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From:	Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 1)
To:	Council
Subject:	EMCO Review of the implementation of the Youth Guarantee - Key Messages Endorsement

With a view to the Council meeting on 10 December 2019, delegations will find below the draft key messages from the Employment Committee on the EMCO Review of the implementation of the Youth Guarantee, as prepared by the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

The country-specific conclusions of the EMCO Review of the implementation of the Youth Guarantee can be found in document 14704/19 ADD 1.

The summary results of the implementation of the Youth Guarantee schemes can be found in document 14704/19 ADD 2.

The figures regarding the monitoring of the Youth Guarantee schemes can be found in document 14704/19 ADD 3.

Key messages on the Youth Guarantee

When EPSCO ministers agreed on the Council Recommendation on establishing a Youth Guarantee in 2013, the Employment Committee (EMCO) was tasked with monitoring its implementation.

In 2016 and again in 2018 the EPSCO Council endorsed a set of key messages which EMCO had provided on the basis of its monitoring. These noted Member States' strong commitment to implementing the Youth Guarantee and the need for this commitment to continue in the long term. They underlined the importance of strong partnerships within Member States and the crucial role of the Public Employment Services (PES). Past key messages have also highlighted a shift in the approach in several Member States, putting more focus on upskilling and support for young people facing multiple disadvantages. Outreach to young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) has been considered a key challenge in many Member States, although to a lesser extent for those that had developed strong incentives for young people to register for the Youth Guarantee. Moreover, the lack of an overarching strategy for implementing the Youth Guarantee was also highlighted in many Member States.

EMCO has continued its monitoring in the context of its multilateral surveillance, focusing in particular on the quality of traineeship offers and programmes during the October 2019 review. The current key messages draw on the results of that review (whose country-specific conclusions are included in annex). Also annexed to this document are the results per Member State of the 2018 data collection exercise, preceded by a summary of the main results at EU level.

Horizontal conclusions from the 2019 review of Youth Guarantee implementation

Along with the improvements to the macroeconomic outlook, the labour-market situation of young people is improving, enabling the Member States to focus more on addressing labour-market needs and vulnerable youth. The implementation of the Youth Guarantee varies between Member States but also between regions within Member States. Member States took action to step up early intervention and outreach activities, to integrate services for young people following a one-stop shop approach or to coordinate the services better and to involve employers and establish partnerships with all key stakeholders, notably towards providing attractive and well-performing vocational education and training. Preventative and activation measures are both part of the Youth Guarantee in Member States. Member States also took measures to improve the quality of traineeships. There is more active cooperation between employment and social services as well. PES have improved the delivery of personalised services and tailored them more to labour-market needs.

The review shows that the measures implemented in the framework of the Youth Guarantee are bringing results. Challenges regarding the development of outreach strategies and personalised services for NEETs still need to be tackled. In most Member States, young people with lower educational attainment are at the highest risk of becoming unemployed or NEET. Therefore, many interventions have been refocused to target specifically the most vulnerable groups, such as youth with low or no work experience, a migrant background or with health/social issues who are at high risk of becoming long-term NEETs. Because of the specificities of the groups furthest away from the labour market, a longer preparatory phase might be needed in the most complex cases.

Member States have taken steps to strengthen the Youth Guarantee offers by providing individualised paths and focusing more on early intervention in some cases. Efforts have been made to encourage young people to begin or return to education or training, as well as to offer them appropriate career guidance and more opportunities to engage in work-based learning and acquire work experience. Further efforts are needed to exploit the full potential of skills needs assessments and skills forecasting. Support for more preventative approaches to reduce early school leaving might be considered in future development of Youth Guarantee schemes.

Several Member States have developed promising approaches for the identification of and **outreach to young NEETs** by making use of innovative communication and outreach tools (social media, mobile teams, street workers, youth mediators) as well as information and communication technologies allowing the linking of different databases to facilitate the tracking of NEETs and to map their needs and use of services. However, for many Member States finding suitable solutions to respect data protection rules remains an obstacle in their efforts to better reach out to NEETs and to people from vulnerable groups who are most in need of personalised services. Despite these efforts, the proportion of the NEET population or of certain sub-groups (such as the inactive or youth facing multiple barriers) reached by the Youth Guarantee remains relatively low in some Member States.

Strong **partnerships** with key stakeholders in the design and delivery of the scheme have been an essential part of the Youth Guarantee in most Member States. The cooperation between public authorities in charge of implementing the Youth Guarantee and service providers, as well as between various levels of governance, has been enhanced but could be further improved in some cases. The use of integrated or coordinated service delivery, e.g. in the form of one-stop-shop approaches, has increased, but there is room for further improvements in coordinating employment, education and social services to support vulnerable young people in particular.

Individual action plans are provided and are regularly updated in some Member States. Some Member States also perform assessments of labour-market needs. However, efforts should continue to further improve the effectiveness of PES by ensuring adequate staffing levels and enhancing their capacity to systematically offer personalised and individualised counselling and action planning according to the various jobseeker profiles.

Most Member States are tackling the **quality of offers** within the Youth Guarantee framework. Some countries consider offers that lead to employment as being of good quality; others are putting a greater emphasis on ensuring good-quality apprenticeships and traineeships, preventing early school leaving and encouraging continued education. Some Member States define ‘good-quality’ job offers as offers that last for at least six months.

Traineeships are offered both as part of the Youth Guarantee and within a larger framework of active labour-market policies. The traineeship frameworks across the EU tend to differ considerably and in a number of cases compliance with the principles of the Quality Framework for Traineeships still needs to be improved.

Certification of vocational education and training (VET) programmes was introduced in some Member States in order to ensure their quality under the Youth Guarantee. Several PES are conducting their own evaluations to ensure the quality and effectiveness of education and training programmes.

Another issue that was raised in the review relates to the **sustainability** of funding for Youth Guarantee measures and programmes, particularly their dependence on the European Social Fund and their continuity beyond the current programming period. In a number of cases, a more strategic approach less reliant on ad hoc measures and projects would be needed.

There is a growing awareness of the importance of a solid **monitoring and evaluation** system. Countries need to step up their efforts to improve their capacity to monitor the destination of young people leaving the Youth Guarantee and to follow-up participants after exit from the Youth Guarantee in order to better assess impact. Some Member States are setting up monitoring systems that link different administrative data while in other countries data protection issues still need to be addressed.

Member States are making use of the opportunities provided by mutual learning among Member States, the Commission's Structural Reform Support Service, and international institutions (including the OECD) to have a better understanding of the situation of NEETs and of the effectiveness of measures.