

## Youth Partnership

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Partnership between the European Commission  
and the Council of Europe in the field of youth



**Chairmanship of the Czech Republic**  
Council of Europe  
May – November 2017

**Présidence de la République tchèque**  
Conseil de l'Europe  
Mai – Novembre 2017

## Symposium

# 'Youth Policy Responses to the Contemporary Challenges Faced by Young People'

Prague, Czech Republic

12-14 June 2017

### **Pillar 3: ACTIVITY and Occupation Theme 6: Working and Creating Teasers**

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## What are we talking about?

This theme explores the relation between **young people and their participation in the labour market**, either from the point of view of **having access to job**, having the competences needed and also as having the conditions to **become creators/entrepreneurs**. Attention will be given to the relationships between initiative and creativity, and enterprise and entrepreneurship. The practices that could be included here are vocational guidance programmes or support for social innovation (such as co-working spaces, hubs and incubators).

## Entrepreneurship

The [Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan](#) aims to remove existing obstacles to entrepreneurial initiatives and to change the culture of entrepreneurship in the EU. It identifies three areas for immediate intervention: [entrepreneurial education and training](#); removing existing administrative barriers and supporting entrepreneurs in crucial phases of the business lifecycle; reigniting the culture of entrepreneurship in Europe and nurturing the new generation of entrepreneurs. Yet, entrepreneurship is not a homogenous concept. One could distinguish:

- A. **Entrepreneurship by choice** refers to entrepreneurial initiatives when other possibilities, such as decent employment, are present.
- B. **Entrepreneurship by necessity** refers to entrepreneurial initiatives when other possibilities, such as decent employment, are **not** present (e.g. often minority and women's entrepreneurship is a consequence of discrimination in the labour market).

The difference between the two emerged after the discovery that over half of all workers in the developing world are self-employed, without this being necessarily linked to high productivity, growth or innovation ([Margolis, 2014](#)).

**Having in mind the above distinction, should entrepreneurship training take into account the fact that young participants are either in situation A or B?**

**And should youth entrepreneurship policies be sensitive to this distinction? Why YES? Why NO?**

## Right to Work

The [Youth Employment Initiative \(YEI\)](#) is one of the **main EU financial resources** to support the implementation of [Youth Guarantee](#) schemes. It exclusively supports young people who are **not in education, employment or training** (NEETs), including long-term unemployed or those not registered as job-seekers. According to the [European Commission](#), since January 2014 (and until October 2016), 14

million young people have entered Youth Guarantee schemes. Around 9 million young people took up an offer, the majority of which were offers of employment.

### Traineeships

Traineeships/internships are considered stepping stones to employment and are an important part of the YEI. However, in the last years, different stakeholders have expressed their concerns regarding their quality. The European Youth Forum has developed a [European Quality Charter on Internships and Apprenticeships](#), [An Employers' Guide to Quality Internships](#) and has been strongly engaged in fighting unpaid internships. At the institutional level, in 2014, the Council of the European Union, based on the Commission's proposal, adopted its final [recommendation](#) on a Quality Framework for Internships (QFT). It proposes guidelines for traineeships outside formal education. The aim is to ensure traineeships have a high-quality learning content and fair working conditions for supporting education-to-work transitions.

**What would be, in your opinion, the ways of making traineeships and internship a stepping stone into employment, and not a dead-end? How could employers/ states/ European institutions further work towards this aim?**

### Rural and Urban

In many parts of Europe, there are large discrepancies between **rural and urban** areas. Young people in isolated rural areas are rarely offered meaningful youth work experiences, likely to broaden their horizon, towards creativity and initiative. When programs are available, they are likely to reach the local elite (i.e. gender, ethnicity and class may create important divides). Yet, there is a need for youth work to reach young people from remote or underdeveloped regions, in ways likely to shape their attitude towards change and initiative.

**What are in your country, the major barriers for youth work in reaching young people in rural areas? Are you aware of examples of practice that worked towards social change in rural areas? How did they work? Any instances of failure/ dilemmas to share?**

### Inclusive jobs

Despite progressive inclusion policies and legislation, in many European countries, a higher percentage of **people with disabilities** were in work 40 years ago, then today. For instance, in 1970s, 75% of men with disabilities having no qualifications were employed in Scotland, c.f. 38% in early 2000s ([Riddell, 2014](#)). Despite legal measures (including quotas), still, unemployment among people with disabilities is high across Europe.

**What is the situation in your country now, in comparison with 30-40 years ago?**

**What are, in your opinion, some explanations for the changes that occurred?**

**How could working places/ companies be made more inclusive?**

**Are you aware of examples of practice that led to more young people with disabilities in quality employment? Are you aware of practices that reduced the labour market discrimination based on other characteristics? How did they work?**

## Quality Employment

### In work-poverty

Despite employment being an important element in rising young people's quality of life, still, an alarming number of employed young people face problems with sustaining themselves with their salary ([Krzaklewska, 2013](#); [Eurofound, 2007](#)). According to the European Parliament, the rate of those in work and at risk of poverty is on the rise since 2005; as of 2012, **in-work poverty** affected 9.1% of the working age EU population. The young workers (18-24) are at the highest risk of in-work poverty (12.2%) ([SPC, 2014](#)). The European Union defines the category of 'working poor' in the sense of having an income below 60% of the national median.

**To what extent is in-work poverty acknowledged as an issue in your country?**

**What are, in your opinion, the reasons for in-work poverty in your country? How could states and European institutions work towards addressing it?**

### Precariat

The **precariat** is a related condition, characterized by job insecurity, low wages, without social support systems such as unemployment benefits or/ and insurance. Importantly, *precarious jobs* are associated with a weakened sense of belonging. The significance attached to work as an identity marker is diluting (e.g. work is merely a 'way to pay the bills' cf. Koeber 2002 and less a source of pride). Guy Standing developed the concept by arguing that a growing number of jobs are de-skilled, alienating, project-based, fragmented and that nobody is protected from entering joining *the precariat*.

According to [Hoskins and Sallaho \(2011\)](#), young people need to develop the knowledge, skills and resources necessary for dismantling the oppression and discrimination at the personal, but also at cultural and structural levels. In their opinion, youth work can contribute towards a better understanding of power relationships and their consequences. Also, it involves the disposition to act to create peaceful social change based on reducing inequalities and discrimination.

**Which groups of young people in your country face the highest risk of joining ‘the precariat’?**

**Can you identify any new, emerging groups?**

**Who can do something about that? In your opinion, what type of policies are needed?**

**How can the labor market situation of young people be looked at through critical lenses? Is there any way youth work can act towards increased social justice in the world of employment?**