

## **FRAMEWORK OF ACTIONS ON YOUTH EMPLOYMENT**

**Third follow-up report**

**September 2016**

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## Foreword

This is the third annual follow-up report of the Framework of Actions on Youth Employment, adopted by the Social Dialogue Committee on 27 September 2016.

It gives useful information on the actions by social partners taken at national, cross-industry, sectoral and enterprise level on youth employment.

It describes the main trends that can be identified through the different national reports submitted to the ETUC (and the liaison committee EUROCADRES/CEC), BusinessEurope, CEEP and UEAPME, and compiles into one document the members' contributions.

The European social partners would like to thank their national affiliates for their contributions.

# Introduction

In their autonomous work programme 2012-14, the European social partners (EU SPs) ETUC, BusinessEurope, CEEP and UEAPME agreed to address the issue of youth employment as first priority and to negotiate a Framework of Actions (FoA).

The text was negotiated between September 2012 and April 2013, and was successfully adopted by the four EU SPs organisations in 2013<sup>1</sup>. It includes an annex presenting a selection of national initiatives in the field of youth employment.

The Framework of Actions aims to promote solutions to reduce youth unemployment, deliver concrete measures to improve young people's employment opportunities and contribute to this important debate. It calls on national social partners, public authorities and other stakeholders to act together and achieve concrete progress. It builds upon existing and new practices linked with the four priorities identified:

- Priority 1: **Learning**
- Priority 2: **Transition**
- Priority 3: **Employment**
- Priority 4: **Entrepreneurship**

As in previous FoAs, national social partners are committed to report on their activities annually over three years (2014, 2015, and 2016) which will allow an evaluation of the progress made towards achieving their objectives in order to ensure they have a real impact. This will be followed by a final evaluation report in 2017.

As part of this follow-up process, the European social partners will evaluate the Framework of Actions' impact on both employers and workers. Furthermore, as indicated in the negotiated text, "this evaluation can lead to an update of the priorities identified and/or an assessment on whether or not additional action is required in one or more of the priority areas".

During this year's follow-up, the level of engagement and positive contributions of national social partners, including through their agreements, is stable compared with last year's. More progress is needed especially on activities directly linked to bipartite initiatives. Many of the initiatives identified in the national evaluation reports focus on updates to ongoing initiatives which have been reported previously. But overall, during the first three years of follow-up work, social partners in 23 out of the 28 Member States have provided input.

This high number of national reports by national social partners compared with observed levels of reporting for recent EU social dialogue instruments, shows that the more the European social partners address important issues for the national social partners, the better actual implementation or follow-up is.

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<sup>1</sup> It is the third Framework of Actions negotiated by the European social partners, following the 2002 FoA on the lifelong development of competencies and qualifications and the 2005 FoA on Gender Equality.

## **Upcoming conference on the youth employment Framework of Actions**

In spring 2017, the European social partners intend<sup>2</sup> to organise a conference with the objective to prepare for the drafting of the final evaluation report of the 2013 Framework of Actions on Youth Employment (to be published in autumn 2017). As done in the past before the final implementation report on the Framework Agreement on Inclusive Labour Markets, this conference will be an opportunity to take stock of national developments, as well as encourage national social partners to exchange information on the activities held at national level and discuss the preliminary findings of the final evaluation report. This will also raise awareness on the ways social partners' have followed-up the four priorities set by the Framework of Actions.

The Conference will also be an opportunity, in the case of absence of reporting after four years, to encourage the members in the countries concerned to keep the European social partners informed about their follow-up activities until actions have been undertaken at national level.

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<sup>2</sup> Subject to EU funding received for the Integrated Projects 2016-2018

<sup>3</sup>rd follow-up report, Framework of Actions on Youth Employment

## Chapter I – Main trends under the four priorities

In June 2016 4.277 million young people were unemployed, making up an unemployment rate of 18,8%. Although a slight improvement can be seen in comparison with the previous year, the situation remains difficult for young Europeans trying to make their way into the labour market. Young people continue to face additional challenges/difficulties compared with other age groups, including high levels of youth unemployment and other situations of precarity. For those employed, 42,6% of young workers work under temporary contracts in the first quarter of 2016 in comparison with the rate of 13,8% for the total workforce.

### Priority 1: Learning

#### *Apprenticeships and traineeships*

Apprenticeships continues to be very high on the social partners and national governments agendas. In Austria as in Denmark and Germany, social partners have strong influence on the content and framework conditions, including legislation, of dual learning systems which have proven to be very useful to ease transitions between the world of education and the world of work.

However, there are still concerns to be overcome. One is related to the quality control of the accreditation of companies (example: in Austria companies receive guidelines and advice), another is the skills and support needed to undertake and finish a Vocational Education and training (VET) programme (examples: in Denmark and in the Netherlands there is a special focus on drop outs, in Austria there is a supra-company training for young people who do not have a place in full time based VET). The issue of assisting companies as well as disadvantaged young people is also important in Germany. In addition, the definition of an apprentice and the rights attached is also an issue for discussion (example: in Poland social partners are close to agree on a common definition and understanding of rights).

In Ireland, Latvia and in the United Kingdom the focus is on promoting, funding and increasing the number of apprenticeship placements (examples: in Ireland there are 25 programmes initially approved within 6 sectors, in Latvia an ERASMUS+ project aims at facilitating VET to match labour market needs and ensuring a quality process for all the parties involved).

A common pattern for successful VET is that social partners must be “co-owners” with the Government of the dual learning system. But the systems in place must be continuously adapted and improved. For instance, the 2015 reforms in Denmark are still ongoing as is the German Alliance of Initial and Further Training 2015-2018. Social partners have also provided recommendations and expertise to their government to improve VET systems (example: Estonian employers, Portuguese and Swedish social partners have communicated their desire to improve the image of apprenticeships) or in forthcoming reforms (example: in Finland a reform is expected in 2018). In Cyprus, there are discussions to introduce VET systems and social partners wish to be involved in the process while in Bulgaria a survey has been conducted in order to set in motion a tailored dual training system. In the UK, reforms aim “to increase the quality of apprenticeships; ‘employer-led standards’; and; establishing the Institute for Apprenticeships, an ‘independent and employer-led body’, to regulate the quality of apprenticeships”.

Improving the image of vocational education is also key for social partners. In Estonia, the Estonian Employers' Confederation in cooperation with Foundation Innove, representatives from the Ministry of Education and Research, vocational schools and professionals, has addressed apprenticeship training scenarios, identified obstacles and provided solutions, and

developed recommendations for the future (amendments to legislative acts, teaching materials etc.). On the trade union side, EAKL has promoted the ETUC proposal “A European Quality Framework for Apprenticeships” and will continue this work.

- *European social partners’ projects on apprenticeships*

*On 26-27 May 2016, the European social partners organised a conference to present the outcomes of their two parallel projects on apprenticeships – an employers’-led project on the cost-effectiveness of apprenticeship schemes and a trade unions-led project on a European quality framework for apprenticeships. These aim to achieving well-functioning apprenticeship schemes. During the conference, the European social partners presented a joint statement “[Towards a Shared Vision of Apprenticeships](#)”, as well as a [joint video](#).*

*Download the employers report here:*

[http://erc-online.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Employers\\_Final-Report-on-Apprenticeships-May-2016.pdf](http://erc-online.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Employers_Final-Report-on-Apprenticeships-May-2016.pdf)

*Download the trade unions report here:*

[http://resourcecentre.etuc.org/ReportFile-20160530143543\\_A-European-Quality-Framework-for-Apprenticeships-EN.Final.Corr.pdf](http://resourcecentre.etuc.org/ReportFile-20160530143543_A-European-Quality-Framework-for-Apprenticeships-EN.Final.Corr.pdf)

Although traineeships are not specifically addressed in the Framework of Actions, it appears to be a key topic addressed in the national reports. In Croatia, the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan was adopted in April 2014 and focuses on early intervention and activation measures, including prevention of early school leaving and activation support to inactive youth. In addition, labour market integration measures are envisaged, such as encouraging employers to offer quality traineeships and apprenticeships.

Moreover, Cypriot social partners are directly involved with their Government to take steps towards promoting traineeships. For this purpose, the Human Resource and Development Authority of Cyprus (HRDA) has designed and currently implements various schemes, co-funded by the European Social Fund, through which an allowance is provided to the apprentices or trainees for their period of apprenticeship or traineeship.

In Poland, social partners agreed in June 2015 to start drafting a joint document containing the recommendations of the social partners on the quality of traineeships in the open market. The discussion includes the following issues: preparation for traineeship and recruitment; contents of the educational component; content of the agreement for the traineeship, including working time; rules embracing trainee mentoring and coverage of accident and health insurance. They agreed also on the need to confirm the completion of traineeships, as well as to evaluate the practice by the trainee afterwards.

The police sector, in the Netherlands, contributes to the education of young people by offering a new internship programme. It is meant to raise interest for working for the police and help prepare young people for the labour market in general and contribute to their employability.

### *Education systems reforms*

Apprenticeships are only one subject area where reforms are taking place and they are often embedded in boarder education systems reforms.

In Ireland, a reform was adopted in 2015 to ensure all young people are better prepared for the changing world of work. This includes major reform of initial teacher education, new

induction models for schools and further development of a Continuous Professional Development framework for teachers. Teachers' development and qualifications are also areas considered for further improvement by the Dutch social partners in the public sector. In Denmark, a reform of the upper secondary education was adopted in June 2016. One of the aims is to "challenge what types of education young people choose after finishing primary and lower secondary" (including VET and a technical upper secondary education).

But more education systems reforms are expected. In Finland, although the government is reducing its financing for VET, a reform is expected (in 2018) to renew legislation, funding system, guidance system, learning in the workplaces and qualification systems and social partners are involved through national level working groups. In Cyprus social partners agree that there is a need to reform education and training curricula with social partner involvement in a way that education will be responsive to labour market's needs and therefore reduce the skills mismatch.

- *Baltic area project on enhancing cooperation and implementing VET reforms*

*The Ministry of Education and Science in cooperation with the Latvian social partners LDDK and LBAS is implementing an ERASMUS+ project entitled "National Authorities for Apprenticeships: Implementing Work Based Learning in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia (WBL-Balt)". This project runs from December 2015 until November 2016, and it aims to "To support development of WBL and apprenticeships in the Baltic States and to enhance cooperation between 3 Baltic States in implementing VET reforms". Project activities on the Baltic level are: enhanced cooperation and peer learning between the 3 Baltic States in implementing VET reforms and supporting WBL development, and establishing the Baltic Alliance for Apprenticeships and Work Based Learning.*

*For more details, please go to the joint Latvian report on page 50*

## **Priority 2: Transition**

### *Youth guarantee*

Social partners who have reported on the state-of-play of the youth guarantee (YG) at national level (about 13 countries) are involved to various extents in the design and implementation of the scheme. However, social partners in some countries (Finland, Spain) stated that their level of involvement by the authorities, especially in the follow-up of existing YG schemes, is poor. In some countries (Austria, Finland), the YG is not new and such a mechanism already existed before the adoption of the EU-wide scheme, but most initiatives started in 2015. Some national plans specifically target young NEETs (Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary). In Cyprus, a three-year national Youth Employment Action plan has been signed in order to implement the Youth Guarantee in the country.

It is clear that the youth guarantee has led to activities at national level over the last years. Indeed, 10 national reports described various initiatives, including the way social partners have been involved. Some national social partners expressed concerns due to a lack of social partner involvement.

In terms of outcomes, some reports point out to the number of young people who have benefited from youth guarantee schemes. But the information gathered does not allow to assess the extent to which the EU youth guarantee has contributed to the reduction of youth unemployment in the last few years.

## *Guidance and information*

Specific career guidance initiatives were reported in Austria, Croatia, Finland and Ireland. They provide services such as information and counselling, with a strong online presence. It is reported that success factors are: up-to-date information and regularly addressing any gaps in the system. In Bulgaria projects are reported for students and unemployed on entrepreneurial, vocational qualification, transversal and mathematical skills. In Germany a guidance project focuses on the integration of refugees in SMEs.

### **Priority 3: Employment**

As seen in the second follow-up report, several initiatives relate to the adaptation of employment legislation with a view to providing better work opportunities for young people in terms of the number and also quality of jobs. Again, some reports underlined the still critical situation of young people at work and the proposals put forward to improve it.

In Germany, collective agreements in the public sector have been signed to guarantee apprentices a permanent contract providing that they successfully complete the training and probation period.

#### *Framework conditions conducive to job creation*

Many social partners have started their national report with general remarks outlining the most important issues to be addressed from their point of view. Most of those mentioning VET and dual learning anticipate that the impact on youth employment will be substantial. However, many other aspects are reported that can play a role to provide better perspectives and opportunities for young people. Some countries have introduced schemes where financial incentives are offered to employers who hire young people (Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Netherlands, Poland). By contrast, it is not clear what kind of measures social partners themselves have put in place to determine terms of employment, including labour costs, with the aim of helping young people to enter and develop in the labour market.

In Cyprus, the social partners agree that in order to tackle the high unemployment rates it is necessary to encourage the creation of more and better jobs. Moreover, they agree that it is necessary to invest in research and development, innovation, education and training in order to create more jobs where young people can be employed.

Social dialogue can contribute to the design of effective employment schemes for young people as this was recently the case in Belgium, Poland and Sweden. Social partners can take an active role in the design and implementation of employment-related schemes involving educational components, such as in VET. But they also try to influence and, where appropriate, contribute to reforms thanks to their expertise and knowledge of labour markets practices, in line with their respective priorities. Progress is needed to increase the ownership of reforms by the social partners and overcome deadlocks that are due to opposed views on the reform path that needs to be followed. In addition, collective bargaining is an important tool as collective agreements were mentioned by the social partners in Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden.

### **Priority 4: Entrepreneurship**

More initiatives have been reported this year on entrepreneurship than in the previous reports. They mainly focus on encouraging young people to develop the right skills (business, finances, maths, digital literacy) to get an entrepreneurial mindset. This is done through the promotion of entrepreneurship education in schools and/or developing initiatives (examples: in Bulgaria,

employers are involved in a European business game project, in Germany, the *SchuleWirtschaft* offers a country-wide business planning game for secondary school students). Skills validation is an important aspect. In Austria, the Entrepreneur Skills Certificate continues to be a valued way for young people to choose self-employment and entrepreneurship. When combined with work in a junior enterprise it leads to an Entrepreneurial Skill Pass.

- *Entrepreneurial Education in Ireland*

*In Ireland, creativity and entrepreneurial capacity in students is possible by embedding entrepreneurial education across the educational system. This is key to adapt to changing patterns of work in a globalised economy, which require to upskill and reskill throughout one's life. The Government's 2014 national policy statement on Entrepreneurship in Ireland is included in the National Skills Strategy 2025 and will be further progressed in the coming months.*

*For more details, please go to the joint Irish report on page 46*

Regional, national and/or EU funding can be important drivers to foster self-employment, or to train and support future entrepreneurs (examples: in Cyprus, the Ministry of Energy, Commerce, Industry and Tourism, following social partners' position and suggestions, has been implementing the Youth Entrepreneurship and Women's Entrepreneurship schemes, in Portugal the regional business association AEC (Associação Empresarial de Cantanhede) provides entrepreneurial support, in Sweden the Swedish Jobs and Society foundation gives free start-up advice at local level).

## Chapter II – Focus on

### *Skills, first and foremost*

Equipping young people with adequate skills to facilitate entry into, as well as progress through, the labour market is an issue widely shared by social partners. This comes along with a better identification of skills needs in the labour markets and aspiration of young people. Skills training and development as well as some more targeted skills needs such as technical or digital skills are increasingly addressed by apprenticeship schemes, for example in the form of e-apprenticeship (i.e. using digital learning platforms). Specific projects aimed at increasing skills, competences and qualifications were reported in Austria, Bulgaria, Latvia and Portugal.

One focus of the education measures in Ireland is on developing a capacity for continuous learning and “learning how to learn.” A lifelong learning approach has also been identified as a priority for social partners in Croatia, Cyprus, Ireland and Latvia. Moreover, the acquisition of transversal skills is an important element of developing entrepreneurship in Bulgaria and Ireland.

### *Regional dimension*

The regional dimension plays an increasing role in several countries for education, training and employment issues. In Belgium, many competences related to youth employment and training are transferred from the national level to the regional level. The Belgium national report therefore reflects this situation with a breakdown between Flanders, Brussels-Capital and Wallonia. In Austria, the apprenticeship offices at the regional Economic Chambers are responsible for the accreditation of training companies, approval and registration of apprenticeship contracts, the organisation of apprenticeship-leave exams, awarding of the qualification as well as administration of the financial incentives for training companies. In Ireland, the Regional Skills Fora was set up to foster engagement between employers and education and training providers and enable the development of a collective understanding of the skills needs and job opportunities. A local approach to education and youth employment policies is also very strong in France, Germany, Netherlands and Sweden.

Temporary regional initiatives have been reported in Bulgaria (trade unions organised regional discussion forums and initiatives with a focus on the problems and challenges facing young people in the labour market), in the Czech Republic (employers have campaigned on a cross-country initiative to improve the image of industry and technical education among the public) and in Latvia (regional seminars on a project to support development of work based learning).

#### • *Regional Pact for Employment in Wallonia (Belgium)*

*On 29 June 2016, the social partners of Wallonia region together with the regional government signed a regional Pact for Employment for employment and training. The Pact addresses the following issues: reorganisation, simplification and rationalisation of existing employment benefits through a revision of the target groups' measures, and the creation of training places for learners in vocational education and training. It also establishes professional counselling schemes for emerging and future jobs.*

*In the Flemish region, the Regional Pact has set up a series of improved and innovative pathways in the already existing dual education system, among other measures.*

*For more details, please go to the joint Belgian report on page 17*

### *Addressing the needs of more vulnerable groups*

Social partners have reported several initiatives focused on specific groups at risk of being marginalised or being already far away from labour markets.

**Migrants.** In the Netherlands, the national youth action plan will focus on closing the skills gap between education and the labour market and pay special attention to young people without a degree, dependent on social benefits or with a migrant background. The government is investing € 7,2 million to support the matching of these vulnerable groups to suitable vacancies and also working together with five large municipalities to support migrant youth. In Sweden, as from January 2016 the target groups of the Youth Introduction agreement is broadened to also encompass newly arrived immigrants.

In Denmark, dual training is serving to the needs of marginalised youth.

#### ● *Integration of young refugees into the German labour market*

*At federal level, the “Introductory training for young people” (“Einstiegsqualifizierung”, EQ) which is an instrument providing 6- to 12-month pre-training placements in enterprises, was revised to match the rising number of young refugees. It now enables combinations of pre-training with language course which are crucial for their successful integration into the labour market. Another initiative aims to integrate up to 10,000 refugees in dual vocational education and training. The craft companies provide the apprenticeship placements while the Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the Federal Employment Agency financially support the preparatory courses. Finally, refugee guides were published to support notably SMEs with guidance and advisory services concerning the integration of refugees into apprenticeship training and into the labour market.*

*For more details, please go to the joint German report on page 42*

**Drop outs.** Young people dropping out of school and/or education is a growing issue of concern. Social partners in Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden, have explicitly mentioned this target groups. This is often the result of low or inadequate basic skills. The issue of directing young people to the right paths and anticipating possible failure is at the core of the Danish reform of VET systems as well as the Austrian supra-company-training.

### *European Funding*

Social partners have reported a number of projects and programmes co-financed by the ESF targeting young people:

- setting up a non-profit fund to be financed and managed by social partners to support VET in the construction sector (Croatia);
- allowance to the apprentices or trainees for their period of apprenticeship or traineeship (Cyprus);
- career counselling services (Finland);
- support for SMEs in recruiting young people for dual apprenticeship training and prepare companies for the training of young people from abroad (Germany);
- labour market integration of young people far from the labour market (the Netherlands);
- platform to prevent students from dropping out of upper-secondary school and reduce absenteeism (Sweden);
- regional support for apprenticeship (United Kingdom).

In addition to the ESF, social partners also reported on support activities through ERASMUS+ (Latvia), and the Polish social partners have indicated their intention to use the EU Budget Lines supporting projects in the field of social dialogue.

### *Sectoral initiatives*

The reports also highlight several sectoral targeted initiatives. In Belgium, a new generation of sectoral agreements (2016-2017) was concluded in early 2016. These sectoral agreements (34 in number) are negotiated between the sectoral social partners and the Flemish Government and are based on previous sectoral agreements. They include commitments and actions in terms of better links between education and the labour market.

The Croatian CEA-Construction Industry Association initiated the implementation of the project "Strengthening of social dialogue by establishing Paritarian Fund - SOGRADI" in 2015 co-financed from the European Social Fund. This project has been implemented with the sectoral social partners, UATUC-Trade Union of Construction Industry of Croatia and aims at promoting social dialogue and educating/informing 150 professionals (stakeholders) about values, benefits and general features of such a fund.

In Germany, in 2014 a collective agreement concluded in the local transport sector at communal level ("Demographischer Wandel im Nahverkehr") introduced the crucial importance of a sustainable personnel policy with a clear focus on vocational training for young people. Through this agreement the undersigned companies are committed to provide adequate training for young employees.

In the Netherlands, social partners have established a new financial instrument named "sector plans" which aim at strengthening the provisions of the sectoral agreements, with a considerable and positive impact on young workers. Also in the Netherlands, the Labour Foundation and the Council for Public Sector Personnel set a policy for the promotion of diversity in the related sectors.

### *Use of Internet for an efficient promotion and support*

The Internet has obviously become an essential tool to advertise measures adopted, launch promotional campaigns; or facilitate administrative procedures. In Finland questions can be sent online to the national trade unions Summer Job Helpline providing advice on matters related to summer employment. In the UK, a Digital Apprenticeship Service (an online portal) allows employers levy payers to access funding, and other businesses to find training providers and courses, along with other sources of information and support. In the Czech Republic, Facebook was used to promote best practices of schools-companies co-operation addressed to parents of children with the aim to orient them in offer of technical education. Facebook is also used in Estonia by employers to inform businesses about work based learning and internship.

# Chapter III – National evaluation reports

## Austria

### **Sources of information**

**Trade Unions:** ÖGB

**Employers:** IV, VÖWG and WKÖ

### **General remark**

Austria's unemployment rate is among the lowest in the EU and its youth unemployment rate is the fourth-lowest. A strong social partnership as well as a strong VET system including apprenticeship training support transition from education to work. About 40% of young people follow apprenticeship training in a private enterprise (about 92.400, April 2016). Besides, those young people who cannot find an apprenticeship training place in an enterprise have the possibility to follow a supra-enterprise dual education (überbetriebliche Lehrausbildung-ÜBA; about 9.700 apprentices, April 2016).

In 2013 the annual Austrian Social Partner dialogue in Bad Ischl was dedicated to "Perspectives for youth" and dealt with education, labour market, family and health. The Social partners adopted concrete implementation proposals which were partly integrated in the new government programme. Furthermore the government committed to provide the possibility for all young people to stay on in education or training until they are 18 years old in order to obtain a formal qualification. Currently a law is being prepared that also foresees the obligation of under 18 year olds to be in education or training. This requires permeability between the different education and training paths.

### **Priority 1 Learning**

#### **Apprenticeship training**

Apprenticeship training is part of the Austrian general education system. About 80% of the training time is spent within the enterprise, about 20% at vocational school. The successful completion of the apprenticeship-leave examination allows for access to further education, e.g. master craftsperson exam for a skilled craft (Meisterprüfung) and other programmes of "higher vocational education and training". Access to university studies can be acquired through taking the exam called "Berufsreifeprüfung".

Social partners have a strong influence on content and framework conditions of dual apprenticeship training: they define occupational profiles which are the basis for the curricula in vocational schools. The apprenticeship offices at the regional Economic Chambers are responsible for the accreditation of training companies, approval and registration of apprenticeship contracts, the organisation of apprenticeship-leave exams (the examination board consists of representatives of Social partners), awarding of the qualification as well as administration of the financial incentives for training companies. In case of questions or problems the apprentices can address themselves to the Chamber of Labour and/or the Trade Union. Beside the responsible Ministries the Austrian social partners consider themselves as "co-owners" of dual apprenticeship training.

One common concern for the Austrian social partners is the quality assurance of apprenticeship training: besides the "traditional" measures for quality control like accreditation of training companies, support for companies through guidelines and advice a systematic analysis of successful completion of apprenticeship-leave exams is carried out. The aim of this analysis is to improve career guidance, adaptation of job profiles, support for apprentices (e.g. coaching), establishment of training clusters, improved cooperation between enterprise and

vocational school, etc. Enterprises can get funding for taking on apprentices from specific target groups (e.g. girls in male-dominated professions), which is decided by the responsible ministries and the social partners.

### **Coaching for enterprises and their apprentices**

In case of problems which might lead to fail the apprenticeship-leave exam the apprentices and the enterprise can apply for coaching free of charge. This project started 2013 as a trial in 4 Regions and will be extended to all regions in 2015. It is organised and administered by the apprenticeship offices of the regional Economic Chambers and financed via a fund based on employers' contributions.

### **Apprenticeship training and "Matura", the school leaving certificate granting university access (Lehre mit Matura)**

Apprentices may – with the agreement of the enterprise – prepare for the Berufsreifeprüfung ("Matura") already during their apprenticeship. The training institutes of the Austrian social partners (WIFI and BFI) provide the respective preparation courses [www.lehremitmatura.at](http://www.lehremitmatura.at).

### **Priority 2 Transition**

The Austrian labour market policy already provided for a "youth guarantee" before the European Union adopted it. Austrian social partners are directly involved in developing labour market strategies. About 40% of the labour market budget is spent on active labour market measures for young people. Preventing long-term unemployment of this target group is an annual goal of the public employment service.

### **Supra-company-training (ÜBA) – training guarantee**

Young people who do not have a place in full time school based VET and who do not find an apprenticeship training place in a private enterprise can follow workshop based programmes in the framework of dual apprenticeship training ("supra-company-training"). However, the first aim is supporting the young person in finding a "regular" apprenticeship training place. The exact amount of available places is decided on an annual basis together with the regional social partners. In 2015 there were about 11.000 supra-company-training-places which cost about 151 Mio Euro that are borne by AMS, the Public Employment Service (in addition to the cost of the part-time vocational schools which are covered by the regular education budgets) and a small share, that is financed by the federal states).

### **Career Guidance Centres of the Economic Chambers and Institutes for Economic Promotion (WIFI)**

Since the end of the 1980s, the Austrian Economic Chambers and Institutes for Economic Promotion have set up a wide range of services related to educational counselling and career guidance in the federal provinces. Related services include among others information brochures, online career guidance ([www.bic.at](http://www.bic.at)), participation in trade fairs, exhibitions, etc. Regional Economic Chambers offer tests to analyse abilities and inclinations of 13-and 14-year old students (one example from Tyrol). Subsequent guidance and counselling allow the young person and his/her parents to take informed decisions on the future career path. In addition regional Economic Chambers provide activities which aim to close the gap between schools and the world of work.

### **World of work and school (ÖGB and AK)**

This project which is carried out by the Austrian Trade Union Federation and the Chamber of Labour supports young people in their preparation for the world of work. Teachers are offered a variety of materials such as guidelines, games and seminars. School classes get information and advice on different topics linked to work, like protection for young people in the workplace, labour market and skills development or career guidance for young people.

#### **Priority 4 Entrepreneurship**

##### **Entrepreneur's Skills Certificate® (Unternehmerführerschein®)**

The Entrepreneur's Skills Certificate® gives young people at school an education in finance and business; the certificate is awarded after examination, and is a valid substitute for the exam required in Austria to be self-employed. Currently the Entrepreneur's Skills Certificate® is available in 255 schools. Until now more than 45.000 certificates were issued. In combination with a successful participation in a junior enterprise the Entrepreneur's Skills Certificate® may lead to obtaining the "Entrepreneurial Skills Pass"®.

### **Sources of information**

**Trade Unions:** FGTB-ABVV, ACV-CSC, CGSLB

**Employers:** FEB-VBO, UNIZO, UCM, UNISOC

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Dans le cadre de leur programme commun 2012-2014, les partenaires sociaux européens ont adopté le 7 juin 2013, au sein du Comité du dialogue social, un cadre d'action sur l'emploi des jeunes. Un rapport de mise en œuvre est sollicité chaque année par les partenaires sociaux européens.

Les deux premiers rapports de mise en œuvre de ce cadre d'action ont été adoptés par le Conseil respectivement en date du 15 juillet 2014 (rapport n° 88) et du 5 octobre 2015 (rapport n° 94). Le présent rapport constitue le troisième rapport de suivi. Y sont reprises les principales évolutions dans les travaux des partenaires sociaux concernant la problématique de l'emploi des jeunes depuis le précédent rapport de mise en œuvre.

Comme indiqué dans les précédents rapports, la Belgique est un Etat fédéral au sein duquel les différents niveaux de pouvoir (fédéral, Régions et Communautés) sont amenés à assumer des responsabilités importantes dans des domaines de compétence liés à l'emploi et la formation des jeunes.

Compte tenu de cette structure institutionnelle, le présent rapport se propose de présenter tout d'abord les activités menées au niveau fédéral par les partenaires sociaux. La seconde partie offre un bref aperçu des activités des partenaires sociaux au niveau régional en s'appuyant sur les contributions transmises par les trois Conseils économiques et sociaux régionaux (Bruxelles, Wallonie, Flandre) dans le cadre de la préparation du présent rapport.

## **II. MISE EN OEUVRE DU CADRE D'ACTION EUROPÉEN SUR L'EMPLOI DES JEUNES**

### **A. Mise en œuvre au niveau fédéral**

#### **1. Conventions de premier emploi**

Les conventions de premier emploi visent à donner accès au marché du travail aux jeunes de moins de 26 ans en leur donnant la possibilité d'obtenir le plus vite possible après la sortie de l'école un emploi, un emploi combiné avec une formation ou encore un apprentissage, et ce auprès d'un employeur privé ou public.

En vertu de la loi du 24 décembre 1999 en vue de la promotion de l'emploi, le Conseil national du Travail est invité, conjointement avec le Conseil Central de l'Economie, à réaliser chaque année une évaluation globale des conventions de premier emploi. Cette évaluation porte avant tout sur le respect des

quotas d'engagement des jeunes de moins de 26 ans tel qu'il est prévu dans la loi, ainsi que sur la répartition des nouveaux engagements entre hommes et femmes.

Le Conseil national du Travail et le Conseil central de l'Économie ont, concomitamment au présent rapport, émis conjointement le rapport n° 98 concernant l'évaluation des conventions de premier emploi. Il ressort de cette évaluation que *l'obligation individuelle* d'occuper au moins 3 % de jeunes de moins de 26 ans est remplie à concurrence de 78, 5 % des entreprises privées de plus de 50 travailleurs (en EPT). Ceci étant, le taux d'emploi des jeunes en Belgique est plus bas que la moyenne européenne nonobstant les mesures prises pour augmenter la participation des jeunes sur le marché du travail. Cette situation est en partie le résultat de la conjoncture récente, mais la situation des jeunes faiblement qualifiés, en particulier ceux d'origine allochtone, reste précaire.

L'*objectif global* de 4 % pour l'ensemble du secteur privé a quant à lui été largement atteint sur l'ensemble de la période examinée. La part des jeunes travailleurs de moins de 26 ans occupés dans l'ensemble des entreprises du secteur privé, en pourcentage de l'effectif des entreprises de plus de 50 travailleurs au deuxième trimestre de l'année précédente, est de plus de 20 % sur la période 2005-2013.

## 2. Coordination des initiatives en matière de formation en alternance

Les Conseils ont pris, au cours des dernières années, de nombreuses initiatives pour améliorer la position des jeunes, et en particulier des jeunes faiblement qualifiés, sur le marché de l'emploi.

Partant ainsi du constat que le nombre de jeunes sortant précocement de l'école et le taux de chômage des jeunes sont préoccupants en Belgique, les partenaires sociaux belges réunis au niveau interprofessionnel ont acquis la conviction que les systèmes de formation en alternance constituent une réponse adéquate à ces difficultés d'insertion sur le marché du travail. Ils se sont dès lors engagés dans leur avis n° 1.702 du 7 octobre 2009 à élaborer un socle commun en matière de sécurité sociale et des règles minimales communes en matière de droit du travail pour ce qui concerne la formation en alternance. L'avis conjoint du Conseil national du Travail et du Conseil Central de l'Economie n° 1.770 du 25 mai 2011 vise à développer ce socle commun dans la perspective d'assurer à nouveau la sécurité juridique et la simplicité, autant pour l'employeur que pour l'apprenti, au travers d'une formation attractive et pleinement qualifiante.

Dans leur avis n°1.895 du 25 février 2014, les Conseils ont réinisté sur la nécessité de mettre en œuvre ce socle dans son entièreté. Cet appel n'a cependant pas été entendu par le gouvernement et la proposition des partenaires sociaux ne sera mise en œuvre que partiellement en raison notamment de la régionalisation, suite à la sixième réforme de l'Etat, d'une partie importante du volet droit du travail en matière de formation en alternance.

Dès lors, afin d'assurer un suivi pertinent et harmonieux des systèmes de formation en alternance développés au niveau des entités fédérées, une plate-forme de concertation avec les partenaires sociaux des entités fédérées (Régions et Communautés) a été mise en place afin d'établir un cadre interfédéral des stages et formations en entreprises pour les jeunes qui suivent des formations qualifiantes. Au sein de cette plateforme, les Conseils ont souhaité endosser un rôle

de coordination, afin d'optimiser la cohérence des politiques entre tous les niveaux de pouvoir et de mettre ainsi en place des systèmes de formations en alternance plus attractifs, car plus simples et mieux coordonnés.

### 3. Emplois-tremplins - Initiatives sectorielles

En 2015, le gouvernement a prévu l'octroi d'un financement supplémentaire pour les secteurs qui, dans le cadre des mesures en faveur des groupes à risque, fournissent un effort de 0,05% de leur masse salariale à des initiatives en faveur d'un ou plusieurs groupes suivants :

- les jeunes de moins de 26 ans qui suivent une formation ;
- les jeunes de moins de 26 ans qui étaient inoccupés au moment de leur entrée en service ou qui ont une aptitude au travail réduite.

Il revient aux secteurs de conclure des conventions collectives de travail en vue d'appliquer cette mesure. Il ressort des informations reçues que 38 secteurs ont jusqu'à présent conclu une convention collective de travail qui prévoit la création d'emplois-tremplins pour les jeunes en vue d'encourager l'emploi des jeunes de moins de 26 ans. Une liste des secteurs concernés est jointe à la présente contribution. Parmi ces secteurs, 13 projets ont répondu aux critères des emplois-tremplins.

Un rapport d'évaluation relatif aux efforts en faveur des groupes à risque doit être établi pour le 1<sup>er</sup> juillet pour les conventions collectives de travail conclues l'année précédente. Celui-ci donnera des informations plus claires quant à la création de nouveaux emplois en faveur des jeunes.

### 4. Autres initiatives

De nombreuses initiatives sont régulièrement prises par les organisations représentatives des travailleurs et des employeurs en vue de favoriser l'intégration des jeunes sur le marché du travail.

La Fédération des entreprises de Belgique a ainsi organisé plusieurs événements dans le cadre d'une campagne d'actions visant à créer des ponts entre tous les acteurs concernés pour favoriser l'insertion des jeunes sur le marché de l'emploi (politiques, enseignement, acteurs sociaux, entreprises et les jeunes). Le 1<sup>er</sup> octobre 2015, un forum intitulé « Young Talent in Action » a ainsi permis la rencontre entre ces différents acteurs. Parmi les actions réalisées en 2016, la rédaction d'un guide pratique « Young Talent@work » a pour ambition d'aider les entreprises à intégrer les jeunes travailleurs.

## B. Efforts au niveau régional

### 1. Région de Bruxelles-Capitale

Dans sa contribution, le Conseil économique et social de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale (CESRBC) a mis en évidence la signature par le

Gouvernement et les interlocuteurs sociaux bruxellois, le 16 juin 2015, de la Stratégie 2025.

Cette stratégie est structurée en deux axes, l'un purement régional et l'autre impliquant des coopérations avec les autres entités fédérées. Cette stratégie est mise en œuvre en collaboration avec le CESRBC dans le cadre de priorités partagées (pilotage et mise en œuvre en collaboration avec les interlocuteurs sociaux) ou de priorités concertées (pilotage direct du Gouvernement mais faisant l'objet d'une concertation approfondie avec les partenaires sociaux).

Font ainsi l'objet d'une priorité partagée la mise en œuvre de la Garantie jeunesse, le renforcement des politiques croisées emploi-formation, le renforcement de la formation professionnelle, le programme bruxellois pour l'enseignement et la promotion de l'emploi durable et de qualité.

Dans le cadre de cette Stratégie 2025, a été mise en place une Task force Emploi-Formation-Enseignement-Entreprises qui regroupe les acteurs politiques, publics, socio-économiques et de l'enseignement. Un groupe de travail, copiloté par les partenaires sociaux, a été mis en place au sein de cette Task force. Celui-ci porte sur les stages et formations en entreprises. Ce groupe de travail est en train d'élaborer une note d'orientation concernant les stages et formations professionnelles qui doivent être modifiés, supprimés ou créés.

Le CESRBC a par ailleurs remis, au cours d'un Sommet social extraordinaire en octobre 2015, des recommandations pour une politique efficiente des groupes cibles, et notamment des jeunes, en Région de Bruxelles-Capitale.

Le CESRBC renvoie également dans sa contribution à un certain nombre d'avis qu'il a émis récemment sur des thématiques liées à la mise en œuvre du cadre d'action européen sur l'emploi des jeunes (stages de première expérience professionnelle, Agence francophone pour l'éducation et la formation tout au long de la vie, création de l'Institut bruxellois francophone pour la Formation professionnelle, plan d'action stratégique des partenariats d'Actiris 2016-2017, Programme de Réforme de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale,...).

## 2. Région wallonne

Parmi les éléments les plus importants depuis le précédent rapport, le Conseil économique et social de Wallonie (CESW) fait part dans sa contribution de la conclusion prochaine du Pacte pour l'emploi et la formation, conformément à la Déclaration de politique régionale 2014-2019, entre le Gouvernement wallon et le Groupe des partenaires sociaux de Wallonie (GPS- W). Le gouvernement wallon et les partenaires sociaux (patrons et syndicats) ont entretemps signé ce Pacte le 29 juin 2016.

Pour ce qui concerne la thématique liée aux jeunes, ce Pacte reprend plus spécifiquement les questions suivantes :

- La réorganisation des aides à l'emploi

Cette réorganisation a pour objectif de simplifier et de rationaliser les aides à l'emploi existantes, par le biais d'une révision des mesures groupées-cibles.

- La création de places de stages pour les apprenants de la formation professionnelle et en alternance

A côté du contrat commun d'alternance, contrat d'alternance unique dans la partie francophone de Belgique, et de l'office francophone de la formation en alternance, chargé du pilotage de la formation en alternance, qui ont été tous deux mis en place le 1<sup>er</sup> septembre 2015, l'accent est mis sur le développement croissant de places de stage en entreprise.

- Le renforcement de l'orientation professionnelle tout au long de la vie

L'objectif de ce soutien à l'orientation professionnelle pour les élèves, demandeurs d'emploi et travailleurs est d'éviter l'orientation par dépit et de favoriser la transition vers des métiers porteurs, émergents et d'avenir. A cette fin, un dispositif unique et multipartenarial d'orientation tout au long de la vie structuré autour de trois Cités des métiers (Liège, Namur, Charleroi) est développé.

- Les principes fondamentaux et la méthode de création d'un contrat d'insertion pour les jeunes

Le Pacte pour l'emploi et la formation prévoit de créer un contrat d'insertion. Celui-ci vise à offrir une première expérience professionnelle aux jeunes demandeurs d'emploi de moins de 25 ans, inoccupés depuis plus de 18 mois et sans expérience de travail. Il prévoit le versement d'une aide financière incitative à l'employeur. Des modules de formation pourront accompagner le bénéficiaire du contrat d'insertion tout au long de son parcours.

### 3. Région flamande

Dans sa contribution, le « Sociaal-Economische Raad van Vlaanderen » (SERV) fait part des derniers travaux des partenaires sociaux flamands en lien avec les priorités figurant dans le cadre d'action européen en matière d'emploi des jeunes.

#### a. Groupes à risque

Suite à la 6<sup>e</sup> réforme de l'Etat, la politique des groupes à risque a été régionalisée.

Un accord sur les « principes de politique des groupes à risque » a dans ce cadre été conclu le 21 janvier 2015 au sein du SERV.

Par ailleurs, le décret flamand encadrant la politique des groupes à risque a été adopté le 18 décembre 2015. Un accord des partenaires sociaux est intervenu sur sa mise en œuvre le 9 mars 2016. Un arrêté d'exécution du 10 juin 2016 reprend partiellement cet accord. Il entre en vigueur le 1<sup>er</sup> juillet 2016.

Celui-ci prévoit une réduction forfaitaire de cotisations pendant la période de formation, ou pendant une durée de 8 trimestres pour l'engagement

de jeunes faiblement qualifiés, ainsi que pour l'engagement de jeunes moyennement qualifiés.

Le bénéfice de cette mesure n'est plus conditionné à la satisfaction par l'employeur de l'obligation de premier emploi.

b. Formation en alternance

Un système intégré de formation en alternance est en cours d'élaboration en vue d'améliorer la connexion entre l'enseignement et le marché du travail. Depuis le dernier rapport, une note conceptuelle mise à jour a été approuvée par le Gouvernement flamand le 3 juillet 2015. Y sont abordées les questions relatives à l'introduction de parcours innovants et qualifiants sur le terrain. Ces questions s'articulent autour de quatre voies interdépendantes qui doivent permettre d'affiner le concept de formation en alternance. La deuxième voie développée est le projet clé « Les bancs de l'école sur le lieu de travail » dans lequel des formations en alternance seront mises en place dans différentes écoles. Un arrêté du gouvernement flamand du 22 avril 2016 a jeté les bases de l'exécution de ce projet. Un décret sanctionnant cet arrêté a été adopté le 1<sup>er</sup> juin dernier.

Enfin, un projet de décret réglant certain aspects des formations en alternance a été adopté le 10 juin 2016, dans la perspective de préciser la composante « lieu de travail » du nouveau système de formation en alternance. Le SERV a émis un avis sur un projet d'arrêté d'exécution de ce décret le 16 juin dernier.

c. Accords sectoriels

Une nouvelle génération d'accords sectoriels (2016-2017) a été conclue au début de l'année 2016. Ces accords sectoriels (au nombre de 34) sont négociés entre les partenaires sociaux sectoriels et le Gouvernement flamand et s'inspirent des accords sectoriels précédents. Ils comprennent notamment des engagements et des actions sur le plan d'une meilleure articulation entre l'enseignement et le marché du travail.

d. Plan d'action pour les jeunes quittant prématurément l'école

Une note conceptuelle du Gouvernement flamand sur ce thème est destinée à remplacer le plan d'action de 2013 portant sur le même thème. Le SERV a émis un avis sur cette note le 28 septembre 2015, au sein duquel il a notamment exprimé sa préoccupation par rapport au nombre limité d'offres qualifiées pour les jeunes qui veulent quitter l'école sans avoir les qualifications suffisantes pour intégrer le marché du travail.

e. Participation proportionnelle à l'emploi

La politique flamande en matière de participation proportionnelle à l'emploi est en voie d'adaptation. Une note conceptuelle du Gouvernement flamand du 9 juillet 2015, qui place l'accent sur le talent et les compétences, a

fait l'objet d'un avis du SERV, le 28 septembre 2015. Dans cet avis, le SERV met l'accent sur la nécessité de réduire les seuils structurels qui empêchent l'insertion effective sur le marché du travail de groupes déterminés, et sur l'accompagnement et la sensibilisation des entreprises pour mettre en œuvre une politique de diversité comprenant une participation proportionnelle sur le marché du travail.

f. Plan d'action « ondernemend onderwijs »

Un plan d'action 2015-2019 « ondernemend onderwijs » a été approuvé par le Gouvernement flamand le 12 novembre 2015. Celui-ci vise à mettre en œuvre l'accord du Gouvernement flamand en mettant l'accent sur l'importance de l'esprit d'entreprise, en stimulant la volonté d'entreprendre des jeunes ou en créant une attitude positive par rapport à l'esprit d'entreprise par le biais de l'école, tout au long du parcours scolaire. Ce plan d'action a fait l'objet d'un avis le 15 février 2016.

g. Note conceptuelle concernant l'enseignement supérieur professionnel

Cette note conceptuelle vise à poursuivre la réalisation d'un profil solide pour l'enseignement supérieur professionnel dont la spécificité consiste à créer un lien direct entre une formation et un métier déterminé ou un ensemble de métiers. Le SERV a émis un avis sur cette note le 23 mai 2016. La préparation de la réglementation en la matière sera poursuivie en 2017.

### **Sources of information**

**Trade Unions:** PODKREPA, CITUB

**Employers:** BIA

The national policy for young people in the context of implementation of the National Plan for implementing the European Youth Guarantee (NPIEYG) requires that they are identified and activated, in order to support them to start work, involve them in training or returning to education, reach young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs) and are not registered in the labour offices, and activate them, since the beginning of 2015. In the period January - December 2015 the registered monthly average unemployed youths up to 24 years (incl.) are 21 578. Compared to 2014 they have significantly reduced - by 7167 persons. Their share in the total number of unemployed has also decreased - by 1.3 percentage points to 6.5%. The share of unemployed graduates in the period was 4.1% (compared to 5.3% in the period January-December 2014) of all unemployed university graduates registered in the labour offices and 6.5% (6.6% in 2014) of all registered youth under 24. Half of the young people under 24 are with elementary or lower education. Their share reported growth by 0.2 percentage points, to 49.9%. The share of young people under 24 without qualifications and specialty continues to grow to 65.7% of the total number of young people under 24 (having 64.4% in 2014). The share of long-term (over one year) unemployed young people up to 24 in the period January - December 2015 increased by 3.2 percentage points to 27.2%.

The social partners - trade unions and employers' organizations took an active part in the work to reduce youth unemployment mainly through:

- Enabling and promoting the integration of young people into the labor market to reduce youth unemployment;
- Informing young people about their employment rights and obligations.

### **1. Learning**

In 2015 in partnership with several universities (Technical University Sofia, Sofia University, New Bulgarian University, European Polytechnical University, and others) BIA actively participated in the activities in updating of the curriculum in higher education in accordance with the requirements of the labour market.

BIA conducted a survey on the possibilities for organizing training by working (A dual education system). The survey was conducted in parallel among employers and vocational schools and the results. The survey results will help conclusions to be drawn about the needs, attitudes and readiness for the introduction of dual training in Bulgaria.

The national structures of workers and employees' organizations - CITUB and CL "Podkrepa" actively involved in informing young people about the opportunities and services offered by employment offices as well as the rights and obligations of youth.

### **2. Transition**

The specific activities undertaken by the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria (CITUB) in 2015 to facilitate the transition of young people from education to employment are:

- A total of 20 youth awareness campaigns conducted through a Mobile information youth centre, with the participation of 4000 young people. The main objectives of the information campaigns are: promoting NPIEYG among a wide range of young people; identifying young people who are inactive, do not study and do not work and motivate them to register in the Labour Offices, in view to promote their integration in the labor market or return

to the education system. All young people who visited the Mobile information centre received free legal advice on labour issues from CITUB lawyers and a package of information materials "My First Workplace". The package includes 9 thematic leaflets available in an electronic version of <http://mfwp.labour-bg.net>;

- Participation with an information stand within the organized by the Employment Agency youth job fairs;
- Regional discussion forums and initiatives conducted with a focus on the problems and challenges facing young people in the labour market, namely:
  - Organized forums on the following topics: "The Labour Market and Young People - Challenges and Policies", "Tackling Youth Unemployment - a Step Towards Quality Jobs", "The Labour Market in the Vidin Region", "Labour Market in Montana. Youth Employment and Unemployment ", "The Labour Market and Youth Employment in Silistra", "Current Analysis of the Labour Market in Pleven", "Unemployment, Wages and Working Conditions", "Employment, Training, Income - a Challenge and a Factor for Development";
  - Regular informational meetings with young people conducted by the 27 so-called Contact Persons from the regional structures of CITUB and "Youth Forum 21st Century", presenting the NPIEYG and familiarizing young people with their basic labour and social rights.

Most of the large member-companies of BIA conduct annually Internship trainings for young (up to 29 years old). For example the Internship Academy of the Overgas has a 10-years tradition in training by individual program, personal mentor and carrier consultation for the interns when the internship is over. About 20 % of the interns stay within the company as employees.

### **3. Employment**

In 2015 again, the social partners had a concrete contribution to the actions in support of employment for young people:

- Within the project "Chance for Work" - 2015 (implemented by CITUB) 947 youths were professionally oriented and motivated. 947 youths were trained in key competence "Teamwork" and 426 young people - in the professions "Social assistant", and "Assistant-tutor in the upbringing of children". The successful graduates (youths up to 24) are 914 people, representing 96.5% of the young people initially included in the training. Considering and analyzing the results of the training and the vocational guidance, the need for a serious motivation of this target group was confirmed, in order to increase their skills, competences and qualifications for their further successful realization in the labour market. 96 psychologists and teachers worked with the young people. The training in both professions was conducted, at the specific workplace, in a real working environment. Subsequently 2/3 of the trainees remained employed in the respective childcare places.

- In the period April-May 2015, within a project of the "Youth Forum 21<sup>st</sup> C" under the Regional Programme for Employment and Training (included in the National Action Plan for Employment (NAPE) - 2015) a total of 20 people from the municipality of Smolyan were trained in part of a profession - 12 of them in part of the profession "Office manager" and the remaining 8 – training for part of vocational qualification in one of the professions "Cook". The training at the workplace and the subsequent internship was conducted in partnership with hoteliers from the town of Smolyan who hired 8 of trained youths on a permanent basis, after they finished apprenticeship. Twelve young people from the town of Ruse were trained for tailors, and after the training they were employed under labour contracts in the Markan AD company.

- Unemployed youth are one of the priority groups under the "Directions" Project (implemented by CL "Podkrepa"). In 2015, the activities under the project included 670 youths up to 29 years (of which 369 up to 24 years). Young people were involved in occupational

guidance, motivation training, courses to acquire key competences and qualifications in subsidized and unsubsidized employment.

- Under the project "From Vocational Training to Effective Employment" (implemented by BIA) there is a target group of unemployed young people under 29 (with a subgroup of young people up to 25 years, who neither study nor work). The project involved 162 young participants up to 29 years of age (121 of them up to 25 years). The project provided training in key competencies and subsidized employment for a period of three months.

- Under the project "Qualitative workforce – sustainable labour market" BIA is conducting activities for training in key competencies and professional qualification of unemployed young people under 29 years, as well with the specific target subgroup of young people under 25 years, that are NEET. The target group is 1310 unemployed, of which 520 are with guaranteed workplace after concluding the training.

#### **4. Entrepreneurship**

BIA is participating in executing a Play4Guidance project that is a European business game to train and guide students and unemployed on entrepreneurial, transversal and mathematical skills. The main aims of the project are to boost entrepreneurial culture in young Europeans; to put in close contact the world of education/training with the world of work, in order to update students' curricula to companies' real needs] to get young Europeans ready to create new businesses to reduce EU unemployment; to identify the greatest common denominators of math, economic, transversal entrepreneurial and digital skills among target groups and target Countries (Bulgaria, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Ireland and Germany).

### **Sources of information**

**Trade Unions:** Union of Autonomous Trade Unions of Croatia (UATUC) and Independent Trade Unions of Croatia (ITUC)

**Employers:** Croatian Employers' Association (CEA)

### **Background information**

The problem of high inactivity is compounded by high unemployment; the low utilisation of the labour potential holds back growth. Unemployment rates are particularly high among young people and the low-skilled. In conjunction with the pickup in economic activity, the youth unemployment rate (45.5%) the Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) rate (19.3%) and the long-term youth unemployment rate (22.6%) have all started slightly decreasing, after the peak reached in 2013. Nevertheless, all indicators are still among the highest in the EU and well above their pre-crisis levels.

The 2013 and 2014 labour market reforms have significantly extended labour market flexibility. The Labour Act was extensively amended in 2013 and 2014, to extend the use of fixed-term contracts, simplify procedures for individual and collective dismissals, facilitate the use of flexible working-time arrangements and flexible types of employment (e.g. part-time and work via temporary agencies) These changes were largely driven by the government, followed by the consultations with the social partners who tried to influence policy makers in relation to educational and labour policy.

Youth unemployment still remains a key concern, due to weaknesses in the education system, and there is still room to improve the effectiveness, monitoring and evaluation of the Youth Guarantee, but also participation in lifelong learning and other support measures.

## **1. Learning**

### **Sectoral Councils**

During 2014, the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports started with the establishment of sectoral councils, in accordance with the Croatian Qualifications Framework Law (CROQF). Inaugural sessions of the majority of sector councils were held during 2015. Sectoral councils are advisory and professional bodies ensuring the development of human potential in line with labour market needs within respective sectors. Their main role is to conduct evaluation for occupational standards, qualifications standards and learning outcomes that are proposed for the CROOF Register on which educational programs will be based upon, and analyse existing and necessary competencies within sectors and sub-sectors. Accordingly, sector councils are the backbone of the CROQF, and their recommendations affect the economic development of the Croatian economy. Furthermore, sectoral councils are responsible for the sector development and providing recommendations to relevant ministries and the National Council for HR Development. Members of the Sector Councils are experts familiar with the development and implementation of the CROQF and evaluation procedures, following the European, national and sectoral development and strategic documents, including representatives of the social partners.

According to the Law, 25 sectoral councils should be established: Agriculture, food and veterinary medicine, Forestry and wood technology, Mining, geology and chemical technology, Textiles and leather, Graphic technology, Mechanical engineering, shipbuilding and metallurgy, Electrical engineering and computing, Construction and geodesy, Economy and trade, Tourism and hospitality, Transport and logistics, Health, Personal and other services, Art, Mathematics, physics, geography, geophysics, chemistry and biology, Basic technical

sciences, Aviation, rocket and space technology, Information and communication, Law, political science, sociology, state administration and public affairs, Psychology, educational rehabilitation, speech pathology and social work, Education and sports,. Philosophy, theology and religion sciences, History, art science, archaeology, ethnology and anthropology, Security and defence, Philology.

**Good practice examples of joint initiatives of social partners** are SOGRADI Project in the construction sector (in order to establish Paritarian Fund for financing education and health and safety at work, and CEMEKO – Centre for competences in the metal industry.

The CEA-Construction Industry Association initiated the implementation of the project "Strengthening of social dialogue by establishing Paritarian Fund - SOGRADI" in 2015 co-financed from the European Social Fund. The project has been implemented with the sectoral social partners, UATUC-Trade Union of Construction Industry of Croatia. The project aims to promote social dialogue by establishing a paritarian fund for the construction sector and educate/inform 150 professionals (stakeholders) about values, benefits and general features of such a fund. Paritarian fund is a non-profit fund established, financed and managed by the social partners. Through the project, a proposal for the model applicable for Croatia has been developed, and among others, it encompasses sectoral vocational education and training and training for health and safety at work. The social partners in the construction sector would finance and carry out additional training of construction workers through the paritarian fund, in accordance with the possibilities and needs of work, in order to acquire qualifications for the current and future jobs. Workers will be trained for safety at work, before starting work, upon introducing changes in the work procedures or new work equipment or its changes, new technologies, posting of worker to new jobs or new work places, determining health injuries caused by dangers and hazards at workplace. The final project outcome is increased general awareness about paritarian funds and their benefits and developed fund model for Croatian situation that integrates good international practice and legislative guidelines and detailed financial and cost/benefit analysis at the national level.

CEMEKO - Centre for competences in the metal sector is acting as intermediary in the implementation of lifelong learning in the metal sector and development of instruments to support social dialogue and collective bargaining at the company level. The first phase of the project was funded by the Dutch Metal Sector Council within the framework of the "Striking deals" project initiated in 2014, upon signing of the letter of intent on cooperation by the Croatian Employers' Association, UATUC-Metalworkers' Trade Union of Croatia-Industrial Trade Union, Ministry of Labour and Pension System and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports. The need for additional training of the existing workforce, lack of skilled workers in the labour market and lack of recognition of prior learning (formal and informal) were identified as key challenges. From 2014 on, several workshops were implemented in the cities of Zagreb, Slavonski Brod and Rijeka with representatives of employers and trade union. CEMEKO was founded and registered as an association in 2015 (founders being Croatian Employers' Association,, Metalworkers' Trade Union of Croatia-Industrial Trade Union, Uljanik company and Duro Dakovic company). First pilot trainings are planned for Uljanik company workers in the fall of 2016. The social partners have agreed to cooperate with educational institutions and to develop joint lifelong learning projects to be co-financed from the European Social Fund.

## **2. Transition**

### **Youth Guarantee**

In Croatia, the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan was adopted in April 2014, which focuses on early intervention and activation measures, including prevention of early school leaving and activation support to the inactive youth. In addition, labour market integration measures are envisaged, such as strengthening job creation, encouraging employers to offer

quality traineeships and apprenticeships and encouraging youth entrepreneurship. A series of measures targeted to young people were promoted which include, among others, new communication methods with clients in the HR Employment Services in a more individualised way, establishment of Career Guidance Centres for delivery of tailor made career guidance and other support services and the promotion of work-based training in vocational education. Newly introduced measures foresaw criteria for traineeships, a relief from mandatory contributions when hiring young people on permanent contracts, the setting-up of a NEET tracking system, curriculum and apprenticeships reform and the further promotion of work-based training. The Council for Implementation of the YG was established in September 2014 to implement and monitor the YGIP and social partners have representatives in that Council. LMP measures providing young people with work experience have been at the forefront. The main measure, “occupational training without commencing employment”- funds work experience and is aimed at improving school-to-work transitions.

### **Occupational training without commencing employment**

This is one of the measures from the Law on stimulation of employment (2012) and the package of employment measures of the Croatian Employment Service (CES). The measure refers (mainly but not only) to young people with-no work experience in profession they were educated for, who thus gain work experience as the first condition to increase their competitiveness in the labour market. After a year of implementation of this measure, it has been accompanied by another one: if the person has been employed after he or she finished practical education, CES was paying 50% of his or her wage. The measure was successful, particularly during 2014 and 2015 when it resulted in an increase of employment of the target group, even by 45% in 2015. Trade unions were not supportive of this measure because they consider it has allowed employers to hire young highly educated persons who got less than a minimum wage (particularly in public sector). A total of 32,493 persons participated in it, which is double than planned, with funds of 732,494,463.00 HRK spent for the implementation of the measure in the public and private sector.

## **3. Employment**

### **Tax relief from mandatory contributions when hiring young people on permanent contracts**

Amendments to the Act on Contributions that entered into force on January 1, 2015, enabled tax relief for employers i.e. exemption from paying social contributions (17.2 % of the gross salary) for five years for employing a young person (up to 30 years of age) under a permanent contract. The same rule applies to employers that provide permanent employment to young persons already having fixed-term contracts. It is estimated that around 31,000 young people have been employed on, being well above the initial target of 12,500.

## **4. Entrepreneurship**

### **The establishment of a simple private limited liability company**

With the entry into force of the Law on Amendments to the Companies Act, through the e-Company electronic service, an establishment of a simple limited liability company was enabled with a founding capital of 10 HRK from any notary or hitro.hr service office on any of the Commercial Courts, within 24 hours a day for 7 days a week. Once the court receives the electronic application for the establishment of a company, the deadline for adopting a decision is 24 hours. Introduction of the possibility of setting up the company for 10 HRK is considered as incentive for starting business, especially for those entrepreneurs who do not have the financial capital, but knowledge and ideas, and the population of young people is the most commonly present in this category. About 15,000 companies were established during one year.

### **Starting a Pilot Project for Implementation of Standard Cost Model (SCM)**

With respect to the obligations in the scope of participation within the European semester, Government of Croatia has adopted a Decision on selection of SCM methodology for the implementation of a pilot project. Ministry of Economy has started implementation of Standard Cost Model (SCM) methodology for regulations in the scope of Trade Act and Real Estate Brokerage Act. The aim is to reduce the burden of regulation and administration for the economy as it is one of the key links for creating the conditions for competitiveness and growth of the EU internal market. Responsible bodies for the enforcement of the pilot project are Ministry of Economy and Agency for Investments and Competitiveness. SCM methodology is globally most widespread tool for administrative burden calculation which business sector has based on different legal and procedural obligations. Savings resulting from the measurement and subsequent abolition of specific costs will create new value for reinvestment for the business sector. The process is carried out through the identification of individual obligations of a company for the supply of information, execution of administrative procedures and payment of fees without taxes. Costs of working hours and wages are measured to the extent used to fulfil administrative obligations and procedures towards the state, as well as cost of purchase of related equipment. The purpose of the application of SCM methodology is to increase the time and money doing business in the market, in order to achieve higher productivity, employment, return on invested capital and profits (which reduces as administrative and regulatory repression is higher). The first pilot implementation of this method in Croatia was started in 2014 for 2 areas - trade and real estate, and in 2015 the state expanded the application of this method to 7 new areas – opening simple Ltd., crafts, safety at work, sanitary and health conditions, energy efficiency in construction, trade and real estate business. By using the SCM the administrative burden in 7 regulatory areas has been measured to 5.5 billion HRK, i.e. the value of about 1.6% of GDP. Initiated measures for administrative relief of 45% are estimated to bringing savings to the economy of 2.5 billion HRK, and the value of about 0.7% of GDP by the end of 2016. Some of the results of applying the SCM methodology are possibility of electronic establishing of a company without a public notary and with 50% lower costs and electronic establishment of a craft by e-Citizens service.

### **Support for Self-employment**

This is an employment measure of the Croatian Employment Service for self-employment of unemployed persons with a developed business plan to support the opening and operation of businesses. The interest was very high and there were 4,885 users of this measure in 2015. Support for self-employment is in line with Commission Regulation (EC) 1407/2013 on De minimis aid. Funds used for the implementation of this measure in 2015 amounted to 69,111,619 HRK. This measure represents the lowest cost as to its effect, indicating that it is necessary to spend a bit more than 50,000 HRK in order to achieve retention of one person in employment.

Support for self-employment of the unemployed persons relates to those expressing interest in self-employment, and at the same time they receive professional assistance and all relevant information on activities related to the realisation of entrepreneurial ideas in one place. Grants are awarded in the amount of 50% of annual labour cost of the person starting up own business. The largest number of participants (32%) considers that without the support received business would not be possible, 21% sees the support as a substantial help in starting business, and 22% consider it to be of considerable assistance. The measure was practically used: the largest number of users (74%) continued with the same or increased business volume after its expiry (39% continued with the same volume of business, 35% continued with the increased business volume, while 14% continued with reduced business volume). A large number of users highlighted the lack of business skills and specific job skills as major obstacles to a more successful commercialization of business ideas.

### **Sources of information**

**Trade Unions:** SEK, DEOK

**Employers:** OEB

The social partners organizations in Cyprus that are members and actively participate to the Employer and Workers organizations at the European level, i.e. the Cyprus Employers & Industrialists Federation (OEB), the Cyprus Workers Confederation (SEK) and the Democratic Labour Federation of Cyprus (DEOK), are jointly submitting the following report with regards to the Framework of Actions on Youth Employment.

It is noted that the Third Follow-Up Report is similar to the Second Follow-Up Report, in view of the fact that no major developments have been taken place since the submission of the previous report. Nevertheless, the policies and actions undertaken by the government and the social partners' organizations continue to be implemented.

### **1. Learning**

The social partners agree that education is key for learning and obtaining skills and competences.

Although in Cyprus the percentage of young people dropping out of school or vocational education is relatively low, the social partners agree that there is a need in reforming education and training curricula, with social partner involvement in a way that education will be responsive to labor market's needs, therefore reducing the skills mismatch that we observe today.

The Ministry of Education and Culture in association with the Ministry of Labour, Welfare & Social Insurance and the social partners' contribution are taking step towards establishing a dual learning system, where a significant part of education takes place in an enterprise in order for the students to acquire technical skills and increase their employability. This system will be tailored in a way that will reform the current educational system, while taking into consideration the labor market needs.

Moreover, the aforementioned Ministries along with the social partners' direct involvement are taking steps towards promoting apprenticeship systems and traineeships. Towards this end, the Human Resource and Development Authority of Cyprus (HRDA), which operates under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare & Social Insurance, has designed and currently implements various Schemes, co-funded by the European Social Fund, by which an allowance is provided to the apprentices or trainees for their period of apprenticeship or traineeship.

### **2. Transition**

With the current economic crisis, labor market transitions, (i.e. periods between the exit from the education system and entry into the labor market, as well as between different jobs) has become an important matter for the Cyprus economy and society. It is noted that the rate of youth unemployment in Cyprus in 2015 was 32,8% (2014:35,9%, 2013:38,9%, 2012:27,7%), which constitutes the fifth highest rate in the Eurozone (it was the fourth highest rate in the

Eurozone in 2014)<sup>3</sup>. The targeted measures taken to tackle youth unemployment prove that there is a slow but steady decrease of youth unemployment for the last three years.

In order to facilitate transition, the Human Resource and Development Authority of Cyprus (HRDA) in association with the social partners has designed and currently implements various Schemes, co-funded by the European Social Fund, to limit the period where the job-seekers remain outside the labor market and at the same time to utilize that period by providing training to them, thus increasing their employability.

During the period of training, an allowance is provided to the young job-seekers and the unemployed persons for their period of training.

Moreover, the Ministry of Labour, Welfare & Social Insurance in association with the Ministry of Education and Culture are working towards establishing a better guidance and information for young students and unemployed persons in general.

The objective is to create more efficient and effective tailored career services focusing on employability while strengthening the links between secondary and higher education, vocational training and labor market needs.

The social partners' role in this area is to promote jobs of high value in the near future (e.g. green economy, health, industry etc) by informing their members and wider public through awareness-raising campaigns and other initiatives.

Moreover, the social partners contribute to government's actions in implementing youth guarantee schemes (designing, implementing and assessing the effectiveness of these policies).

In the long-term, the social partners are working with their members in promoting a lifelong learning culture, a necessary means to further develop the skills and employability of the human capital and the competitiveness of enterprises and the economy.

### **3. Employment**

The extensive economic crisis had a direct impact on employment in Cyprus. Moreover, the Eurogroup's decision of March 15, 2013 for the "bail-in" of deposits deteriorated the access to finance and cash flows shortages that Cypriot companies were already facing. As a result, unemployment rates increased (2014:16,1%, 2013:15,9%, 2012:11,9%)<sup>4</sup> undermining the efforts made towards decreasing the high unemployment rates, especially among the youth.

However, for the first time since the "bail-in" there has been a decrease of unemployment (2015:15,1%) which is largely attributed to the measures and policies adopted with the involvement of the social partner organizations.

The social partners agree that in order to tackle the high unemployment rates is necessary to encourage entrepreneurship and the creation of more and better jobs. Moreover, they agree that it is necessary to invest in research and development, innovation, education and training in order to create more jobs, where young people can be employed.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&pcode=tipslm80&language=en>

<sup>4</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&pcode=tesem120&language=en>

Following social partners' positions that have been repeatedly expressed through the social dialogue with the government addressing the matter of creating more and better jobs, the HRDA, in association with the social partners has designed and currently implements various Schemes, co-funded by the European Social Fund, offering incentives to private enterprises to employ and train unemployed persons. It is noted that specific Schemes have been implemented targeting young unemployed persons (university graduates, high school graduates, early school leavers etc).

Furthermore, Cyprus has concluded a three-year National Youth Employment Action Plan (2014-2016) within the framework of the Youth Guarantee Program, which is partially funded by the European Commission and is aiming in helping all unemployed people under 25 to find employment, continue education, an apprenticeship or traineeship within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. It is noted that Cyprus has received technical support and assistance from the International Labor Organization (ILO) in drafting the National Youth Employment Action Plan. In the process of drafting the Plan, and as part of the ongoing social dialogue, the social partners actively participated by submitting their views and suggestions on what actions should be taken.

The Department of Labor, of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare & Social Insurance, is the government authority that coordinates the implementation of a series of actions and Schemes focusing on public employment service capacity building, vocational education and training reforms.

#### **4. Entrepreneurship**

Despite the measures taken towards training and employing young persons, the social partners agree that promoting entrepreneurial thinking and skills can have a positive impact on the employability of young people as well as in creating more and better jobs.

Towards this end, the Ministry of Education and Culture is currently planning the introduction of new courses in general and vocational education that will help new graduates in setting-up their own business.

Moreover, the Ministry of Energy, Commerce, Industry and Tourism, following social partners' positions and suggestions has been implementing the "Youth Entrepreneurship" and "Women's Entrepreneurship" Schemes, co-funded by the Structural Funds, the Cohesion Fund and the Youth Employment Initiative. With the support of these Schemes, the government aims in encouraging the two groups (youth and women) in setting-up their own business following a process of a business plan submission, mentoring etc, and create new jobs.

## Czech Republic

### **Sources of information**

**Trade Unions:** CMKOS

**Employers:** SP

The economy has recovered in the concerned period heading to full employment. The policies has been focusing on skills development in the context of technical education promotion and young unemployed not engaged in formal education in order to be offered options of quality employment or returning to education. The social partners have been actively involved in raising youth employment and pushed for a number of activities and recommendations of the Framework of Actions to the National Reform Programmes 2015 and 2016. The Operational Programmes “*Employment*” and “*Research, Development and Education*” are used as the most effective tools for the national labour market policy and modernization of the education system (e.g. project “*Překvap*” aiming at creation of a permanent system of forecasting of labour market trends and regular processing of projection of the skill needs and sector studies).

The SP continued in realization of the “*Year of Industry and Technical Education 2015*” launched on 15 January 2015 - a cross-country initiative to improve the image of industry and technical education among public. The campaign was run under the auspices of the Prime Minister and joined by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS), the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MoIT), the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) and the Ministry of Culture. It brought together more than 150 stakeholders – branch associations, companies, schools, universities, government agencies (the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic, CzechInvest, the National Institute for Education and the National Institute for Further Education), regional governments and many other subjects including museums. General partner of the campaign was Depositum Bonum Foundation of Česká spořitelna, a.s. of the Erste Bank Group. The campaign addressed all the four priorities of the Framework of Actions on Youth Employment at national, regional, sector and individual companies’ levels. It advocated for systemic changes in education and research, development and innovation in order to have a beneficial effect on employment in industry and improvement of quality of education at all levels. During the year more than 400 activities were organized including high-level debates on various aspects of education (technical education, quality and relevance of education, financing, co-operation, motivation of youth, innovation), open days with industry in regions, more than 30 seminars and workshops on education, labour market and innovations in the context of Industry 4.0 attended in total by more than 3,000 people. The initiative covered also quizzes for students and more than 30 business, technical, students’ and innovation competitions. The SP cooperated with organizers of trade fairs on education, labour market and industry. The Year supported co-operation between companies and schools and outcomes of the project “*POSPOLU*” (“*TOGETHER*”, <http://www.nuv.cz/pospolu>) closed on 31 October 2015. More than 50 regional meetings of schools, companies and regional governments were held in regions. More than 40 educational excursions to companies, 60 open days in schools and companies and attendance of university students at trade fairs were supported. In October the SP organized the first year of “*BUSINESS School*” ([www.proudly.cz](http://www.proudly.cz)) with the aim to link up young job seekers with future employers across industries and to develop ideas to improve the current situation in the country in a dialogue between talented youth and business professionals and Government members. The SP held several surveys on the perception of education in society, parents’ attitudes towards industry and technical branches and education, on opinions of managers active in the Czech Republic and absorption capacity of companies for traineeships/internships. The year was closed by final conference taking place in Prague on 3 December 2015 attended by ministers and members of the Government where an electronic “*Almanac of Technical Education*” presenting almost 500 secondary schools of vocational education and more than 70 best practices of schools-

companies co-operation addressed to parents of children with the aim to orient them in offer of technical education. All the information on key industries, technical education opportunities in the Czech Republic, best practices, already realized systemic changes and leisure activities are concentrated on [www.rokprumyslu.eu](http://www.rokprumyslu.eu). The activities were given publicity in Czech media (7,000 contributions) and Facebook (reaching more than 500,000 people).

During the Year the following changes were pushed through: compulsory entrance exams in Czech language and mathematics from 2017, compulsory A-levels exams in mathematics from 2021, model contracts between apprentice and company, participation of employers in universities boards, new way of accrediting subjects of study at universities (possibility for employers to comment on the records in school register), long-term plan of education 2015-2020, and introduction of the POSPOLU project recommendations in legislation. In October 2015 the SP presented its positions on creativity, mobility and entrepreneurship in vocational education and training at the round table of the National Convent on the EU. In 2016 the pressure has been put on systemic changes of education to considerably support technical education in order to lower shortage of technically skilled labour.

During the Year the SP co-operated intensively with the CMKOS on the project *“Sector Agreements as a Tool of the Social Dialogue in Addressing Long-term Issues in the Area of Human Resources Development”* that resulted in signing of the National Agreement, 8 sector agreements and 13 regional sector agreements where 2,500 company representatives and other stakeholders are engaged.

Many of the activities started have been continuing including reviving of the Forum of Industry and Universities – a platform to discuss education, science and research and further development of co-operation between the highest representatives of the technical universities and industry companies. The baton of the Year of Industry and Technical Education was taken by the the Association of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises and Crafts of the Czech Republic (AMSP, SP member) that launched *“Year of Crafts 2016”* covering 23 craft guilds and associations and 35 professions and aiming to increase prestige of crafts and bring them closer to the young people. The campaign covers activities in regions, meeting of craft guilds and associations with the Government, legislative goals linked to partial modification of the Trade Act including compulsory shop classes at schools and master exams and preparation of TV series on crafts. ([www.amsp.cz](http://www.amsp.cz)) The AMSP at the same time is partner to an international project *“Strengthening the SMEs’ professional contacts in the field of dual training in the V4 countries”*, promoting more intensive exchange of apprentices and young workers between the V4 countries. (<http://www.amsp.cz/strengthening-the-smes-professional-contacts-in-the-field-of>).

The SP actively participated in BusinessEurope, UEAPME and CEEP project *“The cost-effectiveness of apprenticeship schemes”*, attended the final joint conference of the European Social Partners *“Towards a shared vision of apprenticeships”* held in Brussels on 26 - 27 May 2016 and supports the *Joint Statement of the ESP of 30 May 2016*.

During 2015 the project *“Work Placement for Young People Under 30 Years”* was completed. In 2016 follow-up projects were launched within the Youth Guarantee Implementation Programme of the OP Employment aimed at testing innovative measures of the Active Employment Policy, including trial work placements, internships abroad and returning to education.

The Framework of Actions helped intensify negotiations and co-operation of employers with the Government and supported co-operation between companies and schools in implementation and development of dual-learning principles and make it possible to finance a broad range of activities. The attention of the SP has focused on the long-term measures in

the context of the future industry qualification needs. Putting less emphasis on the inclusivity of education in the Czech Republic would be good for increasing quality of learning outcomes.

## Denmark

### **Sources of information**

**Trade Unions:** LO-D

**Employers:** DA

#### **1. Reform of upper secondary education (gymnsiereform) (Transition)**

- In June 2016 the Government and a number of political parties agreed on a reform of the upper secondary education.
- One of the aims is to challenge what types of education young people choose after finishing primary and lower secondary. VET and a technical upper secondary education should be the first choice for more young people.

#### **2. Implementation of the reform of VET in Denmark (Learning)**

- The reform was adopted in spring 2014 after a hearing process involving the social partners
- The reform commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2015 and is thus soon through its first year.
- In September 2015 a status on the initiatives in the reform was conducted.
- Against this background the parties behind the agreement agreed on a number of adjustments of the reform.

#### **3. Positive results of the reform so far**

- Drop-out rate for students coming directly from primary school has dropped significantly in the first year
- Most teachers and trainers estimate that the students entering the vocational schools after the reform have better qualification and motivation than before the reform
- So far the Danish VET-system has not succeeded in drawing more students to the vocational educations. It is expected, that the reform of the secondary education system will encourage more young students to apply for the VET-programmes.
- Except for minor alterations the reform of the VET-system is still in its beginning and it is too early to evaluate the outcome of this very ambitious reform.

## Estonia

### **Sources of information**

**Trade Unions:** EAKL

**Employers:** Estonian Employers' Confederation

### **Actions taken to follow-up the four priorities of the framework of actions:**

#### **Learning**

Estonian Employers' Confederation and Estonian Trade Union Confederation are represented in the thematic working groups or are consulted on the results of the working groups on education in Ministry of Education and Research and Foundation Innove and others (f.e. The Education Act; workplace based learning; The Lifelong Learning Strategy<sup>5</sup>), also both organisations take part in the work of The Estonian Qualifications Authority (Kutsekoda<sup>6</sup>) in the monitoring and evaluation of vocational education and training (VET) to ensure smooth transitions from education to further training and/or work within quality regulatory frameworks at national level. Kutsekoda is developing a support structure for occupational qualifications system in order to increase the competitiveness of Estonian employees and promote the development, assessment, recognition and comparison of their occupational competence.

**System of labour market monitoring and future skills forecasting OSKA<sup>7</sup>.** For improving the connection between education and the labour market, a system of labour market monitoring and future skills forecasting (OSKA) will provide skills needs projections by sector for the labour market. OSKA analyses the needs for labour and skills necessary for Estonia's economic development over the next 10 years. Estonian Employers' Confederation and Trade Union Confederation are members of the OSKA Coordination Council.

#### ***Improving the image of vocational education; systematic development of work practices system at all levels of education; expanding apprenticeship training;***

- Estonian Employers' Confederation is the Partner Organization of the Ministry of Education and Research and Foundation Innove in the project to inform employers about work based learning and internship. To support the launch of workplace-based learning and contribute to its widespread implementation, informing the public as well employers of the related opportunities has Estonian Employers' Confederation worked out an apprenticeship and internships promotion concept and program of action. For example:
  - The Estonian Employers' Confederation has worked out principles for the annual awards for best apprenticeship trainings and work based learning enterprises. First time the best enterprises were announced in March 2016.
  - The (s)election of the best apprentice or/and trainee in the sector recognises the good employees involved in a workplace-based learning, but which can also draw attention to the employers who recruited the apprentices and contributed to their training(s). Facebook page is created: <https://www.facebook.com/PraktikCumLaude/>
  - The year 2017 will be called and celebrated in Estonia as the Year of Skills (in cooperation with the Ministry of Education).

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.hm.ee/en/estonian-lifelong-learning-strategy-2020>

<sup>6</sup> <http://kutsekoda.ee/en/index>

<sup>7</sup> <http://oska.kutsekoda.ee/en/>

- Study visits for teachers and parents of the lower secondary school pupils to the enterprises/companies.
- Job Shadow Day for the International Students (to make contacts for future internship and career).
- Estonian Employers' Confederation has in cooperation with Foundation InnoVe, representatives from the Ministry of Education and Research, vocational schools and professionals described the apprenticeships training scenarios within the framework, identified the obstacles and provided solutions, developed recommendations for future (amendments to legislative acts, instructional materials etc.).
- Estonian Trade Union Confederation (EAKL) has been consulted with and has given an opinion in the process of apprenticeships' program development but EAKL was not invited to participate in the governance of apprenticeship systems.
- EAKL has promoted the ETUC proposal "A European Quality Framework for Apprenticeships" from 2014 and will do the same with the new one. EAKL and its member trade unions promote education which better meets labour market and young people's needs by taking part in the Sector skills councils. They are founded in the most important occupational fields for Estonia – expert bodies that pool specialists in a specific field of activities. These bodies will monitor, analyse, and project future labour market developments and the situation of initial and in-service education. They will also be partners for the Ministry of Education and Research in deciding on the relevance of the contents of the qualifications in a certain field, as well as in informing society about development directions in their field.

***Estonian Employers' Confederation implements The Project „Developing Apprenticeship: In-Company Trainer Training and Apprenticeship Promotion“<sup>8</sup>.*** In-Company Trainer Training Programme's purpose is to equip In-Company Trainers with knowledge on how to most effectively train apprentices. The Programme will be developed by a mutual cooperation between Latvian, Estonian and Lithuanian partners in a close cooperation with expertise donors AID (Belgium) and TTS (Finland). Project period: 01.09.2015-31.08.2017

## **Employment**

***Estonian Employers' Confederation and Estonian Trade Union Confederation with their respective representatives take part in the management of Estonian Unemployment Foundation.*** We have been participating in the development of services provided for young people by the Estonian Unemployment Foundation. There are services like My first job <https://www.tootukassa.ee/eng/content/services/my-first-job> and apprenticeships <https://www.tootukassa.ee/eng/content/services/apprenticeships>, which can be named as designed for young people, but also all others are available for them too.

***Estonian Employers' Confederation is represented in the working group for Youth Guarantee*** in Ministry of Social Affairs and has been participating in the development of [Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan](#).

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.employers.ee/meist/projektid-2/>

## Finland

### **Sources of information**

**Trade Unions:** Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK), Finnish Confederation of Professionals (STTK), Confederation of Unions for Professional and Managerial Staff (Akava)

**Employers:** Confederation of Finnish Industries EK, Federation of Finnish Enterprises, Commission for local Authorities Employers, Office for the Government as Employer

### **YOUTH GUARANTEE**

Social partners in Finland were part of the old government's Youth Employment Guarantee – committee on 2011-2015; designing, implementing and evaluating the Youth Guarantee.

Social partners influenced strongly to the continuation of the national program as a one of the key schemes in the new government's program in spring 2015, but it didn't have effects. The new government wants to lead the Youth guarantee towards the community guarantee. The national budget for Youth guarantee turned from yearly 60 million (+over 50 million to education) to 10 million for four years. Government launched new committee for the Youth community guarantee in spring 2016 – social partners are not involved anymore.

Youth focus is now in the Counselling and Guidance offices (Ohjaamo), which provides a low level career counselling services that are easily accessible for young people. They will have information and advice about different alternatives of education and work life and counselling for their future plans. Offices emphasise individual counselling and individual support. It is funded with ESF support and community budget. Social partners are in the steering group in a national level.

### **EDUCATION**

Reforming the Finnish vocational education system is one of the government's top priorities. Government will renew legislation, funding system, guidance system, learning in the workplaces and qualification system. Reform is supposed to take place in 2018. Next year there will be substantial cuts in financing vocational education as government decided in its program in spring 2015. 190 million euros will be cut – it is over 10 % from the total amount of public spending in vocational education.

Though the cuts towards the education system are relatively high, are social partners involved in the reform and their expertise is used at the national level working groups. The key challenge is now to keep the popularity of VET as high as it is nowadays; over half of the youth choose VET as number one choice after comprehensive school.

### **EXAMPLES OF SPECIFIC CAMPAIGNS**

The national labour confederations (SAK, STTK and Akava) provides Summer Job Helpline which offers advice on matters related to summer employment. The service is available to young people, their parents and employers. Calls are toll-

free and written questions may also be sent through internet. The service has responded to hundreds of enquiries every summer.

<http://www.kesaduunari.fi/english/>

Akava organizes annually a competition called "Finland's best employer for the summer". Its aim is to raise amount of summer jobs for the youth and award those employers that honor their young employees and the common rules of the working-life. <http://www.akava.fi/paraskesatyonantaja>

Encouraged by the central confederations (employees and employers), several sectors have agreed to participate in a summer job program for school pupils. It offers a possibility to employ a pupil for two weeks during holiday for a fixed pay of 335-345 euros. It is estimated some 20 000 pupils are employed yearly in this program. <http://kunkoululoppuu.fi/kesatyo/tutustu-tyoelamaan-hae-kesatoihin/>

The business and enterprise organizations have successfully activated their member companies to hire schoolchildren and students during their summer holidays. In addition to former activities there is a new campaign focusing on the employment of highly-educated internationals in Finland, organized by the Confederation of Finnish Industries, Sitra, Team Finland, Finpro, Amcham Finland and Me2we. <http://www.findwork.fi>

There is also an awareness raising campaign and competition for employers: Responsible Summer Job 2016. It is a jointly organized by T-Media, Economic Information Office TAT, Sonera, Nokia, Raha-automaattiyhdistys RAY and Oikotie. Its aim is to challenge employers to offer young people more and better quality summer jobs. The campaign also raises awareness on the importance of summer jobs and early job experiences. <http://www.kesaduuni.org/etusivuv2/a-campaign-to-promote-a-responsible-attitude-towards-summer-jobs/>

As an employer, the State is seeking to promote youth employment through cooperation with universities and universities of applied sciences, and by recruiting university trainees. Office for the Government as Employer sends a letter to the State bureaus yearly in which it calls on the bureaus to offer appropriate internships for students.

Local Government Employers, KT offer traditionally numerous summer jobs for youth, in 2014 KT participated in a national summer job -campaign and this activity continues 2016 thorough Kuntarekry Oy.

## Germany

### Sources of information

**Trade Unions:** DGB

**Employers:** BDA, BVOD, ZDH

### 1. Learning

**Alliance for Initial and Further Training 2015-2018:** The "Alliance for Initial and Further Training 2015-2018" has been concluded between the Federal Government, the central German business organisations, the Confederation of German Trade Unions, the Federal Employment Agency and the Federal States in December 2014. The initial aim of the alliance is to prepare young people better for their occupation and the world of work, to give everyone a chance to obtain in-company training, to improve the attractiveness and the quality of dual vocational training and to strengthen advanced vocational training. The alliance is the further development of "The training pact – National Pact for Career Training and Skilled Manpower Development in Germany" (2004-2014). As members of the steering committee, the social partners actively shape the implementation and future direction of the "Alliance for Initial and Further Training". Regional member organisations have signed corresponding agreements and thereby contribute to realising the Alliance's aims at the regional level.

### **Initiative "Priority for in-company vocational training!" (Betriebliche Ausbildung hat Vorfahrt!)**

Based on the initiative of BDA and DGB, the board of governors of the Federal Employment Agency, where social partners form two thirds of the board, launched the initiative "Priority for in-company vocational training!" The purpose of this initiative is to strengthen participation in in-company vocational training of disadvantaged young people. The elements of the initiative are as follows:

- Campaigning to increase the number of apprenticeship positions for disadvantaged young people created by companies.
- The instrument of "training assistance" ("Ausbildungsbegleitende Hilfen"), including knowledge and skills training, is opened to all young people, who need them.
- The federal employment agency has created a new instrument (assisted vocational training / "Assistierte Ausbildung") to assist both disadvantaged young people and companies, who offer them apprenticeship positions. This assistance includes coaching as well as administrative and organisational support before and during the apprenticeship.

BDA and DGB successfully insisted on changes in social legislation which were necessary to implement the "assisted vocational training" und to broaden the "training assistance".

### **Initiative "pathways in education for refugees"**

The ZDH and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the Federal Employment Agency (BA) launched a joint initiative for young refugees. The program is initially limited 24 months. Main goal is the integration of up to 10,000 refugees in dual vocational education and training. The craft companies provide the apprenticeship placements, while BMBF and BA financially support the preparatory courses.

## Collective agreements in the public sector

At German Federal State (Tarifvertrag für Auszubildende der Länder) and at communal level (TVAöD) collective agreements guarantee apprentices a permanent contract, on the condition of having successfully completed the formation and probation period. As introduced in form of a new paragraph in March 2013, this also holds true for jobs in the care professions as well as the forestry sector.

Furthermore, in the collective agreement concluded in the sector of local transport at communal level ("Demographischer Wandel im Nahverkehr") the crucial importance of a foresighted sustainable personnel policy with a clear focus on vocational training for young people was introduced in 2014. Through this agreement the undersigned companies are committed to provide adequate formation for young employees.

## 2. Transition

**Initiative "Success in vocational training – looking for 'latecomers'" ("AusBildung wird was – Spätstarter gesucht"):** Based on a proposal of the social partners in the Board of Governors the Federal Employment Agency started an initiative for 100,000 young adults without professional qualification in the age of 25-34. The aim of the initiative is to give young adults through targeted support a second chance to receive vocational training. A special focus is on young people who – for different reasons – did not find access to vocational training after leaving school. Because of its success the initiative will be continued.

**Start in den Beruf / "passage into vocation"** (national sectoral level): This initiative was designed by the social partners in the chemical industry (IG BCE and BAVC) in order to increase the opportunity to start an apprenticeship for young people. The measure addresses young people that have not been able to find a vocational training placement yet and who are lacking some of the requirements necessary for a successful apprenticeship. During a 6- to 12-months long individual support phase, they are prepared to take up an apprenticeship in class, at the workplace and through social and educational monitoring. A large majority of participants is successfully integrated into a vocational training placement after the program.

**The network SCHULEWIRTSCHAFT (SCHOOLBUSINESS):** Through its initiative SCHULEWIRTSCHAFT, BDA and its member organisations help young people to successfully master the transition from school to professional life. In around 440 regional working groups school and business representatives devise a range of activities that promote vocational orientation and help school students to make an informed career choice. As practical insights into day-to-day business reality are particularly helpful in this regard, SCHULEWIRTSCHAFT organises e. g. business discovery trips and internships that bring school students in touch with local companies.

**Report on vocational training:** The DGB is issuing an annual academic study on the quality of vocational training. The comprehensive collection of data aims to identify areas for improvement within the system of vocational training in Germany.

**"Revision of introductory training for young people ("Einstiegsqualifizierung", EQ):** The board of governors of the Federal Employment Agency decided to adjust the instrument "Introductory training for young people" due to the rising number of young refugees in Germany. "Introductory training for young people" is a measure offered by the transition system. The 6- to 12-month pre-training placements in enterprises are aimed at youths who have diminished chances to find a training position. The introductory training was recently revised to enable combinations of pre-training in enterprises with language course which are crucial for a successful integration of young refugees into the labour market.

**Program "Passgenaue Besetzung" – Supporting small and medium-sized enterprises in the matching of training placements:** The ZDH coordinates a national network of more than 170 consultants at the chambers of skilled crafts, the chambers of industry and commerce and other business organisations which supports small and medium sized companies (SME) in recruiting young people for dual apprenticeship training. The consultants also prepare companies for the training of young people from abroad. Since 2014 more than 14,000 training placements have been generated. The program is co-financed by the Federal Ministry of Economy and Energy (BMWi) and the ESF.

In addition 130 so-called "**Willkommenslotsen**" (refugee guides) were established at the chambers of skilled crafts, chambers of industry and commerce and other business organisations in 2016. They support particularly SME with guidance and advisory services concerning the integration of refugees into apprenticeship training and into the labour market.

### **3. Employment**

**MINT Zukunft schaffen ("Creating a STEM future"):** The STEM professions offer significant employment opportunities for young people as the shortage of skilled labour is particularly pressing in this field. In 2008, BDA and the Federation of German Industries have jointly founded the initiative "MINT Zukunft schaffen" ("Creating a STEM future"), which seeks to increase public awareness of the importance of STEM skills. Through a variety of projects and a network of STEM ambassadors the initiative seeks to encourage school students to start their vocational or academic training in a STEM profession and assists university students by organising mentors.

### **4. Entrepreneurship**

**Entrepreneurship education offered by SCHULEWIRTSCHAFT:** The network SCHULEWIRTSCHAFT promotes entrepreneurship education among school students through various activities. Since 2012 SCHULEWIRTSCHAFT is offering a country-wide business planning game for secondary school students. The computer-aided planning game "*beachmanager*" – in which teams of three students run a virtual water sports centre and have to master a wide range of tasks – passes on economic knowledge and key skills as well as promoting cooperation with regional businesses.

## Hungary

### **Sources of information**

**Trade Unions:** ÉSZT, LIGA, MASZSZ, MOSZ, SZEF

**Employers:** MGYOSZ - BUSINESSHUNGARY

- Unfortunately no actions especially devoted to the FoA has been organised. Trade union confederations have been negotiating about the problems of the implementation process and decided to come up with a joint action plan shortly.
- As a joint action *at national level*, the Hungarian trade union confederations and MGYOSZ has applied for the translation of the Framework of Actions to the Translation Found and after we received the translated text and we agreed on the final Hungarian version February 2015, is was distributed among our member organisations and published on our websites.
- The Hungarian social partners continuously use the FoA as a reference in their negotiations and communication.
- The Hungarian Youth Guarantee Program started in February 2015. First it targeted young people under 25, registered in the Public Employment Service, looking for a job for at least 6 month. The target group includes about 174.000 young NEETs, the full budget between 2014-2020 is about 220 billion Forints (approx.734 million EUR). The full implementation will follow only from 2018. Social partners pushed for a quicker implementation and better involvement in this procedure. (*Priority: Transition*)

### Sources of information

**Trade Unions:** ICTU

**Employers:** Ibec

### Themes

#### **Learning**

A lot of work has been carried out over the last year to secure **reform to the education system** to ensure all young people are better prepared for the changing world of work. This includes major reform of initial teacher education, new induction models for schools and further development of a Continuous Professional Development framework for teachers which have been committed to and are underway as part of the [National Skills Strategy 2025](#). At initial teacher education stage programmes have been lengthened and changed made to the content and pedagogical approaches to better prepare teachers for the classroom. At CPD level this includes whole-school CPD, subject-specific seminars, seminars for school leaders and teacher-led CPD. As teachers are the lifeblood of the success of schools this is key to ensuring educators have their methods and practices under review and are provided with opportunities to acquire and enhance their knowledge, skills and attitudes.

The single greatest challenge for the education system at all levels is developing a capacity and appetite for **continuous learning** in young people so they can thrive and fulfil their potential as workers and citizens. The curriculum reform in the new [Irish Junior Cycle](#), with its emphasis on innovation, resilience and “learning how to learn” provides a good example of how these aspirations can be translated into tangible learning outcomes. Similarly the National Skills Strategy 2025 has committed to require higher education institutions to introduce employability statements for their courses.

As previously reported a number of new **apprenticeships**, beyond the traditional sectors, have been approved and recruitment is currently under way. Alongside the 25 programmes initially approved within Manufacturing and Engineering, Tourism and Sport, Financial Services, Information Technology, Transport Distribution and Logistics, and Business Administration and Management, others are in development phases.

#### **Employment**

On occasion, difficulties have occurred whereby even qualified young people face difficulties integrating engaging in the labour market due to a lack of jobs or skills mismatches. To address this requires increasing collaboration between educational institutions and social partners so that young people acquire the right skills and better information on possible attractive career prospects or sectors/areas they may not have considered is readily available. This will increase the chances for employers to find the right candidates and for employees to choose the right career.

To foster this engagement between employers and education and training providers and enable the development of a collective understanding of the skills needs and job opportunities, [Regional Skills Fora](#) have been set up. The new network of Regional Skills Fora will provide a framework for the education and training providers, employers and enterprise development agencies to work together in identifying and addressing the current and future skills needs of each region on an ongoing basis which can be used for education programme development and staying close to market. This will facilitate employers understanding the education and training provision available, support contemporary course development and facilitate students

to attain skills and qualifications pertinent to occupational needs. Employers will be able to promote the range of career options available more widely to prospective job seekers.

## Entrepreneurship

Changing patterns of work in a globalised economy require individuals to upskill and reskill throughout their lives. To support this it is essential to promote creativity and entrepreneurial capacity in students which is possible by embedding **of entrepreneurial education** across the system to enrich the learning experience and develop skills for life. The education system has a critical influence in shaping entrepreneurial attributes from an early age. Young people who benefit from entrepreneurial learning develop latent business knowledge and essential skills including creativity, initiative, tenacity, teamwork, understanding of risk and a sense of responsibility. These are the high level skills necessary for all commercial and social endeavours which make young people more employable and entrepreneurial.

In September 2014 the Government launched a [national policy statement on Entrepreneurship in Ireland](#) identifying the education system as core to shaping entrepreneurial attributes from a young age. To support this and to build on the good work occurring throughout various stages of the education ecosystem, Ibec developed a set of [recommendations](#). The document is a stakeholder policy document designed for all stakeholders; government, policy makers, employers, parents and students at all levels. It was aimed at changing the thinking around entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial thinking for young people – to view it as a culture, a philosophy and a permanent theme across education rather than a stand-alone subject. Following interactions with various stakeholders and the Department of Education many of these recommendations have been included in the National Skills Strategy 2025 and will be further progressed over the coming months. These include: prioritising a focus on transversal skills development with particular emphasis on entrepreneurship, language proficiency and ICT skills; completion of an Entrepreneurship Education Policy Statement that will inform the development of entrepreneurship education guidelines for schools.

## Transitions

Strong **career guidance** is important for individuals at all stages to strengthen the links and transitions between school, further and higher education and the world of work. Without this people are unaware of the opportunities and possible careers and occupations available to them. This is even more important where there is social marginalisation or unemployment if individuals are going to be prevented from falling into long term unemployment or poverty. Career guidance is underpinned by up-to-date careers information from employers and is essential given our commitment to lifelong learning. While a number of excellent resources are available for schools such as CareersPortal.ie and Qualifax.ie and the development of INTREO and JobPath services have seen developments in this area, there has been a commitment to carry out a full review of the guidance services, tools and careers information to map future priorities and improvement recommendations. Addressing any gaps in the system will help to improve the matching of supply and demand in the labour market.

### **Sources of information**

#### **UNILATERAL REPORT**

**Trade unions: CGIL – CISL - UIL**

### **Foreword**

Levels of youth unemployment in Italy remain significantly high (40.3%. – 15-24: 41% women and 39.8% man. As the youth guarantee schemes in Italy has been extended to youngsters of 15-29, it is useful to underline that the related unemployment rate is 29.9% - 35.5% women and 28.9% men).

A comprehensive labour market reform (the so-called “Jobs Act”) has been adopted in Italy at the end of 2014 and implementation decrees have been adopted during 2015 and 2016. The reform is not the result of social dialogue. Social partners have been informed and consulted in some phases of the implementation of the legislative decrees of the Jobs Act.

This reform also includes a comprehensive review of the dismissal procedures and regulations and the introduction of the “open ended contract with increasing entitlements”, in addition to provisions on active labour market policies.

In order to increase the number of the newly introduced “open-ended contract with increasing entitlements”, the Government allocated a significant amount of resources in order to cover the taxation (100% for 3 years for those hired with the new contracts in 2015 and 40% for those hired in 2016).

Reform of short term contracts and apprenticeship schemes has been passed by Renzi Government in March 2014 without consultation of social partners and by way of a Government Decree, contrarily to what stated in the FoA.

The process of reform of labour market, which foresees the constitution of national agency for labour active policies (Anpal) and which is included in the Jobs Act, has not been yet developed.

### **Actions taken by the Italian social partners to follow-up the 4 priorities of the framework of actions:**

#### **Learning: Implementation of internship projects linked to Youth Guarantee:**

1) “Botteghe di mestiere e dell’innovazione”: training pathways through internship to be held in one of the 5000 workshops or companies (botteghe) that have submitted 900 projects selected through public notice. The shops (botteghe) that have been selected deal with different fields: from food and wine sector to mechanical, from the wooden-furniture sector to fashion from the craft sector to the mass distribution circuit.

“crescere in digitale” (Digital growth plan): free e-training for all the Youth Guarantee enrolled and 3.000 internship to endorse the digitisation of companies;

2) Creation of a monitoring committee of the PON (operational national programme) “For School” - Programming period 14/20 – at an early stage.

### **Transition**

1) Introduction of the universal civil service (SCU) n. 2617 on 25/05/16 as part of the third sector reform (actions with features related to certification of competence and skills and employability).

2) Participation of the social partners to the Joint Monitoring Committee on PON IOG and SPAO (programming plan 14/20), through monitoring and evaluation policies on Youth Employment Action, specially Youth Guarantee and active employment policies; monitoring on the implementation at regional level of the 9 actions on Youth Guarantee and integration with POR; participation of the social partners to the Employment Group of the Human Resources FSE Subcommittee, with steering effects on Youth Guarantee reprogramming.

3) Youth Guarantee projects implementation:

FlxO Project - Training and Innovation for employment (Programme of Italia Lavoro in association with Youth Guarantee to support 1000 upper secondary schools, and 75 universities in order to improve and qualify guidance and placement service and to promote apprenticeship and work-learning paths.

Giovani e Legalità (Youth and Legality): Rehabilitation of 1000 minors/Young people/adults in prison through vocational guidance and vocational training projects

4) Rescheduling of internships, employment bonus, introduction of the national revolving fund SELFIEmployment to support entrepreneurship/self-employment.

5) Interconfederal agreement on Apprenticeship at first level (for vocational qualification or high school diploma) or third level (for the University Degree or Master) under a so called dual system building project (ex art. 43 and 45 d.lgs81/2015)

6) Sectorial National collective bargaining on apprenticeship (occupational type) during the renewal procedures.

7) Testing of education/work alternation (ex L.107/15) that introduces a compulsory training on workplace minimum 200 hours for the high schools and 400 for vocational or technical schools.

## **Employment**

1)Testing of the generational turnover (s.c. staffetta generazionale); (Stability law 2016 – L208/15- action to promote the generational turn-over inside companies)

### **Sources of information**

**Trade Unions:** LBAS

**Employers:** LDDK

1. 2014-2016 LBAS and LDDK participate in Youth Guarantee and Unemployed training Steering Committee where submitted proposals for the implementation of Youth Guarantee initiative in Latvia and needs for trainings of different sectors.
2. LDDK continues an initiative "virtual practice" on portal prakse.lv (see <http://www.practican.com>) which gives opportunity for anyone who is interested to gain first work experience or just to get information about occupations in different companies in virtual way through game.
3. LDDK in cooperation with LBAS implements ERASMUS+ project "VET For Employment (2014-2017) to create and to develop systemic tools for traineeships effectively involving employers and thus facilitating VET compliance with the labour market needs and ensuring qualitative traineeships process for all the parties involved there in. LBAS will provide guidelines for qualitative apprenticeships.
4. LBAS is a partner in Erasmus + project "Partnerships for lifelong learning in engineering and technology" (2015-2017) where main aim is to study of the respective conditions and designs of integrated learning opportunities and bridging programmes in technical occupations as well as their impact on a successful entry into the labour market and the development of vocational identity of learners.
5. LBAS is a partner in project called „Unions4Vet“ (2015-2017) where main goals are: To strengthen trade union cooperation in the field of vocational training with its partner organizations and to initiate dialogs to create a quality framework and minimum standards of apprenticeships.
6. In 2016 LBAS together with German trade union DBG submitted application of project „Supporting Anticipation of Change and Development of Skills“ which aim to contribution of knowledge and experiences regarding the anticipation of change and development of workers' skills by interest representatives at company level, inter alia, to formulate recommendations for a European trade union strategy for make better use of information, consultation and participation procedures at the workplace in order to anticipate change, develop workers' skills and enhance employability.
7. 2015-2016 LDDK and LBAS also actively participated in development of legislation of work-based learning and sector skills councils within role of social partners and participation in VET will be strengthened.

The Ministry of Education and Science in cooperation with LDDK and LBAS implements an ERASMUS+ project "National Authorities for Apprenticeships: Implementing Work Based Learning in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia (WBL-Balt)" from December 2015 until November 2016. The aim of the project is to "To support development of WBL and apprenticeships in the Baltic States and to enhance cooperation between 3 Baltic States in implementing VET reforms". Project activities on the Baltic level are: enhanced cooperation and peer learning between the 3 Baltic States in implementing VET reforms and supporting WBL development, and establishing the Baltic Alliance for Apprenticeships and Work Based Learning. Cooperation agreement between the 3 Baltic ministers responsible for education was signed on June 22, 2015, during ministerial conference in Riga. On the national level, each Baltic country planned their own activities to support WBL. Latvia did: a study on previous WBL pilot projects and on necessary regulatory framework for WBL, and expert group developed proposals for WBL legal framework, organised 5 thematic round tables and 5 regional seminars to promote WBL. Additionally, awareness raising campaign and the international conference is planned.

### PRIVATE SECTOR

#### Sources of information

**Trade Unions:** FNV, CNV and VCP

**Employers:** VNO-NCW, MKB-Nederland and LTO Nederland

**Labour Foundation [Stichting van de Arbeid]** – the consultative body whose members are the three peak employers' associations and three peak trade union federations in the Netherlands

#### Introductory remarks

In the Netherlands, the issue of youth unemployment is being tackled primarily at regional and local level. This is because, at an early stage of these activities (2009 and then again in 2013), the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW) decided to route the financial and other support for these activities via the country's municipalities. This approach, which is still in effect, is supported at national level by SZW and the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) via the *Aanpak Jeugdwerkloosheid* (Tackle Youth Unemployment) programme. The activities are regularly reported in a digital newsletter.

Most of the extra activities that the members of the Labour Foundation have undertaken to combat unemployment in general and youth unemployment in particular, are performed pursuant to the Social Agreement [*Sociaal Akkoord*] which the Labour Foundation and the government entered into on 11 April 2013.

Over the last three years, social partners at decentral level have used a new instrument, 'sector plans', to make joint investments in measures that contribute to strengthening sectoral frameworks and a 'job-to-job' programme. SZW developed a co-financing scheme to carry out this programme, as a result of which more than EUR 1 billion was made available for that purpose. Of that amount, some EUR 450 million was provided by the government; the remainder was contributed by the social partners (primarily using sectoral education and training funds) and the regions. A large portion of these activities – approximately 40 percent – will benefit young people under the age of 27. The activities for young people are primarily aimed at the opportunity to offer them work-based training or allow them to participate in programmes through which an intermediary assists them with finding a job.

The Labour Foundation meets with SZW every other week regarding the execution of the sector plans. The two organisations also meet once or twice a year to discuss the progress and results of the *Aanpak Jeugdwerkloosheid* programme. Because this programme is carried out at regional level, the Foundation has not created a role for itself to organise additional activities relating to this programme.

Both the central and decentral members of the Foundation, in particular the youth branches of the trade unions, are extremely active in combating youth unemployment in a dozen fields.

#### Learning

The employers' organisations and trade unions consult regularly in the Labour Foundation regarding several national themes relating to vocational education. These themes are:

- Harmonising secondary education with vocational education, and, at post-secondary level, harmonising intermediate vocational education with advanced vocational education;
- Reducing school drop-out rates;
- Training young people who lack a starting qualification;
- Providing information on study programmes and the various results of those programmes.

Any points that are identified at these meetings as requiring attention are put on the agenda.

Furthermore, in the organisation SBB (Samenwerkingsorganisatie Beroepsonderwijs Bedrijfsleven), social partners discuss the themes, which are related to this form of education on the job, with the management responsible for vocational training.

## **Transition**

This theme is also regularly discussed in the Labour Foundation's two working groups. Action is taken as necessary. The areas that primarily require attention are:

- Harmonisation of education and the labour market;
- Agreements regarding internships and apprenticeships in collective labour agreements;
- Agreements regarding basic work-based training in sector plans.

## **Employment**

This subject is primarily dealt with via:

- Sector plans that include specific agreements about the influx of young people;
- In July 2016 a new co-financing scheme will enter into effect in addition to the co-financing scheme that is part of the sector plans. Young people will also be eligible to participate in this new scheme, which is called *Doorstart naar nieuw werk* (A New Start Towards a Another Job);
- Stipulations in collective labour agreements, such as those regarding a generation pact, the influx of young people, internships for young people, and similar issues.

The youth branches of the trade unions are also active in promoting the regional *Startersbeurs* (Starters' Job Fair).

On 2 July 2015, the Labour Foundation and the Council for Public Sector Personnel Policy [*Raad voor het Overheidspersoneelsbeleid*] kicked off the Diversity in Business [*Diversiteit in bedrijf*] project. Through this project, central employers' organisations and trade unions want to promote diversity and inclusion in the business community with regard to gender, ethnic-cultural background and religion, sexual orientation, age, and occupational disability. This project will devote attention to the influx of young people from various ethnic-cultural backgrounds in the business community.

## **Entrepreneurship**

The Labour Foundation consults regularly with vocational education providers regarding the importance of including entrepreneurial skills in the programmes they offer.

## PUBLIC SECTOR

### **Sources of information**

**Trade Unions:** SCO (Samenwerkende Centrales van Overheidspersoneel/Alliance of unions for governmental employees)

**Employers:** VSO (Verbond van Sectorwerkgevers Overheid/Alliance of Governmental Sector employers)

### **Background, the Netherlands:**

At the end of 2013 youth unemployment reached a record height: in September of that year 196.000 young people were unemployed. In the past two years, youth unemployment has fallen due to work and study opportunities, resulting in 159.000 registered unemployed youth in April of 2016<sup>9</sup>, which is 11.2% of the Dutch workforce aged between 15-25. Compared to the percentage of unemployed in the whole Dutch workforce aged 15-75, which was 6.4% in April of 2016 (seasonal adjusted percentages)<sup>10</sup>, youth unemployment remains high and is still nearly double the percentage of the whole Dutch workforce.<sup>11</sup> The unemployment-duration of the workforce aged between 15-25 is relatively short, compared to older age-cohorts and has decreased over the past 12 months.<sup>12</sup> But young people, as recent entrants into the labour market, are still more likely to work on a temporary contract compared to people over 25.<sup>13</sup>

For the public sector the trend of staff reductions, as described in the reports of 2014 and 2015, continues. Also low labour mobility and less outflow to retirement than expected in 2010, still tempers access of young people to employment in the public sector.

### **Actions taken to follow-up the four priorities of the framework of actions:**

The government, local governments, social partners, education providers and young people themselves undertook several measures to ensure work or further education for young people. These measures include several actions on regional level, in which the social partners have been involved.<sup>14</sup> In addition 'working agreements' have been made with employers, including some employers in the public sector.<sup>15</sup> The Dutch government launched an action plan on youth unemployment in 2013. The youth action plan will be continued by the government for another year and will focus on closing the skills gap between education and the labour market and pay special attention to young people without a degree, dependent on social benefits or with a migrant background. The government is investing €7,2 million to support the matching of these vulnerable groups to suitable vacancies (Matchen op werk), also working together with five large municipalities to support migrant youth (City Deals), and, together with schools, to further the attainment of working skills and supporting students to make an informed choice

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<sup>9</sup> <http://aanpakjeugdwerkloosheid.nl/actueel/nieuws/2016/05/19/jeugdwerkloosheid-daalt-licht-meer-jongeren-aan-het-werk>

<sup>10</sup> <http://statline.cbs.nl/Statweb/publication/?VW=T&DM=SLNL&PA=80590NED&D1=10,12-14&D2=0-1&D3=0&D4=153-155,161-172&HD=160524-0846&HDR=T&STB=G1,G2,G3>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2016/20/werkloosheid-daalt-licht>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2016/19/minder-langdurig-werklozen>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2016/20/flexwerker-houdt-vaker-werk>

<sup>14</sup> For an overview see <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/werkloosheid/inhoud/aanpak-jeugdwerkloosheid>

<sup>15</sup> For an overview of the working agreements see: <http://aanpakjeugdwerkloosheid.nl/partners/werkgevers>

for a study with a good career perspective.<sup>16</sup> Secretary of State Jetta Klijnsma has recently made 166 million available from the European Social Fund (ESF), specifically aimed at reducing youth unemployment and the labour market integration of people with a distance to the labour market. Municipalities can apply for these funds starting May 16, 2016.<sup>17</sup>

The following section focuses on seven sectors within the public domain. The list below does not give an all encompassing overview as not all public sectors (other sectors are judiciary, higher education, research institutions and university medical centres) are covered, as this would ask for a much longer report. However this report does give a picture of the situation and of measures taken in the public sectors to tackle youth unemployment.

#### *Central government*

- Retirement of a civil servant does not necessarily lead to a vacant position, due to the current austerity measures and the agenda for a compact government. This especially affects young people. This situation is unchanged in 2016.
- Most young people who are working for the central government, find their jobs via regular vacancies. Nevertheless, the government does offer internships, apprenticeships and traineeship programs. In 2015 the number of internships increased with 25% to 5.000 and there were 260 traineeships. The government traineeship programme runs since 1998 and offers jobs to 100 - 120 trainees per year; the specialist traineeships offers jobs to appr. 140 trainees. In 2015 a pilot named Kickstart started in the form of an apprenticeship for young people, aiming specifically at improving labour market skills. In 2016 these apprenticeships will be further developed.<sup>18</sup>

#### *Provinces*

- The 12 provinces are dealing with reorganisations, shrinking budgets and a 12% decrease of employees between 2012-2014. Also over one third of all employees is over 55 years of age, the average age of employees working at a province is 49 years. Nevertheless, more than half (53 percent) of all new employees starting work at a province is younger than 35.<sup>19</sup>
- In the collective labour agreement 2012-2015, the social partners agreed to initiate a pilot project in two provinces, called 'Youth for Old'. The aim of the pilots is to realise five jobs for young people per pilot. The provinces Noord-Holland and Friesland have started the preparation of these pilots.
- The provinces are actively attracting youth through their traineeship and internship programs.

#### *Municipalities*

- The average age of employees working for a municipality is currently 48,3 and still growing. The percentage of employees aged 35 or below has decreased from 16% in 2010 to 11% in 2015. Due to increasing responsibilities regarding social spending at

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2015/11/30/kamerbrief-aanpak-jeugdwerkloosheid>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.agentschapswz.nl/actueel/nieuws/2016/05/16/166-miljoen-euro-subsidie-beschikbaar-voor-nieuw-tijdvak-actieve-inclusie>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/werkloosheid/inhoud/aanpak-jeugdwerkloosheid>

<sup>19</sup> <http://werknemersbijdeoverheid.nl/overzicht-inhoud/personeelsmonitoren/personeelsmonitor-decentrale-overheden-2016>

municipal level, together with budget cuts, most municipalities are trying to keep their organisation as small as possible. This is visible in the 2% decline in the number of employees between 2014 and 2015. Between 2014 and 2015 the amount of flexible contracts has increased. It has become harder for youth without working experience to find a job at a municipality. Although 70% of the municipalities now have specific policies to promote the inflow of youth, this has proven to be difficult. While the inflow of young employees grew 4 percentage-points to 39% between 2014 and 2015, still less employees under 35 years of age started working for a municipality in 2015 compared to 2011.<sup>20</sup> The social partners have decided to take action on this issue. Following up on their former collective agreement of July 2014 to ensure that at least 1.500 young people start working in this sector, the current collective agreement of 2016-2017 aims at ensuring another 1.000 young people are hired. The bipartite A+O foundation for municipalities facilitates this by financially rewarding municipalities when hiring a young employee, trainee, apprentice or intern aged under 28.<sup>21</sup> 25% of all municipalities have an active traineeship programme.

- Furthermore, many municipalities work together with other municipalities in a regional setting, whereby arrangements are agreed upon specifically aimed at hiring young employees under 28.
- Since the autumn of 2014 the social partners and the municipalities agreed on the 'Generation pact: chances for youth'. Its aim is to stimulate the inflow of young people by encouraging older employees to work less. In 2015 12% of all municipalities participated in this scheme. According to the 80/90/100-rule, older people can work 80% of the time, for 90% of the salary while keeping 100% of their pension. There are also variations to this construction with different percentages.<sup>22</sup>

#### *Water boards*

- To face the ongoing ageing within the sector, strategic workforce planning is still seen as one of the most important employment themes.
- The average age of employees working at a water board is 48 years. The bipartite A+O foundation for water boards does focus on attracting young people to work at the water boards. In some employment plans of provinces, the water boards are also mentioned as partners.<sup>23</sup>
- Cooperation between the water boards and the educational sector is necessary to manage the link between schools and labour market. In the collective agreement of 2015 the social partners representing the water boards have reached out to schools to sign covenants and promote knowledge sharing in order to bind students to the sector and maintain an up-to-date curriculum.

#### *Education sector*

- In the past decades, pupil numbers have decreased due to lower birth rates, this trend will continue to influence the demand for teachers. While some large cities have a hard time finding enough teachers, some rural areas are confronted with smaller schools.

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<sup>20</sup> Personeelsmonitor Gemeenten 2015, [www.aeno.nl](http://www.aeno.nl)

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.aeno.nl/subsidies/jongerenregeling>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.aeno.nl/generatiepact-kansen-voor-jongeren>

<sup>23</sup> <http://werknemersbijdeoverheid.nl/overzicht-inhoud/personeelsmonitoren/personeelsmonitor-decentrale-overheden-2016>

This leads to a diverse demand for recently graduated teachers, depending on the geographical location. Forecasts show a growing demand for qualified teachers in both primary as well as secondary education.

- In 2014 the *sector plan* of the social partners in the primary education sector has been approved by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. Part of this plan is the 'Young & Old'-programme. The programme offers financial support when hiring young teachers in general or when hiring young teachers in case an older teacher leaves for early retirement.<sup>24</sup> The aim of this programme is to create or retain jobs for young and unemployed teachers (410 fte). Based on the evaluation by Ecorys (April 2016) 299 vacancies for young employees have been created, totalling 227 fte.<sup>25</sup>
- There are also several other initiatives taken in the education sector to facilitate the entry of young teachers into the labour market. These include the project *Vierslagleren* of the social partners in the primary and secondary education sector. During the past two years over 300 applicants for *Vierslagleren* have successfully been rewarded with a subsidy, this subsidy will continue in 2016.<sup>26</sup> Trade unions are also offering development programmes and job application support for starting teachers in the education sector.<sup>27</sup>
- The social partners in the primary and secondary education sector have agreed upon hiring or retaining 3.000 young teachers, of which 1.200 in the secondary education sector. This measure is funded through the National Education Agreement, leading to €150 million has been invested, it has also been enshrined in the collective agreement for the secondary education sector (article 18.3 collective agreement secondary education sector).
- The secondary education sector has two traineeship programmes, these are not focusing on youth employment per se, but on trying to stimulate extraordinary students to become a teacher.

### Police

- As one of the largest employers of the Netherlands, the police sector contributes to the education of young people by offering internships. It is also a way to raise interest for working for the police. Police internships also help to prepare young people for the labour market in general and contribute to the employability of youth. Just like in 2013 and 2014, 800 VET-students are being supervised during their internship within the police force.
- Migrant youth has a higher chance of pre-emptively leaving the police academy admission process. Therefore an initiative has been established to retain the inflow of migrant youth by assisting young people with an immigrant background in a 10-week support process in preparation of the first admission tests, including training in the field of cognition (exam experience), language and sports. 70 percent of the supported youth has passed the first tests, bringing this group closer to admission for the police academy.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.arbeidsmarktplatformpo.nl/arbeidsmarktplatform-po/activiteiten-subsidies/sectorplan-po/jong-en-oud.html>

<sup>25</sup> Report Effectmeting Sectorplan PO (Ecorys, April 21, 2016)

<sup>26</sup> [www.arbeidsmarktplatformpo.nl/vierslagleren](http://www.arbeidsmarktplatformpo.nl/vierslagleren) and <http://www.voion.nl/programmaliijnen/arbeidsmarkt-en-mobiliteit/werken-in-het-voortgezet-onderwijs/vierslagleren>

<sup>27</sup> [www.starteninhetonderwijs.nl](http://www.starteninhetonderwijs.nl)

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.politieacademie.nl/lecd/bestpractices/Documents/Voorschakeltraject,%20schakel%20tussen%20uniform%20en%20pluriform%20-%20Hollands%20Midden.pdf>

## Defence

- In general the Dutch defence sector has more possibilities to hire new people compared to other public sectors. More specifically every year 3.000 new participants can take part in the *Veiligheid & Vakmanschap* (Safety & Craftsmanship) programme. This programme covers the different disciplines within the defence sector and also includes an internship. After graduating and a positive (physical) examination, it is possible to apply for a job at the military. In total the defence sector supervised about 6.500 interns in 2015.
- The defence department also offered, via municipalities, 100 *Werkfitstages* (Work Fit internships). These internships are aimed at young people with a vulnerable labour market position. They were offered a three month period to work on their labour skills. The idea is that they will become more 'labour fit'. This program does not guarantee a job, but it is possible that a job is being offered.

## Conclusions

Despite recent economic growth, young employees are still finding it difficult to find (long-term) employment. While flexible or temporary contracts are offered more easily, some young groups are still finding it hard to find a job at all. 10% of the unemployed youth aged 15-25 remains unemployed for a longer period of time, mainly consisting of young people on benefits, young people without a basic educational qualification and migrant youth. Especially those who left school without the basic 'starting qualification' necessary to compete within the current labour market pose a challenge. Their unemployment rate is double that of the youth unemployment rate, when they acquire a job it is often flexible or temporary employment and they will also find it harder to gain and remain in employment in the future.<sup>29</sup> Also the relatively high enrolment in studies for which the current economy has little vacancies poses a challenge, this can be seen at all educational levels. Another worrisome group is those who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) and have withdrawn themselves from actively looking for a job, they are not represented in the current unemployment statistics. This group, without the skills to improve their economic situation and with an income below the poverty-line, are at risk of becoming socially excluded. They often display a mix of risk-factors: migrant youth, the lacking of basic educational qualifications or employment skills.<sup>30</sup> Accordingly we see that youth action plans, some of the social partners measures and ESF-subsidies focus mainly on these groups.

The current discourse also shows that the social partners in the public sector in the Netherlands are aware of the necessity to fight youth unemployment. Many of the current measures have been in place for a couple of years. The ageing of the labour force will also result in a reasonably large outflow, even though smaller than expected earlier, of older employers in most public sectors eventually. However, for now, this does not necessarily lead to more job opportunities for young people.

More than the measures put in place for their own organisation, organisations in the public domain have also actively developed general strategies to tackle youth unemployment in general. In these strategies employers' organisation and trade unions are often involved. Most of the initiatives concentrate on stimulating and facilitating young people to work in the private sector; not so much in the public sector itself. These actions, together with slow but steady economic growth, seem to lead to results as youth unemployment has been decreasing since

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<sup>29</sup> Wiltthagen, Peijen, Dekker, en Bekker, S. (2014). Het perspectief van jongeren op de Nederlandse arbeidsmarkt: Arbeidsmarktintrede, dienstverbandtransities, aansluiting vanuit het onderwijs.

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2015/11/30/kamerbrief-aanpak-jeugdwerkloosheid>

February 2014 from 16,5 percent to 11,2 percent now (April 2016). However, economic growth in the public sector leads less directly to more employment of young people. The lack of financial resources has been mentioned as the main constraint to employ young starters in the public sectors and to carry out related measures.

## Poland

### **Sources of information**

**Trade Unions:** FZZ, OPZZ, NSZZ Solidarność

**Employers:** Konfederacja Lewiatan, Pracodawcy RP, ZRP

In the reporting period, Polish social partners took both tripartite and bipartite actions in line with the scope of the FoA YE.

#### a) Tripartite:

In 2015 works in the Social Dialogue Council (SDC) have started. SDC is a new body of social dialogue in Poland, through which social partners managed to reach the first substantial agreement on major issues.

#### b) Bipartite

Continuation of work on the recommendations on the framework for quality traineeships.

Social partners (mentioned above) held 5 autonomous meetings aimed at elaborating joint proposals in the framework of implementation of the FoA YE:

18.06.2015 – the expert seminar on the quality of traineeships in the open labour market (experts of the social partners organisations and of the Ministries: of Labour and Social Policy, as well as of the National Education);

16.07.2015 – a technical meeting to decide procedures and modalities of further joint work;

21.10.2015, 07.12.2015 and 10.01.2016 – negotiation meetings focused on 2 main issues: - joint recommendations on the quality of traineeships in the open labour market and - joint initiative with a legislative proposal, related to the definition of a juvenile employee.

*FoA YE has played a positive role around social partners' actions on youth employment issues in Poland.*

### **Learning**

Partners are close to agree on a joint motion to the Minister in charge of labor on the following issues:

- The definition of a juvenile employee for the purpose of vocational training – Social partners would like to propose a revision of Chapter IX of the Labour Code (they propose the extension of the catalogue of exceptional cases in which it will be possible to employ for vocational training, under the conditions for juvenile employee, people aged over 18 years (and under 21 years), who are in difficult living and social situation

- Unequal rights of juvenile employees to discounts on public transport. Partners drew attention to the fact that there is unequal treatment of young workers, who are under a contract of employment for vocational training and take practical learning with an employer, and realize theoretical training in non-school system. These people, even though they implement compulsory education, are not entitled to discounts on public transport.

## Transition

Partners began intensive work in June 2015, when it was agreed to start drafting a joint document containing the recommendations of the social partners on the quality of traineeships in the open market. It was decided after the expert seminar that the inspiration for such document would be Polish Quality Internships Framework developed and adopted by the Polish Human Resources Management Association. (More details: <http://stazeipraktyki.pl/program>)

In the next months, partners agreed on the following issues: -preparation for traineeship and recruitment, - the contents of the educational component, - content of the agreement for the traineeship, including working time, the rules embracing trainee mentoring and coverage insurance, accident and health insurance. They agreed also on the need to confirm the completion of traineeship, as well as to evaluate the practice by the trainee afterwards.

However, partners failed to agree on the length of notice period of the practice, the duration of practice and amount of remuneration for a practice. The unions representatives pointed the need for compensation that allows for self-maintenance of the trainee and claimed an unambiguous indication of the value of the salary (different variants were proposed, including the determination of hourly and salary proportional to the minimum wage). Employers' organizations proposed not to impose on employers the specific minimum wage. In their opinion the remuneration of the trainee should be determined in proportion to the salary provided for position where the traineeship takes place and the effects of work of the trainee during traineeship.

In this situation, the partners have decided to temporarily suspend its work and resume it after the preparation of new proposals by the parties. The partners count on the possibility to continue further work with the technical and expert support from the Social Dialogue Council.

## Employment

The First Job program has started, it is expected that this year it will contribute to provide 30 thousand jobs for young people. However, it is difficult to assess the program yet. First comments suggest that employers are interested. Program consists of refunding the remuneration of youth (in the amount of minimum wage) for the first year and increased access to resources of the National Training Fund for the next year for employers who will participate in the program.

## Other initiatives and events

Lewiatan Confederation and NSZZ "Solidarność" received a negative response from the European Commission regarding project planned under the budget line EC "social dialogue" and aimed at the implementation of the Framework of action on youth employment. The proposal was finally rejected by the Commission due to insufficient participation of foreign partners in the project. But social partners agreed that they would improve an application and try to submit it again.

The Social Dialogue Council (SDC) - the new social dialogue body has set itself ambitious goals and has already achieved its first successes. Issues related to the employment of young people are also located in the orbit of interest of the social partners. This is reflected in the range of actions of individual teams of SDC. So far, the Council reached agreement on the following issues:

- Amendment of the provisions of the Labour Code in terms of confirming the terms of employment before start of work by employee.

- Introduction of a minimum hourly wage for people employed on civil contracts and the self-employed (12 PLN per hour)
- Abolishing the regulations on the use of a lower minimum wage for the first time entering the labor market (now it is 80% of the statutory minimum).
- In the field of temporary work - to organize the market and to improve the robustness of the agencies
- Introduction to the Polish public procurement system social clauses and obligation to employ with use of labour contracts.

Furthermore, at the request of ZRP, with the support of other social partners, the SDC Team for development of social dialogue was given, among others, a task to elaborate principles for monitoring and support by the Social Dialogue Council of the implementation of effects of European social dialogue in Poland. Therefore, ZRP, NSZZ Solidarnosc and Lewiatan presented a joint proposal to set up a bipartite working group inside the Team and make it responsible for drafting of such principles and rules and other proposals related European social dialogue and the European Semester as well as their further implementation.

An important initiative was also the appointment by the Minister of Labour and Social Policy the "Youth Guarantee" Monitoring Team in Poland, at the request of social partners and organizations of youth. The team meets at least once every 6 months and is an important platform of contacts between the social partners, youth organizations and the government. Although the name suggests that the subject relates only to the program "Youth Guarantee", it is the opportunity to meet a wide range of people interested in the situation of young people on the labour market and initiate joint actions.

As a consequence of cooperation of social partners and other stakeholders, the amendments to the Act on employment promotion and labour market institutions introducing program "First Job" has entered into force.

## Portugal

### **Sources of information**

**Trade Unions:** UGT (General Union of Workers) and CGTP-IN (General Confederation of Portuguese Workers), members of ETUC (European Trade Union Confederation)

**Employers:** CIP (Confederation of Portuguese Business), member of BusinessEurope and CEEP (CEEP Portuguese Association), member of CEEP

### **National context**

According to the CGTP-IN and UGT-P, the unemployment rate remains unacceptably high, especially among young people (32% in 2015) as well as job insecurity (67,5% of young people up to 25 years had a non-permanent contract, a higher percentage than in 2014); early school leaving remains high, including in higher education. Salaries are generally low, even in jobs that require high qualifications: salary proposals for college graduates are often just above the minimum wage. The present situation is largely due to the policies pursued by the Portuguese government between 2011 and 2015, mainly under the Troika memorandum, that have not allowed for the recovery of the unemployment or employment levels recorded in previous years.

The worker's struggle, and especially young people, was crucial to defeat the policies that led to this situation and to reverse some of the more restrictive measures. But it is also necessary that the new government fulfils its promises of changing employment and vocational training policies, fighting against job precariousness and increasing the education and qualification of workers.

UGT-P signals positively the effort made by the actual government in changing the past approach regarding the labour policies.

### **Priority 1: Learning**

#### **CGTP-IN**

About the monitoring and evaluation of vocational education and training and the governance of apprenticeship systems, social partners participated in meetings of ANQEP (National Agency for qualifications and Vocational Education and Training) and IEFP (Institute for Employment and Professional Training). Last year ANQEP's General Committee met only once, but the subject was deeply discussed, namely the issues concerning the balance between training needs and courses offered in Portuguese territory. Another subject in discussion was the attractiveness of VET courses and its place among the national education priorities.

In the framework of ANQEP, the CGTP-IN continued to participate, along with the other partners, in a working group called "Management working group for the anticipation of qualification needs". Within this group we discussed (only written consultations took place) the mechanisms that we have to put in place to make this system work nationwide. For the moment the need anticipation system only works in half a dozen districts.

Through the IEFP, in the monthly Administration Board meetings, we participated in the discussion on the implementation of several programs concerning young workers integration in the labour market. However, these forms of participation (ANQEP or IEFP) are no more than a mere formality, since all policies discussed are generally already designed and decided when they came to the knowledge of Trade Unions and social partners.

Regarding traineeships for young people, the CGTP-IN presented several proposals to improve the legislation and has denounced several misuses of the work of trainees, particularly for replacing real jobs, as well as unpaid work situations (against the law) while the traineeships are not approved by the IEFP. In CGTP-IN's view, in most cases, traineeships are being used to mask unemployment, but the public authorities (IEFP and the labour inspection) do not control the situation properly.

### **UGT**

UGT manages a training centre – CEFOSAP – jointly with the public Institute for Training and Employment. This Centre develops training actions directed to the public in general and to affiliated members of UGT. CEFOSAP's training activities are also oriented towards young people's needs, providing training courses on strategic areas, so that young people can be better equipped to enter the labour market. Along with CEFOSAP, most of our regional unions also provide training actions directed to youngsters with the same goal.

### **CIP**

CIP followed the matter namely through its intervention in the National Agency for Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training (ANQEP) and in the Directive Council of the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP).

“AEC - Associação Empresarial de Cantanhede” (regional business association), member of CIP, developed apprenticeships courses.

“ANIMEE – Associação Portuguesa das Empresas do Setor Elétrico e Eletrónico” (employers association for the electric and electronic sector), member of CIP, developed through CINEL (Vocational Training Centre managed by ANIMEE and the public Employment and Vocational Training Institute) a wide range of training modules: i) Apprenticeships courses; ii) Technology Specialization Courses; iii) Courses “Active Life” (training for unemployed youth with low qualifications); iv) Education and Training Courses for Adults.

Within the referred modalities is important to highlight that all these training modules include training on-the-job.

The mentioned actions contribute to: i) the attractiveness and image of initial vocational training of young people; ii) training in dual learning; iii) the reduction of early school drop-out rates and low qualifications; iv) an easier transition of young people between the education system, vocational training system and the labour market; v) promote equal opportunities and gender.

### **CEEP**

GEBALIS, member of CEEP-Portugal, is one of the enterprises of the Task Force “NEET Platform – ABC (Actions from the base to the top)”, in Portugal (Not in Education, employment, or Training Youth Platform).

This Platform is a meeting and learning space that aims to find answers to the young people in NEET situation.

As member of the task force, GEBALIS was also co-responsible for the organization of the 2016 International Journeys called: “*Jornadas NEET's at Risk*”, last 23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> May 2016.

During the 3 full working days, gathering public entities, associations, training centers, universities, enterprises, schools, local municipalities, political decision makers, leaders, experts, technicians and young people, the main question of the Journeys was: “*How can one improve intervention with NEET young people, in order to be more effective and achieve better and long lasting results?*”

The last day of the Conference, 25 May, had 4 thematic workshops (“Prevention”, “Orientation”, “Training” and “Follow-up”) and during the plenary session of the afternoon with Responsibles of Programmes for Youth, two experts from Canada and France, addressed the issue of “Following people, groups and communities, promoting development and the power of acting”.

## **Priority 2: Transition**

### **CGTP-IN**

The CGTP-IN issued an opinion on the Youth Guarantee in Portugal, considering that there was a contradiction between the announced intentions and reality itself. While dismissals are easy enough, job precariousness remains very high among young people, wages are low and many young people continue to emigrate, the same palliative measures for labour market insertion or reintegration remain in force, some of them actually enhancing precariousness and subsequently unemployment, as happens with measures regarding job creation which the former government refused to change. CGTP-IN presented proposals on these and other Youth Guarantee measures to the new government and is waiting for an answer.

Notwithstanding we think that this kind of measures have a short reach since reducing unemployment depends essentially on economic growth, higher wages and pensions, improved consumption, fostering of national production, more public investment and a stop to the closure of public services.

There is a committee for the monitoring of the Youth Guarantee with the participation of social partners, but there has been no meetings. The information on the impact is too small and was given by the new government but only for some of the measures. The data confirms what the CGTP-IN has said. Only 46% of the unemployed recruited remain in the same company one year after the end of support, but for trainees the percentage is even lower (16%). The majority of this employment is precarious: about 70% in either of the two measures.

As regards the application of the law which provides a credit of 35 hours per year of continuing training for workers, the CGTP-IN has strengthened, along with its structures, the need to demand the fulfilment of this obligation by the employers. It has also sensitized the trade union officials in order to integrate into the collective bargaining rules providing credit hours that can go beyond 35 hours per year. Furthermore, since employers are required to consult employees at the time of diagnosis of needs and training plan design, the CGTP-IN has urged their trade union officials to participate in these processes and to demand compliance with these measures.

### **UGT**

The recommendations enclosed in the present Framework of Actions are reflected in the Youth Guarantee initiative. UGT was called to make a contribution on the draft programme and introduced some changes, namely on the standardisation of measures, which were too many, too diverse and unclear on the widening of the target audience (from 25 years old to 30), given the difficulties young people increasingly face to enter the labour market. Although as mentioned before, the effects of all those programs are unclear, and the risk of a permanent rotation of young people is very present.

UGT has several professional insertion offices (GIP) along the country, which work in close cooperation with the public services and provide support to unemployed, many of which young people, in the definition or development of their insertion/ reinsertion in the labour market, namely through information on available jobs, active employment search, information on and forwarding to the existing suitable active employment measures. UGT has also developed a

Initiative for the unemployed aiming at supporting the unemployed in a personalised manner in finding a new job or training offers and the desirable employability solutions.

### **CIP**

“ANIMEE” developed through CINEEL a range of activities to promote transitions, among which we highlight the following actions: i) Training in areas of high technological value (e.g. Information, Technology, Communication and Electronics) and renewable energy giving an important contribution to achieving the priorities set "New skills for new jobs" set out in the Europe 2020 Strategy; ii) Establishment of protocols with higher education institutions for further study's by its graduates; iii) Training actions with in the Youth Guarantee Program.

## **Priority 3: Employment**

### **CGTP-IN**

Job precariousness is one of the most serious employment problems for the Portuguese youth. The CGTP-IN and its juvenile organisation, the Interjovem/CGTP-IN, have been extensively exposing the problem and developing actions to regularise several situations of precarious workers, by integrating them in open-ended jobs, the same applying to bogus self-employment and unlawful temporary agency work. The CGTP-IN has put in place a National Campaign Against Precariousness till 2020 that is already showing results: about six hundred workers with precarious jobs now have permanent contracts due to the workers struggle and the trade union's actions.

The CGTP-IN also put forward demands for the new government to repeal a law allowing the fixed-term hiring of youngsters seeking their first job, or of the long-term unemployed, and to repeal the possibility of prolonging fixed-term contracts. We also demanded proper enforcement of the legislation regarding fixed-term contracts, in order to prevent the replacement of permanent workers by temporary ones, as well as better monitoring of traineeships and mandatory community work that is used extensively in Public Administration and social economy organizations to meet the need for permanent workers but without the same rights and wages that are paid to regular workers.

As for the social protection of unemployed workers, there was a decrease in 2015, not even reaching one third of the real number of unemployed. For young people coverage is even lower due to job precariousness: less than 25% between 25 and 34 years and less than 5% under 25 years. The CGTP-IN recently submitted to the government a number of proposals in this area, including the revision of the system of social protection in unemployment, in order both to extend the coverage and increase the value of the benefits that was substantially reduced in the last years.

### **UGT**

UGT organised two seminars on the subject oriented to young trade unionists in which the problems young workers are facing nowadays in getting and maintaining sustainable and quality jobs was tackled.

Our regional unions have also developed different actions on this topic, namely to promote the discussion on youth unemployment.

UGT also organised several visits to companies throughout the country as a way to be more aware of working conditions and of the type of contracts, namely for young workers in the different sectors and to raise awareness among entrepreneurs for the importance of promoting quality jobs and of reducing precariousness.

## **CIP**

CIP, taking into account the level of youth unemployment, expressed to the Portuguese Government the need to encourage youth hiring, with a view in particular to provide them with a job experience. Therefore, on one hand, we proposed, in the context of flexicurity, the need to have flexible and diversified forms of contracts and, on the other hand, the creation of programs to support the reconversion of young people.

“AEC - Associação Empresarial de Cantanhede” develops a wide range of activities through its Office of Professional Insertion (GIP), among them: i) Actions to support active job search; ii) Identification and dissemination of job offers; iii) Information sessions for unemployed.

## **Priority 4 – Entrepreneurship**

### **CIP**

“AEC” also develops a wide range of activities to support Entrepreneurship, among others: i) Support to the preparation of applications for obtaining funding for the creation of self-employment; ii) Support to business creation; iii) Organization of seminars on entrepreneurship.

“ANIMEE” through CINEL, taking into account the recommendations and objectives established in the Framework of Actions under the priority Entrepreneurship, developed actions concerning the i) acquisition of ICT skills; ii) Technological culture and social skills; iii) Foreign languages and digital literacy.

### **Sources of information**

#### **UNILATERAL REPORT**

**Employers:** National Council of small and medium-sized private enterprises

Actions taken to follow-up the four priorities of the framework of actions:

In terms of creating new jobs for young people, the National Council of Private SMEs in Romania has developed two major projects: - Youth Guarantees - SIMPRACT - Transition from school to working life by doing and creating simulated enterprise.

### **1. Youth Guarantees**

Within the activity A.5 “Program in the course of training in areas required by the labor market and organizing internships pilot apprenticeship” from 30 September to 31 October 2015 were held within the project “Youth Guarantees”, 5 level 1 training courses and 2 start courses for 137 young people who have not graduated high school and do not have a job, yet.

Within the activity A.6 in the “Work program of advice, assistance and training for starting an independent activity or to initiate business activities” there were conducted entrepreneurial advice and assistance, which included legal, marketing, financial, effective methods and techniques management consulting and other services to 80% of the graduates of entrepreneurship. 8 of counselled young people put in practice their business idea and establishing new business.

Within the activity A.7 October 2015 were held 7 job fairs.

- Job Fair in Ialomita County: The event was attended by 46 companies and 552 visitors.
- Job Fair in Mehedinti county: The event was attended by 50 companies and 759 visitors.
- Job Fair in Teleorman County was held in Alexandria: The event was attended by 45 companies and 507 visitors.
- Job Fair in Tulcea: The event was attended by 50 companies and 500 visitors.
- Job Fair in Prahova County: The event was attended by 47 companies and 553 visitors.
- Job Fair in Calarasi: The event was attended by 48 companies and 537 visitors.
- Job Fair Ilfov County Hall: The event was attended by 43 companies and 513 visitors.

### **2. SIMPRACT**

Transition from school to working life by doing and creating simulated enterprise National Council of Private Small and Medium Enterprises in Romania (CNIPMMR), in partnership with the Young Entrepreneurs Association of Romania (YEAR), held in 6-7 November, 2015 “National Fair of Simulated Enterprises -3rd edition, in SIMPRACT project - transition from school to working life by doing and creating simulated enterprise.” Competing for best simulated enterprise entered 27 companies participating at the fair about 300 students. Students come from eight universities in Romania.

Areas of activity covered by the participants were IT, advertising, fashion design, consulting, tourism, trade, transport. Between 17 to 19 November 2015 was held in Karlsruhe (Germany) the “International Fair of Simulated Enterprise” 51st edition, organized under the aegis of EUROPEAN - PEN International, the international network of simulated training firms and businesses. National Council of Private Small and Medium Enterprises in Romania (CNIPMMR), coordinator of SIMPRACT - Transition from school to working life by doing and creating simulated enterprise was present at the event with representatives of three simulated enterprise created under the project. SIMPRACT offered the chance for three students from each simulated enterprise awarded at the fair in Bucharest to represent their companies,

university, country, and project at the trade fair in Karlsruhe, ensuring funding for fee payment at the fair and for transport, accommodation and meals.

Within the International Fair in Karlsruhe 151 simulated enterprises training firms from educational institutions in Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Romania, South Korea Sweden, Switzerland and the USA presented their offer of products or services. The fair organized "Practice Enterprise Business Challenge" event, which brought together 8 multinational teams made up of over 70 participating countries students who received the task of working and analyzing a real company (Bosch) and then presenting the results of teamwork in an elimination rounds. The two top positions were Romanian Simpract students. Also, a surprise competition, "Mystery Shopping" brought the second place to a Romanian Simpract students.

### Sources of information

#### **UNILATERAL REPORT**

**Trade unions:** *Romanian Trade Union organisations*

This are the actions taken by Romanian trade union confederations in terms of the four priorities identified in the scope of promoting solutions to reduce youth unemployment and to give them concrete measures to improve young people's employment opportunities:

- **Project YOUTH GARANTEES** "Transnational partnership for inclusive labor market for young people"
- **Project ERASTMUS AXA.4.Danube strategy** "The development of apprenticeship-type programs in initial training in Romania (DAL-IVET)"
- **Project PRO JUVENES;**

**Youth Guarantees**, it is a project implemented by the Ministry of Labor, Family, and Social Protection, in partnership with the National Council of Private Small and Medium Enterprises in Romania, the Association of Young Entrepreneurs of Romania and the National Trade Union Bloc.

The project is co-financed from the European Social Fund Operational Program Human Resources Development 2007- 2013. Strengthening policies and practices regarding employment and network development at European level and strengthening the capacity of labor market actors (trade unions and employers, public authorities, NGOs) to actively engage in promoting employment and social inclusion of young people by implementing policies that concern their employment - volunteering law, the law internship, apprenticeship law etc.

The project is implemented by the Ministry of Labor, Family, and Social Protection, Department for Social Dialogue in partnership with "AUR" - The National Association of Specialists in Human Resources - Partner 1 Association Novapolis - Center for Analysis and Initiative for Development - Partner 2, Meridian National Trade Union Confederation - Partner 3 and the General Union of Industrialists in Romania - Partner 4.

The main project results:

- 3 development of thematic networks of European and national human resources development and social inclusion;
- completion of 51 transnational partnerships at European level
- achieving a 16 exchanges and transfer of good practice from EU countries that have a positive history in the development of inclusive labor markets;
- 6th developing comparative studies at European level on issues of social inclusion and labor market integration of young people;
- organizing two thematic conferences, seminars and September 8 working groups in order to enlarge ideas and solutions for human resource development, social inclusion and employability of young people.

The objectives of transnational partnerships:

- transfer of experiences and best practices regarding vocational training adaptation to new technologies, including mentoring;
- information transfer and innovations on an inclusive labor market
- transfer experience and best practices for human resources development;
- promote the transfer of expertise on inclusion and employment of long-term unemployed;
- developing a labor market more permissive, flexible and inclusive;
- developing joint programs to promote employment;
- development of new methods for combating discrimination and inequalities in the labor market;

- disseminating innovative methods to other actors involved in combating discrimination;
- identifying the best ways to use the funds for human resource development; promoting the development of comparative studies and exchanges of experience at European level;
- identifying the most appropriate ways to teach entrepreneurship through practical methods;
- strengthening the mechanisms for coordination and control of the implementation of public policies, strengthening social dialogue at all levels to facilitate the adoption, implementation and enforcement of policies affecting the labor market;
- transfer experience and best practices on political mechanisms, administrative, institutional and social partnership which helps to increase the employability of young people on the labor market.

**Project YOUTH GARANTEES**” Transnational partnership for inclusive labor market for young people”

The overall objective of the project "Youth Guarantees!" is to provide a set of active measures (vocational orientation, training programs, apprenticeships in companies and public institutions, and assistance in finding a job).

The project is co-financed from the European Social Fund Operational Program Human Resources Development 2007- 2013.

The beneficiaries are young people who have completed baccalaureate and have no job, they are aged 16-24 years and residence in the counties of Arges, Braila, Buzau, Calarasi, Constanta, Dolj, Dambovit, Galati, Giurgiu, Gorj , Ialomita, Ilfov, Mehedinti, Olt, Prahova, Teleorman, Tulcea, Valcea, Vrancea and Bucharest.  
The project runs from December 23 2013-24 June 2015 and aims:

- Improve the labor market integration of young people;
- To increase the skills of young people in occupations or professions required on the local and regional labor;
- Linking supply with demand for labor in the economy, changing the status (of the unemployed, social assistance) the employee or small entrepreneur;
- To combat long-term unemployment among young people.

**Project ERASMUS AXA.4.Danube strategy** "The development of apprenticeship-type programs in initial training in Romania (DAL-IVET)"

Applicant: National Centre for Technical and Vocational Education Development (CNDIPT), Romania

Partner: Landesakademie Fortbildung und für Schulen Personalentwicklung year rAöR, Germany

Social partners part of project: Cartel “Alfa””;BNS -National Trade Union Bloc; UGIR- General Union of Industrialists in Romania;

Main objective of the project was: Exchanging best practices program was thus designed to ensure contact and presenting all kinds of institutions involved in vocational training by dual system.

Understand the importance of education dual and its benefits on results and economic performance, employment, adequate and developing working life of young people, by organizing conferences / campaigns to disseminate information among students, parents, businesses, local communities (enrollment in tertiary dual is an effective and efficient option youth training, giving them the chance of a job);

- Involving local authorities, the local community and employers in support of vocational schools in the dual system (financial, space and equipment, experienced professionals etc);
- Encourage cooperation relations and continuous training of teachers and professionals (masters, tutors) to correlate the theoretical and practical training. It is very important that companies have an active role in youth education and cooperation is required structured and planned practice between teachers and tutors.

The evolution of professional qualifications should be considered from the perspective of technological developments, but also in terms of developments and trends in the current generation of young people. This are some conclusions of the project.

## Spain

### **Sources of information**

**Trade Unions:** UGT, CC.OO.

**Employers:** CEOE, CEPYME

Since the “FoA” 2nd follow-up report on youth employment in July 2015, there has not been any improvement to be underlined in this document as achievement of new agreements in bipartite and tripartite areas or about the Youth Guarantee.

In relation to this last point, the signers express worries about its development. In this sense, it is important to bear in mind that the “FoA” recommends the active participation of the social partners in the development and the follow-up of the Youth Guarantee Plan. In the Spanish case, the participation has been extremely poor in the last year, despite of the information requests and involvement of the union and business partners.

Beyond that, the *3rd Employment and collective agreement* is still current. The terms of this agreement are detailed in the 2nd “FoA” report that we mentioned before.

## Sweden

### **Sources of information**

**Trade Unions:** The Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO), the Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (TCO), the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations (Saco)

**Employers:** The Confederation of Swedish Enterprise (Svenskt Näringsliv), CEEP Sweden (the members are the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions – SALAR (Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting); Swedish Agency for Government Employers – SAGE (Arbetsgivarverket), KFS, Fastigo and Pacta)

### **Introductory remark – autonomous social partners**

Swedish social partners have a long tradition of being engaged in work to make labour markets more inclusive and well-functioning. The social partners are responsible for setting wages on the Swedish labour market and safeguard the social partners' autonomy. Fundamental components of the model are that the trade unions have a high level of organization rate, employer associations have a high level of affiliations, that the collective bargaining agreements enjoys a strong position, and that the representatives of the social partners at workplaces with mandates to conduct negotiations are independent from the State.

This independence is manifested in part by the majority of the labour market being regulated by a number of main agreements reached at a central level between employers and trade unions, which regulates such aspects as negotiation procedures, dispute resolution procedures and development issues. There are currently about 650 central collective bargaining agreements stipulating wages and general terms of employment in Sweden.

### **Current state of play**

Youth employment is still high in Sweden but the situation on the labour market is improving for a majority of young people, according to key indicators. Unemployment among youth age 15-24 has declined from 23,6% in the first quarter of 2015 to 21,8% in the first quarter of 2016.<sup>31</sup> According to an analysis by the PES<sup>32</sup>, the relatively high unemployment rate is largely explained by high frictional unemployment, with short periods of unemployment for most youth. The share of NEETs is decreasing from 9,3% in the third quarter of 2014 to 8,7% in the third quarter of 2015.<sup>33</sup>

However, there are exceptions to this positive development. The share of young people registered at the PES for more than 90 days has increased from 23% in 2008 to 41% in 2015. The share of young people registered for more than 12 months has more than doubled, rising from 8% in 2008 to 21% in 2015. Three groups of young people stand out as running a particularly high risk of unemployment: youth with disabilities, who lack a high school diploma, and/or are foreign-born.

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<sup>31</sup> The Swedish Labour Force Survey (AKU), available at [www.scb.se](http://www.scb.se)

<sup>32, 3</sup> Arbetsförmedlingen "Perspektiv på ungdomsarbetslösheten", 21 April 2016

## Priority 1: Learning

Learning is at the top of the agenda of the political debate in Sweden. The social partners continue to take active part in both short- and long-term motorizing actions. The scope of the framework to encourage the social partners is therefore fulfilled but can be improved. The social partners influence the development within the area of learning that is the scope of the framework. The framework can be seen as a reference in designing measures to meet the needs that faces the challenges that is in the scope.

### **WorldSkills and the campaign “2016 – the year of vocational training”**

WorldSkills Sweden aims to raise the quality, status and interest in the Swedish vocational training. WorldSkills Sweden is a collaboration between the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, LO and the government via Ministry of Education, Swedish National Agency for Education and the agency for Higher Vocational Education. WorldSkills Sweden organizes WorldSkills Championship and the Swedish Occupation national team's participation in WorldSkills Championships (EuroSkills) and World Championship (WorldSkills).

The partners behind WorldSkills Sweden agreed to make a substantial economic contribution in order to put extra focus on the vocational training during 2016 under the campaign “Vocational training – a smart choice”. The campaign aims to raise the quality in vocational training, improve knowledge regarding occupations and future needs for competence, influence attitudes towards vocational training and collect knowledge regarding vocational training.

### **Drop-outs and Plug-In**

SALAR's work with “Drop-outs” is focused on the new project *Plug-In 2.0*, which SALAR is conducting together with six regional associations and at least 45 municipalities. *Plug In 2.0* will continue and deepen the work done within the *Plug In*, and it will be extended with one region. The structure with efforts being conducted simultaneously at the national, regional and local levels will continue. The project is co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF). *PlugInnovation* is a national platform developed in the *Plug In-project*, whose purpose is to prevent students from dropping out of upper-secondary school. The platform comprises information on research and studies about school absenteeism.

## Priority 2: Transition

The youth guarantee has been implemented in Sweden.

The social partners have signed collective agreements for student co-workers in parts of the private, municipal and central government sectors. The purpose is to provide students with opportunities to prepare for working life, as well as facilitate employment in sectors where there is likely to be a labour shortage in coming years. Student co-workers are part-time positions, and the work is to be carried out in parallel with studies. For the employees the agreement provides an opportunity to work on qualified tasks with a clear link to their ongoing studies, as well as facilitating the transition from studies to working life. The employers gain the opportunity to utilize the competence of students in tertiary education while at the same time having the chance to show their business to be able to attract a competent workforce.

## Priority 3: Employment

### **Youth Introduction agreement**

Some of the social partners have signed collective agreements on a form of youth introduction employment (YA), further explained in the annex to the Framework of Actions on Youth Employment, case study from Sweden. The Swedish government has introduced financial support structures to promote employment within the agreements. In total there are 42

collective agreements on YA. Since the launch of the scheme approx. 2 100 youths have gained employment via YA. The employment is time limited and there are currently approx. 870 ongoing employments within YA. The reform is being supported, monitored and evaluated from different authorities. There are also ongoing political work in order to increase the use of the model. From 1/6 2016 the targeted group for the scheme is being broadened, to also encompass long term unemployed persons older than 25 years old and newly arrived immigrants.

#### **Welfare Trainee in health care**

The local social partners in the municipality of Trollhättan and the local Employment Service are arranging trainees in health care sector. The Employment Service has recruited people, who have been practicing for a month to see if they would like to work in the sector. A one-year education has been created and is approved by the Swedish National Agency for Education. (The program is 46 weeks, including holiday) Participants are studying three to four days per week and are at their appointed workplace one to two days a week. There they have a private tutor, who is in contact with the school to plan the training periods. Since the regulation now allows a trainee job for up to two years (previously one year), the parties agree that they can use the opportunity to extend the trainee period in case the education is not finished after one year.

#### **Priority 4: Entrepreneurship**

##### **Giving young entrepreneurs better opportunities to create a viable company**

The Swedish Jobs and Society foundation is the leading actor in start-up advice in Sweden. Jobs and Society is supporting entrepreneurship in Sweden through professional start-up advice at no cost at local level to people thinking about starting a business. Private industry, authorities and organizations finance the activities. Private businesses contribute with the majority of financing. Jobs and Society is a project aiming to increase entrepreneurship among people aged 18 – 35 years. The program contains of start-up advice, workshops, specific information and mentorship for one year.

## United Kingdom

### Sources of information

**Trade Unions:** TUC

**Employers:** CBI, CEEP

### Background

Each year, the UK social partners focus their attention and reporting on an individual priority area of the Framework. This report focuses on the interlinked priorities of employment and entrepreneurship.

### National level activity

The number of young people who are officially classed as Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in the UK is continuing to fall, according to the latest official figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS).<sup>34</sup> The latest unemployment rate for 16-24 year olds is 13.7%, down from 15.9% a year ago.<sup>35</sup>

### England / UK

The UK government's strategy, *English Apprenticeships: Our 2020 Vision* (December 2015) set out interventions and initiatives (some already underway) intended to promote, fund, increase numbers and ensure the quality of apprenticeships in all sectors of the economy. The plan includes:

- A commitment to increase the number of apprenticeships to **three million starts** over the next five years
- Funding for apprenticeships to be raised and sustained through an annual **Apprenticeship Levy**, charged at 0.5% from all UK employers with payrolls in excess of £3m
- Reforms to increase the quality of apprenticeships; 'employer-led standards'; and; establishing the **Institute for Apprenticeships**, an 'independent and employer-led body', to regulate the quality of apprenticeships from April 2017.
- A new **Digital Apprenticeship Service** (an online portal) for employers, allowing levy payers to access funding, and other businesses to find training providers and courses, along with other sources of information and support.
- Government's right to set **targets for numbers of apprenticeships for public sector bodies** (established in the Enterprise Act 2016)
- **Public Procurement rules** to embed skills development and apprenticeships in larger contracts
- Strengthening links between employers and schools; **volunteer Enterprise Advisers** (recruited from businesses via Local Enterprise Partnerships); traineeships for basic employability skills
- Establishment of the **Careers and Enterprise Company**, an employer-led organisation aiming to strengthen collaboration between schools, colleges, employers and enterprise organisations.

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<sup>34</sup> Labour Force Survey - Office for National Statistics Available at: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/unemployment/bulletins/youngpeoplenotineducationemploymentortrainingneet/latest>

<sup>35</sup> Youth Unemployment Statistics, Briefing Paper No.5871, 18 May 2016, House of Commons Library Available at: <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN05871#fullreport>

Social partners have responded with concerns over aspects of the UK government's strategy, including questioning a target-driven approach which focuses on apprenticeships 'starts' and which it is feared may lead to insufficient attention to quality of experience and outcomes.

### Wales

The Welsh Government, with support from the European Social Fund, will invest £144 million to achieve 52,000 apprenticeships in West Wales and the Valleys over the next four years, with the majority of places targeted at 16-24 year olds.

### Scotland

The Scottish Government has an established Youth Employment Strategy and Modern Apprenticeship programme. It sets an overarching target of reducing the level of youth unemployment by 40% by 2021 and contains 11 key performance indicators to reflect areas of focus.

### Northern Ireland

The new strategy in Northern Ireland, *Securing our Success: the Northern Ireland Strategy on Apprenticeships* (July 2015), emphasises: transitions between employment, study and continuous development; ensuring a high quality experience for young people; and; quality outcomes for employers.

## **CEEP**

CEEP members have drawn attention to the potential impact of the new right to set targets on apprenticeships in public bodies. The Local Government Association (LGA) estimates that the combined effect of the targets and the levy will cost local authorities £600m per year and is calling for an exemption, given considerable budget reductions since 2010. The Department of Health announced (January 2016) an NHS commitment to delivering over 17,000 apprenticeship starts during 2015/16, reaching more than 100,000 by 2020. Delivering this amongst individual Trusts will be complex. NHS Employers is establishing a network of HR colleagues to help prepare for, and implement changes to apprenticeship policy. Unions have raised concerns that employers are using low-paid apprenticeships in place of more expensive workers. NHS Scotland has agreed that no Modern Apprentice will be paid less than the Living wage, now £8.25 an hour.<sup>36</sup> Schools and colleges are urging appropriate investment in face-to-face careers education and some are questioning how this will align with new (relatively small numbers of) volunteer Enterprise Advisers. In addition, local authorities argue for the apprenticeship levy to be pooled and devolved in order to respond to local skills gaps.

## **CBI**

CBI has been promoting the importance and necessity of business engagement within education from primary school age through to secondary school age and beyond to business/university collaboration. The CBI has produced multiple documents to encourage business engagement, including *Making Education your Business*, a toolkit produced alongside the Royal Society to help businesses better engage with schools around STEM

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<sup>36</sup> Scottish Government NHS Circular: PCS(AFC)2016/4 Available at: [http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/pcs/PCS2016\(AFC\)04.pdf](http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/pcs/PCS2016(AFC)04.pdf)

education. The CBI is also working closely with the Careers and Enterprise Company to establish best practice for businesses wanting to engage with schools.

## **TUC**

The new Institute of Apprenticeships will have the key roles of approving new apprenticeship standards and assuring the quality of apprenticeships. Both the TUC and CBI have called for the body to have a meaningful role, including in defining success metrics and measuring the impact of the new system against this, with appropriate resources. The social partners in the UK have called for the institute to comprise employer and union representatives, a model similar to the UK Low Pay Commission, which is responsible for advising on the level of the national minimum wage. The social partners are keen to see an Institute developed which can genuinely represent the interests of both employers and apprentices. This would involve ensuring that the new apprenticeship system enables employers to fully use their apprenticeship levy contributions by providing high quality apprenticeships that can address skills gaps and raise UK productivity.

## **Local level activity**

Locally, employers continue to work closely with local authorities, schools, colleges and others to support apprenticeship and training programmes, provide sector-specific opportunities, promote entrepreneurship and enable employer engagement with those in education. For example:

- Darlington Foundation for Jobs campaign is a joint initiative to tackle youth unemployment led by the Northern Echo and Darlington Borough Council, in association with the Darlington Partnership of public and private sector organisations and backed by the Royal Academy of Engineering. It creates additional apprenticeship places and internships, and builds links with business for young people while still at school.
- Southampton City Council offers financial incentives to employers who recruit apprentices who are looked-after children or care-leavers, young offenders, young carers, teenage parents, young people in 'troubled families', or young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.
- Sheffield City Council partners with the Sheffield College, Peter Jones Enterprise Academy and universities to develop an 'enterprise pipeline' which nurtures emerging talent and ensures that young people with a passion for enterprise have access to appropriate support.

## **Future actions**

Social Partners will continue to promote actions supporting young people's routes to employment, progression and entrepreneurship, and consult with government on its further guidance which is due in June 2016.

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## Annex I – List of contact persons <sup>37</sup>

| Country | Organisation   | Contact persons  |
|---------|--|--|
| Austria | VÖWG   |  |
|         | IV (Federation of Austrian Industry)                             | Mr Helwig Aubauer<br>h.aubauer@iv-net.at<br>Tel: +431711350<br><br>Ms Katharina Lindner<br>k.lindner@iv-net.at   |
|         | WKÖ (Austrian economic chamber)                                  | Ms Christa Schweng<br>christa.schweng@wko.at<br><br>Ms Gabriele Strassegger<br>Gabriele.strassegger@wko.at<br><br>Ms Barbara Wilfinger<br>Barbara.wilfinger@wko.at<br>Tel: +43 (0)5 90 900 |
|         | ÖGB (Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund)                         | Mr Oliver Roepke<br>oliver.roepke@bvl.oegb.or.at<br>Tel: +32 2 230 74 63   |
| Belgium | VBO-FEB (Federation of Belgian enterprises)                      | Ms Michèle Claus<br>mc@vbo-feb.be<br>Tel: +32 25 15 08 11  |
|         | FGTB-ABVV (General Labour Federation of Belgium)                 | Mr Jean-François Macours<br>Jf.macours@fgtb.be<br>Tel: +32 25 06 82 55   |
|         | UNIZO (Federation of Self-employed and SMEs)                     | Ms Nele Muys<br>nele.muys@unizo.be<br>Tel: +32 2 21 22 511   |
|         | CSC-ACV (Confederation of Belgian Christian Trade Unions)        | Mr Piet Van Den Bergh<br>u99pvg@acv-csc.be   |
|         | CGSLB (General Confederation of Liberal Trade Unions of Belgium) | Ms Vera Dos Santos<br>Vera.dos.santos@cgsblb.be  |

<sup>37</sup> This list is composed of contacts given in the questionnaires or, by default, of Social Dialogue Committee members

| Country  | Organisation  | Contact persons  |
|----------|---|--|
|          | UNISOC (union des entreprises à profit social)                | Ms Sylvie Slangen<br>s.slangen@unisoc.be<br>Tel: +32 2 739 10 74   |
| Bulgaria | BIA (Bulgarian Industrial Association)                        | Ms Sylvija Todorava<br>silvia@bia-bg.com<br>Tel: +35929800303<br><br>Mr Bojidar Danev<br>Danev@bia-bg.com  |
|          | BICA (Association of Industrial Capital in Bulgaria)          | Ms. Rossitsa Yankova<br>ryankova@bica-bg.org<br>Tel: +359 2 963 3752   |
|          | CITUB (Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria) | Ms Atanaska Todorova<br>atodorova@citub.net<br>Tel: +359 2 4010 688 / +359 887 504 795<br><br>Ms. Velichka Mikova<br>vmikova@citub.net<br>Tel: +359 2 4010 476 |
|          | PODKREPA (Confederation of Labour)                            | Mr Dimitar Manolov<br>Dimitar_manolov@podkrepa.org<br>Tel:+359 2 980 77 66   |
| Croatia  | UATAC (Union of Autonomous Trade Unions of Croatia)           | Ms Ana Milicevic Pezelj<br>ana.pezelj@sssh.hr  |
|          | ITUC (Independent Trade Unions of Croatia)                    | Ms Marija Hanzevacki<br>marija.hanzevacki@nhs.hr   |
|          | CEA (Croatian Employers' Association)                         | Ms Lidija Horvatic<br>lidija.horvatic@hup.hr   |
| Cyprus   | SEK (Cyprus Workers Confederation)                            |  |
|          | Türk-SEN  | Mr Nihad Elmas<br>turksen@kibris.net<br>Tel:+903922272444  |
|          | DEOK (Democratic Labour Federation of Cyprus)                 |  |
|          | OEB (Cyprus Employers & Industrialists Federation)            | Mr Michael Antoniou<br>mantoniou@oeb.org.cy<br>Tel: +35722665102   |

| Country        | Organisation   | Contact persons   |
|----------------|--|---|
| Czech Republic | CMKOS (Czech-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions)   | Mr Pavel Janíčko<br>Janicko.pavel@cmkos.cz<br>Tel: +420 234 461 111   |
|                | SPCR (Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic) | Ms Marta Blízková<br>mblizkova@spcr.cz<br>Tel: +420 225 279 602<br><br>Ms Vladimira Drbalova<br>vdrbalova@spcr.cz |
| Denmark        | DA (Confederation of Danish Employers)                 | Mr Simon Neergaard-Holm<br>snh@da.dk<br>Tel: +45 29200383   |
|                | LO (Danish Confederation of Trade Unions)              | Mr David Hedegaard Andersen<br>dha@lo.dk<br>Tel: +45 3524 6408  |
|                | Local Government Denmark                               |   |
| Estonia        | ETTK (Estonian Employers' Confederation)               | Anneli Entson, education adviser<br>anneli.entson@employers.ee  |
|                | EAKL (Association of Estonian Trade Unions)            | Kaja Toomsalu, secretary on collective agreement and wage policy<br>kaja.toomsalu@eakl.ee                         |
| Finland        | EK (Confederation of Finnish Industry)                 | Ms Eeva Korolainen<br>eeva.korolainen@ek.fi<br>Tel: 00358942020   |
|                | SAK (Suomen Ammattiliitojen Keskusjärjestö)            | Ms Janne Metsämäki<br>janne@metsamaki@sak.fi<br>Tel: +358405223614  |
|                | LGE + CEEP Finnish section                             | Ms Henrika Nybondas-Kangas<br>henrika.nybondas-kangas@kt.fi<br>Tel: +358 50 3574233                               |
|                | SY - The Federation of Finnish Enterprises - FFE       | Mr Rauno Vanhanen<br>rauno.vanhanen@yrittajat.fi<br>Tel: +358 9 229 229 35  |
|                | STTK   | Mr Risto Kousa<br>Risto.kousa@sttk.fi<br>Tel: +3589131521   |
| France         | MEDEF (Federation of enterprises of France)            | Ms Garance Pineau<br>gpineau@medef.fr<br>Tel: +33153591919  |

| Country | Organisation  | Contact persons  |
|---------|---|--|
|         |   |  |
|         | CGPME (General Confederation of Small and Medium sized enterprises) | Mr Georges Tissié<br>tissié@cgpme.fr<br>Tel: +33 1 56 89 09 30                       |
|         | CGT (Confédération Générale du Travail)                             |  |
|         | CFDT  | Mariano Fandos<br>mfandos@cfdt.fr<br>Tel: +33142038000                               |
| Germany | BDA (Confederation of German employers' associations)               | Ms Renate Hornung-Draus<br>B.Voye@arbeitgeber.de ( <i>secretary</i> )                |
|         | ZDH (German Confederation of Skilled Crafts)                        | Mr Jan Dannenbring<br>dannenbring@zdh.de   |
|         | DGB   | Ms Alexandra Kramer<br>Alexandra.kramer@dgb.de                                       |
|         | bvöd  | Ms Inge Reichert   |
| Greece  | FGI (Federation of Greek Industries)                                | Ms Irini Yvonne Pari<br>main@sevbxl.be<br>Tel: +3222310053                           |
|         | GSEE (Greek General Confederation of Labour)                        |  |
| Hungary | MGYOSZ (Confederation of Hungarian Employers and Industrialists)    | Ms Borbála Vadász<br>vadasz@mgyosz.hu<br>Tel: +3614742041                            |
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# Annex II – Framework of Actions on Youth Employment (June 2013)

## INTRODUCTION

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Youth unemployment is one of Europe's most pressing problems. In the current economic and financial crisis the lack of job opportunities has affected young people more than any other group in society; this is reflected in high and increasing youth unemployment rates and levels of precariousness.

In Europe, more than 5.68 million young people are unemployed. The average rate of youth unemployment (23.4%) is more than double the overall unemployment rate (10.7%). Even before the crisis the youth unemployment rate was particularly high (17% compared with an average rate of 7% in 2008).

Those with jobs are strongly represented in temporary and part-time work with 42% on temporary contracts and 32% in part-time contracts, especially young women.

This shows that there are structural reasons including lack of job opportunities, in particular in some regions, making it difficult for young people to fully integrate into labour markets. The crisis has exacerbated this youth unemployment challenge in many countries especially for disadvantaged groups. More than half of young men and women on the labour markets are now unemployed in some countries. Urgent action is required to provide more and better jobs for the young and avoid scarring effects both to young people and European economies and societies as a whole.

When they enter into the labour market, many young people lack work experience. Therefore, in order to achieve a quick introduction of new recruits into labour market, it is necessary to address this issue. In addition, insufficient basic skills, lack of focus on learning outcomes in education and training, as well as a negative perception of initial vocational education and training (IVET) can lead to difficult integration into the labour market.

Contracts of indefinite duration are the majority form of employment relationships. For some young people, temporary contracts could provide a helpful stepping stone into the labour market. However, supporting young people to develop their career from there is important so as to limit as much as possible the proportion of young people who may well find themselves stuck without longer-term prospects. Social partners should support them in doing this and ensure the adequate protections apply to these contracts.

Longer and unpredictable transitions to the labour markets can have a negative impact on young people's confidence in the future and daily lives, notably in terms of access to a regular income, risk of poverty, possibility of forming a family, and health. Moreover, without a job and adequate social protection, more young people are dependent on their families for a longer time and are more likely to slip into poverty.

According to Eurofound, the cost of 7.5 million young people (15-29) who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs) is more than €153 billion a year, or 1.2% of EU GDP. We risk missing a great deal of the potential of the young generation of Europeans. If this risk materialises, European economies would be losing a part of the young to social exclusion. This would also undermine Europe's competitiveness and innovation potential for the next decades.

Active labour market policies are part of the solution, but reducing youth unemployment is not possible without a strong commitment to education, growth and recovery. Adequate financial resources should be allocated at the appropriate level taking into account fiscal discipline and the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy.

Employability is a valuable way for young people to invest in their future. Measures and targeted incentives should be put in place to stimulate employment and achieve a better match between young people's aspirations and available vacancies.

## 1. CHALLENGES

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The crisis together with the on-going process of economic transformation coincides with profound demographic, cultural and social changes throughout Europe.

Youth unemployment is a key European concern that needs to be addressed. Two main objectives are to create the right conditions to foster employment opportunities for young people and to ease their transitions between education and work.

European social partners aim to address three inter-related challenges:

1. Create more and better jobs and attractive career opportunities for young people;
2. Strengthen the quality and relevance of education and training at all levels to address skills mismatches;
3. Optimise the role of industry, in particular SMEs, and of high-performing public services in Europe as a driver of sustainable and inclusive growth.

More specific challenges include the following:

***Creating more and better jobs and the right framework conditions for smoother transitions into employment.*** With more than 26 million people unemployed, the main challenge remains the stimulation of a job-rich growth pattern and the creation of jobs. In this context, social partners together with institutions should engage at European, national and local levels to foster economic growth, productivity and competitiveness in order to improve the quality and increase the number of jobs. This will make it possible for young people to fully integrate into the labour market.

***Promoting the attractiveness of vocational education and training (VET) and ensuring its quality.*** This will contribute to improving the learning environment and providing young people with relevant skills and competences.

***Promoting the acquisition of transversal and specific competences and skills:***

The evolution towards process-oriented and interdisciplinary work organisation increasingly requires transversal and technical competences, problem-solving and communication skills, and teamwork. Transversal and specific competences and skills should be promoted on a lifelong learning basis including in the work place.

***Dealing with the increasing need for highly skilled workers:*** Together with medium-skill, high-skill jobs are very likely to be on the rise in the coming decades (CEDEFOP forecasts 2020). Preventing young people from dropping out from school and training and incentivising them to achieve medium and high educational attainments, be it through higher vocational education and training or university pathways, will contribute to reinforcing the EU's competitive edge through higher added value and quality production and services. Higher educational attainments will also contribute to their personal and social development.

***Improving the matching between skills supply and demand:*** Closing this gap will help fill the current 2 million job vacancies in European labour markets. In some regions in particular, even qualified young people face difficulties integrating in labour markets due to a lack of jobs or skills mismatches. This requires increasing collaboration between educational institutions and social partners so that young people acquire the right skills. Closing the skills gap will also require better information to young workers on possible attractive career prospects of sectors/areas they may not have considered. This will increase the chances for employers to find the right candidates and for employees to choose the career they aspire to.

## **2. SOCIAL PARTNERS' APPROACH**

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The European social partners reject the inevitability of a lost generation. That is why they have included this Framework of Actions as the first priority of the Work Programme for 2012-2014. They agreed to “focus on the link between education, young people's expectations and labour market needs, while taking account of young people's transition from school into the labour market, in an effort to increase employment rates in general”.

In this respect, European social partners fully support the objective of article 3 of the TEU of working for a highly competitive social market economy and article 9 of the TFEU of promoting “a high level of employment, the guarantee of adequate social protection, the fight against social exclusion, and a high level of education, training and protection of human health.”

With this Framework of Actions, we call on national social partners, public authorities and other stakeholders to act together to achieve concrete progress in favour of youth employment. A multi-pronged approach is needed with measures and appropriate resources to secure high quality learning outcomes, promote vocational education and training, and create jobs.

The European social partners are thus committed to putting forward practical solutions to address youth unemployment taking into account the specific situation of each country, in order to contribute to growth, employment and social cohesion.

This Framework of Actions is based on existing and new practices. European social partners aim to promote the most effective initiatives identified across Europe that could be used as inspiration for designing solutions by national social partners in their respective contexts. We also include recommendations to other relevant actors such as the EU institutions and Member States.

### **BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC:**

- are convinced that investing and creating more and better jobs is the way forward to improve the situation of young people on labour markets,
- consider that much can be achieved by high-performing education and training systems to deliver the right skills for young people, while taking into account their expectations, and the efficiency and resilience of labour markets,
- stress the importance of measures and means aiming to stimulate sustainable and inclusive growth and job creation in Europe,
- want to contribute to setting the right incentives and framework conditions to make the hiring of young people a more attractive option for employers, particularly through collective bargaining between social partners,
- aim to promote adaptability of both enterprises and workers, and opportunities to workers through more dynamic careers,
- recall that inclusive, open and efficient labour markets are fundamental for improving young people's access and sustainable integration in employment,
- affirm the joint responsibility of social partners at all levels in policy development through constructive autonomous social dialogue, in line with the diversity of national industrial relation systems,
- acknowledge the broader dimension of the challenge, which calls for close cooperation with public authorities, as well as education, training institutions, employment services and open dialogue with youth organisations at all levels,
- consider that current and future measures taken must comply with the aims of intergenerational solidarity,
- stress the shared responsibility of employers, public authorities and individuals to invest in skills development.

## **3. PRIORITIES**

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### **PRIORITY 1: LEARNING**

Young people need to be equipped with basic competences, transversal competences, as well as technical and specific competences for their own personal development and employability.

Well-designed education and training curricula, with social partner involvement, responsive to labour market and young people's needs can contribute to reducing the skills mismatch.

Work-based learning, including apprenticeships and traineeships, can also contribute to smoother transition into the labour market for the young and reduce the risks of long transitions.

### **Primary and secondary education**

Access to basic education is a fundamental right and discrimination should be prevented.

Education is a value which benefits the individual and contributes to achieving the Europe 2020 targets. Therefore, governments must provide a well-functioning universal, free and quality general public education – both primary and secondary – and invest in vocational training that prepares pupils properly for further general or vocational education and training pathways.

Young people dropping out of school or vocational education and training before having acquired basic skills are more likely to be confronted with difficult transitions from school to the labour market or to face unemployment later on in life.

Coordinated action towards the design, implementation and monitoring of curricula and education programmes must ensure that learning outcomes foster young people's aspirations and employability.

### **Initial vocational education and training**

In work-based learning models, such as dual learning systems, a significant part of the education takes place in an enterprise. The principle is to alternate between learning and training in school and on-the-job learning while working in an enterprise.

High-quality initial vocational education and training systems have shown merits in a number of countries, involving social partners in their design and functioning.

In particular, well-established dual learning systems can contribute to lower youth unemployment levels.

It is difficult to transfer the dual learning system from one country to the other. The concept of work-based learning needs to be tailored to the context of each individual country, where applicable on a tripartite basis. The idea is to allow all countries that want to review/improve their systems to do so while being fully aware of the characteristics of other countries' systems.

### **Apprenticeships**

Well-designed apprenticeships systems have proved to be effective in easing young people's transitions into work.

The preconditions are the existence of places in enterprises and that pupils have acquired the necessary basic skills.

The agreement between young people and individual employers is to be quality-assured, inter alia through well-defined learning objectives between the apprentice, the training centre and the enterprise.

Social partners have a key role to play in the setting of quality regulatory frameworks at national level and in the design of procedures that limit excessive legal or administrative requirements. Additionally national governments should enforce these frameworks to ensure that the conditions are right to offer apprenticeships placements and comply with the agreed rules, to the benefit of the employer and the apprentice.

The European Commission and European social partners have a role to play to encourage the sharing and the improvement of national practices on apprenticeships.

### **Traineeships**

European social partners take note of the Commission's intention to propose a Council Recommendation on the European quality framework on traineeships and support Member States' actions aiming to improve the quality of traineeships.

### **Mobility**

Programmes such as Lifelong Learning Programme and specific sub-programmes like Leonardo, Grundvig, Erasmus and Comenius as well as the Youth in Action programme have proven their added value. European social partners support a next generation of EU education and training programmes focusing on learning mobility, cooperation for innovation, as an engine for growth.

## **I. Social Partners' Actions**

### **a. Short term**

- Take part in the monitoring and evaluation of vocational education and training (VET) to ensure smooth transitions from education to further training and/or work within quality regulatory frameworks at national level.
- Participate in the governance of apprenticeship systems.
- Identify and address barriers to the development of apprenticeship systems in each country.
- Contribute to designing and participating in setting up the EU alliance for apprenticeships.
- Envisage taking further joint actions towards the Council and the European Parliament based on the upcoming Commission's proposal for a Council Recommendation on a European quality framework on traineeships.
- Ensure that apprenticeship agreements between young people and enterprises clearly define the terms of the apprenticeship and learning objectives of the work-based part of the education.
- Promote the attractiveness of and work on the image of science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields at secondary school and in higher education levels. This should include attracting more women into STEM disciplines.

## **b. Long term**

- Promote education which better meets labour market and young people's needs whilst fostering young people's personal development and employability.
- Strengthen dual learning elements in existing work-based learning models.

## **II. Recommendations**

### **a. Short term**

- The European Commission should add the “share of work-based learning” as one of the variables in its proposed employability benchmark.
- The European Commission should adequately involve European social partners in the management of the next generation of education and training programmes.
- The EU and Member States should ensure that EU funding programmes such as ESF provide initial funding for setting up or reforming apprenticeship systems.
- The European Commission and Member States should support and coordinate European and national campaigns for changing the perception of vocational education and training in European societies, and promote quality work-based learning.
- Eurostat and CEDEFOP should cooperate to provide accurate and harmonised data and policy analysis on the share of workplace-based training at all levels of education and training.
- Member States in cooperation with social partners could consider establishing national and/or sectoral training funds.
- Member States should encourage employers to take on more apprentices and trainees, in consultation with social partners.
- Member States should devise, in consultation with the relevant social partners, framework conditions for apprenticeship and traineeship that are attractive for enterprises and young people, in line with the diversity of industrial relations systems and taking into account their learning objectives.
- Member States should fully implement national qualifications frameworks to improve learning outcomes at all levels of education and training.
- Member States should ensure quality initial vocational education and training (IVET) to increase the qualifications and employability of young people and reduce skills mismatches with the involvement of social partners.
- Member States should promote the attractiveness of and work on the image of initial vocational education and training (IVET) and apprenticeship systems towards young people, their parents and enterprises with the involvement of social partners.
- Member States should improve the labour market relevance of the education and training systems' output as a matter of priority, by putting a focus on investment in education and skills to address increasing skills' mismatches, in line with the Europe 2020 strategy and in the context of the European semester.

- Member States should offer early leavers from school and training and low skilled young people ways and means to re-enter education and training or second-chance education programmes in order to reduce skills mismatches.

## **b. Long term**

- The EU and Member States should spread the principles of work-based learning models and dual learning systems both in secondary and in higher education and training throughout Europe, including apprenticeship schemes and efficient, highly qualifying and sustainable initial and continuous vocational education and training (VET) systems.
- The EU and Member States should encourage cross-border mobility of teachers and trainers, as well as young people's learning mobility and study of foreign languages.
- Member States should ensure quality and inclusiveness in primary and secondary education and training so that pupils possess the necessary basic skills and to reduce early school-leaving.
- Member States should on the first hand encourage employers to offer more and better apprenticeship placements while on the other hand easing administrative procedures for enterprises and in particular for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) regarding the provision of apprenticeships.
- Member States, in cooperation with social partners, employer organisations, enterprises, crafts chambers and chambers of commerce and VET providers should work together at national level to ensure apprenticeships improving career opportunities for young people and enterprises' performance.

## **Priority 2: TRANSITION**

Change has become a constant feature of our economies and societies. This makes it important to ease and support transitions into and within the labour market with reliable, efficient unemployment insurance and social safety nets which are financially sustainable in the longer term.

Labour market transitions usually refer to periods between the exit from the education system and entry into the labour market as well as between different jobs. Under this priority, the focus is put on the transition between education and work.

Transition measures, including in the area of guidance, training and employment integration, are limited in time and agreed, monitored and performed by various actors in accordance with national industrial relations systems.

## **EU Youth Employment Initiatives**

European social partners support the European institutions' determination to address the youth unemployment challenge, while making sure that EU support will go where it is most urgently needed, in particular by enhancing territorial and social cohesion.

In particular, EU social partners welcome the Youth Employment Initiative which was adopted by the European Council on 8 February 2013 in the framework of the discussions on the Multi-Annual Financial Framework for 2014-2020.

### **Youth Guarantee**

Transitions from school to work have become longer and more complex for many young people.

As agreed by the EPSCO Council on 28 February 2013, the objective of a youth guarantee is to ensure that young job-seekers do not remain outside the labour market for long by providing them with 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.

Only a job-rich recovery and growth can reduce unemployment sustainably. With that in mind, youth guarantee schemes should take into account the following basic principles:

- a targeted approach for young people, especially those who are at the margins of the labour market,
- a partnership approach including the involvement of social partners,
- identification and allocation of the appropriate means,
- early intervention to prevent long-term unemployment,
- time-bound schemes with measurable outcomes,
- fostering of employability and mobility to prevent or reduce youth unemployment,
- promotion of employment opportunities for young people which enable them to become independent.

Considering the severity of the situation for young people nowadays, a focus on activation measures targeting the young through the setting-up of a youth guarantee and/or similar measures at national level is necessary in many countries. The youth guarantee may also contribute to the achievement of some Europe 2020 strategy objectives, namely a reduction of early school-leavers, an increase in the employment rate of the population aged 20-64 and a lifting-out of poverty and social exclusion. Measures and actions related to the youth guarantee represent a certain cost which needs to be weighed against the high social and economic cost of inaction.

The youth guarantee must be adapted to the situation in each Member State. Social partners should actively participate in its design and implementation, in partnership with public authorities and other relevant stakeholders. Financing the cost of these measures is primarily the responsibility of public authorities.

### **Guidance and information**

Establishing better guidance and information for all young women and men, and tailored career service centres focusing on employability is a good way to strengthen

the links between secondary, further and higher education and training and the labour market.

This is particularly evident in some sectors including public services. Young people are often unaware about the scope of possible careers and activities offered by both private and public employers and enterprises.

Disadvantaged groups of young people, such as socially marginalised young people, those lacking basic skills and school drop-outs, need special attention in guidance and information.

### **Identification of new skills and new jobs**

Identifying new skills and new jobs and anticipating their development can represent a complex task given the difficulty for social partners and training providers to anticipate future skills needs. Numerous and changing socio-economic and technological factors must be taken into consideration, making it challenging to compile reliable data in this area. Nevertheless this exercise is imperative.

As described in the Framework of Actions for lifelong development of competences and qualifications<sup>38</sup>, this anticipation takes place at two levels: the enterprise level and the national and/or sectoral level.

## **I. Social Partners' Actions**

### **a. Short term**

- Promote the attractiveness and value of jobs in “shortages” areas as future careers (e.g. in green economy, ICT, health, education, industry, etc.) by organising, where relevant, awareness-raising campaigns, open days, “taster” opportunities, initiatives between social partners and schools/colleges, etc., and/or restore the image of a sector or occupation in all their aspects, ensuring that health and safety regulations are respected in all sectors.
- Contribute to governments' actions aiming to implement youth guarantee schemes at national level.
- Take part in the design, monitoring, evaluation and review of youth guarantee measures implemented at national level to monitor their effectiveness and value for money, in light of their performance in activating the young unemployed.

### **b. Long term**

- Achieve a lifelong learning culture by informing and advising their members.

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<sup>38</sup>The Framework of Actions on lifelong development of competences and qualifications was adopted by the European social partners in 2002

- Prioritise support for young job seekers who wish to shift their career orientations and adapt their skills towards sectors in demand in order to address existing job vacancies, without discriminating against other age groups.
- Enhance the cooperation between human resource managers, private and public employment services, educational institutions, social counsellors, employers' and workers' representatives and external/internal coaches and/or mentors.
- Contribute to the design, implementation and monitoring of education, training and lifelong learning curricula, policies and programmes.
- Cooperate with governments and education and training institutions to provide young people with targeted information on available career opportunities and skills needs on labour markets, and on apprentices', trainees' and workers' rights and responsibilities.

## **II. Recommendations**

### **a. Short term**

- The EU and Member States should ensure that a share of ESF resources can be set aside to provide initial funding for Member States that have already introduced or wish to introduce a youth guarantee.
- The European Commission and Member States should involve European and national social partners in the design and implementation of the Youth Employment Initiative in order to ensure its success.
- Member States should examine and, where needed, address the interplay between tax and benefit systems in a fiscally neutral way, also respecting wage policies, in order to encourage young people's employment participation while ensuring full access to social protection.
- Member States should provide effective career guidance within the education systems to help young people make better informed decisions both in lower secondary education and in higher education. Career guidance materials should include clear information about available jobs and career prospects on the labour markets.
- Member States in partnership with employment services should include job search techniques in school curricula to better equip young people in their search for a first job.
- When introducing a youth guarantee or equivalent measures, Member States should follow an approach targeted firstly on young people who are at the margins of the labour market.

### **b. Long term**

- The EU and Member States could develop networks to collect information and exchange experiences aiming at fostering partnership with education and training providers at all levels.
- Member States should foster partnership between social partners and employment services to find effective ways to address vacancies.

- Member States should organise public employment services as effective “transition management agencies”, with the capacity to provide tailored advice to young people to facilitate their transition from the world of education and the world of work and between jobs.
- Member States should consult relevant actors in the administration of traineeship and apprenticeship programmes in order to ease administrative procedures for employers while respecting the social protection and rights of trainees and apprentices.
- Member States should seek to prevent young people without any qualification dropping out of schools with measures such as youth coaching and mentoring at school, compensatory measures such as bridging programmes, and systemic measures such as further training for teachers on the issue of early school-leavers and early warning system.

### **PRIORITY 3: EMPLOYMENT**

With more than 26 million Europeans unemployed, a key condition is to create more and better jobs in addition to the 2 million vacancies in Europe.

The level of youth unemployment is rising across Europe in many countries, a situation which has been exacerbated by the financial and economic crisis. Young people’s integration into the labour market is made more complicated in many countries due to a lack of jobs. Dynamic, open and mobile labour markets should aim to encourage job creation and job search without undermining social protection systems.

Adequate macro-economic policies and targeted measures for productive investment are needed to foster growth and a job-rich recovery. The competitiveness of EU products and services depends significantly on investment in research & development, innovation, education and training.

It is the responsibility of national social partners and governments, in accordance with industrial relations practices, to determine terms of employment, including labour costs, with the aim of helping young people to enter and develop in the labour market.

There is a lack of certain key competences and a shortage of adequate skills in certain sectors and regions in Europe, in particular related to new industries’ and specific public services’ needs. In order to fill in the existing vacancies, European social partners fully support EU and national efforts to provide the adequate (re)training and promote mobility opportunities for young jobseekers who are considering moving and working within and between Member States.

Well-designed and well-functioning employment regulations, and tax and social protection systems are essential for effective labour markets and for the promotion of more opportunities for young people to obtain a job. Labour market reforms, where needed via collective bargaining or legislation in consultation with social partners, could reduce segmentation and enhance access to labour markets for young people. When devising solutions to maximise youth employment opportunities, it is important to respect agreed social and labour rights.

Active labour market policies are also needed to promote young people's access to employment, which enables them to become independent.

Lifelong learning is a shared responsibility which lies with all actors: enterprises, workers and their representatives, public authorities and individuals. Each employee should be aware of and encouraged to develop her/his competences in the course of her/his working life.

Coaching, tutoring and mentoring, including through intergenerational cooperation, can facilitate the integration of young people in their first job. Such an approach can help enterprises promote simultaneously young and older workers' employment. Moreover, individual competence development plans can allow employers and employees to identify the required competences of the young worker in a given work situation.

A diversity of contractual arrangements can help to better match employers' and young workers' needs, for example to cope with changing demand for goods and services, to fill in for absent employees due to sickness or family duties, or to allow young people to better reconcile work with private life or education duties.

However, some young people may well find themselves stuck in a succession of short term and/or limited-hours contracts, accepting these working arrangements due to a lack of other opportunities, thus hampering their possibilities to embark on an autonomous life and kick-start a secure professional development.

Social partners and public authorities need to ensure that the conditions are right for job creation and that permanent, temporary and short-term contracts are regulated in a way that fosters sustainable integration of young people in employment.

## **I. Social Partners' Actions**

### **a. Short term**

- Agree specific terms and conditions of employment support for young job-seekers to promote their access to a first job including special programmes designed to support and qualify the young people to access jobs.
- Promote contracts of indefinite duration to ensure that they remain the general form of employment relationships.
- Ensure, according to the national industrial relations systems, an optimal balance between flexibility and security including the provision of employment protection for all employment relationships in order to tackle segmented labour markets.
- Support mentoring initiatives to allow and recognise the contribution of an older and/or more-experienced worker in transmitting his/her knowledge and expertise to a younger employee.
- Promote smoother integration of young recruits in the workplace through induction and coaching.
- Promote individual competence development plans jointly agreed by the employer and the worker.

- Continue to engage at European level in on-going discussions on transparency and recognition of formal and non-formal competences and qualifications, by promoting the development of Europe-wide means of recognition and validation of competences and qualifications across general and vocational education and training systems.
- Contribute to European initiatives aiming to promote the potential benefits of mobility of young job-seekers and workers, such as via the “your first EURES job” initiative whilst avoiding brain-drain in some countries which would hamper their future development.

#### **b. Long term**

- Conclude bi- or tripartite agreements and/or contribute to the design and implementation of labour market reforms aiming to reduce segmentation and enhance access to labour markets for young people while maintaining the agreed level of social and labour rights.
- Tackle the causes of bogus self-employment to avoid detrimental effects for both employers and employees.
- Take part in the monitoring, evaluation and review of national job plans for young people.

## **II. Recommendations**

#### **a. Short term**

- The EU and Member states should foster job-rich economic growth through sound macroeconomic policies.
- The EU and Member States should work together to make youth employment a more attractive option for employers and promote training of young people as an investment for both enterprises and individuals.
- The EU and Member States should design specific employment policies for young people in close consultation with the social partners, in line with industrial and sectoral needs.
- The EU and Member States should invest in innovation, research & development, and education and training in order to make it easier for young workers to get their first job and gain work experience.
- The EU should associate European and national social partners in the design, implementation and evaluation of the 6 billion euros targeted on youth employment measures in the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2014-2020.

#### **b. Long term**

- The EU should foster and ease young workers’ geographical and occupational mobility, in particular for those wishing to move and work abroad. This can play an important role in helping to match labour supply with demand, while preventing possible brain-drain effects and recognising the rights of and benefits for mobile individuals.

- Sending Member States that are affected by brain-drain effects should take action so as to limit the negative consequences for their labour markets.
- Member States should address youth employment challenges as part of their national jobs plans.
- Member States should foster active labour market programmes and ensure a balance between the necessary support for job seekers and effective incentives to employment. Specific mechanisms should be foreseen for young people dropping out of activation schemes.
- Member states should ensure that effective and proportionate sanctions are foreseen in case of non-compliance with applicable employment regulations, including in situations of bogus self-employment.

## **PRIORITY 4: ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

Fostering entrepreneurial thinking and promoting entrepreneurship skills have a positive impact on the employability of young people and on job creation. Nevertheless, it is only one element of comprehensive youth employment strategies.

Entrepreneurship should be promoted as early as at school level and further integrated into secondary and tertiary education, be it general education or vocational education and training.

Guidance and mentoring for new entrepreneurs should be made available in order to provide them with information on existing legislation, on potential funding opportunities and with all further necessary advice for creating and managing a successful and responsible business. This includes providing user-friendly tools and promoting simple and easy-to-use administrative requirements to create an enterprise.

Creativity should be encouraged along with entrepreneurship as a mind-set that promotes genuine individual initiatives and self-employment, and positive attitudes towards sustainable risk-taking while respecting labour legislation and workers' rights.

Apprenticeship can lead to entrepreneurship due to the first-hand work experience in an enterprise in their field of work and favour the start of a business.

### **Other forms of entrepreneurship**

"Intrapreneurship", which is about promoting entrepreneurial attitudes of employees, and employee-driven/social entrepreneurship, can be successful examples of employee participation schemes aiming to achieve the economic and social goals of the organisations they work for.

However, the boundaries between a worker and an employer can be blurred in cases of bogus self-employment.

## **I. Social Partners' Actions**

### **a. Short term**

- Foster training and mentoring services for young entrepreneurs in order to increase chances of young enterprises to continue activity and grow after the first years of their creation.
- Promote entrepreneurial mind-sets at school and in the society as a whole, aiming to avoid stigmatisation of young entrepreneurs in case of failure.

#### **b. Long term**

- Promote partnerships between large and small enterprises aiming to identify and support market and growth opportunities with special attention to the high value added industrial and services sectors.
- Encourage female entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship from groups at risk of being excluded by specific accompaniment and mentoring advice.
- Address social and environmental challenges as part of activities that enterprises choose to undertake in the area of Corporate Social Responsibility.

## **II. Recommendations**

#### **a. Short term**

- Member States should find a right balance between administrative and regulatory requirements, and the guarantee of a favourable environment for the creation and/or handover of small enterprises, including the development of one-stop web portals (e-administration services).
- Member States should implement targeted tax incentives and enhance support in terms of access to finance for young entrepreneurs to set up an enterprise.
- Member States should set up entrepreneurship courses as part of schools curricula and promote entrepreneurship in work-based learning models, in line with the new Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan launched by the European Commission in January 2013.

#### **b. Long term**

- The EU, including the European Investment Fund, and Member States should develop further existing instruments and, where relevant, establish new ones to support creation and growth of young enterprises, such as for example the Microfinance Facility and the Programme for the Competitiveness of enterprises and SMEs (COSME).
- Member States should organise and promote local, regional and national competitions between young entrepreneurs.
- Member States should integrate entrepreneurship in VET schools so that VET students can choose to become entrepreneurs.
- Member States could promote socially and environmentally responsible entrepreneurship as part of higher education curricula.
- Member States should make sure that the status of the self-employed is enforced where it exists.

## **4. PROMOTION, ACTIONS AND FOLLOW-UP**

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### **Promotion**

BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC (and the liaison committee EUROCADRES/CEC) will promote this Framework of Actions in Member States at all appropriate levels taking account of national practices, through joint and separate actions, as appropriate.

Regional seminars will be organised by the EU social partners to make their members aware of this Framework of Actions. Additional national meetings can be organised in each country by national social partners themselves.

The EU social partners will also transmit this document to all relevant players at European and national levels, including EU sectoral social partners, EU and national public authorities.

### **Actions**

The signatory parties of this Framework of Actions invite national social partners - members of BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC (and the liaison committee EUROCADRES/CEC) to act upon the four priorities identified in this Framework of Actions to foster youth employment and smoother transitions between education and work.

Moreover, European and national social partners will cooperate with EU institutions and/or national public authorities on the basis of the recommendations included in this Framework of Actions.

### **Follow-up**

After three annual reports, the European social partners will evaluate the impact on both employers and workers. This evaluation can lead to an update of the priorities identified and/or an assessment on whether or not additional action is required in one or more of the priority areas.

The European social partners will be entrusted with the preparation of the overall evaluation report during the fourth year after the adoption of this Framework of Actions. In the case of absence of reporting after four years, European social partners will encourage their members in the countries concerned to keep them informed about their follow-up activities until actions have been undertaken at national level.

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