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Halting the sharp decline in youth employment

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Mr Luca VOLONTÈ and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

Young workers are the main victims of the economic crisis in Europe; in the first quarter of 2009 they numbered 5 millions. After three years of declining unemployment, it has rapidly gathered pace again among young people aged between 15 and 24 in the 27 European Union countries: 18.3% of young people are now jobless according to Eurostat. The aggregate unemployment rate in the European Union stands at 8.2% (+1.5% over 2008).

In one year, youth unemployment has risen by 3.7%. It has risen everywhere, except in Bulgaria. It is in the Baltic states that the increase has been most spectacular: +17.2% in Latvia (28.2), +16.5% in Estonia (24.1) and +14.1% in Lithuania (23.6). The lowest growth has been in Germany, +0.3% with 10% youth unemployment.

The most worrying situation is in Spain (33.6%). The situation in the Netherlands is less serious : 6% youth unemployment. Youth unemployment in France (22.3%) is above the European average, as is the general unemployment level (9.3% in the first quarter, +1.7%).

These figures confirm the magnitude of the recession: the decline in the GDP of the 27 European Union member States fell to -4.7 per cent in the first quarter. Considering that the Lisbon Strategy goal (2000) was to achieve full employment by 2010, Europe's employment rate (namely, the percentage of the population aged between 15 and 64 in employment) is 64.6%, one point below 2008.

This steep rise in unemployment, particularly among young people, requires the Council of Europe to begin reflecting on the situation and to discuss a common strategy. Not only economies, but also the future of the Council of Europe countries are in dire jeopardy, because the human rights of the younger generation might be weakened. Decisive intervention by the Parliamentary Assembly is urgently needed to combat the sharp decline in youth employment.

Signed (see overleaf)



*Signed*¹:

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EDG: European Democrat Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group