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THE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT CRISIS: A CALL FOR ACTIONS

Young people represent the promise of changing societies for the better. Yet, there are not enough jobs for young people. Millions are also not transitioning into decent work and are at the risk of social exclusion.

Persistent youth unemployment and underemployment carry very high social and economic costs and threaten the fabric of our societies. Failure to generate sufficient decent jobs can result in long-lasting “scarring” effects on young people.

The youth employment crisis, considerably aggravated by the global economic and financial crisis, now requires governments, employers and workers to work even harder to promote, create and maintain decent and productive jobs.

There is an urgent need to reverse the trend now. Unless immediate and efficient actions are taken, the European community confronts the grim legacy of a lost generation. Investing in youth is investing in the present and future of our societies. A great deal has been learned about how to address barriers young people face to transition into the labour market, but in many countries ineffective macroeconomic and other policies have not delivered enough jobs in general, and for youth in particular. Political commitment and innovative approaches are critical to improve the situation.

There is no one-size-fits-all. There is a need to take a multi-pronged approach with measures to foster pro-employment growth and decent job creation through macroeconomic policies, employability, labour market policies, youth entrepreneurship and rights to tackle the social consequences of the crisis, while ensuring financial and fiscal sustainability.

The fight against youth unemployment is the top priority for the Young European Socialists and its member organizations,

WE therefore:

- Welcome the mentioning of the Youth Guarantee in the majority of the Country-Specific Recommendations; call, however, for more transparency in the

monitoring of the implementation and for greater ambition with regard to addressing the Member States who show no progress in this regard;

- Recall that the Youth Strategy's two overall objectives (creating equal opportunities for young people in the labour market and promoting social inclusion) are far from being reached, and urge the Commission and Member States to realise the tremendous impact the crisis has on young people's participation in society;
- Stress that social investment in favour of NEETs would reduce the present loss to the economy caused by their non-integration in the labour market, which is estimated by Euro found to amount to EUR 153 billion, or 1.2 % of EU GDP.
- Welcome the proposal of the European Commission to increase the pre-financing rate of projects financed through the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) from around 1% to 30%. It was on our political family's initiative that the European Union adopted the YEI and the Youth Guarantee Recommendation. Early on we have been calling for a speedy implementation of the Youth Guarantee. Yet progress in setting up Youth Guarantee schemes is slow. Many Member States of the EU still face difficulties in mobilizing the European funding for these schemes, notably due to budgetary constraints. We hope that increasing the pre-financing rate to 30% will facilitate an easier access to the funding and will accelerate action on the ground;
- We support the extension of the Youth Guarantee to everyone under the age of 30 and a substantial increase of its budget;
- Appeal the European Parliament to monitoring closely all Member State activities to make the Youth Guarantee a reality, and call the youth organisations to keep Parliament updated on their analysis of Member State actions; urge Member States and the Commission to involve youth stakeholders in policy making;
- Call on Member States to ensure that young people have access to quality jobs that respect their rights, including the right to stability and security through a job that has a decent and fair wage, social protection and enables a secure life of dignity and autonomy;
- Call on the Commission, in cooperation with Member States with a youth unemployment rate of more than 25 % in their regions to develop a multi-pronged, coherent and context-specific plan to tackle youth unemployment through the creation of jobs for at least 20 % of the young people affected; states the important role of regional and local employment policies and call on Member States and the Commission to facilitate sharing of best practices;
- Stress that freedom of movement is a core right; stress, also, that young people

should also have the opportunity to access employment opportunities in their own community and that work needs to be done to address geographical inequalities in Europe with regard to youth opportunities; call on the Commission and the Member States to guarantee policies with measures to facilitate the return of young people to their countries of origin, thereby preventing 'brain drain' and the loss of human capital;

- Recall that young workers – especially women and migrants – are often concentrated in precarious forms of employment, with low-paid, fixed-term and poorly protected jobs and internships; recall that the economic costs of increasingly precarious work and increasing gender inequality for the EU are substantial, something which undermines public social security and health care systems, and endangers the European social model;
- Urge the Member States to take strong measures to fight youth unemployment and early exclusion, in particular through preventive action against early dropout from school or from training or apprenticeship schemes (by implementing a dual education system or other equally efficient types of framework);
- Underline the need for promoting youth entrepreneurship with the aim of encouraging the growth of sustainable enterprises, including cooperatives and social enterprises, in rural and urban areas;
- Call for ensuring that quality basic education is freely available;
- Highlight the need for improving the links between education, training and the world of work through social dialogue on skills mismatch and standardization of qualifications in response to labour market needs, enhanced technical vocational education and training including apprenticeships, other work-experience schemes and work-based learning. Developing skills strategies in support of sectoral policies that harness technologies and know-how and result in higher skills and better paying jobs.