



TEXTS ADOPTED

P9_TA(2022)0045

Empowering European youth: post-pandemic employment and social recovery

European Parliament resolution of 17 February 2022 on empowering European youth: post-pandemic employment and social recovery (2021/2952(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 2, 3 and 5(3) of the Treaty on European Union,
- having regard to Article 166 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to Articles 14, 15, 32 and 34 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
- having regard to the European Pillar of Social Rights, in particular principles 1, 3 and 4,
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and its entry into force on 21 January 2011, in accordance with Council Decision 2010/48/EC of 26 November 2009 concerning the conclusion, by the European Community, of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, signed and ratified by the EU and all its Member States¹, and particularly its Article 27 on Work and Employment,
- having regard to its resolution of 17 April 2020 on EU coordinated action to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences²,
- having regard to its resolution of 8 October 2020 on the Youth Guarantee³,
- having regard to its resolution of 10 February 2021 on the impact of COVID-19 on youth and on sport⁴,

¹ OJ L 23, 27.1.2010, p. 35.

² OJ C 316, 6.8.2021, p. 2.

³ OJ C 395, 29.9.2021, p. 101.

⁴ OJ C 465, 17.11.2021, p. 82.

- having regard to its resolution of 20 May 2021 on the right of information of the Parliament regarding the ongoing assessment of the national recovery and resilience plans¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 17 December 2020 on a strong social Europe for Just Transitions,
- having regard to its resolution of 10 October 2019 on the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework and own resources: time to meet citizens’ expectations²,
- having regard to its resolution of 10 June 2021 on the views of Parliament on the ongoing assessment by the Commission and the Council of the national recovery and resilience plans³,
- having regard to its resolution of 29 April 2021 on the European Child Guarantee⁴,
- having regard to its position of 8 June 2021 on the Council position at first reading with a view to the adoption of a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)⁵,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/241 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 February 2021 establishing the Recovery and Resilience Facility⁶,
- having regard to the report of the International Labour Organization of 21 October 2021 entitled ‘Youth Employment in Times of COVID-19’,
- having regard to the European Youth Event 2021 report entitled ‘Youth Ideas Report for the Conference on the Future of Europe’,
- having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on the European Year of Youth (EYY) 2022,
- having regard to the Eurofound report of 9 November 2021 entitled ‘Impact of COVID-19 on young people in the EU’,
- having regard to the European Youth Forum report of 17 June 2021 entitled ‘Beyond Lockdown: the ‘pandemic scar’ on young people’⁷,
- having regard to the resolution of Council of the European Union and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council

¹ OJ C 15, 12.1.2022, p. 184.

² OJ C 202, 28.5.2021, p. 31.

³ OJ C 67, 8.2.2022, p. 90.

⁴ OJ C 506, 15.12.2021, p. 94.

⁵ OJ C 67, 8.2.2022, p. 186.

⁶ OJ L 57, 18.2.2021, p. 17.

⁷ Moxon, D., Bacalso, C, and Şerban, A. M., *Beyond the pandemic: The impact of COVID-19 on young people in Europe*, European Youth Forum, Brussels, 2021.

on a framework for European cooperation in the youth field: The European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027¹, in particular the section on the European Youth Goals,

- having regard to the Commission report of 12 October 2021 on employment and social developments in Europe entitled ‘Towards a strong social Europe in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis: Reducing disparities and addressing distributional impacts’,
 - having regard to the Council recommendation of 30 October 2020 entitled ‘A Bridge to Jobs – Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee’²,
 - having regard to its resolution of 20 October 2021 on the situation of artists and the cultural recovery in the EU³,
 - having regard to its resolution of 11 February 2021 on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience⁴,
 - having regard to its resolution of 16 September 2021 on fair working conditions, rights and social protection for platform workers – new forms of employment linked to digital development⁵,
 - having regard to the Youth Ideas report for the Conference on the Future of Europe from the European Youth Event 2021,
 - having regard to the questions to the Council and to the Commission on empowering European youth: post-pandemic employment and social recovery (O-000075 – B9-0002/2022 and O-000077 – B9-0003/2022),
 - having regard to Rules 136(5) and 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the motion for a resolution of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs,
- A. whereas the COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating effect on the employment and social situation of young people in Europe, with opportunities for personal development dwindling or being temporarily halted, employment rates falling, and numbers of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) consequently rising; whereas the personal income of young people has significantly decreased and the risk of poverty and social exclusion has increased; whereas their chances of future labour market involvement are at risk; whereas immediate action is needed to secure and improve the future and wellbeing of young people; whereas the youth unemployment rate stands at 15,9 %, which is 2,5 times higher than the general unemployment rate;
- B. whereas the poverty rate is predicted to increase as result of the COVID-19 pandemic; whereas countries that were particularly hard hit during the 2007-2008 financial crisis

¹ OJ C 456, 18.12.2018, p. 1.

² OJ C 372, 4.11.2020, p. 1.

³ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2021)0430.

⁴ OJ C 465, 17.11.2021, p. 110.

⁵ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2021)0385.

once again saw an above-average rise in youth unemployment; whereas women, young people, older people, persons with disabilities and large families are more endangered by this development; whereas the Commission's economic forecast for autumn 2022 shows promising figures with a decline in unemployment and labour markets expected to recover to pre-pandemic levels in 2022; whereas the crisis continues to affect young people in particular; whereas the number of young workers declined compared to the first quarter of 2021 and whereas in 2022 and 2023, 3,4 million jobs are expected to be created¹, and it will be essential to ensure that young people take part in these new employment opportunities; whereas an increasing number of young people are now relying on living in their parental home to protect them from poverty; whereas 29 % of three-generation households are at risk of poverty and 13 % are severely deprived;

- C. whereas pre-COVID-19 country clusters widely persist, including with regard to NEET rates;
- D. whereas in 2020, NEET rates among women were on average 1,3 times higher than NEET rates among men; whereas the difference in NEET rates between men and women is particularly high in eastern European countries owing to family responsibilities; whereas the probability of becoming NEET continues to decrease as education levels increase; whereas in southern and Mediterranean countries, the proportion of long-term unemployed and discouraged workers is higher in the NEET group;
- E. whereas young people are the basis for sustainable economic and social prosperity for Europe and are a key priority for the EU as affirmed by the European youth strategy and the reinforced Youth Guarantee, and therefore warrant priority measures for their support, protection, guidance, inclusion, and deserve to have opportunities created for them;
- F. whereas job losses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic were higher in the 15-24 age group than the 25-29 age group, in particular among women; whereas young people were particularly affected by the fact that working hours decreased more than employment as a whole; whereas unemployment numbers reflect only a small proportion of the jobs lost in the COVID-19 crisis, as many young people who lost their job were not eligible for unemployment benefits or other income support;
- G. whereas improving youth civic participation is a goal of the European youth strategy (2019-2027);
- H. whereas rates of non-standard work are very high among young people, with 43,8 % of young people in the EU engaged in temporary work;
- I. whereas in September 2021, President von der Leyen announced a proposal to designate 2022 the EYY to reflect on the perspectives of young people in Europe and to focus on European, national, regional and local policies and legislative proposals that create opportunities for young people across the EU; whereas this proposal should provide a

¹ Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs, *European Economic Forecast – Autumn 2021*, European Commission, 2021.

genuine and efficient impetus to improve the working conditions of young people in the EU;

- J. whereas the mental health of young people has worsened significantly during the pandemic, with problems related to mental health doubling in several Member States compared to pre-crisis levels; whereas 64 % of young people in the 18-34 age group were at risk of depression in spring 2021, partly as a consequence of their lack of employment, financial and educational prospects in the longer run as well as a result of loneliness and social isolation; whereas nine million adolescents in Europe (aged 10 to 19) are living with mental health disorders, with anxiety and depression accounting for more than half of cases; whereas the worsening of mental health can be also attributed to disruptions in access to mental health services and an increased workload, and a labour market crisis that disproportionately affected young people; whereas 19 % of boys aged 15 to 19 in the EU suffer from mental health disorders, followed by more than 16 % of girls the same age; whereas suicide is the second leading cause of death in Europe among young people;
- K. whereas children growing up with a scarcity of resources and in precarious family situations are more likely to experience poverty and social exclusion, with far-reaching impacts on their development and later adulthood, and lack access to adequate skills and have limited employment options, propagating a vicious circle of inter-generational poverty; whereas the Union can play a key role in the overall fight against child poverty and child social exclusion; whereas the goal of the European Child Guarantee is to prevent and combat poverty and social exclusion by guaranteeing free and effective access for children in need to key services such as early childhood education and care, educational and school-based activities, healthcare, healthy nutrition and at least one healthy meal per school day, and adequate housing;
- L. whereas a global survey published in September 2021 led by Bath University and conducted in 10 countries revealed that nearly 60 % of young people said they felt very worried or extremely worried about the climate emergency, with more than 45 % of those questioned stating that their feelings about the climate affected their daily lives and three quarters saying they thought the future was frightening; whereas 83 % agreed that we have failed to care for the planet while 65 % believed that governments are failing young people;
- M. whereas civic participation offers proven benefits to the wellbeing of a person by expanding their social network, providing more opportunities to be economically, socially and physically active and reducing the risk of developing mental health disorders;
- N. whereas, in light of the consequences of the pandemic, a whole generation of young artists and cultural workers will struggle to find their place in our societies; whereas artists and cultural and creative workers tend to have atypical work patterns and often lack proper social security protection, notably in cross-border contexts, which often leads to their exclusion from pension, healthcare and unemployment payments; whereas the lack of collective bargaining for self-employed artists and cultural and creative workers further serves to undermine their position on the labour market and leads to a lack of adequate social protections;

- O. whereas artists and cultural professionals from minority groups including women, young people, representatives of racial, ethnic and geographical minorities, people from vulnerable socioeconomic backgrounds, people with disabilities and LGBTIQ+ people have lesser access to artistic and cultural careers and are hit the hardest by the consequences of the pandemic;
- P. whereas the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) is the main European fund aiming at improving young people's access to employment, promoting equal access to and completion of quality and inclusive education and training, by means of general and vocational education and training up to tertiary level, including by promoting lifelong learning and facilitating learning mobility, as well as by promoting the social integration of young people at risk of poverty or social exclusion, including the most deprived young people;
- Q. whereas the centrepiece of the NextGenerationEU, the recovery and resilience facility (RRF), constitutes a historic EU instrument to help Member States mitigate the economic and social impact of COVID-19 through reforms and investments in six pillars, one of which is dedicated to reforms and investments in children and young people;
- R. whereas the labour and social inclusion of young people refers to their equal access to quality, stable and well-paid employment, decent and affordable housing and adequate nutrition, quality healthcare and prevention services, including mental health protection, and minimum standards of digital infrastructure; whereas education and skills development initiatives, volunteering, quality traineeships and lifelong learning programmes are essential to ensure equal opportunities and access to labour markets while allowing young people to start their adult life with confidence;
- S. whereas the previous financial crisis showed that if young people are not provided with quality traineeships and jobs – based on written agreements and decent working conditions, including a living wage, career counselling, guidance and further training – there will yet again be a high risk that they will be forced to accept precarious jobs, leave their country to find work, or repeatedly enrol in education or training, even though they are looking for a full-time permanent job;
- T. whereas investments in young people, in particular social impact investments, are known to have a positive impact on the employment and participation of young people in society and produce measurable social and financial returns on the funds invested, fostering economic development while achieving social goals; whereas existing tools and mechanisms have to be implemented as much as new instruments should be further considered;
- U. whereas policy silos on youth labour and social inclusion can lead to doubled spending if coordination between Member States and relevant stakeholders is fledgling and there are no permanent structures that can coordinate the various actors, maximise effects, ensure no gaps in coverage and drive innovation;
- V. whereas existing initiatives and policies such as the reinforced Youth Guarantee, the European Youth Dialogue, Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, and new proposals such as Aim, Learn, Master, Achieve (ALMA), must reach young people and tackle youth challenges in 2022, such as youth unemployment; whereas these initiatives

and policies should comprise active and passive labour market policies, effective access to social inclusion measures and social, health and housing services for young people; whereas the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training has concluded that not all apprenticeships and training opportunities are high-quality, and not all apprentices are entitled to employment or social protection rights; whereas in its resolution of 8 October 2020, Parliament voiced concerns about the quality of offers available under the reinforced Youth Guarantee, and stressed that traineeships and job opportunities provided under new and existing programmes and initiatives must be paid and limited in length and number, so that young people are not trapped in never-ending repeated traineeships and exploited as cheap or even free labour without social protection and pension rights; whereas studies show that the current generation of young people find their first real job in their early thirties;

- W. whereas the ongoing development of new horizontal skills among young people, such as digital skills, as well as the development of skills with economic potential, such as green or entrepreneurial skills, is key for a healthy, inclusive and future-oriented European labour market and should create access for every young European to quality employment; whereas the same applies to vocational education, trade skills and life skills; whereas 40 % of employers cannot find people with the right skills to fill their vacancies; whereas the EU needs to overcome all forms of skills mismatch in order to make effective use of its human capital; whereas youth unemployment has become a severe economic and societal problem in many EU countries¹; whereas access to proper digital infrastructure and training on digital skills should be available to all in order to close the gap in digital literacy among young people and ensure equal opportunities for all in the education system and in the labour market; whereas soft skills like critical thinking, team work and intercultural communication are equally important to create a healthy life and work-life balance for young people;
- X. whereas young people's engagement in youth work, social movements, youth organisations and social entrepreneurship is key to creating new solutions; whereas the involvement of private actors, companies and the business sector is needed to improve the transition from education into the labour market and to provide continued access to upskilling and reskilling training and lifelong learning for young people;
- Y. whereas discrimination against young people in general remains an issue in the EU, with young women and young people from vulnerable groups often experiencing discrimination on the basis of their gender, ethnic background (for instance Roma people), sexual orientation and identity, disability, or disadvantaged socioeconomic background, while being at a much higher risk of unemployment, in-work poverty and social exclusion;
- Z. whereas young people in Europe and their representatives and organisations, including trade unions, are active in organising the meaningful participation of young people and producing policy recommendations with solutions for improving labour and social inclusion, including through their engagement as part of the Conference on the Future

¹ Eichhorst, W., Hinte H. and Rinne, U., 'IZA Policy Paper No. 65: Youth Unemployment in Europe: What to Do about It?' *Intereconomics*, 2013, 48 (4), pp. 230-235.

of Europe; whereas they must be considered essential partners in the co-creation, implementation and evaluation of the EYY and beyond;

- AA. whereas employment opportunities for many of the groups mentioned above, particularly young people with disabilities and young people belonging to Roma or travelling communities, are severely restricted by difficulties in accessing the high-quality education they need to be adequately prepared for the modern job market;
- AB. whereas young people are a vital asset for the recovery and development of all EU regions, notably the outermost regions; whereas in Mayotte, half of the population is under the age of 18, while in French Guiana, one inhabitant out of two is under 25;
- AC. whereas in 2016, one third of farm managers in the EU were aged 65 or above and only 11 % of farm managers in the EU were young farmers under the age of 40;
- AD. whereas the agriculture sector and farms in the EU represent the backbone of our economy; whereas in order to ensure food security and contribute to the green transition, it is crucial to attract young people into farming;
- AE. whereas the depopulation of rural areas and the exodus of young people to urban areas show that there is a need to identify solutions and consider short, medium and long-term strategies to keep young people in rural areas;
- AF. whereas too many young persons with disabilities are only offered work in sheltered employment, while in some Member States they are not offered the same workers' or salary rights as people in the open labour market;
- AG. whereas the Youth Ideas report for the Conference on the Future of Europe produced during the 2021 European Youth Event concluded that:
 - Young people demand support in order to train and empower mental health experts within schools,
 - Youth unemployment should be a priority for the EU, and unpaid internships need to be stopped for people of all educational backgrounds and social status; youth organisations and employers should work together to reach potential 'early school leavers' and educate them on their options; assistance should also be given to Member States to set up apprenticeships for asylum seekers,
 - No one should be left behind in the digital world and all generations must be educated on using their digital presence with care; digital literacy should be integrated into school curricula,
 - The EU should allocate more funding to enable all young Europeans to participate in non-formal education and to create a platform to connect schoolteachers with service providers that can provide expertise on topics relevant to contemporary life;
- 1. Welcomes the fact that President von der Leyen designated 2022 as the EYY; considers that 2022 should provide an additional impetus for the proper and full implementation of the European youth strategy through ambitious actions to address challenges faced by young people, in particular the negative effects of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic,

and through the concrete implementation of other existing tools such as the reinforced Youth Guarantee to combat the unemployment and social effects resulting from COVID-19; calls on the Commission and the Council to ensure that all policies targeting young people are intersectional and take into account the diversity of young people across Europe and the challenges they face; considers that the EYY should contribute to the implementation of principles 1 and 3 of the European Pillar of Social Rights;

2. Highlights that the COVID-19 crisis has already left many people jobless, in particular young people who find themselves more often in precarious employment, are more likely to work under temporary contracts or part-time, and are without savings; welcomes, in this context, the Commission's plans to strengthen the Youth Guarantee, and calls on the Commission and the Member States to make the fight against youth unemployment a priority;
3. Notes with great concern the high level of youth unemployment in a number of Member States and the fragility of young workers' employment contracts, particularly in sectors seriously impacted by COVID-19; calls for a reinforced Youth Guarantee instrument that has the objective of reducing long-term and youth unemployment by at least 50 % by 2030, and also includes criteria for quality job creation in line with Sustainable Development Goal 8 of the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; believes it is time to make the reinforced Youth Guarantee both binding and inclusive for all Member States, including active outreach measures towards long-term NEETs and young people from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, such as young persons with disabilities, young LGBTIQ+ and young Roma people;
4. Commends the inclusion of mental health as one of the priorities in the youth goals as specified within the EYY, and calls on the Commission to also prioritise mental health in the upcoming EU care strategy; underlines that the link between socioeconomic factors, such as unemployment, housing insecurity, mental health and wellbeing, must be addressed to ensure a holistic and comprehensive approach towards mental health at EU level; highlights that uncertainty about the future, including the impact of climate change, is having a detrimental effect on the mental health of youth; calls on the Member States, therefore, to make mental health an integral part of the EU's socioeconomic recovery from the pandemic and an occupational health priority, in particular in educational and workplace environments; calls for mental health care to be made accessible and affordable for all age groups, in particular for young people and children, and for health inequalities to be addressed through the provision of adequate support to vulnerable groups of young people; calls on the Commission to conduct a thorough study on the different causes of psychological pain among young people in Europe;
5. Stresses the vital role that young people must play in shaping employment and social policies in Europe; welcomes the EU youth dialogue and the youth work and youth organisations that bring the EU closer to young people, provided that youth participation processes are followed by concrete initiatives from decision makers; encourages the promotion of the co-management principle in the development of youth policies, where young people and youth representatives are included in the development process; calls on the Commission to recognise the positive impact of the third sector, including youth organisations, and the non-formal and informal learning opportunities that they provide through opportunities such as volunteering and youth participation,

and to formally recognise the knowledge and skills gained by young people through the third sector in order to help young people strengthen their perspectives on the labour market; encourages the recognition of civic engagement as meritorious work experience during the hiring process; calls on the Commission to consider supporting the European Youth Capitals project as a continuation of the EYY; calls on the Commission and the Member States to consider a youth clause assessing the impact of an initiative on young people when putting forward new initiatives across all policy areas;

6. Highlights that it is necessary for Member States to continue investing sufficient ESF+ resources into measures that support youth employment; underlines that Member States must therefore allocate at least 15 % of their ESF+ resources under shared management to targeted actions and structural reforms to support quality youth employment; recalls the need for a binding, more effective and inclusive Youth Guarantee within a clear quality criteria framework that provides remunerated traineeships, apprenticeships, and internships for all NEETs;

Investing in the young generation

7. Calls on the Commission and Council to make full and optimal use of the funding available under the multiannual financial framework 2021-2027 without prejudice to the programmes already established under the ESF+, following structural problems related to youth unemployment and poverty; recalls that the outermost regions are particularly affected by these issues and therefore need specific support; welcomes, in this respect, the availability of funds under the RRF for measures dedicated to children and young people and expects this to lead to significant opportunities being created for young people in Europe; calls for social partners and youth organisations to be involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the national recovery and resilience plans; calls on the Member States to ensure that the just transition fund and the ESF+ support integrated plans at local level to help upskilling and reskilling, in particular for the most vulnerable groups affected by the transition;
8. Calls on the Member States to ensure complementarity between measures under the RRF and other EU programmes such as the reinforced Youth Guarantee, the European Child Guarantee and national investment and measures to promote skills, education, training and labour market integration in compliance with their own needs and specific national conditions; calls on the Commission to continue monitoring investment and spending on youth priorities within NextGenerationEU, the RRF and the ESF+ and to keep Parliament closely involved; recalls the opportunity provided by the InvestEU social investment and skills window to generate social impact investments; takes note of the increasing attention paid to the concept of social impact bonds and social outcome contracts aimed at young people while also involving the private sector in their design and implementation;
9. Welcomes the increase in support for young farmers in the next Common Agricultural Policy;
10. Welcomes the broadened scope of the reinforced Youth Guarantee to cover the 15-29 age group; recalls that the reinforced Youth Guarantee should ensure real job opportunities rather than poor quality traineeships or never-ending training;

Labour market integration of young people

11. Notes with concern that the Youth Guarantee has so far not fully reached its goals and calls for reinforced measures, including making full use of the opportunities provided by the ESF+, to promote employment through active interventions for labour market integration and the creation of sustainable entry-level positions which ensure that young people have access to social security and fair remuneration; calls on the Commission to request Member States to present updated reinforced Youth Guarantee schemes and to introduce a framework with clear and binding quality standards for offers provided under the initiatives in order to promote positive and sustainable outcomes for young people and their successful transition to the labour market; calls on the Commission and the Member States to encourage companies to play an active role in the reinforced Youth Guarantee; recalls that one of the ESF+ objectives is to promote gender-balanced participation in the labour market through measures that aim to ensure, inter alia, equal working conditions, improved work-life balance and access to childcare, including early childhood education and care; recalls further that the ESF+ should also aim to provide a healthy and well-adapted working environment in order to respond to health risks related to changing forms of work, and to the needs of an ageing workforce;
12. Recalls that partnerships with stakeholders are a key element of the reinforced Youth Guarantee, but that no formal body or mechanism currently exists at EU level for their participation in the monitoring and implementation of the Youth Guarantee schemes; calls on the Commission to monitor the implementation of the reinforced Youth Guarantee schemes through the Employment Committee (EMCO) and to regularly report to EMCO on the implementation and results of Youth Guarantee schemes, while keeping Parliament informed; invites the Commission to set up a working group for the implementation of the reinforced Youth Guarantee, bringing together relevant stakeholders, including civic partners, youth organisations and social partners, in EMCO's work in order to facilitate coordination and the exchange of best practices between the EU and national authorities, together with civic partners and youth organisations, as well as to assess its impact on a regular basis and propose recommendations for improvement;
13. Calls on the Member States to ensure that public employment services (PES) work with local authorities, the education sector, youth organisations and the private sector through the European PES Network to promote quality, stable and well-remunerated employment and boost tailor-made support for training, job searching and counselling for young people, and encourages the Member States to adequately equip PES to provide resources and training on keeping mentally healthy in spite of an uncertain economic climate and throughout the challenges of job searches;
14. Recommends strengthening the employment focus of mental healthcare systems, particularly by emphasising the positive contribution that quality work can make to mental health recovery;
15. Calls on the Member States to facilitate access for young people to paid, quality and inclusive traineeships and apprenticeships; calls for the reinforcement of monitoring schemes, ensuring that young people receive adequate and quality first working experiences, opportunities for upskilling and new qualifications or credentials; condemns the practice of unpaid internships as a form of exploitation of young workers, and a violation of their rights, and calls on the Commission and the Member States, in collaboration with Parliament, and respecting the principle of subsidiarity, to propose a common legal framework to ensure fair remuneration for traineeships and

apprenticeships in order to avoid exploitative practices; condemns the practice of zero-hour contracts and calls on the Member States to provide support to employers providing traineeships and apprenticeships to young persons with disabilities;

16. Calls on the Commission to review existing European instruments such as the Quality Framework for Traineeships and the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships and to include quality criteria for the offers made to young people, including the principle of fair remuneration for trainees and interns, access to social protection, sustainable employment and social rights;

Labour mobility and skills for the future

17. Calls on the Commission to ensure that the new ALMA initiative assists young people, in particular young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs), in finding temporary quality work experience in another Member State; insists that the ALMA programme must comply with quality standards that uphold young people's labour rights such as decent remuneration, good working conditions and access to social protection;
18. Underlines that digital skills are essential for young people and all industries in the 21st century and invites the Commission and the Member States to consider developing permanent, certified and free access for young people to online and offline courses for digital skills and literacy in all EU languages in partnership with public entities and private companies; calls for the creation of exchange spaces on e-learning and e-teaching; insists that the EU and the Member States develop more programmes such as eTwinning and the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe; notes that severe limitations need to be overcome in many Member States in terms of access to hardware, facilities, adequate trainers and appropriate digital infrastructure; recalls, therefore, the need to link access to online courses with the reinforced initiatives to address shortages in accessing internet and digital tools in order to leave no one behind, and insists that the courses should be built in an accessible way to avoid excluding young people with disabilities;
19. Stresses the importance of green skills development and quality employment opportunities in a climate-neutral, energy efficient and circular economy, especially in the regions most impacted by the green transition, such as those which are heavily dependent on the agricultural sector and those involved in combating climate change, the production of energy from renewable sources, reducing carbon emissions, increasing energy efficiency, waste and water management, improving air quality and restoring and preserving biodiversity; calls on employers to ensure the up- and/or reskilling of their workforce, and to enhance the provision of more effective apprenticeships in line with the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships;
20. Invites the Commission to propose in 2022 new tools and initiatives aimed at developing youth entrepreneurship and youth social investment in the action plan for social economy;
21. Deplores the insufficient correlation between reforms and investments in education and training with measures that ensure labour market inclusion for young people, particularly NEETs; encourages flexible, inclusive, accessible and open learning paths

through individual learning accounts and micro-credentials for young people, youth workers, trainers and professionals, including through skills and competencies gained through non-formal education and informal learning; underlines that strengthening career guidance from an early age, and supporting equal access to information and counselling for students and adult learners, can help young people choose suitable educational and vocational pathways leading to employment opportunities fit for them;

22. Reiterates its call to the Commission and the Council to further encourage the development of vocational education training (VET) and to better promote trade skills, working to avoid the negative perceptions of non-formal education that are prevalent in several Member States, while increasing the attractiveness of VET through communication and outreach campaigns, through curricula, youth trade skills centres or hubs, special ecosystems for VET in local communities, dual education systems and long-term mobility for apprentices; welcomes, in this regard, the initiative to establish European Centres of Vocational Excellence with the aim of providing high quality vocational skills and supporting entrepreneurial activities; calls on the Commission and the Member States to create a stand-alone VET Area and a European apprentice's statute; reiterates that internships should be part of educational and professional development and therefore have a pedagogical dimension; stresses the importance of improving mechanisms for the cross-border recognition of skills and qualifications, and insists on the promotion of and support for practices such as inter-generational solidarity and mentoring in order to reduce inequalities and ensure support for young people;
23. Encourages the addition of civic participation-related activities to the activities that are considered by workplaces to be beneficial to the personal and professional development of employees, especially young employees;
24. Highlights that minimum wage protection has proven to be an effective means to tackle in-work poverty; stresses that in some Member States, young workers in practice receive a remuneration below the statutory minimum wage due to current variations, thereby perpetuating a situation of structural discrimination on the basis of age; calls on the Member States to ensure equal treatment for young people on the labour market, including with regard to the statutory minimum wage, in the proposal for a directive on adequate minimum wages in the European Union (COM(2020)0682);
25. Highlights that young people are unable to fully access minimum income schemes or are excluded from them completely in many Member States as a result of eligibility criteria based on age; calls on the Commission and the Member States to take measures to facilitate young people's access to these schemes in the forthcoming Council Recommendation on minimum income;

Fighting youth exclusion and avoiding a lost generation

26. Calls on the Commission to develop a recommendation to ensure that traineeships, apprenticeships and job placements count as work experience and consequently grant access to social benefits; calls for a decrease in the minimum period of contributions needed to access social benefits; welcomes the Commission's initiative to set up a High-Level Expert Group to study the future of the welfare state and the main challenges that young people face in benefiting from social protection;

27. Calls on the Commission to look into the feasibility of merging the existing European Youth Portal, Europass and Eures platforms into a single digital space with the aim of providing information and opportunities to every young European concerning training, jobs, internships, vocational education and training offers, financial aid, mobility programmes, advice on setting up a business, mentoring programmes, volunteering schemes, rights associated with European citizenship, access to culture, etc.; suggests that the single platform could centralise applications for various offers and programmes and provide references to all the opportunities that the EU offers to young Europeans according to their personal situation; welcomes the creation of one-stop-shops in a number of Member States and supports such aggregation of offline services, which is crucial for reaching beneficiaries and providing them with guidance and assistance, and supports their creation in all Member States, in various cities, in order to reach the most vulnerable groups of young people;
28. Calls on the Commission to ensure that the new ALMA initiative assists young people, particularly NEETs, in gaining access to social and labour market inclusion within their home countries, by finding quality temporary work and skilling experience that respects the quality standards upholding young people's labour rights in another Member State such as fair remuneration and access to social protection; stresses that accompanying and offering guidance to young people before, during and after participation in the programme is key; highlights that ALMA must foster real mobility and quality skills development programmes, vocational training or employment for all participants, including young persons with disabilities or young people coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, and must include an inclusion strategy designed with the input of civil society organisations and the social partners in order to ensure equal access, prevent discrimination and address any barriers that might arise and that ALMA does not become an instrument which creates precarious employment conditions for young people; notes that support should be given to national PES for its implementation through the ESF+ budget line in coordination with private and public partners, while creating synergies with the European Education Area; urges the Commission to ensure the added value of ALMA in addition to the existing opportunities under Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, and to ensure that virtual learning and cooperation remain combined with physical mobility under the ESF+; calls on the Commission to assess whether ALMA could be included as one of the mobility components of the reinforced Youth Guarantee;
29. Considers the welfare of young people a shared responsibility of public and private actors; calls on the Commission and the Member States to work with European and national employers to implement corporate social responsibility (CSR) recommendations to assist vulnerable young people and to include youth provisions in future CSR-related initiatives;
30. Recalls the fact that young women are at increased risk of workplace discrimination¹, worsened by intersectional inequalities, unemployment, being single-parents and being long-term informal caregivers, which often excludes them from the workforce or can keep them below the poverty line; calls on the Council and the Commission to consider indicative minimum targets for assistance and tailored aid schemes in youth and

¹ Baptista, I., Marlier, E., et al., *Social protection and inclusion policy responses to the COVID-19 crisis – An analysis of policies in 35 countries*, European Social Policy Network, Brussels, 2021.

employment initiatives from 2022 onwards for young women at risk; calls on the Commission to work with the Member States to integrate child guarantee national action plans with labour integration measures at national, regional and local level to support young single parents;

31. Reiterates the importance of access to decent and affordable housing and tailored social services for young people, in particular those belonging to vulnerable groups, including young people with disabilities and young people from large families; asks the Commission to work with the Member States on housing first for youth programmes complemented by employment, social and health support services; stresses the importance of private and public investment in social infrastructure for young people; welcomes the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness launched by the Commission and its ultimate objective of ending homelessness by 2030, and the potential this represents for young people; calls on the Member States and the Commission to take measures and implement programmes for young people who have reached the age of 18 and are at risk of being homeless, particularly for vulnerable groups such as LGBTIQ+ homeless people; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that the reinforced Youth Guarantee contributes to tackling youth homelessness, which is on the increase in many EU countries;
32. Encourages the Commission to tackle the main barriers that hold young people back from entering agriculture, such as access to land, finance, knowledge and innovation;
33. Notes with concern the worsening of conditions for many young people in general and, in particular, vulnerable young people already suffering from long-term unemployment and social exclusion such as young Roma, young people with disabilities, young LGBTIQ+ community members and young migrants, and calls for a coordinated approach in creating and offering them opportunities for social inclusion in the framework of the reinforced Youth Guarantee, the ESF+ and the Recovery and Resilience Facility;
34. Calls on the European institutions and the Member States to ensure a non-discriminatory framing of all policies aimed at young people, taking into account the diversity of young people across Europe and the challenges they face;

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35. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.