



# YOUTH WE CAN!

**A quality education for a quality job!**

**The ETUC Youth Conference**

**Kraków 10-11 /11/2011**

According to Eurostat, the general unemployment rate in January 2011 stood at 9.9% in the Euro area and 9.5% in the EU-27 while the youth unemployment in the 15-25 age group stood at 20.4% and is still increasing at an unacceptable rate particularly in Spain and Greece with more than 40%. Moreover, long-term unemployment in this age group has increased by nearly 30% since spring 2008, with young people accounting for 1.2 million of the 5.2 million long-term unemployed.

Low-paid workers (who generally have fewer qualifications) are two to three times more likely to lose their jobs than higher-paid workers. Once again, young people are worst affected by this (despite generally being better qualified), because they are twice as likely to be working for low wages and in precarious conditions as middle-aged workers.

Even before the crisis, 79 million Europeans were at risk of poverty and 32 million were living below the poverty threshold. Despite the fact that people in work are less exposed to the risk of poverty, the term "working poor" applies to at least 17.5 million workers.

In this context, education is one of the means of achieving personal fulfilment, involvement in productive work, social cohesion and improved living standards. Low educational levels are associated with poverty and social exclusion and hence the emphasis placed by inclusion policies should be on guaranteeing access to public services (especially education and training).

Investment in education should not be seen as a problem to be addressed in times of crisis, but rather as a solution for emerging from the crisis as successfully as possible.

**The aim is to educate free, individuals who are aware of their rights and duties and who are able to undertake decent work under the best conditions possible.**

## The ETUC Youth recommendations

- **Policies and measures** must be improved and be drawn up in consultation with the social partners and particularly with trade union organisations.
- **Through** social dialogue, the **EU social partners** should negotiate a **European framework for the integration of young people into the labour market**.
- **Long – term unemployment must be tackled through education and training.** The transition from education to working life must also be made easier.
- We urge Member States **to invest further and more consistently in education**, paying particular attention to public investment in education, research and vocational training when considering their medium-term budgetary targets.
- We urge Member States and EU institutions to take specific measures in order to ensure **access to education and quality jobs for young people who are at risk of poverty and social exclusion**.
- **Universal access to free public education** must be offered to all young people.
- **Measures to promote quality internships and apprenticeships** must be put in place and **the European Quality Framework on Internships** should be supported and implemented.  
<http://www.qualityinternships.eu/>
- Member states must ensure **conditions suitable for the creation not only of more jobs, but better jobs in both public and private sectors**. We need jobs that give people dignity, financial security, learning opportunities, up-skilling possibilities etc.
- The ETUC Youth **wants a real and effective youth guarantee** which offers education, training and quality jobs.
- The ETUC Youth recommends **a proactive approach towards young people** with the development of trade union structures at all levels, which must be given appropriate financial and human resources. Recruiting and organizing new members must be a priority for the trade union movement.
- **The values of democracy and solidarity** must be strengthened in the EU policy making process by means of better participation and transparency.

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