



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 5 June 2008**

**10317/08**

**SOC 341**

**NOTE**

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from : The Presidency  
to : COUNCIL (Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs)

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**Subject : Information from the Slovenian Presidency on the Conference ‘Jobs for Youth – Prosperity for All’  
(Brdo pri Kranju, 24-25 April 2008)  
(Any other business item)**

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Delegations will find attached a note from the Presidency.

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**Information from the Slovenian Presidency on the  
Conference ‘Jobs for Youth – Prosperity for All’  
(Brdo pri Kranju, 24-25 April 2008)**

During the Slovenian Presidency, a conference entitled *Jobs for Youth – Prosperity for All* was held at Brdo pri Kranju. The conference contributed significantly to addressing the issue of youth employment and the successful inclusion of young people in the labour market. It was attended by experts from the EU Member States, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the European Economic and Social Committee and representatives of the social partners and non-governmental organisations.

The Slovenian Presidency focused its attention on young people and their position in society. In this context, an in-depth discussion on the employment of young people was encouraged. It included not only topical issues but also in-depth discussions about themes considered under previous Presidencies.

The successful integration of young people into the labour market is one of the most important challenges we face in the EU. There is an urgent need for effective approaches to improving employability in response to the skills' needs in the labour market. Education can be a crucial factor of employability as well as of the effective social inclusion of young people. In the EU Member States, the average unemployment rate among young people aged 15 to 24 is 2.4 times higher than that of the whole working age population; in 2006, it stood at 17.4%.

Responses to this situation must follow the basic principles of the European Youth Pact: investing in youth, education, training, mobility, swift transitions of higher quality, promoting counselling and guidance facilities for the effective integration of young people into the labour market. This must be a joint effort of the whole of society at all levels: European, national, regional and local. Numerous institutions, and in particular the social partners, have a crucial role to play. A comprehensive mix of policy responses should include measures addressing new forms of employment, youth mobility, education and training, while taking into account the needs of the labour market as well as reconciliation of work, private and family life.

Despite the fact that young people with their energy and spirit are considered to be the driving force of society, they today face serious challenges in entering the labour market. Young people are undoubtedly the most flexible group within the active population. Nevertheless, measures to ensure their security and stability are required. First and foremost, easy and efficient transition from education to the labour market should be ensured. Furthermore, young people in their first employment should be guaranteed a level of security enabling them to make a decision to found a family and favouring the reconciliation of professional, private and family life.

The main goal of the Conference *Jobs for Youth - Prosperity for All* was to contribute to defining policy guidelines to support the Member States' policies for a better integration of young people into the labour market. Therefore, the Conference focused on:

- young people and atypical employment;
- young people and mobility;
- linking up the labour market with education; and
- reconciliation of working and family life.

The conference conclusions indicated that a comprehensive cross-sectoral approach is needed in order to address issues related to the employment of young people.

The key findings of the conference are as follows:

- Young people should be provided with an environment in which they are able to develop their potential to the maximum and contribute to the creation of prosperity and to a competitive economy;
- Young people need solid life prospects that stretch beyond the short-term and are anchored in personal, family and social security.

Other important conclusions:

- the causes of youth unemployment must be systematically addressed and the guidelines of the European Youth Pact consistently taken into account;

- an easier, faster, and above all, more efficient transition from education to the labour market should be facilitated for young people. This requires a comprehensive approach and integrated policies at local, national and EU levels;
- any work experience, enabling young people to find appropriate and quality employment, should be better promoted; young people should have the opportunity to acquire new and additional work experience, skills, competencies and knowledge; the quality and scope of sharing experience between generations should be improved and extended;
- the role of informally acquired knowledge, i.e. knowledge acquired outside standard ways of gaining qualifications, should be stressed;
- the dissemination of good practice aiming at young people should be facilitated and promoted so as to enable the reconciliation of work, personal and family life;
- the permanent provision of information to young people concerning their economic and social rights and ensuring compliance with the principles of equality and non-discrimination are of the utmost importance;
- in order to improve the situation of young people in the labour market, the role of employment services should be strengthened. The counselling, motivation and guidance provided to young job-seekers is particularly important;
- the efficient use of funding available to youth projects from different sources, mainly from the European structural funds, should be emphasised;
- the exchange of good practices, but also of bad practices, in setting-up national and European tools for youth projects, carried out by companies, universities, schools, local and regional authorities, associations of undertakings and trade unions, should be facilitated;
- the role of the social partners in addressing issues relating to the inclusion of young people in the labour market should be strengthened.