

RECOMMENDATION 139/2014¹

Youth Unemployment and Employment Policies in the BSEC Region: The Need to Empower the Young Generation

1. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) expresses concern over the current youth unemployment crisis, which threatens to leave ‘a generation lost to work’. In countries around the world, persistently high youth unemployment threatens the futures of individuals, with negative repercussions on the economy and the fabric of societies. In 2013, the global unemployment rate among 15–24-year-olds was estimated at 12.6%, with 73,000,000 jobless young people.
2. The PABSEC notes that informal employment of young people is also on the rise, and the youth are finding it increasingly difficult to find jobs that match their skills and education. Barriers related to weak economies, discrimination, and inequality of opportunities hamper their development and their productive participation in the workforce.
3. Since its establishment, the PABSEC has prioritized social issues. Employment has been a key issue discussed in numerous Reports and Recommendations adopted by the Assembly, such as:
 - Recommendation 14/1996 on *Social Guarantees during the Transition Period*;
 - Recommendation 21/1997 on *Rights and Social Protection of Refugees and Displaced Persons*;

¹ *Rapporteur*: Mr. Ioan VULPESCU, Chairman of the Committee – Romania

Assembly debate on 14 May 2014 (see Doc.: GA43/CC42/REP/14, Report of the Cultural, Educational, and Social Affairs Committee on *Youth Unemployment and Employment Policies in the BSEC Region: The Need to Empower the Young Generation*, discussed in Antalya on 9 April 2014; *Rapporteur*: Mr. David BERDZENISHVILI, Member of the Committee – Georgia).

Text adopted by the Forty-Third General Assembly in Athens on 14 May 2014.

- Recommendation 51/2001 on *The Legal Framework for the Protection of Migrant Workers in the Black Sea Countries and the Relations between Immigrant Communities and the Host Country*;
 - Recommendation 61/2002 on *Women's Participation in Political, Economic, Social, and Cultural Life*;
 - Recommendation 67/2002 on *Social Reintegration of Jobless People*;
 - Recommendation 74/2003 on *The Fight against Poverty*;
 - Recommendation 77/2004 on *Improving the Social, Economic, and Civil Rights of People with Disabilities*;
 - Recommendation 100/2007 on *Improvement of the Quality of Life in the BSEC Member States*;
 - Recommendation 103/2008 on *Social Cohesion within the BSEC Member States: Contribution to Political Stability*;
 - Recommendation 106/2008 on *The Impact of Globalization on the Social Policies in the BSEC Member States*;
 - Recommendation 109/2009 on *Migration in the BSEC Member States: Social and Cultural Aspects*;
 - Recommendation 130/2012 on *Social Welfare Reforms in the BSEC Member States*.
4. The PABSEC stresses that the youth employment crisis, considerably aggravated by the global economic and financial crisis, has had a major impact on the economies and societies of the BSEC region. Member States have sought to address the problem by taking measures to promote, create, and maintain decent and productive jobs. While much knowledge has been gained about mechanisms to overcome the challenges that young people face when entering the labor market, there are still several countries where ineffective macroeconomic and other financial policies have failed to meet the desired objective: enough jobs in general and jobs for the youth in particular.
 5. The PABSEC is aware that there is no easy solution to the problem of youth unemployment, and a collective approach is needed to address the systemic nature of the challenge, particularly at the national level. To this end, it underlines the need for measures to foster pro-employment growth and decent job creation through effective strategies that will address the social consequences of the youth employment crisis and also ensure economic stability. Such measures include effective macroeconomic policies, higher employability, better labor market policies, and support for youth entrepreneurship and rights.
 6. The PABSEC believes that regional variances in education and labor market outcomes for young people should be used as an opportunity for knowledge sharing about successful measures and programs that Member States have adopted to improve youth employability. In order to facilitate exchange of information and experience and promote regional cooperation, the Assembly stresses the need to develop comprehensive and integrated databases on the youth labor market, within the framework of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation.

7. **Therefore, the PABSEC recommends** that the parliaments and the governments of the BSEC Member States:

- i. *promote* pro-employment macroeconomic policies and fiscal incentives that support stronger aggregate demand and increase productive investment that improves the capacity for job creation and access to finance;
- ii. *create* a policy and regulatory framework that facilitates the transition from informal work or unemployment to formal employment and decent jobs;
- iii. *review* labor market policies and programs to ensure that they make a significant contribution to job creation for young people;
- iv. *facilitate* job creation by securing a better match between demand and supply of work through the development of efficient employment services;
- v. *promote* youth entrepreneurship by improving access to finance for the operation of sustainable youth enterprises — in particular, micro-, small, and medium-sized — including mechanisms such as subsidized credit, loan guarantees, and support for microcredit initiatives;
- vi. *ensure* that young people receive equal treatment and are afforded rights at work;
- vii. *eliminate* discriminatory barriers (such as age, sex) to entering the labor market, address different forms of precarious work, and, where relevant, analyze possibilities to reduce non-wage labor costs in order to boost recruitment prospects amongst young people;
- viii. *regulate* and monitor apprenticeship, internship, and other work experience schemes, including qualifying certification, to ensure that such schemes allow for a real learning experience instead of replacing regular workers;
- ix. *involve* youth policy stakeholders, young people, and other civil society organizations in the design and implementation of appropriate policies to address the youth unemployment crisis, as well as in the regular, systematic assessment of the future needs of the labor market and the requisite skills and competences;
- x. *develop* partnerships between public and private employment services, career guidance services, and other specialized youth services (NGOs, youth centers and associations) so as to enable a smooth transition from unemployment, inactivity, education or training into work;
- xi. *promote* high-quality work-based learning (apprenticeships, internships, and traineeships) as an effective measure to improve sustainable transitions from education and training to work, notably by fostering skills that are relevant to the labor market and improving skill matches;
- xii. *formulate* systems to recognize prior learning, non-formal education, and skills acquired on the job;
- xiii. *establish* mechanisms for early identification of potential school dropouts and provide them with support to continue their education or access other employment, education, or training opportunities;
- xiv. *encourage* and support high-quality guidance, including career information, information on rights at work, and counselling on employment and education prospects;

- xv. *provide* adequate income support to the unemployed youth until labor market conditions improve;
- xvi. *focus* on the most disadvantaged youth groups, such as the low-skilled young people or those from migrant backgrounds, who face the greatest risk of exclusion from the labor market;
- xvii. *reactivate* the BSEC Working Group on Exchange of Statistical Data in order to obtain comprehensive and comparable data on youth employment in the region;
- xviii. *promote* cooperation at the level of the Committees on Youth and Social Affairs of the National Parliaments by organizing joint meetings in the PABSEC framework.

8. **The PABSEC invites** the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs to consider this Recommendation.