

ETUC Press Release

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To: Veerle Solia

The new youth employment package proposed by the Commission: a positive commitment that requires further action



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The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) welcomed the new youth employment package just unveiled by the European Commission.

The situation of young people is indeed dramatic. More than 5.5 million of them are out of work today. Youth unemployment rates are double if not triple those of the population in general. The levels of precariousness have also become unsustainable, with a proliferation of fixed-term contracts, part-time contracts and work placement schemes that all too often replace existing jobs. It must also be pointed out that according to Eurofound estimates concerning NEETs (young people with no employment, education or training), the annual cost of inaction in such a situation amounts to €153 billion for the EU.

Having been committed for several years to these issues, the ETUC has welcomed proposals such as the youth guarantee, a measure that should be continued and which should be considered as an investment. In view of the urgency and importance of the situation, this commitment should be backed by appropriate resources, in particular from the Social Fund and other structural funds.

Furthermore, although work placement schemes can constitute a stepping stone to employment, a quality framework is required for them, given certain abuses that have been identified.

Nevertheless, faced with the scope of the European crisis, the employment issue should be tackled in a more global manner, and blind austerity policies should be over and done with, so as to get out of the crisis from the top, with real recovery and investment policies for quality sustainable jobs.

Patrick Itschert, ETUC Deputy General Secretary, concludes: "We cannot sacrifice one or even two whole generations in Europe. Public authorities and the social partners must assume their responsibilities and address the fundamental concerns expressed by young people. The ETUC is reiterating its commitment on this front in the current negotiations with employers on actions for young people."

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