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*Committee on Employment and Social Affairs*

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**2015/2006(INI)**

24.6.2015

# **OPINION**

of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

for the Committee on Culture and Education

on promoting youth entrepreneurship through education and training  
(2015/2006(INI))

Rapporteur: Jana Žitňanská

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## **SUGGESTIONS**

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

- A. whereas the EU's youth employment figures are alarming, with some Member States having a youth unemployment rate of more than 50 %; whereas education plays a key role in fostering the social and occupational inclusion of young people, and whereas entrepreneurship should be regarded as a cross-cutting competence and as an additional option for creating new businesses and, above all, more job opportunities, thereby helping to reduce youth unemployment and to boost young people's employability;
- B. whereas young people benefit from entrepreneurial training and education and practical entrepreneurial experience, which help to develop their skills and talent, enabling them to develop confidence, and which contribute to new business creation, employability and innovation; whereas entrepreneurship is a hugely under-utilised option for many young people with disabilities;
- C. whereas the effects and impact of entrepreneurship programmes in education show that students who have completed such programmes obtain a job more rapidly at the end of their studies;
- D. whereas entrepreneurship is one of a number of ways of helping young people to find a job and earn a stable income;
- E. whereas the aim of the Europe 2020 strategy is to create an economy based on high employment levels and economic, social and territorial cohesion; whereas a robust social economy is of key importance in this connection;
- F. whereas cooperative businesses provide high-quality, inclusive and crisis-resilient jobs that cannot be relocated; whereas, thanks to their cooperative model, such businesses increased their turnover and continued to grow during the crisis, with fewer bankruptcies and redundancies than other types of company;
- G. whereas social and inclusive businesses participate actively in innovative sustainable growth, promote greater cohesion within society and local communities, and can create employment opportunities for young people, including those who are socially vulnerable and those furthest from the labour market;
- H. whereas teaching by experienced entrepreneurs creates a positive image of entrepreneurship and facilitates the step towards entrepreneurship;
- I. whereas young entrepreneurs face numerous challenges and difficulties, including a lack of experience, of the right skills and of access to finance and infrastructure;
- J. whereas the inability to use information and communication technologies constitutes a latter-day form of illiteracy;
- K. whereas the possibility of uncomplicated and non-fraudulent exits allows investors and

entrepreneurs to restart businesses more successfully, to employ more workers and to experience lower failure rates;

- L. whereas young people will be better qualified to engage in business on a transnational scale if they are proficient in foreign languages;
- 1. Calls on the Member States, together with regional and local authorities, to use all existing EU-level funding resources, such as the European Social Fund, the European Youth Employment Initiative, the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI), the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme and the EU programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (COSME), to encourage and support initiatives which pursue more effective and better-targeted links between businesses and the education sector, which foster an entrepreneurial culture among young people – regardless of socio-economic background or gender – so as to encourage them to develop creativity, initiative and sense of responsibility, and which reverse the perception that entrepreneurship is a residual career option; calls on the Commission to look into how such funding is actually used, and to make it easily accessible and simple to use; highlights the need for investment in education and infrastructure in order to address the digital divide in the Union;
- 2. Calls on the Member States to do all they can to raise awareness among young people of opportunities to set up businesses, by providing appropriate education and training programmes focused on entrepreneurship and by promoting individual skills, in particular digital skills and digital leadership skills as essential tools for entrepreneurs in today's economy and business environment; stresses that a young, experienced and appropriately skilled workforce is of essential importance for EU competitiveness and will help to speed up the economic recovery process and to create jobs in all the Member States;
- 3. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to remove barriers to entrepreneurship in order to help young people to transform their creative ideas into successful business plans;
- 4. Calls on the Member States to combat barriers to young entrepreneurs with disabilities through the provision of training for service providers whose responsibilities include supporting people with disabilities, and through the adaptation of the premises at which support is provided in order to make them accessible to those with mobility challenges;
- 5. Calls on the Member States to be proactive in improving regulatory frameworks and streamlining administrative procedures for businesses, in particular SMEs and social businesses, and to promote and monitor the quality of the employment practices of such businesses; points out that social and inclusive businesses create sustainable jobs, contribute to community development and help to promote a sustainable environment and to ensure social resilience in times of crisis;
- 6. Calls for public employment services to be more proactive in providing assistance and advice to businesses, and to young entrepreneurs in particular;
- 7. Stresses the need to address the financial difficulties affecting young entrepreneurs, to facilitate their access to credit and special grants, to reduce existing administrative burdens, and to put in place a regulatory environment and fiscal incentives that encourage the development of youth entrepreneurial initiatives and boost job creation, in order to

- facilitate the start-up and stabilisation of young entrepreneurs' business projects;
8. Calls on the Member States to promote cooperative entrepreneurship, which is based on democratic decision-making procedures and helps young people to become responsible employers, employees and consumers; points out that cooperatives and other social and inclusive enterprises are an integral part of the European social model and the single market and therefore deserve full recognition and support, as provided for in the constitutions of some Member States and in various fundamental EU provisions;
  9. Calls on the Member States to support green and sustainable business projects;
  10. Calls on the Member States and on regional and local authorities to offer innovative students increased access to, and availability of, scholarships and micro-loan schemes, together with support, information, mentoring, multidisciplinary assistance and peer-to-peer evaluation platforms, in order to enable them to start their own ventures or projects, such as those supported under the Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship axis of EaSI; calls on the Member States to facilitate access to and return of loans, to promote the use of crowdfunding, to develop partnerships between the local economy, businesses and universities, to enhance the role of businesses in integrating young people into the labour market, and to consolidate the entrepreneurial skills pass (ENP) at various levels of school and university study, especially in partnership with SMEs; urges the Member States to encourage the establishment within universities of business incubators dedicated to sustainable development and future-oriented branches of study;
  11. Stresses the need to improve the entrepreneurial culture within tertiary education by supporting and facilitating the creation of new companies by young people on the basis of academic research (spin-offs), reducing the bureaucratic burden involved in establishing such companies, and creating a clear and supportive regulatory framework for student entrepreneurs; considers that, in this context, schools and universities should allow time and space for, and grant recognition of, initiatives by young people so as to give them the necessary confidence to undertake new projects that may prove useful in setting up independent businesses; welcomes initiatives which reward young people for successful business ventures (e.g. the award for the best student company of the year), further emphasises the importance of companies giving young people the chance to obtain their first direct in-house work experience, and reiterates the necessity of promoting company visits and traineeship schemes with such objectives, so as to give young people an overview of the business world;
  12. Calls on the Member States to ensure that their education systems, including vocational training programmes, include a greater focus on the development of cross-cutting entrepreneurship competencies, skills and knowledge, in particular by providing for ICT skills and foreign languages to be taught in the first years of schooling and by promoting, in secondary and tertiary education, learning which instils and develops the competencies needed to become an entrepreneur, such as creativity, communication skills, business management, book-keeping and accounting, and which is delivered effectively through hands-on and real-life experience; calls, while stressing the important role played by teachers in fostering an entrepreneurial mindset among young people and providing them with the right skills and qualifications, on the Member States to pay special attention to the provision of appropriate and specialised training for teachers, to ensure their ongoing

professional development and to expand opportunities for the inflow of experienced entrepreneurs as teachers;

13. Calls on the Commission to monitor closely the concrete measures implemented by Member States to support entrepreneurship among young people, to devote special attention to the promotion and publication of information about results and to encourage and support institutions and organisations in exchanging good practices, sharing ideas, knowledge and experience, and forming cross-sectoral strategic partnerships; encourages the Commission and the Member States to develop benchmarks, models and common instruments and projects in order to promote youth entrepreneurship; welcomes the Erasmus+ and Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programmes, which give young people the opportunity to study and train abroad and to acquire entrepreneurial experience in other Member States; asks the Commission to ensure that companies comply with the rules applicable to these programmes, which safeguard the rights of participants, and that such programmes are publicised within secondary schools and vocational and higher education institutions;
14. Calls on the Member States to simplify procedures for non-fraudulent exits and to create a supportive exit environment, so as to send young people a clear message that a failure will not result in a setback with lifelong consequences;
15. Calls on the Member States to promote entrepreneurship as a positive career option in the career advice provided within secondary and tertiary education and to tackle the negative stigma surrounding entrepreneurship as a career option, which is prevalent in some Member States;
16. Urges the Commission to monitor closely the specific measures being implemented by Member States, to ensure that young people choosing a business career enjoy the same entitlements in respect of welfare (under International Labour Organisation Recommendation 2021) and of health and safety at work;
17. Calls on the Member States to increase awareness of self-employment and business creation for young people with disabilities, through actions such as promoting the career paths of people with disabilities who have already been integrated into the labour market and giving public recognition to entrepreneurs with disabilities.
18. Calls on the Member States to promote sponsorship for young entrepreneurs which enables them to benefit from the experience and support of their more seasoned colleagues;
19. Calls on the Member States to encourage young people into entrepreneurship by facilitating project-based studies within the education system which cut across disciplines and are delivered in cooperation with companies;
20. Urges the Commission to ensure that no measures taken by the Member States impede the free movement of workers, so that young people who have chosen business careers are able to conduct their activities wherever they wish to in the European Union;

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<sup>1</sup> International Labour Organisation (ILO), Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No 202).

21. Stresses the crucial role of a number of associations of young businesspeople in fostering entrepreneurship among young people, providing them with the opportunity to develop innovative projects and obtain business experience and giving them the tools and the necessary confidence to set out as entrepreneurs;
22. Calls for closer collaboration with the private sector and the social partners with a view to encouraging a risk-taking, entrepreneurial and innovative culture (e.g. through structural commitments such as facilities for innovation and the exchange of ideas);
23. Notes that promoting cooperation between secondary and tertiary education would allow increased dialogue among young people and encourage innovation;
24. Calls on the Commission to examine factors which discourage women from taking up an entrepreneurial career path and to ensure that education systems and related measures and activities actively strive for gender equality.

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

<b>Date adopted</b>	23.6.2015
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 39 -: 2 0: 10
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Guillaume Balas, Tiziana Beghin, Brando Benifei, Mara Bizzotto, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, David Casa, Ole Christensen, Martina Dlabajová, Lampros Fountoulis, Marian Harkin, Rina Ronja Kari, Jan Keller, Ádám Kósa, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Kostadinka Kuneva, Jean Lambert, Jérôme Lavrilleux, Patrick Le Hyaric, Jeroen Lenaers, Javi López, Thomas Mann, Dominique Martin, Anthea McIntyre, Joëlle Mélin, Emilian Pavel, Georgi Pirinski, Marek Plura, Sofia Ribeiro, Anne Sander, Sven Schulze, Sión Simon, Jutta Steinruck, Yana Toom, Ulla Tørnæs, Marita Ulvskog, Renate Weber, Jana Žitňanská, Inês Cristina Zuber
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Maria Arena, Georges Bach, Heinz K. Becker, Paloma López Bermejo, António Marinho e Pinto, Edouard Martin, Tamás Meszerics, Csaba Sógor, Helga Stevens, Monika Vana, Tom Vandenkendelaere
<b>Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote</b>	Flavio Zanonato, Branislav Škripek