



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 8 January 2007

5063/07

LIMITE

**JEUN 1
EDUC 2
SOC 3**

NOTE

from : Presidency
to : Youth Working Party

Subject : **Draft key messages on further implementation of the European Pact for Youth**

Delegations will find attached a set of draft key messages on further implementation of the European Pact for Youth, as drafted by the German Presidency for consideration during the next meeting of the Youth Working Party on 12 January 2007.

**DRAFT KEY MESSAGES ON FURTHER IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE EUROPEAN PACT FOR YOUTH**

A. Analysis of the progress made in implementing the European Pact for Youth in 2006.

Background

- (1) Despite some improvements in the employment situation in Europe, it is apparent when examining National Reform Programmes (NRPs) from a youth perspective that young people on average tend to benefit less from such improvements than adults. Young people, particularly early school leavers and young people with specific disadvantages, continue to face many challenges in the various stages of transition between education, training and the labour market.
- (2) Youth unemployment often results from a mismatch between the outcomes of education and training systems and the requirements of the labour market. Insufficient account is taken of those young people who increasingly have to make non-linear transitions into the labour market and who in many cases then find themselves in precarious employment conditions.
- (3) In particular, insufficient attention is paid to the needs of young people who, given their specific socio-economic context, their family situation or, in some cases, their migrant backgrounds or gender-related issues, are faced with fewer opportunities.
- (4) In many cases, the fact that fewer opportunities are available for young people is due to the particularities of the area in which they grow up. In deprived city areas and regions which are economically and structurally weak or demographically imbalanced, the social participation of young people is seriously restricted.

Action taken

- (5) Member States have implemented a wide range of measures in line with the European Pact for Youth, such as training measures, financial incentives for employers to hire young workers or apprentices and the reform of employment services. The measures taken by Member States have in general been strengthened but have not yet made it possible to attain a satisfactory result, since the approach used has not always been sufficiently comprehensive or integrated.
- (6) In its 2006 Annual Lisbon Progress Report¹, the Commission has drawn attention to the need for stronger action to ensure the availability of skilled labour, and for measures aimed at reducing the rate of early school leavers. This target has been incorporated into the 2006 NRPs.

Some progress has been made:

- in ensuring the availability of skilled labour, so as to prevent bottlenecks in the labour market;
- in increasing employment among certain groups - such as young people at high risk of unemployment, the low skilled and the unemployed themselves -, in tackling regional employment disparities and in better integrating minorities into employment;
- in limiting early school leaving, particularly through reforms designed to revitalise education and lifelong learning systems, in improving the quality of education, in strengthening initial and vocational education and training and in promoting entrepreneurship education;
- in implementing the new start by offering young unemployed people a job, an apprenticeship, additional training or other employability measures within six months, or in some Member States three months, of becoming unemployed;
- in facilitating business start-ups.

¹ COM(2006) 816 final : Part I, Annex, Part II

- (7) In the field of micro-economic policy, measures have been taken by Member States to foster entrepreneurship, such as providing access to risk capital, entrepreneurship education or support for young, innovative SMEs.
- (8) In modernising their employment policies, Member States have implemented a wide range of measures in favour of young people:
- concentrating on an inclusive labour market, adopting a 'lifecycle' approach, and developing an integrated approach for disadvantaged youth;
 - providing better guidance and counselling at the earliest possible stage;
 - implementing measures aimed at reconciling work and family life, such as childcare programmes or employment services, whose objective is also to increase youth participation in the labour market.
- (9) A large number of Member States have implemented measures aimed at providing a new start for youth, in line with the commitments taken at the 2006 Spring European Council. In addition, the measures implemented under the European Pact for Youth are being used by Member States as complementary tools to help young people become better integrated. In both cases, evaluation is required by 2008, when the first Lisbon cycle (2006-2007) will come to an end.

B. Further implementation of the European Pact for Youth – priority steps

Young people constitute a valuable resource for both the present and future of the European Union and European society at large. Their potential for creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship is needed to achieve the aims of the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs. It is for this reason that incorporation of the youth dimension into national implementation of the Lisbon Strategy is crucial.

Against this background, in the process of further implementing the European Youth Pact, Member States should place special emphasis on the following priorities:

(1) Particular attention should be paid to young people in the transition period between school education, vocational training and employment.

To ensure favourable framework conditions for the successful social and professional integration of young people, Member States should, in accordance with their national legal and administrative systems, reinforce cross-sectoral coordination between policies at all levels, involving all the relevant political, administrative and non-governmental stakeholders.

(2) The use of local strategies to implement the European Pact for Youth can play a significant role in ensuring high-quality measures aimed at better social and professional integration.

When implementing the European Pact for Youth, implementation strategies are required which take account of local and regional characteristics, in order to strengthen the active participation of all those involved at local level, including young people themselves, their networks and their organisations.

(3) To be able to offer all young people equal opportunities for social and professional integration requires individually tailored measures.

Individually tailored measures, which take account of the specific strengths and weaknesses of every young person and thus better ensure his or her active participation, should be developed and followed up with a view to assessing their effectiveness. In addition, youth specific aspects should be strengthened in the current debate on flexicurity, with a view to proposing concrete measures to combat the segmentation of certain labour markets and to offering better jobs for young people.

(4) To enhance the social and professional integration of young people, governance of the Lisbon Strategy should include a 'youth governance' component

Within the Lisbon Strategy, youth governance should be strengthened at all levels, i.e. through the active involvement of all actors in youth policy, as a means of ensuring the quality and effectiveness of measures targeted at young people.

In addition, within the existing framework of European cooperation on youth policy, an ongoing exchange of experience and best practice regarding implementation of the European Pact for Youth should be initiated by Youth Ministers and taken forward by the Member States and the Commission, also with a view to contributing to the youth governance of the Lisbon Process.
