

QUALITY JOBS

FOR youth:
OUR WAY
FORWARD!



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Contents

Foreword	2
1. Transitions	4
2. Quality jobs	10
3. Mobility	12
4. Entrepreneurship	14

Foreword

The crisis and austerity measures implemented at national level in the last years have had a disproportionately negative impact on the working and living conditions of young people in Europe. In 2014 12.4% of the all young people in the EU28 were not in employment, education or training. The dramatic job loss has shrunk the employment rates of young people, and in several countries the reduction has been larger than 30%: 23.8 million people were unemployed in the EU in February 2015 - of whom around 4.85 million were young people under the age of 25 (2.17 young women, Eurostat data for December 2014). If already before the crisis levels of unemployment were structurally higher among young people than for adults, after its outburst the situation has worsened dramatically and in some countries there are more young people without a job than employed (i.e. Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Italy and Spain) (Eurostat, data for 2013).

Temporary jobs, precarious contracts, lack of basic social protection and even discriminatory practices on the basis of age are the norm for millions of young people who are trying to make their way in the labour market: the number of young people in the EU working with a temporary contractual arrangement is increasing and the number of permanent jobs constantly falling.

The respect for fundamental labour and social rights must be the pre-condition for any job. Unfair practices like unpaid internships and bogus self-employment only serve to impair the position of young people in the labour market. Any job is not necessarily better than no job, if employees are not granted labour and social rights.

A large proportion of young people can be described as 'working poor': 11.4% of young employed (18-24) were at risk of in-work poverty and the rate was higher among young women (12.5%) compared to young men (10.6%)(Eurostat, data for 2013). Decent wages play an important role in preventing poverty, yet minimum wages, notably for youth, are sometimes under the poverty threshold and do not allow a decent living. For instance, in 2012, Greece cut the "youth" minimum wage by a higher percentage (32%) compared to the cut imposed to general minimum wage (22%) under the pressure of the "Troika", pushing more and more people into the trap of working poor. Lower minimum wages for young people already exist in the UK and other countries are considering it. Moreover, despite the overall objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy, aimed at decreasing rising inequalities, in 2013 almost 31.6% of young Europeans were at risk of poverty and social exclusion. .

More effective action is needed to improve gender equality at all levels, eliminate the gender pay gap and fight discrimination in the workplaces, notably for youth on the basis of all grounds defined in directive 2000/78¹ (race, disability, sexual orientation and gender expression, age, religion and beliefs etc.). Gender equality and non-discrimination should be goals for all society, and not considered as a special concern. To achieve this it is necessary to strengthen accountability of the public sector and to promote the advantages of an inclusive and equal society

¹ Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000, establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation.

Youth unemployment cannot be mitigated by addressing the issue from the supply-side only via structural labour market reforms, reducing the skills mismatch and fostering mobility. This has been notably the role taken by the European Commission since the setting into motion of the “Youth on the Move” Initiative. Though some improvements might be needed in these fields, research² suggests that wrong actions taken by political decision makers in this sectors turned into further labour market segmentation and discrimination, brain drain in some countries and reduced quality of working conditions with negative impact on health and safety.

We must revert this trend by shifting the focus of all actors to the creation of quality employment by improving and increasing public and private investment in Europe. The ETUC Youth committee will keep collaborating with all stakeholders and partners to give voice to young people in Europe, organize for stronger unions and promote equality, solidarity and democracy at all levels.

Why this document

This document provides views and recommendations of the European youth workforce represented by the ETUC – Youth Committee on a series of topics earmarking the reality of work for young workers: working conditions, transitions from the educational system to the labour market or to further education (traineeships, apprenticeships, dual learning, entrepreneurship and mobility).

This document aims at providing as a basis for the role of the ETUC – Youth Committee as the voice of young workers in Europe when negotiating with employers’, dealing with European and national decision makers and collaborating with NGOs on the design, implementation or monitoring of measures which might affect the quality of life and work of young workers.

This document is the outcome of a collaborative work undertaken by the members of the ETUC – Youth Committee started on the occasion of the EU funded seminar “For Quality Measures on Youth Employment!” in July 2014 held in Turin at the occasion of the Italian Presidency of the EU and will be reviewed and updated in the future.

What is the ETUC Youth Committee?

The ETUC Youth Committee represents the young European generations in working life issues. It is a statutory body of the European Trade Union Confederation and is composed of one representative nominated by each national trade union confederation affiliated to the ETUC (90) from 39 Countries and the European Trade Union Federations (10).

It is steered by a bureau of 5 elected members, 2 Vice-Presidents, a President and by an ETUC coordinator. Its objective is to make the voice of young European workers and unemployed heard inside the trade union movement and wider in the society (policy makers at EU, national and local level, employers organizations, NGOs, and other stakeholders).

² Benchmarking Working Europe, ETUI, 2015 <http://www.etui.org/Publications2/Books/Benchmarking-Working-Europe-2012>

1. TRANSITIONS

School-to-work transitions are a crucial moment for young people³. In the last decades, they have become increasingly difficult compared to the 1980s and the economic crisis has amplified the risk of downwards transitions into unemployment and inactivity. Moreover, the transition from school to work often coincides with a critical development phase for a young person, experiencing their first steps into adulthood. For these reasons, this document looks in closer detail at the three main tools likely to ease this transition: internships, apprenticeships and the Youth Guarantee scheme.

Internships

Lack of work experience is often seen as one of the obstacles to a quick labour market integration of young people. Work experience allows work-related but also transversal and general skills to be gained which are positively assessed by employers at the moment of hiring. One way in which young people can gain work experience is via internships. In 2013, 46% of young Europeans aged between 18 and 35 did an internship and the majority of them had more than two⁴. Traineeships are, therefore, now fully part of the school-to-work transition system. However, in spite of being a potential stepping stone into the labour market, internships do not always rhyme with good quality and working conditions.

For these reasons, the ETUC Youth Committee believes that internships should never lead to job replacement, i.e. permanent or temporary jobs should not be filled by interns. In fact this would inject further precariousness in the labour market and weaken further the entry position of young people.

The internships we want⁵:

- 1. Guarantee good quality working conditions, agreed duration, decent compensation, within a legal and binding agreement at national and European level, including the possibility of a Directive**
- 2. Set clear learning objectives and recognition of skills and knowledge acquired**
- 3. Ensure guidance at the work place**
- 4. Inform interns of their labour and social rights including the right to be represented by trade union reps**
- 5. Involve all relevant stakeholders in order to monitor, support and improve the outcomes of the internship**

Well-organised internships should aim at helping young people acquire the practical experience and skills to complement the knowledge and qualifications previously acquired

³ In this document young people include young people from 15 to 24 if not mentioned differently

⁴ EUROBAROMETER 2013. The Experience of Traineeship in the EU. Flash Eurobarometer. Brussels: European Commission.

⁵ The ETUC Youth Committee has supported the initiative establishing a European Quality Charter of Internships and Apprenticeships <http://qualityinternships.eu/>. This part heavily builds on this document.

through formal or non-formal education. Internships should offer the young person the possibility of gaining valuable hands-on experience in order to be better informed about existing sectors, job prospects and personal professional projects. This implies that guidance of a competent supervisor should be ensured, as well as access to robust evaluative and complaints channels in order to monitor the progress and quality of the internship. Interns should be provided with the same level of health and safety, training and protection.

Because of their lack of work experience and the short and atypical contract form of internships, interns are more likely to be less informed about their social and labour rights. Therefore it is crucial that they are informed, at the beginning of their internship experience, about their social and labour rights as well as any health and safety risks linked to their position. Relevant social protection should be granted accordingly.

Internships can be done as a part of (higher) education with the aim of providing practical experience to students who are about to enter the labour market. Although these internships are considered as a part of the education path, they should guarantee some minimum but crucial labour standards in order to avoid any abuse and to allow the young person to make the most of the internship experience. The ETUC Youth Committee recalls the importance of regulating the internship experience with a written and legally binding contract between the educational institution, the intern and the hosting organisation. Trade unions at company level should be informed about the number of interns and through collective bargaining should be consulted about the tasks, training and contract provided.

The learning objectives should be clearly spelled out as well as all the details that contribute to clearly frame and ensure the quality of the internship. Finally, internships should never be done for free and without any reimbursements, in-kind benefits and/or remuneration.

Similar criteria should be applied to internships that are taking place outside or after formal education. In particular, the remuneration of the internship should not go below the poverty line set at the 60% of the median income or below the national minimum wage. This criterion is highly important in a moment when young people are increasingly at risk of poverty even when they still live with their parents as the whole household situation has deteriorated in several countries. Social partners can play a crucial role to this regard, namely in the framework of collective agreements.

Working conditions, the length, a clear description of the tasks and the social security benefits should be clearly stated and respected. Finally, skills and knowledge acquired should always be certified and recognised in order to allow people to make the best of their experience.

Trade unions, together with the relevant national stakeholders and in partnership approach, should contribute to develop the appropriate support and monitoring policies also including the collection of data.

Apprenticeships⁶

Work-based learning, which is generally associated with apprenticeships and dual systems of vocational training, is part of the policies supporting the transition from school to the labour market. In Europe, the incidence of apprenticeships varies across countries: in 2011 in Germany, Austria and Denmark more than 5% of the whole population aged 15 to 29 years old were in an apprenticeship⁷. Apprenticeships, in contrast with internships, are integrated into broader education and training policies linked to labour market issues and usually last up to four years.

⁶ This part draws heavily from the ETUC Resolution on Improving quality of Apprenticeship and Work-based learning, available at

<http://www.etuc.org/documents/etuc-resolution-improving-quality-apprenticeship-and-work-based-learning#.VSUS6tyUfHU>

⁷ European Commission. (2013). Apprenticeship and Traineeship Schemes in EU27: Key Success Factors. Brussels

Since the start of the crisis, this combination of work and learning has been attracting considerable attention at the European and national level because it is considered to ease the entry of young people and contribute to keeping youth unemployment low. The ETUC recognises the high potential of apprenticeships, but also the need for these to be developed together with sound broader macroeconomic policies and that, from a broader perspective, education and training should be considered as the essential basis for citizenship and human development, and not only mere economic tools.

The apprenticeships we want:

- 1. Ensure clear and transparent learning objectives and lead to a quality job**
- 2. Should be a guaranteed option for young people when entering the labour market;**
- 3. Ensure quality labour standards, decent working conditions and protection for apprentices and young people involved in work-based learning**
- 4. Ensure the recognition of knowledge, skills and competences acquired by means of non-formal and informal learning**
- 5. Involve trade unions in partnerships with relevant stakeholders in order to monitor, support and improve apprenticeships at company, sectoral, national and European level**

The ETUC, together with its national and sectorial affiliates, as well as the other social partners, are now involved in implementing the European Alliance for Apprenticeships and are strongly committed to putting in place actions to achieve this goal.

Apprenticeships schemes, when properly implemented, can significantly contribute to facilitating transition processes, to tackling skills mismatches in the labour market and to encouraging employers to provide young people with fair and good jobs. However, the availability of apprenticeship places has suffered due to the economic crisis and the weak recovery will slow down the process of expanding the share of apprenticeships available in the countries that have been affected most or of ensuring that apprenticeships translate into jobs.

Apprenticeship schemes should be regulated by formal employment contracts which should set out the rights and obligations of both employers and apprentices, while respecting general national law or regulation. Similarly, this should apply also to training institutions involved in the apprenticeship.

The remuneration of the apprentices should be ensured by the employers and according to collective agreements, or a national and/or sectorial minimum legal wage, for the period of training. Trade unions should be consulted about the number of apprenticeships schemes in a given company as well as about their working and training conditions.

The partnership approach is essential for apprenticeship schemes and it should involve social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations), together with public authorities and training institutions. Firstly, it allows for good quality and safe working environment to be

ensured; secondly it allows efficient monitoring of the suitability of workplaces; and thirdly it guarantees that norms and regulations are respected.

New technologies and skills needs at the sectorial and branch level should be taken into consideration when designing apprenticeships so as to guarantee that the skills supplied and offered meet the requirements of the sector/labour market. At the same time, the apprenticeships and learning activities should be developed on a solid knowledge base and on a forward-looking approach. With the aim of reducing the gender participation gap and the labour market segmentation, apprenticeship schemes should cover a wide range of different occupations and provide employment opportunities for all, men and women alike. Measures should be taken to strengthen the equal participation of men and women in jobs and sectors traditionally considered masculine or feminine. Promoting the gender “desegregation” of apprenticeships will also contribute to improve the occupational mobility of both genders as well as to the reduction of the wage pay gap. This requires a holistic approach including guidance for young people at an early stage as well as raising awareness of schools, trainers and social partners.

Guidance during the apprenticeship on both learning and social rights matters remains crucial. Trade union representatives play a central role in ensuring the latter.

Finally, apprenticeships need to be properly financed in order to enable the young person to attain the appropriate standards and knowledge. The skills and competences acquired should be recognised within the labour market and throughout the education and training system, as should any non-formal and informal learning acquired.

As set out in the ETUC resolution⁸, the ETUC Youth Committee reiterates that trade unions throughout Europe should continue to demonstrate their active and committed support for good quality apprenticeship schemes and should improve their engagement with apprentices in the workplace so as to represent their interests more effectively.

The Youth Guarantee⁹

At the European level several initiatives have been launched for tackling the dramatically high level of youth unemployment, including the Youth Guarantee (YG). The Council of the European Union adopted a Recommendation on Establishing a Youth Guarantee was formally in April 2013 on the basis of the proposal from the European Commission. The Youth Guarantee shall ‘ensure that all young people under the age of 25 years receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education’. The Youth Guarantee is meant to be financed by the European Social Fund, the Youth Employment Initiative and national resources. All countries have presented a Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan¹⁰ and some local initiatives have been put in place or strengthened. The challenges remain for many countries facing institutional difficulties in setting up the YG and those with still high levels of NEETs.

⁸ See footnote nr. 6 **Erreur ! Source du renvoi introuvable.**

⁹ See ETUC report on the Youth Guarantee in Europe <http://www.etuc.org/publications/youth-guarantee-europe#.VSUH49yUfHU>

¹⁰ The United Kingdom has not established a Youth Guarantee but supports the overall approach to it.

The Youth Guarantee we want:

- 1. Support a sustainable and inclusive recovery together with the implementation of an investment plan for jobs which is a necessary pre-condition for improving the situation of young people in the labour market**
- 2. Guarantee the high quality of job offers, trainings, traineeships and apprenticeships, particularly in those sectors where job creation will be most important in the future**
- 3. Lead to a guaranteed offer and intervention within four months. Aim, in the long term, at the implementation of a universal guarantee**
- 4. Guarantee equal access to public employment services**
- 5. Ensure full participation of social partners, civil society and young people in order to increase the transparency and the efficiency of measures adopted**
- 6. Guarantee appropriate social protection for young people to avoid increasing the risk of poverty and precariousness**
- 7. Strengthen existing active labour market programmes while building synergies between programmes and institutions in order to better to fulfil the goals of the EYG**
- 8. Strengthen trust in institutions, secure adequate financing and human resources for ensuring the quality of employment services**
- 9. Carefully assess the target population and provide tailored approaches in order to respond to the heterogeneity of the youth population**

Youth Guarantee schemes were pioneered by the Scandinavian countries and at the European level the Youth Guarantee has been shaped as tool-box with includes preventing and reparative measures for young people who are not in employment, education or training. The main idea is to diversify the approach to this population that is difficult to reach because the contacts with public and welfare services are scarce. This would call for more personalised approach namely using action plans and profiling techniques.

The role played by the Public Employment Services (PES) is crucial in this regard as it is considered as the public actor at the centre of the design of the Youth Guarantee. This means that PES need to be well-financed and have adequate human resources in order to ensure that quality services are delivered and that young people can find the help they need. The YG is also based on a strong partnership approach, where social partners, youth organisations, schools and training institutions, private employment providers and third sector organisations are involved in design, implementation, delivering and monitoring of the YG. A recent study published by the ETUC¹¹ revealed that this partnership approach took place unevenly across Europe and that the involvement of social partners was often not up to expectations.

The YG targets the NEETs population which include both unemployed and inactive youth who are not in education and training. Most of the countries are experiencing funding

¹¹ See footnote n. 9

difficulties in reaching out to these populations and more needs to be done for adapting services and creating or improving the available data that would allow better monitoring of this population.

The early intervention ‘within four months’, recommended by the YG — is another central element as it aims at preventing the scarring effect that unemployment and inactivity have on young people’s future careers. However, this timeframe might be difficult to put into place when deep institutional settings are to be changed.

Finally, while it is clear that each Member State faces different challenges, the financing of the YG remains a crucial matter for most of them: a sound use of European funding and appropriate national contributions should ensure that the YG will be institutionalised and made as efficient as possible in order to contribute to preventing and reducing youth unemployment and inactivity.

2. QUALITY JOBS

The ETUC Youth Committee is strongly concerned about the quality of jobs for young people; the quality of life of younger (and older!) generations depends on the quality of their jobs.

About five million under 25s, are currently unemployed in the EU. Quality job creation should be the number one priority. Some 10 million jobs have been destroyed since the onset of the crisis in 2008¹².

Getting Europe back to work is not the only challenge. Equally important is to ensure that new jobs are quality ones which allow people to have decent standards of living and contribute to their well-being and to a robust economy.

The quality jobs we want:

- 1. Are strongly anchored to a sustainable development model**
- 2. Secure a salary that allows a living salary (without gender discrimination)**
- 3. If they include a transition phase before stability, this must be fair and secured**
- 4. Free of all forms of discrimination on any ground**
- 5. Fit the ambitions and skills of young people**
- 6. Based on an equal minimum wage setting mechanism and anchored to collective bargaining mechanisms**
- 7. Include full access to social protection: pension rights, unemployment benefits, educational, maternity, paternity and parental leave etc**
- 8. Make sure that they enjoy right to join and actively participate in unions and their activities**
- 9. Include life-long learning paths and career guidance throughout the working life**

ETUC Youth is strongly concerned about the future of our planet and about the sustainability of the present economic model. We strongly endorse campaigns against climate change: There are no jobs on a dead planet!

Globalisation, technological innovation and change, demographic trends and the transition to a greener economy are having a profound impact on the labour market. In addition to posing important challenges, they are also windows of opportunity for job creation. However, there is no guarantee that these jobs will be of good quality. Despite the urgent need for job-creation and the increasing impact of digitalisation on the labour markets, ensuring quality must be seriously taken into account and set in a long-term, forward-looking, fair and sustainable conception of employment.

¹²

Eurostat, February 2015

The Youth Employment Package and European Employment Strategy are failing to deliver on quality jobs. Despite the light fall in unemployment rates in some countries, in those countries where jobs are being created, their quality and longer-term sustainability is cause of concern. Many of the jobs created are temporary and part-time and underemployment, in the form of involuntary part-time and fixed term work or work below people's qualification levels, is increasing. Too many young people face a precarious employment situation, plagued by job insecurity and low-wages: precarious contracts such as zero-hour contracts, bogus self-employment and undeclared work are becoming the negative features of the labour market.

The labour market has also become increasingly polarised also among youngsters: despite the precarious working conditions and the deep geographical differences in Europe, highly skilled/educated youth generally continue to access high quality, well-paid jobs, while low-skilled young people are most affected by poor quality, insecure and low paid jobs. Further efforts are needed to support young people accessing education and skills training to to attain employment. There is at the same time a hollowing-out of the middle-skilled jobs. These young workers find themselves increasingly in insecure employment situations and/or in jobs with worse working conditions.

Continued efforts are needed to increase participation levels in the labour market among young women – particularly after maternity leave and if single mothers - and young migrants, school-drop outs, the low-skilled, young people with disabilities and all youngsters at risk of discrimination. Even more so as these groups of people are disproportionately represented in poor quality and low-paid jobs.

3. MOBILITY

The working and living conditions of young migrants are matters of concern of the ETUC – Youth Committee.

In 2013 there were 15.5 million working age third-country nationals living in Europe and 10 million EU citizens living in a country other than their own of the same age group.

The mobility we want:

- 1. While taking into account the diversity of individual backgrounds, equal treatment should be guaranteed all over Europe: migrant workers should not be discriminated on the grounds of their origins.**
- 2. There should be freedom of movement within the European Labour market from the beginning**
- 3. Social protection rights (unemployment benefit, pensions and sick leave) should be portable all over Europe.**
- 4. Education qualifications should be recognized all over Europe**
- 5. Mobile students should have the same access to welfare benefits and services as home students on the basis on the ‘non-discrimination’ rule.**
- 6. Measures should be taken at European and national level to prevent the brain drain.**
- 7. The European trade union movement should take action to promote membership of young migrant workers to unions and their services in as many languages as possible.**
- 8. Young people should be given the opportunity to study and work abroad under scholarships to experience mobility from an early age. All social groups should be included in this not just the affluent backgrounds.**
- 9. The trade union movement should work closely with EURES and young trade unions representatives should become EURES advisors.**
- 10. The affiliation to an ETUC affiliated Confederation should be transferrable all over Europe. If a worker is member of a trade union in the country of origin, this affiliation should be recognized in the country of destination.**

Immigration

Migration is a complex phenomenon in Europe, with considerable differences in the composition of citizens arriving in the EU member states from different country of origin: while in 2012 most immigrants to Italy, Spain and Sweden were third-country nationals, those arriving to Luxemburg, Cyprus, Austria and Germany were EU citizens.

If unemployment has risen all for all groups after the outburst of the crisis, migrants have been even more hit than the rest of the working population. The principle of equal treatment should always be respected: in spite of the fact that equal Access to services should apply in all Europe, we see that migrants are less likely to be actually entitled to those services.

Moreover, statistics show that migrants are more likely to experience precarious working conditions, as the shares of involuntary temporary and part-time jobs are higher among the migrant population than the local population.

Migration and mobility are also priorities of particular interest for the ETUC – Youth Committee: migrants and mobile workers are in general younger than the local workforce.

Emigration

Countries such as Portugal, Cyprus, Lithuania, Spain, Greece, and Ireland experienced severe rises in the emigration flow during the period 2008 to 2012 during the harshest phase of the current crisis.

As for immigration, the distribution and origin of emigration flows vary largely throughout Europe. In Portugal and Central and Eastern European countries emigrants are nationals who were previously living abroad, while in Spain, the Czech Republic and Cyprus most of them are non-EU nationals going back to their home countries.

However, despite the youth composition of the migration flows to Europe and within Europe, the trend in the very last period shows a decline in the rate for young mobile workers and an increase of the upper age category (35 and 54 years old) with a particularly marked trend in the Southern European countries. Taking into consideration the employment prospects for young people in Europe – especially in the referred region - this might be seem a contradictory statistical finding. However, as youth unemployment is also a problem in many destination countries, prospects abroad are not necessarily attractive for young people from the origin ones. For the ETUC – Youth Committee this is nothing but another piece of evidence that structural measures to invest on the creation of quality jobs for young people should be taken.

4. ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Youth entrepreneurship is increasingly considered a successful instrument to contribute to tackling youth unemployment but this will not for sure solve the huge unemployment problem that Europe is currently facing. Guidance should be provided to all young people who want to engage in entrepreneurial activities and only a minority of young people have the right skills and means.

The youth entrepreneurship we want:

- 1. Includes proper guidance and orientation in this activity, including the risks it implies, since formal education**
- 2. Is mainly promoted among those who have the right skills and means**
- 3. Leads to socially responsible young entrepreneurs who are respectful of industrial relations, trade union rights and social dialogue at all levels**
- 4. Is based on a strong shared knowledge also at trans-national level**
- 5. Is based on a long term strategy and focuses in those sectors that pursue a sustainable development economic model and lead to the creation of quality jobs**

ETUC Youth believes that entrepreneurial skills must be backed by a series of favourable background conditions (access to finance, smooth administrative procedures, a positive entrepreneurial context etc.) in order to prove successful. We are conscious about the need to educate a future generation of socially responsible entrepreneurs (with a positive inclination) towards social dialogue and industrial relations (at all levels), but at the same time, entrepreneurial activities might be risk-taking.

According to Eurofound only 33% of young self-employed people in the EU28 in 2013 were women and there is an overrepresentation of young entrepreneurs in sectors like construction, where the problem of bogus self-employment is very common.¹³

Guidance and mentoring for new entrepreneurs should be made available in order to provide them with information on existing legislation, on potential funding opportunities and with all further necessary advice for creating and managing a successful and responsible business.

* * * * *

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Adopted in Brussels on June 26, 2015

¹³

See Eurofound's report *Youth entrepreneurship: Values, attitudes, policies* at <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2015/labourmarket/youth-entrepreneurship-in-europe-values-attitudes-policies>

