

## TOWARDS SOCIAL INCLUSION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE EU

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### Abstract:

Young people today are the group at highest risk of poverty and social exclusion in Europe. While in 2013, 24.5% of the entire population in Europe was at risk of poverty and social exclusion this value was four percentage points higher for youth (28.2%). In most European countries young people have disproportionate difficulties on the labour market; compared to other age groups they therefore have the highest risk of unemployment. If Europe wants to realise its full potential — and provide 75 % of its working population with a job — it needs to use the talents and skills of all its citizens. However more attention is needed at EU level towards social exclusion of young people, beyond the unemployment issue. Evidence shows that many young Europeans are exposed to social exclusion much more broadly than only unemployment: in terms of access to education, access to housing, social and political participation. Education, employment, equal rights and opportunities for citizenship, participation and solidarity between youth and society are the key determinants in the capacity of European policy in this area to achieve greater inclusion of young people.

Main issues of youth in the EU context: a.) one in four young people is at risk of poverty and social exclusion, b.) one in five is unemployed, c.) one in six is not in Education, Employment, or training, d.) one in eight is an early school leaver, e.) one in twelve lives in a severely deprived housing situation, f.) one in twelve perceive their health as bad or very bad.

The EU has emphasised the importance of the importance of a knowledge-based approach to youth policymaking in their respective political documents and strategies, and through programmes: a.) The 'Youth in action' programme (2007–13), b.) EU youth strategy on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010–18), c.) in 2011 was adopted a resolution - Encouraging new and effective forms of participation of all young people in democratic life in Europe, d.) Erasmus for all –that started in 2014 is based on the premise that investing in education and training is the key to unlocking people's potential, regardless of their age or background, e.) Part of the Europe 2020 strategy is the 'Youth on the move' flagship initiative -the objectives of this initiative are to support wider learning and mobility opportunities for all young people in Europe, as well as the modernisation of education and training systems and the development of the youth sector, in particular through transnational and international cooperation projects and networks (EC 2012)

In order to develop more relevant and effective policy interventions for the social inclusion of young people, the following improvements are needed: a.) More attention is needed at EU level towards the social exclusion of young people, beyond the unemployment issue, b.) Promising practice developments do exist that are promoting the broader social inclusion of young people, and they deserve more support in terms of public investment, c.) Existing practices should be more systematically evaluated in terms of

their long-term effects on young people's life chances, and their impact compared with 'no action', d.) Personalisation, focus on motivating beneficiaries, attention to multidimensional need and ease of access are features of measures for social inclusion of young people that could inspire broader social policies, e.) Resistance of adults to the participation of young people in policies affecting them need to be addressed and challenged. f.) Youth participation initiatives need to become more inclusive (ECORYS 2014).

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