

Resolution adopted at the EPP Congress, Dublin (Ireland), 6th -7th March 2014

**Improving the employability of youths and older workers
in the European Union, 2014–2020**

One of the most obvious outcomes of the disruptions to the labour market which arose from changing socio-economic structures and the economic crisis has been massive job losses.

Economic growth is the key to creating more, better jobs and boosting social cohesion. The battle against youth unemployment (people under 30) and unemployment among older workers (people over 45), many of whom are long-term unemployed and who have families to support, must be treated as a top priority. The unacceptably high levels of unemployment in these groups is resulting in grave social consequences and may have a major long-term impact on the future prospects of both those affected and the European economy generally.

The application by Member States of the Youth Guarantee and, where appropriate, a recently-designed Senior Guarantee, are crucially important when it comes to reviving job creation for both young and older workers, smoothing the transition from school to work and easing the reinstatement of older workers who have found themselves excluded from the job market. Investment in education is essential, as is greater labour mobility. These demand greater cooperation between the public employment services and the elimination regulatory barriers to accessing professional services and freedom of movement.

Maximising the potential of key sectors currently in their infancy, such as the ecology economy, ICTs and health and social support, should be seen as a special priority for the European Institutions and Member States.

While economic and tax reforms are starting to produce positive results, social exclusion and inequality remain a significant challenge.

The full potential of structural funds and European investment must be realised and make a fundamental contribution to recovery especially through funding improvements in education and training. The application of EU-level programmes, with special attention being paid to unemployment among younger and older workers, also have the potential to contribute towards promoting employment and social cohesion. Youths and older workers must be given more opportunities to gain fresh qualifications in order for them to be able to adapt to the fast-moving changes in an ever changing, dynamic economy. The bottom line is for this to take place in such a way that they can reclaim their places in the world of work, reducing the length of time they are jobless and the consequent costs which must be borne by the public purse.

This being the case, improved targeting of structural funds to enhance the employability of youths and older workers could be an effective and powerful tool with the potential to make a significant impact on the prevailing, unfortunate labour market situation. At the same time, it could establish the foundations for a more efficient EU labour market for the 2014–2020 horizon.