

Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2017/2039(INI)	Procedure completed
Implementation of the youth employment initiative in the Member States		
Subject 4.15.02 Employment: guidelines, actions, Funds 4.40.10 Youth		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	EMPL Employment and Social Affairs		27/10/2016
		 TOMC Romana Shadow rapporteur  BENIFEI Brando  ŽITŇANSKÁ Jana  DLBAJOVÁ Martina  REINTKE Terry  AGEA Laura  MÉLIN Joëlle	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	BUDG Budgets		10/10/2016
		 NOVAKOV Andrey	
	CONT Budgetary Control		23/03/2017
		 VAUGHAN Derek	
	CULT Culture and Education		25/10/2016
		 NEKOV Momchil	
	FEMM Women's Rights and Gender Equality		07/09/2017
		 BLINKEVIČIŪTĒ Vilija	

Key events

16/03/2017	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
04/12/2017	Vote in committee		
21/12/2017	Committee report tabled for plenary	A8-0406/2017	Summary
17/01/2018	Debate in Parliament		
18/01/2018	Results of vote in Parliament		
18/01/2018	Decision by Parliament	T8-0018/2018	Summary
18/01/2018	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2017/2039(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Implementation
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 159
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	EMPL/8/07681

Documentation gateway

Committee draft report		PE606.092	29/06/2017	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE610.728	27/09/2017	EP	
Committee opinion	FEMM	PE610.552	09/11/2017	EP	
Committee opinion	CULT	PE610.824	23/11/2017	EP	
Committee opinion	BUDG	PE610.811	24/11/2017	EP	
Committee opinion	CONT	PE612.047	28/11/2017	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A8-0406/2017	21/12/2017	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T8-0018/2018	18/01/2018	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2018)139	24/04/2018	EC	

Additional information

Research document	Briefing
Research document	Study

Implementation of the youth employment initiative in the Member States

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs adopted the own-initiative report by Romana TOMC (EPP, SL) on the implementation of the Youth Employment Initiative in the Member States.

The financial and economic crisis that started in 2008 led to a steep rise in people being unemployed, especially young people. The youth unemployment rate rose from 15 % in 2008 to a peak of 24 % in early 2013, with this average rate masking huge divergences across Member States and regions. Besides, the crisis increased youth disengagement from the labour market, with the number of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) reaching 7.3 million in 2013.

As a reminder, in 2013, the Council, by means of a Council Recommendation, established the Youth Guarantee (YG), by which the Member States commit themselves to offering young people a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education.

Also in 2013, the Council agreed to create the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), which was launched as the main EU budgetary instrument linked to the ESF to help Member State regions experiencing particularly high levels of youth unemployment, in particular by introducing YG schemes.

The YG is financed through the ESF, national budgets and the YEI, while the YEI can finance the direct provision of jobs, apprenticeships, traineeships or continued education for the YEI target group in the eligible regions. YEI intervention has no predefined duration, while the YG requires an offer to be made within four months.

Objective: one main ambition of the YEI and YG is to reach out to those young people Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs), who are at the highest risk of exclusion, while taking into account that the term NEETs covers various subgroups of young people with diverse needs.

Members deplored the fact that the Member States have chosen to commit themselves only through the non-binding instrument of the Council Recommendation and pointed out that the aim of the YG is far from being achieved in many Member States.

Education and training: Members stated that only education and training can solve the problem of youth unemployment. A quality traineeship contract must respect a quality framework offering the following guarantees: a written contract; a mentor or supervisor to assess the trainees performance at the end of the traineeship; the contract should have clear provisions on coverage in social security systems and remuneration.

Improving the YEI: Member States are encouraged to:

- update and revise their YEI operational programmes with the involvement of social partners and youth organisations in order to fine-tune their action based on the actual needs of young people and the labour market;
- improve monitoring, reporting and the quality of data as a matter of urgency and to guarantee that reliable and comparable data and figures on current YEI implementation are gathered and made available in a timely manner and more frequently than is required under their annual reporting obligation of the European Social Fund (ESF) Regulation.

Concerned about reports of the inappropriate use of YEI-funded measures, Members expressed their willingness to combat such practices.

Underlining the important role of youth organisations as intermediaries between young people and the public employment services (PES), Member States are encouraged to work closely with youth organisations at national, regional and local level when communicating, planning, implementing and evaluating the YEI.

Further synergies between public and private employment providers, businesses and education systems should be encouraged as well as the widespread use of e-government to reduce red tape.

The report highlighted the need for a strategy to transform the YEI from an anti-crisis instrument into a more stable EU financing instrument for tackling youth unemployment in the post-2020 period, while ensuring the quick and uncomplicated deployment of funds.

Further efforts and continued political and financial commitments to tackle youth unemployment are absolutely necessary. The YEI should provide financial support for measures that foster the integration of NEETs into the labour market, including paid internships, traineeships and apprenticeships, but should not become a substitute for actual gainful employment.

Members suggested the establishment of an EU hotline against the violation of the rights of young people, so that young people can report any negative experience of participation in YEI and YG measures to the Commission directly, enabling the collection of information and the investigation of reports of abusive practices in the deployment of EU-funded policies.

Members noted that EU budget investments through the YEI have made an impact and have accelerated the expansion of the labour market for young people. The YEI represents clear EU added value as many youth employment schemes could not have been implemented without an EU commitment.

Financing: the report noted with concern that there is an actual risk that EU funding is simply replacing national funding rather than creating added value. Members welcomed the fact that at Parliaments urging, the result of the conciliation process on the 2018 EU budget was to increase the specific allocation originally proposed for the YEI by EUR 116.7 million in fresh appropriations, bringing its total to EUR 350 million in 2018. They considered that the overall YEI budget is not sufficient to cover actual demand and the resources required to ensure that the programme reaches its targets.

The report stressed that as of now the YEI is the best performing of all the ESI Funds in terms of financial implementation.

Implementation of the youth employment initiative in the Member States

The European Parliament adopted by 512 votes to 50, with 63 abstentions, a resolution on the implementation of the Youth Employment Initiative in the Member States.

The financial and economic crisis led to a steep rise in people being unemployed, especially young people. The youth unemployment rate rose from 15 % in 2008 to a peak of 24 % in early 2013, with this average rate masking huge divergences across Member States and regions.

Although having peaked at 24 % in 2013, the youth unemployment rate in the EU-28 has steadily dropped, reaching below 17 % in 2017. The level of youth unemployment remains high, there being just a few Member States (Austria, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Malta, Hungary and Germany) with a youth unemployment rate of less than 11 %.

As a reminder, in 2013, the Council, by means of a Council Recommendation, established the Youth Guarantee (YG), by which the Member States commit themselves to offering young people a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education.

In parallel, the Council agreed to create the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), which was launched as the main EU budgetary instrument linked to the ESF to help Member State regions experiencing particularly high levels of youth unemployment, in particular by introducing YG schemes.

It is estimated that 16 million young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) have participated in youth guarantee schemes and that the youth employment initiative has provided direct support to over 1.6 million young people in the European Union.

Objective: one main ambition of the YEI and YG is to reach out to those young people Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs), who are at the highest risk of exclusion, while taking into account that the term NEETs covers various subgroups of young people with diverse needs. Members deplored the fact that the Member States have chosen to commit themselves only through the non-binding instrument of the Council Recommendation, pointing out that the aim of the YG is far from being achieved in many Member States.

In order to be effective, a strategy to boost youth employment should provide for round-table discussions involving those concerned, take account of the territorial context in which it is to be implemented and provide for targeted training that meets the needs of businesses while balancing them with the aspirations and skills of young people.

Moreover, the core labour standards and other standards related to the quality of work, such as working time, the minimum wage, social security, and occupational health and safety, must be central considerations in the efforts made.

Reaching out to the most excluded young people: Parliament called on the Member States to establish appropriate and tailored outreach strategies to reach all NEETs and to take an integrated approach towards making more individualised assistance and services available to support young people facing multiple barriers. It called for the YEI and YG measures to be accessible to all people with disabilities.

Ensuring the quality of the Youth Employment Initiative offers: Members stressed the need to develop a commonly agreed global definition of what should be a quality offer.

In this context, they stated that a quality internship contract shall offer the following guarantees: (i) a written contract outlining concrete objectives and describing high-quality training; (ii) a mentor or supervisor allocated to assess the trainee's performance at the end of the internship; (iii) a specific duration of training; (iv) setting a limit on the length of traineeships with the same employer; (v) clear provisions on social protection and remuneration.

Member States are encouraged to:

- update and revise their YEI operational programmes with the involvement of social partners and youth organisations in order to fine-tune their action based on the actual needs of young people and the labour market;
- improve monitoring, reporting and the quality of data as a matter of urgency and to guarantee that reliable and comparable data and figures on current YEI implementation are gathered and made available in a timely manner and more frequently than is required under their annual reporting obligation of the European Social Fund (ESF) Regulation.

Concerned about reports of the inappropriate use of YEI-funded measures (delayed payments to young people or the abuse of internships), Members expressed their willingness to combat such practices.

More stable EU instrument: Parliament stressed the need for a strategy to transform the YEI into a more stable EU funding instrument to tackle youth unemployment in the post-2020 period, while ensuring the quick and easy deployment of funds. It emphasised the need to improve the quality of offers under the YEI and YG and called for a future discussion about the eligible age bracket.

With a view to collecting information and investigating possible abusive practices, the Parliament has proposed the establishment of an EU hotline against the violation of the rights of young people so that they can directly report any negative experience of their participation in the YEI to the Commission.

Financing: Members noted with concern that there is an actual risk that EU funding is simply replacing national funding rather than creating added value. They welcomed the fact that at Parliaments urging, the result of the conciliation process on the 2018 EU budget was to increase the specific allocation originally proposed for the YEI by EUR 116.7 million in fresh appropriations, bringing its total to EUR 350 million in 2018. They considered that the overall YEI budget is not sufficient to cover actual demand and the resources required to ensure that the programme reaches its targets.