

ETUC statement on Youth

Approved at the Executive Committee 28-29 October 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic and its social and economic repercussions have hit young people in Europe particularly hard. The latest Eurostat figures show skyrocketing youth unemployment figures across the EU: In August 2020, 43,9 % young people aged between 15-24 years in Spain were unemployed, 39,3 % in Italy and 32,1 % in Greece. The EU average lies at 17,6%. Compared to July 2019, youth unemployment increased by 64 000 unemployed young people. Additionally, youth were particularly affected by the pandemic: being very often employed in precarious, non-standard and self-employed work, young people had very hardly access to income compensation and employment protection measures.

To address this, we need to strengthen our efforts to include youth in all relevant European policies and our own campaigns.

1. Reinforced Youth Guarantee

The Council will adopt the Council recommendations on the Reinforced Youth Guarantee, as proposed by the European Commission in July. The document clearly lacks ambition and fails to introduce binding quality standards for offers in the framework of the YG – one of the ETUC's key demands. We strongly encourage affiliates to negotiate binding quality standards in term of stable employment, fair wages and working conditions, and access to social protection, for the implementation of the YG at national level.

2. Extension of SURE and emergency measures

Whereas young people are overrepresented in precarious and non-standard forms of work and self-employment, employment-related emergency measures, as well as SURE, must not only be prolonged, but extended to cover all categories of workers.

3. Recovery plan

Skyrocketing youth unemployment must be addressed in the make-up of the Recovery Plan, including the National Recovery and Resilience Plans. Despite significant financial means mobilised in the framework of the Recovery Plan, young people are being overlooked and we ask Member states to develop specific recovery measures to fight youth unemployment and precarious entry in the labour market.

4. European Pillar of Social Rights

Young unemployed people and precarious workers lack access to social protection. The European Pillar of Social Rights must ensure better coverage for those categories of workers and provide a real safety net for young unemployed people. It is crucial that the upcoming Action Plan for the implementation of the EPSR actively responds to the challenges young people face. The Porto Summit in 2021 must make the EPSR a reality also for young people.

5. Legislative initiative on platform work

A legislative initiative addressing platform work concerns young workers in particular. Whereas young workers are overrepresented in atypical and non-standard forms of work, such as part-time, temporary or 'gig' work, the scope of this initiative must be extended to cover all forms of non-standard employment.

6. Mainstreaming youth

In light of the abovementioned points, the ETUC mini-campaign "A people's recovery" integrates youth relevant issues. Future activities in the framework of the campaign should put the specific challenges young people face at the centre of our demands.