

PRESS RELEASE



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Press Contact: Letizia Gambini, Tel. +32 2 286 94 17, press@youthforum.org

European Economic Recovery Plan: what about investing on youth?

The European Youth Forum (YFJ) expects the European Council to upgrade the European Economic Recovery Plan proposed by the European Commission, by including strong investment in young people's education, training, mobility, access to the labour market and in their autonomy.

The current period of economic recession poses serious challenges to all, and the YFJ greatly welcomes the Commission's initiative to propose a coordinated investment in the European economy. The Communication on the Recovery Plan duly recognised the importance of ensuring solidarity and social justice, and underlined the importance of investing in skills. The YFJ shares the Commission's view that the main priority must be to protect Europe's citizens from the worst effects of the financial crisis, and supports the idea of a major European employment support initiative, re-focusing European Social Fund expenditure.

The employment measures included in the European Economic Recovery Plan can provide a strong answer to the foreseen job losses for many European employees. The measures seem, however, mainly 'reactive', focusing on shielding employees from redundancies. While rightfully putting a focus on combating unemployment, the document fails to address the specific needs of young people, especially those who have yet to enter the labour market. The document does not address the importance of quality training and the need to foster entrepreneurship as a genuine incentive to encourage initial entry into the labour market; similarly, the successful transition of young people from education to stable employment is not given due attention. In this sense, the YFJ believes that increased support for, and recognition of non-formal education could contribute effectively to integrating into the labour force, the new skills necessary to drive the 'knowledge economy'.

"The EU should not run the risk of a 'lost generation', marked by the current crisis," asserts Bettina Schwarzmayr, President of the *European Youth Forum (YFJ)*. "Young people tend to be amongst those who, in such an economic downturn, are more at risk of losing their jobs due to precarious working conditions. In the face of a recession and an economy that is shedding jobs, it is of paramount importance to tackle the specific needs of young people, as one of the vulnerable groups threatened by the financial and economic crisis." Europe needs to invest in its younger generations to ensure their inclusion in society and full autonomy.

"Urgent action should be taken in order to avoid negative consequences," adds Schwarzmayr. "The YFJ expects the European Council to agree on an enhanced European Economic Recovery Plan that will include a corresponding youth investment strategy, by making young people a key target group of the recovery measures under discussion - thereby using the full potential of the young as actors in the economic recovery process."

The [European Youth Forum \(YFJ\)](http://www.youthforum.org) is a platform made up of 99 National Youth Councils and international youth NGOs from across Europe, that promotes the interests of young people towards the European Union, the Council of Europe and the United Nations. For more information, visit www.youthforum.org