OPINION

of the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality

for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

on ‘Tackling youth unemployment: possible ways out’
(2013/2045(INI))

Rapporteur: Roberta Angelilli
SUGGESTIONS

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

A. whereas youth unemployment among women (below the age of 25) continues to rise, having increased from 18.8 % in 2009 to 22.1 % in 2012 and, according to the latest available data, now stands at 22.9 %; whereas issues such as discouragement, self-exclusion and disaffection with work are becoming increasingly widespread; whereas young women still face worse labour market conditions than young men, and whereas this is resulting in a significant loss of economic growth potential for Europe by under-utilising the skills of highly qualified women;

B. whereas in the EU more than 2 million job vacancies cannot be filled; whereas the crisis has also caused large numbers of women to withdraw from the labour market, which represents an under-utilisation of human capital and skills; whereas increasing women’s participation is an urgent political objective;

C. whereas the frequently high costs of childcare services, together with their insufficient availability, have a negative impact on the employability of young mothers;

D. whereas young people are one of the social groups most affected by the current deterioration in the labour market, being more exposed to unemployment, precarious employment and low wages, even though they have higher levels of education than previous generations;

E. whereas the number of university graduates who are over-qualified for vacancies on the labour market, or who lack relevant work experience, is growing;

F. whereas 60 % of graduates are women, who are often placed in positions in which they are under-qualiﬁed or under-paid; whereas young women are also affected by gender differences in non-employment and employment conditions, which results in a pay gap (currently at 16.2 %) as well as a pension gap;

G. whereas ﬂexibility and job insecurity have a greater effect on the employment of women than on that of men: in the third quarter of 2012, of all part-time workers in the 15-24 age group, some 60 % were women; whereas in the same age group, of all temporary workers with a tertiary level of education (degree and postgraduate level), 64 % were women;

H. whereas, according to a Eurobarometer survey on Women and Gender Inequalities in the Context of the Crisis published on 26 February 2013, employers are using gender criteria in the selection of personnel to the detriment of the professionalism and skills of women: in the questions asked at job interviews, the major concern of employers is that of maternity (49 %), followed by work ﬂexibility (35 %) and physical appearance (33 %), while for men, experience (40 %) and professional qualifications (38 %) are deemed to be more important;
I. whereas the number of NEET young people (not in education, employment, or training) has reached 7.5 million, i.e. 12.9% of young Europeans between the ages of 15 and 24, the costs of this situation amount to 1.2% of EU GDP, and over 30% of unemployed people below the age of 25 in the EU have been out of work for over 12 months; whereas the rate of NEET women aged 15-24 increased from 12.9% in 2009 to 13.4% in 2011 (for men aged 15-24 the figure rose from 12.4% to 12.9%);

J. whereas there is a growing danger of a ‘lost generation’ of young people being created in the future, and women are a risk group for unemployment;

K. whereas women are more dependent on social benefits which are being cut economic crisis, generating the so-called new discrimination; whereas 31.4% of women aged 18-24 are at risk of poverty and social exclusion (the figure is 28.3% for men in the same age group);

L. whereas young people are entering the labour market later as a consequence of the crisis; whereas despite Article 19 TFEU, Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 and Directive 2006/54/EC of 5 July 2006, young women still suffer age and gender discrimination when they enter the labour market; whereas access to the official labour market is harder for women from vulnerable social groups, including ethnic minorities;

M. whereas the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy provide for a 75% employment rate for people between the ages of 20 and 64, a school dropout rate below 10% and a removal of at least 20 million people from the risk of poverty;

N. whereas maternity often hampers access for young mothers to the labour market, thereby contributing to the widening of the gender employment gap;

1. Welcomes the adoption by the Council of the Recommendation on Establishing a Youth Guarantee;

2. Calls on the Member States, in particular those with the highest rate of youth unemployment, to implement the measures set out in the Youth Guarantee Scheme as a matter of urgency for all young people of various education and social backgrounds up to the age of 30, also taking into account a gender perspective in all stages of the preparation, programming and implementation of these measures; calls on the Member States to set up employment centres, with adequately trained staff, that are able to implement effective awareness-raising policies and provide specific arrangements for women, also to avoid long-term unemployment and the risk of social exclusion;

3. Stresses that making the Youth Guarantee a reality requires public investments that will promote net job creation, create permanent jobs with proper employment contracts, and ensure respect for collective bargaining for wages and the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value;

4. Calls on the Member States to implement measures addressing gender inequalities that are suited to take into account vulnerable social groups including persons with disabilities, migrants and single mothers;
5. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to take such measures as are necessary to encourage, promote and support business start-ups and self-employment by young women by providing them with training, counselling and easier access to credit and micro-credit that offer favourable terms and fiscal facilities, in particular for SMEs;

6. Calls on the Member States to pursue policies to encourage the presence of women in sectors and careers where they are under-represented, such as in the field of science and technology (in 2009, only 33% of researchers in the EU were women) and in the economic and financial sector, since choosing such paths would make women more competitive on the labour market;

7. Calls on the Member States to support lifelong learning programmes and job retraining opportunities that would make it easier for female students, and for women who have already entered the labour market, to move from one job to another;

8. Reminds the Commission and the Member States of their commitment to the Europe 2020 targets of 75% employment rate for both women and men, and warns that the current level of youth unemployment can leave a generation of women out of the labour market, increasing their invisibility and vulnerability;

9. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to combat gender segregation, both in education and in the labour market, by identifying specific education and training courses, and tuition based on continuous follow-up, abiding by the conclusions set out in the Commission communication of 28 November 2012 entitled ‘Rethinking Education’ (COM(2012)0669), combining education and training policies with targeted employment policies for young women, and promoting and providing incentives for the employment of women in strategic development sectors; underlines that the aim of such activities would be to prevent early school dropouts and to ensure that the skills acquired are sufficient to meet the current and future needs of the labour market;

10. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to evaluate why the national tools for combating youth unemployment, especially among young women, are not effective, and to promote exchanges of best practices and models which have yielded positive results at European level, such as a reduced early drop-out rate, a return to the education system, an effective transition from the world of education to the world of work, reduction of the youth unemployment rate, and access to employment for disadvantaged groups;

11. Stresses that the creation of new employment opportunities must be accompanied by implementing measures to reconcile work and family life, encourage men and women to share domestic responsibilities and assist young mothers in returning to the labour market by providing sufficient, accessible, affordable and good quality childcare facilities (such as day nurseries, crèches and public recreational activities for children) and services for dependent adults in the public and private sector; stresses that such measures avert the risk that mothers have to give up or break their careers, or refrain from or delay starting a family, thereby avoiding their professional and social exclusion and reducing the risk that their children will face poverty and social exclusion; calls, in this context, on the Council to find a common position with Parliament on the Maternity Leave Directive;

12. Calls on the Member States to promote young women’s access to the labour market, take
measures enabling them to stay there while they focus on pursuing quality employment and professional growth, and close the gaps with regard to entering the labour market, careers and pay that have always characterised the relationship between women and men in the workplace;

13. Asks for measures to be adopted that specifically target groups of young women with special needs, i.e. disabled women, immigrant women, women from minorities, women with little or no training, women who have suffered gender-based violence, and women who have left prostitution or prison and for whom finding a decent job is even more difficult;

14. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to organise campaigns for, and provide sufficient information about, programmes for recruitment possibilities and access to social and childcare facilities;

15. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to encourage the use of teleworking both in the corporate sector and in public administrative bodies, so as to offer young people the option of embarking on a mobile and dynamic career path;

16. Takes the view that helping women to return to the labour market requires multidimensional policy solutions incorporating lifelong learning and action to combat precarious work and promote work with rights and differentiated work organisation practices, at the woman’s request, so that they do not have to give up their careers or take career breaks;

17. Calls on the Member States to develop appropriate policies in full compliance with European and national legislation and to take specific measures, including work-focused training and employment programmes, to ensure equal opportunities for both young men and women in gaining actual work experience;

18. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to develop and implement gender mainstreaming and monitoring policies that support unemployed citizens’ access to recruitment and social support services;

19. Calls on the Member States to support and recognise non-formal and informal forms of education and work in youth organisations as instruments enabling students to create their first links with the labour market;

20. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to monitor and disclose all data relating to policies to combat youth unemployment (including implementation of the Youth Guarantee), producing regional statistics for the different Member States and devoting particular attention to the gender aspect; calls, furthermore, for the implementation and monitoring of these policies to be included in the European Semester and in country-specific recommendations;

21. Calls on the Commission and the Member States, when making decisions relating to the 2014-2020 programming period, to lay down more stringent and quantifiable criteria concerning the setting, monitoring and evaluation of Structural Fund objectives, with specific targets relating to the fight against youth unemployment, which should also be
measurable in terms of gender (in the period 2007-2011, 52 % of European Structural Fund beneficiaries were women);  

22. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to take such measures as are necessary to counteract the stereotype that entrepreneurship is a risky and male-dominated occupation; stresses that, in order to strengthen women’s overall position on the labour market and to promote entrepreneurship more effectively, measures should be taken to support regional and international cooperation between female entrepreneurs and to encourage the creation of networks of platforms for the exchange of experience and best practices;  

23. Invites the Commission to consider a further adaptation of the ESF in order to provide additional support in the areas of young women’s training, access to employment and childcare;  

24. Welcomes the Commission’s announcement that it is to allocate EUR 6 billion to the Youth Employment Initiative under the MFF 2014-2020; points out, moreover, that of the EUR 82 billion in unallocated European funding to be reprogrammed for youth unemployment initiatives announced in January 2012, only EUR 16 billion have been used (March 2013); calls for all appropriations to be coupled with better and faster programming, and urges the Commission to encourage exchanges of good practices between Member States in this regard; calls for the Member States to make the greatest possible financial commitment, including by drawing on funds from national budgets, to fight youth unemployment while taking gender-related issues into account;  

25. Calls on the Member States, in agreement with the Commission, to establish a tax incentive scheme to promote youth employment, and to support undertakings of persons under 35, by means of incentives for undertakings – in particular SMEs – to recruit young people on permanent contracts; proposes, to this end, that – as suggested by the Commission in the employment package – the Member States could use the instrument of employment subsidies and a reduction of the tax wedge, particularly to meet the cost to employers of social security and health insurance contributions;  

26. Calls on the Member States, in agreement with the Commission, to establish measures and concessions for apprenticeship contracts and bonuses for business start-ups by young people aged under 35; considers, in particular, that the Member States should provide greater and better support services for start-ups, organise awareness-raising campaigns concerning the opportunities and prospects involved in self-employment, arrange more cooperation between employment services, and provide support for businesses, including with the aid of (micro-)financing;  

27. Urges the Commission and the Member States to make it compulsory to involve and consult youth organisations and the social partners in decisions, policies and programmes relating to the fight against youth unemployment, as well as in the implementation, monitoring and further development of the Youth Guarantee Scheme, the Youth Employment Initiative and the European Alliance for Apprenticeships; calls for young girls to become more involved in youth and student organisations, and subsequently in NGO activities, in order that they may strengthen their position and increase their influence;
28. Calls on the Member States to promote gender diversity in working teams and in the workplace in order to achieve better results at work;

29. Calls on the Member States to introduce policies for encouraging people, especially young women, to remain in work.
RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date adopted</th>
<th>29.5.2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Result of final vote</td>
<td>+: 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>−: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members present for the final vote</td>
<td>Regina Bastos, Edit Bauer, Marije Cornelissen, Edite Estrela, Iratxe García Pérez, Mikael Gustafsson, Mary Honeyball, Lívia Járóka, Teresa Jiménez-Becerril Barrio, Constance Le Grip, Astrid Lulling, Barbara Matera, Elisabeth Morin-Chartier, Krisztina Morvai, Norica Nicolai, Siiri Oviir, Antonia Parvanova, Joanna Senyszyn, Joanna Katarzyna Skrzypulewska, Marc Tarabella, Marina Yannakoudakis, Anna Záborská</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</td>
<td>Roberta Angelilli, Rosa Estarás Ferragut, Mariya Gabriel, Nicole Kiil-Nielsen, Katarína Nevedalová, Chrysoula Paliadeli, Antigoni Papadopoulou, Angelika Werthmann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote</td>
<td>Martina Anderson</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>