Europe’s LOST generation

23.5% 22.8% 20.1% 15.7%

UNEMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION
EU-27, age 15-24, 2012

17.9% tertiary education
20% upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education
30.3% primary or lower secondary education

YEUTH UNEMPLOYMENT
EU-27, age <25, March 2013

YOUNG PEOPLE (15-24 year olds) NOT IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING

NEETs

21.5% BULGARIA
21.1% ITALY
20.3% GREECE

EU-27 13.2%

4.3% NETHERLANDS
5.9% LUXEMBOURG
6.5% AUSTRIA

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

-have you ever started a business?

39% CYPRUS
38% BULGARIA
32% GREECE

EU-27 23%

15% FRANCE
16% BELGIUM
17% SLOVENIA

35% have done 1 internship
28% have done 2 internships
9% have done 3, 5 or more

19% left to do an internship because they couldn’t find a job

Has your education helped you to develop entrepreneurial attitude?
Has your education given you the skills and know-how to enable you to run a business?

EU-27 15-24 64%
EU-27 15-24 49%

Sources: EC, Eurostat, European Youth Forum.
SAVING EUROPE’S “LOST GENERATION”

Report of the high-level European Policy Summit

cooporganised by Friends of Europe and Debating Europe

in association with the Irish Presidency of Council of the European Union 2013

with the support of Eurofound

and with media partner Europe's World.

Summer 2013
Brussels
This report reflects the conference rapporteur’s understanding of the views expressed by participants. Moreover, these views are not necessarily those of the organisations that participants represent, nor of Friends of Europe, its Board of Trustees, members or partners.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The European Policy Summit, entitled “Saving Europe’s ‘Lost Generation’”, organised by Friends of Europe and Debating Europe, brought together a varied panel of experts to discuss Europe’s high levels of youth unemployment.

A recent Gallup poll undertaken in the six largest EU countries shows that young people in Europe are very pessimistic about the future, with pessimism figures ranging from 66% for Italian youth to 28% for Polish youth.

Youth unemployment figures in the EU, at an average rate of 23% at the end of 2012, explain this pessimism. To change this paradigm and increase the number of youth in the labour market, the panellists’ main message was that there must be a shift in the EU’s educational culture.

The European Commission is looking beyond formal education and promoting the teaching of transversal skills, said Androulla Vassiliou, EU Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism & Youth. Rethinking member state education systems requires continuing spending while targeting investments which are more effective and bring back higher returns.

“We are teaching the wrong things,” underlined Ruairí Quinn, Irish Minister for Education and Skills. “So far as education has a role to play in a world where skill sets are made obsolete in 5 years, it must be used to teach basic skill sets and promote flexible thinking and an entrepreneurial spirit.”

Though many blame the economic crisis for the rise in youth unemployment levels, it is important to keep a long-term perspective for supporting the inclusion of young people in the labour market. While it is easy to discuss the issue now, in the media spotlight, the youth employment agenda needs continued support even during periods of economic recovery, said Andrea Gerosa, Founder of ThinkYoung.

This long-term vision is the basic building block of the EU’s ‘Youth Guarantee’ scheme recently adopted by the European Council. Six billion euros have already been set aside in the 2014-2020 EU budget to target young people
who have been out of the labour market for at least four months and provide them with a real chance to find employment and further their education.

The role of business and industry is crucial in order to achieve the goal of saving Europe’s ‘lost generation’ from a lifetime of joblessness and alienation from labour markets. More partnerships between educational institutions and industry in the form of on-the-job training, apprenticeships, internships and the like are absolutely essential to lowering the dangerously high youth unemployment rate in the EU.

“Risk-taking will help to create new jobs.”

Dimitris Tsigos, President of the European Confederation of Young Entrepreneurs (YES) and European Young Leader: ‘40 under 40’
“The message is not that schools should be the maidens of business,” underlined Frank Vandenbroucke, Professor at the Research Centre of Public Economics at KU Leuven and Friends of Europe Trustee, “They must both be harnessed to improve each other.”

Current discussions in the EU institutions do not properly address the synergies in this area since they focus more on what the state can do to incentivise companies. What is needed is a cultural shift whereby companies understand that they are required to contribute to the training of young people moving into the labour market.

While the role of industry and business can be tailored to better suit the goal of reducing youth unemployment, trends in the area of European entrepreneurship are equally worrying, noted Dimitris Tsigos, President of the European Confederation of Young Entrepreneurs (YES) and European Young Leader: ‘40 under 40’.

“We need to craft policies that encourage risk-taking and entrepreneurship,” he stressed. “Risk-taking will help to create new jobs. In order to help people take risks, however, you need a strong social security system. It is no coincidence that the ideal place for start-ups in the EU is Scandinavia.”

Attitudes and legal recourses in Europe towards failure are unacceptable as they currently are. In the entrepreneurial culture of the United States, for example, it is accepted that the majority of entrepreneurs will fail at least once before seeing any success. In the EU, however, failure is considered a stigma and is legally coded as such. This approach to failure and risk-taking is leaching into the mindset of young people, as record youth unemployment is being met with discouragement.

While the task seems daunting, rescuing the ‘lost generation’ is possible. By providing a safety net for entrepreneurs, opportunities for jobs and education for young people, and a cultural shift towards both a widespread acceptance of the relationship between education and industry, as well as a culture of risk-taking, the EU will reap the social and economic benefits of a skilled and productive group of employed youth.
INTRODUCTION

With unemployment on the rise, particularly among Europe’s younger generation, the EU and member state governments must strive to find solutions. “The economic crisis has caused a decrease in the number of opportunities for young people in the labour market,” noted Mariana Câmpeanu, Romanian Minister for Labour, Family and Social Protection.

This issue will not simply go away, stressed moderator Giles Merritt, Secretary General of Friends of Europe. The International Labour Organisation warns that there will be no relaxation of the crisis before 2016. The post-2016 prognosis estimates the youth unemployment rate at 16-18% – down from the 2012 EU average of 23%.1

“The cost of this inactivity is a measure of Europe’s inability to integrate young people into our labour markets.”

Massimiliano Mascherini, Lead Researcher of the Eurofound report “NEETs - Young people not in employment, education or training: Characteristics, costs and policy responses in Europe”

Youth unemployment goes hand-in-hand with problems in European education systems. By some estimates there are as many 14 million young Europeans who are neither working nor studying. Paradoxically, there were some estimated 4 million unfilled jobs in Europe in 2012. As such, the problem is one of a shortage of young people with the skills needed to fill these jobs.

1 For the purposes of this report, the percentage of youth unemployment is calculated by comparing the number of young people who are ready for the labour market to the number who are jobless.
“Youth unemployment is not only a social issue, it is a huge economic issue as well,” stressed Stefano Scarpetta, Deputy Director for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). “As discouragement sets in, joblessness is extended and, as a result, the EU’s economic growth is being undermined for the future.”

The cost of this disengagement is quite high, at an estimated at 153 billion euros per year, underlined Massimiliano Mascherini, Lead Researcher of the Eurofound report “NEETs - Young people not in employment, education or training: Characteristics, costs and policy responses in Europe”. “The cost of this inactivity is a measure of Europe’s inability to integrate young people into our labour markets,” he underlined.

While the transition from studies to the workplace is very difficult in today’s economic climate, the negative long-term impact of joblessness risks perpetuating the social exclusion of the ‘lost generation’ of young people. This ‘lost generation’, failing to obtain gainful employment after their studies, is at risk of never being able to successfully enter and remain in the labour market.

“If we do not strive to pick up those skilled yet jobless youth, they will quickly become lost. This is why the Youth Guarantee limits exclusion from the labour market to only four months,” underlined Koos Richelle, European Commission Director General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

“If we do not strive to pick up those skilled yet jobless youth, they will quickly become lost.”

Koos Richelle, European Commission Director General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

This rather bleak outlook can be seen in the rise of pessimism in EU member states, noted Merritt, calling attention to a recent Gallup poll carried out with Friends of Europe and Debating Europe.2 The results of this poll, undertaken in the six largest EU countries, demonstrate rising pessimism among young people, ranging from 66% for Italian youth to 28% for Polish youth.

2 The results of the Gallup poll can be found here: http://www.scribd.com/doc/141856647/Gallup-Debating-Europe-Poll-Europeans-expect-a-Bleak-Future-for-their-Young
“We have two challenges facing us,” concluded Merritt. “First, we must work towards getting young people into the workplace, and secondly, we must make sure that those who are currently suffering unemployment do not get trapped under the scrap heap for the rest of their lives.”

Early on in the global economic crisis, the European Commission published the EU 2020 Growth Strategy, which suggested that Europe will need to go through deep structural changes to confront and adapt to emerging demographic and global challenges. “The globalising world has changed enormously,” concluded Richelle. “We need to frame the debate about youth unemployment in terms of this new paradigm.”
WHAT IS BEING DONE?

“Youth unemployment is one of the greatest challenges facing Europe,” Commissioner Vassiliou noted. “Improving our educational systems is the medium- and long-term solution to this problem. We must ask ourselves: How can we save this generation by offering them the education and skills they need?”

The European Commission is currently examining how to adapt the EU’s educational system, she added. Youth today need to move beyond solely formal education and learn critical transversal skills such as decision-making, team work, and flexible thinking. Having examined existing member state education systems, the Commission has released a communication aimed at ‘Rethinking Education’.

In order to support EU member states in modernising their education systems, the Commission’s communication offers five main conclusions:

1. There is a need for stronger focus on transversal skills;
2. Suggested benchmarks for foreign language education;
3. Bulking up and creating quality vocational education systems;
4. Training highly motivated and entrepreneurial teachers, and;
5. Standard member state instruction and qualification across the EU.

This communication is a step in the right direction but there is a tendency to underestimate the challenges, stressed Vandenbroucke. “There is a serious imbalance in the education systems in Europe,” he said. “We need to put our money where our mouths are and push through reforms. Even with the current penchant for austerity, we need more investments. Less money does not mean more efficiency.”

“When it comes to employment and educational policies, the influence from the EU level is limited,” noted moderator Joop Hazenberg, Correspondent for EU Watcher and Founder of The Next Generation for Europe (NGE) think-tank. “In the long-term, the EU should have more power to streamline labour markets through policy decisions.”

As educational policy is the purview of member state governments, they must make the needed efforts in the context of wider EU policies, Vassiliou underlined. More remains to be done to achieve the EU 2020 goals in education of reducing

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3 The full text of this communication can be found here: http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/rethinking/com669_en.pdf
the percentage of early school leavers to 10% and increasing the percentage of graduates from tertiary education, including vocational education.

Providing an example of what steps EU national governments can take to improve youth employment opportunities, Câmpeanu elaborated the Romanian national plan, offering five main directions that the Ministry of Labour has set out:

1. Career counselling and guidance for young people;
2. A system for skills recognition, whether obtained through formal or informal methods;
3. Stimulating job creation through youth entrepreneurship programmes and tax incentives;
4. An apprenticeship programme for those youth pursuing vocational education, and;
5. A system for promoting internships for university graduates.

New national and European programmes aimed at investments in improving vocational and university education will be important in the medium-term, Vassiliou underlined. The European Alliance for Apprenticeships,4 which will be launched in July to help unemployed youth find solutions through industry apprenticeships, will bring together the relevant actors – companies, governments and social partners – to determine how best to encourage industry to offer quality apprenticeships.

Another programme is Erasmus for All,5 which, among other things, will create structured partnerships – dubbed ‘knowledge alliances’ – between universities and businesses so that they may better adapt to each other’s needs. The so-called ‘sector skills alliances’ will serve the same purpose by linking institutes of vocational education and the relevant sectors.

The mismatch between skills that young people are learning and labour market requirements is a key problem, according to ThinkYoung’s recent publication, ‘Overcoming the Skills Mismatch’ said Gerosa.6 The report stresses that many young people today are adaptable and are more likely to build careers in areas which interest them, rather than what pays the most. One of the largest issues is the poor communication of what is required for the labour market and what is provided in terms of education.

“The fact that until now there has not been a strong link between educational curricula and labour market demand has led to a severe lack of technical staff, in Romania

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4 A concise description of this initiative can be found here: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/news/20747.aspx
5 This initiative, slated for the 2014-2020 period, will focus on streamlining formal, informal and non-formal education in a pan-European educational context. For more information, follow: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/135457.pdf
6 For the full text, follow http://thinkyoung.eu/overcoming-the-skills-mismatch/
and elsewhere,” noted Câmpeanu. “It is clear to me that the actors involved need to strive to work together.”

Addressing this lack of effective communication is a high priority for the EU, underlined Vassiliou. In order to facilitate mobility and job-searching, the Commission has created two tools; the EU Skills Passport and the European Skills Panorama.

The EU Skills Passport is a complement to the Europass CV format and will help supply better qualified candidates by allowing job seekers to demonstrate clear evidence of their skills. On the demand side of the equation, the European Skills Panorama is an online tool which highlights skill shortages in specific sectors and regions, to facilitate looking for and finding jobs.

**Youth Unemployment in Europe**

NEETs - young people not in Employment, Education or Training

More than 14 million young people in Europe aged under-30 are currently disengaged from labour market and education.

Eurofound estimates the economic loss due to the disengagement of young people from the labour market at €153 billion.

Eurofound argues young people have to be set on a long-term, sustainable pathway, and that youth employment measures should be client-centred, not provider-focused.

This means equipping them with qualifications needed for successful labour market integration.

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The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working conditions (Eurofound) is a tripartite European Union Agency, whose role is to provide research knowledge and expertise in the area of social and work-related policies.

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SOLUTIONS FOR THE SHORT TERM

Many of the initiatives currently on the table are likely to produce results only in the long term. However, it appears that there is a lack of short-term solutions, noted audience member Martin Forrest, Global Business Researcher at Ingeus.

In the short term, replied Vandenbroucke, there needs be a more balanced approach to macro-economic policy in Europe, with a more expansionary approach from the northern member states that would allow the troubled southern states to restructure while holding off recession.

Another short-term solution is improving those aspects of member state social security systems that are directly related to income support and employment services, noted Scarpetta. Furthermore, European policies, such as those aimed at reducing early school leaving and particularly the Youth Guarantee, can be important in combating low youth unemployment.

The basic building block of the Youth Guarantee scheme is a heterogeneous approach to avoiding long-term disengagement with the labour market, stressed
Mascherini. Under the programme, funds will be made available for those young people who have been out of work for more than four months to allow them to find a job or further their education. “The Youth Guarantee will provide job seekers with the tools they need to find work or further their education,” he said. “This is the first step towards including them in the agenda and integrating them into the labour market.”

The Youth Guarantee programme is a political commitment, Scarpetta said. It is also a framework for coordination across member states allowing public employment services, educators and employers to gain understanding of the specific needs of young people. “It is no coincidence that the public employment services in those countries with the highest unemployment rates are also those with the least funding,” he said.

The first step to accomplishing the scheme is to interview young people to determine their needs, he said, adding: “Youth know what they need more than any case manager. In order for the Youth Guarantee to address the fundamental problem of youth unemployment, it has to result in specific programmes for specific cases.”
RETHINKING EDUCATION

The challenge of reforming education systems facing the EU and member state governments is daunting especially in the face of the current economic downturn and austerity measures. “I think that we are underestimating the scope of the problems in our education systems, and the level of ambition that is needed to fix them,” Vandenbroucke said, adding that the Commission’s communication ‘Rethinking Education’ is a very positive step in the right direction.

“We are underestimating the scope of the problems in our education systems and the level of ambition that is needed to fix them.”

Frank Vandenbroucke, Professor at the Research Centre of Public Economics at KU Leuven and Friends of Europe Trustee

Education is the primary responsibility of member states, Richelle underlined. “We try to exchange best practices but unfortunately Europe is not a learning society. In the EU, everyone wants to make their own mistakes.”

What is needed in the EU is a new outlook for how to educate young people, noted Carmen Costea, Vice Rector of International Relations at University Spiru Haret, Bucharest. “Education does not begin and end with universities,” she stressed. “Education should start at birth and integrate whole communities.”
For the past ten years, University Spiru Haret has hosted the Alternative Sciences Association (ASA), an initiative that promotes informal and unconventional education. The programme brings together students of all ages, academic backgrounds and expertise to explore native talents and motivate new skills and is remarkable for having a 0% unemployment rate amongst its beneficiaries.

In order to accomplish this, the ASA holds weekly meetings with media and businesses to discuss solutions and debate success stories. The ASA works with companies to select the most interesting students and give them opportunities to work and gain valuable skills.

In short, there needs to be a cultural shift to a more holistic approach to education, stressed Quinn. There are existing models of learning traditions not locked into formal education, for example the Scout Movement and other youth organisations. These organisations impart practical and transversal skills in youth, precisely the sorts of skills that many feel are lacking in graduates from higher education.

“Education does not begin and end with universities. Education should start at birth and integrate whole communities.”

Carmen Costea, Vice Rector of International Relations at University Spiru Haret, Bucharest
E.D.P. brings together privately and publicly held companies, from all sectors of the Romanian economy, NGOs and distinguished individuals, who are interested in Romania's European present and future and its EU-membership benefits.

This platform for dialogue is based on generating debates and meetings between local and foreign business groups in order to initiate and contribute to an interactive dialogue on current issues, aiming to provide economic smart solutions, to support the development of the Romanian economy in the context of the future EU budget for 2014–2020.
INVESTING IN EDUCATION

In addition to this shift in awareness, targeted investments need to be made in vocational education to both achieve excellence and reduce the negative connotations that come with it.

“I want them to use computers to create tools. Not how to use Excel but how to create Excel.”

Vandenbroucke noted that such targeted investments were applied in Belgium to improve vocational training with a big impact on the quality of schools. “Funding educational excellence is an absolute necessity,” he concluded, “but these investments must be sustained.”

When considering investments in education, there is a risk of planning too far ahead. “The economy is transforming faster than people are learning,” noted Tsigos. “It seems rather useless to craft educational policies that serve the long term.” In order to address this complication, education may better serve as a way to impart fundamental knowledge and be coupled with on-the-job training.

“So far as education has a role to play in a world where skill sets are made obsolete in five years, it must be used to teach basic skill sets and promote flexible thinking and an entrepreneurial spirit,” Quinn underlined.

“I want employees to have skills in reading, writing, mathematics, and coding,” noted Peter “HP” Halácsy, Co-founder and Chief Technology Officer of Prezi, a successful
From left to right: Frank Vandenbroucke, Androulla Vassiliou, Giles Merritt, Karen Coleman, Massimiliano Mascherini, and Andrea Gerosa
Hungarian start-up with more than 120 employees. “I want them to use computers to create tools. Not how to use Excel but how to create Excel.” Basic skills that combine knowledge and use critical thinking and common sense to achieve results are more valuable than many highly-specialised trades and diplomas, he said.

“Young people in Europe do not know how to cope with failure. The challenge for the educational sector is to train young people to resolve difficult situations.”

Mariana Câmpeanu, Romanian Minister for Labour, Family and Social Protection

“As it stands, young people in Europe do not know how to cope with failure,” underlined Câmpeanu. “The challenge for the educational sector is to train young people to resolve difficult situations.”

“We are teaching the wrong things. We are training youth to remember when their iPhones can do it for them.”

Ruairí Quinn, Irish Minister for Education and Skills

“We are teaching the wrong things,” agreed Quinn. “We are training youth to remember when their iPhones can do it for them.” In fact, he continued, the methods of learning by discovery that are used in pre-schools are more in tune with human nature and better complements modern uses of technology. One of the challenges for the current generation of educators is to re-educate themselves about the benefits of technology and how new technologies are being used by younger generations.
BRINGING JOBS AND EDUCATION TOGETHER

An important consideration for education reform is improving young people’s exposure to the working world. “We have to bring economic sectors and businesses into the game,” noted Olivier Küttel, Head of European Public Affairs at the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL). “We need to reconnect the world of work with the world of education.”

The tertiary level of education needs to be closer to industry. This can be accomplished through systematic and structured partnerships as suggested by several member state governments. “Educational institutions need to ask industry representatives what they need and tailor curricula to meet these needs,” Quinn noted.

“We need to reconnect the world of work with the world of education.”

Successful apprenticeship programmes, such as those common in Switzerland, Austria, Germany, and Denmark, function well in large part due to companies’ active involvement, noted Scarpetta. Young people benefit enormously from apprenticeships, gaining experience in socialisation, team work, and practical skills.
In Switzerland, stressed Küttel, youth unemployment is at 3%. This low rate comes as a result of the Swiss education system. As they finish compulsory education at 16 years old, students decide to follow one of two educational tracks. Approximately 20% of students choose an academic track, meaning college and then university, while the other 80% opt for vocational education.

Those 80% who choose vocational training are effectively hired by the state for a four-year contract, paid low wages but trained extensively in whichever sector they choose while continuing their studies for two days a week. Contrary to many EU member states, vocational education is not stigmatised in Switzerland, but viewed as a valuable extension of compulsory education that facilitates entry into labour markets.

Technical schools are often considered to offer a second-tier education compared to universities, agreed Scarpetta, adding that many of the EU countries succeeding in terms of work integration have good quality vocational education. “Improving
the quality of vocational schools and removing the societal bias against them is a challenge for the future,” he underlined.

As a result, the Swiss system allows for flexibility, Küttel stressed. By the time students are 20 years old, they have a diploma that allows them to attend university if they choose, while also having been highly trained and ready to compete in the labour market.

The results of this system form part of a much-needed cultural shift in the EU, whereby companies and industry understand that they need to actively contribute to the training of young people. “The discussion in the EU as to the state’s role in

“Improving the quality of vocational schools and removing the societal bias against them is a challenge for the future.”

Stefano Scarpetta, Deputy Director for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
offering incentives to companies to integrate young people into the workforce is not the discussion we should be having,” Küttel said. “Businesses need to commit to training programmes in such a way that youth are being lowly paid but highly trained. This is a win-win situation.”

This shift may not be so simple, owing to the high supply of unemployed youth and the weak demand of crisis-choked companies, noted Scarpetta. There is, however some scope – for example through internship programmes – to encourage hiring with wage subsidies, focussing on those young people who are job-ready and ensuring that these subsidies are going to companies that are growing.

“The risk inherent in internships is that many interns are just used for cheap labour,” stressed moderator Karen Coleman, Broadcast Journalist and Columnist for the Irish Independent. “It is incumbent on the employer to train interns and help them find their path.” For the most part, this scheme is in place but it has to be more closely monitored to build confidence in employers.
Young people are the future of our democracy, and so it is vitally important that they take an active interest in politics.

With that in mind, Debating Europe is working closely with schools and colleges across each EU member state to launch a series of student-led online debates under the banner Debating Europe Schools.

This new exciting initiative is designed to give students the chance to question policymakers, debate with fellow students from other European countries, and learn more about the work of the EU, particularly in the run-up to the 2014 European Parliament elections.

Join the debate on Europe’s future!
ENCOURAGING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Unemployment is a symptom of a sick economy and not the disease itself. “The debate in the EU about youth unemployment is comparable to discussing which brand of painkiller to use on a patient with cancer,” Tsigos stressed. “The EU is acting like an old person – slow-moving and very conservative.”

There are four strategic issues at play in the EU’s employment model, he continued: access to risk financing; the realisation of the single European market for entrepreneurs and small-business owners; an educational paradigm that promotes a culture of failure; and legal, financial, and social support for entrepreneurs and risk-takers. “We need authentic EU models to promote sustainability – rather than dominance – and to encourage risk-taking in order to stimulate the economy and create more jobs,” he concluded.

“In the United States, if you create a company and fail, you can get a job at Google. In the EU, if you fail, you are alone.”

Andrea Gerosa, Founder of ThinkYoung

The EU needs to shift its mind-set as regards failure, said Gerosa, adding: “In the United States, if you create a company and fail, you can get a job at Google. In the EU, if you fail, you are alone.”
This attitude is bred in young people beginning early in their education, where excellence is rewarded but not resolve, failure, or teamwork. “In the EU, we reward champions, not teams,” Tsigos underlined.

As it stands, European youth lack entrepreneurial skills, Coleman said. In Ireland, for example, the ideal careers for recent generations have been in property law and banking, leaving no room for an entrepreneurial reflex. “We need a more visionary approach in the EU towards entrepreneurship,” she concluded. “An overall shift in how we consider economic growth.”

“In order for youth to become entrepreneurs, they need the right mindset. We are encouraging education ministers to begin entrepreneurial education at the elementary school level.”

Androulla Vassiliou, EU Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism & Youth

This entrepreneurial reflex is becoming more commonplace among young people, noted Vassiliou. However, this reflex needs to be cultivated and fed by education systems beginning at a young age. “In order for youth to become entrepreneurs, they need the right mindset. So we are encouraging education ministers to begin entrepreneurial education at the elementary school level.”

“We need to create jobs. We need to create companies,” stressed Halácsy. “We need to tell more success stories and motivate the entrepreneurial spirit in our young people.” In turn, these entrepreneurs must become active role models for younger generations, visiting schools and encouraging unemployed youth to take responsibility for their own careers.
CONCLUSION

“We have a problem of orientation in young people,” concluded Vandenbroucke. “We must strive to find a balance and help them to discover their passions and talents.” This is as much a legal as cultural shift in the EU and, while much remains to be done, there are promising signs that these shifts are emerging.

From a policy perspective, the EU institutions are taking positive steps in the direction of more support for unemployed youth, both in terms of financial and practical support, as well as in terms of education. However, as long as educational policy remains under the control of member state governments, the uneven distribution of unemployment is likely to continue. For the short-term, more balanced macro-economic policy and more streamlined use of policies such as the Youth Guarantee will help to correct this deficiency.

“The problem of education is linked to regions,” concluded Küttel. “We have to think about what we can do at the regional and national levels.” Bringing economic sectors into the educational process can go a long way towards improving the situation, as fairly-managed apprenticeships and internships can benefit both companies and young people.

While legal and procedural processes will serve to provide structures and a balanced outlook, there also needs to be a cultural shift in Europe towards more entrepreneurship, risk-taking, and a culture of failure.

As an integral part of this cultural shift, social security systems should be adapted to offer support for those young entrepreneurs willing to take risks. Shoring up these systems should be seen as an investment, rather than a cost. Richelle stressed that when young entrepreneurs feel able to take risks and know they can count on state support in case of failure, they are more likely to innovate, thereby promoting economic growth.

Finally, Tsigos concluded, “we need to rediscover politics. Our educational system needs to educate citizens to participate more fully in democratic
processes. We all have to become citizens to combat the democratic deficit and then the idea of the EU will flourish.”

“We speak about the Youth Guarantee and so forth and it sounds like we will fix the problem,” Merritt noted. “But, looking at the outlook the young people have, in most EU countries, they know that their future will not be as good as their parents’ past. We need to stop hiding behind our political double speak and be straight with younger generations.”
ANNEX I – Programme

08.30 – 09.00 Welcome coffee and registration of participants

SESSION I
09.00 – 10.00 SKILLS SHORTAGES IN A DWINDLING EU WORKFORCE

Europe is facing a double crisis; paradoxical though it may seem, rising unemployment, especially amongst young people, is accompanied by an increasingly severe labour shortage. In 2012, despite rising joblessness, there were 4 million unfilled jobs in the EU. Would-be employers complain above all about the lack of technically qualified job seekers, and by 2015 the shortage across Europe of high-tech personnel will be 900,000. Europe’s “lost generation” of unemployed and perhaps unemployable young people represents a human tragedy and an economic disaster. Today’s youth will be needed to make up for the reduction in the labour force; by 2030, the EU labour pool will have shrunk by 12 million people, creating particularly acute shortages in Germany, France and Italy. Unless countered, demographic decline coupled with young people being discouraged from joining the workforce will seriously depress Europe’s prospects for economic growth, costing society far more than the measures and investments needed to address the problem. Will the European Commission’s launch of its “Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs” partnership, aimed at addressing employment in the ICT sector, provide the necessary tools to deliver a solution with rapid results? What should a comprehensive and far-sighted EU jobs strategy consist of overall?

Androulla Vassiliou EU Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism & Youth
Andrea Gerosa Founder of ThinkYoung
Massimiliano Mascherini Lead Researcher of the Eurofound report “NEETs - Young people not in employment, education or training: Characteristics, costs and policy responses in Europe”
Frank Vandenbroucke Professor at the Research Centre of Public Economics at KU Leuven, Former Belgian Minister for Employment and Pensions, Former Flemish Minister for Work, Education and Training, and Friends of Europe Trustee

Co-moderated by Giles Merritt, Secretary General of Friends of Europe, and Karen Coleman, Broadcast Journalist and Columnist for the Irish Independent

10.00 – 10.30 Coffee break
SESSION II
10.30 – 11.30 NEW POLICIES TODAY FOR THE YOUTH OF TOMORROW

Northern Europe’s healthier employment picture – most have developed vocational training methods comparable to Germany’s ‘dual-system’ that link work experience with technical qualifications – is no secret. Other EU governments have long admired this approach, but unlike some Asian countries have not copied it, preferring instead to focus on job creation schemes and apprenticeship subsidies for employers. What contribution can an EU initiative such as the “Agenda for new Skills and Jobs” play in a process that is largely national not to say local? Should policymakers concentrate more on streamlining labour markets to remove restrictive practices and other barriers, encouraging more women to participate, especially in southern Europe, and reducing high levels of taxation on labour? Without radical policy changes, how will Europe fare when by mid-century today’s four workers per pensioner is cut to just two?

Mariana Câmpeanu  Romanian Minister for Labour, Family and Social Protection
Olivier Küttel  Head of European Public Affairs at the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL)
Koos Richelle  European Commission Director General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
Dimitris Tsigos  President of the European Confederation of Young Entrepreneurs (YES) and European Young Leader: ’40 under 40’

Co-moderated by Giles Merritt, Secretary General of Friends of Europe, and Joop Hazenberg, Correspondent for EU Watcher and Founder of The Next Generation for Europe (NGE) think tank

11.30 – 12.00 Coffee break
SESSION III
12.00 – 13.00  GETTING YOUNG PEOPLE INTO JOBS – WHAT WORKS BEST?

Youth unemployment in Europe is unacceptably high. One in five young people under 25 are out of work – and in some southern European countries like Spain it’s one in two. Lacking work experience and all too often technical skills, Europe’s young people present a truly daunting challenge to politicians and policymakers; how in the short term can jobs be found for so many school-leavers, and more strategically what measures could create a motivated new generation of entrepreneurs and innovators? Are the EU’s efforts to encourage “Youth Guarantees” of the kind pioneered by Finland and Austria capable of making a difference, and how should the 20 million new “green jobs” forecast for the EU by 2020 be shaped to favour youthful entrants? Are there policies that might reduce labour market pressures that discriminate against younger and less experienced workers? Which elements of “Social Europe” protect the interests of youthful job-seekers and should be retained, and which have the opposite effect by favouring older generations? What sort of in-depth re-think of social policy throughout Europe is needed to encourage young people to become productive and find jobs?

Mariana Câmpeanu  
Romanian Minister for Labour, Family and Social Protection

Ruairí Quinn  
Irish Minister for Education and Skills

Carmen Costea  
Vice Rector of International Relations at University Spiru Haret, Bucharest

Péter "HP" Halácsy  
Co-founder and Chief Technology Officer of Prezi

Stefano Scarpetta  
Deputy Director for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

Co-moderated by Giles Merritt, Secretary General of Friends of Europe, and Karen Coleman, Broadcast Journalist and Columnist for the Irish Independent

13.00  End of summit
ANNEX II – List of Participants

Kimberly Adams, Managing Director, Flying Bridges
Diyah Ramadani Agustini, Third Secretary for Economic Affairs, Mission of Indonesia to the EU
Robert Anderson, Head of Unit, Living Conditions and Quality of Life, European Foundation for the Improvement of Working and Living Conditions (Eurofound)
Ivan Antonijevic, Counselor, Mission of Serbia to the EU
Nicole Baromska-Glab, Assistant, European Commission: Legal Service
Sue Basu, EU Public Affairs Manager, Huawei Technologies
Amaia Beloki, EU Policy Advisor, Delegation of the Basque Country to the EU
Joachim Berney, Education Attaché, Mission of Switzerland to the EU
Vivita Berzina, Counsellor for Employment and Social Affairs, Permanent Representation of Latvia to the EU
Lucyna Białk-Cieslak, Headmaster, Poznan Lifetime Learning Center
Stanislava Bouman, Programme Coordinator "Learn Serbian", Serbian Institute for Public Diplomacy
Kalina Bozhkova, EU Public Affairs & Corporate Citizenship Coordinator, Microsoft
Miriam Brewka, Officer, Neighbourhood Coordination Unit, European External Action Service (EEAS)
Marita Brömmelmeier, Director, Division for Economic Development and Employment, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
Monika Caban-Benavides, Communications Assistant, European Commission: Directorate General for Regional Policy
Geert Cami, Co-Founder & Director, Friends of Europe Les Amis de l’Europe
Mariana Câmpeneanu, Minister, Ministry of Labour, Families and Social Protection, Romania
Eduarda Castel-Branco, Senior Special Human Resource Policy and Country Manager, European Training Foundation (ETF)

Karen Coleman, Broadcast Journalist, Columnist for the Irish Independent and Founder, Planet Podium
Cliff Collins, Programmes Director, European Health and Fitness Association (EHFA)
Cristian Cosmin, State Secretary, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Romania
Carmen Costea, Vice Rector of International Relations, Spiru Haret University Faculty of International Relations
Andras Czeti, Counsellor, Permanent Representation of Hungary to the EU
Laurence Damazie-Edmond, Senior Communications Manager, Electricité de France (EDF)
Atu Darko, Director EU Affairs, Flying Bridges
Steriani Stella David, Attaché, Youth and Sport, Permanent Representation of Greece to the EU
Saskia De Groof, Coordinator, P&V Foundation
Mirjam Dondi, Counsellor, Head of Unit, Permanent Representation of Austria to the EU
Rashko Dorosiev, Project Director, Political Research, Centre for Liberal Strategies
Stanislav Drapal, Head of Unit, Internal Audit, European Commission: Joint Research Centre
Anton Eckersley, Director, International Relations, Ingeus
Manuela Epure, Vice Rector of Scientific Research, Spiru Haret University Faculty of International Relations
Claire Fernandez, Policy Officer, European Network Against Racism (ENAR)
Ovidiu Folcut, Rector, Romanian-American University
Martin Forrest, Global Business Researcher, Ingeus
Melissa Frödin, Information Officer, Central Sweden European Office
Nathalie Furrer, Director, Friends of Europe Les Amis de l’Europe
Janusz Galeziak, Minister Counsellor, Europa 2020, Employment Strategy, European Social Model, Permanent Representation of Poland to the EU
Miguel Gallardo, Project Director, European Students’ Forum (AEGEE)
Leticia Gambini, Director External Relations and Funding, World Organization of the Scout Movement
Chiara Garaiazzo, Director, Youth and Sport, European Commission: Directorate General for Education and Culture
Marianna Georgallis, Policy Officer, European Youth Forum (YFJ)
Andrea Gerosa, Chief Thinker, Founder and Member of the Board, ThinkYoung
Anna-Maria Giannopoulou, Policy Co-ordinator, European Commission
Andres Ginestet, Founder, Complexity Balanced World United-Institute (COBAWU-Institute)
Jovana Gojkovic, Assistant, Serbian Institute for Public Diplomacy
Vicky Grobler, Youth Leader, Center for Creative Leadership (CCL)
Justyna Grzes, Researcher, Plastics Europe
Jenny Gulliford, Research Assistant, The Work Foundation
Elena Gurrea, Policy Officer, Fundacion Comunidad Valenciana Región Europea
Péter "HP" Halácsy, Co-founder and Chief Technology Officer, Prezi
Moritz Haller, Policy Coordinator, European Commission Joint Research Centre
Joop Hazenberg, Founder & Director, The Next Generation For Europe (NGE)
Franziska Hilger, Policy Advisor, Siemens EU Affairs Office
Jacqueline Hogue, Project Manager, Friends of Europe Les Amis de l’Europe
Gabrielle Hubler, Events Organizer, Information and Communications, European Foundation for the Improvement of Working and Living Conditions (Eurofound)
Hester Jansen, Journalist, Science Guide
Maren Jaschke, Junior Programme Manager, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
Marcin Kepara, Vice Principal, Poznan Lifetime Learning Center
Mariana Klavina, Mentor, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) EU Office
Julia Kofler, External Relations Manager, British Council
Aris Kokkinos, Journalist, eurobole.com
Kee Kras, Security and Cargo Assistant, Association of European Airlines (AEA)
Ulrike Kunert, Senior Policy Officer, Representation of the Region of Lower Saxony to the EU
Olivier Küttel, Head of European Public Affairs, École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne EPFL PRES
Sylvie Laffarge, Director Community Affairs, Europe, Microsoft
Anton Lager, Head of Unit, Centre for Epidemiology and Community Medicine, Stockholm County Council
Rauno Lämsä, Budget Counsellor, Ministry of Finance, Finland
Jianmin Li, Minister Counsellor, Education and Culture, Mission of the People’s Republic of China to the EU
Thierry Libert, Assistant Policy Officer, Science Advice to Policy, European Commission: Joint Research Centre
Ramona Lile, Rector, Aurel Vlaicu University
Karin Lopatta-Loibl, Policy Officer, Youth, European Commission: Directorate General for Education and Culture
Frederic López Palau, Director, Institutional Relations Office in the Cabinet of the Vice President, Government of Catalonia
Andrei Luchici, Employment Attaché, Permanent Representation of Romania to the EU
Robertas Lukasevicius, Deputy Attaché for Social Security and Labour, Permanent Representation of Lithuania to the EU
Ramona Nicole Manescu, Member, European Parliament: Youth Issues Intergroup
Laura Mark, Project Assistant, Generation Europe Foundation
Måns Mårtensson, Media Manager, European Foundation for the Improvement of Working and Living Conditions (Eurofound)
Danièle Rod, Counsellor, Policy on Science, Research, Technology, Education and Training, Mission of Switzerland to the EU

Hugo Rousseau, Chargé de Mission, Délégation Générale de la Région Rhône-Alpes

Ronnie Ryan, Personal Secretary, Department of Education and Skills, Ireland

Haroon Saad, Director, Luden

Bernd Sandbrink, Senior Consultant, Platte Consult European Public Affairs Consulting

Stefano Scarpetta, Deputy Director, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs

Peter D. Schellinck, Secretary General, European Organisation for Technical Approvals (EOTA)

Cristina Mihaela Semanaru, Assistant to Ramona Nicole Manescu MEP, European Parliament

Ana Maria Serban, General Secretary, European Development (EDP)

Gabriela Sierck, Director, Bundestag, Germany Liaison office at the European Union

Andrée Sonck, Director, Euroclear

Ana-Maria Stan, Policy Officer, Vocational Education and Training, European Commission: Directorate General for Education and Culture

Pawel Stelmaszyk, Head of Unit, Logistics, Co-modality, Motorways of the Sea & Marco Polo, European Commission Directorate General for Mobility and Transport

Katrin Sturm, Advisor, Confederation of German Employers’ Organisations (BDA)

Ruairi Talbot, Press Officer Coreper I, Permanent Representation of Ireland to the EU

Daina Toleikyte, President, Salus Publica Foundation

Gábor Török, Lead Engineer, Prezi

Dimitris Tsigos, President, European Confederation of Young Entrepreneurs (YES)

Sandrine Tunezenwe, Language Strategy Project Manager, Center for Creative Leadership (CCL)

Wout Van Calmere, Member of the Staff, International Affairs, De Ambassade

Isabelle van de Gejuchte, Senior Programme Manager External Relations and European Affairs, British Council

Melle van Dijk, Assistant to Marietje Schaeke MEP, European Parliament

Frank Vandenbroucke, Professor, University of Leuven, Friends of Europe Trustee

Patrick Vangoedsenhoven, Brand Sales, IBM Belgium

Marta Varela, Government Affairs Communications Manager, Dow

Androulla Vassiliou, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism & Youth, European Commission

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Tatiana Wan, IT Coordinator, Center for Creative Leadership (CCL)

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