

Working together for youth employment

# From education to the workplace

A global challenge



## SEMINAR CONCLUSIONS





## INTRODUCTION

---

On 30 June, a seminar on Youth and Employment was hosted by the Employment and Social Affairs Committee of the European Parliament, and jointly organised by the four agencies: Cedefop (the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, Thessaloniki), ETF (the European Training Foundation, Torino), EU-OSHA (the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, Bilbao) and Eurofound (the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, Dublin).

The seminar, which attracted some 200 participants from various institutions and interest groups, was a mix of key note and special addresses, thematic contributions from the four agencies, and a panel debate bringing together members of the European Parliament and Commission services, European social partners and youth organisations.

The agencies highlighted the complementarity of their work by each presenting different aspects and perspectives related to youth employment in Europe and its neighbourhood countries. Topics included the transition from education to the workplace, guidance for young people at risk, safe and decent jobs for young people, the “NEETs” phenomenon (young people Not in Education, Employment or Training) and its economic costs, the active inclusion of disadvantaged young people in employment and the global dimension of youth employment.

*“Si la jeunesse n’a pas toujours raison, la société qui la méconnaît et la frappe a toujours tort”*

### François Mitterand

These were the words used by Madame Pervenche Berès (S&D, FR), chair of the Employment and Social Affairs Committee, and chair of the seminar, during her opening speech.

After having welcomed the participants and underlined the regular and fruitful cooperation between the Committee and the four Agencies, she explained how hard young people are hit by the crisis, by not only losing their jobs, but also their housing and even their self-confidence. She denounced the inappropriate public budget support for youth and the fact that youth issues are sacrificed first before any other policy issues. And as the title of the seminar explains so well, youth unemployment is no longer only an EU topic, but a global one. To her, the challenges are now for all stakeholders to work together on youth employment and education.



*“How we tackle the challenges will shape the future of a whole generation”*

## **Juan Menéndez-Valdès**

This message was put forward by Juan Menéndez-Valdès, Director of Eurofound, who welcomed the participants in the name of the four participating agencies. He underlined the importance of youth employment, expressed concern about the long term consequences of the current situation, the importance of training for long-lasting employability and the need to put youth employment in a multidimensional perspective, as will be shown through the presentations by the four agencies who all have a specific mission in relation to the subject of youth employment.



## THE THEMATIC PRESENTATIONS

---

*Cedefop: What does it take to become employable? Guiding young people into the labour market.*



Pascaline Descy, Head of Research and Policy Analysis at Cedefop, built her presentation around two main issues: training choices and specific support measures.

The crisis has mostly hit low skilled people in the majority of EU countries, whereas in the southern EU even a university degree is not a proper protection against unemployment.

Recent research has shown that by 2020, 80% of jobs will require a medium or high level qualification and that there will be a decrease in the demand for jobs with low level skills. Hence the importance of EU tools such as Europass, which has proven to be extremely successful, and the importance of guidance and counselling to allow for a smoother transition into the labour market. She mentioned entrepreneurial learning as a key contributor to economic growth and job creation.

Young people must reinforce their employability, and can do so by choosing a professional qualification that is suited to them, by developing their career management skills and learning to learn competence, by being aware of their own personal attributes, capacities and abilities, and finally by being able to adequately document and promote their knowledge, skills and competences to ease access to the labour market.

Vocational education and training is to be considered as a key structural element of education and employment policies: it is instrumental in matching young people skills to jobs and it facilitates the transition to the labour market.

Finally, she recommended diversifying training at school and university, to better connect the world of education with job realities and to increase work based learning.

*Eurofound: No work in sight? The role of governments and social partners in fostering labour market inclusion of young people.*

Donald Storrie, Head of Unit for Employment and Competitiveness at Eurofound, showed the highly differentiated situation at Member State level, with the Netherlands and Spain at the two extremes of the youth unemployment scale. He underlined that simple unemployment and employment statistics are not always an appropriate measure of the situation of young people on the labour market as so many are students and, hence, classified as being out of the labour force.

Unemployment rates have tripled since the beginning of the crisis, and young people have been hit harder by the recession than other age groups, regardless of their educational level. The number of young people not in employment, education or training (the "NEETs") also increased over recent years. Around 12,9% of young people belong to this group amounting to 7,5 million,



leading to considerable social and economic consequences for the people themselves and for society. New policy action is required in order to reengage young people in labour market or education. However, as the population of NEETs is highly heterogeneous in terms of characteristics and needs, each sub-group contained within the NEET category will need distinct policy interventions, in particular young people with disabilities.

Social partners have recognised the particular difficulties faced by young workers, and they mostly agree on policy measures taken by governments such as developing apprenticeships and reforming education systems. Integrated approaches and coordinated actions between governments and social partners might be beneficial to all and might constitute one of the cornerstones towards sustainable social and economic development for Europe.

Despite the concerns, evidence from previous recessions show that well educated young people will be among the first to be employed again when the recovery begins.



*OSHA: Safe start. Occupational safety and health from school to work. Findings and recommendations.*

Sarah Copsey, Project manager at the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work – EU-OSHA, said that young workers under 25 are more likely to suffer non-fatal work accidents than other age groups. Too often young people are given unsuitable jobs without much training on safety issues. Risk education is therefore essential to both employers and employees throughout schools and universities, and in education policy and teaching.

EU OSHA has collected and analysed examples of good practices to prevent occupational safety and health (OSH) risks to young workers in order to identify trends, innovative methods and success factors. Similarly, EU OSHA has examined good practices for including risk education in schools.

Young worker training must be part of a health and safety management approach based on workplace risk assessment, and even innovative features of training are often simple and cost effective interventions that bring results in business benefits and savings.

But a two-way strategy is needed to combat risks to young workers: a prevention culture needs to be promoted among new recruits but also at all levels of education. Both at work and school, active learning methods should be used, maintaining their relevance to real work and circumstances. But it is important to remember that training will only be effective if it takes place within the context of an effective safety culture and management system to prevent risks, with top level management commitment.

Continued efforts are also needed by EU members to collect more detailed data on the types and circumstances of work accidents to children, and young people still at school to help target interventions.

*ETF: The global dimension of youth employment. With special focus on northern Africa.*

Anastasia Fetsi, Head of Thematic Expertise Department at the European Training Foundation - ETF, gave as background an introduction about Northern Africa's demography, with one third of the population under 15 years of age, and the demographic trend that exerts substantial pressure on the labour markets and education systems.

In North Africa, past growth was jobless growth, meaning that the growing number of people entering the labour market could not be absorbed. Although the education levels of the young population have increased substantially during recent years, the possibilities for finding quality jobs are still limited, and the quality of education and training remains low. One of the characteristics of unemployment is the growth in "educated unemployment", the most visible feature of the youth employment challenge. Insufficient creation of quality jobs, as well as low employability due to the low quality of education provision, lack of work experience and skills mismatch are the main causes of low employment rates. As a result, millions of young people work in informal jobs with no social security or prospects for improvement. This situation leads obviously to emigration as an attractive alternative.

All countries in the region have launched active labour market measures, including self employment schemes and extra vocational training courses. But their scope is generally limited and they mainly target graduates of higher education. The road ahead in addressing the challenge of youth employment requires a more concerted effort by the countries to improve education and training systems, and the skills relevance of all young

people in order to enhance their employability. This, in turn, will support job creation for all levels of education and improve the functioning of the labour markets by addressing segmentation. Vocational education and training, with enhanced quality and attractiveness, can provide an alternative to university education and an opportunity for skills acquisition to young people who leave school without qualifications.

*DG EAC: Educating young people for tomorrow's jobs: "Implementing youth policies requires a long effort. It's not a matter of one-two-three,"*

Jan Trzczyński, Director-General for education and culture at the European Commission, whilst recognizing the global challenge of youth employment, expressed hope that the actual high levels of unemployment will not become chronic, ending up with a lost generation of people with very weak or

no attachment to the labour market. To fight against such an unacceptable situation, the EU, working in close partnership with the Member States, works on appropriate policy responses, knowing very well that there is no magic stick that can make youth unemployment simply disappear.

Evidence-based policy, already designed with the support provided by the four agencies, and structured dialogue with young people which takes on board their concerns and recommendations, have led to increased attention being paid to educational challenges such as the raise of education attainment and the reduction of early school leaving. Education is very high on the EU political agenda, and this will be reflected



in the budget allocations for education under the next multiannual financial framework. Policies to strengthen peoples' skills through education and training, with Youth on the Move and The Agenda for New Skills and Jobs as flagship initiatives, are now being translated into action. More precisely, four areas will get specific attention: 1) the improvement of the capacity to identify the skills that employers need and value, now and in the future; 2) the link with schools to make sure they are offering these skills, and a re-think of the role teachers have to play in this; 3) the need to ensure that there is the right mix of skills, and 4) the increased offer for young people to become more mobile, to enhance their employability and, eventually, to find work where it is on offer.

This will require close monitoring of the labour market, in order to understand how jobs are changing and which new qualifications need to be developed. The EU Skills Panorama, which provides an updated overview of current and future skills needs and identifies skills mismatches, might help with this.

Stronger partnerships with schools, universities, enterprises and a range of other interested groups and organisations such as trade unions and public employment services, will be needed to develop and provide updated skills profiles and multidisciplinary curricula, while offering facilities for work-based learning schemes to allow for a smooth transition from education to the workplace. Internships will put students in touch with the world of work, as will other non-formal learning activities, such as the ones provided through the European Voluntary Service, which can facilitate the transition from education to employment.

Finally, Mr. Trusczyński stressed the importance of mobility, because learning mobility, be it in the form of an internship or a study period abroad, prepares young people for the increasingly globalised labour market. Finally, a proven correlation exists between cross border experiences and the decreasing length of time between finishing education and finding a job.

*“Europe can only stay competitive by investing in its people.” – Jan Trusczyński*





## THE PANEL DISCUSSION

---

A panel discussion with the agency representatives and panellists from the European Parliament, European Commission and social partners such as youth organisations and business associations was chaired by Emilie Turunen (Greens/EFA, DK), the youngest Member of the European Parliament, and substitute Member of the Employment and Social Affairs Committee who employs several young assistants. She was therefore well placed to introduce the debate and point to the relevance of the subject for her generation, which is not only a matter of supply and employability, but also of demand and investments.

### LABOUR MARKET ACCESS

When debating the responsibilities of different stakeholders and policy makers in setting and implementing a comprehensive strategy ensuring fair and sustainable employment to young people, Luca Scarpiello, Vice-President of the European Youth Forum, said that this crisis is not only a job crisis, but also concerns education, employment and youth autonomy. It therefore requires a holistic approach: not only a policy change, but also a social change. The solution can thus not be sectorial, but must be structural, and involve all actors who should be prepared to discuss together and find solutions together, following an enriched structured dialogue model. Young people are eager to participate and take the floor, and this energy should not be marginalised. If policies fail, it would not only be a loss for young people, but for the whole of society.

With regard to the role of active labour market measures provided by Member States, MEP Ria Oomen-Ruijten (EPP, NL) referred to a Dutch resolution of the eighties, which stated that young people would not benefit from social welfare schemes, but would instead be offered extra education and training possibilities. Even acknowledging that this went too far, she noted the very low unemployment figures in the Netherlands today. Such schemes are affordable, and serve the purpose of fulfilling the EU 2020 benchmarks. Her colleague, Marian Harkin (ALDE, IE), an Irish MEP confronted with the situation in her country, deplores the high levels of emigration towards the USA, Canada and Australia, and is convinced that the austerity measures, focusing on cutting back rather than investing, will not halt it. A different mind-set is needed that helps set up an entrepreneurial and business friendly environment, allowing for easier access to credit.

On the issue of cuts in education budgets, Pierre Mairesse, Director of Lifelong learning, horizontal policy issues and EU 2020 strategy at the Directorate General for Education and Culture, said that the European Commission is, for the first time, critically analysing Member States' investment in their education and training programmes through the European Semester. In this exercise, more than ten Member States were recommended to increase spending on education. He denied the allegations that all Member States are cutting their education budget during the crisis, and noted that a lot of Member States are investing in growth. To him, the EU is setting a good example by increasing its budget for education, as proven in the planning for the next financial framework for the period until 2020.

Regarding the role and responsibility of employers, Steven D'Haeseleer, Social Affairs Director at Business Europe, noted the malfunctions in the market which the crisis has exposed. Structural deficits such as the mismatches of skills and demand in the labour market are but one example, while the obstacles at national level, with national programmes not concrete or ambitious enough, are the real concern. He also gave preference to lower introductory wages when entering the labour market, allowing for later increases, instead of increasing the threshold and thus lowering the employment prospects. This will motivate young people to improve their skills and move up the career ladder. Juliane Bir, Youth Officer and Advisor on Social Dialogue at ETUC, said that low paid jobs should not be the solution to replace higher qualified jobs, as in this way young people would be considered as commodities, and this is not the right signal to give in times of decreasing faith and increasing uncertainty. According to her, young people are accusing the EU-institutions, business and trade unions for not taking their concerns seriously. She called upon the participants to team up and come with joint, high speed responses.

## EMPLOYABILITY

The recent economic downturn has shown that not only are low skilled young people vulnerable, but also that highly skilled youngsters encounter serious problems to enter the labour market. This led Luca Scarpiello to say that “any work is better than nothing”, as young people are sometimes told, is a loss for everybody. The demand side needs to be addressed by making tax incentive schemes at local level more effective, by reforming the Public Employment Services, by better using European Social Funds, by providing quality in the transition from education to work through traineeships or youth guarantees, the latter unfortunately not approved by the Council on 17 June. These initiatives do not cost a lot and can have maximum effect but do initially need political will. Ria Oomen-Ruijten voiced concern about early school leavers and lower skilled young people, who should take priority in the measures undertaken. An agreement between social partners in solving youth unemployment will help according to her. Marian Harkin put more emphasis on the demand side, agreeing that with low skills it is more difficult to enter the labour market, but that the key question for her remains the availability of jobs, and how to ensure that young people get the right job. All actors need to sit together and come forward with suggestions: create ideas and bring them to the labour market, create a positive environment for businesses to create jobs. The representatives of the social partners agreed that cooperation is important, and even if their messages are sometimes different, recent joint declarations prove that coming closer to each other is not impossible.

On the role of the Europe 2020 Strategy, giving clear flagships and benchmarks, Christian Lettmayr, acting director at Cedefop, underlined that attractiveness should be defined as attractiveness for the labour market. Vocational Education and Training is one of the ways to approach this: the problem of low skilled people can be addressed by giving them vocational training which will also drive the growth of a country. Pierre Mairesse confirmed that the EU, through its Communication on Education for EU 2020, addressed the need to raise skills levels and to better match skills with labour market needs. In this respect, vocational education and training can be a solution to many problems.

Concerning EU tools, such as Europass, speakers agreed that they can have beneficial results and be an asset for better mobility. However, Europass, and other mobility instruments, would benefit from broader dissemination and better targeting, in order to broaden their reach. According to Juliane Bir, this issue needs to be tackled by the European Commission. Raymond Maes, acting Head of Unit of Youth employment, Entrepreneurship, Micro-Finances at the Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, argued to the contrary and said that many issues related to youth employment need to be dealt with at national level. He mentioned the youth guarantee and the single open ended contract idea as valuable suggestions from both the European Commission and the European Parliament, although neither have as yet been taken up yet by the Member States. The recent Council Conclusions of 17 June form a good basis to take many of the points discussed further – but it is at national level that they need to start implementing them.

When asked about the quality of work, Juan Menéndez-Valdés, Director at Eurofound said that good examples already exist for countries to remove access to jobs for young people, referring to research carried out by Eurofound at national, sectoral and company level. However different views on the balance between training and mobility, and between quality and quantity of jobs exist. To him it is important that young people do not end up in precarious jobs, and that many barriers are removed so that young people can easily transit between jobs. Moreover, if on the one hand, social partners have different views about the most important issues affecting the situation of young workers, they share, on the other hand, consensual issues that perhaps should be addressed more effectively in order to find proper solutions.

Jukka Takala, Director at EU-OSHA, concluded by underlining the importance of quality at work, and demonstrated with the aid of statistics that many workers drop out of the workforce due to occupational accidents, serious health problems caused by work, stress or burnouts, and that this may particularly affect young people who are just entering working life. These absences can be avoided by providing a decent working environment, which is especially important for young people. Employment should not be created at any price.

*“Youth unemployment is a major challenge that does not get all the attention it deserves. Panellists do not agree on the same means to solve problems, but all agree that all actors have to move together,” Emilie Turunen*

## GLOBAL ASPECTS OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

That youth unemployment is not an issue only concentrated within the borders of the European Union, but a phenomenon existing at global level, was illustrated by the special addresses given by Saïd Aïdi, Minister of Vocational Training and Employment from Tunisia and by his Egyptian counterpart, Ahmed Hassan El Borai, Minister of Manpower and Migration.

Minister Saïd Aïdi acknowledged that youth unemployment is a global issue but that the characteristics of each country need to be considered. For his country, Tunisia, as a result of the revolution that ended 23 years of dictatorship, values like dignity, freedom, justice, social quality and equality are high on the political agenda. However, freedom is a process that has to be learned. Tunisia therefore needs time to adapt its mind-set to the new situation: it is facing a cross-cutting challenge with issues like the mobilisation of all partners and social dialogue as the future foundations for its new democracy.

Employment is considered to be a right by young Tunisians, and without throwing away the historical heritage of the past, the interim government, in charge of the country until the elections in October, has decided to focus on education, and on education for everybody, with a common goal to create a better future for all young people and to reduce the high levels of unemployment. For the moment, huge inequalities in education exist, mainly due to regional imbalances. A national approach will be implemented: screening existing education curricula, improving coherence between different institutions, focussing on social promotion and regional development, and providing a better information flow. This will be part of a social and economic “roadmap,” mainly addressing human capital development and governance issues with the key institutions, but also with companies and local authorities. For this roadmap to be successful, Tunisia needs the support of the European and international community.

*“Le chantier est immense mais on y croit,” Minister Saïd Aïdi, Tunisia*

Minister Ahmed Hassan El Borai, through acknowledging that the situation in Egypt is more or less similar to the one in Tunisia, underlined the fact that 70% of Egypt’s unemployed are between 15 and 29 years old, and that of these 70%, around 60% do have a university degree, meaning that there is a very high level of “educated unemployment” in his country. The interim government has already undertaken steps to improve the freedom of trade unions, through a new law that will be voted in soon, to adopt minimum wages and to introduce unemployment benefit. It also created a national fund for vocational education and training inside the Ministry of Labour, doing away with the scattered situation in the past. He also noted the difficulties the government is facing in dealing with the topics of social justice and freedom. The Arab Spring in Egypt was more a social revolution than a political one, and even though Europe has its own serious problems for the moment, it needs to increase its role in Northern Africa and help to create a stable Mediterranean area, including in the political area by trying to find a solution for the conflict between Israel and Palestine, so that a fair and sustainable peace can be installed. He expressed hope that the new neighbourhood policy of the EU will be more successful, and that issues such as mobility and migration will receive more attention.

*“It’s a time of opportunity to move on from the past to build a better future. It is not an easy journey, but the end will be worth it.” László Andor*

## THE COMMISSIONER’S CONTRIBUTION

László Andor, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, stressed the fact that youth unemployment is a very complex problem with no single, simple answer. One of the key challenges for him is therefore to create coherent actions within the variety of portfolios at European and international level. He praised the important work the agencies are doing and the high quality of their analyses, and the good relations the European Commission has with the European Parliament. He referred to Mrs Turunen’s report on youth employment and securing young people’s access to the labour market as an excellent example of good cooperation.

On youth unemployment, he mentioned some fundamental trends that dominate thinking today: high unemployment rates in the EU, with one third of young people being unemployed for more than a year; the NEETS phenomenon, the disengagement of young people and their risk of drifting away from society into social exclusion and poverty; the lack of skills, the low skilled and matching between education and the labour market; the dualism and segmentation in the labour market where young people are trapped in precarious or temporary job situations.

For the European Commission, youth issues are at the heart of its policy agenda. Targets have been set, for instance in the Youth on the Move Agenda, catering for education and training at all levels, for stronger policy efforts on youth employment and for more youth mobility, including fostering job mobility and the provision of good quality traineeships. He also referred to the conclusions of the June Council, considered to be a step towards formulating a common approach, but voiced his disappointment about Member States’ lack of commitment to the youth guarantee proposal (a proposal to have school leavers, within four months of finishing school, either in a job, in education or in other activation measures), hoping that Member States would reconsider their position in the near future.

Youth employment is also of fundamental importance in a global context. He congratulated the Ministers of Tunisia and Egypt on the work they are doing at a time when the key challenges are the lack of job creation, social inequalities, unemployment and wide poverty. He said that the European Commission will be strengthening its support to the partner countries through the new Communication on Neighbourhood policy, striving to boost job creation, improve social protection and give high priority to finding the right balance between economic and social development. He strongly recommended that the ETF continue to provide support in the respective countries. The launch of regional development programmes and new mobility partnerships and, last but not least, the promotion of social dialogue, in close cooperation with the emerging trade unions and employers organisations, will aim at long term and sustainable change.

*“To achieve long term and sustainable change it is vital that socio-economic reforms are home-grown by the countries that will have to implement them.” László Andor*



## THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE CHAIR

---

“United in diversity,” the motto of the European Parliament, was very much applicable to this seminar, concluded Mrs Berès, but youth unemployment was everywhere. The crisis in the North and the revolutions in the South have exaggerated the situation of the most exposed: young people finishing education and entering the labour market. They might be tempted to migrate while their home countries are also lacking a skilled labour force.

Youth employment is a transversal issue that needs transversal answers. But the seminar has shown that human capital development, education, training, employability and access to labour markets have to take absolute priority.

Youth unemployment entails excessive costs for our societies. Questions about unemployment need to be interrelated with other cost cross-cutting issues. With all the austerity measures now in place, and with half of the Member States reducing their budgets for education, the young generation is being discriminated against. Member States have to redefine their investment strategy, put clear rules on the use of available funding, and give priority to the stimulation of the labour market. Budgets, whether national or European, must be used for job creation.

The European Commission and the European Parliament have shown to be very committed to the EU 2020 strategy and its flagship initiatives. The importance of this strategy has now to be reflected in the EU’s multi-annual financial framework perspectives, where spending related to education and employment might have to be prompted to an upward review.

The new Communication related to the European Neighbourhood policy shows the importance the Member States attach to their Southern and Eastern neighbours. The European Commission, in close cooperation with its neighbours, will continue to search for the appropriate responses and support policy implementation. But it’s the EU’s role to assist the countries in helping themselves, not in dictating to them what they should do.

“The Spring revolutions in Northern Africa show how desperation among young people can be a factor for change to the better.



*Pervenche Berès*

## SEMINAR POLICY POINTERS

---

- Unemployment, mainly that of young people, denies them hope for the future, robs them of their independence, of chances to find housing and of decency. Measures to avoid unemployment of young people should therefore receive full attention and adequate budgetary support, and should not be sacrificed at the altar of austerity.
- Better access to education, improvement in the quality of education in general and of vocational education and training in particular, linked to an increase of cooperation between education institutions and the labour market, will reduce illiteracy and skills mismatches, and stimulate inclusive governance models.
- Provision of wider, transversal key competences (entrepreneurship, citizenship, communication skills, initiative taking, digital literacy, etc.) is necessary to ensure that the future labour force is adaptable to fast-changing economies. Not only the acquisition of basic skills, but also the development of transversal competences, is a prerequisite for young people to successfully enter the labour market.
- The importance of evidence based policy was underlined: without the availability of hard facts and data sets, an accurate diagnosis on education and labour market issues cannot be provided and adequate solutions cannot be offered.
- The capacity for the identification of skills, and more extensive forecasting of skills' needs to better match the requirements of the labour market, have to be strengthened. The development of a tool such as the EU skills panorama can support better monitoring of the labour market and better understanding of how jobs are changing.



- Young people with a vocational education and training qualification entering the labour market have a better chance of finding a job than low skilled or higher skilled people. Vocational education and training is thus a key structural element of education and employment policies. It is instrumental in matching young people to jobs and it facilitates the transition to the world of work.
- Enhancing the quality and relevance of vocational education and training is necessary for improving its attractiveness, also in the partner countries. Good examples of well-functioning dual training systems exist in some Member States, and can be taken as a source of inspiration for others.
- The number of young people not in employment, education and training (“NEETs”) greatly increased over recent years due to the crisis. However, their population is highly heterogeneous in terms of characteristics and needs, and each sub-group will need distinct forms of policy interventions.
- In most European countries the jobs held by young workers are less secure, simpler and physically more demanding. A two-way strategy is needed to combat risks to young workers: a prevention culture needs to be promoted among new recruits, but also at all levels of education. Occupational health and safety should be integrated into youth employment policy, youth accident prevention and education.
- Young workers need to be placed in safe and suitable jobs that are matched to their abilities and given adequate training and supervision. Parallel to this, they need to receive risk education, from the nursery through to university, to develop appropriate skills, knowledge and behaviour for when they enter work.
- More quality needs to be brought into the transition from education to the labour market. Support measures and tools such as Europass, guidance and counselling, internships, or the development of entrepreneurial attitudes and career management skills, help connect the world of work to the world of education and make the transition smoother. These measures and tools should be widely disseminated and implemented. The hesitation of the Member States during the last Employment Council to agree on a youth guarantee and on the single open ended contract principle, should not prevent these measures from reappearing on the European agenda for discussion.
- Different studies and analyses have suggested that there is a causal relationship between cross-border learning and the chances of shortening the distance between the end of school and finding a first job. Mobility, whether in organised exchanges offered by programmes such as Erasmus, Erasmus Mundus or Leonardo da Vinci, or through internships, offering valuable work-based learning in combination with mobility experience, also helps young people to broaden their experience and to link with the world of work. Mobility with countries outside the European Union will also prepare the future labour force for the employment challenges in a global world.
- Youth unemployment is not only an issue of supply - of employability - but also one of demand. Without investments there will be no economic growth, and no new jobs. The current mind-set has to change, by moving from austerity measures, looking at cutting back rather than investing, to the creation of an environment that stimulates entrepreneurial learning, business friendliness, simpler and easier rules, easier access to credit. In this context, SMEs from outside Europe should not be forgotten, as shown through the examples of Tunisia and Morocco.
- The Southern Mediterranean countries, with a very young population, labour markets characterised by important territorial disparities and the coexistence between a modern and a traditional economic sector, and subject to centralised governance systems, need to make a concerted effort to support job creation through, inter alia, the development of SMEs, an increase in the capacity of regional development and the need to invest in sectors which have the potential to improve the functioning of the labour market and overcome segmentation.



- The Southern Mediterranean countries count on the continued support of the international community to help them address the huge challenges they are currently facing. Bilateral relations with individual Member States support from and close cooperation with the European Union and its institutions as a whole and at all levels, are considered vital in these turbulent times. The European Union has to increase its role in the Middle East at a political level, but also at operational and technical levels.
- More and better partnerships with schools, universities, other providers of education and training, as well as with social partners, public employment services and enterprises, and with the local authorities, will offer possibilities for multidisciplinary approaches and allow the multidimensional perspective of youth employment to be addressed
- Governments have generally been responsible for the majority of the initiatives to help young people during the crisis. However, assessing the effectiveness of such initiatives is crucial, especially in times of austerity when efficient use of resources is essential.
- The current crisis has proven not to be only a job crisis. It is of course related to employment and education, but also to youth autonomy and the possibility for young people to be able to participate in society. A holistic approach is thereto necessary that will look at structural issues supported by intense networking and an enriched social dialogue.
- A structured dialogue with young people, which allows for an open exchange of experiences and a stocktaking of recommendations, has proven to be an innovative but valuable instrument for supporting the formulation of policies on youth employment.
- The structural weaknesses and malfunctions of our labour markets have surfaced during this crisis. Answers need to be formulated constructively and collectively on how to implement necessary reforms, make labour markets more dynamic and efficient, tackle labour market segmentation. Member States are often too vague or not ambitious enough in their objectives. But also representatives of employers and employees need to sit together, to team up and to move to a more common position.
- The cooperation of all stakeholders is essential. Integrated approaches and coordinated actions between national governments, the European institutions, and social partners can only be beneficial to all and will constitute one of the cornerstones towards a sustainable social and economic development for Europe and its partner countries.



# THE SPEAKERS AND PANELLISTS

---

Saïd Aïdi, Minister of Vocational Training and Employment, Tunisia

László Andor, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

Pervenche Berès, Chair of the Employment and Social Affairs Committee, European Parliament

Juliane Bir, Youth Officer and Advisor on Social Dialogue, ETUC

Sarah Copsey, Project Manager, Chair of the contact group on OSH and education, EU-OSHA

Pascaline Descy, Head of Research and Policy Analysis, Cedefop

Steven D'Haeseleer, Director Social Affairs, BusinessEurope

Ahmed Hassan El Borai, Minister of Manpower and Migration, Egypt

Anastasia Fetsi, Head of Thematic Expertise Development Department, ETF

Marian Harkin, Member of the European Parliament

Christian Lettmayr, Acting Director, Cedefop

Raymond Maes, Acting Head of Unit, Youth Employment, Entrepreneurship and Micro-finances, European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

Pierre Mairesse, Director, European Commission, DG EAC

Juan Menéndez-Valdés, Director, Eurofound

Ria Oomen-Ruijten, Member of the European Parliament

Luca Scarpiello, Vice-President, European Youth Forum

Madlen Serban, Director, ETF

Donald Storrie, Head of Unit Employment and Competitiveness, Eurofound

Jukka Takala, Director, EU-OSHA

Jan Trzuszczński, Director-General, European Commission, DG EAC

Emilie Turunen, Member of the European Parliament

## THE FOUR AGENCIES

---

Cedefop – the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, established in 1975, is a European agency that helps promote and develop vocational education and training in the European Union (EU). It is now based in Thessaloniki.

Cedefop works to promote a European area of lifelong learning throughout an enlarged EU. It does this by providing information on and analyses of vocational education and training systems, policies, research and practice. Cedefop's tasks are to 1) compile selected documentation and analyses of data; 2) contribute to developing and coordinating research; 3) exploit and disseminate information; 4) encourage joint approaches to vocational education and training problems and 5) provide a forum for debate and exchanges of ideas.  
[www.cedefop.europa.eu](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu)



**CEDEFOP**

The ETF - European Training Foundation, established in 1995 in Torino, helps transition and developing countries to harness the potential of their human capital through the reform of education, training and labour market systems.



The ETF helps its partner countries modernise their education and training systems - equipping their people with the knowledge, skills and wider competences to take part in dynamic economies and societies. The ETF works on projects in partner countries to reform vocational education, training and employment systems. The ETF 1) provides information, advice and help to the European Community in developing human resources policies in partner countries; 2) supports relevant

stakeholders in partner countries to build capacity in human resources development; 3) helps deliver Community assistance to stakeholders in partner countries and 4) encourages networking and the sharing of information, experience and good practice - both between the European Union and partner countries, and among partner countries. [www.etf.europa.eu](http://www.etf.europa.eu)

The Agency for Health and Safety at Work, established in 1994 in Bilbao, acts as a catalyst for developing, analysing and disseminating information that improves occupational safety and health (OSH) in Europe. As well as developing a comprehensive network of safety and health websites, the Agency also runs campaigns and an active publications program producing everything from specialist information reports to factsheets and covering a wide variety of OSH problems.

National focal points, typically the lead OSH organisation in their respective countries, coordinate and disseminate information from the Agency within their individual countries. In addition, the Agency cooperates with a wide range of partners including the European Commission, other European institutions and the European social partners, as well as international organisations and safety and health organisations worldwide. [www.osha.europa.eu](http://www.osha.europa.eu)



Eurofound is a European Union body set up in 1975 to contribute to the planning and establishment of better living and working conditions in Europe. It is based in Dublin. It provides information, advice and expertise – on living and working conditions, industrial relations and managing change in Europe – for key actors in the field of EU social policy on the basis of comparative information, research and analysis to governments, employers, trade unions, the European Commission and further EU institutions and policy makers.

Eurofound organises its work around three core areas of expertise, with a focus on the following issues: 1) working conditions: including work organisation, time issues in the workplace, flexibility, monitoring of changes in working conditions; 2) living conditions: issues that affect the everyday lives of Europe's citizens, including the balance between work and family life, the provision of social public services and promoting integration into employment; 3) industrial relations: industrial change and corporate restructuring, employee participation in decision-making, the Europeanisation of industrial relations. [www.eurofound.europa.eu](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu)