

Commission takes action to better involve young people in society



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In September the European Commission published a [Communication](#) on “Promoting young people’s full participation in education, employment and society”. As Europe’s population grows older faster and the pool of young workers shrinks, the EU will rely more and more on its younger generation. According to the Communication, young people are often insufficiently prepared to take on this responsibility. One in six young Europeans still leaves school early and 4.6 million 15-24 year-olds are unemployed. The document highlights the need, at EU and national level, to invest more and earlier in youth education and health and to improve transitions from education into work. It also stresses the importance of involving young people more in civic life, as well as in society as a whole.

The challenges young people face when growing up, have become more complex than those faced by their parents’ generation. The transitions from school into a job are complicated. Half of today’s jobs require high level qualifications and others demand much more varied skills than in the past. Around a quarter of European youngsters do not have the skills and abilities needed to join the labour market. In many Member States, one in three young people still remain jobless a year after leaving education.

Education and job prospects need to be improved. At the same time, volunteering activities are important in getting young people on board to play an active part in society. Better cooperation and the exchange of good practice can help to develop such activities. A recent Eurobarometer survey showed that 74% of young people believe that volunteer programmes are a good way to increase their participation in society.

The Commission in particular underlined the need to invest more, and as early as possible, in young people – not only in financial terms but also in political and social terms, through families, NGOs, teachers and employers. Developing cross-cutting youth strategies must be a priority – at both EU and national level – covering a broad range of policy areas like education, employment, health, enterprise, culture, youth and sports. A mayor elaboration is given to the education and employment situation of young people in the Union. The Communication is accompanied by a Commission working paper on youth employment. This [paper](#) provides for the first time an analysis of the employment situation of young people 15 to 30 in the EU-27 and includes a detailed statistical annex.

An actually very new proposal raised in the communication is a proposal for a transversal regular report on Youth in the European Union. And it caused a quite controversial debate among EU institutions as well as in member states. The report should describe and analyse the situation of young people in Europe, develop greater understanding of the issues, and intensify transversal cooperation, says the communication.

Other initiatives, new to the European cooperation in the Youth fields are proposed, such as a new Health strategy which supports tailored actions for young people, analysis of national practices regarding access of young people to culture, with a view facilitate such access.

The communication now is subject to consultation and position taking in the different thematic groups of the Council (Youth, education, employment and social affairs) as well as in the European Parliament. Consultation might lead to a decision for a more structured cross-sector approach in the European policy making, which leads to a better assessment of the impact on children's and young people's life.

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