



Manifesto from Young liberal Leaders on the need to tackle youth unemployment in Europe in the context of the post-Covid recovery



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Having met in Copenhagen between the 23rd and 25th of September 2022, leaders of young liberal organisations from all over Europe decided to reaffirm the pressing need to tackle the issue of youth unemployment in the EU and its many countries, especially in the context of the post-COVID pandemic recovery, the economic depression and high inflation resulting from the Russian war in Ukraine.

The issue of youth unemployment is fundamentally about providing equality of opportunities to young people, as it empowers them to realise their own life project(s). Young people are the future of our societies, and only by empowering them now will we be able to solve many of the current and future problems that our societies will face, from climate change to an ageing population. Taking stock of this crucial matter, we have reached the following commitments and conclusions:

1 Empower young people to choose the best education path for themselves

University may not be the right option for everyone. As a society, we need to move beyond the terms "low-skilled jobs" and "higher education", and instead focus on the practical and technical side of education which focuses on future career choices. All jobs are equally legitimate and necessary for the proper functioning of our societies, but this needs to be properly enforced and recognised. In some European countries, it is not only about tackling unemployment, as while there are jobs available in the market, issues such as poor working conditions or lack of specialised training leaves the vacancy unfilled. This is why we find it crucial to put emphasis on **apprenticeships**, the **standardisation of vocational training** across EU countries, which would help the movement of workers, and the exchange of best practices, for example; on how to inform and motivate graduates who might want to improve their vocational skills. We must encourage **industry and government partnerships** for vocational training, and increase the **cooperation of national unemployment centres** at an EU level.

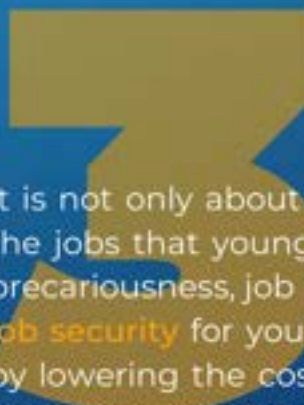
2 New jobs for a new generation in a truly European job market

We need new jobs for the new generations: jobs in the field of sustainability, jobs that incorporate the latest digitalisation advances, even jobs that we have not already thought of. We need a **true European job market**, where digitalisation is promoted and red tape reduced around employment.

This will incentivise young **entrepreneurship and self-employment**, which will boost the dynamism of the private sector.

We must enable **real free movement of people**, and create true mobility by lowering the current barriers that prevent EU citizens from relocating. Fostering knowledge of foreign languages in the EU and informing young generations about opportunities, will contribute to reducing inefficiencies in the EU single market, lowering unemployment, and extending opportunities for young people. Thus, we should make available more opportunities to work and travel between European countries by encouraging **Erasmus for young entrepreneurs**, workers, traineeships abroad and other related initiatives.

We call for a comprehensive **EU-wide report and 'analysis of skills'**, so that employers and governments can know which skills are available where and vice versa. Finally, we must encourage the use of digital resources to enable a European-wide skill exchange, sharing and learning, which would also allow people to improve their skills while working ("skill and reskill"), increase their mobility and enhance the traineeship infrastructure between EU countries.



Improve working conditions to eradicate the 'working poor'

It is not only about getting a job. We must **improve the labour conditions** of the jobs that young people get, as poor conditions will only perpetuate their precariousness, job insecurity and delay their emancipation. We have to ensure **job security** for young people through incentives for their employers, such as by lowering the cost of employing young people through tax breaks, or other payments that do not encourage hiring young people. We have to **respect all jobs** - we truly believe that everyone is capable of carrying out any job they want in any sector, and in doing it, can contribute to society by doing their part.

We must focus on **lowering the inflation rate**, as it has hugely detrimental effects to the cost of living, especially for young people. In connection with that, we must give appropriate importance and care to both **mental and physical health** and promote more **counselling** for young people, especially on how and where to find an appropriate job relevant to their skillset but also how to cope with the mental health costs of unemployment.

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