

Speaking points: **European Youth Forum intervention at the Council of the EU-Youth**

19/11/2010, Brussels

Dear Ministers responsible for Youth Affairs,

Dear President of the Council of Ministers of Youth,

First of all the European Youth Forum wants to thank you for the invitation to the Council of Ministers to present the results of the 2nd phase of the structured dialogue. We really appreciate the opportunity we have to present the results of the structured dialogue on youth employment. We consider this as an important recognition for the efforts many youth organisations and young people invested during the last year in this successful dialogue. We hope that their contribution will be taken into account when designing policies to address this crucial issue.

In the Council Resolution on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field you agreed on in November 2009, there was a clear call for deepening the structured dialogue. This was implemented since January under the Trio Presidency Spain-Belgium-Hungary. During this period institutional stakeholders and young people worked together on youth employment through national consultations and EU Youth Conferences. They jointly defined the landscape of challenges on youth employment under the Spanish Presidency. Now they came up with recommendations to address these challenges during the Belgian Presidency. Thousands of young people in the EU Member States were consulted. The results of this process are 40 concrete policy recommendations that you have in front of you.

Some of the key recommendations presented in the joint recommendations are partly addressed in the Youth On The Move initiative presented in September by the Commission, which shows their relevance for EU youth policy.

Among these, the following topics are of crucial importance for the European Youth Forum:

- Non-Formal Education and its recognition is an important issue, and needs to benefit everyone. NFE is an important resource for young people to foster the much-needed skills for today's economy, such as creativity, team-work, problem-solving and flexibility.
- For the YFJ, the Youth guarantee, or the social guarantee framework, as mentioned in the recommendations, is an important measure to help young people overcome the obstacles of transition between education and work. In the long term, it would contribute to the sustainability of the European Social Model and to the goals of the EU 2020 Strategy.
- A quality framework of internships is also essential to ensure the transition from education to the labour market and should set the basic quality requirements for internships, covering all

forms of learning in a real work situation, and preventing internships to replace regular work positions.

Some other recommendations could and should be addressed in the future New Skills New Jobs initiative that is to be discussed very soon, such as:

- Reconciliation of working and private life
- Combating discrimination

Nevertheless, some other challenges highlighted in the recommendations related to youth employment doesn't seem to fit under these initiatives and still need to be addressed. Among these:

- questions of social protection
- information and guidance
- participation dimension.

The European Youth Forum strongly hopes that these points, jointly agreed on by young people and institutional representatives during the dialogue process will find an institutional answer and that concrete measure will be implemented to address them.

This is why the European Youth Forum really expects a strong political outcome during the Hungarian EU Presidency. The recommendations defined jointly should directly feed into the future EU policy on youth employment and be formally endorsed by the Council of Youth Ministers. In this perspective, the third phase of consultations and the EU Youth Conference in Budapest are really crucial to finalise the process. We also hope that after these 18 months specific attention and efforts will be made to turn as many of these recommendations as possible into reality and improve the situation of young people on the labour market.

Another important development related to the process of structured dialogue was the presence of the Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion during the EU Youth Conference in Leuven. Involving stakeholders from outside the youth field allowed to give more outreach to the joint recommendations. We very welcome this strong sign for the European Commission towards a cross sectorial approach as outlined in the Youth Strategy. The European Youth Forum would like to see similar developments going on within the Council itself. There is an important role for you as Youth Ministers as well to motivate your colleagues within other policy areas such as employment, education and social affairs to motivate them to also have specific attention for young people when designing and implementing policies related to employment. Therefore we highly encourage you to communicate these joint recommendations to your colleague Ministers.

(Thanks a lot for your attention)