



THE YOUTH



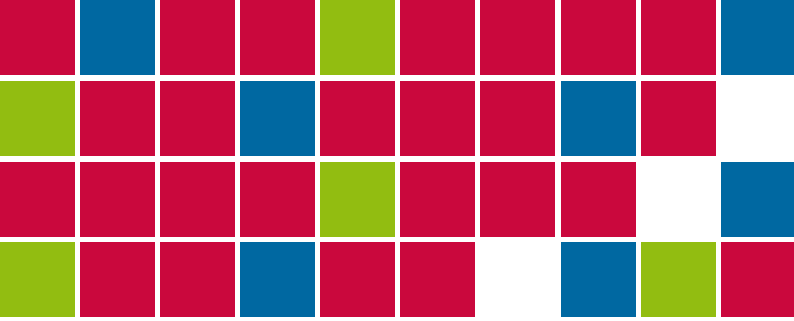
GUARANTEE



IN EUROPE







THE YOUTH GUARANTEE IN EUROPE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the time of writing (June 2014), almost all Member States had reacted positively to the Council Recommendation establishing a national Youth Guarantee either by drafting a national implementation plan or, at least, clearly stating their intention to follow the European blueprint. Although this positive reaction represents a first step, there is still room for improvement both concerning how countries have designed their plans and the extent of involvement of trade unions in the Youth Guarantee schemes across Europe.

The Youth Guarantee represents a good opportunity, in particular for some countries, to rethink and reorganise active labour market policies targeting young people. Further, its design and implementation can also help identify the linkages between the labour market and education systems, as well as between the labour market and welfare systems, that need to be improved in order to ensure smoother transitions into the labour market.

However, supply-side labour market measures, like the Youth Guarantee, need to be thought of in the macro-economic context and be considered together with demand-side measures. It is too limited to deal with unemployment by focusing only on the supply-side and labour market policies which are based on the overly straightforward assumption that unemployment can be tackled mainly by targeting job search, improving skills, and strengthening motivation. The issue of unemployment, particularly among young people, cannot be thought of as a mere behavioural and (ir)rational choice problem of the supply-side.

Based on the results of a survey carried out among the members of the ETUC Youth Committee concerning their involvement in the development of YG schemes and the analysis of the national Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans available until June 2014, the main findings are that:

- The Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans (YGIPs) are mainly built on existing national and regional measures and institutions as well as on local needs. This has resulted in a variety of approaches and designs of YGIPs. However, several countries have included traineeships and temporary contracts as one of the most important measures within the framework of the YG.
- In some countries, strong reliance on EU funds with no national short/medium term engagement might limit the scope and the effective implementation of structural reforms aiming at institutionalising good quality services for young people. Moreover lacking resources in the long run might reduce the sustainability and coherence of the programmes and interventions funded.
- The availability of funding is a necessary but not sufficient condition for an effective implementation of the YGIPs. In several regions across Europe, the absorption capacity of the ESF fund, particularly linked to administrative and human resources skills, is very low and this might undermine the realisation of the YG in the country.
- The involvement of social partners in the Youth Guarantee is clearly mentioned in the Council Recommendation. However, only in very few countries did trade unions report that they were satisfied with their role in the design of the YG. Most of the ETUC affiliates reported that their involvement was partial and sporadic, often in the margins of other meetings and with no real possibility of tackling the YG topic in a detailed way.
- The participation of trade unions at the different stages of the YGIPs was often done within ad-hoc institutions or in lightly formalised institutions.
- Most of the projects funded under the ESF will undergo formal evaluation; however in several countries it is still not clear in the YGIPs how the YG will be monitored and assessed. Further, the role and the involvement of trade unions is far from being clearly stated.
- The YG foresees that Public Employment Services (PES) play an important role in delivering services to the young public. Yet, national PES are often understaffed and not prepared to cope with a young public which might not have been part of its usual target group before.

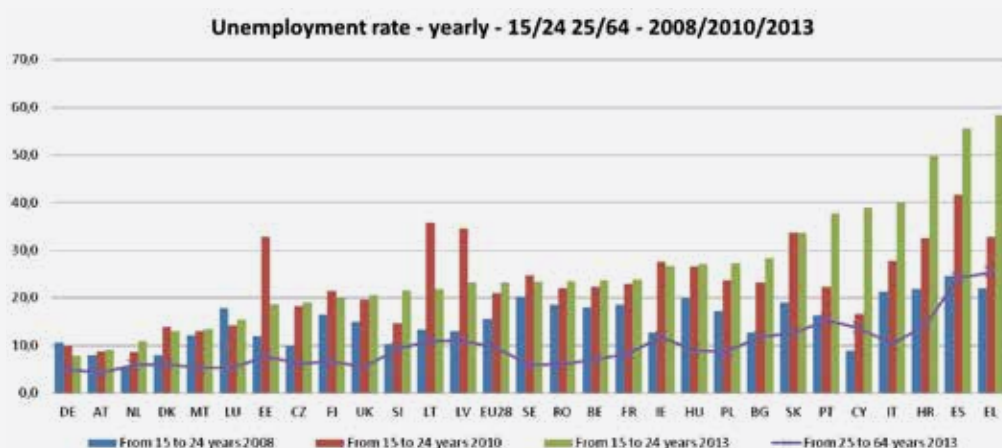
Finally, again, although the introduction of the YG might have a positive impact both in terms of labour market outcomes and institutional change by stimulating improvement of labour market services, the supply-side labour market policies need to be considered in conjunction with education, youth, and welfare policies as well as the bigger macro-economic context.

This report is composed of four parts: the first part deals with the labour market situation of young people with a special focus on NEETs (young people not in education, employment or training). The second part presents the main features of the Youth Guarantee project as it has been developed at the European level. The third part presents the results of the survey conducted among ETUC affiliates in order to understand whether and how trade unions were involved in the development of the YG schemes at the national level. The fourth part outlines in detail all the YG implementation plans together with the trade union position in each country. The conclusions draw some reflections on the future developments of the YG and point out some potential obstacles that might be addressed in the future.

EVOLUTION OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT DURING THE CRISIS

This first section shows some labour market developments for the younger generation. It looks at three different moments of the crisis: 2008 when the financial crisis had not yet fully spread to labour markets, 2010 when the first signs of an increasingly worrying labour market situation clearly appeared and 2013 with the latest developments. Two age groups are considered: youth, commonly defined as young people aged between 15 and 24 years, and the older group aged between 25 and 29. The decision to include this latter group is driven by the fact that it has also experienced a significant increase in unemployment and NEETs rates (ETUI/ETUC, 2014). A special focus will be dedicated to the NEETs, which are the target group of the Youth Guarantee.

Figure 1: Unemployment rate – young people age between 15 and 24 and adults aged between 25 and 64, yearly data



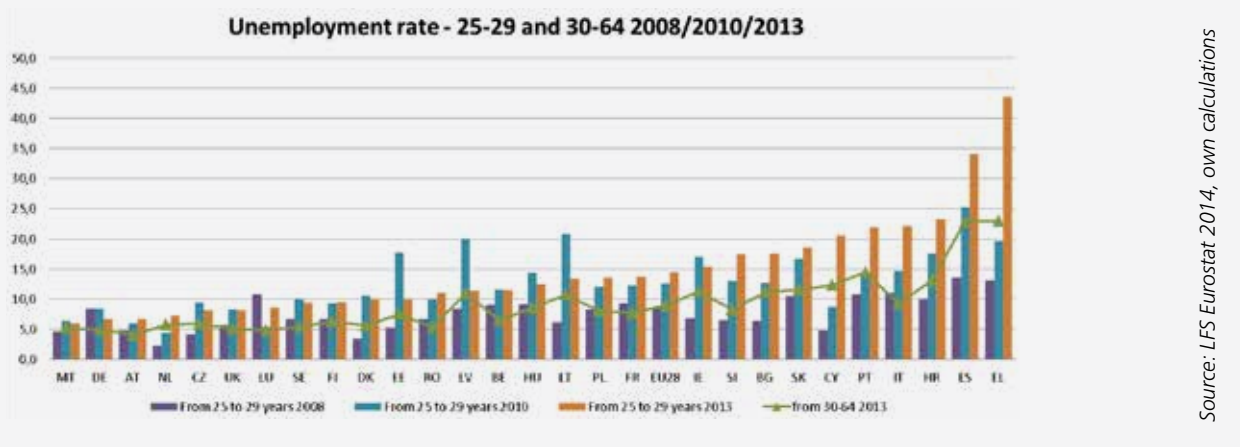
Source: LFS Eurostat 2014

Figure 1 shows the unemployment rate of young people aged between 15 and 24 years and of adults aged between 25 and 64 years, in 2013, for comparative purposes. Data from 2008 show that there were already important differences between countries for the young cohort: in 2008, in Germany, slightly more than 10% of the labour force aged between 15 and 24 years old were unemployed. Austria, The Netherlands and Denmark showed even lower rates. In contrast, Greece, Spain, Croatia and Italy had rates higher than 20%, which skyrocketed in the following years. In 2010, two years after the onset of the crisis, unemployment rates started to grow in several countries. The increase was dramatic in the Baltic countries where youth unemployment attained more than 30-35%. Other countries experienced massive increases in unemployment, such as Slovakia, Spain and Ireland. While in 2010 there was a common increase trend in unemployment – though with differences in scope and with the exception of Luxembourg and Germany–, in 2013 diverging trends emerged across Europe. In some countries the rate of youth unemployment increased very slightly compared to 2010; in a few member states it decreased, like in Germany, Denmark and the Baltic countries; but in others, youth unemployment figures recorded dramatic increases, like in Portugal, Cyprus, Croatia, Spain, Greece and Italy. Divergent trends are due both to the different macro-economic situation (ETUI/ETUC 2014) and austerity measure enacted to face the crisis.

The sharp decline in youth unemployment in the Baltic countries has been impressive. Firstly, the macro-economic environment changed radically during the five years of the crisis: during the first two years they experienced a strong depression due to a disproportionately high share of real estate and construction (Unt, 2012) while in the following years they went through a notably high recovery (ETUI/ETUC, 2014). The recovery, which also helped reduce unemployment, was driven by the reduction of private credit and growth in exports (ETUI/ETUC, 2014). Secondly, labour force migration ‘helped’ to cut unemployment (Maslauskaitė & Zorgenfreija, 2013), meaning that potential young unemployed individuals left the country. The economic decline, the cutbacks

in welfare and the high unemployment rate triggered emigration in particular of young men of working age (OECD, 2013). The profile of the labour migrant from the Baltics has changed in recent years: Latvians are more likely to be students with higher education degrees and they are oriented to long-term or permanent migration. Estonian labour migrants were mostly young blue-collar males aged between 15 and 34 years working in the construction sector, which was highly affected during the crisis. While young Estonians are likely to go back to their country of origin, young Lithuanians aged between 20 and 34 years tend to leave the country for longer periods or permanently. Lithuania experienced mass emigration between 2009 and 2011. Emigrants were mostly young people (20-34 years old), who represented more than 55% of emigrants, and more than half of them had completed upper secondary vocational education (OECD, 2013). Indeed, this can have an impact in the long run if the young and educated labour force continues to leave these countries.

Figure 2: Unemployment rate young adults aged between 25 and 29 years and adults aged between 30 and 64 - yearly data



When extending the age group to include young people aged between 25 and 29, one can see that it was also strongly affected by the crisis and that both the patterns of increase and rates are very similar across the board to the ones of the younger group. From a gender perspective young women in both the 15-24 and 25-29 age groups had slightly higher unemployment rates than young men in the first years of the crisis (ETUI/ETUC, 2014). Since 2010, data show a reverse trend with young men having higher unemployment rates. This is mainly due to the sectors affected by the crisis and job losses, which were mainly male-dominated, namely the craft and related trade workers sectors (ETUI/ETUC, 2014). However, in both age groups, the steady increase in female unemployment is very likely to reduce this gap also triggered by austerity measures enacted in the female-dominated public sector, such as health and social services. (ETUI/ETUC, 2014).

Figure 3: NEETs young people aged between 15 and 24 years, yearly data by activity status

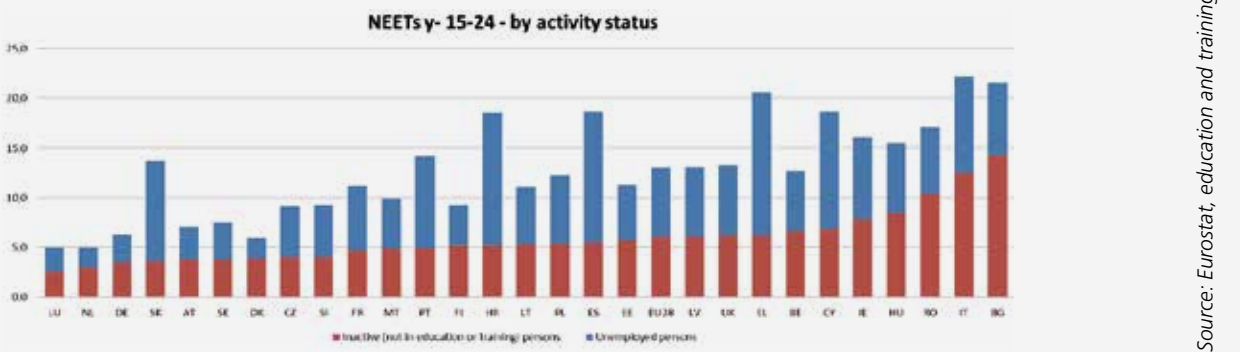
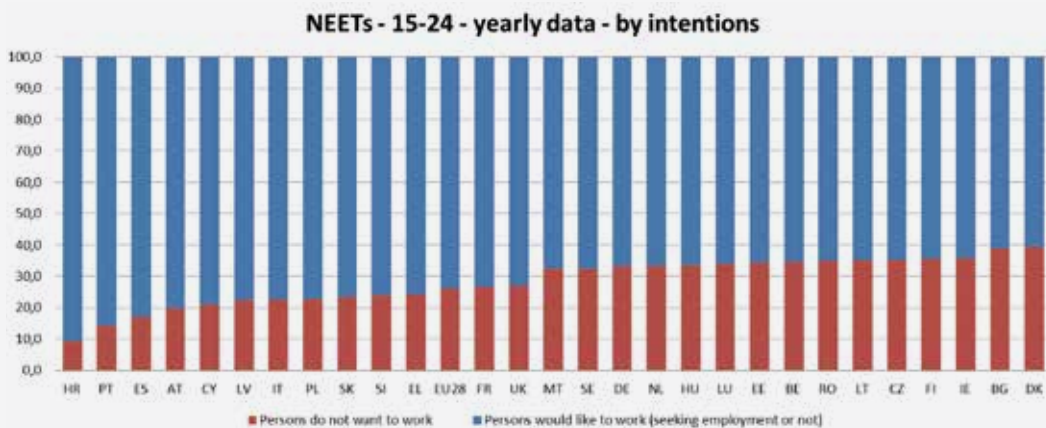


Figure 3 shows NEETs rates for young people aged between 15 and 24 years by activity status (unemployed and inactive¹) in percentage points. It is widely acknowledged that NEETs are a heterogeneous population that embraces young people with very different socio-economic and educational background as well as having different reasons for being NEET (Dietrich, 2013; Eurofound, 2012). Therefore, Figure 3 only gives a partial picture that can be somewhat complemented by the information provided by Figure 4, showing whether young NEETs are available for work. Countries are ordered according to the higher percentage points of young people inactive among their NEETs population. The relevance of the share of inactive can be a good indication of the type of policies that need to be strengthened in the country. If most of the young NEETs are unemployed and are also looking for a job, then active labour market policies aiming at activating them quickly by providing job-search assistance and job-matching services could be more appropriate. On the contrary, if there is a higher share of inactive NEETs not looking for a job, then a closer look at the reasons of inactivity (are these young people in disability benefits, on parental leave or single parents? Are they mainly from some regions or with a migrant background? etc.) is necessary to identify whether stronger or better targeted outreaching programmes need to be put in place. It is interesting to note that countries with a high share of NEETs, such as Italy, Bulgaria, Croatia, Spain, and Cyprus have very different shares of activity status. In Croatia, Spain, and Greece most young NEETs are actually unemployed, meaning that they would be available for work and actively seeking a job. The same cannot be said for countries like Italy, Bulgaria, and Romania, where the high share of NEETs is actually mostly composed of young inactive NEETs. This does not imply that these young inactive NEETs do not want to work (see graph below), but that – for different reasons – they are not looking for a job and are not available for work in the weeks following the survey (e.g. family duties, being ill or disabled, etc).

From a general perspective, the total level of NEETs for this age group shows a not so rosy picture: in 2013, Greece, Italy and Bulgaria had rates higher than 20%, meaning that one out of five young persons in these countries was out of the labour market and any other education or training system. In other countries, the share of young NEETs unemployed and inactive is fairly similar. A final caveat, to keep in mind when dealing with NEETs figure, is the duration of this ‘being NEET’ spell. Aggregate data fail to grasp individual trajectories and these data cannot tell us how much time these young NEETs are actually spending as NEETs. Previous research in some European countries has shown that time spent in a NEET state can be very different across countries and it entails different policy designs.

Figure 4: NEETs young people aged between 15 and 24 years, yearly data by intentions

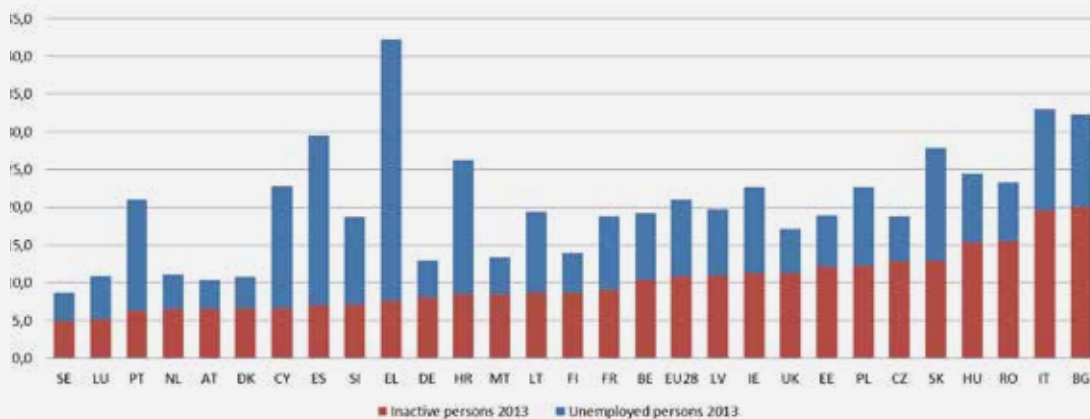


Source: Eurostat, education and training, 2014

¹ It is important to note that we use the definition inactive NEETs here in order to define young people who are not in employment education or training and who are not seeking a job, i.e. that are not defined as unemployed. This definition of ‘inactive’ should not be confused with the more general definition of inactive in the labour market that, for this age group, would also include students as they are ‘economically inactive’.

Figure 5 shows the rate of young NEETs aged between 25 and 29. Similarly as in Figure 3, countries are ordered according to the share of young inactive NEETs. Six countries have shares higher than 25% meaning that one quarter of the whole population of young people aged between 25 and 29 years is not in employment, education or training. As shown in ETUI/ETUC (2014), only a small part of this age group is still in the education system (in the EU28 in 2012, 8.1% were in education or training), while the vast majority is already working (in 2012 in the EU28 71% of young people aged 25-29 were employed). The high share of unemployment and inactive NEETs is then worrying as, for most of them, entry into education is less of an option than for the young group. However, it is always important to warn against any homogenisation of the NEET group, regardless of the age group. While for the young cohort a temporary NEETs situation could be linked to the transition from school to the labour market, being NEET for this older age group could be explained by parenthood or family care as young people between 25 and 29 are more likely to be in the phase of family formation.

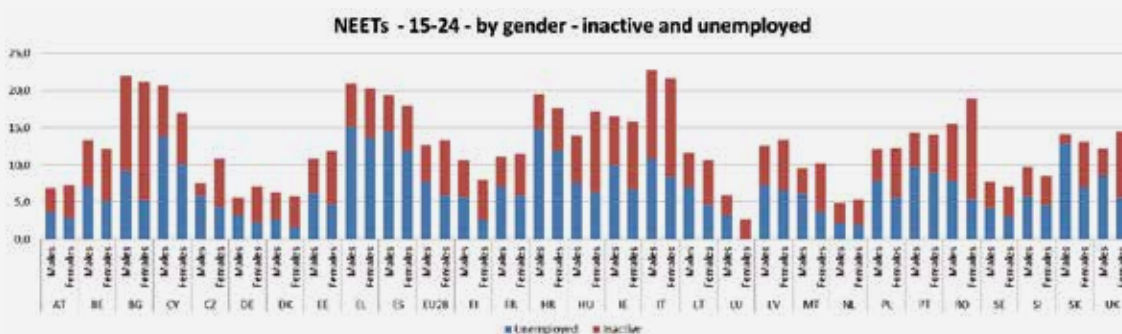
Figure 5: NEETs young people aged between 25 and 29 years, yearly data



Source: Eurostat, education and training, 2014

Figure 5 shows a similar pattern for this age group to the young one. Countries most affected by the crisis show very high NEETs rates, namely Greece and Spain. However, most of the young persons in this category defined themselves as unemployed (available to work and looking for a job), while inactive NEETs in these countries represent around 7-8 % of the whole reference population which is in line with countries with low shares of NEETs such as Luxembourg, Denmark, Austria and Sweden. Nonetheless, there are also countries that are still suffering from the impact of the crisis that have a high level of inactive NEETs. This is case for Italy and Bulgaria where inactive NEETs represent more than half of all NEETs.

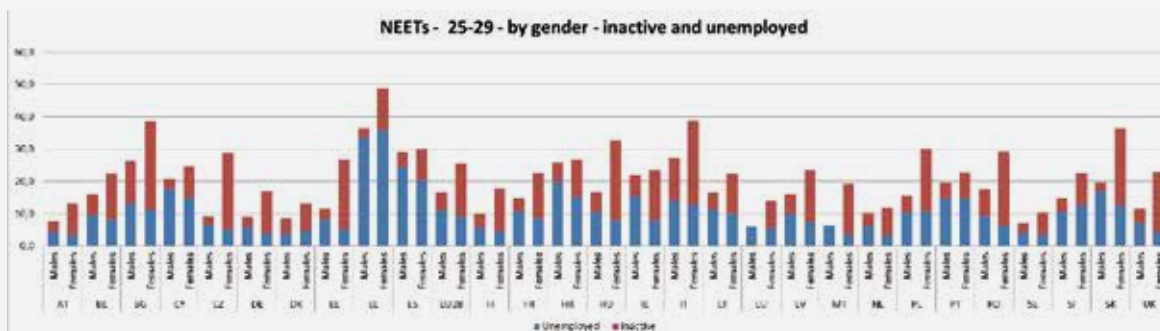
Figure 6: NEETs aged between 15 and 24 years by gender and status, 2013



Note: Each column represents the share of unemployed and inactive NEETs among male and female populations for that age group. Data for unemployed females for Luxembourg are missing.

Source: Eurostat, education and training, 2014.

Figure 7: NEETs aged between 25 and 29 years by gender and status, 2013

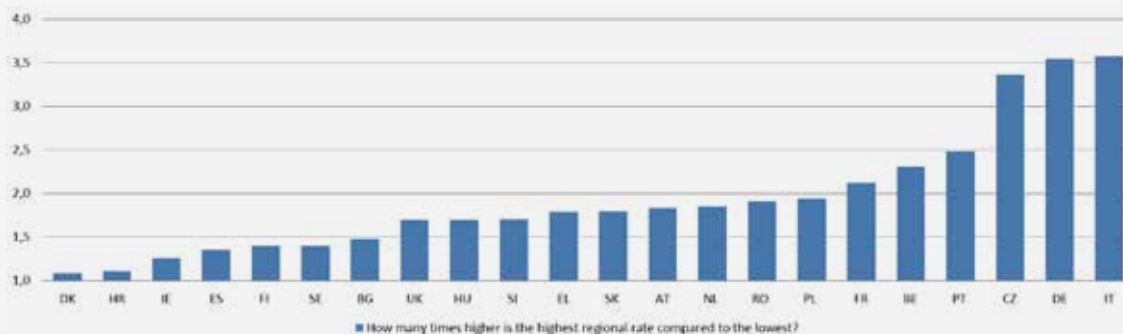


Source Eurostat, education and training, 2014

When broken down by gender and activity status (Figure 6 and Figure 7) one can see that the difference between the distribution of inactive and unemployed NEETs by gender is more pronounced among the older than the younger cohort also because of family formation and caring duties that mostly concern women.

Also the variations in rates of NEETs for young women and males are significantly different. The share of unemployed NEETs in Greece and Spain, strongly hit by the crisis, is higher for both males and female also for the older cohort. In Central and Eastern European countries, but also in Italy, the share of inactive NEETs among female is striking compared to the share of inactive NEETs among young males. This also reflects poor employment rates for the female population of these countries, which are far below the EU28 average (data not shown).

Figure 8: NEETs aged between 15 and 24- Regional differences between NUTS 2 regions², 2013



Source: Eurostat, education and training, 2014 own calculations

Funding allocated at the European level for combating youth unemployment, namely the YEI (Youth Employment Initiative), will be granted to regions (NUTS 2³) in member states which experienced high levels of youth unemployment (equal or more than 25%) or significant increases. Although the unemployment rate is retained for granting the money, it is the NEETs rate that is used for identifying the target population.

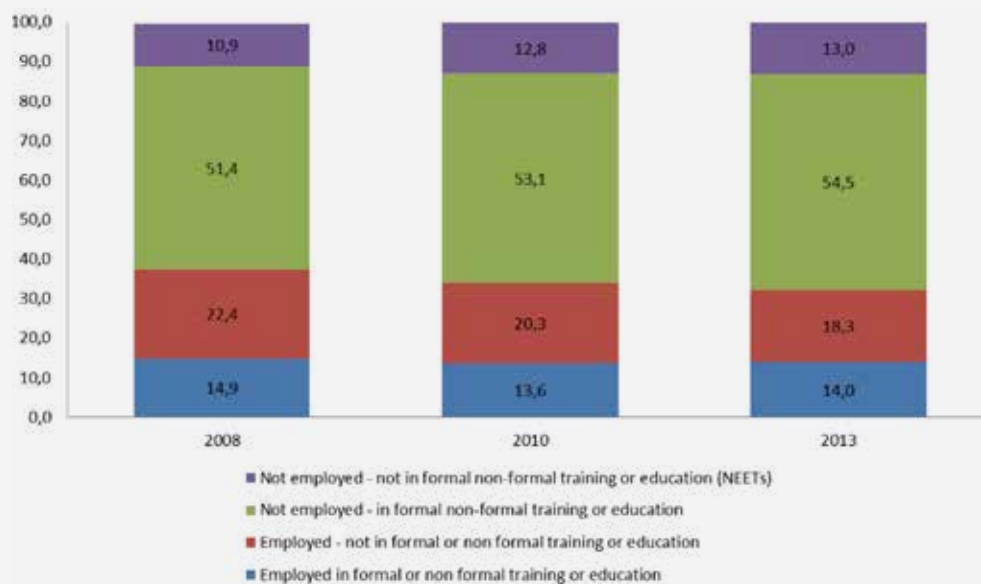
Figure 8 shows rates of NEETs in the different countries as well as the percentage point difference between the lowest and the highest rate of NEETs across national sub-regions. The idea is to show that the NEETs issue has also a regional dimension that needs to be considered when policies are designed. Lower differences across countries denote a more homogeneous situation of young people. This is the case in Denmark, Croatia and Ireland where the gap across the country is not higher than 1.3 times the rate of the regions with the lowest rates. For Germany and Italy the highest rates are 3.5 times the lowest rate. This graph has to be read together with the national

² Countries with no second column are countries with no statistical division in NUTS.

³ Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) defined, NUTS 2 category refers to regions belonging to the second level, largely used

rate levels of NEETs as the average national level in Germany is significantly lower than the average national rate of Italy; nonetheless high disparities across regions should not be overlooked. As will be shown in the country section, some countries, also because of their distribution of competences, will develop regional Youth Guarantee schemes within a national framework (e.g. Italy and Spain). While the regional approach might turn out to be the most appropriate to tackle and better adapt the measures to the regional needs, it is important to provide a flexible yet clear national framework ensuring that all young people receive at least similar programmes in terms of content and quality and that mechanisms of redistribution and support are put into place at the national level. High NEETs rates are often found in regions where resources and administrative capacity is low because of a mutual reinforcing of negative socio-economic circumstances. Moreover, the allocation of higher amounts of resources in most deprived areas is necessary but not always effective: as will be shown in the next section, the administrative capacity for spending money and organising services is crucial for an effective implementation of programmes.

Figure 9: Population distribution - employed and not employed and in education or training - 15-24 – EU28



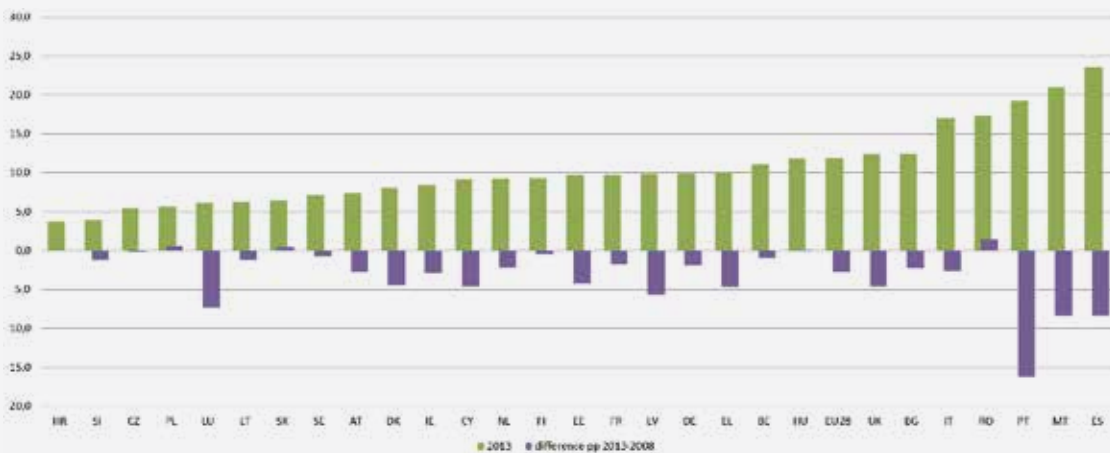
Source: Eurostat, education and training, 2014

The share of young people in education and training and not employed – i.e. they are supposedly full-time students – increased steadily between 2008 and 2013. Although this aggregated date cannot reveal how young people are moving between labour market and education, one can imagine that the increase of the share of young people in education and training is due to an established trend of increasing participation in education, but also to the steady reduction in early leavers from education and training (see Figure 10).

Showing a similar trend, the share of young NEETs increased more rapidly in the first two years of the crisis, mostly due to a sudden high increase in young unemployed. Between 2010 and 2013 the increase was more modest and in 2013, 13% of young people were not in employment, education or training. Since 2008, in the EU28, the share of young employed people has been decreasing by two percentage points every two years, confirming the lower presence of young people in the labour market. While the share of young people in employment is still decreasing, there is a slight increase in young people both employed and in education or training. The trend was negative in the first period of the crisis and confirmed the decreasing availability of training and vocational education in companies (Heyes, 2014). Finally, Figure 11 and Figure 12 show

employment rates for young people (15-24) and young adults (25-29) in 2008, 2010 and 2013. Countries are ranged according to their rates in 2008 in order to show the big contractions in employment for both groups in some countries like Ireland, Slovenia and Cyprus that had rates higher than the EU28 average but fell significantly after 2008 in the first and after 2010 in the others. During the first period of the crisis the reduction in employment was limited for both age groups (around 5 pp), except in the Baltic countries, Ireland and Spain that were affected from the very onset of the crisis because of their very open markets in the first case and the real estate and construction sector bubble in the latter.

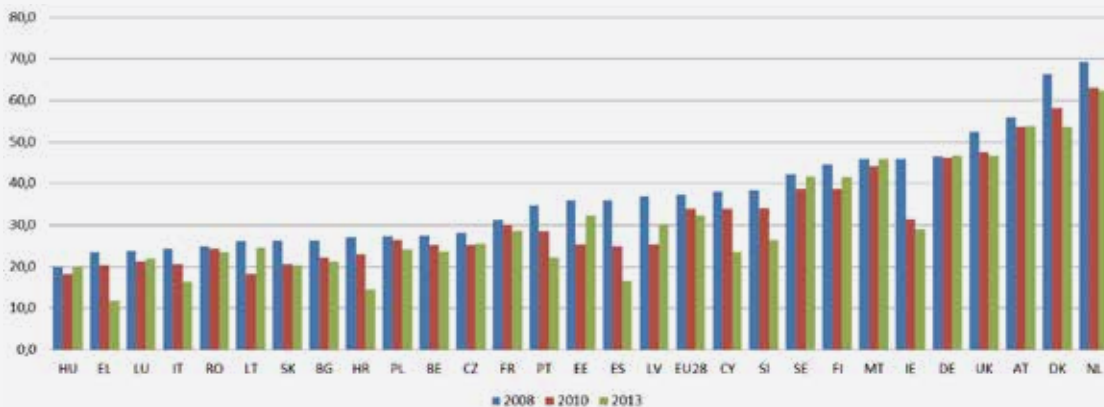
Figure 10: Early leavers from education and training (18-24), 2013 and difference in pp between 2008 and 2013



Source: Eurostat, education and training, 2014

For young people aged 15-24 employment rates vary substantially across countries. This is not only due to the crisis and the important job destruction that took place in some countries, but also to the institutional setting. For instance, apprenticeships in Austria and Germany increase country employment rates for this group as young people are counted as employed. In 2012, Germany and Austria had respectively 53.6% and 50% of young people employed and also in education or training (ETUI/ETUC, 2014). In other European countries like the Netherlands, Denmark and Finland, the share of part-time jobs contributes significantly to the high rate of young people in employment (ETUI/ETUC, 2014).

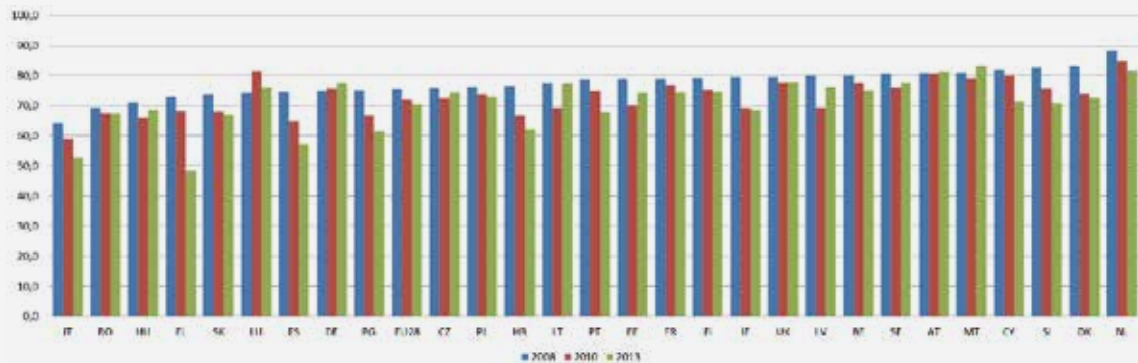
Figure 11: Employment rate – young people aged between 15 and 24 years – yearly data



Source: LFS Eurostat 2014

Even for the older group, we find important variations across the the board, that have been widening with the crisis. In 2008, the difference between Italy, the country with the lowest rate, and the Netherlands, the country with the highest rate of young adult employment, was 24 percentage points. Since the start of the crisis the divergence between the right-hand side and left-hand side of the chart has increased: in 2013 the difference in percentage points of young adult employment was almost 35 percentage points (Greece with the lowest rate and Malta the highest).

Figure 12: Employment rate – young adults aged between 25 and 29 years old – yearly data



Source: LFS Eurostat 2014

Although not shown, the share of young people employed in temporary contacts has been increasing steadily since before the crisis and, after an initial reduction due to the onset of the crisis, it started rising again in 2009 (Eurofound, 2014). The proportion of young people employed on temporary contracts went up in 20 of the 28 Member States. The use of temporary contracts among young people aged 15-24 was particularly widespread in Italy and Ireland where it grew respectively by 10.6 and 14.4 percentage points between 2007 and 2012. In 2012, at the European level (EU27), 42.1% of young people were employed on temporary contracts. Only Romania, Latvia, Lithuania and Bulgaria showed rates lower than 10%, while all the other countries had higher rates, with Slovenia having 72% of its young employed labour force hired on temporary contracts. The nature of temporary contracts can vary enormously as well as the potential positive or negative impact that these contracts can play in young people's trajectories in the labour market. Indeed, temporary contracts, like apprenticeships that ensure high-quality training and clear employment prospects, might serve as a stepping stone for a sustainable entry in the labour market compared to subsidised employment contracts or traineeships with no mandatory training or hiring conditionality. Although YG plans rely heavily on (temporary) job subsidies and traineeships, as we shall see in the coming section, studies have shown that the transition rate from temporary to stable employment positions decreased during the crisis, not only for temporary but also apprenticeship contracts (such as in France and Italy)(Eurofound, 2014). Moreover, Eurofound points out that, even though in most cases temporary contracts enjoy similar entitlement to social protection as regular contracts, in practice the nature of the job often does not guarantee access to unemployment, sickness and maternity leave benefits.

Hence, designing sound YGIPs (Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans) also means preventing a massive use of temporary employment subsidies that are at risk not only of leading to economic inefficiency (i.e. substitution, displacement and deadweight effects), but can also lead to an increasing precariousness of young people's trajectories in the labour market.

YOUTH GUARANTEE IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT:

FUNDING AND MONITORING⁴

The European Council of 7-8 February 2013 proposed a Youth Employment Initiative (YEI, hereinafter) with a budget of 6 billion euro. The 6 billion euro were to come from two different sources: a dedicated budget line (3 billion) and from targeted investment from the European Social Fund (3 billion)(European Commission, 2013b). YEI targets young people aged between 15 and 24 years old who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) regardless of their being registered as job-seekers. Regions eligible are those that had youth unemployment rates for young persons aged 15 to 24 of more than 25% in 2012, and for regions in Member States where the youth unemployment rate has increased by more than 30% in 2012 and had youth unemployment rates of more than 20% in 2012 .

Funding under the YEI is meant to *target individuals rather than systems or structures*, for which the European Commission suggests using 'regular' Cohesion funds (European Commission, 2013d). This implies that, for instance, measures that will be financed under the YEI will be direct support for traineeships or apprenticeships, provision for first jobs, mobility programmes, and second chance school measures. On the other hand, measures such as training of trainers or job counsellors or the modernisation of PES will be not funded under this initiative.

The ESF for the period 2014-2020 allocates 80 billion euro for human capital, employment and social inclusion projects. This amount corresponds to 23.1% of the total cohesion funds, a threshold that was set as a minimum for guaranteeing financing programmes under the ESF (European Commission, 2014). The funding under the YEI has been frontloaded, meaning that it will be available during the first two years, 2014 and 2015, and will aim at targeting the objectives of the Youth Employment Package, whose flagship initiative is the Youth Guarantee.

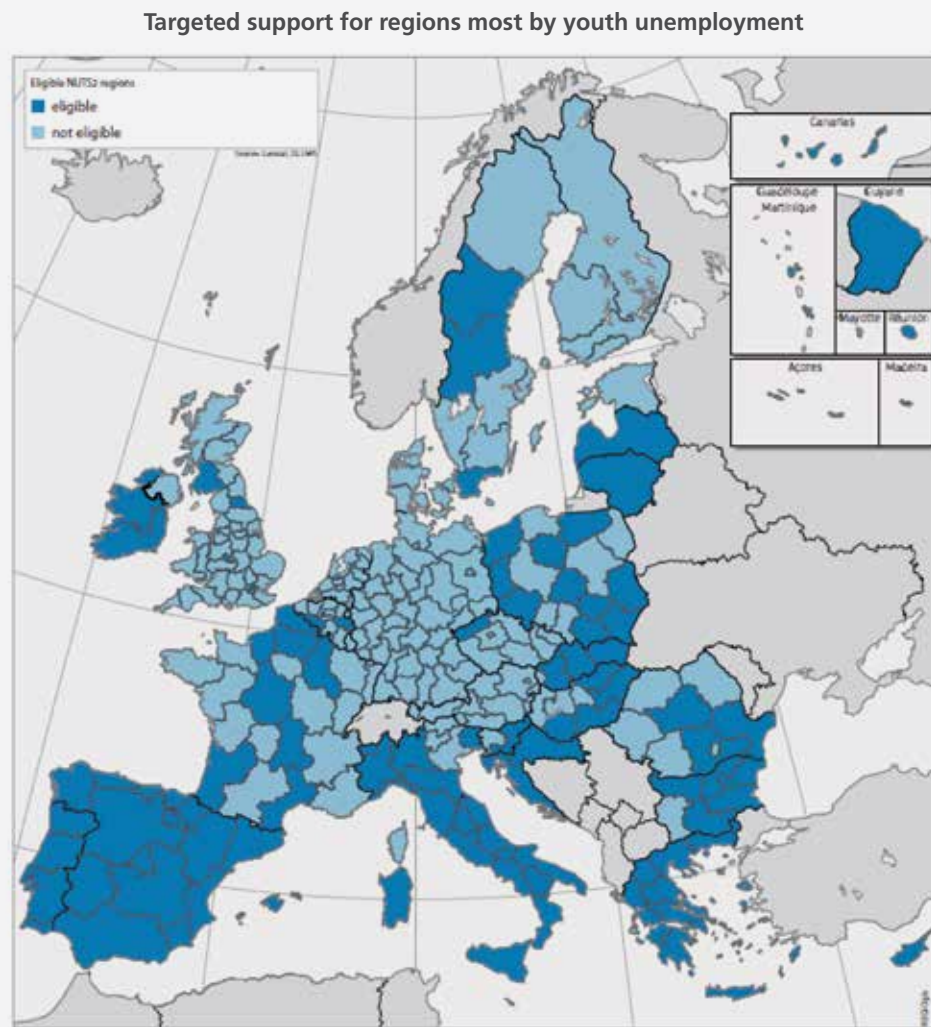
The YEI will then be composed of a share of funds that do not need to be co-financed (i.e. the share coming from the dedicated budget line) and a share coming from the ESF, which needs to be co-financed with national resources. However, it is important to underline that money allocated under the YEI is not supposed to replace the national commitment of resources aiming to reduce youth unemployment, but rather to complement national efforts and trigger a short-term answer to youth unemployment via the establishment of the YEI.

Nonetheless, although the availability of money is a necessary condition for project implementation, it is not always the unique solution for implementing policies. The absorption capacity, i.e. the institutional capacity for putting planned projects into place and claiming money back from the ESF, is an important element that ensures the effective use of funding. This is still limited in some countries, particularly those which are more in need of important reforms in systems and structures dealing with the priorities of the ESF. For instance, in Romania only slightly more than 10% of the projects approved were actually financed (European Commission, 2013a). The absorption capacity of regions and particularly of local authorities – which often have to manage structural funds - is highly dependent on competent staff and skills for preparing projects and being able to seize funding opportunities while meeting funding requirements. Further, cooperative abilities at the local level are also relevant for attracting and managing funds (Tatar, 2010), as well as the authorities' long-term vision, administrative efficiency (i.e. management, programming. Monitoring and evaluation capacity) and, indeed, sufficient resources to co-finance projects (Milio, 2007; Zaman & Georgescu, 2009).

⁴ Some countries are missing as National Reforms programmes are not yet available at the time of writing. (Slovakia, Latvia, Romania, Portugal)

⁵ REGULATION (EU) No 1304/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 17 December 2013 on the European Social Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006," 2013

Figure 13: Regions eligible for YEI funding



Monitoring

After the introduction of the European Semester, the Operational Programmes adopted by Member States for developing their ESF priorities, including projects under the YEI, over the seven-year programming period (2014-2020), need to be in line with the National Reform Programmes, which, in turn, are supposed to be assessed and monitored the following year between May and June by the Commission and the Council (Andor, 2014). Their assessment is translated into the Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs) that Member States are supposed to take on board for developing their policies.

In late May last year, the European Commission published the 2013-2014 CSRs. The 2013 recommendations were based on analyses of each Member State's situation and on the assessment of the implementation of the 2012-2013 CSRs combined with the analysis of the National Reform Programmes and Stability Convergence programmes presented by Member States in April that year.

In 2013⁶, seven countries did not receive any recommendation dealing with youth employment or youth issues (Estonia, Finland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Germany, Slovenia, and the Czech Republic)(Clauwaert, 2013), while 12 countries⁷ received a specific recommendation calling for the

⁶ Cyprus, Greece, Ireland and Portugal did not receive CSRs because they were to follow the Memorandum of understanding.

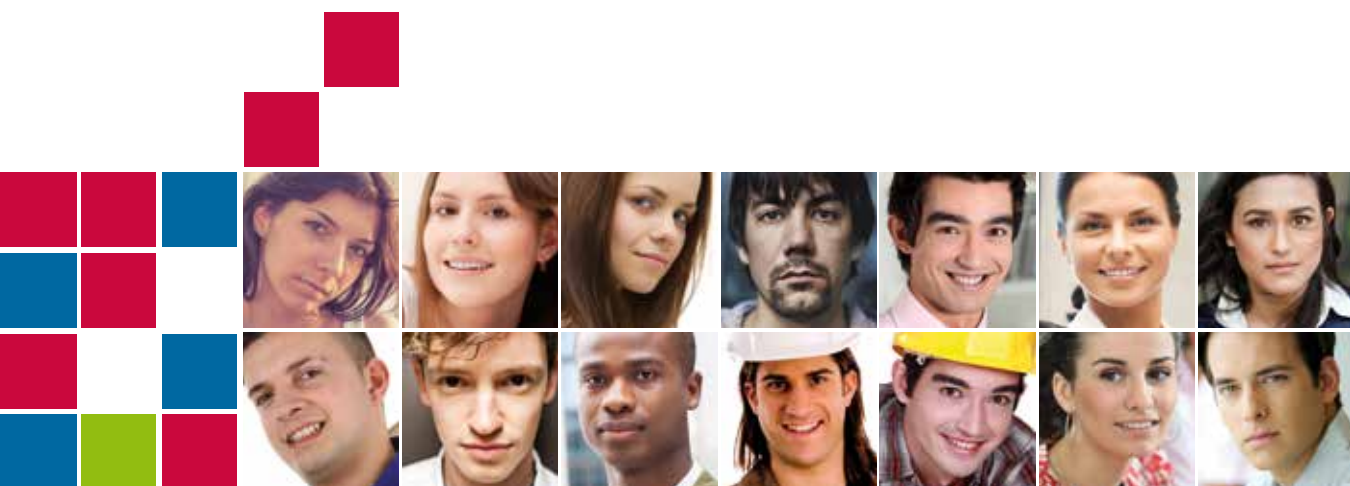
⁷ Bulgaria, Spain, France, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, the United Kingdom. Sweden were asked to complete existing measures to be in line with the Youth Guarantee.

implementation of the Youth Guarantee. All the remaining countries received some recommendations on specific issues mainly related to facilitating school-to-work transitions through hiring or apprenticeships, promoting work-based learning or reducing the share of early school leavers⁸.

In April this year, Member States sent their National Reforms Programmes (NRP) that, in principles, should build on the CSRs received last year.

Clauwaert reports that for eight countries the 2014-2015 CSRs delivered by the European Council this year highlight that some Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans do not meet the expectations or that some aspects need to be strengthened (Clauwaert, 2014 forthcoming). For example, CSRs for Bulgaria warn that not enough effort is put into the improvement of PES with the consequent risk of not reaching young people who are not registered at the PES. Similarly for Croatia, Italy, Portugal, Poland and Spain, CSRs recommend increasing the number of apprenticeships and improving out-reaching activities. CSRs for Ireland and Slovakia call for a better targeting and reinforced measures for long-term unemployed and low-skilled and disadvantaged young people⁹.

A large majority of countries reported that a YG was implemented or will be soon implemented. As will be discussed in the country specific section, several countries used the YG as a framework for existing measures and for improving specific features in order to comply with the definition of the YG set at the European level, and linked it with the YEI funding. Others have used the concept of the YG promoted at the European level for broadly framing national pilot projects aimed at young NEETs (e.g. France and Romania).



⁸ for a more in-depth overview, see Clauwaert, 2013

⁹ See CRs for each mentioned country at http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_en.htm



THE PARTNERSHIP APPROACH: AN OVERVIEW OF THE SURVEY RESULTS

As presented in Bussi and Geyer (2013), the YG shows some core elements that were put forward by the Commission in its Proposal for a Council Recommendation on a Youth Guarantee: the early intervention and activation; enhancing skills and promoting labour market integration and building on partnership-based approaches. This last core element of the YG includes three types of partnerships and involvement of different stakeholders: first the cooperation between relevant private and public employment services providers; second the involvement of young people's representatives and, third, cooperation with the social partners. The involvement of social partners is proposed at all levels and from the design to the implementation of policies targeting young people. In particular, the social partners are mainly involved in the development of apprenticeships and traineeship schemes.

Countries eligible for YEI funds were supposed to present YGIPs to the Commission in December last year. For those countries not receiving the funds from the YGIP the deadline was postponed to 2014. YGIPs were presented with some delays as the Commission asked some Member States to revise some parts (e.g. Belgium) or to comply with the requirement of consulting social partners on the issue (e.g. Greece).

As the partnership approach is an important element of the setting up of YGIPs, we launched a survey among trade unions in order to monitor whether they are involved, at this stage, and what is their degree of satisfaction regarding the cooperation. In this section we present an overview of the main features of the involvement of the trade unions across countries surveyed. In the following section we go more into details by presenting YGIP and its related measures as well as a more detailed description of trade unions' participation in the YGIP national plans.

The survey

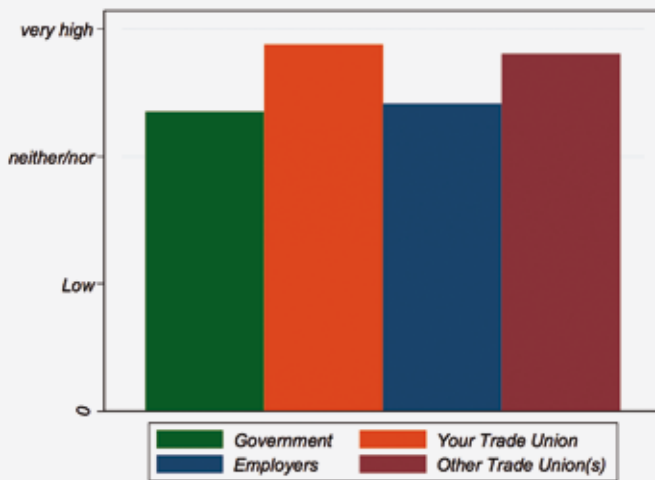
The survey was conducted between April and May 2014. All national representatives at the ETUC Youth Committee and the national representatives who took part in the negotiations on Youth Employment between October 2012 and April 2013 were involved in the survey. In some of the countries, like France, trade unions decided to submit a common position and send only one survey. For those countries where more than one answer was received, the different positions of trade unions are spelled out in the country sub-section. The survey compares trade unions' opinions on the relevance of the YG for the government, trade unions and employers; it also compares the view of challenges and priorities that the trade unions and the government esteem important to be tackled by the YG. Further, it tries to grasp the involvement of trade unions in four main steps: the design of the YGIP, its implementation, its daily management and its evaluation.

The survey reveals that, at the national level, trade unions were actively involved in 16 countries out of the 25 surveyed¹⁰.

According to the trade union representatives who took part in the survey, national governments do not attribute as much importance to the implementation of the YG as they do. The same is true for employers, who, according to trade unions, do not put the YG on the top of their agenda. Aggregate results are shown below, and for countries with more than one contribution the average score was calculated.

¹⁰ Slovakia, Malta and Estonia are missing

Figure 14: Importance of the YG (trade unions perceptions)



Challenges that trade unions and governments aim at tackling with the YG do not always have the same relevance for the two actors.

Figure 15 shows that tackling NEETs has a similar relevance as a challenge both for trade unions and the government, while the highest difference is to be found in the need to tackle youth employment precariousness for young people.

Figure 15: Relevance of challenges - Government and Trade Unions (trade unions' perceptions)

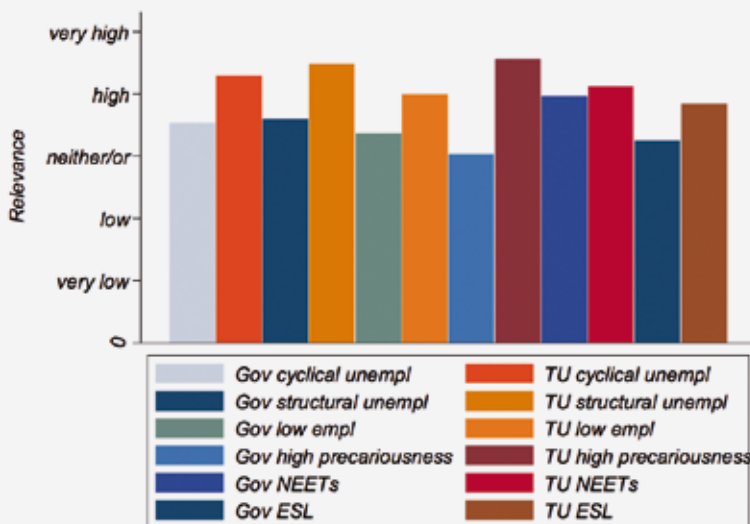
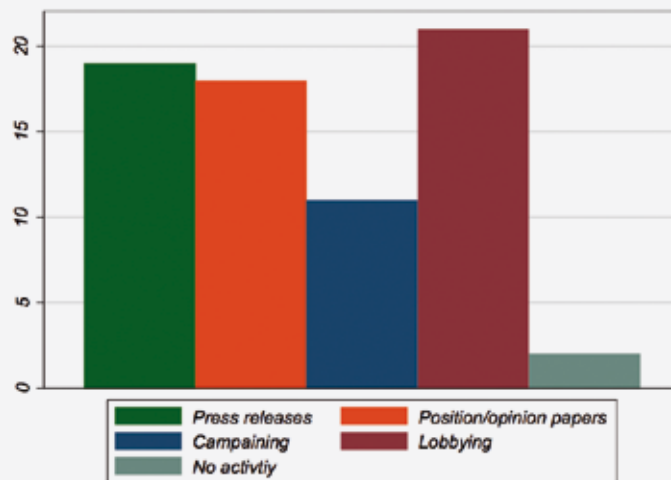


Figure 16 shows that the relevance of the YG expressed by trade unions is also translated into a clear commitment, as almost all trade unions report that they were involved in one or more activities for the promotion of the YG in their countries. Lobbying activities were the most often used together with the publication of press releases and positions and opinion papers.

Figure 16: Activities for promoting the YG



Concerning the design of the YGIP, in nine countries¹¹ trade unions reported not being involved. Based on the survey data collected, it is currently not possible to clearly state whether the lack of involvement in these countries affects all trade unions in the country or only those surveyed .

The participation of trade unions in the design of the YGIP was split into three dimensions: information, consultation and negotiation. Five countries¹² reported that the information took place informally. In seven countries¹⁴ trade unions were informed within lightly formalised institution, e.g. ad-hoc commission or newly created forum. Only in one country, Bulgaria, were trade unions informed in stable institutions. Concerning consultation, trade unions reported that it took place informally in three countries¹⁵; lightly formalised in nine countries¹⁶and in stable institutions only in Bulgaria and Slovenia. Negotiations on the YGIP did not always take place, such as in Germany, Spain or Poland (Solidarnosc). In Finland and Bulgaria, they took place in stable institutions, while in Cyprus, Slovenia and the Czech Republic it was done within lightly formalised institutions. Only in Austria, Lithuania, Croatia and Romania was it done informally.

Although in most of the countries surveyed, trade unions were involved in the design of the YGIP, this hides different quality and degree of the involvement and satisfaction among trade unions.

Concerning the timing of the involvement of trade union we find that in Bulgaria, Finland, Poland (Solidarnosc), Slovenia, Croatia, Denmark, Cyprus and Romania, trade union involvement took place right from the beginning of the design process. In other countries trade unions were asked to give their contributions after a first draft was presented by the national government, like in Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Portugal and Italy. In Spain and Lithuania, trade unions were involved when the government had already made a definite decision on the national Plan.

¹¹ Belgium, Sweden, Hungary, Ireland, Luxembourg, Greece, the Netherlands, Portugal and the UK

¹² For example, we know that in Poland and in Romania some trade unions did take part in the design of the YGIP while others did not. In addition, French trade unions took part at the national level but did not take part in the design of the pilot project 'Garantie Jeunes', which is the first attempt to set up the scheme in the country. There is also another caveat to bear in mind: the trade union representative who answered the questionnaire might have not been informed about her/his trade union involvement on the YGIP. Indeed, the timing of the answer also has an impact as the survey might have preceded trade union involvement.

¹³ Romania, Cyprus, Poland – Solidarnosc, Lithuania and Austria

¹⁴ Spain, Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Slovenia, Croatia and France. Denmark answered 'don't know'

¹⁵ Austria, Romania and Lithuania.

¹⁶ Cyprus, Italy, Denmark, Croatia, Poland (Solidarnosc), Germany, Czech Republic, Spain and France.

Concerning the degree of satisfaction, trade unions were asked to assess it on a scale of 1 to 5 (very unsatisfied/very satisfied). Only in two countries, Finland and Austria, the respondents declared being very satisfied about their participation. In four countries, - Bulgaria, Italy (CGIL), Lithuania, Portugal – trade unions are satisfied with their involvement. In Poland, Slovenia, Croatia, Denmark, Cyprus and Italy (CISL) the involvement was considered neither positive nor negative. In Latvia, trade unions are unsatisfied (LIZDA) and very unsatisfied (LBAS). Dissatisfaction is also expressed by the representative from the Czech Republic, Germany and Sweden, an even stronger feeling of dissatisfaction was expressed by the Spanish (CCOO), who denounced a very limited time allocated to trade unions for commenting on the document received (see section on Spain).

In some countries, trade unions are less involved in the implementation and daily management of the YGIP. For instance, in Ireland, the Czech Republic and Italy trade unions' involvement in these two phases of the YGIP is still not clear. In Italy, this is due to the fact that trade unions are recognised as organisations that can deliver some of the services included in the YG, but all the administrative set-up still needs to be defined. In Slovenia, Finland, Portugal, Croatia, Romania, Spain, Belgium and Bulgaria trade unions are or will be included in the implementation of the YG.

Several trade unions answered that they still do not know whether there will be an evaluation and if they will be involved. Indeed, countries receiving money from the YEI and/or using ESF for implementing the YGIP will have to report on a set of common indicators¹⁷. Countries where the process of evaluation has already been foreseen, or at least that is known to trade unions, are Austria, Finland, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, the Netherlands, Croatia and Romania. In Austria, Finland, Portugal, Croatia and Romania trade unions will be directly involved in the evaluation together with institutional actors.

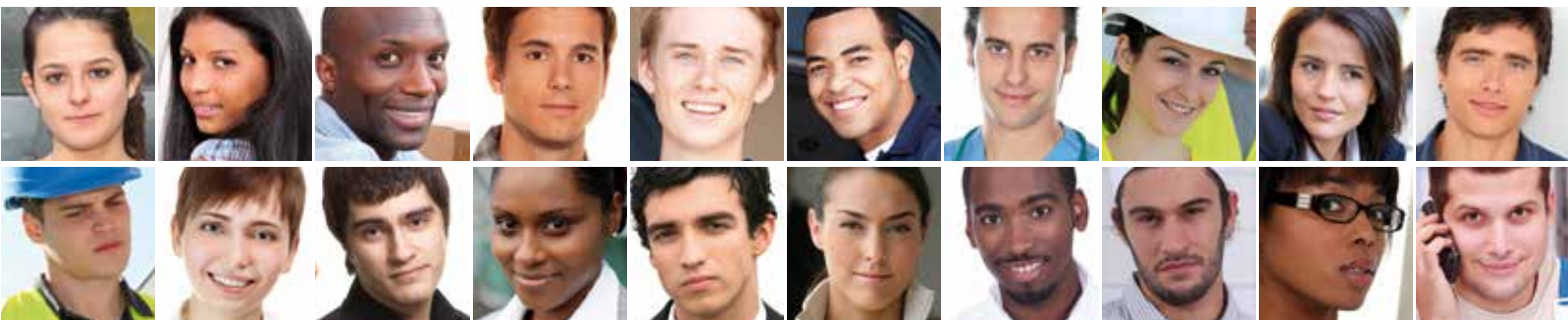
In the following section, a county perspective on the features of the YGIP and on the involvement and position of the trade union respondent(s) is presented.



¹⁷ REGULATION (EU) No 1304/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 17 December 2013 on the European Social Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006 (2013).

COUNTRY FOCUS – YOUTH GUARANTEE, IMPLEMENTATION PLANS AND TRADE UNIONS' INVOLVEMENT ACROSS EUROPE¹⁸

This section presents the country situation concerning the implementation of the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans (hereinafter YGIP) and the role and involvement of the trade unions in the different stages of the YGIP.



AUSTRIA

The Austrian youth employment context has been quite positive in spite of the crisis in Europe: youth unemployment was at 9.2% in 2013. Unemployment is mostly short time as 70% of young unemployed remain outside the system for less than 90 days, but those having primary education show a higher risk of being unemployed compared to young people with higher educational attainments (low-skilled youth represent 45% of unemployed young people). When looking at the gender of unemployed young people, most of them are males aged between 20 and 24 years. The NEET rate in Austria was 6.5% in 2013, which represents around 78700, almost evenly distributed between not in employment and unemployed (Sozial Ministerium, 2014).

The measures

In Austria there is already a guarantee scheme since 2008. The *Training Guarantee* targets all young people up to 18 who are at risk of not having an apprenticeship position (those who are dropouts are allowed to take part up to the age of 24) (Sozial Ministerium, 2014). For these young people a 'supra-company' apprenticeship is provided. It is important to note that, although these schemes are financially supported by the State, the certificates they deliver are equivalent to those delivered in regular apprenticeship programmes. This point is important because it reduces the problem of bad signalling in the labour market for

young people who might find some difficulties in their first entry. Further, it is reported that more than 90% of young people in a supra-company apprenticeship complete the apprenticeship training. In 2014, 11000 people planned to take part in the training guarantee.

Together with this early intervention guarantee for very young persons, there is a plethora of other measures contributing to the Austrian YG, such as coaching and local NEETs programmes in order to help more disadvantaged groups; but also qualifying coaching for apprentices in order to avoid their dropping out, alternative school or training programmes (Sozial Ministerium, 2014).

At the structural level, the implementation plan also mentions the possibility of extending the age for compulsory education up to 18 in order to reduce the rate of early school leaving.

Another central measure is the "Future for the Youth" initiative (*Aktion Zukunft Jugend*): it consists of intensified job placement and counselling by the PES (AMS) (re-) training, (up-)skilling or special employment subsidies for young people aged between 19 and 24. The young unemployed should receive a job, a (re-)training/ (up-)skilling or subsidised employment within 3 months.

"Future for the Youth" has been implemented since 2009. In 2013, 95500 started a job and more than 53000 started a training course in the framework of "Future for the

¹⁸The descriptions of the national YGIPs are based on official documents when available in French, Italian, English, Spanish, German. Because of missing information three countries, Slovakia, Malta and Estonia are missing.

Youth". When the programme was implemented for the first time, young unemployed were supposed to receive either an offer of employment, or an individually coordinated qualification measure or a subsidised employment place within 6 months of registering with the PES (AMS). The time of intervention has thus been reduced.

The Austrian YG will consist of the *"Future for the Youth" programme* and the *Training Guarantee*.

The Austrian YG is mostly focused on training as the main aim also for those aged between 19 and 24 is to integrate them into apprenticeship programmes. Most of the attention is geared towards the quality and level of skills of young people as they are supposed to enter the apprenticeship system and answer to employers and labour market needs. The good degree of involvement of stakeholders and in particular of social partners in the design of the YG seems to be highly correlated with strongly rooted tripartite bodies and coordination in the field of vocational education and apprenticeship.

Although the quality of possible jobs offered to young people is not mentioned explicitly in the text, this might be due to the fact that most of the YG strategy is targeted at providing apprenticeships. Apprenticeship contracts are highly regulated in Austria and they consist of 2 or 3 years in employment with a strong training component. In 2011, an article highlighted that the training guarantee helped to reduce the unemployment of young people up to 18. The introduction of the YG and specific measures and the idea of splitting the action between up to 18 and up to 24 seem to be good ways of reaching a wider public.

Funding

Austria is not eligible for YEI funding as its rate of youth unemployment is low.

In 2012, a total of 610 million euro were spent on integrating young people into the labour market (160 million euro for training – 175 in 2013).

The role and involvement of trade unions

Trade unions¹⁹ that took part in the survey and the government think alike concerning the challenges and their degree of importance that the YG should address. The main issue at stake for both the government and the TU is the level of precariousness of young people's employment and the share of NEETs.

PRO-GE has been publishing press releases; position papers; lobbying and campaigning. Trade unions were involved in the design of the Implementation Plan of the YG via informal consultations at all national, regional and local level. They were involved after the first draft of the plan was written by the government. PRO-GE assesses positively the presence of their union for the improvement of the youth guarantee and its relevance in the country but no improvement in the image of the TU among young people. However, they are very satisfied with the involvement. PRO-GE reports that they are not involved in the implementation or in the management of the YG. However, they are involved in the evaluation which is done by a state institution in consultation with social partners. Moreover, the TU will be also able to monitor the implementation of the YG via their TU representative inside the institutions implementing the YG. They believe, however, that while the involvement of the trade unions has to be maintained in the policy design and in the implementation phases, it should be increased in the management and the evaluation stages. When comparing their involvement in the YG and in other ALMPs (Active Labour Market Policies), PRO-GE considers that the degree of their involvement in the whole process is similar.

PORTUGAL

In 2013, 37.7% of young people aged between 15 and 24 years and 21.9% of young adults aged between 25 and 29 years were unemployed. Not only are these figures dramatically high, but they also increased enormously since 2010: more than 15 percentage points for the young group and more than 7 percentage points for the older group²⁰.

Further, Perista et al. report that young people are heavily affected by labour market flexibilisation and that a rise in precariousness makes it increasingly difficult to achieve

employment stability (Perista, Nunes, & Carrilho, 2013). In 2011, data from the Portuguese Statistical office show that 57.2% of employed young people aged between 15 and 24 years were in temporary contracts. The percentage of young employed aged between 25 and 29 was 38.6%. Moreover Persista et al. report that 'bogus' self-employment is a real problem in Portugal affecting mostly young people.

The Portuguese YG (*Garantia Jovem*)²¹ puts together measures to combat youth unemployment under a com-

¹⁹ Working closely on youth issues with ÖGB, answers from Pro-Ge were declared as representative of all TU in Austria.

²⁰ Eurostat, Labour Force Survey, yearly data.

²¹ <https://www.garantiajovem.pt/> last accessed May 30th

mon programme. There are four axes: employment, training, traineeships and education. The official website clearly states that the YG is not a guarantee of a job, instead the *Garantia Jovem* aims at increasing young people's qualifications, easing school-to-work transitions and reducing youth unemployment.

The *Garantia Jovem* follows the EU guidelines for early intervention and establishes that – following a gradual implementation – young people not in employment, education or training will receive one of the four options within four months from being unemployed or leaving formal education or training.

Together with explicit measures for easing integration into the labour market, the *Garantia Jovem* also supports young people in their orientation towards one of the actions included in the YG.

Concerning job offers, employers can receive two types of financial support: under the “Estágios Emprego”²² there are traineeships for a period of 12 months targeting youngsters aged between 18 and 30 years. These ‘estágios’ are also for young people over 30 years, if they obtained a level 2 or higher qualification in the last 3 years and are seeking a new job and have not received any income in the last 12 months i.e. in a clear situation of socio and economic distress, or if they are single parents or if both breadwinners in the household are unemployed. The target is then quite broad and includes young people and families at higher risk of poverty and precariousness. Depending on the qualification level, the monthly wage goes from slightly more than 400 euro to almost 800 euro. Public financing for the trainee wage is 100% for the first traineeship and 80% from the second; however, from 2015 on it will be 80% for each trainee hired. They are supposed to include a training component; however no evaluation or monitoring is foreseen nor the obligation of hiring the trainee.

The second type of support that companies can have in the framework of the *Garantia Jovem* is the reimbursement of the social security contributions for hiring young people aged between 18 and 29 who are registered at the PES. The social contributions will be reduced by 100% during a maximum of 18 months (amounting to a maximum at 200 euro per month) and by 75% if the contract is temporary.

As for continued education and training, the *Garantia Jovem* aims at reducing early school leavers and helping them complete secondary education. This can be done by enrolling in vocational education (lower or upper secondary level) or an apprenticeship or specialised training in technology. There is also another type of traineeship that is listed among the measures that can be offered to the

young person in the framework of the YG: these are the “traineeships in projects”, which are recognized as strategic for the national economy. They can have a duration of 6 to a maximum of 18 months in any type of sector or activity and registered young unemployed aged between 18 and 29 are eligible if they never received state support for a traineeship. The trainee will receive a scholarship that can go up to 691 euro for highly qualified young people (minimum 420 euro). Trainees also receive in-kind benefits but no indication of compulsory training. No on-the-job coaching is foreseen nor mentioned. Traineeships might then be more interesting for employers as they seem to promote precarious employment situations rather than stimulating sustainable employment for young people. Self-employment will also be offered as an alternative path for young people in the framework of the YG.

The target

Young NEETs under 30 years old are eligible for the YG. Portugal has thus decided to extend the age range of intervention. The extension of the age range was also strongly supported by UGTP, which found the age limit set by the European definition of the YG too limited and not inclusive enough in the Portuguese socio-economic context. In the first two years (2014- 2015), TU reported that the YG will aim at reaching 378400 young people.

The funding

Almost 1.3 million euro will finance the implementation of the Portuguese YG during 2014 and 2015.

The role and the involvement of trade unions

UGTP reports that the YG in Portugal is considered as a very important issue both for the government and for the TU, while it seems less important for employers. UGTP was active in promoting and supporting actions regarding the YG and published press releases, position papers, organised campaigns and lobbying activities. The priorities that should be tackled by the YG are very similar for the government and for the UGTP even though UGTP also puts emphasis on the low employment rate of young people and precariousness, while the government seems – according to the respondent – to be less interested in tackling precariousness. UGTP was not involved in the design of the YG; however they are involved in implementing the YG via mandatory and stable organisms. This partial involvement allowed them to provide important contributions and remarks in order to modify some of the measures adopted by the government.

UGTP will not be involved in the daily management of the YG, however they will be included in the evaluation and monitoring process of the YG that will be carried out

²² http://www.iefp.pt/apoios/empresas/Paginas/Estagios_emprego.aspx, last accessed May 30th

via a state institution in consultation with the social partners. UGTP also reports that they will have representatives in the institutions in charge of implementing the youth guarantee and that many institutions were involved in the stages of the YG. This seems to indicate that the partnership approach was respected at least in this initial phase.

IRELAND

Ireland went through a major financial and economic crisis during the last five years. If it is now recovering, the impact of the crisis is still evident in the high share of young unemployed and lower employment rate among the younger generation compared to the pre-crisis rates. The unemployment rates for young men increased more rapidly because of the crisis in the construction sector. Although the gap between young women's and men's unemployment rate is falling, young men still represent 60% of the long-term young unemployed. Not only did the crisis increase the level of young people unemployed, but also pushed many of them to leave the country and reversed the migration trends of the years before the crisis: in the three years after the crisis 63000 young people left the country (Department of Social Protection, 2013).

The target and the timeframe of intervention

The Irish YG addresses young people under 18 without upper secondary education attainment by providing them with a second-chance or training pathway. Young unemployed aged between 18 and 24 are instead provided with assistance to find employment or an offer of quality training, education or work experience. Actions for this older age group are delivered after four subsequent months of registered unemployment.

The YG guarantee for young people under 18 will be implemented in the next 2 years, while the guarantee for young people between 18 and 24 years old has been launched in 2014 and it is expected to be fully operational by the end of 2014. In this first phase, only young people with a high risk of being unemployed will be targeted. The definition of being 'at-risk' is defined by a statistically informed analysis of progression outcomes (PEX), the score aims at defining which interventions should be offered to the person.

The intervention will be extended to young people with medium-to-high probability of finding a job if still unemployed after 9 months. Since its introduction, the YG will also target long-term unemployed, who are expected to receive an offer for employment, education or training within 4 months after the start of the programme.

However, UGTP reports that involvement in the individual stages of the process should be increased, particularly because they also report that - compared to other ALMPs - their involvement in the design and in the management was weaker, particularly in the design phase of the YG.

The measures

In Ireland, the programme Pathways to Work – the Irish YG – was already implemented in 2012 and it includes some of the aspects of the YG.

Concerning early school leavers, the YGIP reports that Ireland has an effective approach for reducing dropouts which helped reduce the number of young people leaving the educational system with less than upper secondary educational attainment in recent years. A positive feedback on educational and training alternatives also came from the trade union which took part in the survey (see answer from SIPTU in the next section). For young people aged between 18 and 24 years who register at the PES and receive job-seekers payment, the YG comprises the same intervention and activation process as the Pathway to Work programme, however with a greater focus on early intervention and on the early engagement of the young job-seeker (Department of Social Protection, 2013). PEX score will determine the timing and nature of the intervention. If the score is low, the young person will attend a job-search session within two weeks and a one-to-one interview a few days later. If the person is more likely to find a job, then he or she will receive a follow-up only after four months of unemployment.

Although the timing of the individual follow-up for this last 'more advantaged' group has improved compared to the current practice, it seems that it does not fully comply with the European YG guideline on early intervention, which calls for offering a quality job, a traineeship, an apprenticeship or continued education within four months. The Irish Plan seems to suggest, instead, that for people with 'theoretically' high probability of exiting unemployment, the offer will be made four months after the individual (one-to-one) interview engagement and this seems to imply that one of the measures for the YG could be proposed to young people 8/9 months after having registered at the PES.

The Irish YGIP also outlines the procedures for monitoring young people's progress toward labour market integration: monthly monitoring interviews are foreseen, which is more intense than the current interviews scheduled every two months (Department of Social Protection, 2013).

The YGIP is also quite explicit and precise on mutual obligations and on the consequences of non-compliance and makes clear that young job-seekers should show higher motivation because more means are put at their disposal. The YGIP explicitly mentions that because young people are entitled to strengthened services – which supposedly imply higher funding – they are therefore expected to show greater commitment. While pushing towards a higher responsabilisation of young people, this statement clearly makes the link between being in need and deserving intervention by showing in return motivation and commitment. The underpinning logic is not that the public service needs to test its efficiency by providing valuable outcomes for the individuals and the society; but rather it guarantees its efficacy by ensuring that young people actively collaborate.

The Irish YGIP also includes plans for tackling long-term unemployment (i.e. unemployed for more than 12 months).

Concrete measures for the labour market integration of young people include outreach activities for early school leavers, internships, education and training schemes, education allowances, support for self-employment, mobility schemes, and employer incentives (JobsPlus). Employer incentives and internship programmes have been lately modified in order to better target young people instead of the wider group of job-seekers.

The funding

68,14 billion euro will come from the YEI for the period 2014-2015, this amount will be topped up with a similar financial engagement from ESF funding. The national contribution for more structural intervention needed and associated with the abovementioned measures is not specified in the YGIP.

The role and the involvement of trade unions

The Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU), which is part of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), took part in the survey and reported that they supported the YG by publishing press releases, organising campaigning and lobbying activities. Challenges that the YG is meant to tackle from a trade union and government perspective are pretty much similar except for one - employment precariousness - which is not considered as important by the government, but which is considered of very high importance by the trade union.

The Irish YGIP reports that the programme is based on institutional partnerships which include government agencies as well as social partners, the National Youth Council of Ireland, and local networks of stakeholders who are supposed to participate in the delivery and /or the review of the YG (Pathways to work 2013).

While the Department of Social Protection (DSP) is the leading co-ordinating institutions, the report makes clear

that the development of the YG was done in several steps by including first governmental actors and, in a second stage, consultations were opened in October 2013 in order to receive inputs from the interested stakeholders. These pieces of information differ, however, from the survey answer received from the SIPTU. They reported that they were not involved in the development of the YG. Moreover they report that, at this stage, it is still not clear whether the TU will be involved in the implementation, management and evaluation of the YG. However, it is very likely, the TU reported, that it will be involved in the implementation of some specific measures of the YG, such as the Community Employment Opportunities, where workers are organised. Because of this lack of involvement and clarity, SIPTU calls for an increasing participation in the implementation, management and evaluation of the YG. They also report that their involvement in the YGIP was weaker compared to their usual involvement regarding active labour market policies.

Because the Irish YG builds on several existing measures, SIPTU assessed that the quality of the type of contract offered to young people is rather bad, as well as the remuneration received. The duration of contracts and the working conditions are reported to be neither good nor bad.

The entrepreneurship programmes offered, guidance and job counselling are instead assessed positively by the trade union respondent.

SIPTU also suggests that some aspects of the current YG setting should be improved: namely eligible age should be extended in order to cover young people up to 30 years old; resources should be increased in order to provide special measures needed to target vulnerable young people who are not in the Live Register (i.e. registering for unemployment assistance benefits or for other statutory entitlements at local offices) and this would also need more outreach work. Further, they claim that the quality of internships is often variable and their frequent use might increase the risk of job displacement.

Trade unions also call for an increased number of apprenticeships for young people. As reported by the YGIP, since the onset of the crisis the number of young people finding training as apprentices has declined rapidly from 8000 in 2007 to 1500 in 2013 (Department of Social Protection, 2013).

Finally, they report that while education and guidance are already of good quality, young people at secondary school should receive guidance from an earlier stage.

An historical perspective

The idea of a guarantee was born in the Nordic countries well before the increased attention seen in recent years at the European level. Hummeluhr explained that during the sixties the role and place of young people in society became important and relevant in the political world. This was accompanied by the massification of the education system, which allowed and increased participation of young people coming from more disadvantaged backgrounds (Hummeluhr, 1997). The leading idea was that the education system at all levels had to keep pace with a growing request for training and education from all social classes. As Hummeluhr highlighted, even if the word 'guarantee' was not clearly employed at that time, the main goal was to prevent the economic and social situation having an impact on opportunities to continue education. Although already in 1978, after the first (oil) crisis, a government committee looked into the possibility of having a youth guarantee; it was in the late 1980s that the concept of a guarantee really emerged (Hummeluhr, 1997). Since labour market measures targeting youth had not proved to be particularly successful, most of the attention was geared towards reducing early school leaving and preventing young people going into the labour market too early and with poor qualifications. A first youth guarantee pilot project was launched already in 1981. It consisted of measures very similar to those in place today, as it was mainly centred on guaranteeing places in secondary education for young people²³. The idea was firstly to provide places in education or a job in the regular labour market or, if this was not successful, a subsidised workplace. A nation-wide youth guarantee programme was then established in 1984.

Although it did not have an immediate impact, the youth guarantee had a positive effect on the length of unemployment (Hummeluhr, 1997), which is considered the first cause of the 'scarring effect' and the increased likelihood of marginalisation and decrease in well-being (Bell & Blanchflower, 2011).

Similarly to the current idea of the YG, municipalities and local authorities were at the heart of delivery of the youth guarantee and were to guarantee a six month traineeship for all young people under their twenties if a place in education or in the regular labour market was not available in the first three months of unemployment.

In 1992, the youth guarantee was temporarily stopped

because local authorities were no longer able to provide traineeships or places in training courses due to the crisis. Between 1991 and 1995, when Finland was highly affected by the economic crisis and its unemployment figures were particularly high among young people (34%), several reforms were put into place particularly dealing with the vocational education system, which increased the number of places available, made it more flexible (proposing a mix of general and vocational courses) and created more places at the local level for young people who needed job-search support and counselling. In 1995 the idea of a 'guarantee' came back into official government programmes: it established that all young people should be provided with a place in upper secondary education in order to reduce dropout and the associated risk of unemployment. The ultimate goal was to bring 50% of drop outs back to school in order to continue after compulsory schooling; this called for a closer cooperation with the social partners to improve the offer of vocational programmes (Hummeluhr, 1997).

The latest version of the YG was officially launched in January 2013. Based on a strong cross-sectoral and cross-actor approach, the Finnish YG has been often praised as the beacon for the implementation of other YG schemes across Europe. As presented above, the current setup of the youth guarantee in Finland builds on more than 20 years of experience.

Since 2013, the Finnish YG has been based on the combination of a Social Guarantee for Young People, the educational guarantee and the skills programme for young adults (Nuoriso Takuu, 2013). Hence, the Finnish YG is strongly structured around education, vocational education and skills acquisition. The government programme's policy is concretely developed around measures included in the educational guarantee, measures promoting employment, measures targeting the hard-to-reach and broader reform of vocational rehabilitation and other reforms.

The target group

The YG applies to all people under the age of 25 and those aged under 30 who graduated less than one year before registration at the PES. The educational component of the Finnish YG is particularly important as it ensures that every young person graduating from compulsory

²³ It is interesting to note that youth workshops that were provided since the start of the youth guarantee pilot project are still ongoing today as they proved to be particularly successful for young unemployed people. The youth workshops aim at providing vocational education offers within the framework of individualised action plans, social counselling is also foreseen. Participants, up to 29 years old if they are early school leavers, normally stay from 6 up to 12 months in the programme. 65% of participants seem to find a job or enter education or training after attending the workshop. See EC database on labour market policies <http://ec.europa.eu/social/PDFServlet?mode=mlpPractice&practiceId=15>, last accessed May 21st. The contact between the young person and the workshop organisers was mainly established via PES. This underlines the central role played by cooperation at the local level.

school will have a place in upper secondary education. The programme for young adults, a component of the YG, targets young people aged between 25 and 29 years without any vocational education.

As explained in the official documents available, the coverage of Individual Action Plans – which is agreed between the institution and the young jobseeker - is extremely high and covers almost 100% of young job-seekers under the age of 25 before their unemployment reaches three months²⁴.

The timeframe of intervention

Youth guarantee interventions should be put into place within 3 months. This implies that all young unemployed registered at the PES should receive an offer within three months of continuous unemployment. The development of an IAP is done within 2 weeks after the young person registered at the PES.

The measures offered

Built on several existing services and past experiences, the YG is articulated around education, skills development, job-search oriented workshops, health and social guidance as well as youth outreach work. The most used measure is continued education which is part of the education guarantee. By targeting particularly all young people finishing basic education, the education guarantee aims at ensuring that they get a place in any kind of upper secondary education, be it general, vocational, apprenticeship or workshop or any other form of study. In order to prevent school dropout, priority is given to those young people who are not enrolled in an upper secondary education institution after basic schooling. An increased allocation of education and training places backs the education guarantee together with more flexible study arrangements. Higher economic incentives are also available for those vocational education providers that provide apprenticeship training. Since these increased resources are paid to employers, the aim is to encourage the creation of a higher number of apprenticeship place. Moreover, these training subsidies can be combined with the *Sanssi* card, i.e. social contribution reductions for employers who hire apprentices. While the education programme is actually targeting young people after their compulsory school, the skills programme for young adults aged between 20 and 29 with basic education is very much focused on the acquisition of vocational skills.

More labour market oriented measures are put into place by the PES via youth workshops, job-search, and try-out. Sheltered employment and subsidised employment are also available for those people who already have second-

ary education and might be ready to enter the labour market. It seems, however, that skills development and education are the most promoted and used measures. Subsidised employment (*Sanssi* card) is linked to employment contracts or apprenticeships training. Wage subsidies amount to 700 euro per months for maximum 10 months for employment contracts; in the case of apprenticeships the duration of the wage subsidy covers the whole duration of the apprenticeship contract. No particular requirements in terms of duration of the subsidised employment contract are mentioned for obtaining the incentive.

In contrast with most of the European countries, self-employment is not considered as a popular measure to be offered to the NEETs and it is very rarely mentioned in the official documents available on the YG website.

With the aim of reaching the most disadvantaged young people, the Finnish YG also includes youth outreach work and workshops targeting young people under the age of 29. These already existing programmes have a more social approach, including health support, to young participants who often lack vocational education degree. The most common measure used in these workshops is to direct young people towards education (75% of the participants in workshops go back to education). The relevance of the outreach work carried out at the local level is also highlighted by a new provision to the Youth Act introduced in 2011 that established an obligation on municipalities to perform outreach youth work and provide early support to young people (Kekkonen et al 2012).

It is important to point out that a means-tested benefit scheme – called “labour market subsidy” and implemented in the 1990s when there was high youth unemployment – is particularly important for young people because it is granted to those entering the labour market for the first time or to the unemployed who have exhausted the rights to unemployment benefits. However, this benefit is dependent on having a vocational degree and on the participation of the young person in an educational programme of any type – from vocational training to university education (Lorentzen et al., 2014). Researchers argue in fact that, if in the welfare literature the Nordic welfare state was considered to function as a shelter from social exclusion for young people, in the past years a clear reduction in coverage and generosity of welfare benefits for young people has taken place (Lorentzen, et al., 2014).

The funding

The implementation of the Finnish YG is supported by 60 million euro a year and 52 million euro a year are granted for the programme improving skills for young adults.

²⁴ http://www.nuorisotakuu.fi/files/37412/Nuorisotakuu_Final_en_04092013.pptx_Vain_luku_.pdf, last access 19th May 2014.

The central role of the local authorities

The role of cooperation at the local level is extremely important for the development of the YG. The network of educational providers, public employment services, municipalities, health and social welfare institutions aims at ensuring a variety of services and flexibility in managing the network at the local level. This ensures the exchange of data concerning young people who may face difficulties; these exchanges were already put in place during the first pilot projects of the YG in the 1980s.

Mutual obligations

The role of sanctioning – a more direct and concrete way of talking of mutual obligation – is not, or very rarely, mentioned in the Finnish YGIP and official documents mostly highlight the role of mutual engagement between the public authority and the young unemployed taking part in the YG. It is interesting to note that there is an explicit reference to the need to listen to the young person's opinion in the definition of the IAP and not only an appeal to a one-directional adaptation of the IAP to the needs of the labour market.

The involvement and the role of trade union in the YGIP

Based on a long tradition of cooperation between the social partners and the government in the field of labour market and active labour market policies, the Finnish YG was born from a tight collaboration between the relevant ministries, the trade unions, the business representatives, NGOs and Youth representatives/associations. Trade unions were involved in the working group on the youth guarantee that was appointed in September 2011. The working group's first assignment was to prepare proposals for the full-scale realisation of the youth guarantee, the budgetary impacts of the proposals and the potential legislative amendments arising from them (Working Group on the Youth Guarantee, 2013). The working group also pointed out what were the limits and the challenges that YG was likely to face, including the lack of sufficient study places, an insufficient number of health care and social service provisions or insufficient support for student welfare. The working group also made clear in the report that the 60 million euro allocated by the government was not enough for dealing with the multiple challenges facing young people. Hence, they suggested that the skills programme for young adults should be included as a part of the YG. This was the case since, as reported above, the

skills programme for young adults is fully integrated into the Finnish YG and constitutes one of its core elements.

The contribution received via the survey from SAK, the Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions, confirms that both the trade union and the government consider the youth guarantee to be of highest priority. SAK supported the youth guarantee by publishing opinion papers and press releases as well as by lobbying activities. In addition to their involvement in the working group for the YG, SAK was also part of bipartite agreements about youth employment and education.

Concerning the importance of different problems regarding young people²⁶, SAK reports that only concerning the issue of precariousness the government and the trade union agenda is not exactly similar, i.e. being of higher importance for trade unions.

The involvement of the SAK in the development of the YIPG took place, right from the very beginning, under the form of negotiation in stable and formalised institutions, and their involvement, as expected, was at the national, regional and local level. Concerning the involvement in the design of the YGIP, SAK declares itself very satisfied because of the high degree of involvement not only on the YG issue but also on employment and education issues at large. Trade unions are also involved not only in putting the YGIP into practice at national, regional and local level but also in sectors and cross-sectors. Further, as well as being involved in the local delivery of services for vocational training and apprenticeships, trade unions are also involved in managing of the youth guarantee, although their involvement at the local level is not homogeneous across the whole country.

Trade unions will also be involved in the process of evaluation of the YG that will be carried out together with government institutions and relevant stakeholders such as Allianssi – the Finnish Youth Cooperation highly involved in reaching out to socially excluded young people – which will also be involved during the planning and the monitoring of the YG.

Because of the high degree of involvement so far, SAK declares that the involvement of the trade union in the Youth Guarantee should be maintained and that the quality of guidance and counselling services available for young people is good, while a neither good nor bad assessment has been expressed on the quality of contract type and contract duration. SAK still calls for increased resources, apprenticeship places and job offers, which are still considered as insufficient for the young people involved.

²⁵ <http://www.kela.fi/web/en/labour-market-subsidy> last accessed 22nd May 2014.

²⁶ i.e. cyclically high youth unemployment; structurally high youth unemployment; low youth employment; high job precariousness; high rates of NEETs and high rates of ESL

The Italian YG formally saw the light on 1st May 2014. The legal basis for the YG was set in June last year with the Decreto Legge 7 of 28th June²⁷, which included special provision for combating youth unemployment and for social cohesion. With the aim of implementing the YG, a special ad hoc institution was set up with an advisory and instructive role and its mandate will be over by the end of 2015. The creation of the ad hoc national institution is mainly based on the idea that coordination is needed at the national level since active labour market service delivery and vocational education and training are competences of the twenty Regions. The institution has the task of writing the common guidelines and common minimum standards – based on a State-Region Conference agreement - which guarantee the homogenisation of practices across the country; but single regional implementation plans will be developed at the regional level. The institution also has the task of stimulating the coordination and the dissemination of good practices in order to favour mutual learning. Only institutional actors are included in this newly created institution (i.e. representative of relevant ministries, the national vocational education institution, representative of Regions and chambers of commerce).

Indeed the introduction of the YG sheds light on the poor system of active labour market policies implemented in the country (with very clear regional differences). It was then the occasion for stimulating reflexion on a system that poorly covers young people both in terms of passive (i.e. unemployment benefits)²⁸ and active labour market policies.

The role of the PES ('centri per l'impiego') is central in the delivery of services and in the coordination of complementary services that are needed to face multiple disadvantages. However, data from 2011/2010 reveal that the number of staff in the PES divided by the number of NEETs aged between 15 and 24 would result in more than 160 people by job-counsellor. Moreover in 2011, data from Eurostat show that Italy spent 0.03% of its GDP in active labour market services²⁹ while at the European level (28 countries) the estimated amount of GDP spent on labour market services was 0.211%. Further the % of GDP spent on active labour market programmes such as training, employment incentives, start-up incentives, direct job creation and supported employment in Italy was

0.32 compared to the estimated 0.495% at the European level. Further, both the total amount of resources granted to labour market services (PES) and active labour market policies have been declining steadily since the onset of the crisis. Moreover, at present, there is no national system collecting job offers and job demands, nor a national system for certifying competences (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, 2014).

The current division of tasks between the Regions and the central government is the following: the first will be in charge of developing regional plan concerning all the measures included in the YG – except for guidance within schools – while respecting the guidelines established at the national level; the latter will be in charge of putting forward structural changes, i.e. the national IT database of jobseekers and active labour market policies, the evaluation and the monitoring of the programme as well as the information activities. However, CGIL reports that the delays and problems have already come out during the inclusion of the database of the Ministry of Education in the national network, thus making the timely identification of the target group more challenging.

The existing fragmented institutional structure and the current economic crisis are important challenges that the Italian YG will be facing in the coming years (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, 2014).

The target group

The yearly data for NEETs in Italy in 2013 were the highest in the whole EU (see

Figure 6 and Figure 7) The NEET group indeed constitutes the main target group of the YG, which consists of more than 2.2 million young people between the ages of 15 and 29 (1.2 million young people aged between 15 and 24 years). However, the YG also identifies other subgroups that, although they statistically belong to the general category of the NEETs, are likely to face different challenges. They include: early school leavers (aged between 15 and 18 years); young people finishing upper secondary education; young people finishing tertiary education and young people disadvantaged. The target group then goes beyond the 15-24 age range and it includes young people up to 29. A very recent monitoring report shows the number of young people who registered online or at regional offices

²⁷ http://www.cliclavoro.gov.it/Normative/D.L.28_giugno_2013_n.76.pdf, last accessed 22nd May 2014

²⁸ During the crisis the Italian government modified the law regulating unemployment benefits in order to extend the coverage to precarious workers, among them young people, who were not eligible for unemployment benefits due to short working history. Currently employees who do not meet the criteria of unemployment benefits are entitled to as many days as those worked up to six months (180 days). The replacement rate is very low as it represents 35% of the last remuneration for the first 120 days and then 40% for the remaining. - http://www.flashgiovani.it/files/archivio/documenti/Lavoro/minidisocc_req_ridotti.pdf, last accessed 22nd May 2014

²⁹ All services provided by the PES together with publicly funded services. (Eurostat http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_SDDS/EN/Imp_esms.htm)

for the youth guarantee is more than 57000³⁰, 52% aged between 15 and 24 years.

The timeframe of intervention

Although not being implemented, the idea of an early intervention (within four months after registration at the PES) was already included in a law approved in 2000. The early intervention targeted young people under 25 and the age of 29 if recently graduated. However, this legal provision had been very rarely implemented. The YG is more ambitious because it aims at including not only young unemployed but also those young people exiting the educational system. The YGIP adopted the timeframe set at the European level and, within four months of being registered at the PES, young people should receive one of the measures presented below.

The funding

Italy will receive money from the YEI, which grants across Europe 3 billion euro to those regions with more than 25% unemployment rate among young people aged between 15 and 24 years. Italy will receive a total amount of more than 1.5 billion euro (567 million euro from the YEI, and 567 from the ESF; 40% is the current contribution from national resources as ESF co-financing, i.e. 379 million euro). In addition to these resources the Italian government has also added 800 million euro targeted at hiring young people; 170 million euro for supporting traineeships regulated at the regional level and 170 million euro for supporting start-up and NGOs in the Southern part of the country (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, 2014).

Regions will be highly autonomous in choosing how to manage funding coming from the YEI. This might result in different prioritisation among the measures.

Performance mechanisms for the allocated resources have also been established: since PES are mainly regionalised, the regions will receive incentives if their local PES are able to put a high number of young jobseekers back into the labour market, regardless of in which region the young person has found a job. Although setting performance objectives might lead to a more effective use of European and national funding, the profound divergence of labour market situations across the regions might lead to a distribution of funds that does not reflect the real local need for resources. Moreover it is interesting to read in the YGIP that the performance incentives seem to be provided only to PES that succeed in (re)integrating young NEETs in the labour market, thus not considering tentry into education, traineeships, civic service etc. as a successful exit.

One of the novelties introduced by the YGIP in the Ital-

ian system of active labour market policies delivery is the unitary cost – set at the national level - for each type of measure delivered within the YG. Together with the national guidelines, common unitary costs aim to rationalise expenses while ensuring common standards of public services. However, some commentators raised some doubts about the way in which funding will be distributed: the PES will not mainstream the whole European and national resources granted for the YG measures, instead money will be distributed directly to private agencies. These private employment agencies might ask to be paid for implementing actions for young people which they might have done anyway, without receiving financial support from the YEI or ESF³¹.

The capacity for spending and allocating funds correctly and efficiently is another challenge for the implementation of the YG in Italy: in the Southern regions between 2011 and 2012 there was a decrease of almost of 60% in the resources actually spent by the regions in training for apprenticeships. Slightly more than 21% of resources were spent³².

The measures

The YG will be implemented in the context of rapidly changing labour market regulation. Since the launch of the YG by the European Commission and approval by the European Council, three governments have taken power and, due to the dire socio-economic situation, all three of them implemented a number of labour market reforms, mainly touching on regulations for apprenticeships and temporary contracts.

Seven main measures have been identified by the ad hoc working group: job offers with employment incentives if necessary, apprenticeships, traineeships, civic service, international programme for mobility, continued education and start-up counselling. The civic service is a specificity of the Italian YG plan, which explicitly includes community work as an alternative for young unemployed, not in school or training. Backed by trade unions as a positive measure within the YG, civic service, the natural alternative to military service, is presented as a professionalising experience in Italy or abroad for young people aged between 18 and 28, who will receive a payment of around 430 euro a month.

In addition to these measures, the Italian YG plan foresees some more functional and institutional reforms particularly with the introduction of nation-wide databases with data from all young job-seekers in order to reduce the lack of coordination between supply and demand. Because of the semi-decentralised system of government, there will be one implementation plan for each region and, due to the autonomy which enables regions to promote one

³⁰ http://www.garanziaiovani.gov.it/Monitoraggio/Documents/Monitoraggio_Garanzia_Giovani_22maggio_DEF.pdf, last accessed 24th May.

³¹ <http://www.lavoce.info/youth-guarantee-occasione-persa/> last accessed March 24th

³² <http://www.bollettinoadapt.it/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/1831.pdf> last accessed 22nd 2014

measure over another, there might be some differences in how the money will be spent and on which priorities. For example, in the Region Valle d'Aosta around 40% of the budget will be spent in traineeships, in Sicily 20% of the entire resources will finance self-employment, while in the Veneto region 36% of the budget will be spent on the creation of traineeships³³.

The involvement and role of trade unions

Together with the Forum dei Giovani, the Italian National Youth Organisation, NGOs and student representatives, the three main trade unions, CGIL CISL, UIL and also UGL have been involved since October 2013 in discussions concerning the design of the YGIP. The stakeholders involved in this process were invited to create synergies for promoting and implementing specific actions included in the YG. A "focus group" dealing with YG issues ranging from structural problems to lack of visibility will be implemented. In this forum, trade unions will also take part.

The three main confederations – CGIL CISL and UIL – answered the survey. CGIL, CISL and UIL reported a moderate appreciation concerning the (high) relevance of the challenges addressed by the YG. All confederations were informed and consulted in the design of the YGIP in lightly formalised institutions (see above, ad hoc institution) af-

ter a first draft was developed by the government, but with no broad possibility of negotiation on some actions included in the YG. The same happened unevenly at regional level. The involvement at the national level of the trade unions was an initiative of the government. In spite of some limitations, the involvement of the TUs in the design phase of the YG improved, according to the TUs, the quality of the YG and strengthened the legitimacy of TUs' actions against youth unemployment.

The involvement of TUs in the implementation and the management of the YG are still not clearly defined; however both CISL and CGIL can be potentially involved in the delivery of information and guidance of young job-seekers, thus taking part in some of the preventive measures included in the YG.

The stakeholders, and among them trade unions, will be involved in the monitoring of the actions carried out in the framework of the ESF.

At the regional level, UIL reported that they were involved in the design of the YG regional implementation plan, in roughly the same way as in similar actions carried out in the framework of the European Social Fund; compared to other active labour market policies they consider that their involvement was less relevant.

GERMANY

Germany has low unemployment and NEET rates and it was able to keep them low even during the crisis. This seems to be due to different interacting factors including: macroeconomic, institutional (labour market policies, educational and training policies), and demographic trends (Cahuc, Carcillo, Rinne, & Zimmermann, 2014).

While announcing last year that no Youth Guarantee would be implemented in the country, Germany has now joined other Member States in the implementation of the YG. Indeed, the German YGIP is explicitly based on "sufficient labour market policy instruments", thus the aim is mainly to strengthen the measures already existing and maintain a low unemployment rate among young people (Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales, 2014). The BA (PES) collaborates at the local level with municipal support and is widespread across the Länder. The job centres provide services of placement and counselling in order to promote occupational integration, vocational train-

ing, and employment. Concerning the development of the Plan across the country, the YGIP specifies that - due to limited resources – not every single measure will be available in the whole country and this will need better targeting.

The long list of measures already in place or planned in the framework of the German YG is not easy to summarise and briefly assess. What is clear is that, due to the strong presence of vocational education and training and the rooted dual system, most of the actions labelled as contributing to the Youth Guarantee promote and support measures dealing with integrating the vocational education and training system. The monitoring of measures will be done within already existing mechanisms such as the report for the European Employment Strategy, national statistics and federal report on skills and vocational education and training.

³³ See implementation plan of the region Valle d'Aosta, Sicily, Veneto Region
http://www.regione.sicilia.it/deliberegiunta/file/giunta/allegati/106237Deliberazione_n_106_del_13_05_2014.pdf;
http://www.regione.veneto.it/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=3aa0e0ea-b538-4a1d-b096-daa9a6da6a39&groupId=60642;
http://www.regioni.it/it/show-approvata_la_convenzione_delliniziativa_garanzia_giovani/news.php?id=344115 last accessed 24th May.

The target group

The target group cannot be identified with clarity as the measures target different populations at different stages of the school-to-work transition.

The timeframe of intervention

Timely intervention was already present in the Social Code regulating labour market intervention for job-seekers. There is an obligation to integrate young people who are eligible for social benefits into employment or vocational education or training as soon as they request benefits. However, this timely integration, DGB argues, is not guaranteed in practice as there are many exceptions. Individual action plans - elaborated after the profiling and exchanges with young people - are considered as mutually binding and can be revised after a period of three months. However, for the plethora of measures included in the German YGIP below, it is not possible to clearly set a timeframe for intervention as these activities are not always provided by PES and are not always delivered to young unemployed but also to students or school leavers in transition from school to work.

The funding

Since there are no regions in Germany with more than 25% of youth unemployment in the reference year (2012), no money was allocated from the YEI. Most of the funding comes from national sources (e.g. tax-funded, federal budget, local tax revenues); some projects receive funding from the ESF as part of the regular activities financed by the fund. The amount of funding allocated is high compared to other European countries and particularly institutionalised.

The measures

The German YGIP is a collection of different programmes that aim to tackle different issues related to youth school-to-work transitions.

There are two main axes of intervention: early intervention and activation and the promotion of labour market integration. In the first axis, the German YGIP includes early vocational orientation and guidance at school and first-hand experience for young people who have to choose their future training; particular attention is also addressed to low achievers, who can be supported by a mentor. An ESF funded project targeting disadvantaged neighbourhoods (*Jugend Stärken im Quartier*) mainly consists of local collaborative out-reach work carried out by youth centres in order to support young people (NEETs) who suffer from multiple individual impairments or social disadvantages and are not registered with the PES or reach-

able by other institutions. The aim is to offer an individual socio-educational support. The Apprenticeship (VET) Pact, in force from 2004-2014, is another measure included in the YG package. Although the conditions for this expiring pact were set in such a way that the DGB did not find it appropriate to take part³⁴, the DGB is currently actively involved in the ongoing negotiations on the succeeding programme - the "alliance for vocational training and further training" (*Allianz für Aus- und Weiterbildung*). Included in the measures aimed at promoting labour market integration, the German YGIP lists actions for guidance and training placement services. These services are operated by the PES and job centres. Data from previous years show that around 3.5% of young people with low skill levels, but also some with higher skills levels, were not able to find an apprenticeship and got trapped in transitional paths (Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales, 2014). PES and accredited employment services also provide vocational training preparation schemes in order to give introductory training courses to those young people who were unable to enter vocational education and training. Interregional mobility and cross-border mobility are also promoted at the PES. Due to possible higher barriers to labour market integration and vocational education and training, special programmes also target young people with disability and with migrant backgrounds. Another measure listed is the promotion of entrepreneurship which consists of providing information particularly to schools and in universities.

Partnerships and the involvement of trade unions

Local cooperation is ensured between the different governments and employment agencies, job centres (local accredited employment service agencies), but also schools and social partners of particular importance.

Due to the centrality of the dual system in ensuring a smooth transition from school to work, the role of vocational guidance is crucial. Vocational guidance is developed across the country and schools cooperate in networks in order to provide some short trial periods in companies to young people who have to choose their training

The PES (BA) is a self-governing corporation under public law and its board, which acts as a supervisory and legislative body, is tripartite, thus including employers and workers representatives and public bodies. Trade unions take part in the board of the local employment agencies, thus the involvement of social partners in the managing of employment services is institutionalised. Moreover, the involvement of employers and unions in vocational education and training is of particular importance. Employer and union representatives both develop the train-

³⁴ The reasons why the DGB decided not sign the agreement concerns the employers' request for looser regulations on youth employment, for example, by extending working hours before 6am and after 10pm. The DGB also claimed that employers wanted to reduce protection for young apprentices and shorten training periods. Last accessed 24th May: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/2010/11/articles/de1011029i.htm>

ing regulations for state-recognised training occupations (Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales, 2014).

DGB answered the questionnaire on TU involvement in the design of the YG implementation plan. They supported the implementation of the YG through press releases and opinions, but also via lobbying activities, which, they believed, contributed to the improvement of the visibility of the TU and of the legitimacy of the TU in tackling youth employment issues.

When assessing the relevance of the YG project, the DGB clearly states that the relevance of the YG is not perceived similarly across actors, with employers and the federal states attributing low importance to the YG initiative. Moreover, the survey reports that the DGB and federal government considered the challenges faced to be of different relevance: while TUs are concerned, for instance, about employment precariousness of young people, the government seems to pay, according to the DGB, a very low level of attention to this issue. The DGB also highlights the issue of quality apprenticeships and quality internships as another challenge to be addressed, while this seems to receive less attention at the federal level.

The DGB was involved in the development of the implementation plan and they were informed and consulted in lightly formalised fora. However, they report that their involvement took place after a first draft was developed by the government and that only one hearing was scheduled, giving them very little time for presenting comments and remarks. For this reason, the DGB is unsatisfied with the level of involvement. TU involvement in the other stages of the YG (implementation, managing, evaluation) can-

not be defined clearly as the German YG is a collection of different measures and TUs are involved in some of them but not in others. Concerning the monitoring and the evaluation of the results, the federal government, as mentioned above, already has some monitoring tools, but no global or specific monitoring for the YG as a whole is foreseen. According to the DGB, then, the involvement of TUs should be increased.

Overall, the DGB is highly disappointed with the German YGIP as it consists only of a list of already existing measures. They believe in fact that, even if the level of youth employment is certainly lower than in other parts of Europe, there are problems regarding the employment situation of young people (precarious employment, lack of apprentice positions) that could have been better tackled in the framework of the German YGIP. During the consultation by the German Federal Labour Ministry, the DGB therefore suggested including an “apprenticeship guarantee” as a central part of the German YGIP. By creating a binding guarantee ensuring that each young person looking for an apprenticeship would get a placement, the number of VET positions offered could have been increased. The DGB suggestion was not taken up by the Federal Labour Ministry. Moreover, concerning the age of the target group, the DGB says it should include young people up to 29 years old, as an increasing number of young people start their careers later. Finally, the DGB also calls for tools for guaranteeing the quality of apprenticeships and internships to be put in place in order to avoid young people getting stuck in low quality training.

SWEDEN

Like Finland and other Nordic countries, Sweden has a long tradition of active labour market policies. In 1980, if a young person was NEET, s/he could have a special one-year “work introduction” or, as a last resort, temporary relief work or short training courses. Moreover, at that time, the capacity of the upper secondary education was increased, the apprenticeship sector encouraged and short introduction programmes to upper secondary education were established. The economic support for young people was changed and became equal for all young people regardless of the measure chosen. Although not called a youth guarantee, in practice these measures functioned as such (Hummeluhr, 1997).

According to Hummeluhr a kind of youth guarantee was introduced in Sweden for the first time in 1984, it was called ‘Youth Team’. It guaranteed 100 per cent subsidised work in the public sector 4 hours a day for all unemployed aged 18 to 19 during a period of six months (Hummeluhr, 1997).

Forslund and Nordström Skans (2006) reports that a genuine youth guarantee was introduced for the first time in 1998 and delivered at the municipal level, which did not show any significant improvement in young participants’ opportunities for integration into the labour market (Forslund & Nordström Skans, 2006).

Although not implemented in all municipalities, the YG at that time targeted young people aged between 20 and 24 years. The YG consisted of an obligation to offer the target group a full-time activity after 100 days of unemployment. The duration of the programme was limited to 12 months. However, not all young people in that age range were included in the programme because it was the PES that had to decide whether to refer the young person to the municipality for the youth guarantee programme or not. Forslund and Nordström Skan (2006) found that the YG participants registered in greater numbers at the PES, spent longer finding a job and exiting unemployment in

general, had lower future income and employment and higher take-up of social assistance. However, a large number of young people taking part in the youth guarantee went back to education, which can be considered as a good outcome for the scheme.

The current Swedish YGIP builds on existing measures: particularly the Job Guarantee that was established in 2007. The Youth Job Programme was put into place in order to help those young people more likely to be stuck in long-term unemployment. The Youth Job Programme targeted young people aged between 16 and 24 with three months of unemployment. The programme consisted of follow-up and support for young people seeking work (i.e. intensive job-search activities and job counselling). Young people who were not able to find a job despite these efforts were offered measures such as work placement, education and training, apprenticeship programmes and advanced vocational training. Hence, it was very similar to the current European idea of the Youth Guarantee (YOUNEX, 2009). Moreover, persons aged between 18 and 24 years, participating in the programme and unqualified for unemployment benefits, could receive a development allowance. The educational attainment of job-seekers also mattered for defining the entitlement: persons under 20 lacking a final grade from upper secondary school received a significantly lower daily allowance compared to the other recipients (Bengtsson, 2012). A recent evaluation of the Job Guarantee and of the services implemented indicates that the initiative is more directed at managing the numerous young people registered at the PES and less directed to the need to find a good match between employers and job-seekers (Swedish National Audit Office, 2013). Moreover, the audit study reports that more should be done to reach young people who are not registered at the PES and that the possibility of individualisation of measures was actually limited (Swedish National Audit Office, 2013).

In 2013, youth unemployment in Sweden was almost 24%, which is three times higher than the adult unemployment rate; however half of these young people who were looking for a job were actually full-time students looking for a part-time or full-time job. This means that, although being counted as unemployed, those young people were not NEET – in 2012 around 8% of young NEETs³⁵ aged between 15-24 were still part of the education system. Moreover, youth unemployment in Sweden is quite short term: 60% of young people exit unemployment within three months; long-term unemployment (more than 12 months) represented around 5% in 2012, most young people staying longer in unemployment did not have primary or secondary school educational attainment (reference to the YGIP). These characteristics

of youth unemployment in Sweden have resulted in a special attention to intense job-search activities.

The time of intervention

Young people registered at the PES as jobseekers for at least three months are the target; the IAP (individual action plan) for all people registered at the PES is foreseen within 30 days, this is supposed to be shorter for young people who normally go through profiling and motivation courses as the IAP is set at the very beginning. The job guarantee has a duration of maximum 15 months.

The measures

Because of the type of unemployment, mostly shorter than 3 months, the initial focus in the Job Guarantee for youth is targeted at supporting job search activities. The idea behind this work-first approach is that, because young people like to integrate into the labour market, it is better not to lock them into education and training measures where they are less likely to be available for job-search.

In addition to the Job Guarantee (which does not provide a job but supports the job search via intensive actions), since 2012, young people with low qualifications and more at risk of long-term unemployment may take part in active measures such as on-the-job training or education from their first day as job-seekers.

This is only one of the latest measures which are meant to complement the Job Guarantee. Other measures implemented since 2007 mainly include the introduction of IAP and a profiling tool, guidance, job-search, motivation courses and early intervention. In particular the role of profiling has become central since 2012, with a web application defining the degree of risk of being trapped in unemployment based on statistical criteria. The early identification of young people at risk is considered effective as it targets resources to those who are most in need.

Another measure that goes in the direction of highly activating policies adopted by the Swedish government is the introduction of an “activity report” to be completed by jobseekers every month between the 1st and the 14th month of unemployment, with all relevant information on actions taken to find a job.

Employment incentives and mobility allowances are also included as measures to prevent long-term youth unemployment.

All these measures are put into place in the wider context of labour market and educational policies.

PES are the central actors in the delivery of Youth Guarantee measures. It collaborates with local authorities, private agencies, social partners, government agencies and business organisations. While all measures managed by the

³⁵ <http://www.regeringen.se/content/1/c6/22/61/79/0a086bba.pdf>, last accessed on 6th June 2014

PES are implemented in the whole country, municipalities can design different measures aimed at meeting needs at the local level.

Municipalities are also highly involved in the delivery of services as well as in the monitoring and tracking of young people who drop out from school under the age of 20.

Some more structural measures are on the table, particularly concerning the tracking of early school leavers and their integration back into the educational system. Finally, in the framework of the fight against unemployment, in the last year a new form of contract has been introduced, called Vocational and introduction contract (Yrkes och introduktionavtal) which focuses (mainly) on young people with a degree from a vocation-oriented upper secondary institution. These young people are given a chance to get an introductory year at a workplace related to their education. This one-year scheme is subsidised by the government. One of the main conditions for the implementation of this scheme is that the local social partners agree on the terms. This represents an example where the social partners are highly involved in combating youth unemployment.

The role and involvement of trade unions

The position of the Swedish TU (TCO), which took part in the survey, is that the YG is of very high importance, while it seems that for the government it is of low importance. The activities of TCO for promoting the YG in Sweden

were mainly publishing press releases and opinion papers as well as lobbying activities.

The YGIP reports that the ministry informed the social partners about the plan on the 24th of April 2014 and they were given the opportunity to comment on the plan. The survey contribution received from Sweden reports, on the contrary, that there was no involvement of trade unions in the development of the YG plan. TCO declared itself unsatisfied with union involvement in the design of the YG, particularly because the time to comment on a first draft made by the government was very limited – as the draft was sent only the day before the official meeting between the Ministry and the Social Partners. Furthermore, the draft implementation plan was mainly a plan of the measures already undertaken and both employers and trade unions only got half an hour to present and comment on the paper. Due to the very short time for consultation, TCO reported that their contribution to the plan was very limited. Moreover, their involvement is neither foreseen in the putting into practice of these existing measures, nor in the management or in the evaluation of the YG.

TCO also believes that the contract type and duration of employment provided in the framework of the YG are of poor quality; they also report that the age range should be extended up to the age of 29 and that job offers and apprenticeship places and guidance should be provided in closer cooperation with social partners.

HUNGARY

Hungary's rate of young unemployed people aged between 15 and 24 years was already almost 20% in 2008; this figure increased steadily during the crisis and reached 27.2% last year. For young adults, 25-29, the unemployment rate increased by 4 percentage points going from 8.4 in 2008 to 12.5 % in 2013, a rate that is lower than the EU28 average (14.5%).

In Hungary, there is an important share of low-skilled youth who represent 38% of unemployed youth, and around 60% of young unemployed have no previous career while 17% have been unemployed for more than 12 months. (Hungary's National Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan, 2014).

The YG will be implemented gradually because of the high number of young people eligible for the YG and the limited resources available (Hungary's National Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan, 2014).

The target

The age range targeted by the Hungarian YG includes

young people between 16 and 24 years old. Those young people who are not registered at the PES but are eligible for the YG because they are not in education, employment or training and are 16 or older, will need to be redirected to the PES by youth organisations or NGOs working locally with young people.

The measures

The measures listed in the YGIP reflect the options of the European YG definition, they include: a job opportunity with or without wage subsidies, entrepreneurship support, first job experience, apprenticeship, traineeships, public or vocational education. The timeframe of intervention is 4 months after registration at the PES.

The role and involvement of trade unions

In the implementation plan for Hungary, the government reports that besides governmental actors, NGOs were also actively included in improving the situation of young people and the Youth National Council was founded in

2012 in order to coordinate youth organisations and increase their involvement in the design of youth policies. Concerning the involvement of social partners and in particular of trade unions, one can notice that in the YGIP the trade unions will only be present in the “Standing Committee of Representative of the Private Sector and the Government”; while employers are part of the Youth Expert Steering Committee which has the main task of controlling the YG and ensuring its planning, management and monitoring. The Committee where trade unions are involved can only discuss YG-related issues and give opinions. Unions will be involved in the management of

the YG (Hungary’s National Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan, 2014). The lack of involvement in the preparation of the YGIP was also confirmed by LIGA and SZEF in their survey answers.

Although it is still not clear whether trade unions will be involved in the evaluation and the monitoring of the YG, LIGA reported that they are supporting the YG by lobbying activities and SZEF mainly by means of press releases and campaigning. For both trade unions the YG represents an important issue and they call for an increased involvement of trade unions particularly in the phases of management and evaluation of the youth guarantee in Hungary.

CROATIA

Croatia officially joined the EU in July 2013 in the midst of the economic crisis. Figures of youth unemployment in the country show that young people suffer from a dramatically high unemployment rate (49.7% in 2013). The YGIP also reports that among young unemployed aged between 15 and 19 years, more than 80% have no work experience. The share is lower but still relevant (40%) for young people aged between 20 and 24 years. Moreover, during the crisis (2009-2012) an average of 27% of young unemployed were unemployed for more than a year (Ministry of Labour and Pension System, 2014). During the crisis, young unemployed Croatians were less and less likely to find a stable job position: only 5.7% made a transition from unemployment into a permanent job contract; in 2012 more than 35% of all young people aged between 15 and 29 years old were employed on temporary contracts.

Because of the dire labour market situation and forecasts of slow recovery, the Croatian YG will be fully implemented in 2017 and it will aim at ensuring that every young person up to the age of 30 will be given a quality job offer, a traineeship, on-the-job training, apprenticeship or continued education within 4 months of becoming unemployed (Ministry of Labour and Pension System, 2014).

The measures

The Croatian YGIP is organised around 4 axes: early intervention; quality job offers; quality apprenticeship and traineeships and continued quality education. Early intervention consists of supporting voluntary activities for young people; social support to young people with social problems or lacking parental guidance; profiling of young people in order to direct them towards the PES for labour market integration or to NGOs or special services for rehabilitation.

The quality job offer measure consists of employment sub-

sidies for employers hiring young people for two years and ensuring that the young employee will be kept for at least one additional year; under this heading the YGIP also includes self-employment initiatives developed in 2013.

The quality apprenticeships and traineeships axis is based on the “Professional training without employment relationship” implemented in 2010. For the first time, this act allowed employers to hire a young person for a traineeship without engaging in any employment contract. The law foresaw that the young person has to have a mentor and receive all benefits due in the collective agreement and granted from the Labour Code, but not a mandatory salary. It could last for no more than 12 months and employers are not obliged to offer employment contracts after the measure. However, employers from the private sector are asked to employ 50% of participants, and if they fail to do that they will not be allowed to use the measure again. In addition, if employers decide to hire a person after completing the traineeship, they can receive a wage subsidy. These contracts were previously linked to the need to gain work experience in order to pass an exam for a professional title. With the revised law, these traineeships are no longer available only for young people who need to gain professional experience for a specific profession, but they are open to all people regardless of their age and with less than 12 months of working experience in that field. Further, trainees get paid around 210 euro which corresponds to approximately 66% of the current minimum wage in Croatia, and the employer will be reimbursed for the cost of obligatory contributions to pension and health and safety insurance. In addition, this employment scheme can last up to 36 months (for specific jobs), and the employer should hire at least 50% of the people they train. If this rule is not met then the employer will not be able to hire trainees in the following year. Although this measure is presented as innovative it seems more likely to increase the precariousness of young peo-

ple in the Croatian Labour Market: the extension of the validity of these temporary contracts and the obligation of hiring at least 50% of the trainees is not a sufficient trade-off to prevent employers from abusing this scheme.

Although aiming at improving the labour market integration of young people, the measure seems more likely to make the labour market more instable as young people are even more likely to get stuck in short-term employment offers or traineeships. Further, some doubts are to be raised concerning the capacity of the PES to monitor and prevent the misuse of this scheme; another issue also concerns the sector in which these traineeships are offered insofar as most of them were agreed in the public sector where no employment prospects are possible afterwards because hiring via these measures is not allowed in the public sector. In addition, the large targeting might lead to an overrepresentation of highly skilled than low skilled, who can find it more difficult to enter the labour market and would benefit more from these kinds of measures at the expense of more disadvantaged young people.

Another similar measure is the "Work after occupational training". It consists of a contract targeting young people aged between 15 and 30 years who are deemed lacking some kinds of skills linked to a specific occupation. Private and public employers do not have the obligation to continue the contract afterwards. Again, this employment scheme does not seem to fully satisfy the idea of integrating young people in the labour market in a sustainable way. The evaluation of the last three years shows that over 50% of young people taking part in this employment scheme with a training component are able to find a first job within a year after the training, which is quite a long period. Other measures oriented to the acquisition of skills are to be developed during this year in order to address the needs of young people, for instance, with a disability or potentially marginalised. Finally, continued education is the other axis of the YG plan. It consists of reforms of the education system that will need gradual implementation in the coming years. These reforms include the extension of compulsory pre-tertiary education, a VET curriculum reform, early school leavers retention programmes and the recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

The timeframe for intervention

It is supposed to be within four months of registration at the PES. Those young people who are deemed not ready for the labour market will first attend other activities in order to prepare themselves, the 4 months will start as soon as they are ready for the labour market (Ministry of Labour and Pension System, 2014).

The role and involvement of trade unions

The YGIP reports that 17 different stakeholders, including social partners, took part in the YGIP Council, the working body coordinated by the Ministry of Labour and Pension System. The YGIP Council was involved in the development of the YGIP and will hold sessions on a quarterly basis. A Youth Task force has been set up by the Ministry in order to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the YG. The implementation of the YG is carried out at the national and regional level by the Local Employment Development Initiatives which include different stakeholders including social partners.

In a previous report, Bussi and Geyer (2013), TUs interviewed in November last year esteemed that their involvement in the development of the YG implementation plan was poor particularly because little debate took place on the quality of measures proposed as well as the clear lack of job opportunities for young people. In the current survey, the Croatian representative at the ETUC youth committee, UATUC³⁶ pointed out that - although TUs were involved in the design of the YG and were able to influence the YGIP to some extent - their involvement took place after important parts of the Implementation Plan (i.e. active employment policy measures) had been developed by the Ministry of Labour. Hence, trade unions were not allowed to discuss already existing active market policy measures. Nonetheless, their participation in the design of the YGIP was considered as positive by UATUC as it improved the legitimacy and the visibility of the trade union in tackling youth issues as well as the quality of the YG.

PPDIV also reports that UATUC will be involved in the implementation of the YG but that this is done informally and mainly at the national and cross-sectoral level. They will not be involved in the daily management of the YG, but they will take part in the evaluation of the Plan which will be carried out by a state institution in consultation with social partners. The National Youth Council was also involved in the design of the YGIP. Finally, TUs conclude that their involvement should be increased in the implementation stage of the YG and call for a real tripartite evaluation of outcomes.

³⁶ The answer was provided by PPDIV, the trade union for food and agriculture which is a member of the ETUC Youth Committee and also a member of UATUC Union of Autonomous Trade Unions of Croatia which took part in the YG Council.

Youth unemployment in France reached 23.9% in 2013, an increase of more than 5 percentage points since 2008. The rate of young adults increased less rapidly during the crisis, around 3 percentage points, and attained 13.7% in 2013 (Eurostat). Like for most of the EU Member States, young people with low educational attainment present much higher levels of unemployment compared to medium and highly skilled young people.

France approved a pilot scheme similar to a Youth Guarantee (*Garantie jeunes*³⁷) in August 2013 based on the report of an ad-hoc working group (Wargon & Gurgand, 2013). The guarantee is currently implemented in the form of pilot projects in 11 of the French *départements*, its implementation will be extended to 20 territories during 2014. This measure aims at complementing existing measures targeting young people in need, in particular young people aged between 18 and 25 years who were previously not taken in charge by the *Missions Locales* and were not eligible for the minimum income scheme (RSA - *revenu de solidarité active*), local institutions delivering social, vocational education and training and labour market integration of young people. Young people targeted by this pilot project are those who are more disadvantaged because they are NEET, do not have any support from their families and are eligible for means-tested allowances. This target sub-group is one of the most fragile of the whole youth population targeted by the *Garantie pour la Jeunesse*³⁸, i.e. the broader strategy within which the 'Garantie Jeunes', the pilot project started last year, is also included.

The funding

On June 3 2014, France received 620.2 million euro for implementing the Operational Programme for the implementation of the Youth Employment Initiative, in the framework of which the YG will be also implemented. 432 million euro will come from the YEI and the ESF associated to YEI and this money will be used to support activation, early prevention and outreach work in order to allow an increasing number of NEETs³⁹ to take part in YG programmes. An additional 188 million euro will be granted under the YEI to the 12 regional Operational Programmes, insofar as most of the actions are developed locally⁴⁰.

The measures

The French YG is meant to complement a series of measures in recent years as well as long-standing actions and structures that aim at reducing youth unemployment, inactivity and social exclusion. One of the most important measures that the current French government put into place is "*emplois d'avenir*" (Jobs for the Future) that targets low qualified young people aged between 16 and 25 years and provides them with work experience.

The *Garantie pour la Jeunesse* is composed of three main objectives: the identification of NEETs via existing networks and systems and with the support of the PES (e.g. platform for monitoring dropouts or the 'Information and Guidance Centres'); the individualisation of coaching and mentoring in order to identify the best orientation (training, traineeships or employment); the third objective is favouring integration in the labour market by means of vocational education or training (e.g. Jobs for the Future; support for self-employment; other subsidised contracts⁴¹; apprenticeships; 'écoles de la deuxième chance') and hands-on work experience which can also be acquired via civic service ('service civique').

Because regional councils will receive 35% of YEI funds, most of the initiatives will be developed at the local level where calls for projects will be launched.

Furthermore, the preparatory document for the pilot project *garantie jeunes* that was published in May last year on vocational training and social dialogue, reported that young NEETs who are at risk of poverty and social exclusion will receive 450 euro as financial support if they take part in measures linked with the YG but do not receive any other financial support from the traineeships or the employment. For instance, the 450 euro will be granted to young people who have difficulties in finding a job and sign a 'CIVIS' contract with the local PES (*Missions Locales*) in order to develop over a year some actions targeting his/her labour market integration. The financial support is however granted for a maximum of 4 months⁴².

This financial support is means-tested and it will be available for young people who are in need and will complement the individualised support provided for their inte-

³⁷ In France, two similar names have been coined for defining two government interventions: the 'Garantie Jeunes' is an initiative that the French government launched as a pilot project last year. The 'Garantie pour la Jeunesse' identifies the European initiative launched by the Commission and approved by the European Council. The 'Garantie Jeunes' is part of the 'garantie pour la jeunesse' but they are different and were implemented at different moments. <http://www.injep.fr/Garantie-jeunes-en-France-et>, last accessed June 7th.

³⁸ We will use the name 'Youth Guarantee' (YG) to identify the 'Garantie pour la Jeunesse'.

³⁹ OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME UNDER THE 'INVESTMENT FOR GROWTH AND JOBS' GOAL, en métropole et outre-mer. The regions that will receive the funding are: Aquitaine, Auvergne, Centre, Champagne-Ardenne, Guadeloupe, Guyane, Haute-Normandie, Languedoc-Roussillon, Martinique, Nord-Pas de Calais, Réunion, Mayotte, Picardie.

⁴⁰ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-622_en.htm last accessed June 7th

⁴¹ For instance: CAE or CIE (contract leading to employment in no-profit sectors or for-profit sectors); structures for the integration in the labour market targeting the most disadvantaged; 'contrats de génération'; the 'emplois francs' (Premier Ministre, 2013)

⁴² Premier ministre, Plan national de mise en œuvre de la garantie européenne pour la jeunesse, réponse des autorités françaises, 20 décembre 2013.

gration in the labour market. The financial support was extended to this age group particularly because the recent national report on the poverty of the population revealed that an increased number of young people aged between 18 and 24 years are living below the poverty threshold.

The timeframe of intervention

The French YG follows the European definition of the YG and sets the intervention within four months from registration at the PES, however this intervention can be any action labelled "Garantie pour la Jeunesse", which does not necessarily ensure that one of the four alternatives listed in the YG will be provided (Premier Ministre 2013). This is confirmed in the Operational Programme which states that within four months from the first one-to-one profiling interview the person will receive an adapted offer or support, which is not necessarily one of the four options included in the YG definition (good quality employment offer, apprenticeship, training or continued education).

The target group

In the framework of the *Garantie pour la Jeunesse*, young people who take part in the YG have to be NEET and early school leavers (regardless of their educational attainment) and living in the regions which are eligible for the funding. Young people have to be between 18 and 25 years old.

Concerning the *Garantie Jeunes*, the pilot project already in place since last year, not all young people can participate in the YG, but only those who are selected to take part by a multi-actor committee⁴³ on the basis of the opinion formulated by the Missions Locales (Wargon & Gurgand, 2013). Hence, young people cannot access the programme without an agreement of the institution that supports them, registration at the PES is not compulsory. The aim of this pilot project is to target 10000 young people until October 2014 (after one year's implementation), and by 2016 to reach up to 100,000 participants.

The role and involvement of trade unions⁴⁴

French trade unions were highly mobilised in supporting the YG: they produced press releases, published position papers, organised campaigns and carried out lobbying activities. At the international level, they also organised together with DGB a Shadow Summit in Berlin and, together with DGB and EYF, an inter-ministerial conference in Paris last year in order to call for higher financial means for the YG. At the national level they are also well coordinated on the issue. Trade unions report that high rates of early school leavers and NEETs are at the top of the agenda of

both the government and trade unions themselves.

As reported already in a previous report (Bussi & Geyer, 2013), the trade unions did not take part in the negotiations on the pilot *Garantie Jeunes* within the ad hoc working group, but were invited to present their opinions to the members of the group (Bussi and Geyer, 2013). They are neither involved in the implementation or in the management of the YG, which is carried out by local commissions composed of the *prefet*, local employment services and experts. Concerning the evaluation of the YG, the trade unions are not directly involved in the follow-up, however their opinions are generally considered. Although they can make their voice heard at the national level, the French trade unions call for a higher involvement of social partners in the evaluation and monitoring of the *Garantie Jeunes* particularly because social partners take part in the national inter-professional agreements as actors in employment policy.

When comparing their degree of involvement in the different stages (design; implementation; management and evaluation) with the degree of their involvement in putting into place active labour market policies, the French trade unions report that it was weaker. Hence, they ask for more involvement in the management and evaluation of the YG.

When considering the participation in the broader Youth Guarantee framework at the national level (*Garantie pour la Jeunesse*), trade unions were part of the designing process but this was limited to a single consultation via the social dialogue committee in charge of European issues. Trade unions were invited to give their opinion on the design of the French YGIP. This procedure, they pointed out, was different and less inclusive for trade unions than the procedure followed for a similar initiative - the '*contrats de génération*' (Generation pact contracts) - launched by the government but signed by the social partners. The consultation on the Youth Guarantee was done via a new institution ('*Conférence Sociale*') created during this current presidential mandate. The aim of this institution is to gather several ministerial representatives and the social partners in order to tackle social issues and establish a common agenda for the following year. It is not then a form of consultation, as it is highly dependent on the agenda setting power of the government. Trade unions did present their written contributions for the ad-hoc group of the Youth Guarantee; however the strict structure of the consultation as well as the lack of time did not allow all the French trade unions to present their feedback.

⁴³ These committees will imperatively include representatives from the State in the département and the general council of the département (elected members). Other members can be appointed by the *prefet* and will include the Missions Locales and representatives of the organisations in charge of the professional integration.

⁴⁴ The answer to the survey was coordinated between Force ouvrière, CFDT, FGT as they adopted a single position.

GREECE

In addition to further measures already described in a former report (Bussi & Geyer, 2013), GSEE reports that the implementation plan for YG was sent to the European Commission, who asked for it to be revised. According to an informal exchange with the Ministry, the YG implementation plan had to be revised because of the lack of social dialogue and an incomplete business-implementation plan.

The YG will thus be implemented by the end of 2014 or the beginning of 2015. Funding of 170 million euro will be granted to Greece from the YEI and 170 million will come from national resources.

The role and involvement of trade unions

The trade union, GSEE, which took part in the survey reports that the implementation of YG is an important issue for both the government and the trade unions. The GSEE trade union promoted the implementation of the YG mainly by publishing position and opinion papers but also by drafting a complete and operational implementation plan for the YG that was recently sent to the Ministry of Labour.

As for the priorities to tackle, the respondent reports that the government mainly sees the YG as a means to reduce

high structural and cyclical youth unemployment, high rates of NEETs and low rates of employment among young people. Higher attention is placed by trade unions on high precariousness of employment positions for young people and the problem of early school leavers. The trade union also reports that it was not involved in the design of the YG. Only recently a government decision was taken concerning the involvement of the social partners in the implementation of the measure. Moreover, it is still not clear whether trade unions will be involved in the management and in the evaluation of the YG. Trade unions' involvement in the YG was till now weaker than in other active labour market policies.

According to information collected from the survey, the YG will target young people from 15 up to 29 years old. Employment, continued education, apprenticeships, traineeships and self-employment will be offered within 5 months of being registered as unemployed at the PES. The YG will only be compulsory for certain categories of young people. 40000 young people are targeted in 2014. Concerning the working conditions and the duration of the contracts offered within the YG scheme, the respondent reports that employment offers are often of bad quality. Because of its complete lack of involvement in the design, the TU representative reports that TU involvement and social dialogue on the YG should increase.

BELGIUM

There will be four implementation plans of the YG in Belgium and federal support to the YG through the unemployment benefit system (Le Forem, VDAB, Actiris, Bruxelles Formation, & Arbeitsamt der DG, 2014). The four implementation plans will be implemented in the three different regions – Wallonia, Flanders and Brussels – and in the German-speaking community.

The Belgian social assistance and unemployment benefit systems are, at the international level (OECD, 2005), considered as providing a too wide coverage because they are open to young people without working history and for a long period of time (previously these unemployment benefits for young people with no working history were unlimited, they are now limited to 3 years). However, its generosity and its eligibility criteria, i.e. being registered at the PES, result in a relatively good monitoring of early school leavers and NEETs.

The measures

At the federal level, the unemployment and social as-

sistance systems ensure that young people have access to financial resources and support in their transition to the labour market. Employment incentives targeting (low-skilled and long-term unemployed) young people are also a competence of the federal government. In 2013, a federal measure was implemented that created 10000 traineeship places for young people aged under 30 with low qualifications or unemployed for more than 6 months, the traineeships are supposed to last between 3 and 6 months (Actiris & ISBA, 2014). The trainees will receive the unemployment allowance (around 700 euros) and 200 euro a month paid by the employer. However, these traineeships do not necessarily include a training component, which is optional (Actiris & ISBA, 2014). No commitment to hire young people is included in the measures. During the first 8 months of its implementation, this measure has found low take-up particularly in the Brussels Capital region, only 137 young people out of the 1650 places granted to the region (Actiris & ISBA, 2014). Furthermore, positions in which this measure has been used are shop and office assistants in the public and private sector and employees

in the restaurant and tourist sector. These positions do not seem to stimulate the creation of genuine and long-lasting employment opportunities or working experiences different from the ones already provided by the PES and are not likely to provide relevant skills to young unemployed. The Belgian Youth Guarantee Plan also mentions as an action supporting the YG at the federal level, a stricter conditionality for receiving 'integration allowance' for young people without working history who have been looking for a job and registered at the PES for 310 days (Le Forem, et al., 2014). Although this measure follows a common European trend of making conditionality stricter and more dependent on job-search and work availability, this does not seem to positively contribute to the implementation of the YG as it might foster the dropping out of the most disadvantaged young people.

The Flemish implementation plan for a YG aims at improving existing measures including strengthening the ties between education and the labour market, improving exchange of data and outreach work (Le Forem, et al., 2014). Currently, the PES in Flanders invites low- and middle skilled young people between 18 and 25 years old for an information session after 6 weeks of being registered as job-seekers. If they are not able to find a job within 3 months from the registration, they will be invited for a screening which can lead to guidance activities. This, according to the Flemish YGIP, implies that all young people will receive a personal counselling or will have found a job within 5 months. The definition of Flemish YG provided in the YGIP states that all young people under 25 years old will be offered training for technical or non-technical competences (i.e. attitude, motivation) within 4 months. Young people with no qualifications are supposed to start a vocational training or work experience by the end of the 6 months. Hence, the Flemish YG differentiates between unskilled and skilled young people both in term of actions offered and timing of intervention. Further the actions offered to the groups are different from those indicated in the Council Recommendation particularly because guidance and motivation training offered within four months cannot be compared to labour market integration measures such as good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship. Numerous measures for reaching young early school leavers and NEETs are developed in partnerships with local and regional stakeholders. Ongoing training programmes are also included as regional measures contributing to the implementation of the YG, among them the IBO (individual on-the-job vocational training) for 3 or 6 months. This job scheme is meant to reach 17800 young people in the Flemish region on a yearly basis. While the IBO previously obliged the employers to hire the trainee under an open-ended contract after the period of training, now employers are free to offer a fixed-term contract to the trainee lasting at least the length of the training.

In Wallonia some provinces are highly affected by the crisis

and youth unemployment rates increased substantially. The current approach of the regional PES ensures that within 4 months from registering young people receive a tailored approach. Other regional and local partners will ensure that NEETs will get support even if not registered as unemployed at the PES. 26.8 million euro over 2 years will be spent for creating partnerships particularly for developing early intervention measures for early school leavers and NEETs. Most of the key reforms in the Wallonia region consist of legal changes aiming at increasing the attractiveness of vocational education and training and at regulating apprenticeship schemes. These legal reforms might be considered not as measures taken in the framework of the YG but rather more broad-reaching reform plans, guidance targeting young people under 25 years old, mobility and self-employment and are also scheduled in the next two years.

In the Brussels Capital Region, another regional plan will be implemented. The Brussels region suffers from high unemployment rates among young people particularly with low educational attainment (almost 30%) or migrant background. Since October 2013, the regional PES has implemented a 'Youth Guarantee' service aimed at supporting young people aged under 30 who are looking for a job. This service also deals with job placements and work experience programmes created by the federal government. The service also provides guidance to young people during their actual work experience in a company. This programme will be integrated into the YG programme. Further, several programmes include language training courses – lack of language skills is one of the most important problems among young unemployed of the Brussels Region.

Finally, in the German speaking region, the share of young unemployed is lower than in the rest of the country also because of the dual vocational system and a more favourable labour market situation. Since January 2014, the PES aims at inviting every young job-seeker for a personal counselling interview within the first four months and to conclude an individual and tailor-made integration contact to be carried out within a defined period of time. While suggesting an early intervention, the design of the German-speaking community YG does not seem to reflect the European guidelines for the YG since there is no commitment to provide offers of employment, training, education or apprenticeships within the four months, but only the guarantee of receiving job-counselling.

The role and the involvement of social partners

The survey was completed by the representatives of ABVV-FGTB and ACLVB, the first referring to the national implementation plan while the latter focused on the Brussels Capital region plan. At both the national and regional level, TUs report that the YG is receiving high importance both from the government and from all the unions. At the national level, ABVV is engaged in lobbying activities while at the local level the ACLVB also reported campaigning

activities. ABVV-FGTB reports that at the national level the main challenge the government expects the YG to tackle is the high rate of early school leavers. For trade unions the priority should rather be geared towards the reduction of youth unemployment particularly via the creation of sustainable and decent jobs, reducing precariousness and NEET rates. At the national level trade unions were not involved in the process of designing the youth guarantee, most likely because it is highly decentralised and mostly based on existing measures. They are, however, involved in the implementation of the YG via stable and formalised institutions both at the federal, regional level and sectoral level. Their involvement via formalised institutions in the implementation of existing measures is done at the socio-economic council where social partners sit. While the YGIP briefly mentions that the assessment at the federal level includes the social partners and the Regions (Le Forem, et al., 2014), trade unions report that there is no clarity about the setting up of the evaluation. Because of the lack of involvement in the crucial steps for the development of a genuine YG, trade unions demand that their

involvement should be strengthened.

In addition, trade unions also report that in Wallonia the network of NGO and third sector associations working with young people was not included in the design of the regional plan for the Youth Guarantee. Also in the Brussels capital region, they report, the involvement of third sector stakeholders, in the preventive actions, was not fully assured. Furthermore, the FGTB in the Wallonia region claims that the role of the NGOs working with young people should not be limited to out-reach work; they also argue that a clearer definition of the common objectives of the YG in the Region would lead to a better organisation of the actions and interventions.

Finally, concerning the measures provided, the AVVB-FGTB also reports that some of the measures are not promoting good and stable job opportunities for young people, but increasing the precariousness of employment and job-churning. This has raised doubts about the potential real effectiveness and positive impact on youth unemployment reduction and better employment prospects for young people expected to be brought about by the YG.

BULGARIA

Bulgaria's youth unemployment rate (15-24) has increased substantially since 2008 and reached 28.4%. For young people with low educational attainment, unemployment was already high in 2008 and increased exponentially during the crisis, in 2013 it was more than 51%. Young adult unemployment rates also increased, although less dramatically than for the younger group: latest yearly data available from Eurostat report 17.6% in 2013 for this age group. Bulgaria submitted its implementation plan in December 2013.

The funding

Almost 210 million euro are to be spent on measures targeting young people under 29 years old between 2014 and 2020 and most of the funds will be spent in this first two years.

Not all regions in Bulgaria are eligible for receiving Youth Employment Initiative money and most of the programmes for the South-Western regions will be financed by the state budget. The main aim of the Youth Guarantee Plan in Bulgaria is to reduce youth unemployment to 7%, from where it now stands at 28.4%. More than 15 million euro is expected to be spent in the creation of sustainable and new employment for young people.

The coordination of actions and partners involved will be ensured by the Coordination council, an ad-hoc institution including representatives of the ministries, local

representatives of municipalities, social partners and youth organisations.

The measures

Measures included in the YG are both preventive and targeted at integrating young people into the labour market. While a large proportion of young people are expected to be employed in subsidised employment (154000 people in subsidised employment and 60000 in the primary sector), a smaller number will be involved in motivational training and specific skill training.

The target

The target population is young people under 29 years old. Over the 7 years (2014-2020), the Bulgaria YG aims at reaching 420000 young people: 75000 just in 2014.

The role and involvement of trade union

Concerning their direct involvement in the design of the YG, CITUB reports their involvement took place in formalised institutions and right from the beginning of the designing process. Further, although they reported that the draft sent to the Commission was then modified and some of the measures proposed were cut and the starting date postponed, they considered their involvement as satisfying because the plan was developed on a set of measures negotiated with the government which also included actions proposed by CITUB in July 2013. Trade unions

together with employers will also be involved in the daily management of the YG within a tripartite committee, their involvement is also expected in the evaluation even if at the moment of writing is still not fully defined.

CITUB produced press releases, position papers, organised campaigning and lobbying activities to support implementation and awareness raising on the youth unemployment issue. Their involvement in the design of the YG improved, according to the respondent, the quality of the YG as well

as the legitimacy of the TU in tackling youth issues. CITUB warns, however, that the implementation process of the YG is slow and it may run the risk of lacking resources for its implementation. They also report that while there are plans for modifying the law regulating internships, no legal reform is foreseen for the introduction of the dual system which is, however, promoted as a measure for combating youth unemployment and improving school-to-work transitions.

CZECH REPUBLIC⁴⁵

Latest data from Eurostat reveal that the youth unemployment rate in the Czech Republic, although having increased by 10pp since 2008, is still under the EU average in 2013 (19% and 23.3% in EU28). Young people with lower educational attainment are more at risk of unemployment (41.9% unemployed in 2013) compared to medium and highly education young people (respectively 16.4% and 14.5% in 2013). The rate for young adults increased much less, by 4 pp in 5 years, and the yearly rate in 2013 was 8.1%.

The CMKOS, Czech-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions, reports that the implementation of the YG, based on existing measures, was foreseen for December 2013. The Czech YG consists of measures offering employment, traineeships and self-employment targeting young people up to the age of 30 while apprenticeships are offered to young people up to the age of 22. Young people who want to take part in the YG will have to be registered at the Public Employment Service and the YG scheme will be

available only for some young persons who express the wish to take part in the programme. Funding allocated from European sources amounts to 12.71 million euro and the same amount will be expected to be allocated by the ESF national contribution.

The role and involvement of trade union

Czech-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions engaged in the lobbying activities for supporting the YG. It reports that while high structural and cyclical youth unemployment, low employment and high precarious employment of young people are the main challenges for both the government and trade unions, NEETs and ESL rates are of less importance. CMKOS reports having been involved in the design of the YGIP and that their involvement took place in lightly formalised institutions. However, this was after a first draft was developed by the government and, because they were not involved since the very beginning, CMKOS reports being unsatisfied.

CYPRUS⁴⁶

The situation of young people in the labour market in Cyprus strongly deteriorated during the crisis: youth unemployment increased by almost 30 percentage points between 2008 and 2013, it is currently one of the fifth highest rates in the whole EU28. The young adult rate also increased substantially and reached 20.6% in 2013 while it was as low as 4.8% in 2008.

SEK- Cyprus reported that their support to the implementation of the YG was made by means of publishing position papers and organising lobbying activities. SEK reports that the most relevant challenge the government aims at tackling with the YG is the cyclical high unemployment rate among young people while NEETs and ESL are not

priority targets. SEK was involved in the design of the YG from the very beginning together with Youth Representatives. They were informed informally, while consultations and negotiation took place in lightly formalised institutions. The initiative to involve trade unions came from the government. SEK is not involved in the implementation or in the management of the YG and also their presence in the evaluation of the YGIP is still not clearly defined.

Concerning the shape of the YG in Cyprus, there seems to be no timeframe for delivering the intervention to young people in the YG programme. 11 million euro will be given from the YEI, a similar amount is expected from the ESF national contribution.

⁴⁵ The section on the Czech Republic YG plan is based exclusively on the contribution collected via the survey answer carried out among trade unions.

⁴⁶ The section on the YG for Cyprus plan is based exclusively on the contribution collected via the survey answer carried out among trade unions.

LITHUANIA⁴⁷

In 2008, Lithuania's youth unemployment rate was around 13.3%, it increased dramatically in 2010 (35.7%) and went down to 21.9% (a bit lower than the EU28 average – 23.3% in 2013) in 2013. Lower skilled people still suffer a high level of unemployment (38.5% in 2013) compared to medium and highly skilled. Young adults aged 25-29 also underwent a high increase (6.1% in 2008/20.8 in 2010/13.4% in 2013).

LPSS (LDS) Lithuanian Trade Union "Solidarumas" reports that the YG is of high relevance in the agenda of the Lithuanian government as well as the social partners. The respondent, LPSS (LDS), report that its support to the YG was mainly done through press releases and position papers. Both the Government and LPSS (LDS) share the same ideas concerning the challenges that the YG should tackle in the country (cyclically and structurally high youth unemployment and employment precariousness). LPSS (LDS) also considers that low employment rates and high numbers of early school leavers should be addressed by the YG.

The role and involvement of trade unions

The Lithuanian trade union, LPSS(LDS), is a partner in the European Commission pilot project of the Youth Guarantee scheme "Establishing a partnership to set up a Youth Guarantee Scheme in Vilnius region", which was submitted by the Vilnius city and county business employers' confederation. They were involved in the design of the YG implementation plan: they were informed, consulted and they negotiated informally on the development of the YG and it was they who took the initiative to be involved because their presence was not mandatory. Their involvement took place after the government made a definitive decision on important details of the implementation plan. They also judge that their presence in the design of the YG improved the quality of the YG and the legitimacy of the YG in their country. Also, the visibility of the trade unions among young people and their legitimacy in tackling youth issues improved thanks to the presence of the TU in the design of the YG. As far as their involvement is concerned, they defined themselves as satisfied. They are also involved in the implementation of the YG via lightly formalised institutions (i.e. in ad-hoc institutions that were created for a specific reason).

DENMARK

Denmark was affected by the crisis because of its highly financed-oriented economy and its high reliance on international exchanges (Meilland, 2011). Despite still being one of the countries with the lowest youth unemployment rates, Denmark experienced a significant increase in unemployment. Youth unemployment rate was one of the lowest in Europe before the onset of the crisis (8% in 2008). In 2010, it increased and reached 14% and, since 2011, when it reached its maximum (14.2%), it started to slowly decline (13.1% in 2013). A similar trend affected young adults: in 2008 their rate was as low as 3.4% and jumped up to 10.6% in 2010 and continued to increase until 2012 (11%). In 2013, the rate decreased by 1pp, but it is still almost twice as higher as the unemployment rate of people aged between 30 and 64 years⁴⁸.

The Danish YGIP focuses on three main aims: integrating young people without education into the regular education system; giving young people without the basic skills for entering education support to be able to join the regular educational system and, finally, getting young people with an education into employment (Ministry of Employment, 2014).

The timing of the intervention

Once registered at the PES, young people will receive a first profiling interview within seven days: if the young person did not complete compulsory education they will be entitled to an educational activation during the first month; if the young person has completed compulsory education they will be entitled to receive a quality offer of relevant activation, training or employment within three months. Two approaches are then developed by the Danish YG which target two populations differently and favour educational achievement for those with lower qualifications rather than labour market integration.

The measures

Measures listed in the YGIP are existing and ongoing measures. The main preventive measure targets young people between 15 and 17 and obliges them to be either in education, employment or any other recognised activity. All those young people in this age range who fail to complete education are tracked and monitored at the

⁴⁷ The section on the YG for Lithuania plan is based exclusively on the contribution collected via the survey answer carried out among trade unions.

⁴⁸ Data retrieved from Eurostat, LFS, 2014.

municipal level, to ensure that they integrate into the educational system as soon as possible in order to conclude vocational education or upper secondary education. Young people aged between 18 and 29 who do not have any education will be oriented towards vocational education or further education also by means of the unemployment reform explained above. Young people with an education will be offered traineeships, wage subsidies, on-the-job training, job-rotation or jobs held by the municipality. If the young person does not meet the preconditions for entering an educational path, a specific support will be provided for preparing them to complete their education. Concerning the measures leading to labour market integration, we shall see that all measures aim at creating on-the-job training opportunities rather than stimulating the creation of job positions. Measures mostly consist in fact of providing a training contract with an enterprise (Praktikpladscentre); hands-on work experience (practical experience in the enterprise - Virksomhedspraktik); work experience to improve skills (Opkvalificeringsjobs). None of these contracts foresee an obligation for the employer to hire the trainee at the end of the scheme/subsidy. Due to low long-term unemployment, the measures for labour market integration included in the YG are based on the idea that young people with an education will be able to find a job in the regular labour market within 3 months. If the young person fails to do that, the YG aims at enhancing employability by targeting skills rather than by supporting job creation.

The YG measures reflect recent reforms in unemployment benefits putting an increasing accent on the role of education as a prerequisite for young people under 30 with no formal education to enter the labour market. Since January 2014, *kontanthjælp* – cash benefits for those who are not eligible for unemployment benefits – have been replaced by an educational aid (*uddannelseshjælp*) for those young people with no education, who are then asked to integrate into the educational system if they want to be eligible for financial aid (Ministry of Employment 2014).

Those youngsters who are deemed not ready to start an education, will be entitled after three months to an activation measure helping them to get closer to an educational path.

The Danish welfare support system also puts a strong emphasis on the active role of young claimants insofar as young people under 30 with no education are asked to sustain themselves financially before the education programme begins. Further, young people under 30 with an education and available for work have to show strong commitment in finding a job during the first 3 months, should they not find an employment they can be forced to take jobs run by the city council for a maximum of 13 weeks or training in a company or subsidised jobs⁴⁹. Students, independent of their income, are also entitled to public support for further education for the whole du-

ration of the study.

The cash benefit reform is meant to create a more activating environment and support the implementation of the YG measures.

Several outreach activities and initiatives as well as guidance programmes are also implemented at the local level and in schools.

The target

Young people targeted by the Danish youth employment initiative are aged up to 29 years.

The funding

Denmark is not eligible for YEI funding, however it can still use ESF funding for implementing innovative measures targeting youth unemployment. 170 million euro is granted to Denmark for the period 2014-2020. Other funding will come from national resources.

The role and involvement of trade unions

The YGIP is based on measures that are developed via a partnership approach and are meant to create synergies between the local actors such as vocational schools, job centres, and youth organisations.

Trade unions are normally part of the board of vocational educational institutions and they are thus involved in providing and organising some of the interventions linked with the YG (Ministry of Employment 2014).

According to the survey respondent, the YG is not high on the agenda of the government and of employers and in general of trade unions. LO reports that their support to the implementation of the YG has mainly been done by organising lobbying activities. Challenges to be addressed by the YG are differently understood by the government, which looks mostly at NEETs, and LO, which also considers it important to tackle employment precariousness and cyclically high youth unemployment. LO was consulted for the design of the YG but via lightly formalised institutions right from the beginning of the process. They evaluate their input in this stage positively, as they report that their involvement improved the quality of the YG and also had positive results for the legitimacy of the trade union in tackling youth issues. The LO reports that they will not be involved in implementing the YG nor in its management, even though they might be considered as marginally involved in the board of vocational education schools. At present it is still not clear whether they will be included in the evaluation process of the YG. However, since most of the measures are already in place, they judge training, guidance and counselling of good quality.

LO also believe that their involvement should be increased at all stages of the implementation of the YG.

⁴⁹ Last access 7th June, <http://cphpost.dk/news/kontanthjaelp-reform-the-central-points.5015.html>; Ministry of employment 2014

THE UNITED KINGDOM

The reaction of the UK government following the launch of the YG was quite cold. In September last year, the UK government agreed on the need for urgent action to combat youth unemployment, at national, multilateral and formal EU-level; however it also indicated that many of the measures recommended under the Youth Guarantee are already in place in the UK and it further made clear that a rigid guarantee at 4 months, as included in the YG, would not be cost effective. Hence, because of what it considered to be a generally inflexible approach, the UK abstained from Council adoption of the Recommendation in February 2013⁵⁰. In addition, the government recognised that the current UK measures were not wholly in line with the Commission's blueprint but stated that they aim for and achieve outcomes in the areas covered by the Youth Guarantee. It also declared that ESF money should address youth unemployment in general and not be limited to the YG. Further, some questions were also raised on the Framework for good quality traineeships proposed by the Commission, which should be more specific concerning the measures targeted. Therefore, the Communication from the Commission on the YG was not felt to introduce any new policy implications for the UK. In April 2014, a report from the House of Lords – European Union Committee, which is expected to provide positions on EU issues to the UK government, recommended that the UK Government reconsider its plans to use the Youth Employment Initiative funds to bolster its existing initiatives and urged the government to implement a pilot Youth Guarantee in the five areas in the UK which will receive Youth Employment Initiative funding (House of Lords, 2014). The report also supports the implementation of the Quality Frameworks for traineeships.

The UK Government finally submitted its plan for spending the Youth Employment Initiative funds on 3 March 2014, over two months after the deadline (House of Lords 2014). As explained above, in the plan it is stated that, while the UK government strongly supports the aim of the Youth Guarantee, there is no plan to introduce the YG. The reasons are to be found, according to the UK Government, in the reservations about the “cost-effectiveness” of the EU's blanket requirement that support should be provided after four months, and in the lack of flexibility in the four-month timeframe for intervention (House of Lords 2014).

The funding

Five UK regions are eligible for YEI funding because of their high youth unemployment and they will receive 193 million euro under the YEI.

The measures

The YGIP sent to the Commission in March this year shows how the YEI funding will be used to bolster existing domestic initiatives, including the Youth Contract. The Youth Contract was launched in 2012 and targeted young people aged between 18 and 24 years. It consists of five axes of intervention: wage incentives over three years for employers hiring young people unemployed for at least six months; an increasing number of work experience or sector-based work academy places; more time with Job Centre plus advisers; the opportunity to be referred to a career interview with the National Career Service; reinforced support to young dropouts. Parallel to the Youth Contract, the Work Programme launched in 2011 targeted young NEETs who had claimed Job Seekers Allowance for nine months. When young people are referred to the Work Programme, providers are free to provide individual help and are paid by results if they are able to demonstrate that the young person enters the labour market for a period of three to six months. Although the Youth Contract is listed by the UK Government as the UK alternative to the YG, the House of Lords considers that the Youth Contract is not targeting young people by providing adopted supporting services but rather promoting employment incentives. Further the Youth Contract does not imply any commitment towards young job-seekers to provide them with a sustainable job opportunity. The report also mentions the lack of funding of the Youth Contract.

The role and involvement of trade unions

The TUC reports that, as expected from the UK government position, the YG has a very low relevance in the agenda of the government while it is of high importance for trade unions and employers' associations. The TUC claims to have been very active in supporting the YG via press releases, position papers, organisation of awareness raising campaigns and lobbying activities. Further, the government priorities that are to be tackled by the YG, or its existing UK measures, are structurally high youth unemployment, high rates of NEETs and early school leavers. The TUC stresses, by contrast, the need also to tackle low employment rates and high precarious employment among young people in the UK, which are overlooked by the government. The TUC was not involved in the design of the YGIP, which is likely to be due to the fact that the plan is based on existing measures. The TUC is also not involved in the implementation and the daily management of the YG. The TUC also considers its involvement to be much weaker in the YG compared to its role in any other

⁵⁰ <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmeuleg/83-xiii/8349.htm> , last accessed on 8th June 2014.

active labour market measures and calls for Parliament to play a central role in the monitoring of the measure.

Indeed, because of the lack of any type of trade union involvement in the definition of the plan, the TUC calls for a higher involvement to enable it to make submissions on aspects of the measures and their implementation. The

TUC also reports that the quality of the services provided is very low and that not only should the amount of resources allocated to the YG be increased, but also the pay for jobs and apprenticeships offered to young job-seekers as well as the quality of the guidance services provided.

SPAIN

Youth unemployment in Spain has reached dramatically high levels during the crisis. Already high in 2008 (24.6%), the rate reached 55.7% in 2013 (Eurostat). Even for young adults aged between 25 and 29 years, rates have skyrocketed: since 2008 the unemployment rate of this age group increased by almost 25 percentage points in 5 years (34.1% in 2013). The Spanish YGIP reports that 58% of young people aged 15-24 who are looking for a job did have a previous working experience, which would suggest that most young people already made their transition to the labour market, but often precariously.

The implementation plan for the YG was sent to the European Commission in December 2013. Due to its high decentralisation of competences on vocational education and training and employment issues devolved to the 'Comunidades Autónomas' (regions), there will be a national framework and several regional implementation plans that will be developed and implemented locally.

The YGIP has been developed within the Strategy for Self-employment and youth employment 2013-2016 which was adopted last year.

The Spanish YG follows the blueprint of the Commission. The job offer should be at least 6 months full-time or part-time (50% of the normal full-time contract); the education offer consists of a training course of at least 150 hours for those with no experience or training and 90 hours for those young people who need to complete their qualification. Young NEET can also receive an 'on-the-job-training' offer or an apprenticeship or traineeship offer. The apprenticeship offer is linked with specific professions or within vocational education schools (e.g. escuela taller, casas de oficios), the traineeship offer will be regulated by the quality framework of traineeship established at the European level and regulated by a national degree. Finally, although not mentioned explicitly in the definition of the YG but adopted in many countries, young people can receive some training for becoming self-employed. Further, for those young people who have not explicitly expressed their wish to take part in the YG or are not registered, some outreach programmes will be established as well as guidance and job-search services.

Any measure will be offered after a profile of the young person has been established. The regions will decide autonomously what features will be taken into considera-

tion for the range of actions to be offered to the young person. This could entail different approaches to young people's needs in the different regions and this is also due to the prioritisation of some target groups that regions can autonomously identified.

The path of the young job-seeker who signs up for the YG is composed of two steps: the first step is the registration (in the basic information requested the family situation is not included) established within 30 days; the second step consists of offering a measure to the young person within a maximum four months after registration.

The target

Young NEETs under 25 are the target of the Spanish YG. Young people have to be registered at the PES, and have to explicitly express their wish to take part in the YG.

The funding

Due to its very high youth unemployment rates, Spain will be eligible for YEI funding amounting to 1887 million euro: half (943.5) coming from the dedicated budget line for the YEI and the other half coming from the ESF component of the YEI (Ministerio de Empleo y Seguridad Social 2013). 50% of the funds coming from the YEI will be granted to the regions according to a weighted system based on the rate of NEETs at the regional level. 50% has been distributed to the regions according to the number of young people unemployed at the regional level relative to the national rate. Additional resources (471 million euro) will also be allocated from the ESF in order to deal with structural reforms that cannot be financed from the YEI and its ESF component.

The role and the involvement of trade unions

CCOO and UGT answered the survey concerning the YG and their involvement in the definition of the YGIP. The YGIP says that social partners will be included in the process of designing, implementation and evaluation of the YG together with, among others, employers' association and youth organisations. CCOO and UGT report that they were involved in the design of the YG and that it was an initiative of the government to include them in the process. Trade unions were informed in stable formalised

institutions and consulted in ad-hoc fora. However, they report that their involvement was mainly to comply with formal requirements because it took place after a definite decision was taken by the government and that the meetings organised for the consultation with trade unions were insufficient for discussing and making relevant contributions for such an important and relevant plan for young Spaniards. More in detail, during the design of the National YGIP, social partners were only asked to attend two meetings. In the first meeting, the government presented a first draft of the document and social partners had only a few days before the second meeting for presenting some comments, thus giving a very short time for reaction which did not allow for some of the more wide-reaching changes and comments that the unions presented to be taken into consideration. During the second meeting, the government presented the document finalised with some of the comments from trade unions included, and right after this second meeting the plan was sent to the European Commission without any other chance to comment on the plan. Hence, consultations were more informative than really participative. Further, CCOO also highlights that even if these meetings were organised as formal consultations, the YGIP was treated as something rather informal as these two formal meetings were also used by the government to inform the social partners on other issues not related to the YG. For this reason, CCOO and UGT declared themselves to be very dissatisfied with the involvement approach followed by the government. Trade unions are also involved in the implementation of the YG although this depends on the various regional plans. Trade unions will however not be involved in the management of the YG and their involve-

ment in the evaluation of the YG is still not clarified. Trade unions also report that they will not have trade union representatives in the institutions implementing the YG, which will not allow them an informal monitoring and feedback on the measures put into place in this framework. Due to the lack of real involvement, trade unions call for an increasing participation in the implementation and monitoring of the YG. At the national level, their involvement was much weaker than their involvement in the definition of other active labour market policies; however, they also report that the involvement at the regional level might have been more intense as in some regions the presence of trade unions was quite important. Concerning the measures adopted, UGT reckons that the age range should be extended to young people up to 35 years old and that more resources should be granted to the implementation of the YG.

In a joint declaration, CCOO and UGT declared that supply-side interventions are useless without an improvement in the macro-economic situation in Spain. Further they also highlighted that the YGIP is mainly based on the measures included in the Strategy for Self-employment and youth employment on which trade unions do not agree because of the labour reform that this strategy brings forward (UGT & CCOO, 2013). The trade unions also fear that the autonomy granted to regions for establishing priorities across groups of young people in need will allow regions to fund existing measures with the YEI money and thus substitute national funds with EU money. (UGT & CCOO, 2013). Finally, among other requests, they also call for a clear monitoring of the quality of contracts offered to young job-seekers by the PES in order to avoid misuse.

LATVIA

Latvia, together with Lithuania and Estonia, was affected by the crisis at a very early stage. Its youth unemployment figure jumped from 13.1 in 2008 to 34.2% in 2010. All Baltic countries managed to reduce the rate and in 2013, 23.2% of active young people were unemployed in Latvia. 47.7% of young jobseekers already had work experience in the labour market, however often in low-skilled jobs or with short-term contracts. A third of young unemployed people have low qualifications or are not qualified for any specific profession. The average duration of unemployment spells for the young cohort is quite low: 3.3 months. This seems to indicate a more short-term type of unemployment. However, this low figure might also hide a high return rate into unemployment with a 'revolving door' effect as jobs held by young people might be precarious jobs.

The measures

The YGIP mentions some planned reforms expected to contribute to the development and implementation of the YG. Reforms aiming to prevent young people from becoming NEETs are mainly planned at the local level and include the creation of new services targeting young people between 13 and 24 years old as well as reforms of the education law on guidance. While these reforms are to be approved in 2014, their implementation is foreseen in 2016. Second-chance vocational school programmes are also planned in order to help young people who drop out of school, aged between 17 and 29 years.

Concerning labour market integration schemes, the YGIP plans to amend some of the existing regulations and ESF targeting of young unemployed in order to better meet young people's needs and encourage their mobility and entrepreneurial skills. Among other services, the Latvian YGIP

also introduces a profiling system, job-search assistance and career services that should be adapted to young people.

In addition, more specific measures aiming at improving soft and specific skills (IT, languages, project management) are also mentioned together with vocational education programmes. These projects are foreseen for the budgeting period 2014-2018. Wage subsidies are also planned for employers who hire young people between 18 and 24 years old on a 12-month contract. While some subsidies are also foreseen for mentors within companies which hire young people, the subsidy does not seem to guarantee any future employment perspective to the young person after the end of the incentive. Additional labour market policies targeting young people with disabilities or highly at risk are also planned and aimed at helping them to find the most suitable job. Support for self-employment is very limited as it targets 334 people in the next 5 years. The actions are to be offered to young people within 4 months as set out by the EC blueprint.

The target group

Young people targeted by the YG are aged between 15 and 24 years. They will be directed towards the YG programme as soon as they register at the PES, or enrol in second-chance vocational educational school or enter into contact with the municipal services dealing with young NEETs.

Funding

Latvia is eligible for YEI funds because its youth unemployment rate was higher than 25% in 2012. 21.7 million euro will be allocated from the YEI funding, a similar amount will be allocated from the associated ESF component.

LBAS reports that national funds amount to more than 4 million euro and that more than 1 million euro will come from private funding.

The role and involvement of trade union

The YGIP reports that social partners together with a plethora of other stakeholders including youth organisations were included in the consultations that took place last summer. Social partners are mentioned as actors at the local level and in strategic partnerships with the municipalities.

LIZDA and LBAS took part in the survey and report that YG in Latvia is not high on the agenda of the government while this is clearly an important issue for trade unions and employers. LBAS declared having engaged in activities like publishing position papers and lobbying activities. They also report that NEETs are the main challenge that the government aims at tackling with the YG, while they consider that the high precariousness of youth employment should also receive attention as well as early school leavers. Trade unions were involved in the design of the YG mainly via lightly formalised institutions created ad-hoc for the YG.

Trade unions say they are unsatisfied about their involvement in the design of the YG mostly because they were not actively involved, and it was an initiative of trade unions themselves and employers who pushed for the involvement of the trade unions. Trade unions report not being involved in the implementation of the YG or in the management of the YG. LBAS reports that trade unions will be involved in the evaluation because the European Commission pushed for the inclusion of social partners in the consulting committee.

THE NETHERLANDS⁵¹

The implementation plan for the YG in the Netherlands was submitted to the Commission, which is however considered, according to the FNV, as a mere formality as it is mainly based on existing measures. Due to its relative low youth unemployment rate, the Netherlands will not be eligible for funds coming from the EYI.

FNV, which took part in the survey, reports that the YG is not high on the agenda of the government and of employers while it is highly important for trade unions. In particular FNV has backed the YG by publishing press releases, campaigning and lobby activities.

FNV reports that the government did not involve social partners in the design of the Youth Guarantee and trade unions are still not informed about the exact framework. Informal exchanges mention that the YG will be designed and implemented at the regional level.

Trade unions are very likely not to be involved in the implementation, the management and the evaluation of the YG. Further, FNV reports that this lack of involvement at the national level – which is much weaker than in any other active labour market policy - is in clear contrast with the request at the regional level, where authorities asks for a full involvement of the social partners in order to contribute to a better and more efficient creation of jobs and internships where it is needed.

FNV also believes that the age range of the YG should include young people at least up to 27 years old; that more resources should be allocated on top of the 116 million euro foreseen for 2013-2015; and that the quality of job offers should be improved as well as the tailoring of labour market policies. FNV also calls for an increased involvement of social partners in apprenticeship schemes, mentoring and guidance.

⁵¹ The section on the Dutch YG plan is based exclusively on the contribution collected via the survey answer carried out among trade unions.

Since the onset of the crisis, Poland has experienced an increase in unemployment of both the younger (15-24) and older (25-29) cohort of young people: the first has increased by 10 percentage points since 2008 and reached 27.3% in 2013; the latter recorded a more limited increase, 5.3 percentage points, and was 13.6% in 2013. Because youth unemployment rates were higher than 25% in 2012, Poland is eligible for receiving YEI funds (252.44 million euro). This amount is expected to be topped up by the national contribution from the ESF component dedicated to the YEI.

In Poland there will be, as it is still being negotiated, one national framework with some possible adaptations at the regional level.

According to trade unions' contribution to the survey, the Polish YG seems to follow the blueprint of the European Commission. Young people should be registered at the PES and are supposed to receive a job offer, continued education, an apprenticeship, a traineeship or, as in many other countries, support for self-employment within four months. Young people targeted are normally the age group up to 25, while for self-employment the age range is extended to 29 years old. The YG is compulsory for all young people in the age range who are unemployed and registered at the public employment office.

As for the quality of alternatives provided, some of them are not assessable yet, however, FZZ reports that the contracts of job offers, the working conditions as well as the guidance and the counselling provided by the PES are often of poor quality. FZZ also calls for an education offer that is better shaped to labour market needs, that apprenticeships should foresee a wage for the apprentice – which it still not a rule - and that guidance to young people should always be provided and not only to young people already unemployed.

The role and involvement of trade unions

NSZZ Solidarnosc, FZZ and OPZZ took part in the survey. OPZZ and NSZZ Solidarnosc report that the YG is not a priority for the government, while FZZ recognises a high relevance of the YG for both the government and the unions. All trade unions put in place activities for supporting the implementation of the YG, OPZZ and FZZ with press releases and position papers, while NSZZ Solidarnosc

says it engaged in lobbying activities to back the YG. In addition to these activities, OPZZ and FZZ report that they took part in seminars and international conferences and NSZZ Solidarnosc also launched a project based on the Framework of Actions on Youth Employment⁵³. Concerning the challenges to be tackled by the Youth Guarantee, the three unions report that early school leavers and NEETs are issues that the Polish government is not aiming at targeting with the YG; while high rates of youth unemployment and low employment rate among young people are two issues which are expected to be tackled by the YG. This prioritisation of challenges is similar for the three trade unions.

Two of the three trade unions, OPZZ and FZZ, declare that they were not involved in the design of the YG, but only briefly and occasionally informed in meetings dealing with different issues. On the contrary, NSZZ Solidarnosc reports that they were involved in the design of the YG right from the beginning of the process; in particular, they were informed about the YG in an informal way and they were consulted on the subject in the framework of lightly formalised institutions. This involvement, mainly on their initiative, was done via the presence of representatives of the union in the Europe2020 strategy. However, NSZZ Solidarnosc also makes clear that their involvement did not prevent a lack of information from government: no real social dialogue was put into place and in June 2013, unions suspended their participation in the Tripartite Commission in order to protest against the government's unilateral decision to change to the Labour Code without consultation.

Concerning the putting into place of the YG, OPZZ and FZZ say they are not involved, while NSZZ Solidarnosc reports that the union is involved but in an informal way, because of voluntary participation by the union.

At this stage it is still not clear whether trade unions will be involved in the management and evaluation. FZZ reports that TUs will not be involved in this stage and the government alone is very likely to be responsible for assessment of the YGIP.

Due to a clear lack of involvement compared to other active labour market policies, OPZZ and FZZ demand more involvement of trade unions in the implementation, management and evaluation of the YG.

⁵² The section on the Poland YG plan is based exclusively on the contribution collected via the survey answer carried out among trade unions.

⁵³ The Framework of Actions on Youth Employment was agreed at the European level among European representatives of the social partners and it was approved in April 2013.

<http://www.etuc.org/press/framework-actions-youth-employment-social-dialogue-provides-solutions-reduce-youth#.U5bQykrI5I0>

LUXEMBOURG⁵⁴

Luxembourg is not eligible for EU money since its youth unemployment rate is far below the threshold set for the YEI.

One of the trade unions involved in the survey (OGBL) reported that Luxembourg has not submitted a YGIP yet but that it is planning implementation. It also reports that both for the national government and the union the YG is of high importance. Press releases and position papers have been published by OGBL in order to support the implementation of the YG in Luxembourg. The main challenges to be targeted by the YG are, from the government perspective, the cyclically and structurally high unemploy-

ment rate, the low participation of young people in the labour market and labour market precariousness of young people. OGBL also considers that NEETs and early school leavers should be tackled by the YG. Trade unions seem not be involved in the design of the YG, in the implementation or in the management of the YG while their participation in the evaluation of the YG is still not defined.

OGBL also reports that the plan is likely to target young people aged between 17 and 25 years and that employment, continued education, apprenticeships and traineeships will be offered to young people in this age range who are registered at the PES.

SLOVENIA⁵⁵

As in many of the European Member States, Slovenia's youth unemployment rate increased substantially, by more than 11 percentage points, between 2008 and 2013 when it reached 21.6% and, for young people with low qualifications, 27.1%. The unemployment rate of young adults aged 25-29 also increased by 11 percentage points after the onset of the crisis and passed from a low 6.1% in 2008 to 17.4% in 2013, higher than the EU28 average for this age group.

ZSSS took part in the survey and reported that Slovenia has submitted an implementation plan for the YG and that there will only be a national implementation plan. ZSSS reports that the YG⁵⁶ is an important issue on the agenda of the government as well as that of the union, while it is of less relevance for employers or other trade unions in the country. ZSSS engaged in several activities to promote the YG, namely publishing press releases, publishing position/opinion papers and organising campaigning and lobbying activities. Both the Government and ZSSS seem to see the YG as a means to tackle the same issues in the country, ranging from youth unemployment, NEETs, early school leavers and youth employment precariousness.

The Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia and its affiliate trade union for young people (Sindikat Mladi plus) are heavily involved through the coalition for the Youth Guarantee, which consists of three NGOs and Sindikat Mladi plus. Hence, ZSSS was involved in the design of the YG, namely it was informed in lightly formalised institu-

tions, consultations took place within stable institutions and negotiations were mainly carried out in lightly formalised institutions.

The involvement took place at the national but also at cross-sectoral level and right from the beginning of the design of the implementation plan.

The Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia believes that its involvement improved the quality of the YG and its legitimacy and as well as the legitimacy of the trade unions in tackling youth issues and their visibility among young people.

However, ZSSS declares that it was not satisfied with its involvement. This negative feedback is due to the fact that there were some problems of (mis)coordination between the governmental institutions during the preparation of YG that negatively influenced the process of coordinating the YG, also from the perspective of TU involvement. Further, there is some dissatisfaction on the part of the trade union because it believes the YGIP should be more explicit on the quality of jobs, particularly promoting the transition into sustainable employment for young people, and that the current version is giving too much attention to the promotion of entrepreneurship.

Trade unions also voluntarily take part in the implementation of the YG at national level in lightly formalised institutions and they will also be involved in the daily operational management of the YG. Furthermore, ZSSS also reports that the Slovenian Ministry for employment,

⁵⁴ The section on the Luxembourgish YG plan is based exclusively on the contribution collected via the survey answer carried out among trade unions.

⁵⁵ The section on the Slovene YG plan is based exclusively on the contribution collected via the survey answer carried out among trade unions because only the Slovene version of the implementation plan was available.

⁵⁶ The Implementation plan is currently available in Slovene at http://www.mddsz.gov.si/si/delovna_podrocja/trg_dela_in_zaposlovanje/jamstvo_za_mlade/

family, social issues and equal opportunities established an ad-hoc group for supervision of the implementation plan for YG during the period 2014-2015 with a particular emphasis on the promotion of the YG. In this group the representatives of the three Slovenian NGOs and Sindikat Mladi plus are also included. As for the evaluation phase of the YG, there is currently no clear plan about how this will take place.

ZSSS declared that the involvement of trade unions was stronger in the design and implementation of the YG compared to other active labour market policies; however in the management and in the evaluation, ZSSS says that the involvement was weaker and for this reason, trade union presence should be stronger.

ROMANIA

Romania's youth unemployment rate was 23.6% in 2013, almost four times higher than that of adults which stood at 6.1%. The unemployment rate increased during the crisis by 5 percentage points. While youth unemployment rates are slightly higher than the EU28 average, unemployment rates for young adults (25-29) were lower in 2013 than the EU28 average. Further, NEETs represented 17.2% of the youth population in 2013, 5 percentage points higher than the average across Member States. Across regions, youth unemployment rates vary substantially: in some regions, also eligible for the YEI funding, unemployment jumped to more than 30%. Further, Roma youngsters appear to be more likely to be NEET: 50% of Roma are NEET and over half of Roma do not complete compulsory school.

The YGIP reports that a 'Youth Guarantee' pilot programme has already come into effect in some regions and it promotes a partnership approach including institutional actors, trade unions and employers. A trade union involved in the pilot project reports that one of the biggest challenges in setting up a scheme with very similar goals to the Youth Guarantee is reaching young people who live in rural areas and are not normally in contact with labour market institutions.

The YG, financed by YEI, will also build on the experience and knowledge acquired during this local partnership-based project. According to the survey respondent, the YGIP will be operational starting from 2015.

The measures

As for early intervention and activation, the Romanian YGIP foresees awareness campaigns in order to reach young people eligible for YG activities. Early intervention mainly aims at putting young people without qualifica-

Concerning the measures adopted in the framework of the YG, employment offers, continued education, traineeships and self-employment training will be offered to young people up to the age of 29, while apprenticeships will be offered to upper secondary students. Young people aged between 15 and 29 years who are unemployed and are registered at the PES are eligible to take part in the YG. The measures should be provided to young people within 4 months of registration at the PES.

The YGIP expects that around 37000 young people a year will enrol in one of the YG programmes.

Concerning the funds, there will be more than 43 million euro coming from European funds and 16 million euro from national sources.

tions back into the education system via second-chance schools, compulsory schooling both for primary and lower secondary school dropouts. Labour market integration measures are based on three pillars which include the revision of unemployment insurance, an amended apprenticeship scheme and the traineeship act. In particular, the new internship act gives employers incentives to hire young people and provide them with employment contracts, training and career guidance. Incentives for employers can come from different sources and can be cumulated. No precise indications are given on the type of working contract that is associated with these incentives and whether training is associated with external providers or if employers are expected to hire young people after the end of the incentives; almost 17000 young people between 16 and 25 years old are targeted in the 3 eligible regions. Reforms of apprenticeship schemes try to promote the adoption of a dual-system approach and, in the three eligible regions for YEI money, the goal is to reach more than 20000 young people. Programmes for self-employment and career guidance are also included among possible measures. Further, the survey respondent also reports that measures should be provided to the young person within four months, as established at the European level, and all young people who are eligible (mainly aged between 16 and 25 years) will have access to the YG regardless of their registration at the PES.

The funding

The whole Romanian YGIP programme relies heavily on European funds and the national contribution mentioned is limited to the unemployment insurance budget to support income rather than provide active labour market measures to recipients. An estimated total amount

of 470 million euro will be used during the two years of frontloading: 149.5 will come from ESF and its national co-financing, the bigger part will come from the YEI (243.8 million) while the unemployment insurance fund will cover 3.4% of implementation of the plan, i.e. 16 million euro. This high reliance on EU funding might be problematic for Romania, for two reasons: the first refers to the specific provision of the YEI which does not allow financing of structural reforms and concentrates on short-term financing of active labour market programmes, which are likely to function better if a strong institutional structure is already in place (Romania spent in 2011 only 0.089% of its GDP on labour market services compared to the EU28 average of 0.211%). The second problem is the low absorption capacity of EU funding. This came out particularly clearly in the last report⁵⁷, which found that Romania is the country with the lowest absorption capacity, meaning that even if 70% of projects were accepted, only slightly more than 10% actually claimed funding.

The role and involvement of trade unions

According to the National Trade Union Bloc (BNS), YG is not such a relevant issue for the national government, employers and other trade unions which were not involved in the implementation of the national YGIP.

BNS is highly engaged in supporting the YG in Romania and published press releases, position papers, organised campaigns and lobbying activities. The challenges that the government aims at tackling by adopting the YG are mainly the high rate of structural unemployment and the low rate of youth employment. Also early school leavers are a priority; while for BNS, importance should also be given to the precariousness of employment of young people. Only the BNS, among the 5 main confederations in

Romania, took part in the design of the YG. This involvement took place informally, mainly triggered by an active engagement and willingness of the BNS to promote an institutional answer to the current youth situation. The involvement took place at the national level, since the very beginning of the drafting of the plan. BNS claims that the strong involvement of the union in the design of the YGIP improved the YG, as well as the legitimacy of the YG in the country and the visibility of trade unions among young people. The legitimacy of employers and the government in tackling youth issues did not seem to benefit from the YG. Because the whole executive bureau of the union was able to actively take part in the design of the YGIP, BNS declares itself satisfied with its involvement. Trade unions will also be involved in the implementation of the YG. The YGIP reports that they will be involved, for example, via the social dialogue in the modernisation of the educational system, the quality and efficiency of VET, developing relationships between educational institutions and employers. While their involvement in the daily operational and financial management of the YG activities is still to be clearly defined, the BNS will be involved in the evaluation of the YG which will be carried out by a tripartite committee. BNS calls, although its involvement in the YGIP was much stronger than in any other active labour market policy, for an increasing presence of trade unions in labour market issues, where they can use their expertise. Finally, the current assessment done by the BNS of measures delivered or to be delivered within the YG is positive.

⁵⁷ REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS, Cohesion policy: Strategic report 2013 on programme implementation 2007-2013 (SWD(2013) 129 final)

CONCLUSIONS:

TAKING-STOCK AND SPOTTING CHALLENGES AHEAD

It is still premature to assess the completeness and the potential success of the YG in tackling youth unemployment as this is highly dependent on the effectiveness of the implementation process as well as macro-economic and institutional factors. Nonetheless, we can take stock of the directions adopted so far, try to understand whether and how the YG will enter national policies and what are – some – of the challenges that it is likely to face.

What directions have been taken so far?

The YG, as defined in European documents, gives a clear framework – including quality of the job offer, the target group, the timing of intervention, the alternative paths available, mutual obligations, and the partnership approach (see Bussi and Geyer 2013) – while ensuring that means to reach the goal and meet with the requirements are flexible enough to adapt to the national context and local priorities.

This flexibility of the YG lies in the variety of actions that can be funded under YEI as well as the implementation design framework suggested in official documents and in particular in the Communication from the European Commission. For instance, although not mentioned in the concise definition of the YG, support to entrepreneurship has been widely reported by Member States as a possible alternative path and recognised as a financeable measure by the ESF rules for the YEI. Similarly, the civic service not mentioned explicitly as a way of helping young people making the transition into the labour market has nevertheless been included in YGIP in Italy and France. As for the partnership approach, the EC indications leave states free to decide what actors to include, provided they include the social partners and youth representatives, as well as choosing the modalities of involvement.

The existing literature on the inclusion of the European Employment Strategy and its ESF mechanisms at national level reminds us that there are very different policy mixes across countries (van Vliet, 2010) which do not actually fit the broad guidelines set out at the European level (Graziano, 2012). As regards different policy mixes and approaches in activation policies, Graziano finds that the approach recommended at European level is a combination of upskilling (i.e. promoting human capital investment and strong labour market orientation) and employment assistance (i.e. strong labour market oriented activation

combined with weak upskilling)⁵⁸ with a strong emphasis on the development of public employment services, job search programmes and employability enhancing measure which make individuals more responsible – via mutual obligations and stricter conditionality (Graziano, 2012). According to Graziano, Member States opted for a more pro-employment oriented approach, thus promoting labour market integration rather than human capital investment. Hence, EU influence on active labour market policies has only been received and implemented in a limited and selective way at national level (Graziano, 2012).

A rapid overview of the YG implementation plans available seems to confirm that countries are adopting different policy mixes. While for some countries it is not clear yet, for others the policy mix has a more distinct direction: Finland and Denmark are targeting up-skilling and human capital development. The former shapes the YG around the 'education guarantee' and the skills programmes for young adults; the latter offers almost exclusively an education or training path to young people with no or low qualifications, while this is not the case in several other countries where the lack of educational achievement does not seem to lead solely to educational pathways. Similarly, a training-oriented approach, focused on apprenticeships and on-the-job training, was presented in the implementation plans of Germany and Austria. Indeed, this reflects their existing structures of dual system education and apprenticeships. Their implementation plans look rather like an exercise of compiling existing measures under the Youth Guarantee definition.

Countries like Italy (at the national level), Portugal, Romania, Croatia, but also Spain, the UK and Ireland seem to foster the integration of young people in the labour market via employment incentives that include, at least formally, a training or on-the-job component. The employment incentives aiming at stimulating the hiring of young

⁵⁸ These types of activation policies come from the typology of activation policies developed by Bonoli, G. (2010). The political economy of active labour market policy. RECOWE,



people are provided under traineeship contracts (e.g. Croatia, Romania, Belgium) often with no clear employment prospects for the young person once the subsidies expire. Thus, even if the 'good job offer' alternative included in the YG definition is often respected by traineeship contract, as these contract often last at least 6 months, it does not guarantee that the work experience will be relevant for the young person nor that adequate outsourced or on-the-job training will be carried out.

As far as the partnership approach is concerned, the survey highlighted that the involvement of trade unions is different across countries in terms of scope, timing and quality. For instance in Poland and Romania, only some trade unions informally participated in the development of the Youth Guarantee and this was mostly dictated by the proximity of some trade unions to the government. In Italy, the government created ad hoc structures for the implementation of the YG including the exchange with the social partners. Similarly, in Spain and in Denmark, the consultations on the Youth Guarantee were done in lightly formalised institutions. In France the involvement took place in an institutionalised consultation setting, 'Conférence sociale'. In Finland trade unions and employers have been full members of the YG since it was renewed in 2013. Despite some differences, the survey clearly showed that at the national level the lightly formalised involvement of trade unions was preferred for both the information and the consultation phases. This is also reflected by the fact that a number of trade unions felt that their involvement in the YG was weaker compared to their usual involvement in active labour market policies (e.g. Ireland, UK, Greece and Spain). Further, the quality of the involvement also differed across countries: in Finland, Slovenia and Austria the quality of consultations met the expectations of trade unions, however, in Sweden, Germany, Czech Republic and Spain trade unions

had little to room to actively contribute to the debate and make proposal because of the extremely limited time allocated for the consultations. Hence, even though the involvement formally took place this did not ensure that it was meaningful even in cases where trade unions were involved from the beginning of the process.

What challenges ahead?

While it is not possible to assess the YGIP on their expected results yet, we will go through potential weaknesses both based on the literature as well as on the analysis of the YG national implementation plans and trade unions answers to the survey.

The Youth Guarantee is not a stand alone policy and it needs to be included in an effective institutional context to meet its goal. Because of its targeting – young people in between school and the labour market – the YG calls for the creation of synergies with a wide range of policy fields, namely the education system, labour market, social services and youth policies. Any other policy that would undermine the efficiency of services delivered for example at school, PES or social services will directly reduce the effectiveness of the YG. Therefore, cuts to public services particularly in the education sector are likely to reduce the quality of education provided or places available for young NEETs who decide to go back to school. The European Commission in its Education and Training Monitor (2013)⁵⁹ pointed out that 16 member states decreased their education expenditure at some stage between 2008 and 2011, while in 2012 six European countries showed further significant budget decreases (Greece, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Portugal, Wales - UK). Cuts in education not included in sound reforms for making the systems more efficient will not allow for a better functioning; they are also likely to make it more difficult to provide adapted services for those young people who are most in need of

⁵⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/publications/monitor13_en.pdf

support, such as young people with an immigrant background (OECD 2013, Education at a Glance). Further, the decline in social spending in Greece, but also in Italy and Portugal and Hungary⁶⁰ is likely to undermine the coverage and adequacy of social support for individual and households. Similarly, the role of income support is crucial in times of crisis when several households rely on its adequacy as it becomes the main source of income. An OECD report (2013) highlights that income support has not been adequate during the crisis particularly in Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal (Society at a Glance 2013). The under-financing and understaffing of PES is also likely to make it more challenging to provide a full and adequate implementation of the YG across national regions. Finally, at the macro level, the reliance on ESF, a poor administrative and financial capacity of absorption of European funding and a scarce national economic commitment might undermine the viability and sustainability of the YG in the long run. Together with macro-economic-related aspects like a lack of demand and resources, there are also some challenges that might come up during the implementation particularly linked with the nature of the YG.

The guarantee

A first weakness that is reported in the literature, but also observed during informal meetings with trade unions, is the name “guarantee”. Based on the Nordic experience, Hummeluhr explains that a weak aspect of the guarantee was the too high expectations that the idea of ‘guarantee’ fed (Hummeluhr, 1997). This probably can also be argued today: the word guarantee refers to a formal assurance (typically in writing) that certain conditions will be fulfilled⁶¹, which might not be the case if several economic and institutional preconditions are not met. Even in the Nordic countries, where the system was already in place and where active labour market policies had gained relevance in combating (youth) unemployment, one of the weakest points of the YG was the misleading idea of right conveyed by the use of the word guarantee and the lag between the real offer and young people’s expectations.

The quality of measures

The quality of the measures offered is relevant for the success of the youth guarantee as a whole. The Nordic experience teaches us that the quality of job offers was a major source of disappointment among young people and that the actions were more formal than concrete offers. This problem might also be found in some national YGIPs, where the employment schemes supposed to provide young people with job opportunities seem to be

likely to increase rather than to reduce the precariousness of (first) labour market transitions of young people in YG schemes. Croatia and Flanders (Belgium) are two examples of potential increased job insecurity: in Croatia the “Professional training without employment relationship” act allows employers to hire a young person for a traineeship without ensuring any type of employment contract after the one year traineeship with the only restriction that if private employers do not hire at least half of the trainees, they will not be able to use the measures. In Flanders, training contracts that were training programmes called IBO (individual on-the-job vocational training) previously obliged the employers to hire the trainee under an open-ended contract after the period of training while now it allows employers to offer a fixed-term contract to the trainee lasting at least the time of the training.

Further, several YGIPs rely on job subsidies (e.g. Hungary, Croatia, France). However, the role of job subsidies, wage and social reduction of social assistance were found to be more effective when targeted at specific subgroups (Martin and Grubb, 2001), and the magnitude of their effectiveness is highly dependent on the elasticity of both of the demand and supply, i.e. of their sensitivity to the final cost of labour, which is different in periods of high unemployment. The effectiveness of job subsidies are also highly dependent on the way they are targeted and are coupled with other taxes or policy interventions. Further, job subsidies might have different effects according to the type of the business, being less effective in the public sector, as well as to the size of companies, and the sector of activity. Indeed, their accessibility, particularly to SME (Marx, 2001), needs to be monitored (Grubb 2001).

Providing continued education leading to recognised qualification is another important feature of the YG, particularly aiming at young people with very low qualifications. While several countries explicitly invest in the school system and create ad-hoc pathways for dropouts and low qualified young people (Denmark), others present education as an alternative but do not mention any adaptation of the system in order to welcome and retain a supposedly new public. This is the case in Italy where no second-chance schools will be financed or systematised but probably ad hoc courses will be financed via ESF funds or regional initiatives.

The coordination of measures

Hummelhur (1997) highlighted that, generally, the success of the youth guarantee in the Nordic countries was very much linked with the efficiency of the cooperation

⁶⁰ <http://www.oecd.org/els/soc/OECD2012SocialSpendingDuringTheCrisis8pages.pdf>

⁶¹ <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/guarantee>

between local communities and cooperation between education authorities, public employment offices and local industries and business and, as highlighted by the Commission, to trade unions and youth associations (European Commission 2012). The monitoring of the young person was also considered as a good means to tracking and helping young people, and local municipalities were obliged to follow the young person for at least 2 years after they finished compulsory education if they are NEET. This helped in developing preventative measures. The early intervention is probably one of the weakest points of YGIPs as, although mentioned, no clear indication of how this will take place is often provided. Moreover, actors in schools, the labour market, youth organisation and social services are often regulated by different institutions at different administrative levels. This implies a high degree of cooperation towards similar objectives and, often, a common management of resources that can help overcome some obstacles. An example is provided by the creation of common databases allowing an effective cooperation between educational and public employment services and local authorities to outreach young NEET, which are missing in countries like Belgium, Italy and Romania.

Further, outreach and early intervention activities can be more successful if young people tend already to look for support at the PES or other local public and private partners involved in the delivery of YG measures. This habit is often stimulated by a cultural perspective on public services, but also by the advantage that young people who register at the PES can receive during their transition from unemployment in the labour market in terms of services and economic support. In those countries with no (or very limited) income support for young people lacking or with limited working experience, attracting young people to register at PES or other institutions might be challenging (e.g. Italy and Romania).

Mutual obligations and the responsabilisation of young people by means of contractualised Individual Action Plans were included as another guideline by the European Commission (Commission, 2012). In several YGIPs there was reference to the mutual obligations underpinning the service provision and the commitment of the young participants (e.g. Ireland, Finland, Italy, Belgium, Germany, Sweden, and Denmark). Sanctioning of non-collaborative behaviour and lack of motivation was particularly tackled in the Irish Implementation Plan. Although not going into the details of possible cut in benefits or sanctions for non-compliance with the IAP, the French YGIP also underlined the expected commitment of young people. As already discussed elsewhere 'the very idea of mutual obligations

is built on the premise that 'welfare recipients who face the threat of sanctions are capable of complying with the work requirements' and that 'the failure to comply signifies a lack of motivation', as well as the assumption that beneficiaries 'are aware of the rules and can rationally calculate the costs and benefits of complying' (Hasenfeld et al., 2004). While this carrot-and-stick approach can have a positive spurring effect for those young people who are ready-to-work and need only light support in their efforts to find a job, its application can be less effective, and even detrimental, in the case of young subject to multiple forms of disadvantage' (Bussi and Geyer 2013).

Will the YG enter national active labour market policy?

The European Union has no hard law competences on active labour market policies and its role is limited to suggesting alternatives and promoting good practices. Therefore, the allocation of European money linked to the achievement of the YG (i.e. the YEI component of the ESF funds) and the inclusion of the YG in the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 Council Specific Recommendations⁶² and in the broad European Semester exercise can also trigger more political interest and commitment across Member States in a moment where a political step towards combating youth unemployment was widely asked.

Because the Youth Guarantee can be defined as a labour market policy, looking at the literature on the Europeanisation of active labour market policies can help reflect upon the dissemination of the idea of the youth guarantee and its policies. For instance, Barbier found that the introduction of the concept of flexicurity⁶³, at the heart of employment policy discussions since 2007, modified country-based systems and sparked new ideas, though among a limited élite (Barbier, 2008). He argues, in fact, that the idea of flexicurity is hardly found in the actual content and outcomes of national policies. Using the example of flexicurity, Barbier explains that there can be two main types of policy changes brought about the soft method of governance through which the paradigm of flexicurity is bound to take root: these can be procedural and substantial changes. Since the Youth Guarantee belong to the same field of policies and it is likely to use the same channels of dissemination, we try to briefly assess both by looking at the pieces of information collected from the survey about the involvement of trade unions and other actors, as well as on information retrieved from the YGIPs.

⁶² Reference to Stefan Clauwaerts on CSRs on the social field.

⁶³ European Commission, Towards Common Principles of Flexicurity: more and better jobs through flexibility and security - Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, adopted on 27 June 2007, COM(2007) 359 final.

A procedural change implies that a policy objective is included in the national agenda. This can seem to be the case with the Youth Guarantee. Not only because most of the countries expressed their commitment to its implementation, but also because concrete implementation plans have been presented. Further, even if some of them are a mere collection of existing measures (i.e. the German, Austrian or Finnish implementation plans), their submission and approval can be interpreted as a first direct sign of the impact of European policies indications on national labour market policy programmes. However, interviews with national trade union representatives highlighted that, even if the Youth Guarantee was on the agenda of the government, it is still far from having become well-known initiative to the wider or even to specialised public. The awareness about this policy seems to be high, but, again, in elite circles. Further, the inclusion of the Youth Guarantee in the government agenda does not ensure that the YGIPs will deliver the expected results and whether it will be left aside once the political pressure and public opinion attention will start to fade away.

A substantial change is classified by Barbier under three different dimensions: the first implies the inclusion of formulation referring to the European policies in national public debated and discourses; the second entails the inclusion of new actors during the design and implementation of Europe-driven policy; the third type of substantial change consists in the adoption of single programmes/policies that are altered and adjusted in their rules, values and theories in accordance with the new policy implemented (Barbier, 2008).

A rough analysis of the survey results carried out among trade unions⁶⁴ seem to point to divergent trends across countries regarding possible substantial change linked to the introduction of the Youth Guarantee, and these divergent trends are more likely to follow a path dependency structure, i.e. a far-reaching inclusion of the YG is more likely to be found in those countries where similar policies were already in place. As for the inclusion of the YG in national debates, the relevance of the YG in national government agendas, according to trade unions answers, is not homogenous and is stronger in some countries (e.g. Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Portugal, Slovenia, Finland) than in others (e.g. UK, Denmark, Latvia, The Netherlands). Concerning the inclusion of new actors, we

could say that in some countries such as Romania and Slovenia the involvement of trade unions was reported to be stronger compared to 'regular labour market policies'. However, this is not the case in those countries where the YGIP was based on existing measures or where there was no consultation at all, with some trade unions in the country (e.g. Poland). Moreover, in other countries like in Spain, France, Portugal and Ireland, the involvement in the design of the YGIP is weaker compared to the degree of their involvement in other labour market policies, sometimes due to broad process of consultation. Despite a divergent scope and degree of inclusion of trade unions, the fact that they are included and/or take direct action in a policy which is in between labour market, school and youth policy and not directly linked with their core business, can be a sign that, for some countries, a sort of Europeanisation of active labour market targeting youth and school-to-work transition policies might be on the way.

The third type of change, more profound, would require a more in-depth analysis of the actual policies implemented and it is still premature.

To conclude, the YG is meant to trigger a long-term structural change, while producing 'immediate results' (European Commission, 2013c). The Nordic experience of youth guarantees shows that the efficiency of the youth guarantee in providing stable jobs is poor, and that the benefit of the youth guarantee in the Nordic countries is the prevention of labour market exclusion as well as the improvement of the quality and relevance of vocational training (Hummeluhr, 1997). Hence, a quick reduction of youth unemployment rates might be hard to achieve as well as stable integration of young people in the labour market in the short run particularly in times of job losses and likely changes in job-creating sectors. However, if countries are able to capitalise on these first youth guarantee schemes, trigger institutional change where needed and create effective cooperation with relevant stakeholders, then the introduction of these policies might have a positive impact in the long term. This is mostly expected in terms of prevention of social and labour market exclusion of young people in transition from school to the labour market as well as by the provision of flexible institutional arrangements which can respond to individual needs while accounting for a changing socio-economic context.

⁶⁴ Some caveats about the survey results: the survey was run among trade union youth representatives who are members of the ETUC youth committee and among those trade union representative who took part in the negotiations for the Framework of Actions. The answers to the questionnaire might be biased towards a more favourable approach to the YG because the pool of people surveyed might be more informed and more sensitive to European policies as they are involved at the European level. On the other hand trade union representatives interviewed might be less informed on active labour market policies implemented in the countries as they mainly deal with youth or international issues. Further, it came out clearly that some unions were involved more than others in the design of the YG, thus the some of the respondents might have been less involved than other trade unions in the country, often this cannot be tested as not all the trade unions in the country are members of the ETUC and not all the trade unions contacted have answered the questionnaire. We got at least one answer for all the countries showed in the country section. For Poland, Italy, Spain, Latvia and Belgium we received more than one answer from different trade unions. All the trade unions which answered the survey are reported on the list of acronyms.

List of abbreviations

ABVV/FGTB	General Federation of Belgian Labour - Belgium
ACLVB	General Confederation of Liberal Trade Unions of Belgium – Belgium
ALMPs	Active Labour Market Policies
BA	PES Deutschland
CCOO	Comisiones obreras –Spain
CFDT	French Democratic Confederation of Labour – France
CGIL	Italian General Confederation of Labour
CGT	General Confederation of Labour - France
CISL	Italian Confederation of Trade Union
CITUB	Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria – Bulgaria
CMKOS	Czech-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions – Czech Republic
DGB	German Confederation of Trade Unions
EAKL	Estonian Trade union confederation – Estonia
EC	European Commission
ESL	Early School Leavers
ETUC	European Trade Union Confederation
EYF	European Youth Forum
FNV	Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging – The Netherlands
FO	Force ouvrière – France
FZZ	Trade Unions Forum - Poland
GSEE	General Confederation of Greek Workers – Greece
IAP	Individual Action Plan
LBAS	Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia – Latvia
LIGA	Democratic League of Independent Trade Unions from Hungary
LIZDA	Latvian Trade Union of Education and Science Employees – Latvia
NSZZ Solidarnosc	Independent and Self-Governing Trade Union Solidarność – Poland
OPZZ	All-Poland Alliance of Trade Unions – Poland
PES	Public Employment Service
PPDIV	Trade union for food and agriculture
PRO-GE	Union of Production Workers
SAK	Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions
SEK	Cyprus Workers Confederation-SEK – Cyprus
SIPTU	Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union – Ireland
SZEF	Forum for the Co-operation of Trade Unions
TCO	Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees
TU	Trade Union(s)
TUC	Trade Union Confederation - UK
UGL	General Union for Labour
UGT	Unión general de trabajadores- Spain
UGTP	Uniao General de Trabalhadores - Portugal
UIL	Union of Italian Workers
YEI	Youth Employment Initiative
YG	Youth Guarantee
YGIP	Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan
YGIP	Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan
ZSSS	Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia – Slovenia
BNS	National Trade Union Bloc - Romania

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