Covid-19: how the EU fights youth unemployment

Youth unemployment remains a key concern in the wake of the coronavirus crisis. Find out more about an EU initiative to help young people find work.

The Youth Employment Support Package consists of:
• A reinforced Youth Guarantee
• Improved vocational education and training
• Renewed impetus for apprenticeships
• Additional measures to support youth employment
What is the Youth Guarantee?

Launched at the peak of the youth employment crisis in 2013, the Youth Guarantee aims to ensure people under the age of 25 get a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education.

A reinforced Youth Guarantee

• Covers young people aged 15 - 29 (previously the upper limit was 25)
• Reaches out to vulnerable groups, such as minorities and young people with disabilities
• Provides tailored counselling, guidance and mentoring
• Reflects the needs of companies, providing the skills required and short preparatory courses

Check out what the EU is doing to help Europe’s economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic

In a resolution adopted by Parliament on 8 October 2020, MEPs welcome the Commission’s proposal but call for more money to be mobilised for the next phase of the Youth Guarantee (2021-2027). They also criticise the budgetary cuts for youth employment support that were made at the EU summit in July.

In addition, the Parliament advocates a legal framework to be put in place to ban unpaid internships, traineeships and apprenticeships in the EU. MEPs also criticise that not all EU countries comply with the voluntary recommendations of the Youth Guarantee and therefore call for making it a binding instrument.

Parliament calls for more ambition

In a resolution on EU Employment Guidelines adopted on 10 July, MEPs called for a revision of the forthcoming guidelines in light of the Covid-19 outbreak, underlining the need to tackle youth unemployment through a reinforced Youth Guarantee.

In July Parliament also backed an increase in the budget for the Youth Employment Initiative, the main budgetary instrument for Youth Guarantee schemes in EU countries, to €145 million for 2020.

Parliament called for a significant increase in funding for the implementation of the Youth Employment Initiative in a resolution on the EU's next long-term budget adopted in 2018. MEPs liked how the initiative has supported young people, but said improvements are needed, including an extension of the age limit and the setting of clear quality criteria and labour standards.
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24 million

The Youth Guarantee has helped more than 24 million young people since its creation in 2013

Find out more
Youth Employment Support
Fact sheet: vocational education and training