



Final document
Draft

A system of guarantees for young people
The contribution of regional policies

1. Frame of reference

It is the future of young people that worries Europe today. The worsening or stagnation of young people's condition is an extremely serious problem for the present, and above all for the future.

Young Europeans are better educated than in the past. Many of them are capable of fulfilling productive and social functions unthinkable for the previous generations of young people. Europe must maintain and reinforce this capability of making its talents grow.

At the same time there is no decrease in the number of low-skilled young people, the unemployed, the over-skilled working in low quality jobs, in hardship conditions. Thinking about the future means considering that the high number of low-skilled fifteen-year-olds will remain unchanged unless there are provisions with an adequate impact. In ten years time they will become low-skilled twenty-five-year-olds.

Processes of society and job market polarisation are going on. The differences between the various strata of young people increase as they never did in the past. Public policies should prevent and reduce the effects of polarisation. They produce a loss of human potential and weakness in social cohesion.

2. Welfare models

The Member States and Regional Governments of Europe have different welfare models for young people's policies. Some of them are more focussed on the role of the family, others on work, others on the individual or the State. None of these models is the best solution, valid for everyone. The young people's condition needs an integration of these various approaches.

Building European strategies must start from the observation that the most significant differences are not between the welfare models, they are between the territories. The place of birth of a young person must not predetermine his entire life cycle, even favouring the encounter between territorial vocations and young people's capabilities and skills. This is why a European strategy for young people must be reinforced, based on local policies, as well as national and transnational ones.

3. Evaluation elements

Over the past ten years, public policies have faced the challenge of improving young people's condition with a commitment that has no precedents.

Nevertheless the results vary from country to country. In some regions more significant improvements were obtained concerning the reduction of young people's unemployment, demographic growth, skill development and generation exchange. In others the trend was the opposite or, at best, there was stagnation.

The results of young people's policies during the crisis years have shown that regional and national strategies can have a direct impact on young people's condition. Even in the short term they can change the unemployment or scholastic success rate by several percentage points.

Nevertheless there are regions that show how even the richest packets of policy measures were not able to reverse the downward trend of young people's condition in periods of economic crisis.

Public policies obtain significant results only if they operate in societies where all the actors take responsibility for the growth of future generations.

Activating the social actors –public and private- is the first success factor of public policies and explains the diversity of results in the various regions and in the various welfare cultures.

4. Improving policy integration

All the regional and national governments have entered young people's policies in their agenda. The trend is towards their progressive expansion, and includes sectors that range from labour to health, from taxes to school, from economic development to commerce, from culture to social matters, etc. The simple juxtaposition of policies gives limited results.

Greater coordination by them could increase quality and impact, constructing proper integrated intervention systems.

Transverse policies are the key to success, the inevitable route for obtaining real, long lasting improvement of young people's condition.

Through its programmes, the European Union can be more decisive in encouraging the construction of coherent, integrated policies.

5. Adopting all the measures that respond to the entire life-cycle of young people

During the crisis years a wide range of measures was adopted connected to the entire life-cycle and to every transition of young people's life.

The wealth of knowledge accumulated by governments should be reinforced by the future impact evaluations of the measures adopted. It is an important source of orientation and cooperation for coordinating the policies of the Member States, still not fully exploited.

The experience of regional governments shows how it is important to arrange measures that act on objectives that aim at:

- a. Completing education and acquiring the right skills, by guaranteeing that the years of schooling correspond to acquiring effective skills and reinforce the relationship with the working world;
- b. Insertion and growth in the job market, by offering incentives, aimed also at self employment, offering valid, qualitative systems of apprenticeship and training, effective orientation and counselling services that follow the young person in his first and subsequent work experiences, and, furthermore, by

supporting the development of professional aspects, mobility for various types of work and among various countries;

- c. Containing situations of disadvantage, by monitoring the life routes of each single young person and activating measures pertinent to each transition;
- d. Developing an adequate social and cultural life, by attributing the cultural infrastructures with new functions in response to the various needs of young people and through support to the growth of quality social networks;
- e. Achieving autonomy and parenthood, through support in having the basic conditions for an independent life and to procreate;
- f. Income support and tax incentives, using measures of income integration and taxation forms and administrative simplification that encourage employment and the creating of companies by young people.

At the same time, the experience of regional governments shows how it is important to make available measures that operate simultaneously on various strata of young population and encourage growth towards autonomy: from the early school leavers, to the NEETs, to the talents. Public policies must not stigmatise young people because of their momentary condition. Everyone must be offered the possibility to become talents. The policy measures – from orientation to entrepreneurship- must offer everyone the best opportunities for growth and employment. The Member States of the European Union must express with determination the choice of acting on all the measures –up to income support and tax incentives- and the strata of young people.

6. One step ahead: activating life-cycle policies

After many years of building and consolidating young people's policies, today the regional governments have measures and instruments available that allow more ambitious goals. Today governments can offer young people not only curative measures connected to the various transitions. Today it is possible to implement policies that offer paths of personal and professional growth, that accompany young people in their life cycle for the necessary amount of time.

Alongside solid and specific measures for autonomy, work and family, it is necessary that anyone in need make use of a route with a variable time line, aimed at achieving personal and professional goals in a period of the young person's life.

All young people's groups –not just the NEETs- must be able to make use of this opportunity and all the social actors must contribute in creating it. Information and the chance to access opportunities of every type and level will increase the growth of talents and social inclusion.

We propose that the European Institutions encourage the commitment of national and regional governments in implementing measures to support young people's life-cycle.

It means guaranteeing that young people, in the various phases of their lives and for the time necessary, can take advantage of periods of accompaniment (even with opportunities using individualised instruments). During these phases, youth must have the availability of personal programmes and packages that will accompany them towards the achievement of goals: from access to the first or second job, to creating a company and managing it, to insertion in quality social networks and participation in social life, etc.

For this goal, Regional governments, along with the European Commission, intend committing to promote an intensified programme of soft open method of coordination aimed at identifying good practices and their transfer.

7. Transferability of measures and implementation of ESF 2014-2020

In the terrain of youth policies –and in particular training, work, entrepreneurship, health and housing- the regional governments intend developing cooperation for the development of youth life-cycle policies and propose that the European institutions assume measures in this sense.

Along with the regions we intend identifying (with opportunities that are workable through individualised instruments), sharing and systemising operative methods and measures of transnational interest that can constitute a useful suggestion for the Union countries, particularly for the Commission and the other European institutions to tackle the youth question in an articulated way, that can usefully and effectively implement the 2014-2020 programming phase and specifically the ESF.

Therefore we would like them to find in this path a suitable organisation and systematisation of the best practices and methods existing on a European level on the subject of:

- ✓ public policies and operative procedures that act on the transitions that concern the process of youth work autonomy;
- ✓ integrated regional systems for young people finalised at dealing with unemployment and the difficulties towards emancipation, and capable of “building a solid front of trust with all those concerned, whether they are employment services, instructors, social parties, employers, youth organisations”.

We feel that all these actions, moreover strongly “recommended” by the Commission, such as: the guarantee for young people, quality apprenticeship and training, policies for young people’s start-up businesses, job mobility, school-work alternation, must find suitable implementation in the territories, but they must also be a starting point for planning new outlines of flexible and evolving action.

It is our ambition to create more outlines of intervention conceived in a European context to tackle an emergency: youth employment. Only with a supranational, Community effort can there be the possibility to find an effective answer.

This is why the European regions that are at the centre of Community programming for cohesion policies undertake to identify a shared path that aims at activating effective measures in favour of young people.

