
Congress 2017 Main motion

The Future of Europe – Investing in young people

1. Introduction

- 1.1. In his State of the Union 2017, President of the Commission Jean-Claude Juncker clearly stated that Europe cannot and will not be the continent of youth unemployment. Youth unemployment remains staggering high in certain EU states and the average remains well above the general unemployment rate.
- 1.2. In addition to facing cut to public services, crippling austerity measures and facing an economic slump, young people are also trying to penetrate the employment market on unequal terms.
- 1.3. Employment is closely linked to social inclusion and CESI Youth therefore advocates for equal opportunities, decent jobs and a minimum requirement of security.
- 1.4. CESI Youth, as a youth platform of a confederation representing the workers believes that high levels of inequality are detrimental to social and economic development. For a society to be resilient it needs to be inclusive and provide an effective public service that caters to the needs of citizens.
- 1.5. CESI Youth believes that solidarity should be at the heart of the European project and social model. Not only solidarity between workers but also those who are excluded from the employment market, which in many cases as statistics show, are young people. Security and stability should be the basic minimum for all and most certainly for the upcoming generations.

In view of these findings, CESI Youth is called upon to strive towards the following:

2. Youth unemployment

- 2.1. EU initiatives, such as Youth Guarantee and Erasmus must help combat high youth unemployment. They must have a solid budget for this purpose and not decrease it, which is the current trend.

- 2.2. Investing in people at the EU level means setting the right economic and social conditions for change. The EU, the member states and the social partners must invest in their youth, whether they find themselves in education, in training, in employment or without occupation. They must put all their efforts into the creation of high-quality jobs to prevent the loss of a generation.
- 2.3. Setting minimum standards can never be synonymous with a race to the bottom. Minimum social standards throughout the EU must aim at upwards-social convergence.
- 2.4. Human dignity and fundamental social and economic rights must be ensured. Combat exploitation of the youth through precarious employment contracts and employment insecurity.
- 2.5. Vocational education and training must be further promoted and equally include soft skills. Investments in these sectors are to be viewed as social investments and need to be given special consideration in the frame of the EU's economic governance and budgetary surveillance rules.
- 2.6. Social dialogue between social partners and member states, to find common grounds where actions to invest and promote education in young people must be encouraged and recognised.
- 2.7. Voluntary work must be however recognised at both levels. It is crucial for our societies to have young people engaged in voluntary social work and it is important for young people that such work is recognised as work experience to enter the labour market.

3. Apprenticeships

- 3.1. Apprenticeships ensure the transition from school to work easier by enhancing the employability of learners and providing them with the skills needed for the labour market. At the same time, apprenticeships also provide benefits for companies and society at large.
- 3.2. Apprenticeships are too often seen as a second choice by young people, parents and society at large. Yet high-quality learning outcomes for VET and apprenticeships would better prepare students for life and good jobs. Appropriate measures must aim at making VET and apprenticeships more attractive.

4. Transfer of values through education

- 4.1. Education and training have to bolster the capacity to civic participation and the esteem for democratic values and tolerance - not least as a tool to foster an open-minded and responsible citizenry to prevent radicalisation and intolerance of any kind.
- 4.2. Conveying general knowledge, know-how and values to young people allows them to actively participate in the construction of their individuality and identity. In today's world, where new technologies allow the permanent, unfiltered flow of information, more than ever before, human beings need to be able to think critically and must have a strong identity.

- 4.3. Education abroad, through Erasmus + or other programmes, is crucial to build up a generation with open minds and rational thinking over what is happening in other EU countries but also worldwide.

5. Youth in trade unions

- 5.1. The EU, the member states and the social partners must invest in their youth. They must put all their efforts into the creation of high-quality jobs to prevent the loss of a generation.
- 5.2. For this purpose CESI Youth is fully committed to engage more and more young people in trade union work.
- 5.3. Fundamentally, ageing also brings the question of intergenerational fairness to the fore. There is today a real risk of a generational divide between younger and older people in terms of decision-making, wealth, material security and access to housing as well as in terms of sharing the financial and fiscal burden of an ageing society.
- 5.4. Weakened trade unions are synonymous with weakened workers. Strength is generated through collectivity and the leverage that lies in that collectivity. Labour market reforms have lowered individual and collective labour protection standards and made jobs increasingly precarious.
- 5.5. The inclusion of youth in trade union work will assist them with the activism which is needed in fighting for worker's rights.

6. Challenge of Digitalisation

- 6.1. The globalisation and digitalisation of the economy have created new, flexible and mobile forms of employment, challenging traditional employment patterns.
- 6.2. Young people are increasingly carrying out services and finding work through digital platforms where their services are readily available.
- 6.3. Platforms are not self-running means of exchanging services, but service providers are carrying out work in a different form to suit the needs of today's increasingly digitalised society. They must not be treated as self-employed in order to deny them benefits that a traditional worker enjoys such as paid sick-leave, annual leave, state pension etc.
- 6.4. Flexibility, competitiveness and modernisation cannot simply lead to the deregulation of labour protection standards and welfare cuts.