



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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NOTE

from: The Presidency
to: Permanent Representatives Committee (Part I)/Council (EPSCO)
Subject: EPSCO lunch item: Youth Employment Policies
- Presidency background paper

Delegations will find in Annex a background paper by the Presidency with a view to the lunch discussion at the EPSCO Council on 8 March 2010.

BACKGROUND TO THE DISCUSSION OVER LUNCHEON

Youth employment policies: one of the priorities in the strategy for growth and jobs

Youth unemployment unquestionably poses one of the most pressing problems encountered in Europe; it is a fact that young people are one of the groups hardest hit by the economic and financial crisis. There is a need to press ahead with specific action here, lest the frustration felt by many young Europeans nowadays at not finding jobs become a permanent, structural feature, impeding the progress of economic recovery.

In view of the risk that the present situation of high youth unemployment rates in Europe will turn young people affected by the crisis into a lost generation, they have to be treated as one of the groups most in need of specific measures to facilitate their integration into the labour market and to improve their chances of remaining employable.

As many of these unemployed young people tend to be poorly educated, it is important to provide for more and better training for them.

The problem of the employability of young people often stems in part from a mismatch between their profiles and abilities and the present and future needs of the labour market. A sizeable proportion of unemployed young people need to acquire skills and abilities geared to the areas of work and occupations set to lead the way in job creation. Their job opportunities will depend very heavily on their employability. Only if their skills and abilities are geared to labour market demand will such habitually more vulnerable groups stand any chance of success.

We must also introduce a combination of measures to combat educational failure and dropping out from school and to increase the number of young people who complete their secondary education or vocational training; we should also take steps to ease the passage from education to work, by encouraging young people to enter the labour market through training-type contracts and/or business traineeships which improve their skills and enable them to go on to find quality jobs.

- What, in your view, are the most effective ways of reducing the impact of unemployment on young people, and what can be done to ensure that they do not continue to be the group worst affected by labour market segmentation, with repercussions on job quality and on their ability to remain in work?
- To what extent and in what way should youth employment policies and action to combat unemployment as part of the strategy on growth and jobs be seen in the light of quantified reduction targets? Should specific indicators be set for young people?
