

## YOUTH EMPLOYMENT MEASURES – SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRAINING POLICIES

The sharp rise in youth unemployment is one of the most alarming indicators generated by the financial crisis in the rich world. Countries in which youth unemployment was already high, like Spain, have fared the worst. Figure 1 shows that, as a result of the strong deterioration in their labour market situation, the unemployment rate among young people now exceeds 30 percent in Croatia, Slovakia, Lithuania, Latvia and Greece, with this figure exceeding 40 % in Spain.

The European Commission's initiative 'Youth on the move' proposes a policy framework for reducing youth unemployment and improving youth job prospects. In this framework, policies that help young people find a first job and start their career take top priority. Such measures have proven to be very efficient in decreasing youth unemployment. Finding a first job increases young people's chances of staying in the labour force, and decreases the average time span a person is unemployed later in life. Other policies in the 'Youth on the move' framework include support for youth at risk, the provision of adequate social safety nets for young people, and support for young entrepreneurs and self-employment.

The European Commission compiled all school education and training measures in place in European countries in 2010 to assess their effectiveness. Table 1 describes these existing youth employment policies and measures covered by the European Employment Observatory Review. The most common measures are those to prevent early school leaving and to link education with work experience, particularly apprenticeships (e.g., through catch-up classes, second-chance schools, training schemes to bridge the gap between school education and the labour market and special training programs for the young unemployed). Broader initiatives include overall reforms to the school and vocational training systems. A few countries focus on specific sectors, on specific subjects (e.g. the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects). In over a third of the countries there is a system for the recognition of non-formal learning in place (or such

a system is being developed) which, although it is often seen as a tool to support adult learners, increasingly offers opportunities for young people to acquire professional certificates recognizing their skills.

Countries that are most affected by the spike of youth unemployment in particular have reacted by creating school education and training measures to tackle the problem. However, many of these programmes were introduced after 2008 or are still under construction.

School education and training policies and measures are only one pillar of the battle against youth unemployment. However, if one succeeds in helping young people to find (and keep) first jobs, this takes a significant burden off other labour market and employment-related policies, as well as the benefit systems.

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### Reference

European Commission (2011), European Employment Observatory Review: Youth Employment Measures, 2010,

Figure 1

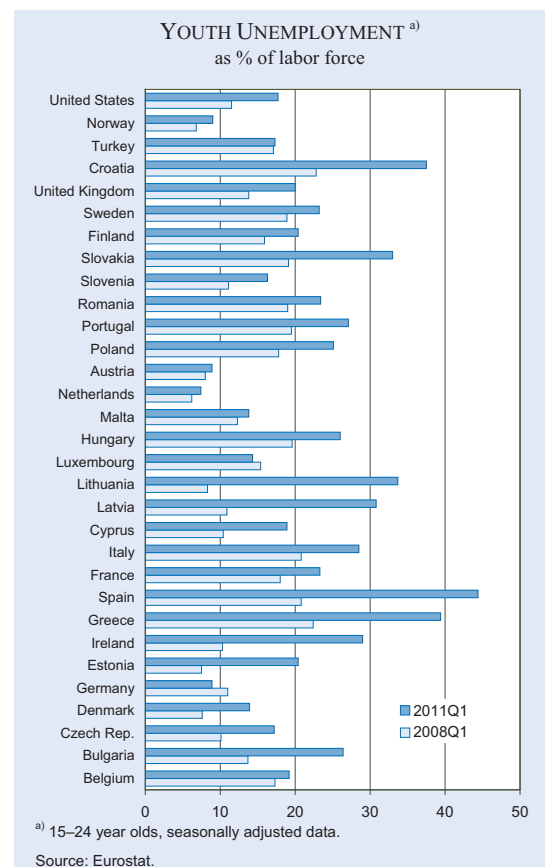


Table 1

## School education and training policies

Country	Policies in place in 2010
Austria	Government programme to help the transition from education to work; vocational training guaranteed for all young people up until the age of 18
Belgium	Policies to improve the image of, and attract more pupils into, technical and professional studies; increase in the number of vocational training places and creation of new vocational training programmes
Bulgaria	School social assistance programmes (traditionally including the provision of breakfast for children in primary grades), free textbooks and other benefits in kind for poor families; provision of access to loans for students
Croatia	Agency for vocational education ensures that approximately 50 % of all professional training courses of teachers are implemented directly in relevant companies
Denmark	Special measures to support apprenticeships and unemployed apprentices
Estonia	'Action plan for growth and jobs 2008–11', focus on educational measures to support young people in continuing their studies, measures include language teaching to non-nationals already in pre-school education, developing counselling systems and introducing customised measures for children with special needs; the new Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act places more attention on increasing the number of vocational training places and creating new vocational leavers; development plan for the vocational education and training system 2009–13 aims to tighten links between vocational training and labour market
Finland	Training programmes; guidance measures for early school; guidelines by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy emphasise early intervention, the local employment agency must produce in collaboration with the young job-seeker
France	'Hope for suburbs' plan: 200 schools are piloting an academic success programme that involves intensive training and individual support for pupils; second-chance schools which emphasise practical skills and work experience lagging behind; 'Acting for youth' plan, includes a 'right to prepare for working life' and extends compulsory education from 16 to 18 years of age special measures to support apprenticeships and unemployed apprentices, specifically in 2009 'Emergency plan for youth employment'
Germany	Creation of extensive system for 'vocational preparation' which provides an entry level; 'Perspective for vocational qualification' programme; 'Jobstarter connect' programme; apprenticeship bonus is paid to 'employers who offer training to young people; Federal governments 'National pact for training and junior skilled workers' to ensure the supply of skilled workers; Federal governments qualification initiative 'Promotion through education' to increase the educational opportunities on offer
Greece	Free teaching support classes in all primary and secondary schools in various subjects; 'One start — One opportunity' programme targets young persons who dropped out of school or completed only secondary education and who have never worked or taken part in some form of training; special training programmes for tourism, ICT and construction
Hungary	Programme to create a network of regionally integrated vocational education centres (RIVEC) was launched; introduction of early vocational education
Ireland	National Training and Employment Authority (FÁS) traineeship programmes combine working towards an industry-recognised certificate or qualification with on-the-job training with a specific employer; special measures to support apprenticeships and unemployed apprentices, specifically short-term measures to support apprenticeships in an annual 11-week certified training programme
Italy	Special measures to support apprenticeships and unemployed apprentices
Latvia	Stricter controls on primary and secondary education programmes in 2008; increasing the number of vocational training places and creating new vocational training programmes; additional funding to increase the recognition and quality of vocational education and training (VET) qualifications and institutions; raising the skills of teachers in the sector and changing teaching approaches towards the flexible skills demanded by the labour market; major policy push to shift focus of the education system from humanities to natural sciences, mathematics and engineering
Lithuania	Raising the skills of teachers in the sector and changing teaching approaches towards the flexible skills demanded by the labour market
Luxembourg	Special measures to support apprenticeships and unemployed apprentices; VET reform of 118 tailor-made training schemes allowing students to obtain three types of competence-based diplomas: certificate of professional competence, professional qualification diploma, technician diploma
Malta	Employment and Training Corporation, offers a variety of schemes to facilitate the school-to-work transition of young people such as the 'Job experience scheme'; Local labour offices provide internships of up to 12 months to young unemployed persons with 120 % of unemployment benefit during the internship
Poland	'Commissioned education' programme within the 'Human capital operational' programme aims to increase the number of graduates of specialisations that are key for a knowledge-based economy

(Table continued)

Country	Policies in place in 2010
Portugal	Increase in the number of vocational training places and creating new vocational training programmes; increase the recognition and quality of vocational education and training (VET) qualifications and institutions school systems reforms; increasing the number of vocational training places and creating new vocational training programmes
Romania	The number of years of compulsory education was increased from 8 years at the beginning of Dec. to 11 beginning of the december to 11
Slovenia	Training programme Absolvent - aktiviraj in Zaposli for people yet to graduate
Spain	Local police contribute to preventing early school leaving; increasing the number of vocational training places and creating new vocational training programmes; supporting the transition from school to apprenticeship training through entry-level vocational preparation programmes; programmes that facilitate the entry of early school leavers into the labour market; the 'School workshop and crafts training' programme offers training for the young unemployed followed by a work placement stage
Sweden	Special measures to support apprenticeships and unemployed apprentices; job guarantee scheme for unemployed young people who have been registered with the Public Employment Service continuously for three months.
United Kingdom	special measures to support apprenticeships and unemployed apprentices, specifically the development of the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS); the 'September guarantee', whereby all 16 and 17 year-olds must be offered an appropriate education or training route with support where needed; The 'Young person's guarantee', which requires all those reaching 10 months of unemployment to take up an option from: work placement, community task force, routes into work, or care first careers or work-focused training
Iceland	Guidance measures for early school leavers; the Directorate of Labour, in cooperation with the Federation of Icelandic Industries, universities and IT firms aims at increasing the number of individuals with tertiary education in technology and sciences
Macedonia	Free textbooks for all pupils in primary and secondary schools; the 'Computer for every pupil (with Internet access)' project was implemented in primary and secondary education; VET centre was established in 2006, with large reforms being planned; special training programmes on certain professions and skills currently required by the labour market
Norway	special measures to support apprenticeships and unemployed apprentices; The Ministry of Education and Research launched the third action plan to strengthen the focus on mathematical and scientific studies; The youth guarantee states that all registered unemployed in the age group 16-20 shall be offered labour market measures after six months; 'Reform 1994' gives young people who have completed secondary compulsory education a legal right to three years' upper secondary education

Source: European Commission (2011).