



## Resolution 1828 (2011)<sup>1</sup>

# Reversing the sharp decline in youth employment

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Access to decently remunerated employment is essential for ensuring sustainable livelihoods, shielding against poverty and socio-economic exclusion, and enabling the exercise of fundamental rights. The effective implementation of the right to work – enshrined in the (revised) European Social Charter (ETS No. 163) – requires European states to take action through specific legislation, policies or programmes, not least in order to minimise the negative consequences and significant cost of unemployment to society. Although unemployment and precarious work risk undermining the dignity of every individual concerned and the human progress of society at large, young people are particularly vulnerable in this respect.

2. In Europe, youth unemployment remains twice as high as for the rest of the working-age population and the situation is further aggravated by the effects of the economic crisis. At the end of 2010, on average one in five young people was unemployed in both the European Union countries and central and eastern Europe, with unemployment rates reaching 42% in Spain but staying below 10% in some countries such as Germany, the Netherlands and Norway. Across the globe, unemployment affected about 13% of economically active young people – the highest figure ever recorded by the International Labour Organization.

3. The Parliamentary Assembly is concerned that despite the fact that young people in Europe today have a better level of education than their parents and that many European countries are facing labour shortages in a growing number of sectors, young workers face more difficulties in entering or re-entering the labour market than the rest of the population. If governments fail to offer realistic solutions to youth unemployment, Europe may well have to pay a high price for a “lost generation” and compromise its competitiveness, security, social peace and development prospects. With the challenges of globalisation and the lingering effects of the economic crisis, Europe simply cannot afford to waste the talents, energy, mobility and creativity of its youth.

4. The Assembly believes that the main causes of both youth unemployment or underemployment are the mismatch between the qualifications of young people and labour market needs, rapidly changing labour market conditions, structural economic shifts and eroding public spending on integrated pro-employment strategies. There is therefore a need for adjustment in public policies at national and European level, with a view to fully implementing the labour-related provisions of the (revised) European Social Charter and promoting better qualifications and skills, more mobility and improved access to job offers and apprenticeship schemes, as well as a greater interaction between employers, state employment agencies and young jobseekers.

5. Taking into account the size and the possible implications of the youth unemployment problem, the Assembly considers that European policy makers should be required to better integrate young jobseekers before resorting to bringing in highly skilled workers from non-European countries. Enhanced inter-generational solidarity and innovative arrangements in the workplace should enable the smoother transfer of skills between experienced and young workers, whilst helping the latter to embrace gainful employment more rapidly and the former to gradually prepare their retirement.

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1. Assembly debate on 24 June 2011 (27th Sitting) (see [Doc. 12626](#), report of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development, rapporteur: Ms Pejčinović-Burić; and [Doc. 12665](#), opinion of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee, rapporteur: Ms Karamanli). Text adopted by the Assembly on 24 June 2011 (27th Sitting).



6. The Assembly is convinced that the European organisations, notably the European Union and the Council of Europe, can and should do more to help their member states offer more and better jobs to the young generation. Other partners, such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB), the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (North-South Centre), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Investment Bank (EIB), could usefully supplement both European and national action programmes.

7. In this context, the Assembly underscores the need for policy makers in Europe to take more into account the demographic reality, economic development problems and democratic challenges in Europe's Mediterranean neighbourhood where millions of skilled young people, frustrated at not being able to find work, will do anything to have a better life and a job, including through emigration. The Assembly sees an overarching long-term interest for European states to support the European Union and Council of Europe action – via their respective neighbourhood policies and strategies for youth, and by involving the North-South Centre – in order to help southern Mediterranean countries to fully tap their development potential and offer their youth a better future.

8. The Assembly therefore calls on the Council of Europe member states to:

8.1. make youth employment one of the major priorities of employment policy and initiate immediate measures, drawing on best European practice in this field;

8.2. foster quality job creation, social dialogue and incentives for hiring young workers, in particular in the most promising economic sectors, notably services, and in those facing labour shortages;

8.3. improve interaction between employers, state employment agencies and young jobseekers;

8.4. strengthen links between educational institutions and businesses, with a view to a better match between the qualifications of young people and labour market needs – current and future;

8.5. enhance educational guidance, skills development, careers advice, employability training and job-search services in order to smooth the transition of young people from studies to work;

8.6. ensure additional education, training and income support in order to facilitate access to the labour market and give professional perspectives to disadvantaged or vulnerable young people, including those with an immigrant or minority background and those living in rural or remote areas, and support youth organisations with field activities in this domain;

8.7. remain vigilant regarding employers' compliance with obligations to ensure decent working conditions, regular training and adequate remuneration for young workers, notably with regard to temporary employment contracts;

8.8. consider setting up or strengthening, as appropriate, public-private partnerships which help young people find their first work experience and on-the-job training;

8.9. put in place fiscal or social incentives for businesses to employ young people under long-term contracts or contracts considered to offer the first truly stable and quality jobs for the young people who occupy them, notably in order to assist the integration of young people with disabilities and those most at risk of social exclusion or marginalisation;

8.10. develop systems allowing young people, and in particular the most vulnerable amongst them, to have access to assisted employment which represents a true "gateway" between the training and working spheres;

8.11. study the policies and practices, notably "flexicurity" arrangements, of countries that have the most successful youth employment rates, with a view to learning how to reduce youth unemployment at home;

8.12. support, not least through voluntary contributions, the Council of Europe projects aimed at promoting youth employment, mobility, language skills and other skills development;

8.13. promote access for the young generation to self-employment, microcredit schemes and advisory services for entrepreneurship;

8.14. encourage multilateral development banks, in particular the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB), and other relevant institutions, such as the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (North-South Centre), to contribute to the implementation of the European Union and Council of Europe neighbourhood policies, in particular through projects aimed at job creation and youth employment in southern Mediterranean countries.

9. The Assembly invites national parliaments of the Council of Europe member states to consider holding annual debates on youth problems, including youth employment challenges, and to study the possibility of proposing youth action plans to tackle the problems thus identified.