

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Since the start of the economic crisis, unemployment among young people aged from 15 to 24 has increased by 50% in the European Union. In France, unemployment of young people under age 25 continues to increase and has reached a record level of 22.7% in the second half of 2012. Even if the crisis has undermined its effectiveness, a degree or diploma remains the individual's best defence against unemployment.

Unemployment rate for those aged under 25 in the second half of 2012

***22,7 % compared to 9,4 %
for the rest of the working population***

***Youth unemployment rate for those
with little or no qualifications***

44,3 %

Aside from the economic conditions, the employment situation with which young people are faced is a result of structural constraints linked to the operation of the labour market and to the inadequacies of our social model. Unemployment in the youth labour market has never fallen below 14% since 1982. Therefore the persistence of unemployment in the youth labour market raises the questions of the effectiveness of employment policies. The segmentation of the labour market makes young people into an adjustable variable particularly in periods of crisis.

***Almost 356,000 unemployed young people
have neither unemployment benefits,
nor minimum social benefits***

Faced with rising long-term unemployment and the risks of exclusion and poverty, it is the inability of our social model to deal with the situation of new generations which is the issue.

The too-widely held view that young people are not well prepared for the world of work has dominated the public debate: poorly trained, misguided, unsure of business practices, even indecisive, they are said to be out of touch with the real world. This attitude must be left behind. It is essentially untrue to claim that young people are unemployable: with more degrees and qualifications than previous generations most of them are capable of innovation, creativity or adaptability to the new technologies needed by companies and of business creation. The accepted «norm» of bringing in young people on a succession of temporary contracts makes no economic sense. The situation young people find themselves in is the result of a policy which has led to their social and economic exclusion, a policy which must be rejected as a matter of urgency.

It is certainly true that a lasting solution to the problem of youth unemployment will not be found while conditions for an improved economic environment are still absent. This statement should not however lead to a wait-and-see attitude or a sense of inevitability. The ESEC, backed by its composition of social partners and all the other elements of civil society, wants to take a renewed look at this major social problem. It is setting out 18 recommendations focussed on five priority objectives.



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THE ESEC SETS OUT 18 RECOMMENDATIONS

TAKE ACTION AGAINST THE STRUCTURAL CAUSES OF EXCESSIVE YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

- **Become involved** in a growth and competitiveness strategy to create employment
- **Improve** access to training and raise skill levels

ENSURE A BETTER TRANSITION BETWEEN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AND THE WORLD OF WORK

- **Improve** the provision of guidance and the links between the education system and the world of work
- **Develop** and improve «sandwich» courses
- **Expand** work placements and improve their regulation

MAKE ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR THE LEAST QUALIFIED YOUNG PEOPLE A PRIORITY

- **Continue** the fight against illiteracy
- **Develop** arrangements for «second chance» schemes
- **Strengthen** the tools available under employment policies in priority areas
- **Increase** the number of State-subsidised contracts during periods of crisis
- **Mobilise** vocational integration through economic activity
- **Establish** an entitlement to postponed initial training

IMPROVE THE OPERATION OF THE LABOUR MARKET

- **Protect** professional mobility and transitions to other employment
- **Reduce** the segmentation of the labour market
- **Make** youth employment a regular topic for social dialogue
- **Promote** the integration of young people into employment by business initiatives
- **Take joint action** on the employment of young people and older people thanks to the new so-called «generations» contract

IMPROVE SUPPORT FOR YOUNG JOB SEEKERS

- **Improve** support for young people at local level
- **Strengthen** social protections for young working people