



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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SOC 293**

NOTE

from: Council General Secretariat
to: Council

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Subject: Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the active inclusion of young people: combating unemployment and poverty
- Adoption

At its meeting on 28 April the Permanent Representatives Committee noted that there was unanimous agreement on the text of the above draft conclusions¹.

The Council is therefore invited to adopt the resolution on the basis of the appended text.

¹ Subject to a UK general scrutiny reservation.

**RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL AND OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
GOVERNMENTS OF THE MEMBER STATES,
MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL,
ON THE ACTIVE INCLUSION OF YOUNG PEOPLE: COMBATING
UNEMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY**

The Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council:

1. RECALLING

The political background to this issue as set out in the Annex to this Resolution, in particular:

- The Council Resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018)².
- Decision No 1098/2008/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2008 on the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010).

² OJ C 311, 19.12.2009.

2. TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THAT

- Solidarity is one of the values underpinning the European Union. Economic and social cohesion are consequently intrinsic goals of European models of society.
- The active inclusion of young people entails a combination of adequate income support, inclusive labour markets and access to quality services.
- The objectives set out in the Lisbon Strategy of achieving more and better jobs and eradicating poverty by 2010, including the objectives of the European Youth Pact, have not been achieved and that it is therefore necessary to continue working towards these objectives.
- The negative effects of the economic and financial crisis on growth and employment are particularly affecting groups in vulnerable situations or at risk of exclusion such as the young people, with a consequent increase in poverty amongst them.
- One of the main tools for combating poverty and social exclusion is employment. Europe needs higher levels of productivity and quality employment. However, the level of in-work poverty among young people (10 %)³ illustrates that not all jobs provide sufficient security.
- Youth unemployment has reached extremely troubling levels: in the European Union, one out of every five young people under the age of 25 is unemployed. Furthermore, one out of every five young people aged between 18 and 24 is at risk of poverty².
- The demographic challenge posed by an ageing population calls for an inter-generational response and for inter-generational dialogue and solidarity.

³ Source: Eurostat, EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (between 18 and 24 years)

3. CONSIDERING THAT

- The social and economic interests of the European Union require that the potential of young people be used to the full.
- It is therefore of vital importance to ensure social inclusion and equal opportunities for young people which enable them to participate actively and equitably in economic, social, democratic and cultural life, paying particular attention to young people with fewer opportunities.
- Unemployment, poverty, social and economic exclusion and all forms of discrimination are obstacles to the well-being of young people and may hinder their active participation in society. Greater inclusion of young people in society and their full and active participation in the labour market, combined with improved access to quality education, as well as adequate and better targeted social protection and services, are essential tools for reducing poverty, improving the quality of life and promoting social cohesion.
- Investing in young people as an essential resource for growth and employment and facilitating their social inclusion would consolidate a more cohesive society, with all young people having equal opportunities to participate.

4. IDENTIFY THE FOLLOWING GENERAL OBJECTIVES:

- Facilitate access for young people to the labour market and provide opportunities for more secure employment on non-discriminatory terms.
- Provide improved access to quality education and facilitate smooth transitions to the labour market from education and training or from unemployment and inactivity.
- Facilitate the reconciliation of private, family and working life.
- Prevent poverty and the social exclusion of young people, as well as the perpetuation of these problems from one generation to the next.

5. ESTABLISH THE FOLLOWING GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- The principle of equal opportunities, taking particular account of gender issues and young people with fewer opportunities.
- The involvement of all relevant actors at local, regional, national and EU levels.
- The role of the structured dialogue in the youth field needs to be highlighted, in particular the results of the current cycle concerning youth employment.

6. UNDERLINE THAT

As outlined in the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018) adopted by the Council on 27 November 2009, achieving the objectives in the youth field requires a dual approach that involves both:

- specific initiatives in the youth field
- and
- mainstreaming initiatives in order to integrate a youth perspective into other relevant policy fields.

7. ACCORDINGLY AGREE THAT

Within the context of mainstreaming a youth perspective into other relevant policy fields - and taking into account the added value of youth policies - actions concerning the active inclusion of young people should focus mainly on two specific fields of action under the renewed framework: that of *Education and Training*, and that of *Employment and Entrepreneurship*. In this respect, the following issues are of particular importance :

- (i) Promoting education, training and non-formal learning in order to enhance employability by:
 - (a) improving young people's knowledge, skills and competences, and ensuring that these are tailored to the needs of the changing labour market and the growing new employment sectors, by developing fair, flexible and efficient systems for high-quality education and training, as well as through non-formal learning and youth work, within the framework of a knowledge-based economy;

- (b) combating the problem of early leavers from education and training, taking full account of socio-economic circumstances;
 - (c) promoting lifelong learning, making use of the added value offered by information and communication technologies.
- (ii) Encouraging transitions between education and training systems and the labour market in order to prevent unemployment and the social exclusion of young people by:
- (a) facilitating professional development opportunities for young people;
 - (b) providing quality guidance services to help young people in their decisions regarding such transitions. In this respect, public employment services, as well as youth counselling and information services, can play an essential role;
 - (c) enhancing the future employability of young people, by promoting the acquisition of work experience during the educational cycle through work placements, internships and apprenticeships supported by both public and private sectors, possibly acting in partnership, or through other similar schemes;
 - (d) recognising the added value of voluntary work and activities as a way of improving skills and competences;
 - (e) considering, where appropriate, the social economy as a source of entry to training and jobs for young people with fewer opportunities.

- (iii) Promoting quality employment for young people by:
 - (a) improving access to stable employment for young people, taking particular account of those with fewer opportunities and recognising that active labour market policies play a key role in this regard;
 - (b) developing integrated flexicurity policies to enhance both labour market flexibility and to provide employment security, as well as to prevent labour market segmentation;
 - (c) stimulating the potential of young people in terms of their skills, talent and motivation, as well as encouraging their mobility, both geographical and cross-sectoral.

- (iv) Promoting self-employment and entrepreneurship by :
 - (a) encouraging an entrepreneurial spirit among young people and the development of their entrepreneurial capacities through adequate education, training and mentoring programmes;
 - (b) facilitating mobility and promoting the participation of young people in networks for young entrepreneurs and the recognition of junior enterprises;
 - (c) encouraging the development of a green economy, in order to further increase business start-ups for young people which will result in new job opportunities and new professions;
 - (d) endorsing the development of young people's talent, imagination, creativity and innovation skills in the framework of formal, non-formal and informal learning;
 - (e) facilitating access to relevant services and assisting in business start-ups for young people, e.g. by providing access to finance or preparing business plans.

- (v) Maintaining, developing and, where appropriate, establishing the necessary measures to provide access to adequate social protection and to high quality services, including healthcare, childcare and housing assistance, with a particular focus on the enhancement of social services aimed at young families.

8. FURTHER AGREE THAT

The instruments within the open method of coordination in the youth field should be fully used, both to support work on integrating a youth perspective into other relevant policy fields, and to implement specific initiatives in the youth field.

9. THEREFORE, IN CONNECTION WITH THE ISSUES OUTLINED IN SECTION 7 ABOVE, INVITE THE MEMBER STATES AND/OR THE COMMISSION, WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE SPHERES OF COMPETENCE, TO:

- Design channels of communication and cooperation with other relevant policy fields and departments both within and between the various EU institutions and within the Member States, paying special attention to activities carried out in the framework of the open method of coordination in other areas, particularly that of social protection and inclusion, education and employment.
- Encourage the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, which complement formal education and which play a useful role in supporting the efficient social and economic integration of young people, in particular those with fewer opportunities. In this context, the work done with such young people by those active in the youth field and participation in the *Youth in Action* programme are particularly important.

- Promote mutual learning instruments and the exchange of best practices, through high-level seminars or meetings of expert groups on issues relating to the social integration of young people and their full participation in the labour market. In this respect, the results of such activities should be effectively disseminated, using existing platforms, where appropriate.
- Make efficient use of the funds available in the EU to support the process of social inclusion of young people in education, training or employment and to combat unemployment and poverty, in particular the European Social Fund, the European Regional Development Fund and the Rural Development Fund, or any other relevant EU funds or programmes such as PROGRESS.
- Continue to support and promote cross-disciplinary research relating to young people and their living conditions, having regard to the socio-economic environment and the opportunities and obstacles this poses for the social inclusion and employability of young people.
- Ensure that existing indicators include a youth dimension, in order to collect and analyse data on the active inclusion of young people and on combating unemployment and poverty, and in order to enable comparative assessments to be carried out by the Member States in the light of their achievements.
- Set up adequate mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the results obtained on the actions outlined in section 7 above, in particular by means of the EU Youth Report.

10. ADDITIONALLY STRESS THE IMPORTANCE, IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMPETITIVE, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE EUROPE, OF :

- recognising the crucial role of young people for the smart, sustainable and inclusive growth necessary for Europe's future prosperity;
- ensuring that the contribution of youth policy - covering areas such as mobility, participation, non-formal and informal learning, voluntary activities and youth work - is fully integrated into the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy;
- recognising the cross-sectoral nature of issues, and therefore promoting:
 - policies that support young people's integration in the labour market and facilitate social inclusion of young people;
 - policies that will equip all young people with the skills and competences they need to play their part in the knowledge-based economy and society of tomorrow.

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Political background

1. Article 6 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, whereby the Union shall have competence to carry out actions to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the Member States in areas, at European level, such as education, vocational training, youth and sport.
2. The European Employment Strategy, as set out in the conclusions of the extraordinary European Council meeting held in Luxembourg on 20-21 November 1997⁴.
3. The Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 14 December 2000 on Social Inclusion of Young People⁵.
4. The Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 28 May 2004 on Social Integration with regard to Young People⁶.
5. The Council conclusions of 5 December 2007: 'Towards Common Principles of Flexicurity'⁷.
6. The Council conclusions of 5 and 6 December 2007 on the future prospects for the European Employment Strategy in the new cycle of the Lisbon Strategy⁸.
7. The conclusions of the Spring 2008 European Council of 13-14 March, which emphasised the importance of combating poverty and social exclusion, promoting active integration and increasing employment opportunities for those furthest from the labour market, in particular young people⁹.
8. The Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 22 May 2008 on the participation of young people with fewer opportunities, which stated that unemployment, poverty, poor health, cultural, social and economic exclusion and all forms of discrimination are obstacles to the well-being of young people and may hinder their active participation in society¹⁰.

⁴ SN 300/97.

⁵ OJ C 374, 28.12.2000.

⁶ Doc. 9601/04.

⁷ Doc. 15497/07.

⁸ Doc. 15813/07.

⁹ Doc. 7652/08.

¹⁰ OJ C 141/1, 7.6.2008.

9. Decision No 1098/2008/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2008 on the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010)¹¹.
10. The Council conclusions of 16 and 17 December 2008 on common active inclusion principles to combat poverty more effectively¹², which stated that active inclusion involves combining adequate income support, inclusive labour markets and access to quality services.
11. The Council conclusions of 9 March 2009 on New Skills for New Jobs - Anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs¹³.
12. The Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training¹⁴.
13. The Council conclusions of 8 June 2009 on social services as a tool for active inclusion, strengthening social cohesion and an area for job opportunities¹⁵.
14. The conclusions of the June 2009 European Council¹⁶, which outlined the results of the informal EU summit on employment held in Prague in May 2009 and stated that the fight against unemployment remained a major priority.
15. The conclusions of the October 2009 European Council¹⁷, which underlined the need to promote, amongst other measures, active social inclusion policies in the light of the continued deterioration of the employment situation.
16. The Council Resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018)¹⁸.

¹¹ OJ L 298, 7.11.2008, pp. 20-29.

¹² Doc. 15984/08.

¹³ Doc. 5927/09.

¹⁴ OJ C 119/2, 28.5.2009.

¹⁵ Doc. 10052/09.

¹⁶ Doc. 11225/1/09 REV 2.

¹⁷ Doc. 15254/1/09 REV 1.

¹⁸ OJ C 311, 19.12.2009.