

Key messages of youth related CoR opinions

Opinion on Quality Framework for Traineeships (CdR 2014-111)

THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

- welcomes the QFT as a useful measure which seeks to ensure that traineeships efficiently ease education-to-work transitions and thus increase young people's employability;
- regrets that youth unemployment is still very high in the EU, particularly in some regions, and stresses the importance of active steps to combat it;
- points out that the local and regional authorities are often largely responsible for the implementation of employment and general and vocational education measures and that the regional aspect of these policy areas is very important;
- agrees with the Commission on the importance of traineeships;
- shares the Commission's concern that traineeships are sometimes abused as a way of obtaining cheap or even unpaid labour;
- regrets that the QFT does not recommend that traineeship providers guarantee appropriate social and health insurance, but merely calls on them to indicate in traineeship announcements whether provision is made for such insurance;
- points out that the QFT does not address the question of unpaid or only partly paid traineeships;
- regrets that the Council recommendation does not refer to traineeships undertaken as part of a course of study, formal education or vocational training; therefore calls on the Commission to put forward a separate proposal for a quality framework for these traineeships;
- welcomes the fact that "the active involvement of employment services, educational institutions and training providers in implementing the Quality Framework for Traineeships" is to be promoted and stresses the important role of local and regional authorities in all three areas.

Opinion on Youth Employment Package (CdR 789/2013)

THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

- welcomes the Youth Employment Package, which proposes a series of practical measures to assist Member States in addressing unacceptably high levels of youth unemployment and the resulting social exclusion;
- stresses the key role that local and regional authorities play in framing and implementing measures to combat unemployment, providing young people with opportunities and support, and exchanging good practice;
- also stresses the importance of actively involving young people and youth organisations when drawing up strategies;
- given the urgency of the matter, requests the European Council to agree to anticipate the implementation of the Youth Employment Initiative already in 2013;
- calls on the European Commission to finalise the European Quality Framework for Traineeships, the European Alliance for Apprenticeships and the proposal for the new EURES regulation;
- calls on the Commission to support and supplement the action of the Member States in the vocational training policy sector, by proposing, in the form of a recommendation, minimum quality standards for apprenticeships at European level in order to facilitate recognition of the skills acquired throughout Europe.

Opinion on Rethinking Education (2392/2012)

THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

- supports the call to enhance efforts on developing transversal skills, particularly entrepreneurial skills;
- considers it essential to build bridges between informal and non-formal learning and formal education. Too often curriculum development at second level is focused on acquiring information, rather than focusing on strengthening understanding, the learning of key skills and developing skills to deal with and navigate their way through this world;
- in the present economic climate, considers it vital to recognise the importance of combining public and private investment in education and training. It is not just important but vital to have totally inclusive policies;
- underlines that in relation to multilingualism and media literacy the specificity of the teaching needs and the rapidly changing curricula require investments in teaching instruments, broader partnerships and constant vigilance. ICT has unlocked enormous potential to improve learning outcomes;

- welcomes the Commission's intention to continue to engage with the stakeholders to take forward the proposed strategy for "Rethinking Education" in a concerted push for reform and reconfirms CoR interest in continuing to work with the European Commission and other partners in the field.

Opinion on Erasmus for All (CdR 400/2011)

THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

- strongly supports the increased budget proposed for the programme. Funding should be distributed between the various educational and youth sectors such that all areas benefit from budget increases;
- underlines the importance of lifelong learning, and therefore of the programme supporting all age groups and types of learning equally;
- feels that support should be most generous where the need and chances of impact are greatest. This should mean a clear relocation of funds to projects aimed at people who currently have little contact with mobility programmes, such as schools, young people not in formal education, and adults in training and further education;
- believes that if the big challenges can be met at local and regional level, people will be prepared for a future characterised by flux. They will be equipped for lifelong learning, and more and more will complete their studies, go through higher education and identify opportunities to complete phases of their education in different parts of Europe and also see the whole of Europe as a potential work location;
- can see advantages in institutional cooperation, including for mobility projects. When mobility occurs within an institutional framework, it may provide a more solid foundation for higher quality and more sustained impact;
- notes its positive experience with parts of previous programmes, such as Comenius Regio, that provide opportunities to involve institutions other than educational ones, and which are aimed at promoting European cooperation in education at local and regional level.

Opinion on Youth on the Move (CdR 292/2010)

THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

- welcomes the European Commission's flagship initiative "Youth on the Move", an ambitious strategic initiative which aims to improve young Europeans' mobility, education and integration into the world of work. For the first time, the European Commission has devised a youth policy framework which encompasses both education and employment;
- notes that education must be at the heart of youth mobility;
- would highlight the close link between poor attainment at school and socio-economic disadvantage which are key determinants to the number of young people neither employed nor in education or training. Breaking this cycle is a challenge for local and regional authorities across Europe and must be seen as a priority within this initiative;
- endorses Member States' and local and regional authorities' flexible use of the European Social Fund to assist young people. This is particularly relevant to the attainment of the Europe 2020 objectives;
- in the assessment of all the educational mobility programmes, which will give rise to legislative proposals in 2011 and a new financial framework in the post-2013 period, it is vital – as noted in the Committee of the Regions' opinion on the Green Paper on "Promoting the learning mobility of young people" – that the key contribution of local and regional authorities to promoting young people's mobility for educational purposes be taken into account.