



MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND SPORTS



EU Youth Conference Report on the Future of Work

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By **Sandra Roe, Lana Pasic and Dan Moxon,**

Pool of European Youth Researchers, co-ordinated by the Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth

Introduction

This report details the findings of workshops conducted with youth delegates (both from national delegations and international youth organisations) and policy makers at the EU Youth Conference in Bucharest, Romania in March 2019. The aim of the workshops was to explore the Romanian Presidency theme of ‘the future of work’ in relation to the EU Youth Goals and the EU Youth Strategy. ‘The future of work’ is an umbrella term that describes the evolution of jobs in the medium-to-long term as affected by certain trends. Workshop participants took the topic of the ‘future of work’ along with the Youth Goal #7 Quality Employment for All and explored the connection with the remaining [10 Youth Goals](#).

Summary and conclusion

A number of key common messages arose from the workshops at the EU Youth Conference on the topic of ‘the future of work’, Youth Goal #7 Quality Employment for All, and the connection with the remaining 10 Youth Goals. These included:

- The key role youth work organisations can and play in relation to young people and work, e.g. sharing information, providing training, developing skills, promoting and enabling participation in EU programmes, ensuring the inclusion of young people from all backgrounds;
- The need for greater recognition of competences developed through youth work and non-formal learning by employers;
- The need for education systems to address the gap between skills needed in the future of work and the current education curriculum;
- The need for enhanced cross-sectoral cooperation in the area of policy development for work related issues such as youth employment, mental health in the workplace and EU employment programmes, e.g. through the establishment of an EU Youth Coordinator and cross-sectoral ‘Youth Check’



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- The importance of dialogue and collaboration between all sectors and young people as well as young people's participation in decision-making related to education, training and employment issues at a local, national and EU level;
- The importance of promoting the inclusion of young people from all backgrounds in education, training and employment programmes, initiatives and opportunities;
- The importance of promoting employment rights and fair working conditions for young people from all backgrounds, for all genders and for young people from both urban and rural areas;
- The importance of improving awareness raising and dissemination of information to young people on EU, national and local education, training and employment related programmes, initiatives and opportunities;
- A recognition of the growing importance of technology in the future of work and the opportunities it can create for young people, e.g. online education and training, technological advances, opportunities for working remotely such as in rural areas;
- The need for improving work related supports for young workers, e.g. childcare, mental health supports, gender equality supports;
- The growing importance of 'green jobs' in the future of work and how this can be supported by the private sector as well as government policies and initiatives;
- The positive and negative role the media can play in relation to influencing work related issues, e.g. gender stereotyping of work roles, stigmatisation of mental health issues, information overload, 'fake news'.

Below you can find further detailed information about the discussions and conclusions in each of the working groups.

The Future of Work and Youth Goal 1: Connecting EU with Youth

The key challenges relating to Youth Goal 1, 'Connecting EU with Youth', and the theme of the future of work identified in workshops included:

- Lack of awareness, understanding and participation in decision-making among young people in EU youth employment policies, programmes and initiatives, e.g. Youth Guarantee;
- Lack of collaboration between young people and EU employment policies, programmes and initiatives, e.g. decision-making, programme development;
- Challenges associated with the implementation of EU youth employment policies such as the Youth Guarantee at a national level, e.g. lack of understanding of national policies.

Key measures needed related to connecting EU with youth and the future of work included:

- Increasing awareness, understanding, information sharing and engagement among young people on EU programmes and initiatives, e.g. Erasmus+ programme and European Solidarity Corps;





- Establishment of an EU Youth Coordinator as proposed by the European Commission for the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, i.e. with the objective of enhancing cross-sectoral cooperation, as well as knowledge development and exchange on youth issues within the European Commission services;
- Implementation of a cross-sectoral ‘Youth Check’, i.e. an impact assessment tool designed to consider the impact on young people of any new Policy or Legislation that is relevant to them.¹
- Increasing participation of young people in decision-making processes on EU employment programmes and initiatives;
- Promotion of a cross-sectoral policy approach to youth employment issues at a national and EU level.

The Future of Work and Youth Goal 2: Equality of all Genders

In relation to the future of work and Youth Goal 2, ‘Equality of all Genders, the following key challenges were highlighted:

- Gender stereotyping in education that can influence young people's choice of job roles, e.g. through availability and promotion of subject choices for all genders in schools’ such as STEM subjects for girls;
- Gender stereotyping of job roles perpetuated in the media;
- A perceived lack of support for all workers such as social protection and supports for workers’ rights, which was considered to have a greater impact on women and people of non-binary or transgenders;
- Lack of adequate childcare provision, which was identified as a challenge for women in particular;
- Challenges faced by specific groups such as LGBTI+ young people in relation to gender equality and employment such as workplace harassment and discrimination and equal and fair working rights and conditions.

It was suggested that improved gender equality in the workplace could lead to increased productivity among workers, more women participating in the workforce and a larger and more sustainable workforce into the future. This would also have economic advantages for society in terms of increased taxes from workers. A further advantage of equality for all genders in the workforce was the potential cultural changes in terms of gender roles if there was greater participation of all genders in all work roles.

Measures needed to address gender equality and the future of work included:

- Addressing gender equality in the framework of working rights and conditions;

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<http://www.youth.ie/sites/youth.ie/files/Youth%20Check%20Report%20for%20web%20FINAL%20June%202018.pdf>





- Raising awareness and addressing the issue of gender stereotyping that influences young people's choices of job roles in society, e.g. through equal subject choices in the education curriculum for all genders;
- Equal employment rights for all workers including equal pay, parental leave and affordable childcare;
- The promotion of women in non-traditional gender job roles in the media e.g. STEM job roles.

The Future of Work and Youth Goal 3: Inclusive Societies

Challenges discussed with regard to Youth Goal 3, 'Inclusive Societies,' and the future of work included:

- The inclusion of youth at risk of marginalisation or discrimination based on their perceived or existing ethnic or national origin, language, race and skin colour, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, political opinion or other belief, social origin or economic status, or other status in the education system and the labour market;
- Fair working rights and conditions for all young people regardless of background.

A number of opportunities were discussed relating to this theme, including the economic benefits of increased participation in the labour market, e.g. increased taxes, decreased unemployment and social welfare expenditure.

Required measures related to this theme included:

- Improving access to education, training and employment for young people from all backgrounds;
- Improving access to information on education, training and employment opportunities for all young people from all backgrounds;
- Empowering young people with fewer opportunities to know and exercise their human rights and ensure their participation in decision making, also by providing support for their self-organisation;
- Empowering young people at risk of marginalisation in the labour market through youth work to promote increased inclusion in employment and society;
- Ensure high-level of participation of young people from all backgrounds in EU youth programmes such as Erasmus+ programme, Youth Guarantee and the European Solidarity Corps;
- Effective social dialogue processes between marginalised youth, groups representing marginalised youth and key stakeholders.

The Future of Work and Youth Goal 4: Information and Constructive Dialogue

According to participants, key challenges related to Youth Goal 4, 'Information and Constructive Dialogue,' and the future of work included:

- A lack of constructive dialogue between youth and decision-makers at EU level on employment issues;





- Lack of cross-sectorial cooperation between the education and employment sectors on youth employment policy issues;
- Lack of information for young people on how to find jobs, write CVs, and prepare for interviews etc.;
- The ‘information overload’ experienced by young people, e.g. social media, ‘fake news’.

However, two opportunities were also highlighted in relation to this theme. Firstly, the increased use of technology that benefits the future of work, e.g. online training, dissemination of information on employment opportunities, and the possibility of working remotely. Secondly, the potential role of youth organisations in sharing employment and training opportunities with young people.

Important measures required in response to this theme to support the future of work were:

- Continued support for young people to engage with EU programmes, such as Erasmus+ Programme and the European Solidarity Corps;
- Promote the use of Europass and Youthpass and the recognition of competences developed through youth work, non-formal learning, and international mobility;
- Holding dialogue with youth at a national level on government employment policies and programmes;
- Investment and support in youth information platforms and services at EU and national levels;
- More funding for EU youth programmes;
- More funding for youth organisations at a national and local level to share information on training and employment opportunities;
- Greater promotion of lifelong learning.

The Future of Work and Youth Goal 5: Mental Health and Well-being

Challenges related to Youth Goal 5, ‘Mental health and well-being’, and the future of work included:

- The impact of work on mental health, e.g. work-related stress, burnout, lack of respect of working rights and inadequate working conditions negatively impacting on young people’s mental health;
- The stigma surrounding mental health in society being replicated in the workplace;
- The lack of mental health supports for workers, e.g. counselling, information on mental health supports.

Key opportunities for development discussed included greater inclusion of young people in society through the de-stigmatisation of mental health issues and positive mental health among workers contributing to greater productivity in the workforce.

Important measures needed related to mental health and well-being and the future of work included:





- Better education and awareness of mental health issues, e.g. in schools, through peer learning, in the media;
- De-stigmatisation of mental health issues in society;
- Positive mental health initiatives in the workplace, e.g. 'mental health sick days', promotion of work life balance, mindfulness, yoga;
- Accessible mental health supports in the workplace, e.g. counselling;
- Promotion of a cross-sectoral policy approach to work related mental health issues, through employers, the mental health sector, the education sector and policy makers working together to address this issue;
- Exploration of alternative work environments, e.g. working from home.

The Future of Work and Youth Goal 6 - Moving Rural Youth Forward

Key challenges related to Youth Goal 6, 'Moving Rural Youth Forward', and the future of work identified included a lack of quality employment and business opportunities in rural areas; infrastructure issues; lack of information on employment issues; and lack of human capital in rural areas as a result of migration.

Opportunities and measures needed that were linked to this theme included

- Improving rural infrastructure, e.g. high-speed broadband; technology transfer to rural areas including online and virtual training;
- Supporting entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship;
- Establishing social centres/youth centres which provide information on mobility and funding for youth, e.g. sponsorships, grants, in order to facilitate capacity-building;
- Developing quality employment in rural areas;
- Offering training and employment grants for young people in rural areas;
- Offering funding/tax exemptions for necessary jobs in rural areas e.g. doctors, nurses;
- Development of workspaces/hubs in rural areas;
- Increasing participation of young people from rural areas in decision-making.

The Future of Work and Youth Goal 8 - Quality Learning

The key challenges highlighted in discussions on Youth Goal 8, 'Quality Learning', and the future of work related to:

- Bridging the gap between the educational curriculum and labour market;
- Education systems focusing not only on evaluating knowledge but on developing the full spectrum of competence knowledge, skills and attitudes of students, e.g. critical thinking, pro-active learning, computer literacy;
- The importance of young people's participation in decision-making;
- Preparing young people better for the labour market, e.g. through reintroducing apprenticeships.

Opportunities discussed included:

- Equal standards in non-formal education at EU level;
- Recognition of non-formal trainers/educators;





- Focus on the development of mechanisms to promote a quality learning environment in rural areas;

Measures called for included:

- Developing cooperation between teachers and youth workers;
- Measures to promote greater recognition by employers of non-formal education and training;
- Tailoring education programmes to specific groups of young people, communities and regions to cater for their needs e.g. promote online learning for rural and remote areas;
- Creating a feedback mechanism to feed into the education system to adapt curriculum to a changing economic landscape.

The Future of Work and Youth Goal 9 - Space and participation

Key challenges highlighted related to Youth Goal 9, 'Space and participation', and the future of work included:

- Lack of funding and resources among organisations working in the area of youth participation, e.g. civil society, NGOs
- Complex grant application procedures impacting on youth organisations, particularly youth-led NGOs

Key measures called for in relation to 'Space and participation', and the future of work included:

- A monitoring system to measure young people's participation in decision-making, e.g. in the development of EU employment policy, in the workplace
- The development and funding of online youth spaces, e.g. country-wide access to internet;
- The development and funding of physical youth spaces, e.g. managed outdoor and indoor spaces and youth centres where young people can work on the development of their skills needed for the labour market, i.e. with specific training and education to be provided;
- The need for employers to recognise experience and competencies gained through non-formal education;
- Volunteering among young people to be recognised by universities and employers, e.g. through days off work for employees to volunteer or engage in activism;
- Educational programmes for young people on how to participate in politics in society and in the workplace, e.g. participation in workers' unions and on company boards.

The Future of Work and Youth Goal 10 - Sustainable Green Europe

The main challenge identified regarding Youth Goal 10, 'Sustainable Green Europe', and the future of work related to changing mentalities regarding green issues such as overconsumption, consumerism, use of public transport, use of plastic etc.

Measures called for relating to Youth Goal 10 and the future of work included:





- Youth events such as the EU Youth Conference to be organised in accordance to the Youth Goal 10;
- Increased education and awareness-raising of opportunities for more 'green jobs';
- Private companies supporting eco-friendly employment, e.g. creating eco-friendly jobs, digitalisation of workspaces
- Governments supporting eco-friendly employment initiatives, e.g. providing tax exemptions and benefits for eco-friendly companies, the provision of cheaper public transport/subsidies for transport, bike schemes etc.

The Future of work and Youth Goal 11 - Youth Organisations and European Programmes

Challenges related to Youth Goal 11 'Youth Organisations and European Programmes' and the future of work were focused primarily on:

- Recognising and validating competence and experience from non-formal education and volunteering in education and the labour market;
- The need for greater funding and investment in the youth sector.

Measures called for relating to Youth Goal 11, Youth organisations and European Programmes included:

- EU should provide greater support to youth organisations working on employment/entrepreneurship, e.g. funding for youth entrepreneurs, helping with the provision of quality employment opportunities in the youth sector;
- Funding schemes for European programmes to be more accessible to youth organisations, e.g. application procedures, youth-friendly language;
- European programmes to be more inclusive, e.g. accessible to young people from all backgrounds
- European programmes to be, structural rather than project-based;
- The need for greater cross-sectorial policy cooperation on this theme, e.g. youth organisations, labour market and governments working together.
- Youth organisations to provide information to youth, e.g. about companies and jobs, career orientation days, guidance on programmes, opportunities, grant applications etc.;
- Youth organisations, through promoting engagement of young people in European programmes could assist in creating qualified employees and active citizens with advanced skills, e.g. soft-skills, inter-personal skills and competences, intercultural competences, project-management skills.

