

## For a good education - throughout Europe!

More than ten years after the banking and financial crisis, many young people in Europe are still struggling for a high-quality job and training place. Even though youth unemployment has fallen in recent years (peak in Europe in 2013: 23.9 per cent, 2018: 14.8 per cent<sup>1</sup>), many young people in many European countries are extremely affected by precarious employment. The proportion of fixed-term contracts among young people has risen sharply in recent years and now stands at 43% (the European average for all age groups is 14% for fixed-term<sup>2</sup>contracts). As in the case of youth unemployment, significant regional differences can be observed in the fixed-term rate. The situation is particularly dramatic in countries like Spain: Here, 70 percent of the young people receive a fixed-term contract. The youth unemployment rate there is 34.3 percent.

The problem of high youth unemployment was recognised by the European Commission and initiatives and programmes were launched with the European Youth Guarantee and the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) to reduce youth unemployment in Europe. The aim was to offer young people under 25 a concrete job or training place within four months of leaving school or entering unemployment. Unfortunately, it is precisely in the regions particularly affected by the crisis and youth unemployment that the funds of this youth guarantee are being used to further advance precarisation. In Spain, short-term internships were cross-financed by the EU with the funds of the Youth Guarantee! Only those who applied for a youth guarantee measure were offered an internship in a company - the internships were subsidized by the EU. Of the 423,000 young people in Spain who took advantage of the Youth Guarantee, only 2,249 were placed in permanent employment after six months<sup>3</sup>.

Although already in 2013 an analysis of the European Commission stated "[...]that training consistently achieves positive job prospects and not only in countries like Germany and Austria, which are typically associated with the dual training system"<sup>4</sup>), partly precarious projects were supported by the European Youth Guarantee instead of investing in more sustainable forms of job placement such as the creation of vocational training.

On the basis of this experience, the DBJR demands that the programmes supported by the *Youth Guarantee* be reviewed and that only those measures be supported which actually offer young people long-term and high-quality prospects for the future. *Vocational training* in particular offers such long-term and high-quality employment prospects. As labour and education policy in the European Union has so far been mainly regulated at national level, vocational training also varies greatly - however, common rules are needed to protect young people from exploitation and increasing precarisation. The European pillar of social rights proclaimed in November 2017 was an important step in the right direction and was welcomed by the DBJR<sup>5</sup>). However, common and binding measures are needed in social and employment policy which agree on minimum standards. Here the national governments of the EU member states have a duty.

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<sup>1</sup>[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Unemployment\\_statistics#Youth\\_unemployment\\_trends](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Unemployment_statistics#Youth_unemployment_trends)

<sup>2</sup><https://www.etuc.org/en/young-people-and-precarious-work>

<sup>3</sup>[https://www.boeckler.de/66355\\_111567.htm?id=magazinmitbestimmung\\_eb482265dc68e34e6cbe7b3b6fb13d9c](https://www.boeckler.de/66355_111567.htm?id=magazinmitbestimmung_eb482265dc68e34e6cbe7b3b6fb13d9c)

<sup>4</sup><https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=11348angld=de>

<sup>5</sup><https://www.dbjr.de/artikel/europa-braucht-uns-wir-brauchen-europa/>

Minimum standards must also be laid down for training in Europe. A first step was the recommendation of the European Council on<sup>6</sup> a European framework for quality and sustainable vocational training. The DBJR demands that these recommendations be defined as a minimum standard for European training within the framework of the European pillar of social rights. Mandatory minimum standards are, in extracts, the existence of a training contract, the definition of learning objectives, the payment of trainees for both in-company and school-based training, the right to social protection, the right to vocational guidance and the involvement of the social partners (employee and employer internal associations) in shaping, implementing and regulating the training system. The criteria used by the Council of the European Union are largely based on the demands of the European Trade Union Confederation<sup>7</sup>. As DBJR, we are committed to ensuring that the criteria for *high-quality and sustainable training* are binding and that the minimum standards for good training in Europe are set.

The DBJR also calls for the mobility of trainees and participation in European exchanges to be promoted and for a stronger focus on trainees to be anchored in the Erasmus+ programme. We welcome the fact that the Erasmus funds are expected to double from 2021 - but this does not meet our demands that Erasmus+ be equipped to meet future needs and structurally expanded<sup>8</sup>). At the same time as doubling the funds, the number of participants is to be tripled<sup>9</sup>. It can be observed that so far hardly any trainees have taken part in an Erasmus+ measure. This was recognised by the European Commission and the ErasmusPro pilot project was launched, which is aimed in particular at young trainees. The declared aim of the pilot project was to support 50,000 trainees in the period 2018 to 2020 with a company orientation and a duration of three to twelve months. As only 238 trainees were supported by the ErasmusPro project in 2018, it is expected that even the target set by the European Commission will not be achieved<sup>10</sup>.

The promotion of European exchange programmes is enormously important. We demand that in future European exchange programmes also take greater account of trainees and that these be significantly expanded in structural terms. The current doubling of Erasmus+ funding while tripling the number of participants is unacceptable in view of the fact that Erasmus+ was already underfunded and structurally inadequate. An increase in resources is therefore a top priority. The different areas of Erasmus+ must not be brought into competition with each other. In addition to the targeted promotion of mobility offers and the improvement of appropriate framework conditions for trainees, the focus must also be on the promotion of youth encounters and exchange programmes that go beyond vocational usability.

The DBJR demands a good education - Europe-wide! That is why we are in favour of binding minimum standards, improved mobility and high-quality measures against youth unemployment.

*Resolved by a majority with one dissenting vote at the Plenary Assembly on 25-27 October 2019 in Berlin.*

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<sup>6</sup><https://www.consilium.europa.eu/de/press/press-releases/2018/03/15/quality-and-effective-apprenticeships-council-adopts-european-framework/>

<sup>7</sup><https://www.etuc.org/en/pressrelease/council-adopts-trade-union-proposals-apprenticeships>

<sup>8</sup><https://www.dbjr.de/artikel/europa-braucht-uns-wir-brauchen-europa/>

<sup>9</sup>[https://ec.europa.eu/germany/news/20180530-erasmus\\_de](https://ec.europa.eu/germany/news/20180530-erasmus_de)

<sup>10</sup><https://www.jugendhilfeportal.de/fokus/europa/artikel/erasmuspro-eu-sozialkommissarin-wirbt-fuer-laengere-auslandsaufenthalte-von-azubis/>