**Follow up to the European Parliament non-legislative resolution of 31 May 2018
on the EU Youth Strategy**

**2017/2259 (INI)**

1. **Rapporteur:** Eider GARDIAZABAL RUBIAL(S&D/ES)
2. **EP reference number**: A8-0162/2018 / P8\_TA-PROV(2018)0240
3. **Date of adoption of the resolution:** 31 May 2018
4. **Subject:** Implementation of the EU Youth Strategy
5. **Competent Parliamentary Committee**: Committee for Education and Culture (CULT)
6. **Brief analysis/ assessment of the resolution and requests made in it:**

The resolution welcomes the achievements of European cooperation in the field of youth, and acknowledges in particular the positive achievements of the European Youth Strategy that successfully engages young people through cross-sectoral work and the Structured Dialogue. The Parliament’s main recommendations to the Commission relate to strengthening cooperation and exchanges of best practices at local, regional, national and EU level; linking all policy proposals pertaining to young people to the overarching European Youth Strategy; setting-up a cross-sectoral working group coordinating the implementation of the Strategy and ensuring effective inter-service coordination; improving the collection of relevant and up-to-date statistics on the implementation of the Strategy and adopting specific monitoring indicators; opening-up more the structured dialogue with young people to include those with fewer opportunities or who are outside formal organisational structures; adopting a rights-based approach to youth and employment while improving the quality of offers and outreach to youth not in education, employment or training (NEETs) under the Youth Guarantee; encouraging initiatives with formal education and informal learning to support young people's innovation capacity, creativity and entrepreneurship; and increasing public investment in education and youth-related issues in the next Multiannual Financial Framework.

1. **Response to requests and overview of action taken, or intended to be taken, by the Commission:**

***Youth challenges and lessons from the current EU youth-related policymaking process (paragraphs 4, 6, 7, 8 and 11)***

On 22 May 2018, the Commission adopted the Communication entitled ”Engaging, Connecting and Empowering young people: a new EU Youth Strategy” (COM(2018) 269 final). The European Parliament resolution is very much in line with the proposals contained in this Communication. The aim of the new Youth Strategy is to focus more on the core of youth policy activities (youth participation, youth solidarity/ volunteering and youth work) while developing the cross-sector approach at national and European level.

To make cooperation more effective, the strategy will build in particular on:

* an agenda to improve youth work, for example through practical toolkits and capacity-building activities funded by Erasmus+ and its successor programme;
* a renewed governance with greater focus and flexibility to adapt European priorities to the national and local context, with a stronger commitment from Member States and a greater ownership by stakeholders;
* and stronger links to EU funding (tracking of overall spending on youth in the EU budget, and stronger convergence with policy and implementation of Erasmus+/ European Solidarity Corps as well as their successor programmes).

The strategy will reinforce the support given to Member States in developing youth policies, through gathering evidence (in particular Youth Wiki), mutual learning and sharing good practices, including new tools such as peer reviews and peer counselling. The Commission will invite Member States to prepare National Action Plans every three years, where they will identify and commit to targeted initiatives for youth translating EU priorities into the national context. Reporting on these plans every three years will be included in the general reporting mechanisms.

The Youth Strategy platform will give stakeholders a greater role in coordinating the implementation of the strategy, offering opportunities to exchange information on activities and results.

The Commission also proposes to create the function of an EU Youth Coordinator, based in the Commission, who will be a visible contact and reference point for young people on youth-related matters.

***Giving a voice to young people in the EU Youth Strategy (paragraphs 16, 20, 21, 23 and 24)***

The above-mentioned Commission Communication on a new EU Youth Strategy includes proposals for a renewed EU Youth Dialogue to better take youth concerns into account and ensure wider outreach, including through online campaigns and consultations. The proposals aim at achieving a greater outreach in particular to disadvantaged young people and to the grassroots level, through youth organisations, youth work and innovative online approaches, including with the European Youth Portal[[1]](#footnote-1).

The Commission is analysing and gathering knowledge about the situation of young people in Europe (including via the dashboard of EU youth indicators and the EU Youth report every three years), as well as about national youth policies (notably via the Youth Wiki). The new Communication proposes to develop monitoring tools, such as policy indicators.

The Commission proposal for the new Erasmus programme 2021-2027 (COM(2018) 367) puts a stronger emphasis on fostering the active participation of young people in civic society and democratic processes, thus promoting active citizenship, a European identity and common values. This will be supported in particular through new actions, such as youth participation and DiscoverEU, a new travelling experience offered to 18-year olds.

***Equal opportunities for securing sustainable inclusion in the labour market (in particular paragraphs 25, 30, 32, 34 and 44-47)***

Giving Europe’s youth the best opportunities and supporting their transition into the labour market has been a key priority for this Commission. The Commission recognises that managing the Youth Employment Initiative as a separate strand within the European Social Fund during 2014-2020 resulted in some inefficiencies and administrative burden for managing authorities and, ultimately, for beneficiaries. The Commission’s proposal for a European Social Fund Plus Regulation (COM(2018) 382) aims to ensure that resources under the shared management strand are concentrated on key challenges. As regards youth employment, all Member States can continue to invest in youth employment under the European Social Fund Plus, and in particular in case they have a relevant country-specific recommendation in this area.

Member States with a rate of youth not in education, employment or training (NEETs) above a given threshold will be required to dedicate a set proportion (at least 10%) of their shared management strand of European Social Fund Plus allocations to targeted action and structural reforms to support youth employment and school-to-work transition, giving priority to long-term unemployed and inactive young people.

In addition, the scope of the Youth Employment Initiative did not allow for support for the structural measures and reforms required in particular in the context of Youth Guarantee schemes. The European Social Fund Plus will make it possible to invest resources in people, reforms and structures, thus ensuring a better match between EU funding and the implementation of the Youth Guarantee.

Learning mobility schemes under the Erasmus+ Programme are a powerful opportunity for young people to strengthen their self-confidence and sense of initiative, while enhancing their competences and employability, and helping them to become active European citizens. Learning opportunities abroad give them the chance to broaden their knowledge and develop new linguistic and intercultural competences.

In order to increase the quality and attractiveness of vocational education and training and apprenticeships, and responding to calls by the European Parliament, the Commission launched the ”ErasmusPro” initiative to provide additional long-duration (three to twelve months) mobility opportunities for vocational education and training learners, namely through work-placements in companies abroad. Both learners following a vocational programme as well as recent graduates can benefit from the initiative.

The future Erasmus programme, which was proposed by the Commission on 30 May 2018, will be the main financial instrument to offer vocational education and training learners and staff more opportunities to go abroad. The Commission envisages expanding participation considerably, with a special focus on including learners from disadvantaged backgrounds, also with new mobility formats. The Commission proposes to double the budget of the future Erasmus programme and to triple the number of learning opportunities abroad, including for vocational learners and staff.

The European Solidarity Corps is also offering young people additional opportunities to get engaged in solidarity activities throughout Europe, in the form of volunteering activities, jobs or traineeships.

Other European programmes and initiatives providing funding and support to learning mobility in a vocational education and training context are notably “Your first EURES job” (which also covers apprentices) and various initiatives launched under the European Social Fund (for example the “*Learning Network for Transnational Mobility*”).

Moreover, two Council Recommendations (the Quality Framework for Traineeships and the Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships) provide clear guidance on key criteria for high-quality traineeships and apprenticeships. The Council Recommendation on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships that was adopted on 15 March 2018 sets out 14 criteria to define quality and effective apprenticeships, ensuring both the development of job-related skills and the personal development of apprentices, in line with national or sectoral requirements or collective agreements.

In March 2018, the Commission proposed a Council Recommendation on “Access to social protection for all” (COM(2018) 132 final), which aims to support self-employed people or people in non-standard forms of employment who, because of their employment status, are not sufficiently covered by social security schemes. The proposal is particularly relevant for young people as they are less often hired on full-time open-ended contracts. Implementing the recommendation would help ensure that young people are covered by social security schemes, can build up entitlements and transfer them when changing jobs.

As regards entrepreneurship, the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) enables selected microcredit providers to increase lending (by issuing guarantees and/ or providing funding). Potential beneficiaries include young people who want to become self-employed or set up a microenterprise, particularly a social enterprise. The EU also seeks to increase knowledge about entrepreneurship and self-employment, including by youth, in co-operation with the OECD, such as through the joint publication ”Missing Entrepreneurs”.

***Sustainable development: the future for young people (paragraphs 48-66)***

The Commission is committed to supporting Member States in developing inclusive, lifelong learning-based and innovation-driven education and training systems. This is one of the key objectives of the Commission's vision of a European Education Area to be created by 2025. The Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (COM(2018) 24), adopted by the Council on 22 May 2018, includes a framework for civic and entrepreneurial competences, including media literacy. Many projects and activities funded under Erasmus+ have been geared towards increasing participation in and accessibility of education. These are to be found on the Erasmus+ Project Results Portal[[2]](#footnote-2).

Moreover, the Commission strongly supports initiatives to foster active citizenship and critical thinking, respect, values and intercultural learning. These issues are at the heart of the Council Recommendation on Promoting Common Values, Inclusive Education and the European Dimension of Teaching (2018/C 195/01), which was adopted by the Council on 22 May 2018. As a policy priority for the Union, they are also reflected in current Union funding programmes such as Erasmus+, Creative Europe and Europe for Citizens, and will continue to be prioritised in the successor programmes after 2020.

Regarding the personal well-being of young Europeans, the Commission tackles physical inactivity and unhealthy lifestyles through the sport chapter of the Erasmus+ programme, the European Week of Sport[[3]](#footnote-3), the implementation of the 2013 Council Recommendation on promoting health-enhancing physical activity (HEPA) (2013/C 354/01) across sectors and the Tartu call for healthy lifestyles[[4]](#footnote-4). The latter is a joint declaration by Commissioners Navracsics, Andriukaitis and Hogan with a list of 15 joint actions to promote healthy lifestyles in the coming two years. One of the actions promotes healthy lifestyles among children and young people, notably by supporting schools and sport clubs in creating and developing partnerships. The Commission also addresses physical inactivity through the new Steering Group on Health Promotion and Preventionaiming at replicating best practices in Member States, and the EU Platform for Diet, Physical Activity and Health.

The Commission proposal for the next Multiannual Financial Framework (COM(2018) 321 final) places a strong focus on youth: the Commission is proposing to more than double the budget of the future Erasmus programme and the future European Solidarity Corps.

1. <https://europa.eu/youth/EU_en> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://ec.europa.eu/sport/week_en> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://ec.europa.eu/sport/sites/sport/files/ewos-tartu-call_en.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)