



*European Economic and Social Committee
Section for Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship
Labour Market Observatory*

Pilot study on the implementation, at national level, of EU policies for youth employment: a civil society perspective

QUESTIONNAIRE

BACKGROUND

Young people have been hit especially hard by the crisis: in the EU28, the youth unemployment rate was 23.5% in September 2013. In some countries, more than one in two young Europeans on the labour market cannot find a job. 7.5 million young Europeans between 15 and 24 are not employed, not in education and not in training (NEETs).

Addressing the youth employment crisis is the first priority of the European institutions, giving rise to several initiatives, such as the **Youth Employment Package**¹, the **Youth Guarantee**², the **European Alliance for Apprenticeships**³, the **Quality Framework for Traineeships**⁴, and the **reform of the EURES job search network**⁵. In the framework of the European Semester, 20 Member States were urged by the EU's Council of Ministers, through **country-specific recommendations**⁶, to take urgent steps to combat youth unemployment. 12 Member States were directly urged to implement the Youth Guarantee.

1 The Youth employment package: [European Commission web pages](#); [EESC opinion](#).

2 The Youth guarantee: [Council of the EU web pages](#); [EESC opinion](#).

3 The European Alliance for apprenticeships: [European Commission web pages](#).

4 The Quality Framework for traineeships (COM(2013) 857 final), [European Commission web pages](#) ; [EESC opinion \(ongoing\)](#).

5 EURES [portal](#); EESC opinion (ongoing).

6 The Country specific recommendations: [European Commission web pages](#).

The June 2013 European Council endorsed a plan which aims to speed up the implementation of the current initiatives and schemes and to increase the involvement of the social partners. The President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, asked the national governments, social partners and European institutions to join forces in addressing the urgent problem of youth unemployment.

In this context, the Labour Market Observatory of the European Economic and Social Committee is conducting a **pilot study on the implementation of EU policies for youth employment in a selection of six Member States** (Austria, Croatia, Finland, Greece, Italy and Slovakia).

The aims of the study are:

1. to gain a better understanding - from the point of view of organised civil society - of the policies that are put in place to help young people find work, of their implementation and their actual impact on youth unemployment;
2. to assess the level of involvement of the social partners and organised civil society and to give them an opportunity to put forward their comments, ideas and recommendations on policies and ongoing reforms and to let them be heard at EU level;
3. to identify and share good practices or difficulties encountered in the Member States;
4. to report to and possibly make recommendations to the EESC and its various bodies, the European institutions and other stakeholders involved in EU employment policy.

The study is conducted by way of:

- this questionnaire, which deals in particular with traineeships, apprenticeships, the youth guarantee, and which is sent to a range of organisations in the Member States selected for the study (employers' organisations, trade unions, youth organisations, various NGOs, etc.);
- a request for information that is sent to the public authorities that are in charge of employment and youth in the selected Member States;
- a series of interviews on the ground with a selection of organisations and, if necessary, with the public authorities.

In order to promote the impact study and to finalise the study and its possible recommendations, a high-level public event will be organised by the Labour Market Observatory at the beginning of April 2014 in Brussels. Representatives from respondent organisations, social partners and civil society organisations, European institutions and think tanks will be invited to that event.

We thank you very much for your commitment, your cooperation and for taking part in this questionnaire!

The secretariat of the Labour Market Observatory (Ana Dumitrache, ana.dumitrache@eesc.europa.eu, +32 (0)2 546 8131) is at your disposal for any further information on this pilot study.

DETAILS ON THE RESPONDENT ORGANISATION

Organisation	
Contact person	
Position	
E-mail address	
Telephone number	

TRAINEESHIPS

There is no common European definition of traineeships and confusion often arises between the terms traineeships, internships and apprenticeships. For the purpose of this questionnaire the term 'traineeships' refers to: *work practice including an educational component which is limited in time. The purpose of these traineeships is to help the trainee's transition from education to work by providing the practical experience, knowledge and skills that complete his/her theoretical education.*

This questionnaire deals with the so-called '*open-market*' traineeships, *i.e. traineeships agreed between trainee and a traineeship provider (business, non-profit or government) without the involvement of a third party, generally conducted after completion of studies and/or as part of a job search. It does not address traineeships forming part of academic and/or vocational curricula, nor traineeships which form part of mandatory professional training (e. g. medicine, architecture etc.).*

1. Availability of traineeship positions

Is there a sufficient number of traineeship positions available in your country? Is your organisation / are its members contributing to efforts to meet that aim? Do you have any suggestions for improvement?

Please explain and illustrate, where possible, with examples:

2. Incentives to providers

How would you evaluate the moves to encourage enterprises / host organisations to offer traineeships providing good quality learning content and decent working conditions?

Please explain, giving if possible, suggestions for improvement:

3. Incentives for youth

How do you evaluate the existing incentives to young people to take a traineeship position? Do you have any suggestions for improvement?

Please explain, giving if possible, suggestions for improvement:

4. Quality framework for traineeships

What do you think of the recent [European Commission proposal on a quality framework for traineeships](#) (e.g. in terms of conclusion of a written traineeship agreement, learning objectives, working conditions, rights and obligations, duration, recognition, transparency)? Would you have any suggestions for the implementation of this Quality Framework? How do you see the active involvement of social partners in implementing the Quality Framework for Traineeships?

Please explain:

APPRENTICESHIPS

This section deals with apprenticeship schemes which are understood as forms of *Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET) that formally combine and alternate between company-based training (periods of practical work experience at a workplace) and school-based education (periods of theoretical/practical education followed in a school or training centre), and whose successful completion leads to nationally recognised initial VET certification degrees*. This definition makes no explicit reference to the existence of a contractual direct relationship between the employer and the apprentice⁷.

5. Awareness

How would you evaluate the level of transparency and quality of information on apprenticeship schemes and possibilities? If necessary, would you have any suggestions for improvement? Does your organisation / do its members help to raise awareness about apprenticeships?

Please explain and illustrate, where possible, with examples.

⁷ European Commission, Apprenticeship supply in the Member States of the European Union, January 2012.

6. Availability

What do you think about the number of apprenticeships available and the coverage of sectors (limited to traditional sectors / open to the most innovative sectors)? Do you have any suggestions for further measures to promote the availability of apprenticeships? Does your organisation / do its members contribute to that aim?

Please explain and illustrate, where possible, with examples:

7. Content

How do you evaluate the overall content of apprenticeships (training component, monitoring and enforcement, etc.) ? Do you have any suggestions for improvement? Is your organisation/are its members involved in the design of apprenticeships' content?

Please explain and illustrate, where possible, with examples:

8. Recognition

What is your opinion on the certification of apprenticeships and the recognition of qualifications and competencies acquired through apprenticeships?

Please explain:

9. Incentives to providers

How would you evaluate the incentives to enterprises to offer apprenticeship positions (wage subsidies, contributions to compensate costs, obligation to offer apprenticeship positions when working for a public authority, etc.)?

Please explain, giving if possible, suggestions for improvement:

10. Incentives for youth

How do you evaluate the existing incentives to young people to take an apprenticeship position and the existing efforts to increase the attractiveness of apprenticeships?

Please explain, giving if possible, suggestions for improvement:

The European Alliance for Apprenticeships

[The European Alliance for Apprenticeships](#) is an initiative to improve the quality and supply of apprenticeships across the EU and to change mind-sets towards apprenticeship-type learning. It aims to bring together stakeholders from public authorities, social partners, business, vocational education and training (VET) providers, youth representatives and other key stakeholders, such as chambers of commerce, with a view to coordinating and improving different initiatives for successful apprenticeship-type schemes.

The Alliance was successfully launched in Leipzig on 2 July 2013 with a [Joint Declaration](#) by the European Social Partners, the European Commission and the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU, and with a number of pledges by businesses, industry, chambers of commerce, industry and crafts, Vocational Education and Training (VET) providers and youth representatives.

11. Is your organisation / are its members contributing to the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (e.g. through pledges that describe their plans to increase the supply, quality and attractiveness of apprenticeships)?

Please explain:

12. How would you see the implementation of the common guiding principles addressed by the Council in October 2013 regarding apprenticeship schemes?⁸ What are, in your view, the challenges and the strengths of its implementation in your country?

Please explain and give, if possible, suggestions for the implementation of these guidelines:

⁸

Council [doc.13568/13](#)

13. Partnerships⁹

What do you think of existing partnerships in the field of apprenticeships (between countries and at national level, such as between public authorities, social partners, chambers of commerce, industry and crafts, youth organisations, etc.)?

Please explain, giving if possible, practical examples and suggestions for improvement:

14. Effectiveness of traineeship and apprenticeship schemes

How do you evaluate the effectiveness of existing traineeship and apprenticeship schemes in obtaining sustainable employment?

Please explain, giving if possible, suggestions for improvement:

YOUTH GUARANTEE

According to the Council Recommendation on establishing a Youth Guarantee¹⁰, Member States should ensure that young people receive, within four months of having left school or becoming unemployed, a good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship.

15. Added value

How do you view the creation of a youth guarantee in your country? Do you believe that it will bring an added value to the existing measures which aim to facilitate the quick access of young people to education, training, apprenticeship and employment?

⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/education/apprenticeship/reform_en.htm

¹⁰ The Youth guarantee: [Council of the EU web pages](#).

Please explain:

16. Features and implementation

What should be, in your opinion, the main features of the youth guarantee (e.g. age of the people eligible, time within which a solution has to be offered to young people, etc.)? Do you see challenges or/and strengths in relation to the design and/or implementation of the youth guarantee?

Please explain, giving if possible, suggestions for improvement:

17. Prioritisation

In case of a gradual implementation of the youth guarantee in your country, to which groups of young people should priority be given (vulnerable groups, long-term unemployed, young people with complex needs, "hard-to help" unemployed young people, etc.)?

Please explain:

18. Information on the youth guarantee

In your view, what measures should be taken to raise awareness about the youth guarantee? At whom should such measures be targeted (young people, parents, employers, education and training providers, public employment services, outreach work, centres for young people...)?

Please explain:

19. Role of social partners and civil society

How do you evaluate the role of social partners and civil society in the design, implementation, monitoring and assessment of the youth guarantee?

Please explain:

20. Role of your own organisation

What is the precise involvement of your organisation / its members in the design of the youth guarantee? How do you see the role of your own organisation/its members in the future implementation and governance of the youth guarantee scheme?

Please explain:

21. Synergies

Is the introduction of the youth guarantee in your country an opportunity to foster synergies between stakeholders such as employment services, education, social and health services, social partners, civil society organisations?

Please explain:

MOBILITY

22. Information on mobility

How would you evaluate the level of transparency and quality of information on transnational mobility, including the utility of EURES¹¹? Should further measures be taken to increase this awareness? If yes, which ones, and at whom should such measures be targeted (young people, parents, employers, education and training providers, public employment services, outreach work, centres for young people...)?

Please explain and illustrate, where possible, with examples:

¹¹

[A Decision to modernise and improve EURES – the pan-EU job search network - has been adopted by the European Commission on the 26 November 2012, and it should be implemented as from January 2014 - https://ec.europa.eu/eures/](https://ec.europa.eu/eures/)

23. Cooperation between Member States

Do you think there would be possibilities for enhanced forms of cooperation between your country and other Member States in order to stimulate mobility of young people in search of traineeships, apprenticeships, jobs – see example of the Nordic Labour Market?¹²

Please explain:

OTHER ISSUES

24. Labour law

Does the labour law in your country contribute to the creation of undefined work contracts / is it neutral / does it hinder the creation of such contracts?

Please explain:

25. Incentives for young people to be part of the labour market

In your opinion, is the system (welfare state – unemployment benefits, social assistance, adequate child care provision, fight against undeclared work, etc.) encouraging young people to enter / re-join the labour market?

Please explain:

Support provided to young people

¹²

Example of the Nordic Labour Market¹² - Since 1985, the Nordic countries have co-operated on an exchange project [Nordjobb](http://www.nordjobb.org) for young people in the Region. Nordjobb offers young people a summer job under normal pay and working conditions, temporary accommodation as well as a cultural and leisure programme in another Nordic country - <http://www.norden.org/en/about-nordic-co-operation/agreements/treaties-and-agreements/labour-market>.

How would you evaluate the career guidance / counselling services to young people? (Is it provided at a sufficiently early stage? Is it tailored to individual needs? Does it involve families?)

Please explain, giving if possible, suggestions for improvement:

26. How would you evaluate the current measures that aim to encourage young people to start their own business?

Please explain, giving if possible, suggestions for improvement:

27. How would you evaluate the measures that are being taken to prevent / remedy the disillusionment of young people experiencing difficulties in finding a job, traineeship, apprenticeship?

Please explain, giving if possible, suggestions for improvement:

28. Evaluation of the measures for youth employment

Is there a system in place to evaluate measures taken to fight youth unemployment (e.g. for collecting feedback from young people on how services function and measures aimed at assisting them)?

Please describe and give, if possible, your views on that system:

29. Partnerships and involvement of stakeholders in the policies for youth employment

How would you evaluate the collaboration between employers' organisations, trade unions and organised civil society in your country regarding youth employment? Are there initiatives agreed between social partners to help young people find work?

Please explain, giving suggestions for improvement where necessary and practical examples:

30. Cooperation between Member States

How do you see possible **cooperation between your country and others** regarding youth employment? Does your country offer good policies and practices that could serve as a source of inspiration for other MS? Do you think that your country could follow other countries' examples?

Please explain, giving if possible, suggestions for improvement:

Thank you very much for taking part in this questionnaire!