

# EU Employment and Social Affairs Policy

## **Securing Jobs, Developing Skills and Protecting Workers**





## What does the EU do?

---

European economies are steadily recovering from the financial crisis. The challenge now lies in tackling unemployment and strengthening social cohesion. How can Europe play a role when the EU has only limited influence in the field of employment and social policy? The main responsibility is on Member State Governments. The EU, however, coordinates and monitors national policies to promote the more efficient practices in domains such as employment, poverty, social exclusion and pensions. It also makes laws and monitors their implementation in areas such as rights at work and coordination of social security schemes.

The EPP Group in the European Parliament has always been a driving force for EU action in employment and social policy. We work to improve the EU's capacity to combat unemployment and improve working and living conditions for Europe's citizens. In practical terms, this means prioritising actions that **boost youth employment**, foster an **inclusive labor market** and promote the **mobility of workers**.

*"Social policy touches the lives of all citizens. At a time when unacceptable unemployment continues to prevail in the EU and the unprecedented influx of migrants and refugees has created a challenge to our social systems, the EPP Group proposes reforms to safeguard our health and social protection systems"*

**David Casa** MEP (Malta)

EPP Group Coordinator in the Employment and Social Affairs Committee  
of the EP Committee (EMPL) of the European Parliament



Tackling youth and long-term unemployment are top of the list of our priorities. High youth unemployment rates - currently 4 million between 15 and 24 - reflect the difficulties faced by young people in finding jobs. The EPP Group has therefore endorsed EU-wide programmes, such as the EU **Youth Guarantee** and **Erasmus +**, which make it easier for young people to find a job, continue in education and training and promote entrepreneurship.

The number of long-term unemployed persons doubled between 2008 and 2014 and currently account for half of the total unemployed in the EU. At the beginning of 2016 long-term unemployment affected 10.5 million people (4.3% of the active EU population), 63% of whom have been out of work for more than two years. In fighting long-term unemployment, the EPP Group has supported the Juncker Commission's concrete initiatives, such as the the **European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI)**, which seek to strengthen job creation, economic recovery and social fairness in Europe.

EU policies must also reflect the increase in life expectancy, fight discrimination and promote age-friendly environments. The EPP Group promotes actions that make active ageing in the workplace possible. We also support lifelong learning to help citizens adjust to a fast-changing world. In addition, the integration of migrants is important for a functioning modern social Europe.

The right to **free movement of workers** within the EU is one of the pillars of the Single Market. The EPP Group believes worker mobility stimulates EU economic development and social cohesion. In 2016, the EPP Group was the driving force behind a law to revamp the European Employment Services (**EURES**) network, which helps jobseekers find a job abroad.



# 1. Boosting Youth Employment

---

Unemployment levels are unacceptably high in the EU. Of the almost 21 million unemployed, more than 4 million are aged between 15 and 24. Creating jobs for young people is therefore a top priority for the EPP Group. To this end, we have supported the **Youth Employment Initiative** and the **Youth Guarantee**.

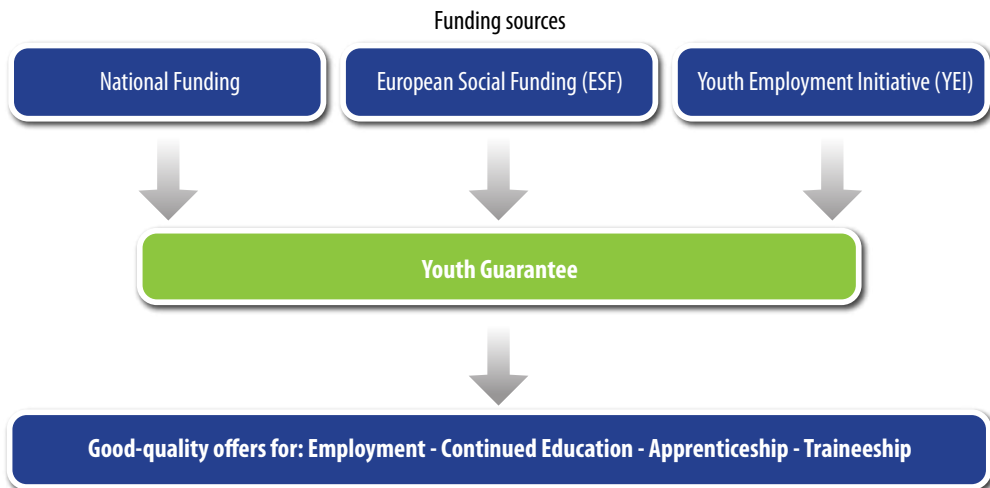
## **Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) and Youth Guarantee**

The **Youth Employment Initiative (YEI)** is one of the **main EU financial resources** to support the implementation of the Youth Guarantee scheme. Under the **Youth Guarantee**, Member States must put in place measures to ensure that young people up to the age of 25 receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship **within four months of leaving school or becoming unemployed**.

Since the start of its implementation in 2013, 14 million young people registered in the scheme, and 9 million took up an offer. There are now 1.4 million fewer young unemployed in the European Union, and 700,000 fewer NEETs (young people not in education, employment or training).

Given that unemployment is still very high, the EPP Group has supported the Commission proposal in September 2016 to increase the YEI budget from € 6.4 to € 8.4 billion for the period 2014-2020.

## Overview of the funding of the Youth Guarantee



Source: ECA

*"Youth unemployment is a threat to the future of Europe. We therefore support policies that help young people develop the skills they need when looking for a job"*

**Tom Vandenkendelaere** MEP (Belgium)  
EPP Group Substitute Member in the Employment  
and Social Affairs Committee (EMPL) of the European Parliament



## The Youth Guarantee at Work

### 118 New Jobs for Young People in Vilnius

Under the Youth Guarantee, a pilot project in Vilnius, Lithuania, helps jobseekers enter the job market and apply for internship schemes.

**Action:** The scheme involves a series of three seminars centred on participation in the labour market, followed by an Employers' Fair finished by an advice and communication session. Following the seminar series, each young person was directed towards a work placement (lasting up to one month) with an employer.

**Result:** 270 young people directly benefitted from the project. By the end of the project, 44% were recruited, and 80% of these were offered a long-term job.

Source: European Commission

*"The EPP Group is strongly committed to boosting SMEs as they are the main force in generating jobs and growth and therefore at the core of the EU economy"*

**Elisabeth Morin-Chartier** MEP (France)  
EPP Group Member of the Employment  
and Social Affairs Committee (EMPL) of the European Parliament



EU countries are responsible for their own education and training systems, but the EU helps them **set joint goals** and **share good practices**. For the EPP Group, the major political force in the European Parliament, education as a means for young people to improve their professional skills and employability is a top political priority.

Under the EPP Group leadership, the European Parliament has successfully pushed for a new **'ERASMUS +'** programme, which is the expanded version of the 'Erasmus' programme. Over the budgetary period 2014-2020 the EPP Group succeeded in significantly increasing the funding for the ERASMUS + Programme by 40%, allowing more than 4 million Europeans to study, train, gain work experience and volunteer in another country.

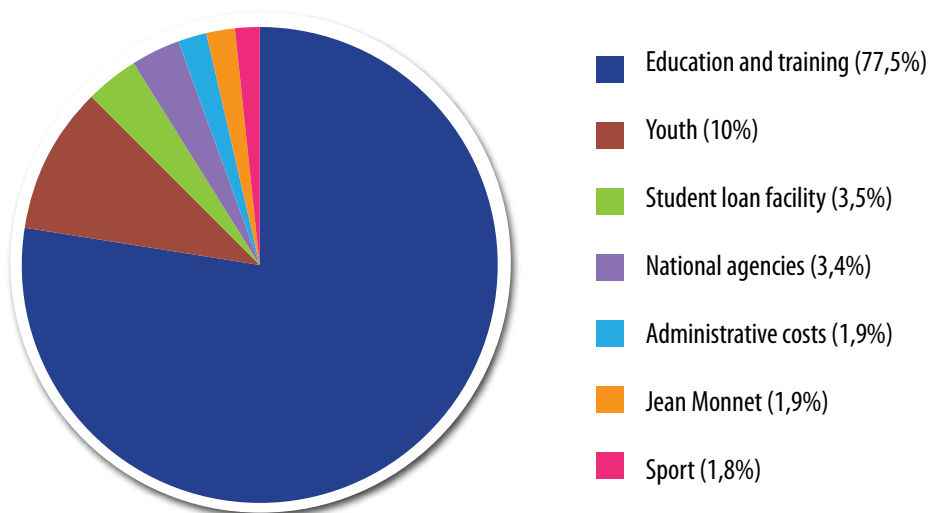
### **Erasmus+: A European Success Story**

Erasmus+ is the EU's programme to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe. Its budget of €14.7 billion will provide opportunities for over 4 million Europeans to study, train gain experience, and volunteer abroad.

In 2016, the budget **increased by almost €300 million**, representing an increase of nearly 13% compared to the previous year. There is a special focus on encouraging projects that support social inclusion, notably of refugees and migrants, as well as projects that prevent radicalisation.

By the end of the academic year 2013-14, the Erasmus programme had supported 3.3 million Erasmus students and 470,000 staff since its launch in 1987.

## Budget allocation of the Erasmus + Programme 2014-2020



Source: European Commission, Erasmus+ 2014-2020

*"We must ensure solidarity between the younger and older generations. Therefore we support measures for the active participation of younger and older workers in both the job market and social life in general"*

**Heinz K.Becker** MEP (Austria)  
EPP Group Deputy Coordinator of the Employment  
and Social Affairs Committee (EMPL) of the European Parliament



## 2. Inclusive Labour Market

---

The EPP Group works to build a society based on solidarity. The promotion of the European social model is crucial if we want European values to have an impact in a rapidly changing world. It is our task to adapt the EU to the needs of the 21st century by setting the right priorities and bringing the EU closer to its citizens. The **European Social Fund (ESF)** finances employment and social policy. **Europe 2020** is a 10 year programme for smart, sustainable and inclusive economic growth in the EU and serves as a guideline for all the EU's actions.

To achieve the **Europe 2020** goals the EPP Group has been active in:

- Backing action to integrate asylum seekers and refugees, including vocational and educational training as well as internships to identify the potential of individuals and enhance their integration.
- Favouring measures that aim to address long-term unemployment. The EPP Group is in favour of exchanging best practices with Member States on how to best integrate the long-term unemployed.
- Calling for extra measures, such as providing online e-skills courses, to be taken for the integration of the 50+ generation into the labour market, business, education or training, with the aim of preventing long-term unemployment and the risk of social exclusion.
- Supporting measures that ensure a balanced sharing of family responsibilities and tackle the gender pay gap. The EPP Group backs the Commission's roadmap which addresses the challenges of work-life balance faced by working families.

- Favours actions that combat discrimination based on sex, race or ethnic origin, religion, disability, age or sexual orientation. EU equal treatment legislation sets out minimum levels of protection that apply to everyone living and working in the European Union. The EPP Group encourages Member States to go further and adopt even stronger legal measures.

## What is the European Social Fund (ESF)?

Established in 1957, the ESF is Europe's main instrument for supporting jobs, helping people get better jobs and ensuring fairer job opportunities for all EU citizens. It works by investing in Europe's human capital – its workers, its young people and all those seeking a job. ESF financing of EUR 74 billion for the period 2014-2020 is improving job prospects for millions of Europeans, in particular those who find it difficult to get work.

*"The EPP Group works to combat aged-based discrimination and to develop incentives and opportunities for workers over the age of 60 to pass on their knowledge and experience"*

**Thomas Mann** MEP (Germany)  
EPP Group Member of the Employment  
and Social Affairs Committee (EMPL) of the European Parliament



## The European Social Fund at Work

### ‘Senza più Paura’ (No more fear)

In the two years between 2012 and 2014, “Senza più Paura” (No more fear), a project developed by the Piedmont regional authorities and largely financed by the ESF, has successfully freed 311 women from domestic violence, human trafficking and prostitution.

Women from Italy, Europe and outside Europe who have suffered abuse (217 were victims of violence and 94 were victims of trafficking and severe exploitation) have managed to start new lives thanks to this programme.

A personal welcome, assistance, safety, guidance, entering the job market and independence are the main focuses of the programme which includes 17 projects and benefits from the help, skills and support of a network of 122 associations and local bodies.

Source: European Commission

### Europe 2020 Strategy in a nutshell

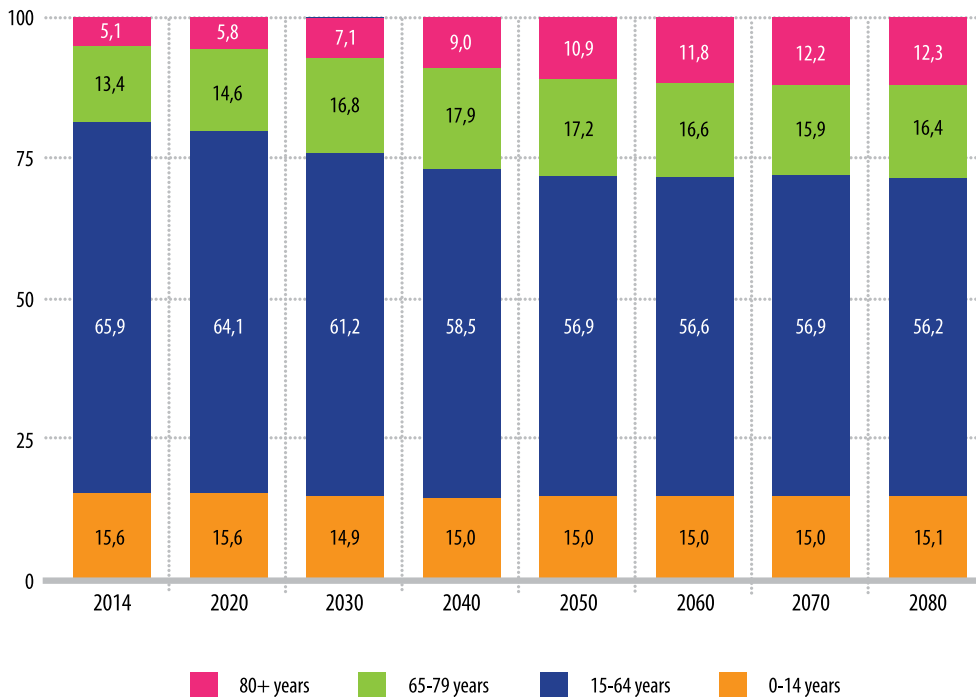
Europe 2020 is the European Union’s ten-year jobs and growth strategy. It was launched in 2010 to create the conditions for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Five headline targets have been agreed for the EU to achieve by the end of 2020. These cover employment; research and development; climate/energy; education; social inclusion and poverty reduction.

Progress towards the Europe 2020 targets is encouraged and monitored throughout the European Semester, the EU’s yearly cycle of economic and budgetary coordination.

## Population structure by age groups, EU-28, 2014-2080

(% of total population)



Data source: Eurostat, July 2015

### 3. Mobility of Workers

---

Freedom of movement for workers is **one of the four fundamental freedoms** on which the EU Single Market is based. It is one of the core values of the European Union and a fundamental element of EU citizenship and **can take several forms:** permanent stay in another country, daily or weekly cross-border commuting or short-term stay through posting of workers.

At present, slightly over 7 million EU citizens work and live in an EU country other than their own. They represent 3.3% of total employment in the EU. Almost 78% of the working-age EU citizens residing in another EU country were economically active and their employment rate reached 68%, 3.5 percentage points higher than the average among those residing in their country of citizenship.

In addition, around 1.1 million live in one country but work in another (frontier or cross-border workers) and around 1.2 million each year are posted to another country for a short-term project.

The EPP Group firmly believes that the transnational mobility of EU citizens across the Single Market can also help tackle the current imbalances in employment levels among Member States. The objective is to develop a dynamic and integrated EU labour market, instead of 28 divergent ones, while preventing abuses and distortion.

The **EPP Group approach to promoting labour mobility** centres on:

**Increasing workers' mobility:** through better implementation of workers' rights, by reducing administrative obstacles to mobility and



ensuring appropriate matching between labour supply and demand.

**Transferability of pension rights and cross-border health:** The EPP Group welcomed the new option for pensioners to **settle abroad for retirement** without losing their pension rights. However, more needs to be done as EU citizens should not have to worry about losing the value of their pension when moving within the EU for professional reasons.

**Promoting mobility of young people:** The mobility of citizens as regards education and training is essential both for cultural and economic reasons. It contributes to promoting the concept of European citizenship and to boosting EU competitiveness.

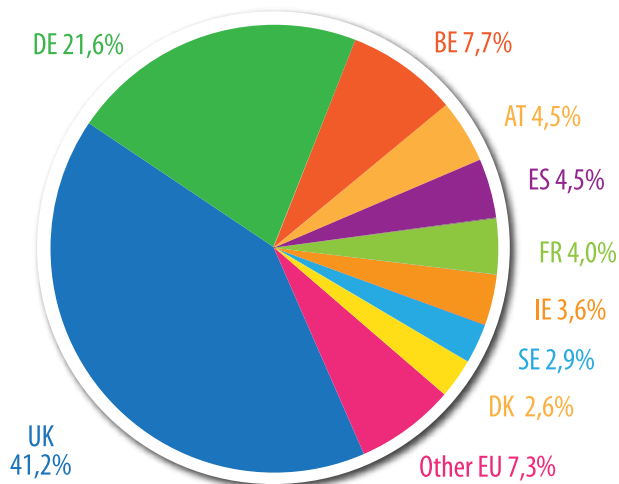
### **EURES: How the EU Facilitates Labour Mobility**

The EU facilitates labour mobility, in particular by making young people aware of job opportunities in other countries. **EURES** provides information, advice and recruitment/ placement (job matching) services for the benefit of workers and employers as well as any citizen wishing to benefit from the principle of free movement of workers.

EURES is a co-operation network between the European Commission, Public Employment Services (PES) of 28 Member States, and their partners. It consists of about 1.000 EURES advisers working on transnational and cross border mobility issues.

The human network is complemented by the EURES Job Mobility portal, which gives access to about 1.4 million job vacancies and over one million CV's across Europe. There are on average more than a million visitors on the EURES portal per month.

## Employed persons taking up residence in an EU Member State within the last two years, 2014



Data source: Eurostat



*"We need a fair Internal Market, and not just free mobility. People need to be able to work under the same conditions as the nationals of the host Member State"*

**Jeroen Lenaers** MEP (The Netherlands)  
EPP Group Member of the Employment  
and Social Affairs Committee (EMPL) of the European Parliament



Follow us



Published by: Publications Team  
Press and Communications Service  
Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)  
in the European Parliament

Editor: Pedro López de Pablo

Authors: David Stellini and Mark Dunne

Responsible: Greet Gysen

Coordinator: Marilena Deriu (Revision: Mark Dunne)

Address: European Parliament  
60 Rue Wiertz  
B-1047 – Brussels

Published in: February 2017

Internet: [www.eppgroup.eu](http://www.eppgroup.eu)

E-mail: [epp-publications@ep.europa.eu](mailto:epp-publications@ep.europa.eu)

Copyright: EPP Group in the European Parliament

