



International Conference

'Keeping Young People in Employment, Education and Training: Common Challenges, Shared Solutions'

10th and 11th of March 2013
Bucharest, Palace of the Parliament





Conference concept

1.1 Current situation across the EU

This conference will consider how enhanced cooperation and exchange of good practices in education, training, youth policy and work can lead to informed early public interventions for supporting young people not employed, in education or training. The conference main objective is to create or enhance effective learning partnerships for policy development in this area.

The number of young people (15-29 years) not in employment, education and training is one of the indicators highly relevant to assess the quality and effectiveness of education, training and employment systems. This category includes young people who have failed to integrate into the labour market for various reasons (lack of employment opportunities, lack of skills required in the labour market etc.) and are not involved in educational program (regardless of level) or training. Recent studies point out that NEETs are triggered by a combination of personal, economic, educational and social factors and reflect the degree of withdrawal or distancing from the labour market and society in general (EUROFOUND, 2012).

The value of this indicator is a concern for all the Member States, provided that, on average, only about 30% of young people succeed to get employed 6 months after graduation (EUROSTAT, 2013) and long-term unemployment continues to be high in the case of young people. Leaving early the education and training system leads to low-paid and limited in time jobs. Returning to school or enrolling in professional training programs should become the main alternative for these young people, CEDEFOP estimating that the demand for low skilled labour will continue to decline over the period 2010-2020. Unfortunately, the current supply of education and training partially meet the needs of these young people, as Rethinking Education country analysis are pointing out (EU 2012) and the

Moreover, the reintegration of NEETs is not concerning only the low-skilled young population and the quality of education and training alone cannot explain NEETs. NEETs may also lack social and human capital and face complex personal challenges which play a role in their situation. Given that they are not a homogeneous category, it is extremely important to identify their profile and the risk



factors in order to have a broader and more relevant understanding of the NEETs situation and to develop appropriate intervention and support programs. As a result of the economic crisis, the unemployment among young people who have completed a tertiary education has also increased to almost 50% in Greece, 35% in Spain and close to 30% in Romania, Portugal and Italy.

Equally, a realistic assessment of individual and social cost-related to NEETs is needed both at national and European level. Long-term unemployment and inactivity in the case of youth population entails short, medium and long-term negative consequences, limiting the capacity of public policies to ensure the sustainability of health, education and social protection systems.

1.2 Problems addressed

There is extensive evidence-based information on key priority issues for guiding future policies in the area of NEETs. However, European institutions, Member States, policy makers and key stakeholders should strengthen work in partnership to drive forward effective and efficient solutions to the NEETs problem.

In order to share experiences and knowledge in relation with success initiatives and practices in Europe and foster the implementation of innovative responses to NEET challenge, a common platform is needed across EU. Thus, many outcomes of recent policies in this field could be better documented and coordinated.

The diversity of situations faced by the NEETs require to promote more effective strategies, combining different approaches and tools from education, training, youth work as well as social and employment services. The lack of vision and coordinated strategies limit the effectiveness of measures taken by social and youth workers and counsellors to prevent NEETs. The current policies should therefore give more importance to sustainable and coordinated early intervention/prevention measures and personalised support to children and youth at risk of exclusion.

1.3 Objectives of the Conference

The event is intended to be solution-oriented and focus on interventions that already showed positive results. On the one hand the conference will briefly introduce NEETs profile and identify risks (e.g. risks before people leave the education system) and prevention measures. On the other hand, the conference will focus on reintegration through a cross-sectoral approach covering VET, apprenticeships, adult education as well as youth interventions and promote examples of policies, solutions and projects that work.

The solutions discussed will focus equally on intervention measures, as well as prevention and compensation measures, and will promote a cross-sectoral approach before young people are completely out of education, training or labour market system.

Given the wide participation, the conference will be also a platform for mutual learning, debate and sharing of effective and innovative practices in the area of policies targeted on NEETS and will contribute to the development and the promotion of a common intervention framework, developing a joint policy response among represented countries. In the plenary and the parallel sessions, relevant best practices will be presented from different member states.

1.4 Main Conference themes

The conference will be focused on three inter-connected conference themes and specific questions:

- 1. Profile of NEET.** How diverse is the profile of NEETs? Could common/country specific features be identified? What are the main risk factors and individual consequences? What are NEETs main needs for support and what synergies could be created among different public intervention areas? How effective is the intervention on reducing the number of early school leavers for tackling the NEETs challenge?

Aspects such as low economic and social background combined with minority/migrant status will also be taken into account, as well as vulnerable categories such as Roma, people living in rural areas, or young mothers.

- 2. Policy responses and good practices:** What are the main policy lessons learned from the interventions in this area? What innovative tools and approaches proved to be effective? What resources are currently allocated to support interventions in this area?

This theme will also include innovative governance of NEETs, effective tracer studies of socio-professional insertion of graduates and will analyze current challenges for promoting comprehensive strategies, evidence-based policy-making and prevention and early intervention measures and role of strategic, systemic interventions vs. scattered actions, limited in time and scope.

- 3. Capacity and learning partnerships development:** What mechanisms exist for monitoring and evaluating public policies targeted to NEETs? What is the role of policy learning and transfer in enhancing the effectiveness of public policies for NEETs? How can the success experiences and best practices shared within countries and across regions? What research is needed to fill the knowledge gaps?

This theme will also explore what types and level of investments are needed and also what new partnership/institutional arrangements are needed to be put in place for systemic interventions, with a sustainable impact.

Democratic, open and anticipatory governance will be addressed as a transversal item of the conference.

1.5 Expected results

- Shared understanding and enhanced profile of NEET
- Identification of good practice and policy options for improving the future delivery and effectiveness of services for NEET
- Mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating relevant policies and programs



- Identification of new priorities for research, institutional capacity development and investments
- Development of learning partnerships committed to contributing to developing of effective and efficient early policy responses targeting NEET at European level

1.6 Participants

The Bucharest conference will gather interested public authorities and international organisations, representatives of academic and business sectors from EU Member States, EFTA, Western Balkans, Turkey, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, as well as delegates from countries participating in the Union for the Mediterranean.

Main categories of participants:

- EU Commissioners;
- MEPs;
- Members of the European Economic and Social Committee and Committee of the Regions;
- Ministers of education, labour and youth from different European countries ;
- Experts/ policy makers / social partners;
- Erasmus+ National Agencies;
- National Coordinators for the European Agenda on Adult learning;
- European Commission experts active in peer learning activities in this area;
- Representatives from social services, local authorities, NGOs active in the field, project promoters of relevant LLP, YiA, ESF or EPPA projects;
- Representatives of relevant agencies, county school inspectorates and teacher training centers ;
- Representatives of structured civil society, including youth organisations;
- Former NEETs.

1.7. Programme

Venue of the conference: Palace of the Parliament, 2-4 Izvor Street, Bucharest.

Agenda: *See document attached*

