



Press Release

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EU Youth Guarantee falls short of initial expectations, say Auditors

The EU Youth Guarantee, which aims to help young people without jobs, training or education, has made limited progress, and its results fall short of initial expectations, according to a new report from the European Court of Auditors (ECA). Under the Youth Guarantee, Member States should ensure that all young people receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of leaving school or becoming unemployed. In addition, the European Council established the Youth Employment Initiative to increase support for those regions and individuals struggling the most, with a budget of €6.4 billion.

The auditors visited Ireland, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Portugal and Slovakia. These Member States had made some progress in implementing the Youth Guarantee, and some results had been achieved. However, none had ensured that all those not in employment, education or training had the opportunity to take up an offer within four months.

“Over four million under-25s were still unemployed across the EU in mid-2016”, said Iliana Ivanova, the Member of the ECA responsible for the report. “Policymakers should ensure that programmes designed to help young people do not raise expectations which cannot be fulfilled. Indeed, the European Commission itself acknowledged in its recent White Paper on the Future of Europe that there is a mismatch between expectations and the EU’s capacity to meet them.”

One important contributing factor, say the auditors, is that it is impossible to address all young people affected by using the resources available from the EU budget alone. In the case of the Youth Guarantee, the auditors found a lack of strategies with clear milestones and objectives to reach all those who needed offers of employment, education or training; the overall cost and available funding were not assessed by Member States, and the poor quality of the available data made it difficult to assess results.

The examination of the Youth Employment Initiative found that the assessment of its target group had been insufficient, that there was a risk of EU funding simply replacing national funding rather than adding extra value, and that the low quality of data made it difficult to measure the

The purpose of this press release is to give the main messages of the special report adopted by the European Court of Auditors. The full report is on www.eca.europa.eu.

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reported results, which were below expectations. The auditors concluded that the Youth Employment Initiative had made a limited contribution to date in the Member States visited.

The ECA makes a number of recommendations to the European Commission and to the Member States.

Among the key points raised, the Member States and the Commission should:

- manage expectations by setting realistic and achievable objectives and targets
- perform gap assessments and market analyses prior to setting up schemes
- improve their monitoring and reporting systems.

The Member States should:

- establish a complete overview of the cost of the Youth Guarantee and tailor schemes to available financing
- ensure that offers of employment, education or training match participants' profiles and labour market demand, and therefore lead to sustainable employment.

The Commission should:

- ensure that Member States justify how their EU-funded youth employment measures will adequately address their needs.

Special Report No 5/2017: "Youth unemployment – have EU policies made a difference? An assessment of the Youth Guarantee and the Youth Employment Initiative" is available on the ECA website eca.europa.eu in 23 EU languages.