour mobility, including mobility in apprenticeships and traineeships; calls on the Member States to regularly update the vacancies and curricula vitae; calls on the Commission to improve the job-matching process in EURES to ensure that young people receive appropriate, high-quality job offers in line with their curricula vitae;
72. Encourages the Member States to establish quality dual education and vocational training systems in coordination with local and regional economic actors, following the exchange of best practices and in line with the specific nature of each educational system, in order to overcome the existing and future skills mismatch;
73. Invites the Member States and the Commission to establish innovative and flexible grants for nurturing talent and artistic and sporting ability in the field of culture, education and training; supports those Member States that are seeking to introduce scholarship schemes for students with proven educational, sporting and artistic ability;
74. Notes that early school leaving and students leaving school with no qualifications are among the greatest challenges for our societies – and that addressing them must be one of our main goals – as they lead to a precarious existence and social exclusion; points out that mobility, adapting education systems and implementing individualised measures can offer solutions for the most disadvantaged people with a view to reducing the dropout rate in education and training;
75. Highlights the need to create a student contract that will enable university and vocational training students to combine studying with work, preferably in undertakings in the field for which they are training, with a guarantee of completing the studies commenced;
76. Highlights the need to continue efforts to reduce early school leaving and foster the education of disadvantaged young people;
77. Notes that in spite of a decrease in most Member States after its 2013 peak, youth unemployment remains a matter of serious concern in the EU, with around 8 million young Europeans being unable to find work and with the proportion facing long-term unemployment or involuntary part-time employment or traineeship status remaining high;

Financial resources

78. Underlines the importance of strategic investment, including from the European Structural and Investment Funds, in particular the European Social Fund, for regional development, competitiveness and the creation of high-quality traineeships, apprenticeships and sustainable jobs; notes that special attention should be paid to young people who are neither in employment nor in education and training, so-called NEETs;
79. Notes that the programming period 2014-2020 took some months to get started and that a first assessment of Union policies within this period, and in particular of those dedicated to youth, cannot be fully representative of their real impact;
80. Points out that in the previous programming period, the Court of Auditors estimated the error rate for transactions under the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) and the Youth in Action programme (YiA) at over 4 %; expects the Commission to have tackled those errors in the implementation of Erasmus+;
81. Notes the fact that in 2013 the budget execution rate for the 2007-2013 programmes, in particular the LLP, the Culture Programme, the MEDIA programme and the YiA programme, was 100 %; considers, however, that the execution rate alone is not a significant indicator of the effectiveness of programmes with a view to assessing their success;
82. Is concerned that at the end of 2013 the mismatch between adopted commitment and payment appropriations resulted in a shortfall of payments (for instance, in the case of the Erasmus+ programme to the sum of EUR 202 million), with negative repercussions for the following year; asks the Commission to ensure that this situation will not be repeated in the context of the new programmes;
83. Recalls that the reluctance of young people to launch businesses also contributes to the slow rate of economic growth in Europe, and therefore considers it necessary to support young people in starting their own businesses;
84. Welcomes the fact that more than EUR 12.4 billion from the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) have been earmarked for the fight against youth unemployment during the new programming period;
85. Notes with satisfaction that 110 300 unemployed young people participated in actions financed by the YEI in 2014; welcomes the fact that the EU heads of state and government have decided to allocate EUR 6.4 billion in Union funds (EUR 3.2 billion from the ESF and EUR 3.2 billion from a new budget line) to the Youth Guarantee (YG); stresses, however, that in some Member States there are still some difficulties in the implementation of the YG and YEI;
86. Calls for the EU and the Member States to step up efforts to ensure that apprenticeships and traineeships are not used as forms of insecure labour that take the place of real jobs and that all the necessary labour protections, including in connection with pay and other financial entitlements, are guaranteed;

87. Calls for targeted and simplified measures to enhance Member State capacity to make use of available funding through the European Structural Funds, the European Social Fund, the European Regional Development Fund, the European Cohesion Fund, the European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI), the Youth Employment Initiative, Youth on the Move, Your First Eures Job, Horizon 2020 and programmes and actions in the area of citizenship;
88. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to simplify the administrative procedures for granting financial resources to youth organisations, as these often lack the capacity to handle complicated application processes when applying for support from the various EU programmes;
89. Encourages the Member States to make full use of the Erasmus+ programme by better targeting people of all educational levels in order to improve the employment prospects of young people, foster cross-border careers and fair labour mobility; supports intercultural learning, European citizenship and young people's education in democracy and values, and therefore calls on the Commission when conducting the mid-term review to seek out and remove obstacles in the funding procedure which are making it difficult to achieve these goals, so that Erasmus+ can be more effective in this matter;
90. Welcomes the fact that the Erasmus programme has surpassed the benchmark of three million students; notes the sustained success that this Union flagship programme has enjoyed since its inception, and believes it is important that this programme should continue to receive support;
91. Regrets the wide variations among Member States in terms of the numbers of Erasmus students both sent and received; recommends more assertive information campaigns and simplification of the rules;
92. Reminds Member States that they should commit to extending national funding as a complement to the ESF and YEI appropriations, in order to ensure the necessary boost to youth employment; considers it necessary, furthermore, that the instruments used and the grants awarded should permit a dignified life; calls, therefore, for an assessment of grant levels in the light of the real cost of living in each Member State;
93. Urges the Member States to take the necessary measures to implement the Youth Guarantee scheme; calls for continued political commitment to the Youth Guarantee as a long-term, structural reform, ensuring sustainable labour-market integration through high-quality offers;
94. Urges the Member States to implement fully the Youth Guarantee, on the basis of strong cooperation between national, regional and local authorities, education systems and employment services; points out that the Youth Guarantee should be integrated fully into national employment plans and youth and education policy planning, and should be widely communicated to all young persons; recalls that the involvement of youth organisations in the communication, and also in the evaluation and implementation, of the Youth Guarantee tool is crucial to its success;
95. Recalls that young women and men of different socio-economic circumstances face different labour-market conditions at different ages; calls on the Commission and the

Member States to include such gender-specific and socio-economic considerations in the design and implementation of youth and labour market policies such as the Youth Guarantee;

96. Considers that the especially high levels of job insecurity among the young, together with the ageing of the European population, represent a major challenge for the sustainability, sufficiency and adequacy of pension systems, and seriously harm intergenerational solidarity; calls on the Commission and the Member States, therefore, to take all necessary measures to prevent abuses of, at least, the grants provided under the Youth Guarantee scheme, and to favour, at least for contracts established within the Youth Guarantee framework, contracts which allow young people to pay contributions to national social security systems;
97. Urges the Member States to fully implement and monitor the effectiveness of the Youth Guarantee, by making full use of the funds the EU has made available to them in order to implement measures to promote youth employment by integrating young people, including those with disabilities, into the labour market with a job, apprenticeship or traineeship within four months of leaving school or losing a job, by – for example – creating lifelong, tailor-made career guidance systems, registration offices, information points and methods of data collection, and by encouraging registration by the unemployed with a view to obtaining a picture of the real situation as regards youth unemployment, as well as improving the services offered by job centres to young jobseekers;
98. Urges the Member States to address without delay the key success factors for the implementation of the European Youth Guarantee, such as the quality and sustainability of job offers, further education and training, social inclusion, synergies with other policy fields (relating to education systems, the labour market, social services and youth), and cooperation between all the relevant stakeholders, in order to integrate young people into the labour market, reduce youth unemployment rates, and achieve a long-term positive impact in terms of prevention of social and labour market exclusion of young people in transition from school to the labour market;
99. Calls for an enlargement of the focus of the European Youth Guarantee as regards education and training for unskilled or low-skilled unemployed young people, so as also to cover young graduates and those who have completed vocational training, as well as for the extension of the age limit under the Youth Guarantee from 25 to 29 so as to reflect the fact that many graduates and labour market entrants are in their late twenties;
100. Calls on the Member States and regions to exchange good practices and learn from each other; points out the importance of conducting an assessment of the implementation of the Youth Employment Initiative by the Member States in 2014 and 2015; stresses the importance of assessing the medium-term effectiveness of the Youth Guarantee, with a focus on its achievements in enabling young people to acquire skills and enter employment, and of the further continuation of this initiative; points out, moreover, that the involvement of youth organisations in the evaluation and implementation of the Youth Guarantee is crucial to its success;
101. Is looking forward to the presentation of the comprehensive report on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee later this year by the Commission;

102. Notes that the Court of Auditors' report on 'EU Youth Guarantee – Implementation in Member States', due to be completed at the beginning of 2017, will provide a clearer assessment of the programme's results; considers that, inter alia, an analysis of its efficiency and long-term results should be included in the report;
103. Calls on all Member States to introduce a minimum guaranteed income, in order to offer young people who have finished school and university the resources they need to live decently until they find work;
104. Reminds the Commission of the importance of ensuring a high level of awareness among young people concerning available programmes and opportunities to participate, and also of ensuring that the information offered on the programmes is of high quality, using quantifiable indicators (e.g. the response and involvement of the target group);
105. Urges the Commission and the Member States to implement expansionist economic policies which offer greater leeway in the area of public investment in education, training and high-quality apprenticeships;
106. Urges the Member States to invest more and not to cut their national budget funding for youth policies, the arts, culture, education, health care and social services; furthermore, calls on Member States to channel investments into inclusive education which responds to societal challenges with regard to ensuring equal access and opportunities for all, including young people with different socio-economic backgrounds, as well as vulnerable and disadvantaged groups;
107. Recommends the inclusion of youth entrepreneurship in the MFF, and that Member States should work on developing national strategies aimed at achieving synergies between Erasmus+, the ESF, the EYI and Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs, as well as on clear guidelines for impact assessment, to be provided to Member States by the Commission;
108. Asks the Commission to deploy a comprehensive monitoring scheme for the youth programmes which combines planned result indicators, concrete outcomes and long-term outputs;
109. Stresses that a focus on performance and results is needed, and is pleased to note that the new regulatory framework for the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) for the programming period 2014-2020 includes provisions for reporting on results from Member States;
110. Recalls that 68 % of the ESF budget goes on projects in which young people could potentially be one of the target groups;
111. Highlights the need to promote housing grants to meet needs arising when it is impossible for students to follow vocational training or university courses in their own town or city of residence or in cities less than 50 km away;

Participation in decision making

112. Calls for stronger partnerships between youth organisations and public authorities with

a view to increasing opportunities for participation by young people and their organisations in policy-making; considers the role of youth, arts and sports organisations in developing young people's participatory skills and in improving the quality of the decision-making process especially important, with special regard to the fact that youths are contributors to society and are also providers of solutions to the contemporary challenges facing European society; highlights the unique role played by youth organisations in developing a sense of citizenship around the practice of democratic values and processes;

113. Stresses the value of youth organisations as providers of citizenship learning and education of democratic values, skills and competences, and recognises their contribution to improving youth participation in democratic processes;
114. Stresses the vital importance of informal and non-formal learning, the arts, sport, volunteering and social activities for encouraging youth participation and social cohesion as tools that can have a huge impact on local communities and can help address many of the societal challenges;
115. Calls on the Member States to comply strictly with the principles of inclusivity in youth work, with particular emphasis on young people with disabilities;
116. Stresses the need to intensively develop awareness regarding citizenship, media and digital literacy, critical thinking and intercultural understanding, using a wide range of instruments which are familiar to young people (e.g. social networks); stresses the significant role that such programmes and education play in preventing radicalisation among young people;
117. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to take account of new forms of economic involvement by young people, such as the growing trend for them to use sharing economy tools;
118. Stresses that young people's voluntary political, social, cultural and sports activities at local, regional and national level should be supported and better recognised for their value as an important form of non-formal learning that contributes to the development of key competences for life and to promoting values such as cooperation, solidarity, equality and justice; stresses, however, that the readiness of young people to develop voluntary activities cannot ultimately be considered as a possible cheap replacement for services that the Member States should take care of; asks that voluntary activities be recognised and fully acknowledged or validated;
119. Calls on the Member States to promote democratic participation by young students and to help young people in education to participate in their education and to contribute to it through their membership of student organisations;
120. Emphasises that better understanding of EU values, the functioning of the EU and European diversity are crucial in order to promote participation in democracy and to foster active citizenship among young people;
121. Calls on the Commission to make the most of new digital tools and to fully exploit the opportunities offered by social media in education and training, to provide targeted

high-quality media training that encourages the development of media literacy and critical thinking, and to promote and encourage participation by young people in decision-making, as well as in the civic, cultural and social life of society, in order to increase employability and enhance entrepreneurship, innovation and culture; acknowledges also the potential of digital tools to be used as an effective means for fighting bullying, hate speech and radicalisation;

122. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission, and to the governments of the Member States.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The human and social capital that young people represent is one of Europe's foremost resources and guarantors of its future. The European Union and its Member States therefore cannot afford to squander the potential inherent in the knowledge, creativity and skills of Europe's 90 million young people.

The economic crisis has hit young people particularly hard. The disparity between certain categories of young people has also grown, while some of them have increasingly lost their place in social and civil life. This situation is further aggravated by the fact that, in the case of some of them, there is a risk of social passivity, exclusion and isolation and even violent radicalisation.

Youth policy is a competence of the Member States, while the European Union's role is one of coordination, guidance and support. As it is not possible to adopt any legislative measure at EU level in this field, the Open Method of Coordination has been devised. This method brings together the appropriate ministers of the Member States within the Council of the EU, and they formulate many principles and objectives within their field. Subsequently, Member States are free to decide in what form and to what extent to accept these principles and objectives and to incorporate them in their own national youth strategies. In the case of countries with unfavourable statistical indicators, it would be worthwhile to adopt best practices and tried and tested youth policy measures to a greater extent, and to apply more widely those measures formulated through the Open Method of Coordination which are producing positive results. (Bearing in mind that each Member State has its own specific features and its individual problems, clearly it is not possible to issue the same prescription for every illness, as it were, but it is easier to stick to the customary path: it is possible to adopt tried and tested approaches from elsewhere).

The Youth Cooperation Framework supports the various measures adopted by Member States and the European Union inter alia by means of data collection, mutual learning, exchanges of experience and dialogue with young people.

The renewed framework for European cooperation in the field of the EU Youth Strategy, or in other words of youth policy, which covers the period 2010-2018, defines eight fields of action, namely: education and training, employment and entrepreneurship, health and welfare, participation, volunteering, social inclusion, youth and the world, creativity and culture. The strategy has two general priorities:

1. facilitating the transition from school to the world of work, and
2. fostering active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity among young people. This has become particularly important recently because of the radicalisation of young people and the need to prevent it.

Positive trends are emerging as regards educational indicators. This is so even though significant differences exist between the data of some Member States. Overall, early school-leaving is declining. The figure for the 18-24 age group fell from 13.9% in 2010 to 11.1% in 2014. However, the figures remain high in Spain, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Romania. The

percentage of graduates rose from 33.8% in 2010 to 37.9% in 2014. This means that one third of young people in Europe (in the 30-34 age group) are graduates, while 82% of the 20-24 age group have an upper secondary education certificate. Although unemployment has risen among graduates, in the EU as a whole the unemployment rate is still far lower among them than among the least educated people of the same age. At the same time, under-employment is a problem for members of this group too, as well as the fact that they are over-qualified in relation to the opportunities on offer on the labour market, or else they are qualified in the wrong field.

Many young people not only in the local but in the global community are building their system of contacts: in 2014, 82% of young people were members of some kind of online social network. Young people often participate in social and political life through social media, while in comparison with older generations, fewer of them vote. Despite this, many are active members of their local communities. In 2014, every second young person was a member of at least one organisation, club or community and one in four was volunteering.

Many young people have difficulty in finding quality jobs for themselves, and this in turn is a serious obstacle to becoming independent. In recent times, youth unemployment has fallen in most Member States, but the numbers involved continue to be grounds for concern. Whereas in February 2013, mean youth unemployment (among the 15-29 age group) in Europe peaked at 23.9%, the corresponding figure had fallen to 20% by November 2015. In some Member States, however, the situation is still very worrying, with youth unemployment exceeding 40%.

In 2014, youth unemployment in the age group 15-19 in the EU was 26.3%, while in the 20-24 age group it was 20.6% and in the 25-29 age group 13.6%. 8.7 million young people in Europe cannot find a job and are facing long-term unemployment or only working part-time.

Altogether, there are 13.7 million young people in Europe who are neither employed nor in education or training (NEETs). Nearly 27 million young people are at risk of poverty and social exclusion. The poverty rate is higher among young people in comparison with the population as a whole, and involuntary part-time work or in many cases protracted temporary positions expose this generation to a risk of a long-term low quality of life.

The risk of inactivity, poverty and social exclusion does not affect all young people equally. Those who start life with poorer prospects often suffer multiple disadvantages. Young people who have been born into poor families, with a migration background, or into a linguistic or cultural minority community (for example the Roma), who have grown up under State supervision, who have limited school qualifications or who face health problems begin their lives at a greater disadvantage, so they are more likely to become young NEETs. Children born within the EU to immigrant parents from outside the EU have unemployment rates nearly 50% higher than other young people living here.

There is therefore a big disparity between the two groups of young people: those who have a vision of their own future, who continue to study, who are confident that they will find a good job and who participate in social, civil and cultural life, on the one hand, and those who have little hope of accomplishment and who are at risk of marginalisation. This disparity jeopardises social cohesion and long-term sustainable economic growth. Because of the ageing of its population, Europe urgently needs to activate young people and encourage responsible parenthood.

The Member States and the Commission continued their cooperation between 2013 and 2015 with a view to promoting employment of young people, their integration into the labour market, social acceptance and active civic participation. In the light of the results, it may be said that in many fields progress has been made, but we need to find further solutions in order to reduce youth unemployment, improve young people's quality of life and prospects for the future, achieve equal opportunities, increase the civil self-awareness of young people, increase social participation and prevent violent radicalisation. In order to attain all these objectives, more systematic cooperation is needed at EU and Member-State level in many areas of policy, such as employment, education and training, social policy, youth policy and culture, sport and health. It is also important to make appropriate funding available to pay for the implementation of youth programmes, in which regard the EU and Member States alike have an important role to play. In general it may be said that the Open Method of Coordination is working, but that there is a need for better, more intensive cooperation in future. Effective cooperation and dialogue among the various stakeholders are important.

I am convinced that the EU's structured dialogue between political decision-makers, young people and their representatives is the most important instrument for getting to know young people's views. Since 2013, the structured dialogue has continuously been developed, and it now already has a more established position in the youth strategy. The EU dialogue also has an influence on the national dialogues which are getting under way. In addition to the structured dialogue, the Member States should make further efforts to ensure that EU programmes and grants aimed at young people reach as many of them as possible (adapting to the habits and demands of young people, particularly using the modern social media).

In the period 2016-2018, we must seek, by means of the framework for cooperation in the youth field, to encourage groups of young people which are as large and diverse as possible to take on an active role in local and global communities and civil and democratic life. By means of the framework for cooperation we should equally help young people to find jobs and participate in the life of society. Cooperation on policies relating to youth work, volunteering and participation in civic life must be supplemented by EU funding under the Erasmus+ programme. The integration of young people into the labour market and the development of their human capital will also be supported by other instruments such as the European Social Fund, the Investment Plan for Europe and the Youth Employment Initiative. In order to allocate funding more effectively, it would be useful to review the frameworks which have been used at various times.

21.4.2016

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON BUDGETARY CONTROL

for the Committee on Culture and Education

on Assessment of the EU Youth Strategy 2013-2015
(2015/2351(INI))

Rapporteur: Derek Vaughan

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Budgetary Control calls on the Committee on Culture and Education, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Notes that the programming period 2014-2020 took some months to get started and that a first assessment of Union policies within this period, and in particular of those dedicated to youth, cannot be fully representative of their real impact;
2. Points out that in the previous programming period, the Court of Auditors estimated the error rate for transactions under the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) and the Youth in Action programme (YiA) at over 4 %; expects the Commission to have tackled those errors in the implementation of Erasmus+;
3. Notes the fact that in 2013 the budget execution rate for the 2007-2013 programmes, in particular the LLP, the Culture Programme, the MEDIA programme and the YiA programme, was 100 %; considers, however, that the execution rate alone is not a significant indicator of the effectiveness of programmes with a view to assessing their success;
4. Is concerned that at the end of 2013 the mismatch between adopted commitment and payment appropriations resulted in a shortfall of payments (for instance, in the case of the Erasmus+ programme to the sum of EUR 202 million), with negative repercussions for the following year; asks the Commission to ensure that this situation will not be repeated in the context of the new programmes;
5. Welcomes the fact that the Erasmus programme has surpassed the benchmark of 3 million students; notes the sustained success that this Union flagship programme has enjoyed since its inception, and believes it is important that this programme should continue to

receive support;

6. Regrets the wide variations among Member States in terms of the numbers of Erasmus students both sent and received; recommends more assertive information campaigns and simplification of the rules;
7. Notes that in spite of a decrease in most Member States after its 2013 peak, youth unemployment remains a serious matter of concern in the EU, with around 8 million young Europeans being unable to find work and the proportion faced with long-term unemployment or involuntary part-time employment or traineeship status remaining high;
8. Recommends a stronger focus on entrepreneurship in the EU Youth Strategy as key to boosting economic growth; notes that in 2014 only one in five young Europeans wishes to start his or her own business, continuing to find the idea difficult; favours prioritising the development of an entrepreneurial culture at an early age, flexible work regulations allowing the combination of work and studies, dual education, and access to financing;
9. Recalls that the reluctance of young people to launch businesses also contributes to the slow rate of economic growth in Europe, and therefore considers it necessary to support young people in starting their own businesses;
10. Welcomes the fact that more than EUR 12.4 billion from the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) have been earmarked for the fight against youth unemployment during the new programming period;
11. Notes with satisfaction that 110 300 unemployed young people participated in actions financed by the YEI in 2014; welcomes the fact that the EU heads of state and government have decided to allocate EUR 6.4 billion in Union funds (EUR 3.2 billion from the ESF and EUR 3.2 billion from a new budget line) to the Youth Guarantee (YG); stresses, however, that in some Member States there are still some difficulties in the implementation of the YG and YEI;
12. Reminds Member States that they should commit to extending national funding as a complement to the ESF and YEI appropriations, in order to ensure the necessary boost to youth employment; considers it necessary, furthermore, that the instruments used and the grants awarded should permit a dignified life; calls, therefore, for an assessment of grant levels in the light of the real cost of living in each Member State;
13. Highlights the need to enhance the role of the Erasmus for young entrepreneurs programme for achieving long-term quality employment; is of the opinion that job mobility is needed to unleash the potential of young people; notes that currently there are 217.7 million employed people in the EU, of which number 7.5 million (3.1 %) are working in another Member State; notes, in addition, that, according to EU surveys, young people are more likely to be mobile and to bring new skills and qualifications back home;
14. Recommends the inclusion of youth entrepreneurship in the MFF, and that Member States should work on developing national strategies aimed at achieving synergies between Erasmus+, the ESF, the YEI and Erasmus for young entrepreneurs, as well as on clear guidelines for impact assessment, to be provided to Member States by the Commission;

15. Asks the Commission to deploy a comprehensive monitoring scheme for the youth programmes which combines planned result indicators, concrete outcomes and long-term outputs;
16. Stresses that a focus on performance and results is needed, and is pleased to note that the new regulatory framework for the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) for the programming period 2014-2020 includes provisions for reporting on results from Member States;
17. Recalls that 68 % of the ESF budget goes on projects in which young people could potentially be one of the target groups;
18. Notes that youth policies and national strategies must be developed with and for young people;
19. Notes that the Court of Auditors' report on 'EU Youth Guarantee - Implementation in Member States', due to be completed at the beginning of 2017, will provide a clearer assessment of the programme's results.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	20.4.2016
Result of final vote	+: 21 -: 2 0: 3
Members present for the final vote	Nedzhmi Ali, Inés Ayala Sender, Zigmantas Balčytis, Dennis de Jong, Martina Dlabajová, Luke Ming Flanagan, Ingeborg Gräßle, Bogusław Liberadzki, Verónica Lope Fontagné, Dan Nica, Georgi Pirinski, Petri Sarvamaa, Claudia Schmidt, Bart Staes, Michael Theurer, Marco Valli, Derek Vaughan, Anders Primdahl Vistisen, Tomáš Zdechovský
Substitutes present for the final vote	Richard Ashworth, Caterina Chinnici, Cătălin Sorin Ivan, Benedek Jávor, Karin Kadenbach, Marian-Jean Marinescu, Markus Pieper, Julia Pitera, Miroslav Poche, Patricija Šulin
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Georg Mayer

30.5.2016

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

for the Committee on Culture and Education

on assessment of the EU Youth Strategy 2013-2015
(2015/2351(INI))

Rapporteur: Tom Vandenkendelaere

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 into its motion for a resolution:

1. Notes the impact of the second cycle of the Youth Strategy (2013-2015) in stressing the importance of an adaptable approach to youth policy with cross-sectoral and multi-level involvement; values the structured dialogue with youth organisations in this regard; calls on the Commission and the Member States to improve access to high-quality education and training and employment for young people; recalls the eight fields of action promoted by the Youth Strategy;
2. Stresses the importance of the Youth Strategy, given the EU's alarmingly high youth unemployment, the high and widely varying percentages of NEETs (young people not in education, employment or training), and the challenges of youth poverty and social exclusion; stresses that the next cycle (2016-2018) should contribute to the two objectives of the Youth Strategy by identifying and tackling the causes of youth unemployment, such as early school leaving, by fostering entrepreneurship among young people, by investing in education, internships, apprenticeships and vocational training in the skills reflecting labour market opportunities, needs and developments, and by facilitating the transition to the labour market in terms of measures ensuring better coordination of education programmes, employment policy and labour market demands; points out that labour market actors must be supported in their endeavours to implement the Youth Guarantee Scheme in an effort to ensure that, at the latest four months after leaving school, young people are either in employment, in education or undergoing vocational (re)training;
3. Urges the Commission and the Member States to implement expansionist economic policies which offer greater leeway in the area of public investment in education, training and high-quality apprenticeships;

4. Stresses that effective implementation of the Youth Strategy should be closely linked to achieving the Europe 2020 headline targets, particularly those of having 75 % of the population aged 20 to 64 in employment and lifting as many young people as possible out of poverty and social exclusion; notes that although there has been a decrease in some Member States since 2013, there is still a real concern that youth unemployment continues to stand at almost double the overall unemployment rate, with around 8 million young Europeans still unemployed; underlines, therefore, the importance of addressing geographical mismatches between job supply and demand both within and between Member States via the changes made to the European Job Mobility Portal (EURES), in order to improve youth employment opportunities and achieve greater social cohesion;
5. Recalls the Europe 2020 headline target whereby the proportion of early leavers from education and training should be less than 10 %; stresses the need to combat early school leaving, which is a contributory factor to unemployment, by dialogue between the education sector, public employment services and the social partners, by identifying the shortcomings of the school system and society, by supporting students in finding their own learning methods, by implementing relevant and engaging curricula, by realising a strong and well-developed personalised guidance system with high-quality counselling and orientation services for all students, especially at the first signs of student dropout, by adequately informing students about future labour market opportunities and career paths, including technical and artisanal job profiles, by providing STEM education and dual learning, by ensuring qualitative apprenticeships, internships and work placements, and by offering students a second chance in the form of vocational training;
6. Underlines the fact that a holistic and inclusive educational approach is essential in order to make all students feel welcome and included and empowered to take decisions about their own education; points to students leaving school with no qualifications as being one of the greatest challenges for our societies – and combating it one of our main goals – as it leads to social exclusion; points out that apart from adjusting training systems, specific measures must be introduced for those in greatest difficulty; recalls that traineeships and apprenticeships should lead to employment and that the working conditions and tasks assigned should enable trainees to acquire the practical experience and relevant skills needed to enter the labour market; believes that, in order to tackle youth unemployment, the involvement of regional and local public and private stakeholders in the design and implementation of the relevant policy mix is fundamental;
7. Believes that Member States' youth policies should be closely coordinated with other policies and that more synergies should be found; further recommends enhancing cooperation between schools, businesses, public authorities and other labour market stakeholders in order to estimate the future skills needs to pre-empt skills mismatch and to facilitate the process whereby young people choose job profiles that actually match the needs of the labour market;
8. Calls on the Member States to implement measures to facilitate young people's transition from education to work, including by ensuring quality internships and apprenticeships, giving young people clearly defined rights that include access to social protection, written and binding contracts and a fair remuneration, in order to ensure that young people are not discriminated against when accessing the labour market, and adequately informing students about future labour market opportunities;

9. Stresses that unemployment rates clearly decrease as the level of education attained rises, and that it is therefore necessary to promote and invest in higher education opportunities for young people in the EU;
10. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to boost ICT training in order to equip all young people with the relevant e-skills useful for the labour market, for example by reallocating funding within the Youth Employment Initiative;
11. Underscores the importance of formal, informal and non-formal learning, including as a part of associative activities, for the development of values, aptitudes and skills in young people, as well as for learning about citizenship and democratic involvement; draws attention to the range of training possibilities and models available in the Member States and, in particular, to dual learning, which can soften the transition from education or training to employment; supports the implementation of lifelong learning; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure coherent, valid, Europe-wide recognition of the skills and competences acquired through formal, informal and non-formal learning and traineeships, with a view to bridging the gap between the skills shortages and skills mismatch observed in the European labour market, and to provide their support for such activities in the framework of the respective EU programmes; calls, further, for a greater focus on languages, especially neighbouring languages, in the field of vocational education and training (VET) in order to strengthen the position and employability of the students concerned in the cross-border labour market;
12. Considers that the especially high levels of job insecurity among the young, together with the ageing of the European population, represent a major challenge for the sustainability, sufficiency and adequacy of pension systems and seriously harm intergenerational solidarity; calls on the Commission and the Member States, therefore, to take all necessary measures to prevent abuses of, at least, the grants provided under the Youth Guarantee scheme, and to favour, at least for contracts established within the Youth Guarantee framework, contracts which allow young people to pay contributions to national social security systems;
13. Recalls that employment and entrepreneurship constitute one of the eight priorities identified in the EU Youth Strategy (2010-2018); stresses that youth work and non-formal learning, particularly via young entrepreneurs' organisations and youth organisations, which offer young people the opportunity to develop innovative projects, gain entrepreneurial experience and acquire the wherewithal and confidence to launch their own businesses, play a vital role in developing young people's creative and innovative potential, including their spirit of enterprise and entrepreneurial and civic skills; stresses the need to create an environment favourable to entrepreneurship and innovative start-ups in the interests of youth employment in Europe; emphasises that all the obstacles which prevent young people from developing their ideas, potential and attitudes must be removed;
14. Notes that due to the current wave of digitalisation and new trends in the labour market, more and more young people are encountering new forms of employment balancing flexibility with security; stresses the importance of adequate education for young people aimed at emphasising the role of social protection mechanisms in career development;
15. Urges the Member States to fully implement the Erasmus+ programme, especially its

apprenticeships facet, thereby promoting and fostering further cross-border training and career and labour mobility among young people and providing them with skills and competences for life, including language skills, while also broadening their opportunities and chances to participate in both the labour market and society, whatever their academic qualifications, skills or education level may be; expresses concern that the mobility of apprentices has not yet achieved the desired levels and calls on the Commission, the Member States, companies and schools to find ways to overcome the remaining obstacles to the mobility of apprentices; stresses the importance of supporting young people in their mobility projects, given the age factor and their often unstable financial situations, including by removing certain indirect constraints on mobility, such as accommodation and transport difficulties;

16. Calls for improved opportunities for VET students to do work placements in neighbouring countries in order to foster a better understanding of other Member States' labour and training practices, for example by funding the travel costs of students who continue to live in their home country; points out that mobility in training is a vital asset when it comes to entering the job market, but also in understanding and engaging in the European project by experiencing it; emphasises the importance of implementing a European framework to promote mobility as part of apprenticeship and vocational training; calls, moreover, on the Member States to take full advantage of the EURES network so as to support intra-EU youth labour mobility, including mobility in apprenticeships;
17. Urges the Member States to fully implement and monitor the effectiveness of the Youth Guarantee, by making full use of the funds the EU has made available to them in order to implement measures to promote youth employment by integrating young people, including those with disabilities, into the labour market with a job, apprenticeship or traineeship within four months of leaving school or losing a job, by - for example - creating lifelong, tailor-made career guidance systems, registration offices, information points, and methods of data collection, and by encouraging registration by the unemployed with a view to obtaining a picture of the real situation as regards youth unemployment, as well as improving the services offered by job centres to young jobseekers;
18. Calls on all Member States to introduce a minimum guaranteed income, in order to offer young people who have finished school and university the resources they need to live decently until they find work;
19. Calls on the Commission to enhance and support student mobility in the field of education and vocational training (EVT) by promoting the Erasmus for Apprentices scheme;
20. Believes that early intervention and proactive labour market policies represent a shift from dealing with symptoms of multi-generation deprivation towards identifying and managing risks early in life in order to prevent unemployment and facilitate reintegration; draws attention especially to the situation of those who are most marginalised and at greatest risk of unemployment;
21. Calls on the Member States and regions to exchange good practices and learn from each other; points out the importance of conducting an assessment of the implementation of the Youth Employment Initiative by the Member States in 2014 and 2015; stresses the importance of assessing the medium-term effectiveness of the Youth Guarantee, with a

focus on its achievements in enabling young people to acquire skills and enter employment, and of the further continuation of this initiative; points out, moreover, that the involvement of youth organisations in the evaluation and implementation of the Youth Guarantee is crucial to its success;

22. Reminds the Commission of the importance of ensuring a high level of awareness among young people concerning available programmes and opportunities to participate, and also of ensuring that the information offered on the programmes is of high quality, using quantifiable indicators (e.g. the response and involvement of the target group);
23. Urges the Member States to address without delay the key success factors to the implementation of the European Youth Guarantee, such as the quality and sustainability of job offers, further education and training, social inclusion, synergies with other policy fields (relating to education systems, the labour market, social services and youth), and cooperation between all relevant stakeholders, in order to integrate young people in the labour market, reduce youth unemployment rates, and achieve a long-term positive impact in terms of prevention of social and labour market exclusion of young people in transition from school to the labour market;
24. Notes that the Court of Auditors' report on 'EU Youth Guarantee - Implementation in Member States', due to be completed at the beginning of 2017, will provide a clearer assessment of the programme's results; considers that, inter alia, an analysis of its efficiency and long-term results should be included in the report;
25. Calls on the Member States to strictly comply with the principles of inclusivity in youth work, with particular emphasis on young people with disabilities;
26. Calls for an enlargement of the focus of the European Youth Guarantee as regards education and training for unskilled or low-skilled unemployed young people, so as also to cover young graduates and those who have completed vocational training, as well as for the extension of the age limit under the Youth Guarantee from 25 to 29 so as to reflect the fact that many graduates and labour market entrants are in their late twenties;
27. Calls on the Member States to issue knowledge- and evidence-based reports on the social situation and living conditions of young people, and to draw up national action plans and implement them consistently;
28. Stresses the need to intensively develop awareness regarding citizenship, media and digital literacy, critical thinking and intercultural understanding, using a wide range of instruments which are familiar to young people (e.g. social networks); stresses the significant role that such programmes and education play in preventing radicalisation among young people;
29. Stresses that the promotion of more and equal opportunities for all young people, furthering social inclusion, gender equality and solidarity and fighting all forms of discrimination in relation to young people, in particular on grounds of gender, racial or ethnic origin or disability, should be central to achieving the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy;
30. Stresses that it is essential that the next cycle of the EU Youth Strategy includes young

refugees and asylum seekers under its objectives and ensures their equal and non-discriminatory treatment, access to education, training and employment and social inclusion, thus helping them build their identity in the host countries and make full use of their talents and potential, and avoid their marginalisation and disenchantment;

31. Stresses the importance of open and low-threshold programmes for working with young people from less stimulating environments;
32. Calls on the Member States to encourage women to take up training and careers in sectors where they have been under-represented, such as STEM and IT.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	24.5.2016
Result of final vote	+: 47 -: 4 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Laura Agea, Tiziana Beghin, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Enrique Calvet Chambon, Ole Christensen, Martina Dlabajová, Lampros Fountoulis, Elena Gentile, Arne Gericke, Thomas Händel, Marian Harkin, Danuta Jazłowiecka, Agnes Jongerius, Jan Keller, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Kostadinka Kuneva, Jean Lambert, Jérôme Lavrilleux, Jeroen Lenaers, Javi López, Morten Løkkegaard, Thomas Mann, Dominique Martin, Anthea McIntyre, Joëlle Mélin, Georgi Pirinski, Marek Plura, Terry Reintke, Maria João Rodrigues, Claude Rolin, Anne Sander, Siôn Simon, Jutta Steinruck, Romana Tomc, Ulrike Trebesius, Marita Ulvskog, Tatjana Ždanoka
Substitutes present for the final vote	Michèle Alliot-Marie, Maria Arena, Amjad Bashir, Lynn Boylan, Rosa Estaràs Ferragut, Paloma López Bermejo, Edouard Martin, Joachim Schuster, Csaba Sógor, Helga Stevens, Ivo Vajgl, Tom Vandenkendelaere, Gabriele Zimmer
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Fernando Ruas

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

Date adopted	13.7.2016
Result of final vote	+: 22 -: 6 0: 1
Members present for the final vote	Isabella Adinolfi, Dominique Bilde, Andrea Bocskor, Nikolaos Chountis, Silvia Costa, Mircea Diaconu, Angel Dzhambazki, Jill Evans, María Teresa Giménez Barbat, Giorgos Grammatikakis, Petra Kammerevert, Andrew Lewer, Svetoslav Hristov Malinov, Curzio Maltese, Stefano Maullu, Luigi Morgano, Michaela Šojdrová, Yana Toom, Helga Trüpel, Sabine Verheyen, Julie Ward, Bogdan Brunon Wenta, Bogdan Andrzej Zdrojewski, Milan Zver, Krystyna Łybacka
Substitutes present for the final vote	Mary Honeyball, Dietmar Köster
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Julia Reid, Helga Stevens

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

22	+
ALDE	Mircea Diaconu, María Teresa Giménez Barbat, Yana Toom
ENF	Dominique Bilde
PPE	Andrea Bocskor, Svetoslav Hristov Malinov, Stefano Maullu, Michaela Šojdrová, Sabine Verheyen, Bogdan Brunon Wenta, Bogdan Andrzej Zdrojewski, Milan Zver
S&D	Silvia Costa, Giorgos Grammatikakis, Mary Honeyball, Petra Kammerevert, Dietmar Köster, Krystyna Lybacka, Luigi Morgano, Julie Ward
Verts/ALE	Jill Evans, Helga Trüpel

6	-
ECR	Angel Dzhambazki, Andrew Lewer, Helga Stevens
EFDD	Julia Reid
GUE/NGL	Nikolaos Chountis, Curzio Maltese

1	0
EFDD	Isabella Adinolfi

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention