

Outcomes of the Hungarian Presidency EU Youth Conference on youth employment

Gödöllő/ Budapest, Hungary, 2-4 March 2011

The Council of the European Union has adopted the Resolution on the Renewed Framework for European Cooperation in the Youth Field (2010-2018). This document defines the main areas of the youth policy in the European Union and requests for setting up a dialogue between young people and policy makers about the issues of European youth policy. The structured dialogue is an instrument to ensure that the opinion of young people is taken into account in the formation of EU youth policy.

The Trio Presidency of Spain, Belgium and Hungary made a common decision about executing the structured dialogue on the theme of youth employment during the 18 months of the Trio in 2010 and the first semester of 2011.

The first phase of the consultations came to an end with the EU Youth Conference in Jerez, where youth delegates and directors general of EU Member States jointly defined priorities about youth employment, based on the national consultations.

The second phase of the consultation concentrated on recommendations of young people in relation with priorities described by the conclusions of the EU Youth Conference in Jerez.

The participants of the EU Youth Conference in Leuven, Belgium prepared 40 recommendations reflecting on the needs of young people in the field of employment and employability, fine-tuning the results of national consultations.

The aim of the third phase of the national consultations was to crystallize the core issues of youth employment, working further with recommendations of the EU Youth Conference of Leuven. This stage of the consultation brought about specific proposals of young people to resolve the difficulties young people might face when entering the labour market.

During the EU Youth Conference under the Hungarian Presidency in Gödöllő and Budapest from the 1st to the 4th of March 2011 youth delegates and Directors General finalized a document of specific recommendations and proposals about the key topics of youth employment as it follows:

Compiled conclusions

Recommendation

Career-oriented training and guidance is essential to raise young people's awareness of labour market requirements and prepare them for the world of work, both for employment and entrepreneurship. Therefore, career-oriented training and guidance should be integrated at all levels of education.

Proposed action(s)

1. Create a consultative institution, which focuses primarily on the provision of career advice within education structures, and undertakes dialogue with relevant stakeholders in order to provide young people with relevant and sufficient career advice.
2. Set up a national level programme to promote the importance of every job to various sectors of society, especially to the youth field, highlighting that all jobs are necessary and should be valued in society.
3. Create measures aiming to facilitate cooperation between business and education at local level to provide work experience for young people.

4. Set up a national competition for young entrepreneurs and provide financial support to implement the winning proposals.
5. To implement specific policies offering young people, who are actively looking for work, a job, working experience or training after a specified period of unemployment.

Contribution of young people:

Young people should clarify to their educational institutions the lack of information about education, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. Stakeholders, especially student- and youth organisations, should mobilise young people in consultative bodies on a democratic basis. Youth participation should be achieved through youth representative structures, by means such as campaigns, lobbying and projects to increase awareness of labour market requirements. Student and youth organisations should provide training on topics dealing with career-orientation and guidance.

Recommendation

It is of vital importance to safeguard the rights of young people entering into the labour market, as well as throughout the entire working life, through tailored policy measures and enhanced control mechanisms. Since internships are a valuable tool for a smooth transition to the labour market, a quality framework is needed in order to guarantee the educational value of such experience.

Proposed action(s)

1. Regulate, evaluate and monitor the quality of internship through the establishment of a binding legislative framework within the EU to prevent the fraudulent use of internships. This framework should guarantee:
 - a. *a written contract specifying the terms of the internship*
 - b. *no replacement of paid job*
 - c. *individual tailored tutorship*
 - d. *full accomplishment of the training hours*
 - e. *fair remuneration*
 - f. *establishment and strengthening of the inspection bodies for interns' working conditions*
 - g. *support the access to work contracts once the training has ended*
2. Develop financial support for internship providers that offers quality internship opportunities for young people.
3. Promote partnerships between educational institutions and the internship providers to ensure the implementation of the quality framework.
4. Create an EU-wide database about internship opportunities offered in different Member States, including assessments from former interns.

Contribution of young people:

Young people can contribute by assessing their internship experience in a given company and in this way guide potential interns.

Young people and youth organisations should advocate more extensively on the topic of quality internships, putting forward good practices.

Youth organisations should encourage the participation of young people in trade unions and professional organisations.

In order to strengthen the impact of the quality framework on internships, youth organisations should work together with other associations, entities or relevant youth platforms.

The necessary information on the legislative framework should be given to the interns through trade unions and youth organisations in order to raise awareness about their rights and responsibilities.

Recommendation

It is important to ensure easier access for all young people to youth-friendly, innovative and engaging labour market information and career path oriented support, through formal and non-formal educational settings. Therefore relevant actors such as youth workers, career advisers and trained teachers must be recognized as a significant source for relevant support.

Proposed action(s)

1. Provide tailored training for specialized youth workers, teachers and career advisers to deliver employment related information and career counselling.
2. Dedicate more space, time and support to youth workers and career advisers in schools.
3. Encourage partnership between enterprises and educational institutions by providing structure for high quality internship programmes.
4. Include practical information from employees to provide knowledge and develop competences needed for finding a position in the labour market in training courses for young people.
5. Organise seminars on career path orientated support fostering cooperation between youth organisations and national employment services at a European level.

Recommendation

Youth organisations are major providers of non-formal education, informal learning and wider mobility opportunities outside the formal education context. Therefore, sustainable long-term financial support is essential in order for them to equip young people with skills and competences to become active citizens and ease their access to the labour market, which is an important step in achieving the aims of the Europe2020 strategy and building a competitive, knowledge-based and sustainable Europe.

Proposed action(s)

1. Financially reinforce the Youth in Action programme and continue it as an independent programme, while prioritising strengthening its user-friendliness, flexibility, and the inclusion aspect, so that all young people have access to it.
2. Develop sustainable long-term financial support to youth work, in constant dialogue with youth organisations, rather than financial support based on singular projects.
3. Compile and disseminate best practice models for financing non-formal education among the Member States.
4. Create a non-formal education accreditation system to identify and recognise providers of non-formal education, such as youth organisations.

Contribution of young people:

Young people contribute with their volunteering time to the financial sustainability of youth organisations.

Recommendation

A balance between working life and personal needs allows young people to make full use of their potential in both the labour market and their private lives. To combine employment with further education, training, family life and volunteering, young people need improved voluntary flexibility as well as security together with ensured access to necessary resources.

Proposed action(s)

1. Improve social security measures to encourage employers and employees to use various flexible working forms, especially telework, part-time work, job sharing and work at home.
2. Provide more types of flexible and affordable child care facilities at working, living and studying places run by qualified staff.
3. Ensure structured dialogue mechanism, including social partners, to regularly evaluate practices of flexible working arrangements for young people, publish and disseminate the results of the evaluation.
4. Launch information campaigns to encourage young families to equally share tasks of private and professional life using flexible working arrangements.

Contribution of young people:

Young people and youth organisations should actively participate in social dialogue for a better cooperation with local, national and European authorities. Young people and youth organisations should emphasise that certain

types of flexible working conditions can also be ideal for those who cannot get a job on the 'conventional' labour market due to their present life situation, e.g. distance, illness, pregnancy; inform other young people about it and increase the work force. In general young people and youth organisations should take part in the discussions about flexicurity, by lobbying for their cause. They will be users of existing opportunities in the context of both flexibility and security and have the responsibility of promoting them. Young people and youth organisations should initiate regular evaluations in order to participate in youth research, which can lead to exchange of information on local level and dissemination of good practices useful for them.

Recommendation

Mobility is important to gain competences significant for the personal and professional development of all young people. Equality of access to mobility opportunities is achieved by removing social, cultural, political and administrative obstacles with reference to the Europe 2020 Strategy, and particularly the Youth On The Move flagship initiative.

Proposed action(s)

1. Create a new youth friendly media communication tool in order to provide extensive information about mobility possibilities, value of competences and international skills gained through them on both European and national level through existing institutions (working with youth matters), initiatives, programmes and youth organisations.
2. Ensure free access, without visa obstacles, for participants in both formal and non-formal youth mobility and voluntary exchange programmes or projects between the European Union and neighbouring countries.
3. Continue removing economic barriers that prevent young people with fewer opportunities from participating in EU mobility programmes through creating a 'means tested' element to the application process or providing additional financial support.
4. Create a European Employment Service fostering employment mobility for young people by supporting job search and facilitating all additional procedures, including housing, insurance and linguistic support.

Recommendations

Youth work provides young people with skills and competences that are useful in employment, education and social and personal development. Recognition of youth work, as an important complement to formal education, requires cooperation among the youth sector, education institutions, employers and authorities at all levels.

Proposed action(s)

1. Develop a strategic approach to the recognition of youth work and the competences gained through youth work and volunteering - as is being explored at European level with Youthpass. This should include encouraging and informing young people on how they can best frame these competences for prospective employers.
2. Establish a legal framework for volunteers which includes a rights-based approach to volunteering. Such a framework should value both voluntary youth leaders and paid youth workers.
3. Develop time and organisational flexibility in formal education to enable young people to participate in or lead youth work (such as international mobility programmes, and local youth initiatives).
4. Create platforms of exchange between the actors of the labour market and the youth work sector in order to build a common process where there is a mutual interest.
5. Ensure sustained mechanisms of finances at all levels for youth work by programmes – e.g. Youth in Action at the EU level - and by providing other resources such as facilities and transport provision.

Contribution of young people:

Young people and youth organisations should develop self-assessment tools for youth leaders and workers enabling them to present skills and competences in a meaningful way.

Youth organisations should encourage the implementation of different activities (e.g. workshops) in order to disseminate information and raise awareness on the importance of youth work, volunteering and non-formal education. In general, all stakeholders in youth work should recognize the importance of working together.

Recommendation

Existing and new generations of EU programmes and funds are important tools to promote learning mobility and other forms of learning and to increase young people's opportunities in the labour market. Therefore it is vital that they are open to all young people, with special attention to young people subjected to discrimination. These programmes have to be strengthened and developed in order to build further the capacity of young people to realise their human rights.

Proposed action(s)

1. Encourage Human Rights Education (formal and non-formal) in order to make all young people aware of and capable of using their rights.
2. Ensure the existence of a separate youth programme in order to combat discrimination and promote the inclusion of all young people on the labour market and in society as a whole.
3. Ensure, monitor and assess the implementation of anti-discrimination policies and European Union programmes in the Member States in order to ensure equal opportunities for young people.
4. Make European Union funds and programmes accessible for young people and youth organisations; and create support structures to help youth organisations to apply for such funding.
5. Ensure that all young people and their perspectives are taken into account when developing next generation of the Youth in Action Programme in order to combat discrimination.