



TEXTS ADOPTED

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Implementation of the Council Recommendation on a Bridge to Jobs - Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee

European Parliament resolution of 15 September 2026 on the implementation of the Council Recommendation of 30 October 2020 on A Bridge to Jobs - Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee and replacing the Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee (2025/2184(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Council Recommendation of 30 October 2020 on A Bridge to Jobs - Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee and replacing the Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee¹,
- having regard to Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union and to Articles 145, 147, 149, 151, 153, 165, 288 and 292 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, in particular Articles 14, 15, 21 and 31 thereof,
- having regard to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular Goal 8, adopted by world leaders in September 2015 and endorsed by the Council,
- having regard to the European Social Charter (revised), in particular Articles 7 and 17 thereof,
- having regard to the European Pillar of Social Rights proclaimed and signed by the Council, Parliament and the Commission on 17 November 2017, in particular Principles 1, 3 and 4 thereof,
- having regard to the Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on

¹ OJ C 372, 4.11.2020, p. 1.

establishing a Youth Guarantee²,

- having regard to the Commission communication of 7 October 2020 entitled 'A Union of Equality: EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation' (COM(2020)0620),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 January 2026 entitled 'Union of Equality: Anti-Racism Strategy 2026-2030' (COM(2026)0012),
- having regard to the Council conclusions on the role of youth work in supporting young people's development of essential life skills that facilitate their successful transition to adulthood, active citizenship and working life³,
- having regard to Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/1004 of 14 June 2021 establishing a European Child Guarantee⁴,
- having regard to the European Semester framework and country-specific recommendations,
- having regard to the Employment Committee's (EMCO) monitoring and reporting framework for the Youth Guarantee, including direct monitoring indicators, follow-up indicators and key messages used in the multilateral surveillance of its implementation,
- having regard to Eurostat indicators on youth unemployment and young people neither in employment nor in education and training (NEETs),
- having regard to the Commission monitoring reports and data collection on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/1057 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 establishing the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1296/2013⁵,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/888 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing the European Solidarity Corps Programme and repealing Regulations (EU) 2018/1475 and (EU) No 375/2014⁶,

² OJ C 120, 26.4.2013, p. 1.

³ OJ C 189, 15.6.2017, p. 30.

⁴ OJ L 223, 22.6.2021, p. 14, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/reco/2021/1004/oj>.

⁵ OJ L 231, 30.6.2021, p. 21, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/1057/oj>.

⁶ OJ L 202, 8.6.2021, p. 32, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/888/oj>.

- having regard to Decision (EU) 2021/2316 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 December 2021 on a European Year of Youth (2022)⁷,
- having regard to the Council Recommendation of 15 March 2018 on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships⁸,
- having regard to the Council Recommendation of 10 March 2014 on a Quality Framework for Traineeships⁹,
- having regard to the Council Recommendation of 24 November 2020 on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience¹⁰,
- having regard to the Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning¹¹,
- having regard to the Council Recommendation of 9 March 2026 on human capital in the European Union¹²,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 5 March 2025 on the Action Plan on Basic Skills (COM(2025)0088),
- having regard to the European Economic and Social Committee opinion of 29 October 2020 entitled 'Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee',
- having regard to the European Committee of the Regions opinion of 5 February 2021 entitled 'Youth Employment Support: A Bridge to Jobs for the Next Generation Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee'¹³,
- having regard to European Court of Auditors (ECA) special report No 3/2015 of 24 March 2015 entitled 'EU Youth Guarantee: first steps taken but implementation risks ahead', and special report No 5/2017 of 4 April 2017 entitled 'Youth unemployment – have EU policies made a difference?',
- having regard to the 2024 Eurofound report entitled 'Becoming adults: Young people in a post-pandemic world',
- having regard to the 2024 Eurofound report entitled 'Young people

⁷ OJ L 462, 28.12.2021, p. 1, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2021/2316/oj>.

⁸ OJ C 153, 2.5.2018, p. 1.

⁹ OJ C 88, 27.3.2014, p. 1.

¹⁰ OJ C 417, 2.12.2020, p. 1.

¹¹ OJ C 398, 22.12.2012, p. 1.

¹² OJ C, C/2026/1687, 13.3.2026, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2026/1687/oj>.

¹³ OJ C 106, 26.3.2021, p. 7.

in the Western Balkans’,

- having regard to the 2023 Cedefop publication entitled ‘European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning’,
- having regard to the 2025 European Training Foundation publication entitled ‘Outreach to young people not in employment, education or training – A practical manual for outreach’,
- having regard to the 2026 Cedefop publication entitled ‘An EU reference framework for lifelong guidance: 18 guidelines for policy and systems development’,
- having regard to the European implementation assessment of 18 December 2025 entitled ‘The implementation of the reinforced Youth Guarantee - Trends in EU Member States, impact, EU funding and governance’ published by the European Parliamentary Research Service,
- having regard to the study published by the European Committee of the Regions in June 2022 entitled ‘The local implementation of the Reinforced Youth Guarantee’,
- having regard to the position paper of the European Youth Forum of 13 March 2025 entitled ‘Youth Guarantee: How to support young people finding a pathway’,
- having regard to its resolution of 8 October 2020 on the Youth Guarantee¹⁴,
- having regard to its resolution of 17 February 2022 on empowering European youth: post-pandemic employment and social recovery¹⁵,
- having regard to its resolution of 21 November 2023 on reducing inequalities and promoting social inclusion in times of crisis for children and their families¹⁶,
- having regard to its resolution of 11 March 2025 on the European Social Fund Plus post-2027¹⁷,
- having regard to its resolution of 27 November 2025 on the EU strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities post-2024¹⁸,

¹⁴ OJ C 395, 29.9.2021, p. 101.

¹⁵ OJ C 342, 6.9.2022, p. 265.

¹⁶ OJ C, C/2024/4211, 24.7.2024, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/4211/oj>.

¹⁷ OJ C, C/2025/3146, 20.6.2025, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2025/3146/oj>.

¹⁸ OJ C, C/2026/1715, 24.4.2026, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2026/1715/oj>.

- having regard to Rule 55 of its Rules of Procedure, as well as Article 1(1)(e) of, and Annex 3 to, the decision of the Conference of Presidents of 12 December 2002 on the procedure for granting authorisation to draw up own-initiative reports,
 - having regard to the opinion of the Committee on Culture and Education,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (A10-0218/2026),
- A. whereas the Youth Guarantee (YG) was established in 2013 and reinforced in 2020 (RYG); whereas it is a commitment made by the Member States to young people under the age of 30 to offer them good-quality employment, continuing education, or an apprenticeship or a traineeship opportunity within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving education; whereas since its establishment in 2013, around 60 million young Europeans have taken up an offer under the YG scheme;
- B. whereas young people neither in employment nor in education and training (NEETs) constitute a diverse group with different lived experiences; whereas Eurofound research¹⁹ highlights that the NEET population is highly heterogeneous and consists of distinct subgroups, each facing unique structural barriers to accessing quality education, training, apprenticeships, volunteering opportunities and youth work, preventing their successful integration into the labour market, and therefore requiring tailored, flexible and personalised support to meet their specific needs; whereas in the implementation and improvement of the RYG particular attention must be paid to NEETs in vulnerable situations and those furthest from the labour market who are often hard to reach;
- C. whereas in the design and implementation of such measures the principle of subsidiarity and the competences of Member States in the fields of education, training and employment policies should be fully respected;
- D. whereas the NEET rate in the EU has resumed its downward trend in the post-pandemic period; whereas the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan includes the target of reducing the NEET rate to 9 % among young people aged 15-29 by 2030; whereas this objective is on track to be achieved, despite significant disparities between Member States and regions; whereas achieving this target would still leave a significant number of young people in precarious situations; whereas there is a persistent gender gap among NEETs, with the NEET rate among young women consistently exceeding that of

¹⁹ Eurofound, 'Exploring the diversity of NEETs', Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2016.

young men in the EU²⁰;

- E. whereas Roma and Travellers are the group with the highest NEET rate in the EU, at 47 % for young people aged 16-24, compared to an EU average of 9 % for the same age group²¹; whereas gender-disaggregated data shows that, on average, 61 % of young Roma and Traveller women are NEETs, compared with 33 % of young Roma and Traveller men²²; whereas none of the Member States surveyed are close to reaching the targets set out in the EU Roma strategic framework²³; whereas without a targeted and strategic approach by Member States, the EU risks leaving a generation of young Roma and Travellers at risk of exclusion from education, training and the labour market;
- F. whereas care leavers are a group particularly at risk of becoming NEETs, yet due to insufficient reliable data, their numbers at EU level remain unclear, as do the outreach measures in place to support them and the opportunities available to them after leaving care; whereas young people leaving institutional care often face abrupt transitions to independence without adequate educational continuity, housing stability, access to social protection, employment support or professional guidance, increasing their risk of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion; whereas these transition gaps could be addressed in the RYG implementation through tailored support mechanisms;
- G. whereas vulnerable NEETs may lack the functional literacy, numeracy and digital skills required to access quality education, training or the labour market; whereas young people's performance in reading, mathematics and science across the EU is declining, and those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds are over six times more likely to underachieve than their peers²⁴; whereas these

²⁰ Eurofound, 'NEET rates by gender, 15-29 age group (%)', <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/en/surveys-and-data/data-catalogue/neet-rates-gender-15-29-age-group>.

²¹ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 'Rights of Roma and Travellers in 13 European countries - Perspectives from the Roma Survey 2024', 2025, <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2025/roma-survey-2024>.

²² European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 'Rights of Roma and Travellers in 13 European countries - Perspectives from the Roma Survey 2024', 2025, <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2025/roma-survey-2024>.

²³ European Commission, 'EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation for 2020-2030' (COM(2020)0620), https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/99cc0720-68c2-4300-854f-592bf21dceaf_en?filename=eu_roma_strategic_framework_for_equality_inclusion_and_participation_for_2020_-_2030.pdf.

²⁴ European Commission, 'Education and Training Monitor 2024'.

worrying trends must be actively considered in the RYG to prevent deepening social divides and ensure equal access to education and future employment opportunities;

- H. whereas support measures to prevent early leaving from education or training should be deployed under the RYG, together with social protection measures such as family support, vocational guidance and seamless transitions from secondary education to other forms of education or training, to ensure that young people are not compelled to leave education prematurely due to their individual socio-economic backgrounds;
- I. whereas the Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022 on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability²⁵ recognises micro-credentials as a key tool for flexible, inclusive and targeted learning pathways, enabling individuals to acquire, update and certify their skills in a modular way, particularly in response to labour market needs and the green and digital transitions;
- J. whereas nearly one in four young people in the EU were at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2024, a rate which is 3,3 percentage points higher than that of the total EU population²⁶; whereas structural inequalities, such as material deprivation and persistent social disadvantage, undermine young people's ability to access the labour market and live independently; whereas the RYG should be recognised not only as a social priority, but also as a strategic investment in young people and the EU's human capital, thereby strengthening social cohesion, competitiveness and long-term economic resilience as well as reducing poverty and social exclusion;
- K. whereas the labour market integration of NEETs has become increasingly complex, driven by factors such as the increase in non-standard forms of employment, the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and digitalisation, and the cost of living crisis, including rising housing costs; whereas these developments create structural barriers to sustainable employment and labour market integration, require more flexibility and mobility from young people and exacerbate inequalities that leave vulnerable NEETs behind; whereas the increasing barriers to labour market integration for young people undermine social cohesion and institutional trust; whereas the implementation of the RYG must be reformed and strengthened to effectively respond to these challenges and prioritise NEETs furthest from the labour market;
- L. whereas youth underemployment remains a persistent challenge, with young people disproportionately represented among low-wage

²⁵ OJ C 243, 27.6.2022, p. 10.

²⁶ Eurostat, 'Young people - social inclusion', 2025.

earners²⁷ and in precarious work²⁸ and part-time employment²⁹; whereas they frequently lack access to adequate employment protection and social benefits; whereas young people are also at higher risk of job displacement due to automation and AI; whereas many young people, despite being highly educated and skilled, struggle to translate their qualifications into stable employment; whereas the employment rate for recent graduates is declining³⁰; whereas such conditions provide limited financial security and undermine pathways to sustainable labour market integration; whereas this particularly affects vulnerable NEETs who are disproportionately concentrated in low-skilled and low-quality employment;

- M. whereas Member States have generally maintained a strong political commitment to implementing the YG and their national implementation plans; whereas particular efforts have been made to strengthen support capacities for NEETs and mutual learning exercises through meetings of national coordinators at EU level or beyond;
- N. whereas there are almost as many models for implementing the YG as there are Member States; whereas the institutional arrangements for its implementation range from integrating the YG into existing national systems to creating a separate national model; whereas governance arrangements also vary between centralised models coordinated at national level and fully decentralised models at local level;
- O. whereas it is difficult to establish a direct causal link between the implementation of the RYG and the observed results in terms of reduction in the NEET rate and youth unemployment, particularly where RYG schemes are embedded in broader national policies; whereas this highlights the strong need for focus to be placed on tangible outcomes for young people, improved alignment with national labour market needs and closer synergies with EU programmes in the implementation of the RYG;
- P. whereas a clear majority of Member States rely on an employment-first strategy, while others prioritise a training-focused approach; whereas in 2024, 35,2 % of positive and timely exits from the YG preparatory phase led to employment, 6,5 % to education, 2,5 % to a traineeship and 1,6 % to an apprenticeship³¹; whereas education and

²⁷ Eurostat, 'Low-wage earners as a proportion of all employees (excluding apprentices) by age', https://doi.org/10.2908/EARN_SES_PUB1A.

²⁸ Eurostat, 'Young people on the labour market - statistics', 2018.

²⁹ Eurostat, 'Part-time and full-time employment - statistics', 2025.

³⁰ Eurostat, 'Employment rates of recent graduates', 2025.

³¹ European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, Data table on Youth Guarantee Direct indicators,

training play a dual role in equipping young people with relevant skills and qualifications while, at the same time, encouraging personal development, autonomy, creativity, civic engagement and the capacity to actively participate in society; whereas these dimensions are mutually reinforcing and contribute to sustainable labour market integration, social cohesion and democratic participation;

- Q. whereas European data shows that initial VET pathways that feature a strong work-based learning component are the most effective instrument for preventing people from ending up in NEET situations, inasmuch as young people who complete work-based learning pathways of at least seven months boast employment rates of up to 90,5 %, as opposed to 69,7 % for those who do not have access to these pathways³²; whereas dual VET systems use a structured alternation between school and work to generate marketable skills and significantly reduce the gap between job demand and supply; whereas the Member States that have robust dual VET systems have the lowest youth unemployment rates in the EU;
- R. whereas active citizenship, civic education, volunteering and participatory initiatives empower young people to become well-informed, responsible and engaged members of society, and can complement employment and training measures by supporting the development of transversal competences, as well as a sense of agency, solidarity and belonging;
- S. whereas the validation of non-formal and informal learning, in line with the Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012, enables young people furthest from the labour market to build on skills and competences acquired through youth work, volunteering, and cultural community and heritage-related activities;
- T. whereas youth work is recognised at EU level, including under the European youth work agenda, as a distinct practice supporting young people's personal development and social inclusion; whereas approaches to the recognition of youth work, and the qualifications and professional standards required by the sector, vary significantly across Member States, resulting in uneven visibility and portability of competences acquired through youth work;
- U. whereas the effective implementation of the RYG requires targeted and integrated measures, combining employment support with access to education and training, as well as basic enabling conditions such as social services, youth work, childcare and care, mental

February 2026.

³² European Commission: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, Education and training monitor 2025 - Comparative report, p 58, Publications Office of the European Union, 2025, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/2221794>.

health and well-being support, cultural activities, housing, transport, social protection, and, where appropriate, adequate income support; whereas this holistic approach should ensure lasting labour market integration, prevent long-term exclusion and disengagement, in particular for young and single parents, promote gender equality, support sustainable work-life balance and rebuild trust among marginalised young people; whereas low-threshold, community-based outreach centred on culture, sports and civic engagement, through actors such as public libraries, museums, youth centres and youth organisations, is critical in reaching those furthest from public services in order to boost RYG participation;

- V. whereas institutional and structural barriers to the effective operationalisation of the YG and its practical implementation still remain at both national and local level, such as limited public employment services (PES) capacity, obstacles to the sharing of data between services, the mismatch between education and training provision and the labour market, as well as the poor outreach and support to vulnerable NEETs facing socio-economic disadvantages; whereas inactive and vulnerable NEETs are often left out of RYG initiatives to the benefit of young people closer to the labour market;
- W. whereas the RYG goals reflect the shared political priorities of Parliament, the Commission and the Member States under the current multiannual financial framework (MFF), notably through the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), contributing to the EU's objective of sustainable economic growth and the creation of high-quality jobs in line with the European Pillar of Social Rights; whereas stronger synergies between the Youth Guarantee, Erasmus+, the ESF and the EU Youth Strategy could enhance young people's opportunities for participation, mobility, skills development and social inclusion across Europe;
- X. whereas the effectiveness of the RYG depends on the transparent and efficient use of EU and national funds; whereas to address the persistent problems and new rapidly evolving challenges to labour market integration for young people, these priorities must be maintained beyond the current programming period and be complemented by an improvement in managing authorities' absorption capacities; whereas Eurofound estimates that the failure to integrate NEETs into the labour market amounts to an economic loss of nearly EUR 100 billion per year across Member States³³;
- Y. whereas the effectiveness of the RYG should be measured not only by the immediate entry of young people into employment, education or training, but also by the quality, sustainability and long-term career prospects of such opportunities; whereas stronger

³³ European Commission, 'Employment and Social Developments in Europe (ESDE) 2025', September 2025.

monitoring, disaggregated data collection and evaluation systems capable of measuring long-term impacts are essential to fully capture its outcomes, particularly for vulnerable and marginalised groups;

- Z. whereas retaining young talent and better anticipation of skills and training needs, including through regional mapping of skills mismatches, can help bridge the skills gap between educational outcomes and labour market needs, especially in strategic sectors with the potential to boost the EU's long-term competitiveness, in line with the Council Recommendation of 9 March 2026 on human capital;
- AA. whereas the YG is based on a principle of mutual obligation, under which young people not only have the right to a high-quality offer but also the duty to actively participate and accept reasonable employment, training, or educational opportunities;
- AB. whereas Member States must therefore ensure that, in cases of repeated and unjustified refusal of reasonable offers, appropriate measures can be applied in accordance with national law to prevent passivity and promote the personal responsibility of young people;

Trends in the implementation of the Youth Guarantee

1. Welcomes the strong performance of labour markets in the EU and the historically low unemployment rates; regrets, however, that this trend is not having a greater impact on young people, whose unemployment rate across the EU hovers at around 15 %, still almost three times higher than the rate for the general population³⁴, and who are not seeing improvements in the quality of their employment; notes that the unemployment situation among certain groups of young people is particularly worrying and that the RYG has the potential to reduce youth unemployment and act as a preventive measure;
2. Welcomes the downward trend in the rate of NEETs in the EU since the introduction of the YG, which fell from 16,1 % in 2013 to 11 % in 2025³⁵; notes, however, a disparity between Member States, with some having already achieved the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan target of decreasing the NEET rate to 9 % by 2030, while others still have alarmingly high numbers of NEETs;
3. Emphasises that direct monitoring indicators for the YG suggest significant and persistent challenges in the bringing into operation and delivery of YG schemes; highlights, in particular, that in 2024

³⁴ Eurostat, 'Unemployment by sex and age - annual data', https://doi.org/10.2908/UNE_RT_A.

³⁵ Eurostat, 'Young persons neither in employment nor in education and training by labour status (NEET rates)', https://doi.org/10.2908/EDAT_LFSE_20.

more than half of participants (54 %) remained in the preparatory phase for more than four months, that positive and timely exits from the preparatory phase represented less than half of cases (45,1 %)³⁶ and that the coverage rate stood at less than 50 % of the NEET population in many Member States³⁷; deplores the fact that these figures indicate that YG schemes are not meeting their core objectives in terms of outreach, timeliness and effectiveness;

4. Stresses that follow-up indicators are undermined by a lack of data and methodological weaknesses in several Member States, notably for the 25-29 age group, and the high share of unknown outcomes, which prevent a comprehensive assessment of the sustainability of RYG schemes by type of offers and their long-term effects, as well as comparisons between Member States based on disaggregated data such as by gender, age, disability, location and socio-economic status; notes that some Member States group together education and training data into one category, and employment and apprenticeship data into another; highlights in this context that the available data indicates that a majority of young people were in a positive situation six months after leaving RYG schemes in 2024 (58,3 %), but that this proportion decreased after 12 (53,1 %) and 18 months (30,3 %)³⁸;
5. Emphasises that the implementation of YG schemes is hindered by persisting long-term challenges, such as outreach to and support for the hard-to-reach NEETs, the low coverage rate of these schemes, the low quality of offers, the limited capacity and coordinating role of RYG providers, in particular PES, and incomplete monitoring frameworks; takes note of the latest EMCO reviews and the emphasis placed on the persistent difficulties in overcoming structural and institutional barriers that prevent the sustainable labour market integration of young people, in reaching inactive and vulnerable NEETs, in mobilising national budgets to ensure the sustainability of schemes, and in monitoring and collecting data³⁹;
6. Underlines that NEETs are a heterogenous group and that a large number of young people are in a particularly vulnerable socio-economic situation, such as young women, young carers, young parents, early school leavers, young persons with disabilities, young Roma and Traveller communities, young people facing discrimination

³⁶ European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, Data table on Youth Guarantee Direct indicators, February 2026.

³⁷ European implementation assessment of 18 December 2025 entitled 'The implementation of the reinforced Youth Guarantee - Trends in EU Member States, impact, EU funding and governance' published by the European Parliamentary Research Service.

³⁸ European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, Data table on Youth Guarantee Follow-up indicators, December 2025.

³⁹ 6184/26. 6831/24.

on the grounds of religion or belief, race, ethnic or socio-economic background, or sexual orientation, those leaving institutions or alternative care arrangements, those with migrant backgrounds and residence status, those who have exited custodial systems and those struggling with addiction or chronic diseases, those coming from rural, remote, mountainous or insular areas, and those affected by housing insecurity and homelessness; stresses that these groups face a higher risk of unemployment, social exclusion and becoming NEETs, as well as structural barriers to accessing education, training and skills development and quality jobs; highlights that poverty, health conditions, stigmatisation, institutional distrust and lack of social support can act as barriers to RYG participation and generate economic and social costs, and therefore require targeted and inclusive measures to address disparities and ensure equal opportunities for all; is concerned that RYG schemes often prioritise young people who are already closer to the labour market and recalls the importance of providing support to inactive NEETs, as well as to hard-to-reach NEETs, on an equal footing with the support provided to NEETs who are registered as unemployed;

7. Observes a notable imbalance in the opportunities offered under RYG schemes in favour of employment-first approaches over training-focused systems⁴⁰; underlines that limited visibility of education and training opportunities under RYG schemes risks undervaluing alternative pathways and may incentivise short-term labour market offers; stresses that the RYG has not actively tackled the issue of precarious work, leaving vulnerable young people at risk of in-work poverty through low wages and inadequate social protection and employment security; stresses that the choice of offers must be based on the NEETs' individual situations and the objective of their sustainable integration into the labour market; notes in this regard the potential of subsidised offers to promote upskilling and empower young people to progress in their careers;
8. Underlines that currently not all eligible young people receive offers of quality employment, education, apprenticeships or training within four months of leaving education or becoming unemployed; acknowledges that job quality remains a major challenge in youth employment and that YG offers should promote fair working conditions, sustainable education and labour market integration as well as contribute to combating precarious forms of work; recognises the slowdown in graduate jobs and highlights the mismatch between the qualifications of certain younger workers and their roles, which can negatively impact long-term earning and career potential; notes that the current indicator framework for the RYG focuses primarily

⁴⁰ European implementation assessment of 18 December 2025 entitled 'The implementation of the reinforced Youth Guarantee - Trends in EU Member States, impact, EU funding and governance' published by the European Parliamentary Research Service.

on quantitative performance metrics such as NEET rates, youth unemployment and timely exits from the preparatory phase, without monitoring the quality of offers or the sustainable integration of beneficiaries;

9. Emphasises the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on young people and the important stabilising role played by the YG in preventing a new youth unemployment crisis in this context; considers that, with the effects of this period now behind us, the RYG should have as its new objective the reduction of unemployment and inactivity among the hardest-to-reach young people;
10. Highlights the generally positive feedback from managing authorities on the merger of the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) financial instrument into the ESF+⁴¹; emphasises that this has led to an obligation to allocate 12,5 % of the ESF+ budget to actions and reforms promoting youth employment, VET and the transition from school to work for Member States with a NEET rate above the EU average; deplores the fact that this earmarking, a legacy of the YEI, is not included in the Commission's proposal for the 2028-2034 MFF;
11. Highlights that the absence of specific earmarking for youth employment in the next MFF risks undermining the results achieved and leading to inadequate funding, as highlighted by the European Court of Auditors prior to its introduction⁴²; highlights the absence of requirements for Member States to report national funding for measures implementing the RYG, which limits EU-wide comparability and evaluation; recognises that, in a challenging budgetary context, RYG funding should prioritise the labour market integration of vulnerable and inactive NEETs;
12. Stresses that young people face multidimensional challenges that cannot be addressed solely through employment-activation measures and that the sustainable labour market integration of NEETs requires a holistic approach; highlights that the YG operates within a broader framework of EU and national policies and that achieving its core objectives depends on enabling policies and preventive measures in other areas such as social protection, social inclusion, housing, in-work poverty, family, care and childcare, transport, mental health and anti-discrimination; recognises, in particular, the housing crisis and the disproportionate impact it has on young people;
13. Recalls Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's commitment in

⁴¹ European implementation assessment of 18 December 2025 entitled 'The implementation of the reinforced Youth Guarantee - Trends in EU Member States, impact, EU funding and governance' published by the European Parliamentary Research Service.

⁴² ECA special report No 3/2015 of 24 March 2015 entitled 'EU Youth Guarantee: first steps taken but implementation risks ahead', p. 24.

2019 to ensuring that every child in the EU at risk of poverty or social exclusion has access to the most basic of rights like healthcare and education, which was followed by the adoption of a Council Recommendation establishing a European Child Guarantee in 2021; stresses that the objectives of the European Child Guarantee cannot be achieved without an ambitious dedicated budget at both EU and national level; reiterates in this context its call for a substantial dedicated budget of at least EUR 20 billion for the European Child Guarantee; underlines the urgent need for this dedicated budget to be allocated in the next multiannual financial framework in order to respond to the growing challenge of child poverty and social exclusion;

14. Notes that the focus placed on the YG in the European Semester has diminished in recent years, particularly with regard to the country-specific recommendations, which have not mentioned the instrument since the years when the recommendations were published and there was political momentum surrounding them; highlights, given the labour market situation in some Member States, that a discrepancy is apparent between these situations and the formulation of country-specific recommendations; regrets the decision taken in the Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure to downgrade the youth unemployment rate to an auxiliary indicator, even though this remains a worrying problem in many Member States;
15. Welcomes the establishment of validation systems for non-formal and informal learning in most Member States; regrets, nevertheless, that the implementation of the Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 remains uneven, especially in terms of the fragmentation of qualification frameworks, complex validation procedures, insufficient guidance and a lack of dedicated financial and human resources;
16. Welcomes the 2021 Western Balkans Declaration⁴³ and the adoption by these countries of national youth guarantee strategies, demonstrating the attractiveness of this instrument; stresses that these efforts are important in promoting the EU accession process, but recognises difficulties similar to those faced by Member States in terms of reaching vulnerable groups, the capacity of PES and the quality of offers; stresses the important role of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance in supporting the implementation of the YG in the Western Balkans;

Impact of the reinforced Youth Guarantee

17. Recognises that the RYG has acted as a catalyst for institutional reforms and policy innovations across the Member States, and has

⁴³ Western Balkans Declaration on ensuring sustainable labour market integration of young people, 2021, <https://www.esap.online/docs/141/western-balkans-declaration-on-ensuring-sustainable-labour-market-integration-of-young-people>.

also prompted reflection on the reorganisation of active labour market policies for young people; notes with concern, however, that half of the Member States' implementation plans have not been updated over the past decade and thus no longer reflect the current labour market realities, including its trends and transitions, such as the increase in precarious work, the twin transitions and growing underemployment;

18. Stresses that the impact of the RYG is uneven both across and within Member States in terms of its implementation and regarding the specific elements of the reinforcement, while noting that the RYG is not binding on Member States; notes in this context the diversity of approaches to the RYG with regard to its delivery and the scope of the offers provided; underlines that Member States have differing levels of socio-economic development, demographic challenges, local labour market conditions and access to services, resulting in strong regional and local disparities in youth unemployment and inactivity, therefore requiring some flexibility in the design of measures under the RYG;
19. Welcomes the extension of the age group covered by the RYG to include young people aged 25 to 29, considering that transitions from education to the labour market have become longer and less linear, with many young people moving between employment, unemployment and inactivity; notes that this extension has increased participation in RYG schemes, with this age group accounting for around one third of the total number of participants in 2024⁴⁴; emphasises that this increased participation has not always been accompanied by an increase in the capacity of PES, which are faced with a greater number of cases, some of which are more complex; regrets that some Member States have decided not to implement this extension of the age range for the RYG;
20. Stresses that intergenerational solidarity is a cornerstone of the EU's welfare model and is essential for preserving social cohesion in the context of demographic change and economic transformation;
21. Regrets that awareness of the RYG schemes remains low among young people, employers and, to a certain extent, public authorities, education and training providers and relevant stakeholders not directly involved in the implementation of the schemes or employment issues; stresses that integrating the RYG schemes into broader national programmes risks overshadowing the opportunities offered to NEETs; notes that the NEETs who are hardest to reach remain those who are least aware of RYG schemes and the services available to support them; considers this low awareness, partly

⁴⁴ European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, Data collection for monitoring of Youth Guarantee schemes: 2024, December 2025.

attributable to the absence of effective information campaigns, in particular those targeted at young people with fewer opportunities, a significant barrier to the uptake and effectiveness of the RYG;

22. Emphasises that poor horizontal and vertical coordination between EU, national, regional and local levels has proved a persistent challenge to the effective delivery of the RYG; notes that the fragmented approach between the actors and services responsible for implementing the RYG is often attributed to data protection issues, outdated registers, or unclear responsibilities among authorities, which prevent the sharing of personal data;
23. Highlights the persistent gaps in data sharing and interinstitutional communication, particularly between schools, education and training providers, alternative care services, social services and PES; regrets that many public authorities did not sufficiently involve social partners, school and universities, civil society organisations and youth organisations in the design, implementation and evaluation of the RYG at national level, undermining its effectiveness; underlines that community-based engagement and a collaborative approach are essential for increasing awareness of RYG opportunities, preventing early school leaving, enabling early intervention at key transition points and supporting the transition from school to employment⁴⁵;
24. Notes with strong concern that outreach remains one of the main obstacles to the effective implementation of the RYG; regrets that outreach measures are mainly passive and based only on NEETs registered with PES and that the latter do not have the capacity to take a proactive approach to outreach within communities; notes that this creates systemic barriers for those who face practical challenges, social or digital exclusion, or who do not trust institutions, and who require personalised guidance and support measures; emphasises that effective outreach must reflect local realities and involve trusted local services and organisations working directly with young people and hard-to-reach NEETs;
25. Expresses deep concern regarding the equity of RYG schemes and their ability to reach vulnerable and inactive groups; stresses that RYG implementation remains insufficiently integrated with other policies supporting the sustainable labour market integration of vulnerable NEETs, such as care, social protection, health policies and housing; recalls that a lack of evidence-based outreach hinders the development of more refined strategies; stresses that the focus on vulnerable groups in reinforcing the YG has yet to materialise through effective outreach and support mechanisms and increased

⁴⁵ European implementation assessment of 18 December 2025 entitled 'The implementation of the reinforced Youth Guarantee - Trends in EU Member States, impact, EU funding and governance' published by the European Parliamentary Research Service.

capacity across Member States; is concerned that a number of young people re-enter the NEET category some time after leaving the RYG schemes;

26. Highlights that young women and, in particular, single mothers remain over-represented in the NEET population, despite the strengthened gender dimension of the RYG; stresses that RYG implementation must reach all target beneficiaries equally and better reflect gender-specific patterns, whereby women are more likely to become inactive NEETs and to be outside the labour force, while men are more likely to be registered as unemployed NEETs;
27. Emphasises that insufficient capacity and resources within PES remain a critical and persistent barrier to the effective implementation of the RYG; is concerned that PES staff are frequently not provided with the adequate training or resources required to effectively identify, reach and provide tailored support to NEETs, especially the most vulnerable and hardest to reach;
28. Is strongly concerned about the observed trend within RYG schemes of a shift away from personalised towards increasingly generalised services⁴⁶; stresses that one-size-fits-all approaches have contributed to the prevalence of RYG offers that mismatch the skills and individual profiles of beneficiaries; stresses that the personalised approach is necessary to address the diversity of NEETs' needs and the variation in regional and local labour market conditions; recalls that tailored actions tend to be more effective and cost-efficient, as the low costs of delivering general services do not compensate for the low effectiveness of this approach in addressing the multilayered difficulties faced by young people; welcomes efforts made by some Member States to strengthen the personalised approach of their RYG schemes, in particular by including an individual action plan based on the beneficiaries' profiles;
29. Highlights the efforts made in some Member States to analyse the digital skills of NEETs by PES or through self-assessment; stresses that many young people suffer from basic skills gaps as well as digital illiteracy⁴⁷, preventing them from contributing to innovation, prosperity and sustainable economic growth, despite using digital tools; underlines, in this regard, the need to improve digital infrastructure to provide better access to education and training opportunities; regrets that, in most cases, the emphasis placed on skills in reinforcing the YG is not reflected more clearly in the results

⁴⁶ EMCO review of the implementation of the Youth Guarantee - Key Messages, 2024.

⁴⁷ European Commission: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, 'International Computer and Information Literacy Study (ICILS) in Europe, 2023 - Main findings and educational policy implications', Publications Office of the European Union, 2024, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/5221263>.

analysed and that skills development initiatives under these schemes are not more closely integrated into other EU and national skills initiatives, including those related to innovation and competitiveness; emphasises that competencies gained by young people through formal, non-formal and informal learning should be fully recognised and valued for career and professional development;

30. Stresses the absolute necessity of rapid and continuous intervention for NEETs in order to prevent them from being trapped in vulnerable situations; regrets, in this context, the generally excessive waiting times for RYG offers, and that the proportion of timely and positive exits has slightly decreased since the YG was reinforced; notes, however, that the effectiveness of placements is primarily measured by the positive outcomes they yield, which have been shown to decline slightly after six months, indicating a lack of sufficient post-placement support;
31. Deplores the fact that, despite an emphasis on aligning quality criteria on EU frameworks, the quality of offers has seen very limited material improvement since the introduction of the RYG; is concerned about feedback from some stakeholders indicating a reliance on subsidised employment offers leading to fixed-term contracts without pathways to genuine employment, traineeships without clear learning objectives, the mismatches between available opportunities and the profiles and skills of beneficiaries and a lack of connection between individual needs and available services; recalls that the Recommendation emphasises that the quality of the offer should be ensured through post-placement support and feedback⁴⁸; emphasises that improving the quality of RYG offers must be prioritised and stresses the need to detect and combat practices that circumvent the purpose of traineeships, and the use of standard employment relationships disguised as traineeships within RYG schemes;
32. Underlines that young people need concrete and quality RYG opportunities, particularly work-based learning such as VET, apprenticeships, traineeships and first employment experiences; underlines the importance for RYG offers to continuously adapt curricula to labour market needs as well as the interests and well-being of beneficiaries in order to develop transferrable and cross-cutting skills, reduce skills shortages and prevent skills mismatches;
33. Stresses that the RYG has failed to actively tackle age discrimination and the prevalence of precarious work, leaving NEETs, and in particular vulnerable NEETs, at risk of exploitation and in-work poverty through low wages, a lack of social protection, a lack of employment security and unequal treatment; is concerned that this may contribute to the normalisation of precarious and low-quality

⁴⁸ OJ C 372, 4.11.2020, p. 1-9.

employment in the labour market, whereby stable and decent jobs become replaced by traineeships and insecure and non-standard forms of work; stresses, in this regard, the need to detect and combat practices that circumvent the purpose of traineeships, and the use of standard employment relationships disguised as traineeships;

34. Stresses that mobility support measures are essential to ensure equal access to quality VET across regions; recognises the innovative potential of the Aim, Learn, Master, Achieve (ALMA) initiative in providing disadvantaged and vulnerable NEETs with additional support and work-based learning experiences abroad under RYG schemes; stresses that initial feedback on this initiative points to difficulties in its operability and a considerable number of participants dropping out, indicating the need for increased support for the organisations implementing, or wishing to implement, ALMA projects, as well as targeted support for beneficiaries⁴⁹;
35. Regrets that the implementation of the RYG remains insufficiently linked to social protection systems, resulting in cases where participation in RYG schemes may result in reduced or withdrawn social benefits for both individual NEETs and their households;
36. Welcomes the fact that RYG stakeholders generally consider the EU funds available for its financing to be adequate⁵⁰; notes, however, the tendency in some Member States to rely almost entirely on the ESF+ to finance RYG schemes, which raises questions about the sustainability of these programmes, or on the use of EU funds to replace pre-existing national funds, thereby limiting the capacity of programmes to expand in response to demand; notes with concern that national authorities can face significant difficulties in effectively accessing and utilising available EU funds for RYG implementation; is concerned about feedback indicating that problems with accessing EU funds stem from a persistent lack of human resources in national authorities, poor coordination between authorities in some Member States, or between authorities at national and EU level, as well as unclear application procedures, which prevent the effective absorption and use of available EU funds⁵¹;

⁴⁹ Social Innovation+ Initiative, 'Impact evaluation of the projects implemented under the ALMA initiative - Final evaluation report', 2026.

⁵⁰ European implementation assessment of 18 December 2025 entitled 'The implementation of the reinforced Youth Guarantee - Trends in EU Member States, impact, EU funding and governance' published by the European Parliamentary Research Service.

⁵¹ European implementation assessment of 18 December 2025 entitled 'The implementation of the reinforced Youth Guarantee - Trends in EU Member States, impact, EU funding and governance' published by the European Parliamentary Research Service.

37. Welcomes the EMCO indicator framework for monitoring the RYG and its annual assessment of the implementation of the instrument, and highlights the robustness and comparability of the indicator data aggregated at EU level; regrets, however, that the direct monitoring and follow-up indicator framework containing data reported by Member States is of lower quality in terms of data collection, the monitoring system and the high proportion of unknown situations in the YG results; points out, in particular, that national monitoring frameworks often exclude inactive NEETs who are not registered with public services, rendering a large part of the RYG target group invisible; is concerned that follow-up indicators are completely absent in several Member States and do not take into account the quality of the offers;
38. Emphasises the transformative potential of the RYG to reduce youth unemployment, underemployment and social exclusion; stresses that while the RYG addresses some of the shortcomings of the initial instrument, persistent operational challenges, a lack of defined objectives and the evaluation of schemes continue to hamper implementation; regrets that the potential and objectives of the RYG have not yet been fully achieved by the Member States, since most of the challenges lie at this level; emphasises, in this regard, the importance of the EU continuing to play its full role in supporting the Member States, promoting best practice and providing technical assistance where necessary; regrets that the European Court of Auditors' 2017 conclusion that the YG progress falls short of expectations is still partially true almost 10 years later; stresses the urgent need for reform and further improvements to bridge the gap between the ambition of this instrument and its practical implementation;

Recommendations

39. Underlines the importance of an enabling policy framework for the implementation of the RYG and the successful labour market integration of NEETs; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that RYG offers are supported by quality standards for employment, working conditions, education, traineeships and apprenticeships, flexible learning and working arrangements to unlock the potential of carers, especially young mothers, inclusion policies and appropriate skilling opportunities, as well as by effective access to social protection and services such as additional childcare and care facilities, effective transport systems, adequate healthcare, affordable and available housing for young people, and regional development;
40. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to deliver targeted improvements to strengthen capacities of PES and other relevant national entities responsible for RYG implementation, including by strengthening the administrative and human resources specialised in

supporting youth employment and by allocating dedicated resources in a manner that is commensurate with current challenges; highlights the fact that the modernisation and digitalisation of PES must be accompanied by investment in training and capacity-building programmes for relevant regional and local authorities in order to improve effective outreach, personalised and inclusive support within the four-month intervention period, and sustained follow-up support; calls on the Member States to ensure that PES are better equipped to reach out to and support all NEETs, particularly those in vulnerable situations, by enabling PES to provide NEETs with structured training and access to physical and digital infrastructure; highlights the potential for cooperation between PES and private employment agencies, as well as the potential of the European Network of PES to promote the exchange of best practice, foster peer learning and support convergence of performance across Member States;

41. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to provide comprehensive and, where possible, individualised support to address the structural and often complex barriers faced by vulnerable NEETs, in order to tackle the root causes of social exclusion and address their labour market situation; stresses that this support must be provided in the form of a package of measures delivered by PES and other relevant social services aimed at helping with childcare and care, increasing access to family planning services, supporting access to affordable housing, healthy nutrition, healthcare and mental health services, combating addiction, and developing confidence and empowerment; points, furthermore, to integrated, low-threshold approaches, such as one-stop shops, as appropriate means of delivering such support; further calls on the Member States with a positive and timely exit rate or a coverage rate below the EU average to conduct a comprehensive assessment of their RYG schemes in order to identify the reasons for these shortcomings and rectify them by reshaping these schemes based on the results;
42. Stresses the need to bolster RYG governance through a collaborative and community-based approach in all its phases; calls on the Member States to strengthen coordination between ministries, public authorities, PES, social partners, relevant labour market actors, education and training providers, social and healthcare services, national youth councils, civil society, including grassroots and youth organisations, and cultural and sports actors at national, regional and local level to ensure that everyone works within integrated networks of services for NEETs;
43. Calls, in this context, for the establishment of formal partnerships through, inter alia, tripartite commissions, cooperation agreements, or protocols at national or regional level between relevant public authorities and these partners; stresses the necessity of building

trust between RYG providers and local communities, for example by aligning educational and training RYG offers with labour market needs, involving social partners and other stakeholders in the design, monitoring and enforcement of quality RYG offers and offering additional preparatory training or bridging programmes to early school leavers; encourages the Member States to disseminate best practices, such as sectoral partnerships and training initiatives in direct partnership with employers aimed at securing recruitment at the end of training, job fairs, information days or other employer-youth matching events;

44. Calls on the Member States to adopt a regional approach to implementing the RYG, with substantial and prioritised investments and measures in regions with the highest NEET, youth unemployment and inactivity rates where structural disadvantages are greater; stresses that this regional approach must benefit from national supervision in order to ensure equal standards for support and delivery throughout every Member State and reduce regional inequalities; stresses, furthermore, that this approach should foster tailored measures for vulnerable NEETs whether they live in urban, rural or remote areas, such as transport and digital connectivity support, specific training for rural NEETs, and targeted improvements in the administrative outreach of PES and in the delivery capacity of PES to offer in-person as well as digital and mobile support, in turn supporting local employment and preventing the outflow of young people; further calls on the Member States to involve local authorities more closely in the design of RYG schemes in order to increase their sense of ownership;
45. Commends the Youth Guarantee Knowledge Centre⁵² and calls on the Commission to update this database, focusing on past initiatives that have proven successful in supporting NEETs and integrating them sustainably into the labour market; believes that this Knowledge Centre should serve as a basis for more frequent exchanges of best practice between Member States and regions, particularly with regard to monitoring, reporting, governance and cooperation; encourages peer reviews between Member States as well as the organisation of cross-border projects on the implementation of the RYG to promote the adoption of proven models, including in regions facing implementation challenges; calls on the Commission to ensure greater transparency regarding the YG coordinators' meetings and to broaden their participation to include other stakeholders such as civil society, where appropriate; considers that this cooperation at European level should be coupled

⁵² Commission, 'Youth Guarantee - Knowledge centre', https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/eu-employment-policies/youth-employment-support/reinforced-youth-guarantee/youth-guarantee-knowledge-centre_en.

with closer interparliamentary relations;

46. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to include in RYG schemes a set of preventive measures and early warning systems focusing on early school leaving in order to improve the school-to-work transition and avoid long-term impacts on young people's lives; suggests that these measures should have educational and early intervention dimensions, with a particular focus on low levels of basic, digital and soft skills, and should include mechanisms for schools to identify and report young people at risk of becoming NEETs to the services responsible for the RYG; calls, in particular, for improved mapping of RYG beneficiaries, coaching measures, mentoring programmes involving professionals, cooperation to strengthen family capacity to support children in their learning, learning opportunities in both formal as well as non-formal and informal environments, civic education programmes, and career and vocational guidance and for skills assessments to be developed;
47. Calls on the Member States to invest in the training of education and training providers to enable them to identify learners at risk of early leaving from education and training and to support them effectively; urges the Member States to prioritise upskilling of teachers and VET trainers in strategic sectors, in particular digital and emerging technologies; suggests a requirement for schools to conduct exit interviews with early school leavers on advancing on an individual pathway into employment through further learning or work in order to support informed decision-making;
48. Calls on the Member States to build on potential synergies between the RYG and the Council Recommendation of 28 November 2022 on pathways to school success⁵³, by including concrete links between the two schemes in their national strategies towards school success, with specific actions such as offering routes back into mainstream education and training, or ensuring access to quality second-chance programmes for all those who have prematurely left education or training;
49. Calls on the Member States to invest in and strengthen their VET offers and modernise their lifelong learning systems, in close cooperation with social partners, as well as education and training providers, local enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), in particular by exploring options for individual training accounts or training funds in line with national models; stresses the need to ensure the inclusiveness and quality of training offered under RYG schemes and their recognised qualifications; urges the

⁵³ Council Recommendation of 28 November 2022 on Pathways to School Success and replacing the Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 on policies to reduce early school leaving (OJ C 469, 9.12.2022, p. 1)

Commission and the Member States to harmonise EU-wide qualification frameworks and promote cross-border recognition; calls, in particular, on the Member States to recognise the individual right to training and lifelong learning for all young people; calls on the Commission to build on the Herning Declaration⁵⁴ in the forthcoming EU VET strategy to improve the attractiveness, quality, portability and inclusiveness of these opportunities for young people; highlights the importance of concretely demonstrating the career opportunities created by VET, particularly in the context of the green and digital transitions and evolving labour market demands; welcomes, in this context, the announcement of the creation of a European Skills Intelligence Observatory, which will aim to increase skills capacity and foresight, using where appropriate advanced technologies, and to ensure a skilled and resilient workforce;

50. Calls for the promotion of quality apprenticeships and dual education systems, such as by combining classroom learning and practical work experience, especially for vulnerable young people, to make it an appealing pathway; stresses the need to ensure the equal recognition and integration of apprenticeships within education systems in line with the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships; calls, furthermore, for upskilling and reskilling opportunities, in particular in local SMEs and social enterprises, in order to ensure the continuity and relevance of training pathways; recognises the efforts made by Member States with regard to upskilling and reskilling programmes and recalls that Directive (EU) 2019/1152⁵⁵ establishes that where an employer is required to provide training to a worker to carry out the work for which they are employed, such training must be provided to the worker free of cost, must count as working time and, where possible, should take place during working hours;
51. Stresses the need to ensure synergies with existing national skilling programmes by creating dedicated opportunities for RYG beneficiaries and to improve the quality and inclusiveness of education; calls, furthermore, for the participation of RYG beneficiaries in Erasmus+ to be prioritised, including through simplified and accessible application procedures and mobility support for participants from Member States with higher rates of young people in vulnerable situations;
52. Underlines the importance of social entrepreneurship as a tool for promoting youth employment, particularly for young people who are

⁵⁴ Herning Declaration on attractive and inclusive Vocational Education and Training for increased competitiveness and quality jobs 2026-2030, September 2025.

⁵⁵ Directive (EU) 2019/1152 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on transparent and predictable working conditions in the European Union (OJ L 186, 11.7.2019, p. 105, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2019/1152/oj>).

in vulnerable situations and for NEETs; stresses that social enterprises can contribute to the development of skills, social integration and the creation of sustainable jobs with a local impact; calls on the Commission and the Member States to strengthen their support for social enterprises in the context of the RYG, including through appropriate funding, training, guidance and access to cooperation networks;

53. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to take coordinated action to close persistent gaps in functional numeracy, literacy and digital skills, which hinder young people's access to quality education, training and employment; calls for the upskilling of low-skilled NEETs with tailored, flexible and labour-market relevant offers, such as online and in-person courses or a modular learning format on STEM, digital skills and AI, languages, basic skills⁵⁶ and entrepreneurial skills, financial literacy, cultural education and creative skills, certified by micro-credentials; stresses that micro-credentials must comply with verifiable quality standards, provide for explicit employer recognition mechanisms and be integrated into national skills identification, validation and certification systems;
54. Calls for a life cycle approach and greater synergy between the RYG and the Child Guarantee instruments at both EU and national level, in particular to provide continuous support to children and young people in need, especially from the ages of 15 to 18, and to support all children, parents, families and carers, which should lead to stronger families; stresses that this integrated approach must aim to prevent the 'care cliff' phenomenon⁵⁷, whereby young people leaving care experience a sudden loss of housing and social, educational and employment support upon reaching adulthood; emphasises the potential for synergies between the YG and other programmes, such as ALMA, Erasmus+, the Centres of Vocational Excellence, the Digital Europe Programme, AgoraEU, European Employment Services and the EU Roma strategic framework, to provide integrated pathways for young people and support learning mobility across the EU, including through mobility grants;
55. Reiterates the need to urgently increase the funding of the European Child Guarantee, which should benefit from a substantial dedicated budget; insists that this dedicated budget be anchored in the next MFF and implemented through a stand-alone and separate ESF, with an obligation on all Member States to earmark at least 5 % of their national ESF allocation to tackling child poverty and to the

⁵⁶ Commission communication of 5 March 2025 on the Action Plan on Basic Skills (COM(2025)0088).

⁵⁷ Field, A., Sen, R., Johnston, C. and Ellis, K., 'Turning 18 in Specialised Residential Therapeutic Care: Independence or a Cliff Edge?', *Children & Society*, Vol. 35, Issue 5, 2021, pp. 784-798, <https://doi.org/10.1111/chso.12450>

implementation of the Child Guarantee;

56. Underlines the importance of improving the collection and availability of disaggregated and reliable data on children in care and those approaching care-leaving age, in order to strengthen targeted policies, including the RYG; calls on the Member States and PES to extend outreach measures, support services and cooperation to all care settings and to establish a dedicated pathway for care leavers in need as part of the implementation of the RYG, including early identification, coordinated case management between social services and PES services, and the continuity of access to employment support, social protection, housing support and other services required to guarantee equal access and a smooth transition to education, training and future employment opportunities;
57. Believes that greater interoperability between EU programmes and action plans would strengthen the overall action of the Member States, while ensuring the added value of each programme and their targeted efforts in a complementary manner; calls on the Member States to strengthen the links between their RYG schemes and other national youth programmes, setting priorities for RYG beneficiaries; calls on the Member States, in this regard, to develop a national youth cooperation plan and to regularly evaluate and report on their integrated and cross-cutting approaches in support of young people;
58. Calls on the Member States to strengthen national, regional and local outreach measures targeting vulnerable NEETs and to make the activation of this group the top priority of their RYG implementation, acknowledging that they require different engagement strategies; calls, in particular, for dedicated resources to be invested in proactive, decentralised and community-based outreach approaches, which should be combined with integrated service delivery to overcome any specific barriers to social inclusion, and to move away from a traditional model that relies solely on a registration system; stresses that many measures have proven effective in reaching hard-to-reach NEETs and should now be scaled up at national level, including by hiring employment activation specialists from PES and Roma mediators, organising mobile PES units, youth work, mentorship programmes, direct outreach in sports clubs, leisure venues and shopping centres, and ambassador programmes, and optimising the use of digital services and social media;
59. Stresses that stepping up these outreach efforts must make it easier to reach out to vulnerable young people who have so far been invisible to RYG schemes; emphasises that consultation with vulnerable NEETs ensures that their lived experiences contribute directly to more effective awareness-raising, outreach and delivery, particularly for those furthest from the labour market; notes that vulnerable young people do not necessarily identify themselves with

the 'NEET category', and calls, in this regard, on RYG providers to extend outreach beyond this categorisation in order to raise awareness among as many potential beneficiaries as possible; believes that the involvement of peer-to-peer intermediaries, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and local community organisations is essential in order to reach NEETs directly in their communities; notes that for young people in vulnerable situations, the approach must be low threshold, without the need for registration or documentation;

60. Regrets that, despite efforts, no Member State is currently close to achieving the EU-level targets set out in the EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation, in particular the objective to halve by 2030 the gap in NEET rates between Roma young people and the general population; stresses that identifying Roma and Traveller young people, particularly those who are nomadic or from rural and isolated areas, as a priority target group under the RYG, and coordinating these two instruments in synergy, can deliver measurable improvements in education, training and employment outcomes;
61. Calls on the Member States to provide training and awareness programmes on unconscious bias and non-discrimination to public officials, RYG providers, in particular PES workers, employers, and educational and training providers participating in RYG schemes, including on ethnicity, gender, cultural and social sensitivity, physical and intellectual developmental disabilities, sexual orientation and socio-economic background;
62. Calls on the Member States to ensure a structural link between RYG schemes and social protection systems, ensuring equal access to adequate individual income support and other forms of financial assistance for eligible young people in need before, during and after RYG offers in order to prevent gaps in coverage, reduce poverty risks during transitions, and ensure that vulnerable NEETs can meaningfully participate in employment, education and training;
63. Calls on the Member States to explore measures to ensure continuity of coverage and support under the YG for young people engaged in seasonal or temporary work abroad, taking into account the fact that many spend only part of the year working abroad and return home without income for the remainder of the year; stresses the importance of ensuring recognition of skills acquired abroad and rapid re-engagement with employment services upon return; further calls on the Member States to systematically collect and update data on the number of young people undertaking seasonal or temporary work abroad on an annual basis to better inform policy responses and ensure tailored support;
64. Suggests systematically referencing the RYG in national and local

schemes in order to improve visibility and strengthen awareness of the available support services among administrations, local authorities, businesses and target groups; stresses that it is essential for beneficiaries to be aware that they are part of an RYG scheme in order to understand the overall support available to them and calls, in this regard, for national or EU-wide RYG awareness campaigns; calls on the Commission to develop, together with the Member States, a set of visibility rules for RYG schemes, including a recognisable visual identity and clear communications indicating that EU funding is being used;

65. Emphasises the need for additional mapping efforts to identify current gaps, adapt outreach strategies, and propose targeted measures and investments for different NEET subgroups; calls, in particular, on the Member States to carry out a comprehensive and regional analysis of the characteristics of NEET populations, as well as the criteria that increase the chances of becoming a NEET, such as gender, age, disability, or level of education, in order to ensure that measures are tailored to the needs of these young people; suggests that this analysis should include consultation with target groups and relevant stakeholders such as civil society and social partners;
66. Calls on the Commission to provide targeted technical assistance to the Member States to improve profiling and screening tools, and for the development of digital tools aimed at identifying the needs of RYG beneficiaries based on best practice in individualised support; recommends that Member States provide automated self-assessment tools that evaluate the factors determining the support available, noting that online channels may be easier for some young people to use for initial contact; highlights, in this regard, the promising use of profiling tools in some Member States, including AI-based tools, but stresses the need for human oversight and gender-sensitive approaches to avoid misclassification, discrimination or bias;
67. Calls on the Commission to carefully consider the situation of young workers in any upcoming initiative on AI at the workplace, paying particular attention to entry-level positions, as well as working and employment conditions; underlines the need to include AI, digital literacy, creativity and media skills in education and training curricula in order to equip young people with basic operational skills to use digital tools and AI systems and the critical faculties to evaluate their risks and ethical implications, especially for the labour market; calls for the development of synergies with other EU programmes and funds in order to support inclusive digital upskilling;
68. Calls on the Commission and the Member States, in line with the 2012 Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning, to strengthen and further develop their systems

for the validation of non-formal and informal learning and skills acquired by young people; calls for these systems to be adapted to reach NEETs, in particular those who are vulnerable or hard to reach, by increasing the awareness and accessibility of procedures, improving cross-border recognition, enhancing the capacities of those responsible for validation, diversifying the types of certification that can be obtained through validation to include, for example, informal caregiving, volunteering and youth work, or by offering specific arrangements, while ensuring the quality of these procedures; highlights the good validation practices identified in the European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning⁵⁸, in particular the link with the European Qualifications Framework and the involvement of employer organisations in these procedures to ensure the recognition of certified qualifications;

69. Calls on the Member States to balance the offers provided under the RYG schemes to promote sustainable skills development, continuing education, apprenticeships and training opportunities in combination with employment and subsidised jobs; recalls that the choice between the four main categories of offers must be based on the individual aspirations and needs of beneficiaries; calls for the promotion of RYG offers of quality and fairly remunerated traineeships, apprenticeships and vocational pathways, compliant with EU law and requirements, which equip young people with adequate skills, in particular those in demand in the labour market and in sectors where skills shortages persist across many Member States; stresses that quality education offers under RYG schemes should be extended beyond the 15-18 age group;
70. Stresses the value of targeted and monitored employer incentives, such as wage subsidies or tax credits, in boosting the labour market participation of vulnerable NEETs; recommends an ex ante and ex post analysis of financial incentives granted to employers in order to avoid subsidising companies who do not require public assistance, to ensure that short-term placements under RYG schemes do not act as a substitute for permanent contracts and to prevent precarious, non-standard and involuntary part-time offers;
71. Emphasises the corporate social responsibility of companies, which should include targeted measures for NEETs, in particular vulnerable NEETs, and partnerships with education and training providers to introduce young people to a variety of career opportunities; stresses the need to assist SMEs, which require more information and support in order to participate in RYG schemes; welcomes the programmes developed under the RYG schemes in certain Member States aimed at developing youth entrepreneurship

⁵⁸ Cedefop, 'European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning', <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/country-reports/european-inventory-on-validation>

and incentives for start-ups; calls on the Commission and the Member States to support young people in becoming self-employed or running micro-businesses by providing enhanced and specialised support in developing a viable business; calls on the Member States to develop support under the RYG for heritage-related economic activities, including traditional crafts, particularly in rural and depopulated areas;

72. Calls on the Member States to ensure that traineeship offers under the RYG guarantee equal treatment in working conditions, and are accessible and adapted to the individual needs of NEETs, including those in vulnerable situations facing additional barriers such as disability, health conditions or care responsibilities; stresses the need to ensure that no traineeship under the RYG contributes to social dumping, wage dumping or in-work poverty among young people, and that all offers are designed and implemented to ensure accessibility and inclusivity;
73. Encourages the Member States to introduce 'fiscal completion bonuses' for young people who successfully complete apprenticeships, traineeships or certified VET programmes, as an incentive to reduce dropout rates and promote qualification attainment;
74. Encourages the development of additional gradual reintegration pathways for NEETs with fewer opportunities, to help them acquire soft skills, work habits, confidence and recognised learning outcomes and to act as a bridge into formal education, training or quality employment; underlines that pathways such as structured volunteering, civic engagement and participation opportunities, youth work, sports, social enterprises and community placements can act as valuable stepping stones, provided that they are tailored to individual needs, include robust quality standards and are linked to clear follow-up pathways;
75. Recommends the promotion of volunteering opportunities for RYG beneficiaries and the creation of a European quality framework for volunteering; emphasises that volunteering has the potential to improve the skills and employability of NEETs and to accommodate vulnerable young people in a supportive and solidarity-focused environment; considers that the promotion of volunteering opportunities for RYG beneficiaries should occur as part of the Erasmus+ programme and its European Solidarity Corps volunteering strand and that young people engaged with, or seeking to engage with, RYG schemes should also be made aware of available quality volunteering opportunities funded under different schemes; takes the view that civil society organisations should be supported by adequate resources for the delivery of quality volunteering opportunities and RYG offers, ensuring that existing funds for employment and training opportunities are not reallocated and

avoiding the replacement of potential quality jobs and traineeships with unpaid volunteering;

76. Encourages the Commission and the Member States to improve the recognition and validation of skills and competences acquired through youth work, including through the development and clarification of qualifications and professional standards where appropriate; believes that such a process should include consultation with relevant youth work stakeholders and be in line with the European youth work agenda;
77. Stresses that greater efforts are needed to improve the inclusivity of the RYG; calls on the Member States to lead by example by promoting the recruitment of vulnerable NEETs into public administration; encourages the Member States to assign a dedicated and permanent case manager to each beneficiary, who should develop, as far as possible, meaningful one-to-one engagement to effectively provide the necessary and appropriate services for the duration of the scheme; stresses the importance of implementing the Union of Equality strategies in a cross-cutting manner and combating discrimination and stigma in order to create the necessary framework for the inclusion of all NEETs;
78. Notes with concern that young mothers face a significantly higher risk of labour market exclusion, career penalties and NEET status as a result of disproportionate care responsibilities; underlines the importance of affordable, accessible and quality early childhood education and care in facilitating young mothers' access to education and the labour market; calls on the Commission and the Member States to provide targeted and integrated support for young mothers at risk of poverty, including single mothers, notably through the provision of free or subsidised early childhood education and care and priority access to public childcare services; further calls on the Member States to develop tailored activation pathways for young mothers combining flexible and modular education and training programmes, including part-time and remote learning options, VET, traineeships and apprenticeships, flexible working arrangements and mentoring and career guidance services, to enable sustainable labour market integration;
79. Stresses that mentoring is an effective and cost-efficient intervention mechanism that can help build resilience and confidence, combat social exclusion among RYG beneficiaries and ensure the long-term success of RYG measures; calls on the Member States to provide mentoring support as part of their RYG schemes to connect trained mentors with young beneficiaries on a voluntary basis, including to develop their ability to use emerging technologies; points out that this mentoring should be available before, during and after the placement, in order to ensure sustainable inclusion; stresses that such mentorship programmes should complement, but not replace,

professional PES counselling;

80. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to analyse and increase the meaningful participation of young people and youth organisations in the design of intervention models aimed at them and in the implementation of the RYG, in particular in the design and execution of intervention, outreach, support and evaluation, as well as in future policy revisions, notably through 'Youth Checks', so that their needs can be taken into account; underlines that youth inclusion policies can help to enable young people to contribute to their communities;
81. Calls on the Commission to launch an open method of coordination on the quality of RYG offers, aimed at developing specific common indicators for monitoring and evaluation and strengthening or creating national and regional frameworks of quality standards in line with EU frameworks such as the Quality Framework for Traineeships and the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure the regular exchange of best practice, in consultation with social partners, on effective measures to improve the quality of RYG offers; calls on the Commission to include specific measures for youth employment in the Quality Jobs Act, in particular to ensure high-quality and stable jobs; calls for the conclusion of negotiations on the proposed Traineeships Directive⁵⁹ in order to provide a clear and robust quality framework for traineeships offered under RYG schemes, which should be fairly remunerated and accessible to all young people, combine structured learning with practical experience and serve as effective entry points into the labour market;
82. Calls on the Member States to improve the quality of RYG offers by promoting decent conditions, including fair remuneration, by better matching NEET profiles with the offers received and by improving the monitoring of placements with quality indicators focused on long-term career prospects; calls on the Member States to explore the possibility of certification or quality labels for employers or organisations that exceed EU or national quality frameworks; stresses the need to set up and provide information on anonymous, safe and effective reporting channels for RYG providers and beneficiaries to report alleged infringements of rights and obligations as well as to strengthen the controls carried out by labour inspectorates to ensure the full enforcement of EU law;
83. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that traineeships offered under the RYG are fairly remunerated, in line

⁵⁹ Commission proposal of 20 March 2024 on improving and enforcing working conditions of trainees and combating regular employment relationships disguised as traineeships ('Traineeships Directive'). (COM(2024)0132).

with applicable EU law and national frameworks, and based on clearly defined learning and training objectives and a written traineeship agreement; emphasises that unpaid traineeships must not form part of structured active labour market policies; calls for the forthcoming Traineeships Directive to be ambitious and comprehensive, ensuring the full protection of trainees' rights, including the right to terminate a traineeship without prejudice in the event of a breach of fundamental rights, and calls for the swift conclusion of negotiations;

84. Acknowledges one-stop shops as a successful model in several Member States for providing adequate support to youth beneficiaries of the RYG and to preventively help young people before they become NEETs; underlines that their effectiveness depends on strong interinstitutional coordination, the availability of personalised, case-based support and the ability to overcome the fragmentation of services and reduce administrative burdens and on ensuring that services are accessible and visible to young people; calls on the Member States to develop these low-threshold, multi-agency centres across their countries in order to improve the accessibility of information for NEETs and centralise and increase the uptake of RYG support alongside lifelong guidance and advice on education, housing, health, employment, training, social services and youth work in a single location; encourages the Member States that do not yet have this integrated-approach culture to promote the principle of referral within their public administration, so that requests are referred to another competent service if the one contacted is unable to process them;
85. Calls on the Commission to introduce a quality framework for the RYG with robust monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, in line with the Council Recommendation on A Bridge to Jobs – Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee; stresses that quality criteria must ensure that all offers are aligned with the relevant principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights, provide genuine learning and training opportunities that improve employability and facilitate the transition to the labour market, and include transparent recruitment, recognition and certification of acquired skills, and accessible complaints mechanisms; calls for all employment offers to ensure decent working conditions, fair remuneration, access to social protection, training, career guidance, and reasonable probation periods;
86. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to allocate adequate funding for the RYG in the next MFF, in particular by at least maintaining the existing 12,5 % earmarking of EU funds within a future stand-alone and separate ESF to broaden employment, education and training opportunities for young people under the age of 30 across the EU and to improve their socio-economic status; stresses that this EU funding should be seen as an investment in

people and should be transparent, primarily support the development of innovative and effective measures, and scale up, without replacing, pre-existing national funds; calls for the introduction of budget tracking on expenditure related to the RYG at EU level, accompanied by a national RYG marker, which should provide a clear breakdown of expenditure related to the RYG; calls on the Member States, and in particular those that have not reached the 2030 NEET rate reduction target, to supplement EU funds for the RYG with national funds in accordance with their aggregate indicators;

87. Calls on the Member States to allocate dedicated resources to improving the administrative capacity of RYG providers, especially PES, through the provision of training and a toolkit on the absorption of funds; takes the view that this improvement of capacity should also benefit the social partners, youth workers and NGOs involved in RYG implementation; calls on the Commission to allow small-scale funding within the call for projects of existing programmes for stakeholders working with NEETs at local level, in order to expand the use and reach of EU funds across all territories;
88. Urges the Member States to significantly strengthen their systems for monitoring the implementation of the RYG in terms of data quality and coverage, particularly with regard to follow-up indicators and currently unknown results; calls for the collection of timely disaggregated and qualitative data, capturing not only employment status but also the quality of the offer, inclusivity, contract type, remuneration, access to social protection, educational progression, family status, including young and single parents, the risk of falling back into NEET status, and socio-economic background, as well as the impact of interventions on gender, disability and disadvantaged areas; calls on the Commission to provide technical assistance to Member States with incomplete national or local RYG monitoring frameworks in view of their strengthening and to provide training to the dedicated staff as to ensure comparability of data at EU level;
89. Stresses the need to improve the monitoring and evaluation of education, training and apprenticeship outcomes, including by introducing separate monitoring criteria and indicators to follow their long-term success rates, and to follow up on results;
90. Underlines the importance of continuing to integrate the YG and youth employment strategies into the enlargement process; calls on the Commission to continue funding efforts under the next MFF, while monitoring the rigorous use of these funds and placing emphasis on capacity building;
91. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to adopt measures to overcome the structural, legal and administrative barriers to sharing data between services and administrations, while respecting

the privacy of the NEETs concerned; encourages in this regard the clear identification of national authority or authorities responsible for data collection under RYG schemes, and calls for databases to be made interoperable by using a unique identifier for each individual across administrations within national systems, including education and training providers and PES; calls on the Commission, furthermore, to issue a communication on the application of the General Data Protection Regulation⁶⁰ in order to prevent any misinterpretation and legal uncertainty;

92. Believes that the implementation of the RYG needs a new impetus and renewed dialogue with the Member States; stresses, in this context, the opportunity provided by the new European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan to promote the implementation of the RYG and adopt a more ambitious target for reducing the NEET rate; welcomes the initiative to establish a Skills Guarantee and calls for it to include a dimension for young NEETs;
93. Calls on the Commission to make use of the European Semester to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the RYG, using country-specific recommendations where appropriate, and to use the social convergence framework to steer its EU-wide implementation, including its governance and administrative capacity across Member States; calls on the Commission to reinstate the youth unemployment rate as a headline indicator in the Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure Scoreboard in view of its potential risks to macroeconomic stability;
94. Notes that the results of the implementation of the RYG are uneven and that the challenges identified remain relevant today, with some Member States in particularly critical situations; calls on the Commission to adopt decisions to assist Member States whose youth unemployment and NEET rates are higher than the EU average, in order to ensure that the RYG effectively addresses long-standing labour market challenges and reaches eligible beneficiaries while respecting national competencies and labour market specificities; calls on the European Court of Auditors to prepare a special report on the implementation of the RYG;

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95. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and

⁶⁰ Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation) (OJ L 119, 4.5.2016, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/679/oj>).

the Commission.