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From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Permanent Representatives Committee/Council

Subject: Investing in Youth Employment: Implementation of the Youth Guarantee
- Endorsement of the EMCO key messages

Delegations will find attached the key messages from the Employment Committee on 'Investing in Youth Employment: Implementation of the Youth Guarantee' to be endorsed by the Council (EPSCO) at its session on 15 March 2018.

The annexes to these key messages can be found in documents 6149/18 ADD 1 -ADD 29.

Key messages on the Youth Guarantee

When EPSCO Ministers agreed on the Council Recommendation on establishing a Youth Guarantee (YG) in 2013, the Employment Committee (EMCO) was tasked with monitoring its implementation. EMCO's Indicators Group has developed an indicator framework and a data collection exercise, which it carries out in conjunction with the Commission.

In March 2016, the EPSCO Council endorsed a set of key messages which EMCO provided on the basis of its monitoring. These noted the strong commitment to implementing the 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. They also noted the time needed to implement many of the reforms linked to the Guarantee to that point, and looked forward to a fuller evaluation of these reforms in the future. The need to improve consistence in the quality and sustainability of Youth Guarantee offers was noted, as well as the need to improve the data collection.

Further to the 2016 EPSCO Conclusions and the European Court of Auditors' April 2017 Special Report on the Youth Guarantee, the EMCO continued its monitoring in the context of EMCO's multilateral surveillance, focusing in particular on the quality of YG offers and programme on the occasion of the December 2017 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 2016 data collection exercise, preceded by a summary of the main results at EU level.

Horizontal Conclusions from the 2017 review of Youth Guarantee implementation

EMCO carried out its fourth review of the implementation of the Youth Guarantee in December 2017¹, in an improving context where the number of young unemployed and NEETs has decreased though with persisting differences across Member States.

¹ Reviews were carried out annually from 2013 – 2015. They are now carried out bi-annually, alternating with reviews on the implementation of the Recommendation on the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market.

This review demonstrated considerable progress in implementation since the previous review in December 2015: measures underpinning the Youth Guarantee's delivery are now maturing, and Member States remain committed to the implementation of the Guarantee. In a changing labour market context, the Review also highlighted a shift in approach in several Member States, with a stronger focus on upskilling and young people facing multiple disadvantages. In some Member States, YG delivery is based primarily on individual projects and measures, rather than on an overarching strategy.

Most Member States have developed new forms of **partnerships**, which are now central to YG implementation and should be further built upon. The approach differs between Member States – some place the emphasis at local level whilst in others it is more centrally coordinated. Member States highlighted the need for effective cooperation between PES and the education system as well as youth and other services. Such cooperation is crucial particularly in increasing the provision of continued education and apprenticeship offers, and in better supporting young people in the most vulnerable situations.

Outreach to NEETs is still a challenge in many Member States, but to a lesser extent for those that have developed strong incentives for young people to register. Additional efforts are needed in many Member States to upscale existing outreach measures. Making such measures accessible is key. A number of Member States are now focusing outreach efforts on reaching young people who are furthest away from the labour market and who, across the board, tend not to be reached by the YG.

Several Member States face challenges related to the **provision of an offer within four months**. This is the case not only of those with limited PES capacity but also those with a high share of "hard to reach" NEETs, who often need more complex interventions before being able to take up an offer.

Monitoring data on outcomes, although still incomplete, shows encouraging results: close to half of the young people are still in employment, education or training 6 months after leaving the YG and these results are maintained through time. The real situation is likely to be even better since currently not all young people are followed-up after leaving the YG. However, important differences remain across Member States. Work on the **quality and** relevance of the YG offers needs to be continued, inter alia by ensuring that offers are adapted to changing labour markets and better targeted to the specific profile of the young people, whilst helping them gain the right skills and leading to sustainable outcomes.

Given that many YG interventions are co-financed by the Youth Employment Initiative and the European Social Fund, there is a need to **reflect on how to ensure the sustainability and continuity of those interventions.**

Regarding monitoring and evaluation frameworks, YG-related policy measures and initiatives can still be improved in some Member States, including by looking at longer-term outcomes.

Over recent years considerable progress has been made in improving the quality of the data collected on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee. A number of Member States have further improved the alignment of their data with the specifications of the **Indicator Framework** for monitoring the YG, demonstrating both their commitment to the YG and the accumulation of experience over the last few years.

In most countries, a sound methodological approach for the collection and compilation of YG data is in place, although some statistical compliance issues remain. Despite the progress achieved important challenges remain in improving the completion of data, particularly in relation to the destination of all young people when leaving the YG, and follow-up data. **Follow-up data** to monitor the situation of participants after exiting the YG preparatory phase is not yet available in a number of countries, although there are generally plans for it to become available in the future. Member States are strongly encouraged to make additional efforts to improve the completion of data in general and specifically, to improve their capacity to monitor the destination of all young people leaving the YG and to follow-up participants after exit from the YG, particularly where possible through the use of linked registers.