



# Youth and work

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This report is available in electronic format only.

## Country codes used in tables and figures

### **EU25 25 EU Member States before 1 January 2007**

AT	Austria
BE	Belgium
CZ	Czech Republic
CY	Cyprus
DK	Denmark
EE	Estonia
FI	Finland
FR	France
DE	Germany
EL	Greece
HU	Hungary
IE	Ireland
IT	Italy
LV	Latvia
LT	Lithuania
LU	Luxembourg
MT	Malta
NL	Netherlands
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
SK	Slovakia
SI	Slovenia
ES	Spain
SE	Sweden
UK	United Kingdom

EU15 15 EU Member States prior to 1 May 2004

### **Acceding countries (before becoming EU Member States on 1 January 2007)**

BG	Bulgaria
RO	Romania

### **European Economic Area (EEA) states also discussed in report**

NO	Norway
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# Introduction

The role of young people in Europe and youth employment and qualifications are high on the European agenda and the agendas of national governments. At European level, the importance of taking young people into consideration has been emphasised in recent years. In March 2005, the Commission published a communication (COM (2005) 206 final) on **European policies concerning youth (186Kb PDF)**<sup>1</sup>, stating that ‘the destiny of Europe increasingly depends on its ability to foster societies that are child and youth-friendly’. This study examines the employment situation of young people in 26 European countries, looking at unemployment data, the regulatory framework and programmes at national level specifically targeted at raising employment levels. The study also presents the role and views of the social partners and highlights the main issues for policy consideration. It is based on national reports on the subject, drawn up on the basis of a questionnaire, available on the Foundation’s website.

Recent demographic trends indicating substantial changes in the size and age structure of Europe’s population are a challenge to policymakers. The number of young people aged 15 to 24 years is set to decline by a quarter – from 12.6% of the population to 9.7% – between 2005 and 2050, while the 65 years and over age group will increase from 16.4% to 29.9%.<sup>2</sup>

The Commission’s Green paper on **Confronting demographic change (309Kb PDF)**<sup>3</sup> highlights the implications for Europe of these changes.

- The first consideration is the intergenerational burden, as a smaller number of young people will have to carry the burden of replacing the larger numbers of older generations.
- Secondly, boosting growth and enhancing sustainable development will require a significant contribution from young people, as recognised in the European Pact for Youth adopted by the Spring 2005 European Council.<sup>4</sup>
- Finally, integrating young people in the labour market is crucial for ensuring social inclusion, as they are particularly at risk of poverty, with 19% of 16–24 year olds facing this risk, compared with 12% of 25–64 year-olds.

At national level, youth employment raises concerns in most Member States. Data show how transition into the labour market is difficult for young people, with a European average youth unemployment rate more than double the overall unemployment rate (17.9% for those aged less than 25 years, compared with 7.7% for people aged 25 years and over). Particularly worrying is the fact that economic slowdowns have a rapid impact on the youth unemployment ratio.

Gender differences still exist and addressing their consequences is becoming increasingly complex. The Commission Communication on European policies concerning youth stated that all actions and policies should be considered in a gender perspective, as young women experience higher unemployment and higher risk of poverty than young men do. It is now agreed that, although young women generally fare better in the education system than young men do, this group of women is still more likely to face unemployment. However, in an economic slowdown, the increase in unemployment affects young men more than their female counterparts.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/youth/whitepaper/post-launch/com\\_206\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/whitepaper/post-launch/com_206_en.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> 2004-based Eurostat population projections, baseline variant

<sup>3</sup> COM (2005) 94 final, available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/news/2005/mar/comm2005-94\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/news/2005/mar/comm2005-94_en.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Annex 1 of Presidency Conclusions of the European Council, Brussels, 22–23 March 2005 (7619/05)

Furthermore, contradictory impacts of employment and training programmes make it more difficult for governments and social partners to devise effective policies to address the issue.<sup>5</sup>

Against this background, this feature aims to give a brief overview of the situation of the employment relationship of young people in 26 European countries.

In 2005, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions collected information on this topic, through its network of national correspondents of the European Industrial Relations Observatory (EIRO). A unique questionnaire was sent to each national correspondent, aimed at gathering data on the regulatory framework, the programmes devised at national level for employment policies targeted at young people, and in particular the policies and regulations concerning the transition from education into working life. The feature examines the role and opinions of the social partners, and the issues that give rise to discussion when considering policy implementation and outcome.

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<sup>5</sup> The 26 countries concerned are: 23 of the 25 EU Member States before 1 January 2007 (Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK) – Luxembourg and Portugal did not participate in the study – and the two acceding countries before becoming Member States on 1 January 2007 (Bulgaria and Romania) and Norway.

# National classifications

Before detailing specific legislation, programmes and statistics, it is essential to understand how different countries define young people and how they are grouped into categories.

## Age ranges

Variations in age ranges have a significant influence on the number of people potentially addressed by youth policies. In fact, some inconsistency exists among the actual age ranges used by the governments of European countries to identify 'youth'. The most common definition of young people includes those aged from 15 years to 24 years; however, a wide disparity emerges when comparing the national contributions for this feature. The lower limit does not fluctuate much as it centres close to 18 years of age. This stage coincides with the legal entitlement to sign a contract without the consent of an adult, as well as with opportunities to choose freely further education and continuous development of physical and mental abilities. The most common upper limit is the age of 24 or 25 years; nevertheless, some countries extend the range to 29 years, 30 years or even 40 years (see Annex 2).

Upper limits in defining the population of young people develop for diverse reasons. On the one hand, high age limits depend on a country's willingness to grant use of vocational and educational training to counterbalance inexperience and lack of qualification, as is the case in Greece and Romania. Extending the age qualification for work programmes also has roots in educational attainment. In the Czech Republic, people may be considered as 'school leavers', namely people who have completed their education, up to a maximum age of 30 years and up to two years after having completed their education. Although they have intellectually developed, it is believed that a school leaver needs more vocational guidance and work practice to enter the workforce. A similar situation is found in Poland, which generally defines young employees as those aged between 18 and 25 years but which broadens the range to 27 years if an individual graduates from university.

## Young people at risk

In addition to categorising young people by age, governments make distinctions based on aptitude. Policies tend to classify as 'at risk' young people who lack vocational and educational training, labour skills and work experience; in seven countries (AT, BE, BG, EE, IE, IT, SI), young people who are long-term unemployed are also included within this high-risk category. Vulnerable and disadvantaged workers need extra guidance to enter the labour market; consequently, some countries have set up special programmes for them. The definition of 'disadvantaged' varies from one country to another but generally means someone without a successful work record or who has been the target of discrimination.

Fighting social marginalisation is another reason for creating exclusive categories for people with disabilities or of foreign origin. Although not specifically geared towards young people, these categories incorporate young people at work. Employment programmes are one way of enabling disabled people to contribute more in the labour market; Estonia, Belgium and Italy devote attention to this aim. Moreover, Belgium and Denmark have created programmes for young people of foreign origin in order to avoid inequity and to combat rising numbers of unemployment caused by immigrants.

## Women

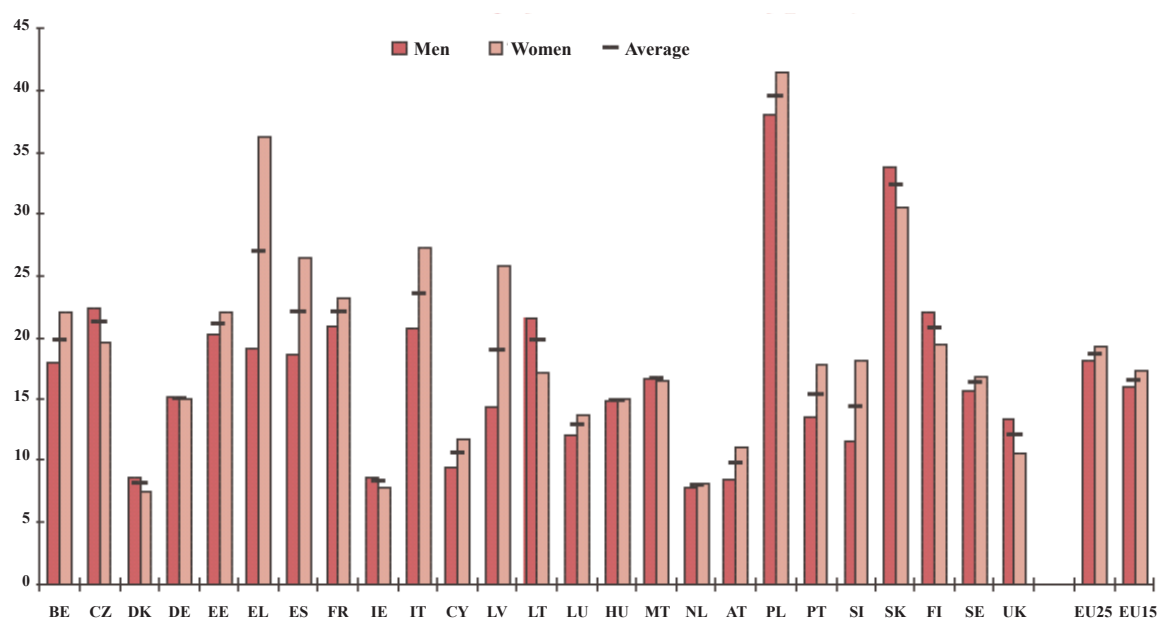
Women are a further category of note, as some governments have adopted distinctive legislation in relation to young female employees, such as the Czech Republic. An unusual categorisation occurs in Italy: 'women of any age, resident in areas where the female unemployment rate is at least 20% less than the male rate or where it is 10% higher' are targeted as disadvantaged workers. They should therefore benefit from the 'work entry contract', introduced by the law reforming the labour market in 2003 (the so-called 'Biagi Law') and aimed at facilitating the labour market entry or re-entry of disadvantaged categories of workers in a broad sense.

# Employment and unemployment data

Government and social partner concerns are mainly based on figures for youth unemployment. Accordingly, legislation and programmes with respect to youth employment have been developed.

First, it is worth underlining that data can differ due to the collection method of the statistics. For example, the age range varies between the countries (15–24 years, 15–19 years, 16–29 years, 16–24 years, 16–32 years and 20–24 years), shifting with the national definitions of employed young people. Furthermore, some inconsistency occurs when comparing Eurostat data to that collected through the EIRO study (details of the latter are compiled in the annexes). The figures below illustrate data from Eurostat. The data provided by the EIRO national centres mentioned in the text may differ because of the year, age range or other specific characteristics within the definition of youth.

Figure 1: Youth unemployment rates, by sex, EU25, 2004 (% of labour force)



Notes: The age range used to specify youth in this figure is not specified.

This figure from Eurostat includes data for the 25 EU Member States while the EIRO reports cover 26 countries: 23 EU Member States (Luxembourg and Portugal did not contribute to this EIRO study), Norway and the two acceding countries up to 1 January 2007, Bulgaria and Romania.

Source: Eurostat, harmonised series on unemployment, *Employment in Europe report 2005*,

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/employment\\_analysis/employ\\_2005\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/employment_analysis/employ_2005_en.htm)

In Figure 1, Poland records a youth unemployment rate above 35% for 2004, whereas the EIRO national contribution (Annex 7) observes a rate of 27.9% over the years 2002–2004. In Slovakia’s case, Figure 1 shows a rate above 30% for 2004, but in 2005 the country reported a 16.2% level of youth unemployment. Nonetheless, by analysing both sets, a coherent picture of young people at work develops overall, whether at national or European level.

## Youth unemployment rates

A rate of youth unemployment at or above 20% occurs in 12 countries (BE, BG, CZ, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, IT, LT, PL, SK). Referring again to Figure 1, the lowest unemployment rates – those hovering at 10% or below – are found in five countries (DK, IE, CY, NL, AT). Germany may also qualify for this set of countries as a discrepancy arises when comparing the Eurostat data of 15% and the data from the EIRO study (9.7% to 9.9% for 2002–2004, Annex 7). The UK is just over the 10% threshold, reporting an 11.6% unemployment rate among 18–24 year-olds in 2005. Norway, a country not included in the chart but part of the EIRO study, indicated a youth unemployment rate of 11.6% in 2004.

A different picture appears, however, when breaking down the unemployment rate by sex, age, length of unemployment and region.

### Gender perspective

From the gender perspective, youth unemployment rates are slightly higher for women than for men among the EU25, according to Eurostat data. Despite this, data collected through the EIRO national centres reveal that 11 of the 26 European countries participating in the study record higher male youth unemployment rates (CZ, DK, DE, IE, LT, HU, MT, NO, SK, FI, UK), while Romania and Bulgaria do not keep gender-specific statistics. In Norway, the rate for young men stands at 12.5%, while the rate for young women is 10.6%.

The situation between the sexes in relation to youth unemployment appears to be approximately equal in several of the countries surveyed, with the exception of Latvia and Greece. Both countries display unemployment rates for women that are almost twice those for men. On the other hand, employment trends appear to be more positive for young women. Since 2000 in Germany, the development of employment has been more favourable for women. Nevertheless, this is not a general trend but rather seems particularly true for those aged 20 to 24 years, as the number of female workers fell by less (-1.5%) than the corresponding decrease for male workers (-8.3%). In the Czech Republic, unemployment rates vary depending on age and sex. In the 15–19 years age group, the unemployment rate among women is 43.9% while the rate for men is slightly lower, at 40.4%. Conversely, in the 20–24 years age group, unemployment accounts for 18.6% of men while affecting 16.3% of women.

### Age range

Younger age groups tend to show higher unemployment as younger workers lack experience and education compared with older workers: the younger age group tends to have twice the unemployment rate of the older age groups. Germany seems to be an exception as, in contrast to other European countries, the unemployment rate of 11.5% for those aged less than 25 years did not differ distinctly from the average unemployment rate of 11% in October 2005. One reason could be the vocational education and training (VET) system, which makes it easier to advance from education to the labour market.

According to Eurostat data, Finland's youth unemployment rate is above 20% (Figure 1), more than twice the general unemployment rate, which stands at 8.7% for men and 8.9% for women in 2004. However, the two age categories that the country uses for statistics in this area show an unemployment rate above and below the overall youth average. Thus, around 30% of people in the 15–19 years age group and around 15% of 20–24 year-olds are unemployed. Of the seven countries that divide their youth age range into smaller statistical categories (CZ, DK, ES, FI, IE, LV, SE), only Denmark displayed a higher unemployment rate in the older age group, experiencing a 6.1% level of unemployment among 25 to 29 year-olds but only 3.1% in the 16–24 years age category (see Table). Consequently, Denmark has decided to include the 25–29 years age group within special initiatives for young people. (See Annex 7 for more national data.)

Table 1: *Unemployment rates, by age group*

Country	Lower age bracket (years)	Unemployment rate	Higher age bracket (years)	Unemployment rate
CZ	15–19	41.9%	20–24	17.6%
DK	16–24	3.1%	20–29	6.1%
ES	16–19	31.2%	20–24	17.4%
FI	15–19	~30%	20–24	~15%
IE	15–19	13.4%	20–24	8.3%
LV	15–16	1.9%	20–24	10.9%
SE	16–19	14%	20–24	12.8%

Note: Only the seven countries listed above divide their young population into smaller statistical categories, as indicated in the Table.

Source: *EIRO national contributions, November 2005*

### Length of unemployment

Germany, Finland, Ireland and the UK report the lowest numbers for long-term unemployment of young people (Annex 7). In 2005, Ireland recorded a rate of 1.4% among 15 to 24 year-olds. Finland had a 4% level of long-term unemployment for those aged 20 to 24 years – a very low number; however, the risk of having a repeated unemployment spell is twice as high among Finland's young people as among the rest of the population. The worst rates occur in Bulgaria, where the number of 15 to 24 year-olds unemployed over one year totalled 46,000 people or 52.8% of all unemployed young people in the country in 2003. Cyprus claims that 20.1% of its young people remain unemployed for over a year, indicating the difficulties in the transition from school to the labour market.

### Regional impact

The unemployment rates of young people also depend on geographical situation. Rates vary within countries, as is evident in the Czech Republic where regions encounter different rates due to the presence or absence of extensive structural economic transformation. The former division of Germany and differences in the economic background explain the discrepancy in the 2005 figures of youth unemployment: 17.9% in eastern Germany compared with 9.8% in western Germany.

### Youth employment rates

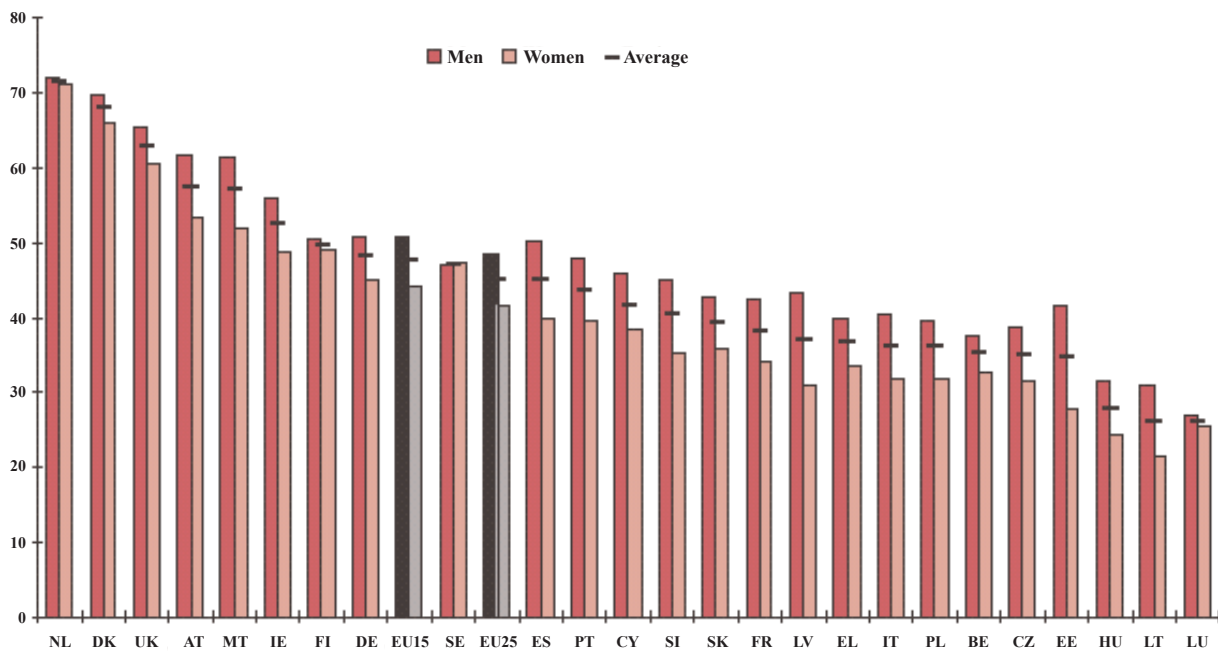
Another important indicator to measure the participation of young people in the labour market is the employment rate. Across the 26 countries surveyed, youth employment rates are around the 20% to 30% range. One of the highest rates of youth employment can be seen in Norway, where 54.4% of 16 to 24 year-olds were in employment in 2004. Bulgaria reported a youth employment rate of 19.2% in 2002 and 21% for 2003. According to the national centre, the increase was due to more students graduating from formal education. Since young people have the lowest education and work experience rates in society, schooling increases their employability, boosts employment rates and lowers unemployment rates. Schooling also has the effect of lowering youth unemployment rates simply because it takes people out of the labour market. In the Czech Republic, the ratio of graduates to the total population of young people has fallen mainly since more young people are continuing their studies. Reasons for this are that basic military service has been abolished and the conditions for gaining unemployment benefit have been tightened.



## Activity rates

An additional measure used in this report is the percentage of economically active people, calculated by dividing the combined number of those employed and unemployed by the total population of the age group in question. The five highest economic activity rates occurred in the Netherlands, Denmark, the UK, Austria and Malta; the first three countries attained rates above 60% (Figure 2). The data collected in the EIRO study (Annex 8) are slightly different from the data given in Figure 2, showing economic activity rates of 59.2% among 15 to 24 year-olds in Slovakia and 63.1% among 20 to 24 year-olds in Latvia.

Figure 2: *Economic activity rates of people aged 15–24 years, by sex, EU25, 2004 (%)*

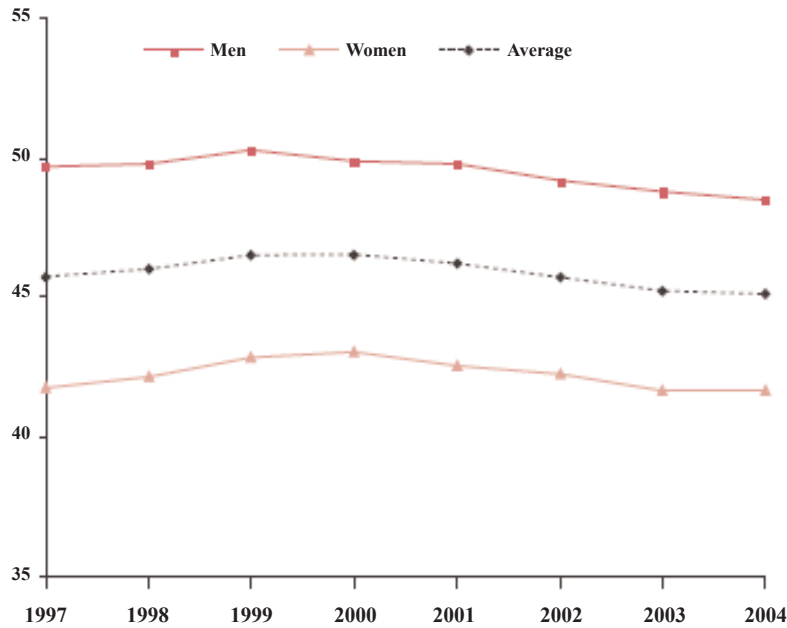


Note: This figure from Eurostat includes data for the 25 EU Member States while the EIRO reports cover 26 countries: 23 EU Member States (Luxembourg and Portugal did not contribute to this EIRO study), Norway and the two acceding countries up to 1 January 2007, Bulgaria and Romania.

Source: Eurostat, *Quarterly labour force data (QLFD), Employment in Europe report 2005*, [http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/employment\\_analysis/employ\\_2005\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/employment_analysis/employ_2005_en.htm)

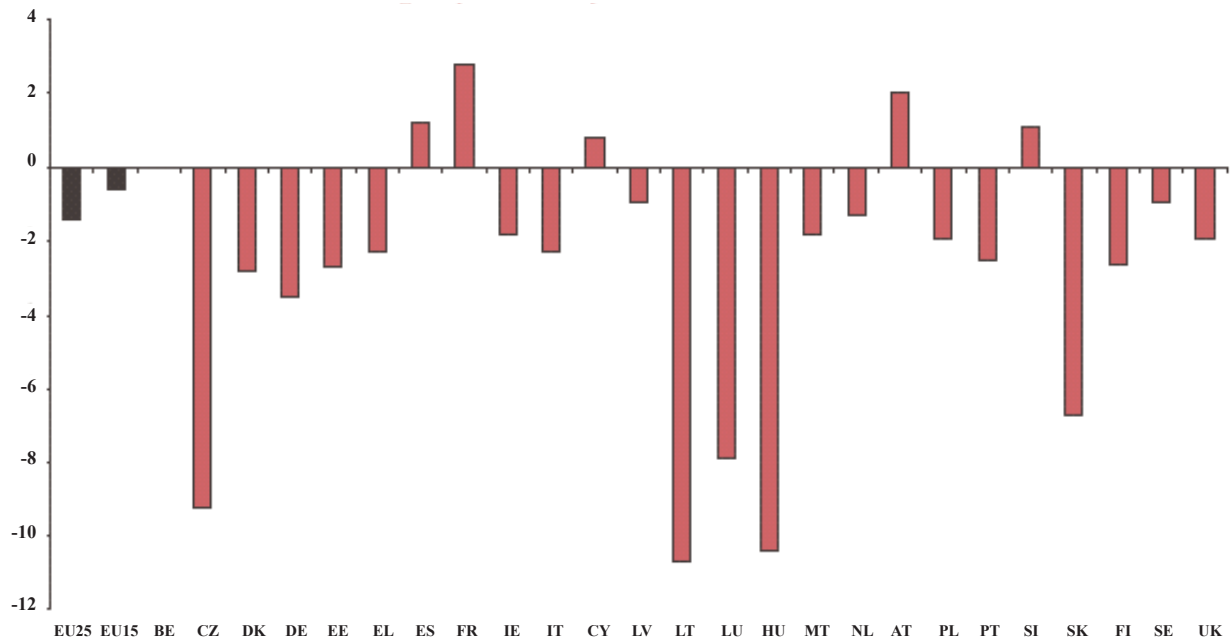
In recent years, economic activity rates among young people have been on the decline in Europe, which is illustrated in Figures 3 and 4. Notice the downward trend over the period 1997–2004 in Figure 3. This is even more apparent when looking at Figure 4, which shows the decline in activity rates in each country from 2000 to 2004.

Figure 3: Trends in economic activity rates for 15–24 year-olds, by sex, 1997–2004, EU25 (%)



Source: Eurostat, *QLFD, Employment in Europe report 2005*, [http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/employment\\_analysis/employ\\_2005\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/employment_analysis/employ_2005_en.htm)

Figure 4: Change in economic activity rates for 15–24 year olds, 2000–2004, by country, EU25 (percentage points)



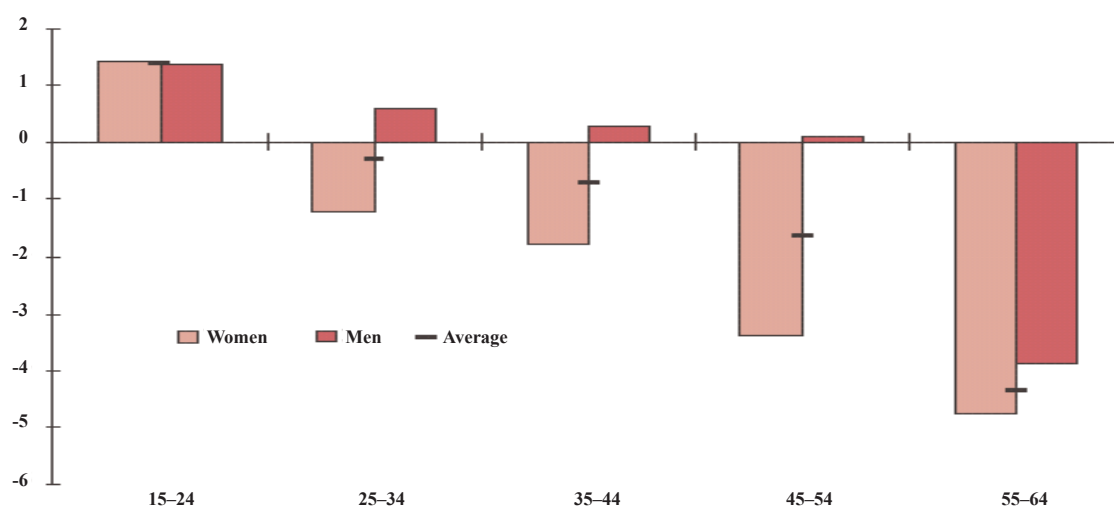
Note: This figure from Eurostat includes data for the 25 EU Member States while the EIRO reports cover 26 countries in Europe: 23 EU Member States (Luxembourg and Portugal did not contribute to this EIRO study), Norway and the two acceding countries up to 1 January 2007, Bulgaria and Romania.

Source: Eurostat, *QLFD, Employment in Europe report 2005*, [http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/employment\\_analysis/employ\\_2005\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/employment_analysis/employ_2005_en.htm)

## Inactivity rates

The economic inactivity rate may be calculated by considering those not in the labour force divided by the age-specific population. In Hungary, the inactivity rate is over 70% for those aged 15 to 24 years, a fact that the country attributes partly to an increasing enrolment rate in higher education. The most significant characteristic of the Hungarian labour market is a low participation rate, which is coupled with relatively low unemployment and high economic inactivity. Figure 5 shows that inactivity rates in the EU25 are highest among those aged 15 to 24 years.

Figure 5: Change in economic inactivity rates between 2000 and 2004, by age group and sex, EU25 (percentage points)



Source: Eurostat, Labour force survey (LFS) spring results, *Employment in Europe report 2005*, [http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/employment\\_analysis/employ\\_2005\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/employment_analysis/employ_2005_en.htm)

All of the figures indicate an overall decline from 2000 to 2004 in young people engaging in the labour market, unemployed or employed. Reasons for this disparity between younger and older people's inactivity rates may be young people's reluctance to enter the labour market or their desire to continue in education, as well as employers' reluctance to hire inexperienced workers.

# Regulatory framework

Regulations on youth employment reflect the concerns of public authorities, the social partners and society to guarantee a safe and smooth inclusion of young people into the labour market. Labour legislation defines the rights of all workers, including young workers. Nevertheless, given the recognised specific need for protection, most countries develop special policies to defend young employees' rights. Depending on the regulatory culture of a country, youth employment laws can either be part of an overarching labour code, or command their own attention in a separate act (Annex 3).

## Issues covered by legislation

National legislation prescribes practices in relation to legally employing underage young people. With regard to the age of employment, young people can usually engage in labour activities around the age of 15 years, depending on the compulsory schooling requirements of the country. Italy's 2003 Moratti Reform recently extended compulsory training and education for a total duration of at least 12 years or until award of qualification at the age of 18 years. If still obliged to attend school, young employees may work some hours after school, on weekends and during holiday breaks. Generally, persons under the age of 18 years, even if not affected by compulsory schooling, are restrained from working overtime and nightshifts.

National legislation may also limit the nature of work a young person may pursue. Such restrictions are based on the premise that an employer should not require a minor to work if it is likely to harm moral and social development, involves a risk of accident, or jeopardises health and education (Annexes 3 and 4).

The main issues of specific legislation regarding youth employment concern apprenticeships, training programmes, daily and weekly working hours, and minimum wages. Regarding working conditions and working time, legislation regulating youth employment tends to propose a restricted framework, imposing a limit on the daily and weekly working hours. Even the Austrian formulation of 'more flexible' working hours aims at suiting young workers' specific needs rather than expanding the patterns of hours that young people work.

## Minimum wage

The minimum wage is a key element of regulations on youth employment (Annex 4). The origin of regulations will not be considered here, as nearly three-quarters of EU Member States have some form of statutory national minimum wage; in the remaining countries, sectoral collective agreements play the main role in setting minimum pay rates (Annex 6).

Of greater interest to this study is the specific link between the minimum wage and youth employment. While minimum wages are not directly tied to youth employment, they are typically equivalent to the wages of young people due to lack of work experience. Additionally, some countries establish a direct link between age and the national minimum wage in defining thresholds. For example, the French minimum wage may be reduced by 10% for those aged younger than 18 years and by 20% for those aged 16 to 17 years of age. In two countries, Romania and Slovakia, the minimum wage can be reduced to 50% during an apprenticeship or if a young person aged less than 16 years is employed. In the Netherlands, the limit is broken down into eight categories, with an annual graduated earnings bracket from the age of 15 to 22 years, ranging from 30% to 85% of the minimum wage (Annex 4).

Further consideration is given to minimum wages beyond age restrictions. The Hungarian Act XXIII of 2002 guarantees young graduates a higher payment than the national minimum wage if they work in the public sector. Age limits do not apply in Poland, where there is a reduced statutory rate for anyone with less than two years of work, at 80% of the statutory minimum wage during the first year and 90% of this wage for the second year. In Slovakia, employed youths who are disabled earn 50% of the minimum wage.

While minimum wages are a way to ensure that young people are provided with guaranteed payment, the system is not free of problems. In the UK, the Trades Union Congress (TUC) has been at the forefront of the campaign to introduce a minimum wage for 16–17 year-olds, arguing that ‘it would protect them against exploitation’. Nevertheless, the TUC is concerned that low wages for young workers in the UK mean that many young people cannot afford to save for retirement because they work in places, such as shops and hotels, that no longer provide workplace pensions and they are earning too little to save on their own. Currently, the Minimum Wage Act of April 1999 establishes a payment of £5.05 (€7.28) for those aged over 22 years, £4.25 (€6.12) for those aged 18 to 21 years along with people aged 22 years and older in their first six months of a job, and £3.00 (€4.32) for 16 and 17 year olds.<sup>6</sup> Although these rates appear very high in direct comparison with those of countries like Bulgaria and Romania – where minimum wages amount to €0.36 and €0.40 – the UK rates have to be put in context with the high cost of living in this country.

### Other legislation and agreements

Some national legislation grants benefits specifically to young people. In Hungary, if the daily working time exceeds 4.5 hours, young workers are entitled to longer work breaks. Furthermore, during the first year of employment, under the Belgian First Job Agreement, a young person is entitled to unlimited absences to respond to job offers and has a reduced notice period of seven days when hired by another employer. In Denmark, activation programmes (mainly job training and education) are offered to uninsured unemployed young people after three months, while the delay before activation is six months for insured unemployed young people. For everyone else, the time period before activation is 12 months.

Collective negotiations have less impact on youth employment regulation. Although industrial relations in many countries are regulated through collective agreements, regulating young people at work is not a priority topic in negotiations. The main youth employment issues covered by collective negotiations are the minimum wage (AT, BE, DK, FI, NL) and training. In 2003 for example, German social partners promoted the dual VET system, combining vocational training in schools and companies, through 121 collective agreements. The agreements aimed at maintaining low pay for trainees – even specifying a low entry-level wage for former trainees – while also recognising the skills acquired during training and offering a job guarantee of six months. Similarly, the Netherlands pursued the creation of ‘learning and working jobs’ through 21 agreements. Within eight collective agreements, certain target figures have been agreed upon, committing to create 1,100 learning jobs.

Finally, a strong industrial relations tradition plays an important role in the social partners’ involvement in setting up regulations, as is the case in Finland where tripartite negotiations and agreements are the basis for developing regulatory framework and social policies.

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<sup>6</sup> All euro equivalents to sterling in this feature are calculated at the rate of GBP 1 = €1.44, as of August 2005.

# Youth employment programmes

Given demographic and workforce trends, governments and social partners in most European countries have devised programmes to boost youth employment. Each country has its specificities regarding the content and resources of such programmes, as well as the actors involved. The targets and structure of the initiatives vary by country depending on the political and economic situation, and must adapt to particular circumstances arising.

## **Comprehensive and targeted programmes**

Usually, a country develops an action plan that incorporates many different strategies and initiatives to boost employment, reduce unemployment, increase skills and qualifications, raise the participation of young people in vocational training, and improve the relation between knowledge and the skills needed by the economy. Spain offers an example of such a multi-faceted plan focusing exclusively on young people. The Spanish General Workers' Confederation (Unión General de Trabajadores, UGT) considers the 2005–2008 Youth Plan as a useful tool aimed at improving the situation for young people in many fields: quality of life, autonomy and opportunities. For the first time, the real demands of young people – such as in relation to employment and housing – will be taken into account, alongside the trade union demand for a Tripartite Commission to improve employment and professional qualification policies.

Some countries have outlined the outcomes they hope to achieve in implementing their programmes; these targets vary among countries. For example, Bulgaria wants 20% of young people to find jobs within six months of unemployment, while Estonia aims to reduce the youth unemployment rate to 16.5% and boost their employment rate to 30.2%. Countries with stronger economies may set higher targets. For example, Finland has set the goal of ensuring that 90% of young people have a tailored job plan within three months of being unemployed, while Ireland plans the elimination of long-term youth unemployment by the end of 2007.

The structure of youth employment programmes may either be wide-ranging or focus on a specific problematic issue. The Romanian government plans to design holistic programmes, which would have the most far-reaching effect on young people. In addition to continuing education, a need arises to support young families, prevent youth crime and eliminate compulsory military service. Structural changes may also be aimed at one area, for example education. In 2001, the Czech Republic implemented the national programme for the development of education in order to overhaul its education system; Malta went a step further and founded the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology to enhance vocational education and the certification of young people.

The overall objective of such initiatives is obviously to increase the employment rate among young people. This target may be pursued in several ways, favouring labour market participation or/ and developing entrepreneurship.

## **Favouring labour market participation**

The first step for some countries will be to smooth the path between training and work, and to favour the inclusion of young people in the labour market.

While many countries distinguish between either training programmes or education, some practice a dual system whereby vocational training takes place in dedicated schools and also in companies. For some years, Austria and Germany have had such a system in place, where it is regarded as the most important transition step from education to employment, and plays a substantial role in ensuring low unemployment among young people. Poland also incorporates a two-tier system in its First Job Programme, developing a combined strategy using internships and vocational training.

Slovenia has also adopted a combined approach, where both education and employment policies focus on optimising the labour market situation of young people. Secondary and post-secondary VET comes under the education policy, including arranging compulsory training of VET students and the apprenticeship system. Meanwhile, the employment policy covers two elements of transition from school to work, namely the systems of scholarship and traineeship which are used as forms of first employment. Three types of scholarship are offered: the human resource scholarship granted by companies, a national scholarship for students from less well-off families, and the Zois scholarship for extremely talented and successful students. Nevertheless, since the 1990s, the number of human resource scholarships, which are intended to lead to employment directly after completion of schooling, has declined. In parallel, the interest of young people in VET opportunities is decreasing.

A more widespread way of promoting youth employment is through apprenticeships. These enable young people to be directly exposed to the job market and their significance in national youth plans does not go unnoticed. For 2006, Sweden proposed the creation of 3,000 apprentice jobs among people aged between 20 and 24 years. Large-scale creation of apprenticeships can be seen in three European countries: Austria has 10,000 places in its 2004 'Jobs for youth' programme; Germany has 30,000 places annually for three years on the basis of the 2004 'Pact on apprenticeships'; and the UK had some 75,000 places in 1997, increasing to 250,000 in 2005, and a planned 300,000 apprenticeships by 2008.

## **Developing entrepreneurship**

A less common way to promote youth employment is through action favouring entrepreneurship. Belgium has launched the 'Rosetta-bis Plan' specifically targeted to secure the transition from education to employment. This plan provides funding for young people wishing to take up a self-employed activity or create their own company. This strategy seems to be successful as Belgium claims to be 'the western European country with the highest rate of young people becoming self-employed immediately after completing their education, compared with the EU average' (Belgian national report). In Norway, a number of employer confederations are involved in a scheme called 'Youth entrepreneurship', aimed at providing people aged 15–20 years with knowledge and experience about starting their own business in Norway.

In a broader context, the Maltese 'Entrepreneurship programme', which is not specifically targeted at young people but includes them nonetheless, provides training, finance, mentoring and marketing support. Through the European **Phare** fund,<sup>7</sup> Bulgaria developed the 'Labour market initiatives' project. The project's main objective is to develop private initiative, employment opportunities and workforce adaptability, especially of disadvantaged groups. The programme's target group also includes young people, particularly risk groups such as those who have dropped out of school without qualifications or those who have graduated from high school aged over 16 years old and remain unemployed for more than three months. The project activities include VET programmes, internship or apprenticeship programmes, as well as promoting entrepreneurship among unemployed people. Nevertheless, in Bulgaria, a relatively low percentage of young people manage their own company: in 2003, the number of self-employed young people doing business alone or in partnership, or working as freelancers or leaseholders, amounted to just 9,600 persons; for the first nine months of 2003, their average relative proportion was about 0.7% of the total number of employed young people.

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<sup>7</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/financial\\_assistance/phare/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/financial_assistance/phare/index_en.htm)

Furthermore, and in line with the predominant economic sector in the country, Romania has devoted particular attention to lowering the age profile of the population employed in agriculture, as around 20% of farmers are aged over 65 years. At the same time, few young people are actually able to relocate to rural areas and to become managers of farming enterprises. The national plan for agriculture and rural development includes certain measures – grants from the state – designed to encourage young people towards agricultural activities by improving rural living and working conditions. One particular objective is to facilitate the transfer of land to young people. People aged less than 40 years are eligible for certain grants from the state to build houses in rural locations and set up economically viable farmland holdings.

### Combating unemployment

Reducing youth unemployment is another way to include young people in the labour market. As already mentioned, unemployment figures among young people are higher than the average unemployment rate throughout Europe, with few exceptions.

Therefore, most governments develop programmes aimed at preventing the downward spiral potentially facing an unemployed person after a certain length of time in unemployment. Long-term unemployment is devastating for all workers, but for young workers this has to be addressed as a risk of jeopardising their chance of ever getting a proper job. The intention is to give them the best opportunities to get a first job or to stay in the job.

In line with the **Employment guidelines**<sup>8</sup> of the **European Employment Strategy**<sup>9</sup>, almost all countries have plans to act before a young person starts to become long-term unemployed, after six months of unemployment. For example, the UK has implemented a complete range of measures focused on young people claiming unemployment benefit for six months by means of the ‘New deal for young people’ (NDYP), one of the nine ‘New deals’ in all. The idea is to help young unemployed people into jobs and increase their long-term employability; the target group is 18–24 year-olds who have been claiming unemployment benefit for six months or more, plus others in the same age group with shorter unemployment spells who are deemed special cases worthy of earlier assistance. The NDYP comprises three stages. At each stage, the participant receives advice, guidance and help.

- The Gateway stage assigns personal advisers in order to find the best path back to employment.
- Those who do not receive job offers at the end of this stage enter the second stage – Option – and have to choose one of four options: a subsidised job, full-time education or training, work experience in the Environmental Task Force, or work experience in the voluntary sector.
- The final stage, Follow-through, is for those who have not been employed after the Option phase; the personal adviser offers more professional advice and support.

Commitment to the programme is reciprocal as participation is compulsory for the target group, and failure to do so results in benefit sanctions.

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<sup>8</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/employment\\_strategy/guidelines\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/employment_strategy/guidelines_en.htm)

<sup>9</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/employment\\_strategy/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/employment_strategy/index_en.htm)



Some countries set particularly ambitious targets. For example, the Finnish government plan, the ‘Social guarantee for young people’, which was introduced in 2005, determines that all young people who are out of work will be offered an education, training or workshop place no later than after three months of unemployment. Furthermore, as noted earlier, the Ministry of Labour’s aim is to ensure that 90% of young unemployed people have a tailored job-seeking plan before they have been three months out of work.

### Offering a ‘second chance’

Offering a ‘second chance’ is another way to combat unemployment and promote youth employment. Through these policies, governments target some groups at risk, such as the low skilled, early school leavers, and substance abusers. The objective is to concentrate resources and efforts with a view to improving their capacities for accessing employment or at improving their employability.

Denmark identified an unequal distribution of unemployment among its population, namely that immigrants and young people of immigrant parents constituted the majority of unemployed people. In 2004, the employment rate was 79.4% for those of Danish origin while it stood at just 48.3% for immigrants and 66% for young people of immigrant parents. In 2003, as part of its national action plan (NAP), the government launched an initiative ‘A need for all young people’ (*Brug for alle unge*). The purpose was to motivate more young immigrants and young people of immigrant parents to pursue an education, assuming that lack of proper education and skills was the main reason for labour market exclusion and marginalisation.

Some strategies deal with specific national situations, such as the Bulgarian national programme ‘Social integration and professional fulfilment of young people from homes for upbringing and education of children deprived of parental care in Bulgaria’. Special programmes have also been designed for people with disabilities, such as the project ‘Creating supported jobs for disabled young people in Estonia’. Meanwhile, Austria has used the same techniques for finding jobs for disabled people in order to combat long-term unemployment. In November 2005, a coaching programme started targeting about 1,500 long-term unemployed people aged under 25 years. Under this scheme, the target group is supported by trainers skilled in the job placement of disabled persons. The aim is to place these people in the regular labour market, at least temporarily.

All training programmes offered to unemployed people tend to improve the basic skills and knowledge that are necessary to fill even a low-skilled post. Often, people encounter multiple risk factors. Poor environments or a socially deprived area are often linked with early school leavers, low skilled and socially marginalised people. The ‘Second chance defence plan’ is one of the numerous programmes French governments have devised throughout the more than 20-year period of youth employment policy. Originally an emergency plan implemented in June 2005, its aim was to help people aged under 21 years who were at risk of social marginalisation. They are housed in special centres on a voluntary basis in order to acquire social norms such as respecting others, while also developing new skills. Supervision is carried out by former soldiers and trainers from the Ministry of Education.

# Key actors and resources

Of the 26 respondents to the EIRO questionnaire, 16 national centres reported youth unemployment as being of sufficient concern to prompt social partner and political discussion. The other 10 countries noted an awareness of the issue, but did not identify high levels of anxiety. For example, in Slovenia, although youth unemployment is commonly recognised as a problem in different political contexts, it is rarely a subject of discussion or negotiation among the social partners and does not represent a major political issue.

## Involvement of the social partners

### Social partner participation

Youth employment policies and programmes are generally government driven. As the correspondent for Norway explained: ‘Social partner organisations do not play an institutionalised role directly related to the development of youth employment policy, nor in policy implementation. However, this is not to say that they do not exert influence on policy through social dialogue and lobbying activity at central level’.

Social partners are interested in and play major roles in employment policies in a broad sense; nevertheless, youth employment is seldom a major subject of social dialogue. One reason for limited interest arises when the issue of general unemployment is combined with youth unemployment. In this case, youth unemployment would not be a foremost anxiety as compared with national unemployment. This view is expressed in contrasting ways, depending on the country’s political history. On the one hand, Norway provides apprenticeship programmes and training for young people, but the country is primarily concerned with providing welfare for all workers, not just the youth; while in Italy, youth unemployment blends into unemployment as a whole. On the other hand, in Greece, youth unemployment does not warrant priority attention among political parties. The degree of confidence in state action could explain these differences. The Greek example reflects the protective role played by families, which have often served to complement or even replace the welfare state due to lack of intervention at national level.

The social partners have participated in youth employment policymaking – albeit in a restricted way – through consultation, tripartite bodies and agreements. Beyond that, the social partners could play a significant role in lobbying for youth employment.

In most countries, the government first proposes the legislation and then consults the social partners at national level directly or through tripartite bodies, such as the Economic and Social Committee in Slovenia or tripartite social cooperation bodies in Bulgaria. This is the usual process followed for general employment policies and even for more specific legislation. Vocational training policies are often proposed and discussed in tripartite bodies, such as the Federal Vocational Advisory Council in Austria or the Tripartite County Labour Councils in Hungary. In order to ensure recognition of professional qualifications, relevant regulations are often discussed in tripartite bodies, such as the National Joint Employment Commission (La Commission Nationale Paritaire de l’Emploi) in France.

The contribution of the social partners is sometimes requested to specify qualification and initial training needs, especially in sectors with a high demand for labour. In the UK, the government urges employers to identify the skills that are needed in the workplace. In its White Paper, the government suggested that employers should have a hand in 22 sector skills, covering 85% of the workforce.

### Social partner initiatives

Collective agreements very seldom deal directly with youth employment. As noted earlier, the main topics discussed and negotiated are the minimum wage (NL) and vocational training (AT, DE, NL, SI). Where youth employment is considered, some interesting aspects could be developed through collective agreement. In Greece, for example, some agreements that have been decided together with the social partners are included in the National General Collective

Labour Agreements. In 1998, a specific agreement introduced medical care for unemployed young people aged up to 29 years who were not covered by a public social-insurance provider.

Social partners' concern for youth employment is sometimes expressed through lobbying by trade unions as well as by employer organisations. In Spain, the UGT and the Spanish Youth Council have developed an information campaign against unstable employment, asking young people to participate and defend their rights. The campaign provides information on the legal instruments for exercising their rights and demanding employer compliance. Finland's technology sector has developed an ongoing campaign to show the attractiveness of the working environment to school children in the final years of their education.

Raising awareness of the situation for young people is also part of the social partners' role and this may be reflected in the structure of the social partner organisations. For example, in March 2005, the National Confederation of Free Trade Unions in Romania, one of the five nationally representative trade union confederations, set up a youth commission by joining the youth divisions of sectoral trade union federations, professional federations and county trade unions.

## **Levels of partnership**

It is difficult to determine the proper level of direct influence on shaping youth employment policy. Because efforts towards youth employment form part of a wider scheme that includes different groups, it is sometimes unclear to what degree the social partners are able to influence the employment programme as a whole. The Danish case highlights this dilemma: in 1993, the legislation on labour policy emphasised the regional level, giving the social partners power of decision-making; however, in 1996 a new law was passed to recentralise the decision-making process.

### **National level**

The national level is obviously important, in light of the European Employment Strategy and the various NAPs for employment that countries have been requested to draft and implement. In many Member States, the youth policies have been devised primarily through the NAP for employment or more recently the national reform plan. The European process emphasises the role of the social partners, and most of them have been consulted or requested to comment. According to the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria (CITUB), the 2005 Bulgarian NAP for employment was a positive step, but had some shortcomings. CITUB noted that the plan did not include as independent subdocuments national programmes for large and problematic groups of the population and of the workforce, such as:

- those who are illiterate, who account for more than 500,000 people;
- people who are discouraged from working or are prevented from finding a job; their total number is almost equal to that of the registered unemployed;
- disadvantaged unemployed people, subject to more than one risk factor in the labour market;
- those threatened by unemployment;
- people who are illegally employed outside Bulgaria.

### **Local level**

The regional level appears to be another significant area for social partner involvement in devising youth employment policy. In September 2005, the Brussels Region Minister for Employment and the Economy launched a first-job pilot project for young people. The Brussels Region has the highest rate of youth unemployment in Belgium. Under the pilot project, quasi-regional employers are asked to hire young people for one year as a means of training them for jobs in sectors with labour shortages.

Finland and Sweden have designed policies at municipality level. In Finland, the 2003 'Youth participation project' started in 72 municipalities after 39 municipal and regional projects were drawn up. Sweden set up its national plan through two programmes targeting young people, the 'Municipalities youth programme' and the 'Youth guarantee', covering its 290 municipalities.

### **Sectoral level**

The sectoral level could also be key for youth employment. It is mainly mentioned by the Member States that joined the EU in 2004; particular sectors facing difficulties in hiring workers organise campaigns to attract young workers. The Association of Mechanical Engineering and Metalworking Industries of Latvia estimated in a research paper that there was a need for young specialists in the sector. The construction industry is another sector experiencing urgent labour shortages and where the social partners decided to act: for example, through the Sectoral Dialogue Committee in Hungary and through collective agreements dealing with pay for apprenticeships in Cyprus. Some employer organisations have special programmes focused on youth employment; the Slovakian Association for the Car Industry, for example, created pilot workplaces for young people, which provide education to these workers.

### **Multi-level and multi-partner initiatives**

Some success has been achieved in countries where programmes were developed involving all actors and all levels. The Dutch situation could be considered as an example in that respect. The main actor combating youth unemployment is the National Task Force, established in 2003 and aimed at creating 40,000 jobs for young people. Improving the cooperation between local and other actors has been a key objective in the work plan entitled 'Working together' (*Samen aan het werk*).

The task force has set up a network of local chairpersons. Some employer organisations committed themselves to achieve certain objectives at sectoral level: the employer organisation for the agricultural sector has committed itself to creating an internship of three months, during which the young person does not lose the social benefits to which he or she is entitled. The municipalities of Eindhoven, Hengelo and Rotterdam are also involved in developing cooperation between public and private companies, and finding a good match between a young person's capabilities and a suitable job.

### **European level**

The countries surveyed frequently design programmes based on EU guidelines. Moreover, countries not only mirror each other in national youth programmes, but sometimes work together on such initiatives. These partnerships are increasingly sought as criteria of eligibility in European programmes. Exchanges of best practice have a significant impact on the national and European outcomes of a project. For instance, Bulgarian participation in the Leonardo da Vinci programme, which links EU policy with vocational training, favoured bilateral agreements. Thus, Bulgaria has been able to send unemployed young people to Germany, Switzerland, Luxembourg and Belgium, which has in turn promoted and raised awareness of the best professional practices and systems in Europe.

## **Financial resources**

Youth employment programmes, national and local policies, and company measures require financial support or incentives.

### **National budgets**

National budgets are the primary source of funding as most youth employment programmes are at national level and government driven. Countries contribute financially in various ways to creating jobs for young people and in implementing measures to combat unemployment and foster youth employment.

In France, state-funded labour market access programmes, which integrate young people into the labour market (mainly through state-funded jobs), involve 850,000 participants and account for 40% of all employment of those aged under 26 years. Hungary uses an apprenticeship programme for public administration. Pursuing another option, Malta funds work in religious and cultural organisations by paying MLT 30 (€70) per week for the duration of six months. A further – relatively inexpensive – option has been to offer telephone and website services, which are easily accessible for young people, providing advice and information about current labour market conditions.

### **Alternative funding**

Sometimes national funds are augmented by private funding, notably through institutions such as the chambers of economy and commerce. In November 2005, the Austrian employment service started a new coaching programme targeting the currently 1,500 long-term unemployed people aged under 25 years. Companies hiring long-term unemployed young people will be partially exempt from indirect labour costs, such as social insurance, for one year. The chamber of economy supports this measure by contributing part of the expenditure involved.

References to European funding are common among the new Member States that joined the EU in 2004 and in 2007. The Phare programme, launched in 1989 in order to help the countries of central and eastern Europe rebuild their economies, is one of the major sources of funding for social policy and action. Almost all of these countries used Phare funds to develop youth employment policies, and some countries took a far-reaching perspective. As noted earlier, Bulgaria set up the 2003 Phare ‘Labour market initiatives’, which incorporate action on VET, internship programmes and entrepreneurship among unemployed people.

### **Resource capacity**

Significant disparities arise between countries in terms of funding capacity. In Estonia, the relevant programme funding allocated in 2004 totalled EEK 5.5 million (about €350,000).<sup>10</sup> Conversely, Austria spent €71 million on a single ‘classes for vulnerable people’ programme in 2004–2005. Estonia’s funding may be a fraction of Austria’s, but the new Member State found another way to accomplish its goals – through the Phare funds. In using these funds, Estonia created nine pilot projects resulting in 210 of the 291 participants finding a job.

A lack of resources clearly appears in certain countries. Polish initiatives – namely, the Graduate programme of 1998, superseded by the First Job programme in 2002 – had positive outcomes. Nevertheless, the scale achieved by the 2002 programme was half of that planned, given limited financial resources and certain shortcomings of the local labour offices, particularly as regards vocational counselling. On the other hand, after demands voiced in the ‘top working summit’, the Netherlands added some €110 million to its funding programme: €75 million for the creation of working/learning jobs, €20 million for vocational education and €15 million to create simulation trainee posts for young people unable to find real trainee positions. These monies were to be added to the €40 million already promised to employers through a tax-incentive scheme. A further €60 million could even be used to reduce the number of young people dropping out of the technical and vocational training system.

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<sup>10</sup> The euro equivalent is calculated at the rate of EEK 1 = €0.06390, as of August 2005.

# Issues for debate

In all the countries, research and discussions take place aimed at finding the most appropriate policy and programmes to combat youth unemployment. Recent findings of the Slovenian study ‘Situation analysis of children and youth’, funded by the Ministry of Education and Sport, Office of Youth, show that employment is – after housing – the most critical area for young people. A relatively high rate of youth unemployment, affecting not only those who are poorly qualified but also university graduates, could explain this conclusion. Moreover, the results of the Slovenian analysis are further reinforced by the status of young people, who as newcomers in the labour market are mostly affected by flexible, unstable forms of employment, which offer less social and economic security.

In many countries, research on youth unemployment is included within more general projects addressing unemployment benefits (DK), activation (DK, NL) and replacement incomes linked with minimum wage determination (FR, NO, UK). The latter issue has been questioned in several countries. For example, discussions have been raised in France with regard to extending the minimum income allowance (*revenu minimum d’insertion* – RMI) to young people aged under 26 years. Norway has also considered extending the ‘Youth guarantee’ from those aged under 20 years to people aged under 25 years. Meanwhile, as noted earlier, in the UK a campaign for introducing the minimum wage for 16–17 year-olds was organised by the TUC. All of these discussions centred around the same issue: how to help young people and guarantee them an income, without creating negative incentives for them not to seek work or not to study.

## Precarious status

The experience of poverty among young people definitely emerges as a topic of concern in research. The Romanian National Trade Union Bloc (BNS<sup>11</sup>) published a study on poverty, highlighting widespread youth unemployment and concluding that poverty affects the level of education and access to healthcare services: 39% of poor people aged 15 to 24 years have not attended any form of high school or vocational education. According to BNS, the relatively low expenditure on education and the problem of students dropping out of school are two of the major issues that negatively affect youth employment opportunities.

Precariousness, which is a common status among young people, notably at work, leads families to play a significant role in youth survival. Despite the absence of research on how young people cope with unemployment and precarious employment, Slovenian youth studies show an increasing role for families, with young people strongly dependent on the economic, social and moral support of their parents. Similarly, in France the debate on the RMI highlighted the decision made in 1988, when the age of 26 years was set as a threshold for access to the RMI. This demonstrates a political desire to discourage living on welfare, instead promoting integration into the workforce as the primary means of subsistence for young people. Nevertheless, the deterioration of the conditions for integration into the labour market undermines the relevance of this argument. Young people are thus consigned to live on their family’s resources. Many studies have highlighted the precarious situations in which young people without family support or who belong to poor families find themselves.

## Matching education and skills demand

The main issue of debate and policy in the area of youth unemployment is the mismatch between education, qualification and labour market skills demand. Most if not all countries appreciate that education and training is the most important means for addressing unemployment among young people. Sometimes, governments respond to youth unemployment as the Spanish state has done, favouring prolongation of education while also developing flexibility of employment. More often, however, a full policy shift may be found – as in the case of the UK – moving from policies dedicated to get young people into jobs to programmes aimed at maintaining young people in education.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.bns.ro/>

This has had implications for how labour market needs of skills are identified, with social partners being, spontaneously or on request, involved in the identification of skills needs. In Latvia for example, the Association of Mechanical Engineering and Metalworking Industries of Latvia estimated the demand for workforce in the metal industry. Among other conclusions, it emphasised the need for young specialists in the sector and underlined the cooperation that would be needed between the government, enterprises and educational institutions. In the UK, the government involved the Confederation of British Industry and employers in identifying the type of skills that will be needed in the workplace. Proposals were put forward to develop new sector skills agreements that will cover what needs to be done to improve skills levels in each sector. Universities and colleges have to be supplied with the necessary information to channel their resources most effectively.

The quality of education is at stake. In most of the countries, the social partners confirmed that the education level, skills composition and work experience of the labour force do not meet the requirements of a rapidly changing labour market. In Estonia, for example, the social partners stated that the educational system has not been able to adapt sufficiently to respond to the rapid changes in labour demand, and to ensure a sufficient level of education and the necessary vocational skills for all young people entering the labour market. Furthermore, as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) has shown in Germany, more than 20% of 15-year-olds lack the basic competencies that are necessary to complete a typical VET programme.

The first important step is to map the situation. In the Czech Republic, the OECD initiated an extensive international project 'Transition from initial education to working life'. It should help to develop knowledge on unemployment among school leavers, as it analyses – trying to identify a development series – the situation in different education categories, unemployment according to training field groups and by regional breakdown, and the issue of long-term unemployment among school leavers.

## **Programme and policy effectiveness**

Discussions also pertain to the effectiveness of programmes and policies addressing the issue of increasing youth employment while reducing youth unemployment across Europe. Assessments of the various plans and programmes are difficult, even if regular evaluation is sought. The effects of employment programmes vary considerably, depending on the objective pursued and/or the context and method used to evaluate them. Unfortunately, when assessments are delivered, they show disappointing results.

Firstly, the limitations of many policies have been recognised. The final report of the National Skills Task Force underlined certain shortcomings in the British government's approach to reducing youth unemployment and to increasing the skills and employability of young people. The task force found that the national strategy addressed only the 'supply side of the equation' – the skills that people hold – and did little to address the 'demand side of the equation' – providing opportunities for satisfying and rewarding work. Moreover, as the British TUC emphasised, the NDYP has failed to generate any long-term employment or to achieve equal results for people from different ethnic groups.

Furthermore, sometimes policies achieve the opposite outcome to the pursued objective. The legislative changes introduced in Finland in the mid-1990s did not reach the goal of inducing young job-seekers to actively use the periods of unemployment. Increasing restrictions were introduced on eligibility conditions for unemployment allowance for young unemployed job-seekers. This meant that young job-seekers refusing to participate in labour market programmes faced the risk of losing unemployment support for relatively long periods. Despite this, while the proportion of young people on unemployment allowance fell, no corresponding increase took place in youth employment; rather these changes led to young job-seekers' withdrawal from the labour market.

Secondly, evaluations and studies tend to highlight the few positive effects that youth employment policies have had in enhancing the employment opportunities of participants. Researching the Norwegian situation, Inés Hardoy has been able to detect a positive effect only in relation to so-called vocational youth programmes. Furthermore, this is limited to employment opportunities for women and younger age groups. Other researchers have shown that apprentice schemes have a largely positive impact on the employability of young people aged between 20 and 24 years.

A Finnish study explored the long-term effects of active labour market programmes among young unemployed job-seekers (aged between 16 and 30 years) during the period 1995–2000. The study suggests that job placements and labour market training improve young people's labour market prospects and are in this sense effective employment programmes. A rather disconcerting result of this Finnish study, however, is that practical training, which is the most common active measure among young job-seekers, does not seem to improve participants' employment prospects. Such training is the least expensive of the active programmes offered to young unemployed persons and it also seems to be the least effective. This lack of effectiveness is also noted in other research. Studies carried out by Statistics Norway indicate that the effects of participation in ordinary labour market programmes – mostly classroom training through the labour market administration – are less for young people aged 16–24 years than for other groups in the labour market.

Nevertheless, these gloomy perspectives and analysis should not overshadow the fact that it is essential to act against youth unemployment, as the first labour market experience is of vital importance for young workers. The Swedish study **Scarring effects of the first labour market experience (676Kb PDF)**<sup>12</sup> from the Institute for Labour Market Policy Evaluation (Institutet för arbetsmarknadspolitisk utvärdering – IFAU, Nordström Skans, 2004) suggests several reasons why unemployment may be particularly detrimental to later labour market performance of young people. One reason may be that the market value of the skills acquired in secondary school depreciates quickly if the skills are not put to use. Another reason may be that employers, being uncertain as to the productivity of a potential worker, may use earlier unemployment spells as a screening device when looking for people to recruit. Moreover, experiences of being unemployed may diminish young people's feelings of attachment to the labour market. If they spend their time primarily with other young, unemployed people this may eventually 'reduce the stigma of unemployment and thus also the incentive to work'.

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.ifau.se/upload/pdf/se/2004/wp04-14.pdf>



# Conclusions

The problem of youth unemployment, and more broadly of inclusion of young people in all aspects of society, is becoming more pressing at a global level. Many of the industrialised societies face an ageing population and no real place for young workers, while in poor or emerging economies, uncertainty of economic prospects makes it difficult for young people to get a job, not to mention ‘decent work’, following the International Labour Organisation’s definition.

The role of policymakers is increasingly complex. The youth population presents a great variety of needs and assets; thus, the difficulty of devising effective national policies intensifies. Moreover – within any country – regional differences exist, reinforcing the need to act locally, involving all the social actors, particularly the social partners and public authority representatives.

Furthermore, it takes time to individualise industry and economic sector needs, to design the best policies and to implement them. In the meantime, economic circumstances could change and hamper the overall results, as youth unemployment/employment rates are highly susceptible to cyclical economic changes.

Complexity should not be a cause for discouragement. Both the inclusion of young people in society – especially in terms of employment – and also the continuing inclusion of the ageing workforce are of crucial importance. This wider context has become an integral part of ensuring workers’ employability, company competitiveness, social cohesion and economic sustainability in Europe.

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## Annex 1: Age ranges

AT	In terms of employment, young persons are defined as 15–18 years under the Children and Youth Employment Act. This range extends to 15–24 years concerning ‘young workers’ in political and statistical terms.
BE	Youth workers are those aged under 26 years.
BG	Two categories – those from 15–24 years and those from 24–29 years.
CY	A young person is anyone aged under 18 years; adolescents are 15–17 years old. Cyprus keeps statistics concerning the 15–24 years age group.
CZ	Labour law treats persons up to the age of 18 years as minors. Those who have completed their schooling are considered ‘school leavers’ for up to two years, with a maximum age of 30 years. Young people in general are counted up to the age of 25 years.
DE	Persons below the age of 25 years are young workers, divided into two groups – those aged 15–19 years and those aged 20–25 years.
DK	Young persons are considered to be people aged between 16 and 29 years, divided into two subcategories of 16–24 years and 25–29 years.
EE	Young people in the workforce are 15–24 years old.
EL	Some programmes place the limit at 25 years or 29 years, while others set the age limit at 35 or 40 years.
ES	16–30 years; however, some programmes only run up to 25 years.
FI	Children and young people up to the age of 29 years in terms of youth policy. Up to 25 years for youth employment policy.
FR	General youth employment policies are aimed at those aged under 26 years.
HU	People under 18 years are considered a young worker, with programmes directed at those younger than 25 years with a secondary education and those under 30 years with a tertiary education.
IE	Young workers are in the 16–24 years age category.
IT	Young workers are defined as between 15 and 18 years, but the age range concerning statistics and youth employment is 15–24 years.
LT	The law contains no definition of a young worker although the term young person is understood to mean from 14 to 29 years old.
LV	Labour legislation uses two definitions concerning young people: children and teenagers. Children are those aged less than 15 years, or younger than 18 years if they are still a student. A teenager is a working person between 15 and 18 years. However, the Statistical Bureau uses age groups of 15–19 years and 20–24 years.
MT	16–18 years old. Under the national youth policy, the definition of young is 14–30 years.
NL	The young worker is aged 16–17 years; a child is considered to be younger than 16 years of age. In the Working Conditions Act, young workers are aged less than 18 years. The range changes frequently depending on the topic – for example, the minimum wage is for those aged 15–22 years.
NO	Programmes are for 16–24 year olds.
PL	Young employees are 18–24 years; 27 years is the upper limit for university graduates. Juvenile employees are 16–17 years old.
RO	Range varies from one regulation to the next; programmes can include people up to 40 years of age.
SE	Two groups – 16–19 years and 20–24 years. Government programmes generally focus on those aged 18–24 years.
SI	Protective legislation aimed at 15–18 year olds; apprenticeship regulation from the age of 14.
SK	Age range is 15–24 years. The Labour Code classifies those aged below 18 years as adolescent employees.
UK	Several pieces of legislation govern those aged between 14 and 22 years.

Source: *EIRO national contributions, November 2005*

## Annex 2: Statutory employment acts

Legislation mentioned below is either specific to young people or covers all employees concerning employment.

AT	Children and Youth Employment Act, Vocational Training Act, Law on Qualification Programmes for Young People.
BE	The texts governing the First Job Agreement are the Law of 24 December 1999 and the Royal Decree of 30 March 2000. Assistance schemes aimed at promoting human dignity apply to everyone in Belgium.
BG	Bulgarian Labour Code, Health and Safety Law, Law for Protection against Discrimination.
CY	Protection of Young Persons at Work Law.
CZ	Labour Code and Act on Employment.
DE	Juveniles (18 years or under) are governed by Youth Employment Protection. The Vocational Training Act and the Craft Trades Law govern issues of vocational training for young people.
DK	The Act on an Active Employment Effort, 2003 encourages more people into the labour force, with a special focus on young people. The Act on Health and Safety at Work also contains special clauses for young people.
EE	Action Plan for Growth and Jobs 2005–2007 and National Action Plan for Employment, 2004. The Employment Contracts Act guarantees equal rights in industrial relations for those aged 18 years.
EL	Law 3227/2004: measures to combat unemployment and other provisions.
ES	Workers Statute; no specific legislation on youth.
FI	The Act on Young Workers regulates employment contracts, working time and safety for young workers.
FR	The Labour Code specifies rules for young people.
HU	Rules contained in Act XXII of the 1992 Labour Code.
IE	Various acts but the main regulatory act is the Protection of Young Persons (Employment) Act of 1996.
IT	The most relevant measures concerning young people exist in the Biagi Law with governance over traineeships, the new apprenticeship system and work-entry contracts.
LT	Law on Youth Policy Framework, 2003.
LV	Protective legislation for those aged less than 18 years combined with national employment plans, the Lisbon Strategy and EU employment guidelines.
MT	Employment and Industrial Relations Act (EIRA), 2002.
NL	Working Time Act and Regulation on Working Conditions.
NO	Act relating to Worker Protection and Work Environment.
PL	Article 191 of the Polish Labour Code lays down basic protection for juvenile employees.
RO	The Labour Code of 2003 sets out working conditions for young people.
SE	The legal acts for unemployment insurance and labour market programmes apply to all workers.
SI	Employment Relationship Act, General Collective Agreement for Economic Activities, Employment and Unemployment Insurance Act, Collective Agreement for the Non-Economic Sector.
SK	Act No. 311/2001 Coll. of the Labour Code and Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on employment services
UK	Minimum Wage Act and Working Time Regulation Act.

Source: *EIRO national contributions, November 2005*

### Annex 3: Protective employment legislation for young people

Country	Working hours	Minimum wage restrictions
AT	Yes, but not specified.	
BE	Working hours for young people aged less than 18 years are limited to 8 hours a day and 38 hours a week, including overtime. Other measures apply to night work and Sunday work.	Yes, but not specified.
BG	No data.	No data.
CY	Law regulates working hours for children, but there is no specification. Some regulations concern night work of adolescents and young persons.	
CZ	Young employees may not perform overtime or night work. Those aged less than 16 years may work at most 30 hours a week, and no more than 6 hours a day. The rest period between two shifts for an employee under the age of 18 years must be no less than 12 hours; continuous rest time in a week must not amount to less than 48 hours for minors.	90% of the minimum wage for those aged 18–21 years, lasting for a period of 6 months from the start of employment. 80% of the minimum wage for the employment of minors.
DE	For those aged less than 18 years, the maximum daily working time is 8 hours except for people aged 16 years or older working in agriculture, who can work 9 hours a day. Labour in two consecutive weeks cannot exceed 85 hours.	
DK	Working time for those aged less than 18 years may not exceed 8 hours a day and 40 hours a week. Children aged less than 15 years or still engaged in primary school may not work more than 2 hours on school days and 7 hours on other days.	Sectoral collective agreements contain clauses for minimum wages for apprenticeships.
EE	13–14 years old (obliged to attend school): maximum of 4 hours per day and 20 hours per week, minimum rest of 18 consecutive hours; 15 years old (no schooling obligation): Maximum of 6 hours per day and 30 hours per week, minimum rest of 16 consecutive hours; 16–17 years old (no schooling obligation): maximum of 7 hours per day and 35 hours per week, minimum rest of 15 consecutive hours.	
EL	No data.	No data.
ES	No data.	No data.
FI	Those aged less than 18 years may work 9 hours a day, or 48 hours a week; the employer has to ensure no harm to the worker in question.	Collective agreements generally regulate minimum wages for young people.
FR	For those aged less than 18 years, strict controls apply over the 35-hour working week.	Minimum wage can be reduced by 10% for those aged less than 18 years and by 20% for 16–17 year olds.
HU	Maximum working time is 8 hours a day and 40 hours a week for those aged less than 18 years. The daily rest period should be at least 12 hours. Young workers cannot be employed on night shifts, stand by duty and on call duty.	National minimum wage is applied to young people. However, Act XXIII of 2002 introduced the concept of the graduate minimum wage, which guarantees a considerably higher wage than the national minimum for young graduates taking up jobs in the public sector.
IE	Those aged less than 16 years may not be employed in a full-time job. Children of 14 and 15 years can do light work during school holidays, with 15-years-olds allowed to work part time during the school term. Maximum weekly working time is 40 hours for 14 and 15 year olds on work experience, 35 hours for 14 and 15 year olds engaged in holiday work, 8 hours for 15 year olds during term time, while 14 year olds are not allowed to be employed during term time. 16 and 17 year olds can have a work week of 40 hours without being on work experience.	Young people aged less than 18 years receive 70% of the national minimum wage.
IT	No data.	No data.
LT	Adolescents may work not more than 8 hours a day and 40 hours a week, counting the daily duration of lessons as working time. Children may work no more than 2 hours a day and 12 hours a week during their school period, and no more than 7 hours a day and 35 hours a week during school holidays.	

Country	Working hours	Minimum wage restrictions
LV	With the permission of a custodian, a 13-year-old may work on study holidays in easy jobs. The parents of those aged less than 18 years must be aware of the safety risks, and the youth can not work overtime or at night. Furthermore, they can only work up to 35 hours a week, in other words up to 5 days per week, 7 hours per day. If those aged less than 18 years go to school, then the allowed hours of work each week is the difference of 35 hours and the time spent attending school. Children may not be employed more than 2 hours a day or 10 hours a week during study time, and 4 hours per day and 20 hours per week during school breaks.	Those aged less than 18 years receive the national minimum wage.
MT	Young people cannot work between 12 and 4 am. Maximum working time of 8 hours a day, 40 hours a week, with two consecutive rest days – one preferably being Sunday.	Workers less than 18 years of age receive a slightly reduced minimum wage.
NL	Certain restrictions apply, not specified in the country's report.	22 years old – 85% of the minimum wage, 21 years – 72.5%, 20 years – 61.5%, 19 years – 52.5%, 18 years – 45.5%, 17 years – 39.5%, 16 years – 34.5%, 15 years – 30%.
NO	Those aged less than 15 years who attend compulsory school may not work more than 2 hours a day, and 12 hours a week. Between 15 and 18 years, young people have to include school attendance as part of the total time allowed for work, and any person aged less than 18 years cannot work overtime.	
PL		No minimum wage for young or juvenile employees. However, a reduced statutory rate applies for anyone with less than 2 years of work: 80% of the minimum wage during the first year and 90% during the second year.
RO	For young people aged less than 18 years, working time cannot exceed six hours per day and 30 hours per week.	Under the apprentice programme, one must receive an amount equal to 50% of the national minimum gross wage.
SE	No data.	No specific collective agreements for young workers. However, in the sector/national pay agreements, for example in the manufacturing industry, there are often minimum pay regulations for younger (under the age of 21) blue-collar workers, consisting of an entry pay for newly-hired workers for a short period (up to 12 months) on a training scheme.
SI	In the Employment Relationships Act (ERA) special protection for the 15-18 age group includes: a ban on carrying out potentially dangerous work, regulation of working time, break and rest entitlements, a ban on carrying out night work and extended annual leave. ERA also defines the circumstances and conditions under which the work of children below the age of 15, apprentices, pupils and students is permitted.	In terms of wages, there is no special regulation for young workers and the general regulation on minimum wages applies. Remuneration of the work of apprentices, pupils and students in training is regulated.
SK	Those aged less than 16 years can work a maximum of 30 hours. Young people aged over 16 years can work a maximum of 37.5 hours. The working time of an adolescent cannot exceed 8 hours in 24 hours.	The minimum wage for an employee aged over 16 years is 75% of the national minimum rate, while those aged less than 16 years or who are disabled receive 50% of the national minimum.
UK	Those aged 18 years or more can work a maximum of 48 hours per week, working no more than 6 out of 7 days and 12 out of 14 days. 16–17 year olds can work no more than 8 hours a day and 40 hours a week, have no less than 12 hours rest between working days and two days off every week.	Those aged 22 years or more receive £5.05 (€7.28) an hour; 18–21 year olds are paid £4.25 (€6.12); 16–17 year olds receive £3.00 (€4.32).

Source: *EIRO national contributions, November 2005*

## Annex 4: Other protective legislation for young people

AT	The Children Act guarantees rest periods, safety and health protection, and a ban on retaliatory treatment. The Vocational Training Act includes regulations for the dual system, namely vocational training provided in schools and in companies.
BE	Various types of work are prohibited for all students based on the Royal Decree of 1999, and additional prohibitions exist depending on age for certain types of dangerous and/or unhealthy work. Young workers are entitled to, under certain conditions, four weeks of paid holidays during the year following the completion of their education.
BG	Minimum age of employment is 16 years.
CY	Laws prohibit youth employment in jobs that have specific risks. Legislation also prohibits child employment except for vocational and occupational training.
CZ	Young people cannot work before the age of 15 years. Employers may only employ young people for work that is suited to their stage of physical and mental development, and are obliged to provide them with extra care at work. Employers may not employ young people on piecework, because that would jeopardise the occupational safety of young employees. Additionally, young people are prohibited from underground work extracting minerals or digging tunnels and shafts, from doing work that is inappropriate for them, dangerous or harmful to their health, work exposing them to increased risk of injury, or work that could cause them to seriously jeopardise the health and safety of other employees or other persons.
DE	According to the Works Constitution Act (Betriebsverfassungsgesetz, <b>BetrVG</b> ), a youth delegation can be set up in any establishment that employs at least five persons who are either younger than 18 or younger than 25, but have not yet finished their vocational training programme.
DK	The Act on active social policy contains specific provisions for the uninsured unemployed, including young people.
EE	If a young person is less than 15 years old and obliged to attend school, the employer should not employ or require him/her to work. However if such minors choose to work, then the nature of the task should be simple, not requiring great physical or psychological strength.
EL	No specific social protection intervention for young unemployed people: they are included in the overall measures.
ES	Minimum age of employment is 16 years.
FI	It is prohibited to employ those younger than 15 years old. Sometimes, 14 year olds can be employed if they show no health or education ill-effects.
FR	Employment in certain sectors is limited or prohibited due to health and hazard concerns.
HU	If the daily working time exceeds 4.5 hours, young workers are entitled to longer breaks during work. Young workers cannot be employed in certain jobs that might be harmful to their health condition or development.
IE	Legislation protects the health and safety of young persons.
IT	
LT	Work for young people aged less than 16 years is prohibited except for light work that does not infringe upon their growth. Every employer should guarantee working conditions that are appropriate to the young person's age. The employer must comply with government regulations with regard to employing those under the age of 18 years.
LV	
MT	Education is compulsory up to the age of 16. Minimum employment age not lower than the minimum school leaving age.
NL	Working prohibitions apply to children aged 15 years and younger, with strict exceptions. Young people of 16 and 17 years of age are allowed to work, but certain activities are prohibited. 12 years of age: allowed to work as part of a working penalty; 13 years of age: allowed to help with light non-industrial work; 14 years of age: allowed to participate in a work placement programme; 15 years of age: allowed to deliver morning newspapers.
NO	Young people can be employed from the age of 13 years, with some exceptions and with parental consent. After 18 years, the workers are considered as adults in most respects. The legislation also guarantees young people the right to education or participation in labour market programmes.
PL	The Volunteer Labour Corps (Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy, <b>OHP</b> ) is the national youth employment authority for young people at risk of social exclusion and for unemployed persons under the age of 25. The Volunteer Labour Corps offers vocational counselling for young people; it may also operate employment agencies without having to register them.
RO	Any young person lacking professional qualifications may be employed as an apprentice on condition that he/she has not reached 25 years.

SE	
SI	Young people are prohibited from working in dangerous occupations. Regulation of working time, breaks and rest, night work and prolonged annual leave also applies.
SK	Certain health, safety, personal development and education standards apply.
UK	In England and Wales, a person is no longer of compulsory school age after the last Friday of June of the school year in which their 16th birthday occurs. The minimum legal working age is 14 years. Legislation prohibits young people from working during school time and ensures extended rest.

Source: *EIRO national contributions, November 2005*

## Annex 5: National minimum wage rates

BE	Monthly	€1,210
BG	Hourly	BGN 0.71 (€0.36)
	Monthly	BGN 120 (€61.43)
CZ	Hourly	CZK 39.60 (€1.24)
	Monthly	CZK 6,700 (€210.09)
EE	Hourly	EEK 14.60 (€0.93)
	Monthly	EEK 2,480 (€158.50)
EL	Daily	€25.01
	Monthly	€559.98
ES	Daily	€16.36
	Monthly	€490.80
FR	Hourly	€7.61*
	Monthly	€1,286.09*
HU	Hourly	HUF 305.00 (€1.21)
	Daily	HUF 2,440 (€9.70)
	Weekly	HUF 12,000 (€47.68)
	Monthly	HUF 53,000 (€210.60)
IE	Hourly	€7.65
LV	Hourly	LVL 0.474 (€0.71)
	Monthly	LVL 80 (€120.26)
LT	Hourly	LTL 2.95 (€0.85)
	Monthly	LTL 500 (€144.81)
MT	Weekly	MTL 53.88 (€125.89)
NL	Monthly	€1,264.80
PL	Monthly	PLN 860 (€189.98)
	Hourly	ROL 16,342.44 (€0.40)
RO	Monthly	ROL 2,800,000 (€69.12)
	Hourly	SKK 37.40 (€0.93)
SK	Monthly	SKK 6,500 (€162.41)
	Monthly	SIT 117,500 (€491.45)
SI	Monthly	SIT 117,500 (€491.45)
UK	Hourly	GBP 5.05 (€7.28)

Note: All euro equivalents have been calculated at the rate of August 2005.

\*Rate applies only to workers on 39-hour week.

Source: *Minimum wages in Europe, European Foundation, 2005*, <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/2005/07/study/tn0507101s.html>

## Annex 6: Data on youth unemployment and employment

	Unemployment rate	Employment rate
AT	In 2005: 42,520 people were unemployed. 15–24 year age group represented 17.9% of all unemployed people. Youth unemployment increased by 10.4% compared with 2004	No data.
BE	In 2004: 15–24 year age group: 21.2%.	In 2004: 15–24 year age group: 27.79%.
BG	In 2003: 15–24 year age group: 28% 36% in 2002.	In 2003: 15–24 year age group: 21%. In 2002: 19.2%.
CY	In 2004: 15–24 year age group: 8.7%	In 2004: 15–24 year age group: 37.3%
CZ	In 2004: *15–19 year age group: Total: 41.9%; women 43.9%, men 40.4%. *20–24 year age group: 17.6%; women 16.3% men 18.6%.	No data.
DE	In 2004: 15–24 year age group: 9.9%, 504,338 young people 38.2% of these were women. The men in the 20–24 year age group have the highest rate of unemployment (62%).	In 2004: 15–24 year age group: 42%.
DK	In 2002: 16–24 year age group: 3.1% Men 3.1%, Women 3.1% 25–29 year age group: 6.1% Men 5.5%, Women 6.9%.	No data.
EE	15–24 year age group: In 2002, men 14.3%, women 22.5%. In 2003, men 16.9%, women 26.0%. In 2004, men 21.2%, women 22.4%.	15–24 year age group: In 2002: men 33.9%, women 21.6%. In 2003: men 34.9%, women 22.6%. In 2004: men 31.8%, women 21.5%.
EL*	In 2004: 15–29 year olds as a proportion of the total number of unemployed: 47% men 50%, women:45.2%.	In 2004: 15–29 year olds as a proportion of the total number of employed: 21.2%; men 20.4%; women: 22.6%.
ES*	In 2005: *16–19 year age group:31.19%, men 26.37%, women 38.18%. *20–24 year age group:17.35%, men 14.71%, women 20.55% *25–29 year age group:11.43%, men 9.31, women 10.74%.	In 2005: Participation rate: 57.35% 16–19 year age group: 29.29% 20–24 year age group: 66.43% 25–29 year age group: 84.37%.
FI	In 2004: *15–19 year age group: men 30.4%, women 29.1%. *20–24 year age group: men 16.5%, women 14.6%. *General unemployment rate: men 8.7%, women 8.9%.	No data.
FR	In 2004: 15–24 year age group: 22%, men 21.6%, women 24.2%.	In 2004: 15–24 year age group: 34.7%, men 37.8%, women 30.3%.
HU	15–24 year age group: In 2002: total 12%, men 12.6%, women 11.2%. In 2003: total 13.5%, men 13.7%, women 13.1%. In 2004: total 14.8%, men 14.8%, women 15.0%.	15–24 year age group: In 2002: 28.5%, men 31.2%, women 25.8%. In 2003: 26.0%, men 29.8%, women 23.8%. In 2004: 23.8%, men 26.3%, women 20.8%.
IE	In 2005: *15–19 year age group: 13.4%, men 13.1%, women 13.7%. *20–24 year age group: 8.3%, men 8.2%, women 8.4%.	In 2005: *15–19 year age group, 30.5%, men 33%, women 27.9%. *20–24 year age group: 72.9%, men 77.6%, women 68.3%.
IT	15–24 year age group: In 2003: 23.7%, men 20.5%, women 27.6%. In 2004: 23.6%, men 20.7%, women 27.2%.	15–24 year age group: In 2003: 25.2%, men 29.7%, women 20.6%. In 2004: 27.6%, men 32.1%, women 23.1%.
LT	15–24 year age group: In 2002, 23.0%, men 23.1%, women 22.9%. In 2003: 24.8%, men 22.5%, women 28.1%. In 2004: 22.5%, men 22.3%, women 22.7%.	15–24 year age group: In 2002: 23.6%, men 26.5%, women 20.6%. In 2003: 22.6%, men 26.3%, women 18.6%. In 2004: 20.3%, men 23.9%, women 16.6%.
LV*	In 2004: Jobseekers as % of economically active population: 15–19 year age group: 31.2% 20–24 year age group: 15.1%.	In 2004: Employed population as % of total population 15–19 year age group: 9.4% 20–24 year age group: 53.6%.



	Unemployment rate	Employment rate
MT*	In 2005: 15–24 year age group: 17.5%, National unemployment rate: 7.8%.	In 2005: 15–24 year age group: 18.7% of all employed population.
NL	15–24 year age group: In 2004: 13.3%; in 2003: 10.6%; in 2002: 8.5% Since 2000: more than twice the 15–65 years unemployment rate.	45% of 2 million young people part of the working population.
NO	In 2004: 16–24 year age group: 11.6%, men 12.5%, women 10.6%.	In 2004: 16–24 year age group: 54.4%, men 54.1%, women 54.7%.
PL*	15–24 year age group: In 2002–2004: 27.9% In 2000–2002: 34.2%.	No data.
RO*	In 2004: 15–29 year age group: 18.2%.	In 2004: 15–29 year age group: 41.9%.
SE	In 2005: 16–24 year age group: 13.1%. 16–19 year age group: 14.0%. 20–24 year age group: 12.8% Total labour force unemployment: 5.4%.	No data.
SI	15–24 year age group: In 2004, total 16.2%, men 14%, women 19.3%	No data.
SK	In 2005: 15–24 year age group: 6.2%, men 15.5%, women 17.0%.	In 2005: 15–24 year age group: 49.5%, men 57.3%, women 42.4%.
UK	18–24 year age group: In 2005: 11.6%, men 12.8%, women 10.2%.	No data.

Source: *EIRO national contributions, November 2005*

\* Country-specific definition applied

## Annex 7: Other youth employment indicators

	Long-term unemployment	Economically active/inactive
AT	15–24 year age group: 14,090 women and 15,726 men were unemployed for 6–12 months as of 1 November 2005.	No data.
BE	In September 2005, 39,384 young people aged under 25 years had been looking for a job for at least one year.	15–24 year age group: economic activity rate of 35.2% in 2004.
BG	15–24 year age group: in 2003, those unemployed for more than one year totalled 46,000 people, representing 52.8% of the total number of unemployed youth. In 2002, the total was 66,400 people or 54.9% of the total number of unemployed young persons.	15–24 year age group: economic activity rate of 29.3% in 2003 and 30.1% in 2002.
CY	In 2004, 20.1% of young persons were unemployed for more than 12 months.	15–24 year age group: economic inactivity rate of 59.1% in 2004.
CZ	No data.	No data.
DE	Youth unemployment a relatively transitional phenomenon: among the total long-term unemployed people only 2.5% were younger than 25.	No data.
DK	18–19 year age group: in 2004, long-term unemployment was 2.3%, men 2.3%, women 2.4%. 20–24 year age group: in 2004, 5.5%, men 5.7%, women 5.3%.	No data.
EE	Long-term unemployment: 52% (2004) ; 38% (2000) Youth unemployed for 6–11 months: 19% (2004); 16% (2000) Youth unemployed more than 12 months: 33% (2004); 25% (2000).	15–24 year age group: participation rate in 2002, men 39.5%, women 27.8%; in 2003, men 42.0%, women 30.5%; in 2004, men 40.4%, women 27.7%.
EL	Long-term unemployment: 40.9% (2004) ; 63.1% (1995) Youth unemployed for 6–11 months: 53% (2004); 67.2% (2000).	No data.
ES	No data.	No data.
FI	In 2004, long-term unemployment rates were practically zero among 15–19 year olds and only 4% for those aged 20–24 years.	No data.

## Youth and work

	Long-term unemployment	Economically active/inactive
FR	15–29 year age group: In 2004, 28.1% of men and 27.4% of women were unemployed for more than a year. 9.2% of men and 8.2% of women were unemployed for more than two years.	No data.
HU	No data.	More than 70% of persons aged between 15 and 24 years were inactive (no year indicated).
IE	15–24 year age group: In 2005, long-term unemployment was 1.4%	No data.
IT	No data.	No data.
LT	No data.	No data.
LV	No data.	15–19 year age group: in 2004: 13.7% were economically active. 20–24 year age group: In 2004: 63.1% were economically active.
MT	No data.	No data.
NL	15–24 year age group: in 2004, long-term unemployment was 11.6%; in 2003, 9.4%; in 2002, 4.8%.	No data.
NO	No data.	No data.
PL	No data.	No data.
RO	15–29 year age group: in 2004, 176,681 were unemployed for 1–3 months; 153,012 for 3–6 months; 70,051 for 6–9 months; 75,293 for 9–12 months	Activity rate of the 15–29: 2004: 49.2%; 2002: 51.7%.
SE	No data.	No data.
SI	2004: 15–25 year-olds unemployed – over 6 months: 37% Long-term unemployment: 25.7% 22.5% of young first job seekers registered long-term unemployed	No data.
SK	Long-term unemployment affects 57.1% of young people unemployed; 60.2% men, 39.8% women.	15–24 year age group: in 2005, the total economic activity rate was 59.2%; men 68.0% and women 51.1%.
UK	18–24 year age group: In 2005, those reporting up to 6 months of unemployment totalled 331,000 people, 184,000 men and 147,000 women; the total figure for unemployment lasting between 6 and 12 months was 75,000 people – 46,000 men and 29,000 women.	No data.

Source: *EIRO national contributions, November 2005*