

BOOSTING UNIONS' PARTICIPATION

TO GUARANTEE QUALITY TRANSITIONS AND EMPLOYMENT
TO YOUNG PEOPLE IN EUROPE

Final Report



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Prepared for the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)

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FOREWORD

Despite some slow economic improvement, the situation of young people in the labour market is far from optimal. The unemployment rate for young people between 15 and 24 is double that of the total workforce, having reached 16,8% in 2017. More concerning is the over-representation of young workers in precarious forms of employment. To name but one feature of the problem, in 2016 the rate of temporary contracts for young people amounted to 40.8% more than three times the percentage for workers of all ages.

The extent of the problem varies significantly between member states. However, in countries with very low youth unemployment rates young workers also face dire working conditions. For example, in The Netherlands, one of the EU countries with the lowest youth unemployment rates, young workers have to live with a wage which is below the legally established minimum wage for the total workforce.

Against the trend of deregulation and lack of investment in Youth policies, the European Trade Union Confederation and its Youth Committee has been supportive of the establishment of a Youth Guarantee since 2009. We welcomed the adoption of the Council recommendation in 2013, the endorsement of the financial capacity- €4 billion - of the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) in 2016 with the EC communication on Investing in Europe's youth, and the later agreement at the Council and the Parliament to increase the YEI by €4 billion until 2020. Also, the 4th principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights is a window of opportunity to guarantee that no youngster will be left behind in the labour market and in society.

That said, the ETUC has kept a critical approach throughout the first 5 years of implementation of the Youth Guarantee. Our affiliates at national level have reported low quality offers and insufficient financial means to meet the situation of NEET (not in education, employment or training) in their countries. Also, the involvement of social partners in the design, implementation and assessment of the Youth Guarantee schemes has not been followed as enshrined in the partnership principle of the Council recommendation. We believe that the stronger this partnership - also including civil society organisations in devising outreach strategies - the better the policies and therefore the prospects of young Europeans in the labour market.

This study presents some innovative elements in comparison with previous research in this regard. It is not only limited to the Youth Guarantee, but opens its scope to other European youth employment policies like the Quality Framework for Traineeships or the European Alliance for Apprenticeships. Also, it includes a set of best practices of trade union involvement in any of these schemes and a toolbox which aims at improving the performance of the ETUC affiliates in shaping up EU policies for getting young people into work.

Last but not least, this report is forward-looking, as it includes a series of recommendations towards the future of the Youth Guarantee and the other youth employment policies, addressed not only to the European institutions but also to national governments and social partners at all levels.

Thiébaut Weber

ETUC Confederal Secretary

Viktória Nagy

President of the ETUC – Youth Committee

INTRODUCTION

This Report has been prepared within the project 'Boosting unions' participation to guarantee quality transitions and employment to young people in Europe' carried out by the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC). The overall objective of this project is threefold:

1. To contribute to the improvement of the situation of young Europeans in the labour market.
2. To evaluate and to provide a trade union input to the implementation of European youth employment policies
3. To empower young trade unionists and make them more active in the industrial relations system, in particular via their youth structures.

This Report contributes to the above-mentioned objectives by paying particular attention to the following needs:

- Need for a pool of systematic knowledge on what is happening at European and national levels in implementation of EU youth employment policies, with a focus on trade union involvement.
- Provision of comparable cross-national information on existing practices of trade union involvement in EU youth employment policies.
- Creation of a practical toolbox (recommendations) on trade union involvement in youth employment policies. The practices should be relevant and transferable to various national and regional contexts as well as rely on evidence regarding their value and impact.
- Sharing of good practices, mutual learning.

The research answered these needs through the following tasks:

1. Assessment of trade union involvement in implementation of European youth employment measures at national level, focusing on a) youth employment policies in the framework of the European Semester, b) the Youth Guarantee (YG), c) The European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA), and d) the Quality Framework for Traineeships (QFT).
2. Identification of good practices on trade union involvement in the following measures:
 - a. Influencing the European Semester and Country Specific Recommendations;
 - b. Designing and implementing YG schemes together with employers at sector, company or municipality/ regional levels;
 - c. Monitoring and implementation of EAfA pledges at national, sectoral and company levels;
 - d. Implementing the QFT at national, sectoral and company levels.
3. Cross-comparison of good practices to derive a 'toolbox' for social partner involvement in the above-mentioned measures at European and national level.

The implementation of these tasks rested upon a methodological framework to gather, assess and analyse data:

- Extensive desk research on trade union involvement in European youth employment measures at national level was carried out. The findings were complemented by an online survey of national trade union officials responsible for youth policies. The survey helped to map the level of involvement in the above-mentioned EU policy activities, as well as identify good practice examples of such involvement. The survey was carried out during the period of June - September 2017 and gathered 21 complete and 33 partial responses from 26 European countries.
- Eight case examples comprising 15 good practice examples of trade union involvement in European youth employment measures at national level were developed. The case examples delved into the activities undertaken by trade unions to contribute to European youth employment policy implementation, the success factors and risks of becoming involved. The selection of cases offers a good coverage of different European regions with varying youth unemployment and trade union affiliation rates.
- The case examples were the main source of evidence for the toolbox designed to inspire national trade union representatives to take action towards becoming involved in implementing EU levels at national level.
- Thorough validation of the research findings was ensured via discussions with the Project Steering Committee during two meetings in Ljubljana (May 2017) and Paris (January 2018) and sustained coordination via email with the ETUC coordinator and the Steering Committee.

The structure of this report mirrors the threefold aim of the study and is structured as follows:

- Chapter 1 presents an analysis of the implementation of EU youth employment initiatives. The sub-chapters cover the need for EU policy and trade union intervention to fight youth unemployment, as well as an overview of the EU youth employment measures (EU Youth Employment Package in particular), their history, issues tackled, and main results and outcomes. The second part of the chapter elaborates on the types of trade union involvement in the aforementioned policies.
- Chapter 2 presents a systematic overview of the good practices of trade union involvement in youth employment policies. Key activities are outlined and illustrated by concrete examples from the case examples.
- Chapter 3 presents the practical 'toolbox' for trade union involvement in youth employment policies. The toolbox covers the activities, level of implementation, success factors, and risks associated with undertaking the activities.

1.

IMPLEMENTATION OF EU YOUTH EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES AT NATIONAL LEVEL

1.1. THE NEED FOR INTERVENTION: ISSUES OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Key issues, which affect young Europeans on the labour market, range from slightly concerning to severely troubling¹. While high youth unemployment rates are the most visible issue in some EU Member States, there are also other, less noticeable but equally serious problems in this area.

- *High youth unemployment.* Following the aftermath of the economic crisis, youth unemployment rates have been exceptionally high: compared to average unemployment rates, in many countries youth unemployment rates remain more than two times higher. Furthermore, NEETs (not in education, employment or training) costs approximate € 153 billion per year, an equivalent to 1.2% of EU's total GDP². Even more disquieting is the impact of unemployment on young people's lives, as it may lead to long-term unemployment, which, in turn, negatively impacts career development, the ability to form and maintain social networks, and occupational satisfaction. One study suggests³ that long-term unemployment effects may be felt for another 20 years, i.e. a lifespan of a generation⁴.
- *Precarious working conditions.* *The Temporary Work on the rise*⁵ study shows that young Europeans are more likely to be employed in low-quality jobs. These kinds of jobs undermine a young person's right for social protection and health security. In these instances, young people are also frequently underpaid and deprived of high-quality professional development. Consequently, this leads to health problems and lower wellbeing⁶.
- *The brain drain effect.* Highly-educated, talented and ambitious individuals often choose to move to more economically advanced regions. This phenomenon is especially prominent amongst European youth. Migration from Eastern and Southern regions to the more prosperous Northern and Western regions has become a notable trend. This kind of migration further deepens the already existing economic divide and increases imbalances between the EU regions⁷. However, a recent study of the ETUC – Youth Committee suggests that low employability of young people is not due to basic skill shortages⁸.
- *Labour market mismatches.* A mismatch between the workers' skill supply and company skill demand can take many forms: skill shortages, skill gaps, or vertical or horizontal mismatches, where a worker's education or qualification is either too low or too high, or the type of education or skills are unsuitable for the job. An imbalance between supply and demand has a negative effect on the labour market, because it prevents economic growth and prosperity⁹.

1 Massimiliano Mascherini, Anna Ludwinek, Carlos Vacas and Anja Meierkord, Eurofound, and Michael Gebel, Mannheim University (2014). "Mapping youth transitions in Europe" Publications Office of the European Union, Eurofound, Available at: http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_publication/field_ef_document/ef1392en_0.pdf

2 Eurofound (2013). NEET. Available at: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/industrial-relations-dictionary/neet>

3 Bell, D.N.F., and Blanchflower, D.G., (2009) Youth Unemployment: Déjà Vu? University of Sterling

4 European Youth Forum, "Policy Paper on Youth Employment". Available at: http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2014/06/0166-13_PP_Employment_Final1.pdf

5 "Temporary work on the rise" of Benchmarking Working Europe 2018, ETUI. Available at: <https://www.etui.org/Publications2/Books/Benchmarking-Working-Europe-2018>

6 *ibid.*

7 Nedeljkovic, V. (2014). "Brain Drain in the European Union: Facts & Figures", Rethink Education Working Paper, No. 4, Bridging Europe. Available at: http://www.bridgingeurope.net/uploads/8/1/7/1/8171506/wp4_rethink_edu_braindrain_nedeljkovic.pdf

8 FIA. "Youth Friendliness Indicator - A critical assessment of the situation of young workers in European labour markets" (2018). ETUC - Youth Committee and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. Brussels. Available at: <https://www.etuc.org/en/publication/youth-friendliness-indicator-critical-assessment-situation-young-workers-european>

9 International Labour Organization (2014) "Skills mismatch in Europe: Statistics Brief", Geneva. Available at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---stat/documents/publication/wcms_315623.pdf

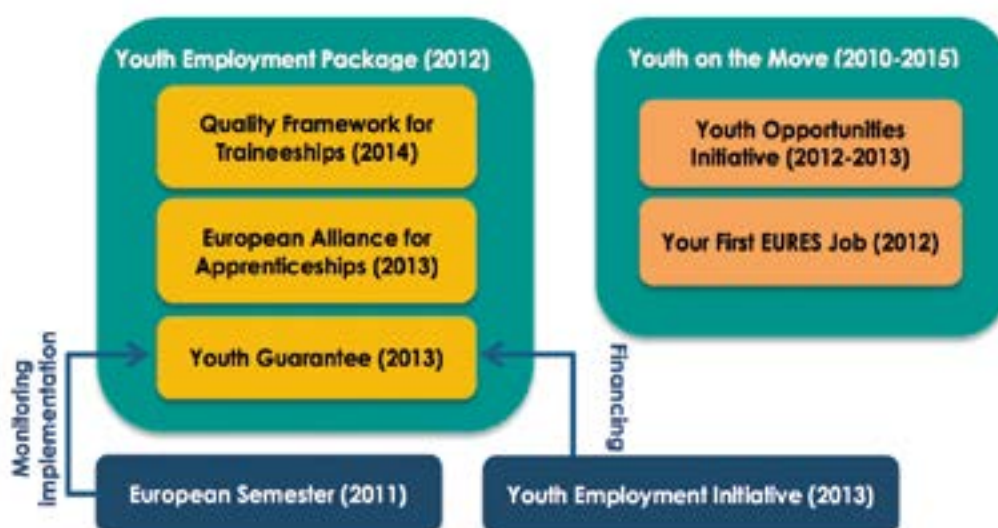
- *Poverty and social exclusion.* High youth unemployment rates have resulted in significant social and economic disengagement amongst the European youth. This is characterized by material deprivation, poor living conditions and growing social implications, such as crime, substance abuse and in some cases, civil unrest¹⁰. If left unresolved, this can have serious consequences for social cohesion. Poverty and social exclusion generate a vicious circle that increasingly marginalizes and leaves young people exceedingly vulnerable to various social risks¹¹.

1.2. AN OVERVIEW OF EU YOUTH EMPLOYMENT POLICY MEASURES

The European youth employment policies consist of a set of means, established at the European level, which comprise of several initiatives, policy packages and financing instruments (Figure 1). The main youth employment policies come under two policy packages, namely the flagship initiative “Youth on the Move”, enshrined in the EU 2020 strategy and its deployment into the **Youth Employment Package (YEP)**. This study is primarily concerned with the latter policy package. The European Semester is also relevant to this study insofar as reviewing youth employment policy measures, the Youth Guarantee in particular, is strongly embedded in this broader policy governance cycle.

The YEP contains three broad initiatives, which are mostly implemented at the national level through a further set of measures, specific to each country and to the initiatives in question. They propose a general direction of policy action, but do not provide any specified guidelines on how stakeholders ought to achieve this. All the initiatives, namely the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EaFA), The Quality Framework for Traineeships (QFT) and the Youth Guarantee (YG) provide a framework, which sketches out the most relevant aspects of youth employment, and which ought to be taken into account. All three measures are discussed in more detail in the section below (2.3).

Figure 1: European youth employment policy measures



Source: Visionary Analytics based on DG EMPL data.

10 European Youth Forum, “Policy Paper on Youth Employment”. Available at: http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2014/06/0166-13_PP_Employment_Final1.pdf
 11 Paolini G., “Youth Social Exclusion and Lessons from Youth Work”, Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency Report. Available at: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/tools/documents/social_exclusion_and_youth_work.pdf

All policy measures within the YEP strongly rest on principles of stakeholder partnership and cooperation:

- European social partners were consulted in 2012 about their interest to start negotiations on a European framework for traineeships. Whereas the ETUC answered positively to this call, the European employers' organisations refused, therefore assigning to the European Commission the task of putting forward such a regulatory framework. The proposal for a Quality Framework for Traineeships was presented by the European Commission in December 2013 and after some amendments by the European Council it was finally adopted in February 2014. The ETUC reacted negatively to the Council Recommendation alleging that it would not provide a solution to the precarious situation of certain trainees in the EU.
- The European Alliance for Apprenticeships is a platform based on voluntary stakeholder commitment. Social partner participation is therefore highly anticipated, because such organisations often have the capacity to promote apprenticeships via various means. In June, 2018, there were 37 pledges from 19 European countries, made by social partner organisations.
- The principle of effective cooperation between key stakeholders, including trade unions, is embedded in the general guidelines of national Youth Guarantee schemes.

1.3. AN OVERVIEW OF THE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PACKAGE

1.3.1. Brief history of each measure

The European Commission issued a proposal for establishing a **Youth Guarantee** in December 2012 under the Youth Employment Package (YEP). The proposal set out the principle elements of this initiative and highlighted components that were crucial for its success. Furthermore, it outlined specific support mechanisms for its implementation, including financial support from the European Social Fund. The European Council further agreed to create the Youth Employment Initiative, which provided an additional sum of €6.4 billion in order to support the implementation of the YG in the regions¹² where youth unemployment rate was higher than 25% in 2012¹³. Finally, the Youth Guarantee was established under the Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013.

The European Trade Union Confederation had been advocating for this kind of initiative since 2009. Furthermore, institutions, such as the European Parliament, The European Commission and the European Youth Forum, had been calling for measures to reduce youth unemployment throughout 2010 as well as 2011. Several countries, such as Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Austria, had already developed schemes similar to YG but these were singular cases and nothing systematic was being done throughout the EU Member States. Once the YG had been established, it received continuous support from social partners who played a more or less active role throughout the design, implementation and evaluation of the YG.

The **European Alliance for Apprenticeships** was launched by the European Social Partners, namely, ETUC, BUSINESSEUROPE, the European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (UEAPME) and the European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public Services and Services of general interest (CEEP), along with the European Commission and the Presidency of the Council of the EU under a joint declaration, signed in Leipzig on 2 July 2013. Trade Unions mostly participated in the implementation of the EAfA through pledges. Many of those organisations, which made their commitments, are members of the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) or ETUC and had received positive encour-

¹² The regional level is NUTS 2 according to the EU Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics

¹³ European Commission, Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, Youth Guarantee, 2018. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079&langId=en>

agements from them to participate. In addition, the ETUC has called for the establishment of a Quality Framework for Apprenticeships¹⁴. In 2016 the ETUC concluded a pan-European project which examined the latest developments in apprenticeship strategies at the national and European levels, gauged the contribution that EU education and training instruments make to supporting apprenticeship training and proposed a series of quality standards and quality criteria which would form the basis of a European Quality Framework for Apprenticeships¹⁵. The goal of this Framework is to establish common quality standards throughout the EU and by doing so, to contribute to the EAfA campaign¹⁶.

As a direct result of these efforts by the European Social Partners, the Commission proposed a Council Recommendation on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships in October 2017¹⁷, which was adopted by the Council in March 2018. The Recommendation outlines 14 criteria for quality and effective apprenticeships that ensure good learning and working conditions for apprentice, and transparent framework for all stakeholders involved in the apprenticeship cycle (recruitment, training and assessment, support, and completion and follow up).

In 2012, after adopting a communication 'Towards a job-rich recovery', the European Commission launched a public consultation on the **Quality Framework for Traineeships**, after the European employers' refusal to enter into negotiations with the ETUC on this topic. The aim of this consultation was to inquire whether there was a need for an EU-wide initiative on traineeships at the workplace, how far should it extend, which quality elements ought to be taken into account and what form should it take. The consultation took place between April and July of 2012. In 2013, the European Commission also published a report on the experience of traineeships in the EU which showed that whereas 7 out of 10 ex-trainees stated that their traineeship experience was useful in finding a regular job, there were also concerns about the quality of traineeships¹⁸.

The second consultation of the social partners at European level under Article 154 TFEU was launched in December 2012¹⁹. The European Commission inquired once again whether it should intervene in this field by establishing quality standards, and if yes, what should these standards be. This consultation could have resulted in the following outcomes: social partners could have entered into negotiations (lasting max. 9 months) and may have reached an autonomous agreement, or they could have asked the Commission to make a legislative proposal implementing their agreement. This consultation was unsuccessful because social partners could not agree on launching negotiations for a possible QFT agreement. The ETUC wanted to negotiate an agreement with social partners, while employer organisations (e.g. BUSINESSEUROPE) were not in favour of this agreement. Therefore, the Commission had to make its own legislative proposal²⁰. In December 2013, the Commission proposed a Council Recommendation on a Quality Framework for Traineeships²¹.

14 A European Quality Framework for Apprenticeships. A European Trade Union Proposal. ETUC, 2016. Available at: https://www.etuc.org/sites/www.etuc.org/files/publication/files/a_european_quality_framework_for_apprenticeships_en.final_corr_.pdf

15 BRIDGFORD, J. (2016). "A European Quality Framework for Apprenticeships - A trade union proposal". ETUC. Brussels.

16 European Alliance for Apprenticeships. European Commission, Employment Social Affairs & Inclusion, 2017. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1147&langId=en>

17 Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 1), Recommendation on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships, Adoption, 13161/17 - COM(2017) 563 final, 2 March 2018. Available at: <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6779-2018-INIT/en/pdf>

18 TNS Political & Social "The experience of traineeships in the EU" (2013). Flash Eurobarometer 378. European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. Brussels ..

19 European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Towards a Quality Framework on Traineeships, COM(2012) 728 final, 5.12.2012. Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:52012DC0728>

20 Position Paper: Quality Framework for Traineeships, BusinessEurope, 4 February, 2014. Available at: <https://www.buiness-europe.eu/sites/buseur/files/media/imported/2014-00163-E.pdf>

21 European Commission, Employment Social Affairs & Inclusion, Traineeships, Quality Framework for Traineeships, 2017. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1045&langId=en>

1.3.2. Issues tackled by each measure

The **Youth Guarantee** is a commitment by all Member States to ensure that anyone under the age of 25 receives an employment or an education offer within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. This initiative is primarily concerned with reducing unemployment amongst European youth mostly by providing a quality offer of training, employment or traineeships within 4 months since the young participant registered into the system. These schemes follow a tailor-made approach based on each individual's needs and capabilities. Consequently, all YG measures ought to ensure smooth labour market integration, benefiting both the employers and the young employees.

However, most importantly, the YG endorses a rights-based standpoint when it comes to youth policy, protecting the rights of young European citizens as an autonomous group and encouraging employers to respect those rights²². This is a basic step to achieving successful systematic inclusion of youth by acknowledging their worth and understanding their expectations for acceptable working conditions. The YG has been successful in putting the topic of youth unemployment on the political agenda and raising awareness of youth employment issues. This resulted in numerous reforms across Member States: a total of 132 labour market measures²³ targeting young people have been introduced in 2013-2015. In this respect, the YG has become one of the key policy-driving tools that retain an important role in youth policy making.

The **European Alliance for Apprenticeships** is a platform which brings together various stakeholders to strengthen the quality, supply and image of apprenticeships in Europe. Recently, the issue of apprentice mobility has also become a relevant domain. This initiative consists of two policy implementation activities, namely the implementation of national commitments, and the implementation of partner commitments through stakeholder pledges. The EAfA is adjacent to the YG, given that it operates by promoting on-the-job training activities within vocational education. This initiative covers three fields of action, namely (1) apprenticeship system reforms, (2) promotion of apprenticeship benefits, (3) smart use of training funds and resources. The Alliance basically enables stakeholders to share information on initiatives regarding apprenticeships at both national and European levels. As a result, it greatly increases stakeholder action visibility, and additionally, helps to promote training funding opportunities. Participation in the Alliance is voluntary and based on highlighting common goals and promoting partnerships between different types of stakeholders.

The **Quality Framework for Traineeships** provides a set of recommendations to member states on the following topics: the conclusion of a written traineeship agreement with reference to the learning and training objectives and the working conditions applicable (without specifying such conditions and objectives), the rights and obligations, the duration and the recognition of traineeships.. The QFT can be an effective measure to tackle traineeship regulation issues, given that currently less than half of EU Member States have set out clear instructions for trainee working conditions²⁴.

1.3.3. Main results and outcomes

So far, these youth employment policies have been relatively successful in reducing youth unemployment and improving labour market integration prospects for young people. However, in many instances, results are also affected by the state of the overall economy within a given region. To ensure that regional economies thrive, it remains paramount to invest in employee education and skills. In this respect, European youth employment policies could not only bring temporary gains but also have long-lasting effects, because they place a strong focus on education and training activities.

22 European Youth Forum (2012). A youth Guarantee for Europe. Towards a right-based approach to youth employment policy. Available at: http://www.projects.aegge.org/yue/files/youth_guarantee_for_europe_YFJ_2012.pdf

23 European Commission, Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, Youth Guarantee, 2018. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079&langId=en>

24 European Commission, Commission Staff Working Document: "The Youth Guarantee and Youth Employment Initiative three years on", 2016. Available at: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:73591c12-8afc-11e6-b955-01aa75e-d71a1.0001.02/DOC_2&format=PDF

Data collected throughout the EU on the implementation of national **Youth Guarantee** schemes is largely positive, but further evidence is needed to adequately assess their effectiveness. The best outcomes were the following²⁵:

- The YG has reached more than 3.5 million young people, who took up either employment or continued education offers.
- Close to half of YG participants remained in either employment or continued education six months after leaving these schemes, and these results were maintained throughout time (12 and 18 months after leaving).
- The average EU NEET rate went down from 13.2% in 2012 to 10.9% in 2017.
- The average youth unemployment rate went down from 24% in 2013 to 16.8% in 2017.
- The YG has contributed to helping Member States introduce youth policy reforms, which resulted in new partnerships between stakeholders, stronger links between employers and education institutions, business and community engagement, and expanded public employment services.

However, some stakeholders – like the European Court of Auditors²⁶, the ETUC, and the European Commission itself²⁷ – also report negative outcomes of the YG. For example, some companies tend to abuse this scheme and employ subsidized trainees, while letting go of their permanent staff. Similarly, many trainees end up working under low-quality contracts or precarious working conditions. It also remains unclear whether YG offers actually lead to employment, or whether they are simply temporary relief solutions.

The progress of the **European Alliance for Apprenticeships** measures were evaluated several times in studies commissioned by the European Commission²⁸. Overall, this initiative contributed to the following list of positive outcomes²⁹:

- A majority of pledge holders reported that they have been actively working on one of the three goals of the EAfA during the past year. Most stakeholders were said to feel ownership towards their targets and were willingly working on them.
- In several countries, number of apprentices has been steadily increasing.
- The EAfA has greatly facilitated stakeholder networking, learning and information exchange.
- The EAfA has helped to increase awareness regarding apprenticeships and, consequently, contributed to shaping the national policy agenda.

The **Quality Framework for Traineeships**, compared to other policies, shows a fairly modest level of progress. Out of 28 EU Member States, only eight have initiated legal changes in order to comply with this framework³⁰. However, while some Member States claim that already existing legislation sufficiently complies with QFT principles and renders the framework unnecessary, other Member States are encouraged by positive examples of its application and are planning to undertake legal action. For example, France has delivered three measures in the form of active labour market policy (ALMP) measures. Lithuania has introduced measures for both open-market and ALMP type of traineeships and Bulgaria has introduced a traineeship employment contract to its Labour Code in 2014. Other EU Member States are pushing for legal reforms that do not fall strictly in line with the QFT, but nonetheless touch upon some of its elements (e. g. social security provision for all employees, including trainees).

25 European Commission, Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, Youth Guarantee: latest data shows progress but more work is needed. 2018. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1079&newsId=9108&furtherNews=yes>

26 Alphametics. Data collection for monitoring of Youth Guarantee schemes: 2016. European Commission. Brussels, 2018.

27 Special report No 5/2017: Youth unemployment – have EU policies made a difference?. European Court of Auditors. Brussels, 2017.

28 Reports may be accessed on the European Commission Apprenticeship webpage: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1198&langId=en>

29 European Union, European Commission. *European Alliance for Apprenticeships – Assessment of progress and planning the future. Final Report*. ICF, May 2017. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8033&furtherPubs=yes>

30 European Commission, Commission Staff Working Document "Applying the Quality Framework for Traineeships", 2016. Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016SC0324&from=EN>

1.4. TRADE UNION INPUT IN THE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PACKAGE

Trade union involvement in youth employment policies is advantageous for several reasons. Most importantly, however, the underlying basis for all reasons to trade union involvement rests on wider inclusion and dialogue, both of which are contributing factors to social cohesion. The *Joint Declaration on the Involvement of the Social Partners in the Economic Governance* called for 'a high level of employment, the guarantee of adequate social protection <...>, and a high level of education'³¹, thereby establishing trade union participation not only as beneficial but as highly recommended. Trade unions are particularly strong and may contribute via the following aspects:

- *Facilitating entrances into the labour market.* Youth unemployment has become a major issue within many EU Member States, leading to other problems such as social inequality and economic instability. Young European citizens are in need of support to successfully break into the labour market. Trade unions can facilitate school-to-work transitions by providing valuable professional skills as well as the necessary market knowledge, thereby expanding employment opportunities. Effective support helps to empower youth and enables young adults to successfully integrate into the labour market³².
- *Enhancing sustainable economic development.* Trade unions occupy a distinct position when it comes to understanding the ongoing dynamics of the labour market. Being well aware of current trends and possible future transformations they can successfully guide the young generation towards secure occupations, whether by providing reliable professional advice and assistance or by encouraging innovation. In the long-run this can result in sustainable growth that further supports economic development and well-being³³.
- *Promoting social dialogue and stakeholder engagement.* Social dialogue is one of the key instruments in fostering successful reforms and strengthening democratic governance. By participating in youth employment policies, trade unions can play a significant role in strengthening the social dimension and contributing to the overall cohesion of the social fabric. By raising awareness of the sociocultural setting, trade unions can contribute to reducing social exclusion, granting social protection, increasing social mobility and benefiting individuals from less privileged backgrounds. This coincides with the social dimension of the *Europe2020* strategy which places social policy at its core.
- *Guaranteeing social protection and adequate working conditions.* Trade unions are well-placed to advocate for better working conditions and ensure that all affiliated employees receive social protection. These aspects are highly relevant for young people, who often find themselves in precarious jobs. Non-standard forms of employment, such as apprenticeships or traineeships also need to be taken into account, because these employees without a clearly defined status tend to be misused.

31 ETUC, BUSSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME, CEEP, "Social Partner Involvement in European Economic Governance: Declaration by the European Social Partners". Available at: http://www.ueapme.com/IMG/pdf/Joint_Declaration_on_the_Involvement_of_the_Social_Partners_in_the_Economic_Governance.pdf

32 Corral, C., Isusi, I.(2013). "Working Conditions of Young Entrants to the Labour Market", EurWORK. Available at:<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/comparative-information/working-conditions-of-young-entrants-to-the-labour-market>

33 Clough B., (2012). "The Role and Impact of Unions on Learning and Skills Policy and Practice: a Review of the Research", Research Paper 16, Unionlearn. Available at: <https://www.unionlearn.org.uk/sites/default/files/Research%20Paper%202016.pdf>

14.1. Typology of trade union involvement

Trade union involvement in EU youth employment policies can be broadly categorised under three types of activities (or lack of them):

- *Trade unions were involved in the framework of social dialogue (by invitation of the government or participated autonomously).* This means that trade unions were included as social partners together with the employers' associations. This category reflects the involvement of trade unions (at the initiative of the authorities or via other formal structures) as opposed to self-involvement of trade unions (see next bullet point).
- *Active self-involvement by trade unions.* This covers instances where trade unions stepped outside of their 'traditional' involvement channels and participated in policy initiatives through other means available. For example, some trade unions included the YG in their demands before it was implemented, or published statements, reports, etc. which were critical towards YG scheme developments in their respective countries. This category should reflect a high level of 'ownership' of EU policies by the trade unions.
- *No trade union involvement.*

This typology essentially helps to capture institutional differences which affect trade union participation in social policies within different countries. Some countries have deep traditions of social dialogue, whereas others do not. Active trade union self-involvement helps to identify ways for trade unions to get involved in countries where possibilities for formal social dialogue are scarce.

14.2. Youth Guarantee

Types of activities by policy stage (design, implementation, evaluation)

The results of the survey indicate that unions were extensively involved in the Youth Guarantee. The majority of trade unions were invited by the government to participate in all YG policy stages. More importantly, trade unions were both actively self-involved and involved by the government. Therefore, it is difficult to distinguish between activities enabled by invitation by the government to participate and activities undertaken as active trade union self-involvement. A tentative categorisation of activities by the type of involvement is presented in table 1 below.

Table 1: Types of activities undertaken by trade unions participating in the YG (by policy stage)

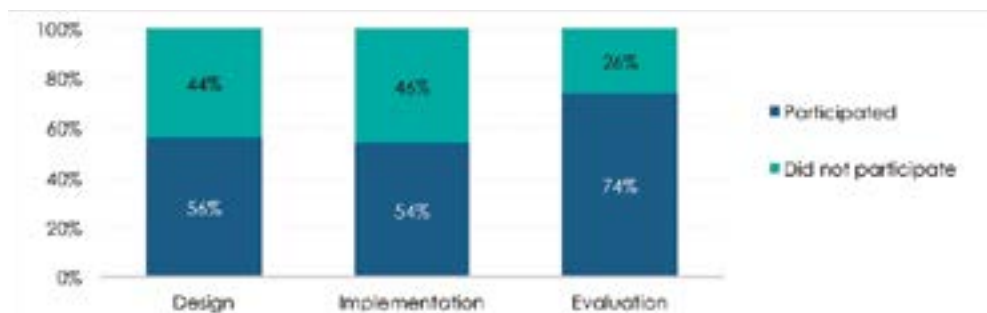
Design	<p>Involved by the government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation through stable tripartite bodies and/or working groups for YG • Participation through semi-formal working groups for YG (e.g. consultations with students, VET school representatives) • Participation through VET institution boards • Participation through ad-hoc consultations and hearings • Development of YG delivery scheme(s) at regional level • Development of YG delivery scheme(s) at sectoral level • Development of training curricula • Development of the system of identifying and reaching NEETs • Organising a round table discussion <p>Active self-involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation through stable tripartite bodies and/or working groups for YG • Participation through semi-formal working groups for YG (e.g. consultations with students, VET school representatives) • Development of training curricula • Development of the system of identifying and reaching NEETs
Implementation	<p>Involved by the government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation through stable tripartite bodies and/or working groups for YG • Participation through semi-formal working groups for YG (e.g. consultations with students, VET school representatives) • Creating networks / cooperating with other organisations • Requesting up-to-date information on the developments • Supervising implementation plans for YG • Identifying NEETs and provide them with integrated packages of services • Delivering training • Promoting social dialogue on topics related to tackling youth unemployment • Publishing press releases, position and opinion papers • Participating in studies (e.g. identifying relevant topics, providing information / knowledge) • Organising campaigns, undertaking lobbying activities • Providing/supporting training at company level <p>Active self-involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating networks / cooperating with other organisations • Publishing press releases, position and opinion papers • Participating in studies (e.g. identifying relevant topics, providing information / knowledge) • Organising campaigns, undertaking lobbying activities
Evaluation	<p>Involved by the government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in dedicated monitoring bodies • Consultations with state institutions/independent experts responsible for the evaluation • Conducting own independent evaluations • Publicly expressing opinions about the general success of implementation of the YG and the drawbacks of the implemented measures <p>Active self-involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in dedicated monitoring bodies • Consultations with state institutions/independent experts responsible for the evaluation • Conducting own independent evaluations • Publicly expressing opinions about the general success of implementation of the YG and the drawbacks of the implemented measures • Publishing press releases, position and opinion papers

Source: Visionary Analytics.

Participation statistics

Over half of trade union representatives who responded whether trade unions were involved in the design of the YG gave a positive answer. Similarly, around half of trade union representatives, who responded whether trade unions were involved in the implementation of the YG, said they were involved at this stage. Trade union participation in the evaluation stage of the YG was the largest by far (74%). Figure 2 shows trade union participation at these three stages of the YG measures in more detail.

Figure 2: Trade union participation in the Youth Guarantee measures by policy stage



Source: Survey on the trade union involvement of implementation of EU youth employment policies, Jun-Sept 2017 (N=39 (design), N=39 (implementation), N=39 (evaluation)).

The trade unions that were involved at the **design** phase of the YG mostly participated through *stable tripartite bodies and/or working groups* (36%). Some trade unions participated through *semi-formal working groups* for YG or *ad-hoc consultations and hearings* (11% each) and took part in the *development of the system of identifying and reaching NEETs* (16%).

During the **implementation** phase of the YG, trade unions were mostly active through *stable tripartite bodies and/or formal working groups for YG* (17%). Trade union representatives indicated a relatively wide range of other activities in more or less equal proportion. The most popular of those activities were participation through *semi-formal working groups for YG, publishing press releases, position and opinion papers, and requesting up-to-date information on the developments* (12% each). Some trade unions also took part in *supervising implementation plans for YG* (10%).

The trade unions that were involved at the **evaluation** stage mostly participated in *dedicated monitoring bodies* and *publicly expressed their opinions* about the general success of implementation of the YG and the drawbacks of the implemented measures (32% each). A fifth of trade unions also took part in *consultations* with state institutions/independent experts responsible for the evaluation, while a slightly smaller share of trade unions (15%) also conducted their own *independent evaluations*.

Satisfaction with involvement and support needed

Trade unions that participated in this measure were generally quite satisfied with their involvement in its three stages. Only trade union representatives who were involved in this measure answered this question. Half of trade union representatives said that they were satisfied in their involvement in the design and implementation phases and a third expressed their satisfaction in their involvement at the evaluation stage. Figure 3 below presents trade union satisfaction with their participation at the different policy stages in more detail.

Figure 3: Trade Union satisfaction with their participation at the different stages of Youth Guarantee



Source: Survey on the trade union involvement of implementation of EU youth employment policies, Jun-Sept 2017 (N= 18 (design), N=13 (implementation), N=22 (evaluation)).

A major reason that prevented trade unions from participating in all stages of the YG was said to be *lack of invitation from the government to participate*. Approximately half of trade union representatives identified this option in all policy stages (47% design, N=17³⁴, 46% implementation, N=18, 50% evaluation, N=10). There were some other reasons mentioned for lack of involvement at the design and implementation stages such as *lack of coordination between stakeholders* (16% design, 17% implementation), *lack of resources* (11% design, 8% implementation) or *lack of a YG scheme to participate* (11% design, 8% implementation) but these were relatively minor cases. Accordingly, most trade unions (77% design, 58% implementation, 64% evaluation) claimed that they need an invitation from the government to participate to get involved in the Youth Guarantee. Some trade unions said that an *invitation by the European Commission* to participate would be helpful (19% design, 17% implementation).

Trade unions that were somewhat satisfied or not satisfied with their involvement at the **design** phase of the YG, identified the following support measures that would have been helpful:

- Earlier invitation by the Government to participate in the design of the YG
- More hearings or meetings at this stage, making it easier to include more trade union concerns regarding YG measures
- Better organisational procedures at the national level on behalf of the government
- More social dialogue at the national level initiated by the government
- More substantial, less formal and better quality social dialogue at the national level
- More systematic rather than sporadic consultation with trade union representatives
- More social dialogue and engagement on a local level
- More influence on the priorities within the design of the YG measures
- More systematic support on a European level at the European Commission to design measures that support long term employment

34 „N” referring to the number of answers received at this regard.

Trade union representatives also indicated a number of support measures that would have been welcome during the **implementation** stage of the YG, namely:

- Better organisational procedures at the national level on behalf of the Government
- More social dialogue at the national level initiated by the Government
- More substantial and better quality social dialogue at the national level
- Better quality of YG measures, which ideally had to be decided through social dialogue during the design phase
- Continuous provision of updated information about ongoing progress of the YG measures either through a national committee or another institution
- Additional financial resources to deliver all necessary measures

Support measures necessary to improve participation at the **evaluation** stage of the YG were said to be the following:

- Stronger cooperation with the government at the YG monitoring body
- A less formal and more cooperative approach towards evaluation from government authorities
- More consultation meetings to discuss YG measures between government authorities and various stakeholder groups
- More quantitative and qualitative data on YG measures in order to accurately evaluate their effectiveness
- Better organisational procedures at the national level from the government
- Introduction of YG quality outcomes that opposes a standard rhetoric which advocates for any quality jobs rather than no jobs at all
- Timely response to trade union concerns and feedback, asking to improve YG measures
- Obligation of governments on a European level to introduce a uniform policy evaluation model throughout the country, which would include social dialogue

KEY MESSAGE

The information provided above clearly indicates that successful trade union participation in the design phase of the YG largely depends on formal social dialogue initiated by the government authorities. Given that most trade unions that were invited to participate were satisfied with their participation and most trade unions that did not participate expressed a wish to be invited by government authorities, trade unions seem to view social dialogue as an important prerequisite for participation. The design phase of the YG involves many stakeholders and state actors, hence autonomous activities by trade unions are difficult to undertake. Not surprisingly, more trade unions were involved at the evaluation stage of the YG, as participation at this stage did not depend on an invitation by the government to participate to such an extent. Furthermore, trade unions participating through government involvement are active in a wider range of activities than trade unions that were self-involved.

Trade union position on quality of measures and suggestions for modification

Out of 20 trade union representatives who answered this question, slightly more than half (55%) of trade union representatives indicated that trade unions were, on average, satisfied with YG measures, seeing them as good or very good. However, a third (35%) of trade union representatives indicated that their trade unions regarded the quality of YG measures as poor, and another 10% said that the quality was very poor. The following list of issues were said to be most salient problems with the YG measures (presented in accordance to the number of trade union representatives who selected the relevant option):

- The YG does not offer long-term solutions and work opportunities
- YG measures lack clearly defined learning objectives/outcomes for training (incl. traineeships, internships, apprenticeships, etc.)
- The age range for those eligible for the YG is too small
- There is too much emphasis on career guidance and too little attention given to employment opportunities
- YG only provides low quality internships
- Resources allocated to this scheme are insufficient
- Precarious working conditions (direct influence on lowering entry-level wages and working conditions of young workers, unpaid internships, employers use the scheme to find cheap workforce and replace regular workforce)
- Illegal working practices
- Very limited impact and no visible results on a national scale

The survey results closely resemble previously expressed feedback on YG measure quality. This feedback is presented in Box 1 below.

BOX 1: QUALITY OF THE MEASURE: YOUTH GUARANTEE

While trade unions are generally supportive of this measure, they were nonetheless dissatisfied with several of its aspects. The most significant shortcomings of the YG were said to be the following:

- The age range for those eligible for the YG was said to be too small. Many trade unions argued that the age range should include those between 25 and 29 years of age (this was achieved in some member states).
- The YG does not offer long-term solutions and work opportunities. The quality of the jobs offered should be improved.
- Too little focus is given to precarious working conditions.
- In some cases YG only provides low quality internships.
- Resources allocated to this scheme are insufficient.
- YG measures are based on already existing measures, most of which are already being implemented by the trade unions.
- The delivery of measures was significantly delayed.
- There was too much emphasis on career guidance and too little attention given to employment opportunities.
- Sometimes the elements prioritized by the government differed to those, emphasised by the TUs (e.g. focus on NEETs, school drop-outs, vocational learning).

Source: 3 Years of Youth Guarantee: What Next?, Annex: Country Focus, A Follow-up Report by the ETUC Youth Committee, 2016; Framework of Actions on Youth Employment, Second Follow-up Report, Social Dialogue Committee, 2015; The Youth Guarantee in Europe, ETUC, 2014.

Eight trade unions would like to see YG continue without major changes. The remaining 19 respondents proposed some desired changes to the YG (see table below). Only one out of 27 trade union representatives (from France) said that the YG should not be continued after 2020, as there will no longer be a substantial number of NEET's in need of this measure due at least in part on the success of the YG and its impact on youth unemployment levels.

BOX 2: SUGGESTIONS FOR MODIFICATIONS OF YG AFTER 2020

Systemic changes

- Advance the YG to an investment program rather than a short term job creations scheme (measures aimed at stimulating employment of young people instead of temporary training placement without employment status and rights)
- Reform the YG to mainly focus on creating new measures rather than supporting already existing programs
- Perform a thorough evaluation of the effects of YG which has not been possible yet due to lack of data
- More commitment from the government, both in terms of setting strategic goals for the national YG measures and in terms of committing more financial resources to their implementation
- More consultation with and involvement of TUs (especially in the evaluation of YG)
- Reducing the bureaucracy around YG measures (mixed sources of financing and a large number of entities involved produces a lot of red-tape)

Suggestions for better targeting

- Better targeting of measures towards long-term unemployed youth (as opposed to current situation where most of the money is spend on those most likely to find job)
- YG should target youngsters with a migration background
- Extend the age range for those eligible (suggestions varied between 29, 30 and 35 years)
- YG should also include atypical forms of education
- Promote an individualised approach to the services provided
- More focus on the quality of work/training offers
- YG should truly reflect the labour market needs
- National programmes to reduce school-leaving
- YG should promote technical skills and promote dual learning (apprenticeship) system

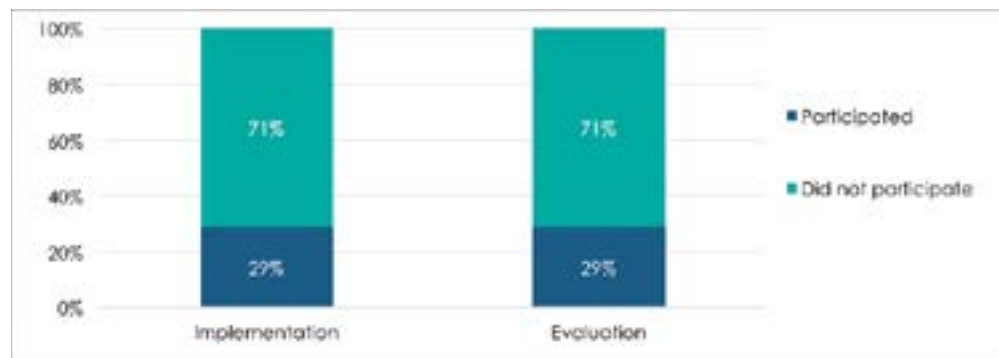
Source: Survey on the trade union involvement of implementation of EU youth employment policies, Jun-Sept 2017 (N=19).

1.4.3. European Alliance for Apprenticeships

Participation statistics

The results of the survey indicate that youth sections of trade unions were not extensively involved in the EAfA. Only about a third of trade union youth officers who responded whether trade unions were involved in the implementation or evaluation of the EAfA gave a positive answer (29% each). All youth sections of trade unions that participated in the implementation also participated in the evaluation phase of this policy measure. Most youth sections of trade unions (71%) did not participate in either policy stage of the EAfA.

Figure 4: Youth section of trade union participation in the EAfA measure by policy stage



Source: Survey on the trade union involvement of implementation of EU youth employment policies, Jun-Sept 2017, N=27 (implementation), N=27 (evaluation).

The youth sections of trade unions that were involved during the **implementation** phase of the EAfA, mostly participated as *partners of a pledge along with national authorities* (46%) or *were invited to be partners of a pledge along with other organisations* (23%). Very few youth sections of trade unions were invited to *lead a pledge* by national authorities or the European Commission (7% each).

The youth sections of trade unions that were involved at the **evaluation** stage were mostly *involved by providing feedback via interviews/surveys to the European Commission and/or independent evaluators* (29%) or, alternatively, by *actively involving themselves in the evaluation of the EAfA through independent evaluations* (29%). Some youth sections of trade unions indicated other means of involvement such as *participation in a national body responsible for conducting evaluations* or *cooperating with national ministries* (14% each).

Satisfaction with involvement and support needed

Despite the fact that very few youth sections of trade unions participated in the implementation and evaluation phases of EAfA, all youth sections of trade unions involved indicated that their participation was successful and they have reached the desired level of involvement.

A major reason that prevented youth sections of trade unions from participating at the implementation or evaluation stage of the EAfA was said to be a *lack of invitation to participate*. More than half of trade union representatives identified this option in the stages in question (60% implementation, 54% evaluation, N=19). Other reasons were said to be *lack of awareness of the existence of the EAfA* (12% implementation, 15% evaluation), *failure to see any significant impact of the EAfA* and *lack of coordination between stakeholders* (8% both for implementation and evaluation). Accordingly, half of trade union youth officers (50% both for implementation and evaluation) said that they *needed an invitation by national authorities to participate* in the EAfA, while approx. a third (30% both for implementation and evaluation) said they *needed an invitation by the European Commission to participate*. A small share of trade union youth officers (15% both for implementation and evaluation) also said that *an invitation by other organisations to participate* would be helpful.

Youth sections of the trade unions position on quality of measures and suggestions for modification

Out of 20 youth sections of trade unions that answered the question, approximately half (52%) of trade union youth officers indicated that trade unions were generally satisfied with the EAfA campaign, assessing its quality as good or very good. However, the remaining half (48%) indicated that the quality of this measure was poor (29%) or very poor (19%). The following list of issues were said to be most salient problems with the EAfA measure (listed from most to least frequently selected by trade union youth officers):

- Apprentices are paid less than the minimum legal wage and/or the rate for the job laid down in collective agreements
- Not all groups of young people benefit from apprenticeships: opportunities to gain access to some apprenticeship schemes are limited, some groups are under-represented on the basis of gender and race
- Apprenticeship is often viewed as a 'second-choice' educational pathway, with no access to other forms and levels of education and training
- Not all apprenticeship schemes are properly funded, and costs equitably shared between employers and public authorities
- Lack of a clear definition of apprenticeship and the related issues of unclear rights and obligations of apprentices, employers and training institutions
- Apprentices often provide a service equivalent to that of an employee but do not receive any remuneration
- Apprentices in some sectors are subject to high-risk working environments (e.g. construction)
- Lack of clearly defined learning objectives/outcomes for apprenticeships
- Lack of mobility opportunities for apprentices in Europe
- Illegal working practices (e.g. some apprentices receive remuneration, but they work without a formal contract and, consequently, have no social protection, or do not receive a recognised qualification)
- Very limited impact and no visible results on a national scale

The survey results closely resemble previously expressed feedback on EAfA quality. Aside from the quality issues which were identified in the survey, additional concerns are presented in Box 4 below.

BOX 3: QUALITY OF THE MEASURE: EUROPEAN ALLIANCE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS

ETUC strongly advocates the implementation of a wide-ranging European quality framework for apprenticeships and has set up a proposal for a European Quality Framework for Apprenticeships. The Framework aims to ensure high quality of apprenticeship schemes. The framework is deemed necessary as the following challenges and problems are visible among the EU Member States (in addition to challenges listed above):

- The necessity to include social partners to ensure a sufficient supply of places for apprentices and make sure that training programmes meet the needs of young people in the labour market
- There is evidence that in some cases young people are leaving formal schooling without basic skills (e.g. numeracy and literacy) which affect their ability to succeed in their apprenticeship
- Absence of systems of recognition of knowledge, skills and competence acquired by non-formal and informal learning

Source: ETUC (2016). A European Quality Framework for Apprenticeships. A European Trade Union Proposal. https://www.etuc.org/sites/www.etuc.org/files/publication/files/a_european_quality_framework_for_apprenticeships_en.final_corr_.pdf

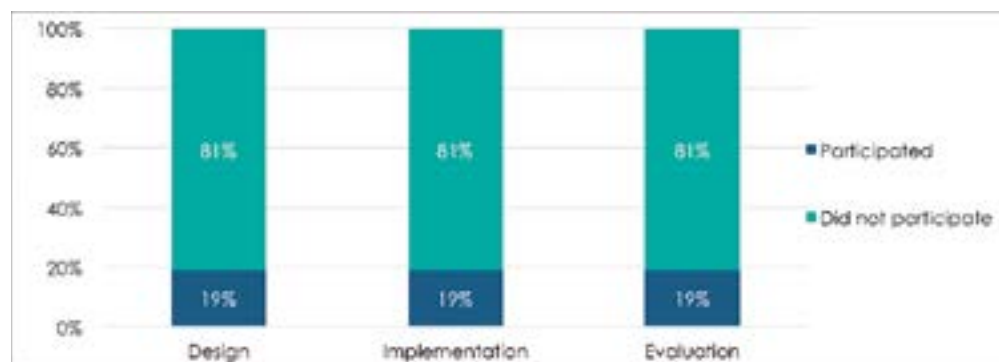
Slightly over half of all trade union youth officers indicated that they would like to see EAfA continue without major changes (14 youth sections of trade unions). The remaining share of youth officers that responded to the survey (11 youth sections of trade unions) said that they would like to see the EAfA modified and/or further developed (most importantly, youth sections of trade unions wish to be better informed about the EAfA). All 25 trade union youth officers who answered this question said that the EAfA should be continued after 2020.

1.4.4. Quality Framework for Traineeships

Participation statistics

The results of the survey indicate that very few unions were involved in the QFT. Only 19% of all trade union representatives who answered this question said that they participated in the design, implementation or evaluation of the QFT (this stands for 5 trade unions). All trade unions that participated in this policy measure were involved in all its three stages. Most trade unions (81%), however, did not participate in any activities related to the QFT. Figure 5 shows trade union participation at these three stages of the QFT measures in more detail.

Figure 5: Trade union participation in the QFT measure by policy stage



Source: Survey on the trade union involvement of implementation of EU youth employment policies, Jun-Sept 2017 (N=26 (design), N=26 (implementation), N=26 (evaluation)).

The trade unions that were involved at the **design** phase of the QFT, were either *invited by the Government/ European Commission to participate* or *actively pursued activities outside of 'traditional' ways of trade union involvement* (two trade unions each). Three trade unions participated in *negotiations among social partners for a possible design of the QFT* and one trade union reported participation in *public consultations between social partners and the European Commission*.

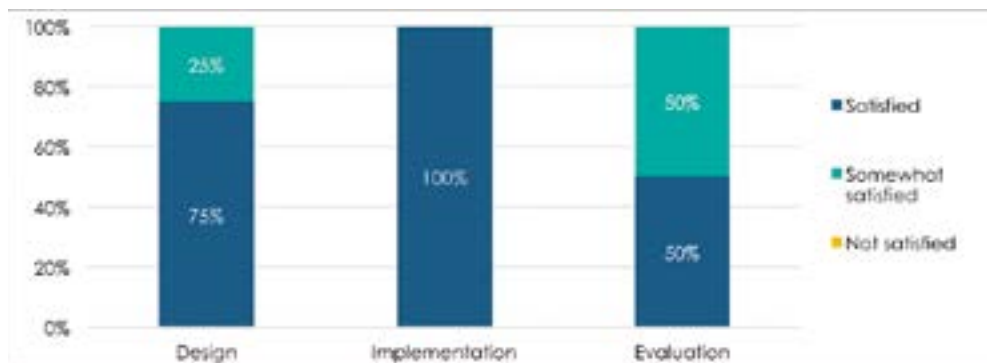
During the **implementation** phase of the QFT, trade unions were mostly involved through submitting *proposals to improve traineeship legislation*. Some trade unions also participated by *directly creating a quality framework for traineeships with national/regional/sectoral authorities* and by *publicizing the issues created by the low quality of traineeships*. Some trade unions also indicated that they were involved in *organising demonstrations/protests* as well as *using collective agreements to define traineeships in line with the QFT*.

The trade unions that were involved at the **evaluation** stage identified various activities such as participating in designing the traineeship skill framework, drafting reports on adopted policies or partaking in consultations with students and youth organisations. However some trade union representatives also said that while they intend to participate in the evaluation stage of the QFT, so far no activities have taken place.

Satisfaction with involvement and support needed

The trade unions that participated in this measure were generally quite satisfied with their involvement in the three different stages of the QFT. Only trade union representatives who were involved in this measure answered this question. Three trade union representatives said they were satisfied with their involvement in the design phase and all trade union representatives said they were satisfied with their involvement in the implementation of the QFT. Half of trade union representatives were satisfied with their involvement in the evaluation phase of the QFT, while another half mentioned that evaluations had not taken place yet.

Graph 1: Trade Union satisfaction with their participation at the different stages of QFT



Source: Survey on the trade union involvement of implementation of EU youth employment policies, Jun-Sept 2017 (N= 4 (design), N=4 (implementation), N=4 (evaluation)).

A major reason that prevented trade unions from participating in all QFT policy stages was said to be a *lack of invitation to participate by the Government*. Approx. half of trade union representatives identified this option in all policy stages (45% design, 46% implementation, 42% evaluation, N=20). Alternatively, some trade union representatives said that they were *not consulted/ invited to participate by the European Commission* (19% design, 14% implementation, 21% evaluation). Other issues, such as *lack of traineeship schemes* or *lack of awareness regarding the existence of QFT* were also mentioned (7% each in all phases). Trade union representatives from Germany, Latvia and Malta (10%) claimed that they *already had adequate traineeship regulations in their countries* and, as a result, did not participate in any phases of this policy measure. Accordingly, a large share of TU representatives said that they *needed an invitation by the national authorities to participate* (38% all phases), *an invitation by other organisations to participate* (20% all phases) or *an invitation by the European Commission to participate* (18% all phases).

Trade union position on quality of measures and suggestions for modification

Out of 20 trade union representatives, who answered this question, approximately half (52%) indicated that trade unions were generally satisfied with the QFT and described this measure as good. However, the other half (48%) indicated that the quality of this measure was poor (24%) or very poor (24%). The following list of issues were said to be most salient problems with the QFT measure (presented by a number of TU representatives who selected the relevant option):

- Insufficient guarantees or social protection
- Trainees often provide a service equivalent to that of an employee but do not receive any remuneration
- Traineeships do not lead to long-term job retention
- Lack of clearly defined learning objectives/outcomes for traineeships
- Precarious working conditions, such as lack of minimum wage, lack of holidays, working overtime without remuneration etc.
- Illegal working practices, such as companies asking the worker to give back some of the money received from the state
- No traineeship legislation
- The existing traineeship legislation is not sufficiently implemented
- Very limited impact and no visible results on a national scale

The survey results closely resemble previously expressed feedback on the QFT measure quality. This feedback is presented in Box 6 below.

BOX 4: QUALITY OF THE MEASURE: QUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR TRAINEESHIPS

A major drawback of the QFT is said to be the non-binding nature of this measure: the ETUC is known to have criticised the agreement reached in COREPER (the Committee of Permanent Representatives in charge of preparing the work of the Council) in February 2014 on the Commission document of 4 December 2013. Implementing the complete set of guidelines provided in the QFT is not mandatory, and therefore may further contribute to the poor quality of traineeships, seeing as traineeships are made legal without ensuring the rights of trainees. The following list of issues have been mentioned by the ETUC and the Youth Committee:

- More attention must be paid to the precarious working conditions of trainees
- Abusive practices whereby the trainees are subject to illegal working practices without sufficient guarantees or social protection
- Even if traineeship legislation exists, it is not always sufficiently implemented
- Trainees often provide a service equivalent to that of an employee but without any of the latter's benefits, and especially as they seldom receive any remuneration
- Trainees are used to replace regular employees
- Young people linger in traineeship positions for too long
- There is not enough evidence that traineeships lead to long-term job retention
- There is a lack of clearly defined learning objectives/outcomes for traineeships

Several trade unions have stressed that traineeships ought to be made a part of training curricula. Trainees ought to be remunerated and furthermore, receive a signed contract.

Source: Quality Framework for Traineeships, Social Consultation Replies, 2012; Commission Staff Working Document, Applying the Quality Framework for Traineeships, 2016.

Out of 24 trade union representatives who answered the question, more than half of all trade union representatives indicated that they would like to see QFT continue without major changes (62%). A third of all respondents (33%) said that they would like to see the QFT modified and/or further developed (see box below). Only 1 trade union representative (5%) indicated that the QFT should not be continued after 2020 because their trade union organisation believes that traineeships ought to be abolished altogether. Further implementation of the QFT at the national level with the help of social partners could help strengthen the weakest aspects of this policy.

BOX 5: SUGGESTIONS FOR MODIFICATIONS OF QFT AFTER 2020

- QFT must guarantee a minimum wage
- QFT must guarantee social security provision
- TUs need to be informed about the existence of the QFT
- More information about the QFT should be made available and its impact made more visible
- Illegal traineeship practices need better control
- QFT needs to be more openly discussed amongst social partners and other stakeholders

Source: Survey on the trade union involvement of implementation of EU youth employment policies, Jun-Sept 2017 (N=9).

1.5. TRADE UNION INPUT IN THE EUROPEAN SEMESTER

The European Semester is a set of complex procedures that eventually lead to national policymaking outcomes, especially the National Reform Programmes (NRP). Trade union involvement in economic and social policies is closely linked to their participation in the European Semester, because many of these policies are, in one way or another, deliberated throughout the European Semester process. Unsurprisingly, this also affects their participation in youth employment policies, given that they are directly linked to labour market and education policies. However, while trade union representatives often show strong support towards various means to enhance youth employment prospects, their involvement in the European Semester remains limited. The Council of the European Union has claimed that involving social partners in the European Semester remains a major political challenge³⁵. Trade unions have a restricted say in the Semester and, subsequently, are less included in youth policies.

The most recent survey data confirms this. On average, less than 50% of trade union organisations were fully satisfied with their involvement in any stage of the YG, while participation levels in other measures were below 30%. This correlates with trade union participation in the European Semester. Currently, only 25% of all trade union representatives who completed the survey, said that they had been involved in the European Semester. However, even those trade union organisations, which had been involved, were mostly involved to a limited extent, or did not address any labour market issues specific to youth. Table 2 below presents trade union respondent remarks in more detail.

35 Sanz P., Welz, C. R., Contreras, R. (2016). *Role of the Social Partners in the European Semester*, Publications Office of the European Union, Eurofound. Available at: <http://adapt.it/englishbulletin/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/ef1570en.pdf>

Table 2: Trade union remarks on participation in the European Semester	
Trade union organisation	Comment on participation in the European Semester
General Workers' Union (Malta)	This organisation put forward their proposals regarding labour market policies, which the current government had promised to address during the election campaign. It also took part in the National Council, where they issued a set of recommendations for the Ministry of Education and Employment.
Independent Self-governing Labour Union 'Solidarność' (Poland)	This organisation criticised the European Semester country-specific recommendations because the most recent report did not sufficiently address youth employment issues.
Danish Confederation of Trade Unions (Denmark)	This organisation was involved in the European Semester, but it had no specific comments on youth employment issues, because youth unemployment in Denmark is not a cause for concern.
Trade Union Confederation (United Kingdom)	This organisation was involved in the European Semester, where it demanded to raise the minimum wage to £10 per hour. Its representatives also emphasised the need to improve employment and educational opportunities for apprenticeship schemes.
General Union of Workers (Portugal)	This organisation emphasised the need to tackle youth unemployment, and especially drew attention towards providing support for eliminating precarious working conditions. It also expressed disappointment that objectives set out during the European Semester are centred on improving economic indicators while social issues remain largely unaddressed.
Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (Belgium)	This organisation's involvement was very limited. Its representatives had been consulted before and during the presentation of country-specific recommendations. Youth unemployment always figures extensively on this organisation's agenda, therefore during consultations, its representatives also emphasised pressing issues in this area.

Another 75% of respondents, who completed the survey, said they had not been involved in the European Semester at all. Such data clearly indicates that trade union involvement in the European Semester remains insufficient and, as a result, has a negative impact on the overall labour market policy implementation process.

An exceptionally good case of trade union participation in the European Semester was demonstrated by a Portuguese trade union, namely the General Union of Workers (UGT). This example is presented in more detail in Box 6 below.

BOX 6: GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE OF TRADE UNION INVOLVEMENT IN THE EUROPEAN SEMESTER

General Union of Workers (UGT, Portugal)

The UGT is regularly invited to attend meetings and working groups to discuss country-specific recommendations between other social partners and government authorities. The UGT representatives are given the opportunity to express their views regarding further policy implementation. For example, the UGT members constantly emphasise the negative effects of short-term employment and keep encouraging the Government to adopt policy measures that would encourage employers to retain their workers for longer periods and provide them with more stability. Another issue that the UGT continuously brings up is social protection of employees, especially trainees. Finally, negotiations are underway with government authorities and employer organisations to introduce a new type of employment contract, namely the generational contract. This type of contract would enable older employees to work fewer hours and instead, use this time to assist young employees in their new working tasks.

The UGT also participates in the European Semester at the EU level. It is involved in bilateral working groups with European Commission representatives, including the European Commission delegation in Portugal.

2.

AN OVERVIEW OF GOOD PRACTICES OF TRADE UNION INVOLVEMENT



Trade union involvement in youth employment policy measures often depends on trade union involvement in social dialogue, effective negotiations and trade union resources for other activities.

Even though effective social dialogue at the national level remains paramount to trade union participation, trade unions are also well-placed to become engaged through other means.

Social dialogue and collective bargaining

This activity falls mostly in line with traditional trade union role of negotiating industrial relations. Trade union representatives are often present in negotiations on various legal issues, such as proposing and campaigning for Labour Code amendments, ensuring social security regulations, or proposing new types of employment contracts. In some cases, trade union organisations may have to extend their scope of action, but overall, including demands on behalf of young labour market entrants fits comfortably with their capacities. Most importantly, this type of activity can have great impact on labour market conditions both for young people and the entire workforce, who, as several trade union representatives emphasised, are sometimes being replaced by trainees. Box 7 presents several (although not all) instances of trade union organisation involvement in youth policy measures through pressuring legal change.

BOX 7: GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES OF TRADE UNION INVOLVEMENT IN NEGOTIATING LEGAL CHANGES

The Independent Self-governing Trade Union 'Solidarnosc' (NZSS 'Solidarnosc, Poland)

In June 2017, NZSS 'Solidarnosc' issued a draft recommendation to social partners that called for the introduction of several means to ensure traineeship quality. Most importantly, they called for introducing a written agreement which states the purpose of the traineeship and its duration, ensuring decent trainee remuneration, providing adequate social protection, and guaranteeing a transparent recruitment process. However, these means were only issued as a recommendation, even though the representatives believe they ought to have become a legal obligation. They are, however, quite satisfied with an introduction of a minimum hourly wage for everyone working under standard employment contracts, civil contracts and the self-employed. This is regarded as a necessity for young people, as they often are paid less than adult workers.

The Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (CSC-ACV, Belgium)

The CSC-ACV was involved in the process of traineeship reform at the regional level in the Brussels-Capital via social dialogue and negotiations. Trade union representatives report that it was the first time their Confederation had gone so far into the negotiation process by holding on to their initial position towards what they believe a quality traineeship ought to look like. To prevent traineeships from becoming a form of cheap employment, social partners negotiated a set of legal obligations. These negotiations took approximately one year and new regulations came into force sometime between 2015 and 2016. According to these regulations, all trainees must sign a traineeship contract to ensure trainee social protection and clearly defined training purposes. However, the key achievement consists in the obligation to ensure that the trainee is supervised by someone who has approved pedagogical competences. This was believed to be a necessary step to guarantee traineeship content quality. The CSC-ACV representatives also said they managed to include a recommendation that all traineeships should lead to a formally recognised certification.

French Democratic Confederation of Labour (CFDT, France)

The CFDT successfully negotiated a set of traineeship regulations that were adopted in 2014. These regulations had already been negotiated in 2011 amongst social partners within the framework of a National Agreement. However, the government only decided to act upon it after the QFT became established at the European level. These regulations aim to ensure that all trainees receive adequate remuneration for their services, social security and healthcare. Furthermore, all trainees must be supervised by a mentor, who ensures that the trainee is welcomed into his or her new workplace, and may comfortably proceed with training activities. Finally, all traineeships must be linked to the trainee's educational pathway, so that any activities undertaken by the trainee are actually suitable to improving his or her competences.

Source: case examples

Proposing new policy measures

Some trade union organisations were persistently engaged in proposing new measures under the YG, the EAfA, or the QFT. While in many instances this included participating in formal or semi-formal working groups to discuss the design of measures, other options, such as organising independent campaigns, issuing position papers with relevant suggestions, or finding other means to place this topic on the government's agenda, are also available. Box 8 presents best practice examples within this area of action.

BOX 8: GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES OF TRADE UNION INVOLVEMENT IN PROPOSING NEW POLICY MEASURES

The Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (CSC-ACV, Belgium)

This trade union organisation advocated for the introduction of the Youth Guarantee and was further involved in all YG and QFT-related activities from the very beginning. The CSC-ACV coordinated its position with other trade union organisations, and sought common ground with both employer organisations and government authorities. The CSC-ACV, together with other social partners, has agreed on a number of new measures to address youth unemployment. This organisation took part in shaping the new financial incentives, which mainly focus on vocational training. Furthermore, the CSC-ACV also negotiated a new type of employment contract for NEETs, namely the integration contract (Fr. *Contrat d'insertion*, NI. *Inschakelingscontract*). This contract aims to facilitate the integration of young people who have been unemployed for longer than 18 months after leaving formal education back into the labour market.

Mladi Plus (Slovenia)

Even before the launch of the YG in Slovenia, Mladi Plus members undertook lobbying activities on a national scale to support the initiative and to convince the Slovenian government to endorse it at the EU level. Following the launch of the YG, Mladi Plus issued a position paper on what their trade union believed the YG in Slovenia ought to look like. Mladi Plus members also sought to include young people in policy making, and therefore established a Youth Council, which is an association of various youth clubs. The Council proposes various measures that ought to help young people transition from education to employment from young people's perspective, emphasising their needs and desires at their new workplaces.

Source: case examples

Steering VET activities or otherwise developing vocational training

Engaging in activities related to VET mostly falls within youth employment policy implementation activities. Trade unions that took part in either promoting, or even steering VET activities, did so within the framework of the YG or the EAfA implementation. However, such practices are less traditional to trade union organisations, and therefore require re-assessing to what extent they are feasible, given the particular organisational structure of each organisation. In some instances, these activities also strongly rest on cooperation between trade union and employer organisations. Organisations that have not established strong links with employers first need to develop good relations if they wish to succeed. Furthermore, these activities are strongly related to educational policies, and therefore require coordination between all institutions active in this area. Best practice examples from this area are presented in Box 9 below.

BOX 9: GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES OF TRADE UNION INVOLVEMENT IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING

The Bohemian-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions (CMKOS, Czech Republic)

The CMKOS participated in a joint project with employer organisations and government authorities, which was oriented towards achieving better labour market integration through the upskilling of young people. The project was carried out as part of the YG policy in Czech Republic. Within the project's framework, social partners and government authorities concluded agreements on national, regional, and sectoral levels. The National Agreement provides a foundational background for the other 13 regional and 8 sectoral agreements. Social partners had to agree on key objectives, which could then be further addressed through activities undertaken at regional and sectoral levels. CMKOS played a major role in this project by assisting the negotiation processes and balancing stakeholder interests. Trade union representatives emphasised the significance of work-based learning and pressured companies to introduce apprenticeship placements, including the upskilling of VET teachers. Furthermore, they negotiated legal measures to ensure adequate working conditions, including stable remuneration and long-term contract provision.

General Workers' Union (GWU, Malta)

The GWU has been directly involved in apprentice-training activities. The GWU submitted a pledge for the EAfA in 2017, seeking to improve the quality of apprenticeships and provide work-based learning opportunities for apprentices. The Trade Union issued a call through the Malta College of Arts Science and Technology (MCAST) and selected apprentices to be employed. All selected apprentices are pursuing an advanced diploma in administrative and secretarial studies, a 2-year EQF (European Qualification Framework) level 4 programme. The apprentices assist different section secretaries, two workdays per week. During the holiday period the apprentices are present at the GWU offices full-time. They often attend various events, help to organise conferences and meetings and benefit from media exposure. All of these activities enable them to build a portfolio and gain valuable work experience. The apprentices receive a compensation.

Source: case examples

Suggesting alternative youth employment opportunities

This activity is rather unique within trade union participation in youth employment policies. However, finding novel youth employment opportunities can have long-lasting positive effects on youth employment prospects, given that this activity opens doors for new ways of entering the labour market. Cooperation with public employment services, youth organisations, employer associations, and government institutions is key, as these bodies are ideally placed to either facilitate the process of linking young jobseekers to job vacancies, or alternatively, establish actual job placements. An example of these activities is presented in box 10 below.

BOX 10: GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE OF TRADE UNIONS FINDING ALTERNATIVE EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS

Mladi Plus (Slovenia)

Mladi Plus members have been actively trying to convince potential employers and employer organisations to offer high-quality job placements. This trade union had enormous success with the Slovene labour market inspection – Mladi Plus representatives convinced this institution to hire interns who would be responsible for checking labour market violations that relate to young people and their working conditions. Furthermore, another proposed measure was to encourage youth organisations to offer employment places for young people. Already more than 150 jobs in such organisations (including Mladi Plus itself) were financed under the YG. These jobs were their first proper employment placements.

Source: case examples

Identifying and developing a system for targeting NEETs

In some European countries, such as Germany or Austria, youth unemployment is not a major cause for concern, because unemployment rates are low. However, these countries struggle with a relatively large number of NEETs. This group of young people is unique, because not only does it often lack education and skills required for successful integration into the labour market, it also lacks basic competences such as language skills or adequate time-management habits. Furthermore, young people belonging to this group struggle with learning difficulties, psychological stress, and other similar factors. Several trade union organisations have been engaged in activities, which specifically target young people between 15 and 24 years of age who may be classified as NEETs. A major difficulty in helping them is to, first of all, successfully reach them, and, secondly, to find adequate means to support them in entering the labour market. These activities usually need to be systematic and include a wide range of stakeholders, including trade unions thus reinforcing the need to create partnerships as included in the Council Recommendation on establishing a Youth Guarantee.

BOX 11: GOOD PRACTICES OF TRADE UNION INVOLVEMENT IN REACHING NEETS

Danish Confederation of Trade Unions (LO, Denmark)

LO, together with all other social partners, has been invited by the government to participate in many actions oriented toward NEETs. One of the main areas of activity consists of setting up a national school network that targets youth at risk. All Danish communities have some kind of services available for those who have not been successful at their education and lack even the most basic skills. However, until recently, such services were offered unsystematically and their quality across the regions differed. One of the most popular pathways for youth at risk is through, what is known in Denmark as *production schools*. These schools aim to assist young drop-outs to achieve the minimum requirements to either return to VET or standard education pathways, or, alternatively, to enter the labour market with sufficient skills. LO has a strong influence on all major areas of such education, namely setting out the qualification standards, determining work-based learning regulations and ensuring that such preparatory schools offer adequate training. Danish trade unions were very actively supportive of setting up a production school network that will consist of 25 to 30 schools across Denmark and will become fully operational later this year (August 2018).

German Trade Union Confederation (DGB, Germany)

The DGB, in partnership with social partners and government authorities, helped to set up a new measure that especially targeted NEETs. This measure provides financial support for young people who wish to take up an apprenticeship, but lack the necessary skills to do so. Each federal state within Germany has its own specific means of implementing this measure, however, in most cases, young people receive assistance from public schools, community colleges, or other institutions. Any such institution may provide specialised training to help NEETs achieve a desired level of basic competences. Furthermore, companies also receive subsidies for providing such people with apprenticeship placements. This is meant to encourage companies, especially ones that do not already offer apprenticeships, to provide more placements and help them build capacity to continue doing so.

Source: case examples

Leading awareness-raising campaigns and promoting open dialogue

Access to information and education opportunities, in many instances, remains key for empowering young people. While traditionally trade unions have engaged in various activities to educate their members, and consequently help them to both perform better at their jobs and stand up for their rights at the workplace, these kinds of activities may also be extended towards youth. Young people, regardless of their status in the labour market, benefit from seminars and discussions that inform them of their employment prospects. Furthermore, awareness-raising campaigns also serve to promote dialogue within the public sphere, adding visibility to relevant issues. Such activities need extensive coordination, but they are not costly. Many trade unions were involved in such activities, either under the implementation of the YG, the EAfA, or the QFT. Box 12 below presents such a case in which trade union activities were exemplary.

BOX 12: GOOD PRACTICE OF TRADE UNIONS LEADING AWARENESS-RAISING CAMPAIGNS**The Independent Self-governing Trade Union 'Solidarnosc' (NZSS 'Solidarnosc', Poland)**

Trade union representatives emphasised that young people are often unaware of the benefits of collective action and maintain a very liberal perspective on labour market relations. This is especially harmful to young people because it leads them to become mistreated by employers without being aware of it. In April 2018, the confederation organised a Youth Forum, where it encouraged novel ideas on how to make the labour market more youth-friendly. Furthermore, NZSS 'Solidarnosc' is a constant user of social as well as traditional media to raise awareness of the importance of quality employment for young people. Finally, it often partakes in various lobbying activities, consultations, meetings and campaigns to ensure the continuity of debate regarding these issues. The most recent campaign will be organised in partnership with the Independent Students' Association to inform students on particular features of student employment, including precarious working conditions.

Source: case examples

Monitoring implementation activities and/or conducting evaluations

This activity largely depends upon trade union willingness and capacity to monitor ongoing measures. Likewise, evaluation activities require similar capacity and engagement on behalf of trade union representatives. While most trade unions that were successfully involved in youth employment policy measure monitoring or evaluation were part of dedicated monitoring bodies, set up by public authorities, some trade unions undertook independent activities. Trade union representatives emphasised the need for both monitoring and evaluation, given that both these activities are crucial for further measure development. Box 13 below showcases trade union involvement and insights with respect to this issue.

BOX 13: GOOD PRACTICES OF TRADE UNION INVOLVEMENT IN MONITORING AND/OR EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

Mladi Plus regularly monitors YG progress both on EU and national levels by participating in established working groups and continuously advocates for better quality measures, especially internship or traineeship offers. It often provides highly critical feedback to both the government and the implementing institutions on the quality of the measures.

The **Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (CSC-ACV, Belgium)** reported that it was necessary to ensure effective implementation of policy measures but that it is especially difficult. For example, trade union representatives pointed out that agreements regarding quality traineeships may be particularly difficult to implement, because while the legal framework might exist but, this does not guarantee adequate protection and trade unions are not always able to step in. Furthermore, the CSC-ACV representatives stressed the importance of evidence for policy-making, saying that giving sound advice to government institutions was sometimes challenging due to lack of credible evidence on various aspects of youth employment conditions in the Brussels-Capital. Trade union members would like to be able to act upon robust results of measure evaluation to propose more effective solutions.

Source: case examples

Implementing the Framework of Actions for Youth Employment

In 2013, the European social partners agreed on a Framework of Actions for Youth employment. While this agreement is not a direct youth employment policy measure, it has acted as a positive push for some organisations to undertake actions within its framework. The actions however are largely diverging and cannot be put under a single category. This agreement often acts as an encouragement to action, as it includes guidelines in terms of fostering employment through various means, all of which can be viewed as adjacent to the YG, the EAfA, or the QFT measures. The FoA agreement outlined 4 priorities namely learning, transition, employment and entrepreneurship within which activities were organised. Social partners were involved in the implementation of this framework on various levels³⁶. If anything, this agreement demonstrates the success of large-scale negotiations and social dialogue.

BOX 14: TRADE UNION INVOLVEMENT IN THE FRAMEWORK OF ACTIONS FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Both the **Independent Self-governing Trade Union 'Solidarnosc' (NZSS 'Solidarnosc', Poland)** and the **Bohemian-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions (AMKOS, Czech Republic)** representatives reported that they undertook a wide range of actions related to youth employment policies within the Framework of Actions (FoA) for Youth Employment. This framework established clear priorities and set guidelines for helping to improve young people's job prospects. The AMKOS was mostly involved in promoting VET activities, especially focusing on apprenticeships. The NZSS 'Solidarnosc' representatives initiated legal changes regarding the definition of juvenile workers, which ought to facilitate access to work-based training schemes for youth under 18. Additionally, NZSS 'Solidarnosc' published a report on the European FoA Plan on Youth Employment in 2014, and in 2017, trade union representatives took part in a conference concerning further FoA implementation activities.

Source: case examples

Most trade unions that were involved in youth employment policy measures identified similar elements, which were important for ensuring successful participation. Two key elements, relevant to almost any activity and any trade union were

- having at least one person continuously working on youth employment issues, and
- maintaining good relations between all stakeholders, including employer organisations.

The first element is due to time-consuming nature of all activities, as well as their large scope. Several organisations emphasised the fact that most activities had to be either organised and coordinated, or required frequent meeting attendance, hence sufficient human resources were an absolute must in this area. The second element is crucial for most trade union involvement activities, because youth policy measures revolve around a large number of stakeholders. Ensuring continuous dialogue is therefore necessary, given that measure implementation depends mostly on the outcome of debates and mutual stakeholder consent.

Other relevant factors to trade union participation success were clear positions, which are supported by valid reasoning and sound evidence, persistence, and smooth communication between trade union members. However, most trade union organisations face similar obstacles when it comes to participation in youth employment policies. Many trade union organisations are rather conservative when it comes to introducing new practices or extending the scope of their actions. This mostly has to do with established *know-how* at the organisational level, which is rather resistant to change. Another issue is weak social dialogue, either between trade union and employer organisations, or also with national governments. Several trade union representatives said they struggled to prove their worth as a social partner, especially the youth branches. This issue is complex, but strengthening trade union capacities for action and negotiation skills may have significant impact.

36 Framework of actions on youth employment. ETUC, BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME, CEEP. Brussels, 2013. Available at: http://resourcecentre.etuc.org/spaw_uploads/files/201306_Framework_of_Actions_Youth_Employment.pdf



CONCLUSIONS
AND RECOMMENDATIONS:
**A 'TOOLBOX' FOR
BOOSTING TRADE
UNION INVOLVEMENT**

The evidence on the experiences of trade unions is documented in this study in order to better understand the opportunities and constraints trade unions face to implementation at national level of European youth employment policies. Based on the data gathered through extensive desk research, survey and interviews with national trade union officials, this section puts forward a set of recommendations that are dedicated to help trade unions get engaged with European youth employment policies at the national level. These recommendations cover all three measures of the EU youth employment package – the Youth Guarantee, the European Alliance for Apprenticeship, and the Quality Framework for Traineeships. These policy measures focus on important and effective ways to facilitate quality transitions of young people from school to the labour market, such as apprenticeships, traineeships, and various other measures connecting young people with labour market vacancies.

The tools for getting involved in youth employment policies are presented one-by-one, along with the 'tips and tricks' of using each tool. The descriptions are based on real-life experiences reported by ETUC affiliated organisations – each tool has been already tried and tested by national trade unions.

Negotiating binding legal frameworks or policies

The capacity to negotiate on legislation is one of the most powerful tools that trade unions have at their disposal. As trade unions are recognised as social partners, they are granted access to the legislative processes. All three EU Youth employment package measures might involve changes to legislation or public policies, therefore this tool is extremely versatile in the context of implementation of EU youth employment policies at the national/federal or regional level.

For example, trade unions can negotiate changes to the following legal frameworks and policies that are connected to the above-mentioned EU policies:

- Commenting on the Country-Specific Recommendations (in the framework of the European Semester).
- Legislation regulating traineeships (incl. both laws and social partner agreements).
- Legislation regulating apprenticeship/dual training contracts (incl. both laws and social partner agreements).
- Legislation regulating working conditions, including stable remuneration and long-term contract provision for young people.

In order for these negotiations to be successful, the trade unions should have:

- Commitment and availability to attend all relevant working groups and meetings to keep up-to-date with negotiations.
- Evidence-based positions.
- Mutual trust between stakeholders (e.g. established reputation of willingness to compromise or the ability to build bridges between social partners and government authorities).

Trade unions should be aware of the following risks when using negotiations on binding legal frameworks or policies as a tool for involvement in youth policies:

- Some activities might not be suitable within the local context (e.g. pushing for new legislation when there are bigger issues of non-compliance with regulation in the particular region). All-size-fits-all should be avoided – solutions should be tailored to the national/local conditions (e.g. instead of negotiating new legislation, focus instead on improving compliance with the law in contexts where compliance is an issue).
- Negotiations are more difficult in countries where the tradition of social dialogue is less established.
- Some opinions might encounter a lack of support or even open hostility.

Examples of trade unions using this tool

- CMKOS (CZ) – negotiating sectoral and regional agreements aimed at promoting and improving VET conditions
- UGT (PT) – negotiating the Country Specific Recommendations.
- NSZZ 'Solidarity' (PL) – recommendations on quality traineeships, legislation on age threshold for participation in VET
- CSC-ACV (BE) – negotiations on traineeship regulations
- CFDT (FR) – negotiations on traineeship legislation

Taking initiative on new policy measures

Trade unions are well-placed to propose new policy measures – they interact with the labour force at company level and understand the salient local and national issues well. Their proximity to the issues on-the-ground puts trade unions in a position where they have unique knowledge on what are the gaps that new policy measures should fill.

For example, trade unions can propose additional policy measures that are connected to the EU Youth Employment Package policies:

- Encouraging companies to offer employment places for young people (a measure within the YG framework).
- Establishing a national alliance for apprenticeships (a measure within the EAfA)
- Setting up apprenticeship schemes (a measure within the YG and the EAfA).
- Setting up a network of education centres to re-integrate young people back into the education system or the labour market (a measure within the YG and the EAfA).
- Designing a network of institutions to ensure equal quality training services across the country.
- Assigning a person at the labour market inspection to monitor labour market violations related to young people and their working conditions.

In order for these policy measures to be set up, the trade unions should have:

- Coordination with other trade union organisations to strengthen their voice on a particular issue (when relevant).
- A focus on building a shared understanding of the problem and its potential consequences for society at large.
- Capacity and space to come up with new and innovative solutions to problems.

Trade unions should be aware of the following risks when taking initiative on new policy measures:

- Underestimating opposite views regarding employment policies.
- Insisting on undertaking activities that are unsuitable within the local context (e.g. when setting up an apprenticeship scheme, there might be significant inequalities between schools both in terms of the quality of the training, and in terms of financing).
- Lack of support for certain opinions, even open hostility (e.g. given that many NEETs are originally from immigrant background, there may be tension when it comes to providing support and allocating financial resources to young people who are xenophobically regarded by some as outsiders to national societies or local communities).

Examples of trade unions using this tool

- Mladi Plus (SI) – responsibility to check labour market violations related to youth at the Slovene labour market inspection.
- CSC-ACV (BE) - financial incentives for young jobseekers.
- DGB (DE) - the German Alliance for Vocational Training and Employment, designing an apprenticeship scheme.
- OGB (AT) – setting up a network of education centres.
- LO (DK) – development of standardised training.

Delivering policy measures

Trade unions may also be very hands-on with youth employment issues and get involved in delivering entire (or parts of) policy measures. Some examples of trade union activities in delivering policy measures are presented below:

- Providing first proper employment placements to young people (under the YG).
- Setting up a system for reaching out to NEETs and helping them to enter into the labour market.
- Setting up a system of monitoring job ads to identify illegal activities (a measure within the QFT).

In order for trade unions to be successfully involved in the delivery of policy measure, they should have human resources dedicated to working on a particular policy measure.

Examples of trade unions using this tool

- Mladi Plus (SI) – providing first employment to youth at youth organisations, monitoring of job violations.

Leading awareness-raising campaigns

Trade unions can use their knowledge and expertise in youth employment issues and organise awareness-raising campaigns. These measures are quite traditional to trade unions and this role of trade unions as a public defender of social rights is well accepted in the European society. Examples of topics for campaigns that would help raise awareness on issues concerning youth employment are presented below:

- Raising wages or ensuring adequate remuneration for young people.
- Combatting precariousness and informing young workers and trainees about the unwanted consequences of signing low-quality employment contracts.
- Campaigning against unpaid traineeships.

In order for trade unions to lead successful campaigns, they should work to have the following elements:

- Establish and maintain connections with other organisations that share similar views.
- Smooth communication between trade union members to maintain a consistent position.
- Clear positions, which are supported by valid reasoning and clear evidence.
- Sufficient resources to participate/organise such activities.
- Ensure the continuity of dialogue via various media channels.

Trade unions should be aware of the following risks when leading awareness-raising campaigns:

- Lack of support for certain opinions, even open hostility.
- Young people are underrepresented in trade unions and therefore a tailored approach should be undertaken when reaching them out³⁷.

Examples of trade unions using this tool

- MKOS (CZ) – ‘End to Cheap Labour’ campaign.
- NSZZ ‘Solidarity’ (PL) – ‘Sisyphus’ campaign, a Youth Forum.
- Mladi Plus (SI) – campaign against unpaid traineeships.

Monitoring/ evaluating implementation of measures

Most of the monitoring/ evaluating of the implementation of the EU Youth employment measures take place in formal formats. However, trade unions are also well-placed to conduct their own evaluations of the policies in order to base their positions towards these measures on solid evidence. Examples of such monitoring/ evaluation activities are presented below:

- Participating in monitoring groups on the implementation of national YG measures.
- Independent monitoring of the implementation of national YG measures.
- Participating in expert groups on apprenticeships/traineeships.
- Discussing the Country-Specific Recommendations during meetings (in the framework of the European Semester) at both the national and the EU level.
- Organising/participating seminars evaluating European youth policies.
- Building alliances with civil society organisations to undertake such monitoring.

In order for trade unions to successfully participate in monitoring/ evaluation of EU policy measures, they should have the following elements:

- Sufficient evidence to provide solid policy advice.
- A critical attitude and be persistent with your position.
- Willingness to negotiate and seek to increase negotiation capacity.

Trade unions should be aware of the following risks when carrying out monitoring/ evaluation:

- Lack of support for certain opinions, even open hostility.
- Lack of access to formal monitoring and evaluation processes in countries with less established traditions of social dialogue.

Examples of trade unions using this tool

- Mladi Plus (SI) – independent monitoring of YG measures.
- UGT (PT) – monitoring of youth policies via the European Semester.
- NSZZ ‘Solidarity’ (PL) – monitoring groups, evaluation seminars.

³⁷ For concrete information about getting young workers closer to the trade union movement, please refer to MARRA, S., AKDOĞAN, D., AYDIN, T. (2016). YOUTH IN UNIONS, UNIONS FOR YOUTH - A practical guide to trade unions in Europe and Turkey for young people. ETUC. Brussels (available at: https://www.etuc.org/sites/default/files/circular/files/201611_booklet_en.pdf)



ANNEXES



ANNEX 1.

COUNTRY BRIEFS

AUSTRIA

Up until 2017, Austrian tradition of social partnership lead Austrian trade unions to become **quite actively involved** in youth employment policy measures. Even though the government took steps to consult the trade unions, they remained mainly involved **outside 'traditional' ways** of trade union involvement. Austrian trade unions were mostly **satisfied with their involvement** in these measures and expressed positive feedback on measure quality.

Context

Austria has a strong tradition of social partnership that covers most economic and social policy areas. By the time the survey was launched, employee and employer organizations have been working in close cooperation with government institutions and major political parties to coordinate each groups' interests in reaching compromises on major political decisions. As such, the Austrian Trade Union Federation (De. Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund, ÖGB), an umbrella association that is comprised of seven separate trade unions, has always been quite actively involved in ALMPs³⁸. ÖGB often partners with another employee organisation, namely the Chamber of Labour (AKL, which is an organisation that represents the interests of 3 million Austrian employees and consumers. Membership is compulsory for all employees working in Austria, and it is thus not to be confused with Austrian labour unions, where membership is voluntary), to influence labour market policies. Austrian trade unions are also strongly involved in vocational education and training (VET) activities. These two factors have lead ÖGB to become actively involved in youth employment policies, placing especially strong emphasis on VET activities.

Level of involvement

The ÖGB reported that it was involved in all policy stages of the YG outside 'traditional' ways of trade union involvement. However, they were also consulted through informal government consultations at national, regional and local levels after the government had issued a first draft of the YG implementation plan. This was in line with the tradition of social partnership which is often implemented informally and with a lot of mutual trust between the social partners. Despite such cooperation, Austrian trade unions have sufficient means to act on their own accord. Given its customary role in VET, the ÖGB was involved in developing VET training curricula and participated in semi-formal working groups that included VET school representatives. Furthermore, the ÖGB also assisted in developing the system of identifying and reaching NEETs. At later YG stages, the ÖGB published press releases, position and opinion papers, participated in studies and organised campaigns.

³⁸ ETUI. *Austria, Trade Unions*. 2016. Available at: <http://www.worker-participation.eu/www.worker-participation.eu/index.php/National-Industrial-Relations/Countries/Austria/Trade-Unions>

ÖGB did not report involvement in any EAfA or QFT activities. However, other studies indicate that trade unions in Austria participated in creating a quality framework for traineeships together with the Chamber of Labour. The framework defines working conditions, the training content and labour law standards that apply to traineeships. Austrian trade unions believe that quality traineeships ought to be a part of training curricula³⁹. In addition, the ÖGB together with the Chamber of Labour published the first Austrian Apprenticeship Monitor in 2015⁴⁰. It presents the apprenticeship situation in Austria from the apprentice point of view. This study served as a basis for several demands in this area. As such, ÖGB is active in the area of apprenticeships but its representative claimed that due to lack of resources, it did not participate in the EAfA⁴¹.

Satisfaction with the level of involvement

Austrian trade unions are generally satisfied with their involvement in youth employment policies despite not having participated in certain measures such as the EAfA. Trade union representatives expressed a wish to be more involved in the evaluation of the YG because they believe that their role in monitoring the implementation of the YG is currently insufficient for adequate assessment of the quality of YG measures. Trade union representatives said that receiving an invitation from national authorities, the European Commission or other organisations would enable them to become involved in youth policies to a larger extent. While this does not seem a necessary condition for Austrian trade union participation, it could nonetheless be a welcome improvement leading to higher trade union satisfaction.

Views on the quality of measures

ÖGB representatives were satisfied with all youth policy measures and believe that they ought to be continued without major changes. Youth unemployment in Austria is generally quite low (below 7%) and therefore youth policy measure quality is not a priority issue. There were no further comments on measure quality.

BELGIUM

Belgian trade union participation in youth employment policies **varied between the regions and the different trade union organisations**. Some organisations were **invited by the government to participate in policy design**, while others also took part in further implementation and evaluation stages. Even though trade union members expressed **critical feedback** toward the quality of measures, they were **overall satisfied** with them.

Context

There are three trade union confederations in Belgium: the Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (NI. *Algemeen Christelijk Vakverbond*, Fr. *Confédération des syndicats chrétiens*, ACV-CSC), the General Federation of Belgian Labour (NI. *Algemeen Belgisch Vakverbond*, Fr. *Fédération Générale du Travail de Belgique*, ABVV-FGTB), and the General Confederation of Liberal Trade Unions of Belgium (NI. *Algemene Centrale der Liberale Vakbonden van België*, Fr. *Centrale générale des syndicats libéraux de Belgique*, ACLVB-CGSLB).

39 Commission Staff Working Document, The Youth Guarantee and Youth Employment Initiative three years on, SWD (2016) 323 final, 4.10.2016: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:73591c12-8afc-11e6-b955-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_2&format=PDF

40 First Austrian Apprenticeship Monitor 2015/2016: <http://newsroom.oegj.at/Monitor/FLASH/index.html>. The second Apprenticeship Monitor for 2017/2018 has also been published: http://www.oegj.at/cms/S01/S01_25.3/die-studie

41 Eurofound. Austria: First Austrian Apprenticeship Monitor published. Available at: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/articles/working-conditions-labour-market/austria-first-austrian-apprenticeship-monitor-published>

The two more representative ones are the ACV-CSC and the ABVV-FGTB, both of which have more than 1.5 million members each. These trade unions are present on numerous bipartite and tripartite bodies that operate on national and regional levels. Trade union affiliation rates are very high, and traditionally, trade unions maintain substantial influence within social dialogue bodies⁴². Most employment policies are governed on a regional level, but due to divisions between the linguistic communities, which are responsible for education policies, obstacles arise that hinder proper youth employment policy implementation practices. Given such institutional complexity, trade unions are involved in youth employment policies to various degrees.

Main type of involvement

Both the ACV-CSC and the ABVV-FGTB were involved in the design of the YG measures. Both organisations participated in developing the system of identifying and reaching NEETs, and they were both invited to attend working groups for the YG. However, the ACV-CSC was also involved in the development of the YG delivery schemes on regional level and the development of training curricula. The ABVV-FGTB representatives said that they were not involved in either the implementation or the evaluation of YG measures, because they were not invited by the government to participate. On the other hand, the ACV-CSC representatives report to have been invited to participate in both the implementation and the evaluation stages of the YG. This organisation supervised the YG implementation plans, requested up-to-date information regarding their development, promoted social dialogue, and published press releases, position and opinion papers. During the evaluation stage, the ACV-CSC participated in dedicated monitoring bodies and publicly expressed opinions about the general success of the YG and the drawbacks of the implemented measures.

Neither the ACV-CSC, nor the ABVV-FGTB participated in any stage of the EAfA. Both organisations were not invited to participate and were not aware of its existence.

The ACV-CSC took part in QFT-measures by participating in negotiations among the social partners on a possible QFT design. It actively issued proposals to improve traineeship legislation and used collective agreements to ensure that traineeships fall in line with the QFT. The ABVV-FGTB was not involved in any QFT-related measures.

Satisfaction with the level of involvement

The ACV-CSC was satisfied with its involvement in the design of the YG measures, but it was only somewhat satisfied with its involvement in measure implementation. Its representatives reported that they wished to have seen better quality outputs during the implementation phase. The ABVV-FGTB representatives said they had not reached the desired level of involvement in the YG design, mostly because they believe that measures orientated towards NEETs needed more publicity.

Views on the quality of measures

Generally, both major trade union organisations believe the YG measure quality is somewhat satisfactory. However, the ACV-CSC representatives stressed that more attention should be paid towards NEETs and young people from immigrant backgrounds. In addition, its representatives said that more measures to promote dual-learning schemes and technical education ought to be made available. The QFT needs to be improved by ensuring that all trainees receive quality training and are granted with sufficient remuneration. However, the ABVV-FGTB representatives said that all traineeships must be abolished altogether as they may be substituting formal jobs.

42 Eurofound. *Living and working in Belgium*. 18 October 2017. Available at: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/country/belgium#actors-and-institutions>

BULGARIA

Some Bulgarian trade unions seem to have been **invited by the government to participate** in certain measures, while other trade unions were not and instead, **participated in other ways** available to them. Unsurprisingly, the former are therefore more satisfied with their involvement than the latter, and accordingly, are also more approving of quality of measures.

Context

According to the Bulgarian Labour Code, all social partner organisations must meet a set of established criteria to be recognized as a representative organisation⁴³. While there are several trade union organisations in Bulgaria, in 2016, only two confederations had been accredited the status of a representative union at national level, namely the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions of Bulgaria (Bl. Конфедерация на независимите синдикати в България, KNSB/CITUB) and the Confederation of Labour Podkrepa (Bl. Конфедерация на труда Подкрепа, КТ Подкрепа)⁴⁴. Only representative organisations enjoy seats within tripartite bodies, where they are often assigned an advisory role. While overall union membership rates since the 1990s have decreased substantially (from almost 100% in 1990 to 20% in 2016), trade unions still retain special rights in the area of collective bargaining. As such, Bulgarian trade unions remain somewhat influential in the adoption of labour market policies.

Level of involvement

KT Podkrepa representatives reported that their organisation was involved in all three policy stages of the YG. At first, this trade union was invited by the government to participate in the design phase, however, even though the KR Podkrepa signed a cooperation agreement, due to a lack of financial and human resources, it could no longer be involved. During the implementation phase of the YG, this trade union was part of the information campaigns and lobbying activities. It also participated through semi-formal working groups for the YG (e.g. consultations with students, VET school representatives).

According to previously conducted studies⁴⁵ and the information reported by CITUB, they were involved in the design of the YG through formal institutions from the very birth of the policy. The set of YG measures was negotiated with the government right from the start of the design process and certain actions, which had been proposed by CITUB, were also included. CITUB was active in providing support for the implementation of the YG through press releases, position papers, organised campaigning and lobbying activities.

None of the Bulgarian trade unions were active in the EAfA or the QFT measures. They reported not being invited to participate and not being aware of the existence of such measures. While Bulgaria introduced legal changes to comply with the QFT in 2014, the trade unions did not seem to have had any significant role in this.

Satisfaction with the level of involvement

KT Podkrepa representatives claim that they had not reached a desired level of involvement in the implementation of the YG measures. This trade union only took part in five or six information campaigns and believes they could have undertaken more diverse and more numerous activities. KT Podkrepa believes that an invitation by the government or the European Commission to participate in social dialogue would increase their capacity to participate. This trade union argued that currently only the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has the legal powers to conduct and oversee the YG measures.

43 A representative organisation refers to an institutional body that has a legal right to represent its members on a national level.

44 ETUI. *Bulgaria, Trade Unions*. 2016. Available at: <https://www.worker-participation.eu/www.worker-participation.eu/index.php/National-Industrial-Relations/Countries/Bulgaria/Trade-Unions>

45 Busi, M. *Youth Guarantee in Europe*, ETUC, 2014.

On the other hand, CITUB representatives for previous studies⁴⁶ reported that even though the implementation plan had been modified, some of their original suggestions removed, and the starting date postponed, they were satisfied with their involvement. CITUB representatives believe that their participation has contributed to improving the quality of the YG.

Views on the quality of measures

While KT Podkrepa representatives described the YG as good, they nonetheless said that overall these measures did not offer long-term solutions and work opportunities, and also lacked clearly defined learning objectives/outcomes for training. Furthermore, more information dissemination campaigns would be beneficial for motivating young people to make use of the measures available. This trade union regarded EAfA and QFT as very poor, given that they were not aware of their existence. CITUB has previously⁴⁷ claimed that the implementation process of the YG was very slow and was at risk of lacking resources for effective implementation.

CROATIA

While the government is expected to consult social partners, the Croatian trade unions often do not have sufficient influence and, as a result, their participation in youth employment policy measures **remained a formality**. Even though they were **invited by the government to participate**, lack of substantial social dialogue **prevented** Croatian trade unions **from reaching a satisfactory level of involvement**. In addition, they expressed negative feedback on the quality of measures.

Context

Trade unionism in Croatia has suffered from considerable fragmentation and systemic weaknesses in Croatian industrial relations⁴⁸. Currently there are four trade union organisations in Croatia that are considered nationally representative. Contrary to many other minor trade unions present in Croatia⁴⁹, these four unions have the right to take part in national tripartite bodies. The Union of Autonomous Trade Unions of Croatia (Hr. *Saveza Samostalnih Sindicata Hrvatske*, UATUC) is the largest and the main trade union confederation. This organisation is present within the Croatian Economic and Social Council, a tripartite social dialogue body that plays an advisory role on economic and social policy. However, during the past two decades, this body has not been successful in reaching long-term social agreements. In addition, Croatian trade unions often lack human resources to undertake many activities. The trade union approach faces challenges towards the structure of the Croatian labour market, where many atypical forms of work have not been present until recently⁵⁰.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.

48 Butković H. *Innovative practices of Croatian trade unions: is there sufficient ground for optimism?* Innovative union practices in Central-Eastern Europe, ed. Bernaciak M., Kahancova M., ETUI, Brussels, 2017.

49 In Croatia 10 people are sufficient for setting up a trade union. As a result, there is a total of 26 higher bodies and 621 separate TUs. For more information, see: <https://www.worker-participation.eu/www.worker-participation.eu/index.php/National-Industrial-Relations/Countries/Croatia>

50 Butković H. *Innovative practices of Croatian trade unions: is there sufficient ground for optimism?* Innovative union practices in Central-Eastern Europe, ed. Bernaciak M., Kahancova M., ETUI, Brussels, 2017.

Level of involvement

The UATUC was involved in the design phase of the YG both by having been invited by the government to participate and by actively pursuing activities outside of 'traditional' ways of trade union involvement. It was invited to participate in stable tripartite bodies and/or working groups for the YG as well as participate through ad-hoc consultations and hearings. This is in line with UATUC's traditional engagement in other labour market policies via similar bodies, e. g. the Economic and Social Council, the national pension fund, and the public employment services. However, similarly to its participation in these bodies, its involvement in YG design was seen as unsatisfactory.

The UATUC takes part in the evaluation of the implementation plan through consultations with a state institution responsible for the evaluation. The YG is implemented at the national and regional level through the Local Employment Development Initiatives which include trade unions. The UATUC was also invited by the government to participate in dedicated monitoring bodies, but this involvement was regarded as a formality and was therefore unsatisfactory. The UATUC has publicly expressed opinions about the general success of YG implementation and the drawbacks of implemented measures.

The UATUC did not participate in either the EAfA or the QFT measures. This was due to a lack of information and public debate regarding these two measures. Croatian trade unions have previously expressed support for a uniform framework for traineeships within the EU that would include an obligation to provide trainee remuneration. However, while the government has foreseen to develop on-the-job training schemes and provides support to employers as well as enforce mentorship, so far the results of these activities do not seem adequate⁵¹.

Satisfaction with the level of involvement

Previously the UATUC claimed that their involvement in the design phase of the YG was poor as the UATUC was invited to take part only after the key elements of the YG had already been developed⁵². Similarly, in the ETUC survey conducted in 2017, UATUC said that the consultations at this phase remained formal, and that the trade union proposals were not taken into account.

Given the fact that Croatian trade unions were not invited to participate in either the EAfA or the QFT, an invitation from the government to participate would have been welcome. However, the main issue remains a lack of social dialogue that underlies trade union participation in all youth employment policy measures. UATUC representatives claim that the government is not showing any readiness for substantial dialogue nor willingness to take into account any evaluation findings issued by other authorities, which could help to improve or redesign these measures.

Views on the quality of measures

Croatian trade unions consider the YG measures to be poor. According to UATUC representatives, the YG in Croatia does not offer long-term solutions or adequate work opportunities. The quality of offered internships is low, given that they lack any clearly defined learning objectives/outcomes for training. Furthermore, the YG had direct influence on lowering entry-level wages and young employee working conditions. UATUC representatives also stressed that there is a lack of measures, which target the long-term unemployed youth. UATUC considers EAfA and QFT measures to be very poor, given that these measures were not even present on the agenda to address youth unemployment and the government authorities did not show any willingness to engage in their implementation.

51 European Commission. Commission Staff Working Document: Applying the Quality Framework for Traineeships. SWD (2016) 324 final, Strasbourg 4.10.2016

52 Bussi M., *Youth Guarantee in Europe*. ETUC, 2014.

CYPRUS

During the last few years, youth unemployment rates in Cyprus have been very high. Trade unions in Cyprus were **invited by the government to participate** in all stages of the YG and the EAfA, given that these measures are also related to the much needed active labour market policy reforms. Despite several shortcomings regarding their participation, trade unions report to have been **satisfied with their involvement** and with the **quality of measures**.

Context

There are three major trade union confederations in Cyprus, namely the Cyprus Workers' Confederation (Gr. Συνομοσπονδία Εργαζομένων Κύπρου, SEK), the Pancyprian Federation on Labour (Gr. Παγκύπρια Εργατική Ομοσπονδία, ΠΕΟ)⁵³, and the Democratic Labour Federation of Cyprus (Gr. Δημοκρατική Εργατική Ομοσπονδία Κύπρου, ΔΕΟΚ)⁵⁴. Generally, trade union affiliation rates in Cyprus are quite high, but over the last two decades membership rates have not been increasing as fast as the general labour force. This tendency coincides with deteriorating trade union bargaining powers and increasing difficulties for trade unions to protect their members.⁵⁵ However, given the high youth unemployment rates in Cyprus (between 2013 and 2016 this rate was on average above 30%), the government is struggling to address this issue and needs active labour market policy (ALMP) reforms. Trade unions are considered a valuable contribution to the process of resolving such problems.

Level of involvement

The SEK representatives said to have been involved in all stages of the YG measures. They were invited by the government to participate and were involved through stable tripartite bodies and formal YG working groups. The SEK is also a part of the Cyprus Youth Council⁵⁶, an umbrella organisation for all youth organisations, which enabled this trade union to become more actively involved. It was invited by the government to participate in the implementation of the YG through stable tripartite bodies and formal YG working groups. It was also active by creating networks and cooperating with other organisation on important issues. The SEK participated in the evaluation of YG measures through dedicated monitoring bodies.

The SEK was also involved in all stages of the EAfA. They were invited by the national authorities to be partners of a national commitment. The trade union is actively participating in the implementation of this commitment through its role within the Human Resource Development Authority (Gr. Αρχή Ανάπτυξης Ανθρώπινου Δυναμικού, AnAD). This is a national body that oversees VET in Cyprus, aiming to provide young people with training and enable them to compete in the labour market. This body is also active in the evaluation of the EAfA commitment implementation and therefore the trade unions were also involved at this policy stage.

The SEK was not involved in any QFT-related activities and reports that Cyprus generally lacks traineeship schemes. Opening opportunities for social dialogue with employers' associations is seen as a necessary first step if this measure is to be considered.

53 The Pancyprian Federation on Labour (Gr. Παγκύπρια Εργατική Ομοσπονδία, ΠΕΟ) is not a member of the ETUC.

54 There is a third, but a much smaller confederation, namely the Democratic Labour Federation of Cyprus. For more information, see: <https://www.worker-participation.eu/www.worker-participation.eu/index.php/National-Industrial-Relations/Countries/Cyprus/Trade-Unions>

55 Ioannou G., Sonan S., *Trade Unions in Cyprus. History of Division, Common Challenges Ahead*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2014. Available at: <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id-moe/11143.pdf>

56 Cyprus Youth Council. See more at: <http://cyc.org.cy/en/>

Satisfaction with the level of involvement

The SEK was somewhat satisfied with its involvement in YG measures. Trade union representatives pointed out that there is still a lot of room for improvement and that the main issue was inadequate organisation at the national level. The SEK representatives claim that better organisation would not only improve YG measure design but also facilitate their implementation. Furthermore, the evaluation of measures needs to be stricter in order to assure correct measure implementation practices. SEK considers its participation in the EAfA to be successful and satisfactory.

Views on the quality of measures

While the SEK considers the quality of all three youth employment policy measures to be sufficient, it has nonetheless expressed its demands for several modifications. Currently SEK believes that the YG does not offer long-term solutions and work opportunities, and furthermore lacks clearly defined learning objectives. In addition, it is reported that employers tend to take advantage of these schemes to replace their regular workforce. Finally, the age range for those eligible for the YG was said to be too small. The SEK generally supports the YG measures, however, aside from the issues already mentioned, they also argue that the YG measures should be more in line with labour market demands and include atypical education.

In the SEK representative's view, EAfA would benefit from a clear definition of apprenticeship and the related issues of clear rights and obligations of apprentices, employers and training institutions. There is no traineeship legislation in Cyprus, so any QFT-related activities are somewhat superfluous.

CZECH REPUBLIC

The youth unemployment rate in Czech Republic is very low and, as a result, youth employment issues do not figure extensively on government's agenda. However, labour shortages are increasing and social partners call for measures to increase labour market participation and upskill the Czech labour force⁵⁷.

In previous studies⁵⁸ the Bohemian-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions (ČMKOS) was said to be involved in the design of the YG measures through lightly formalised institutions. However, the trade unions were unsatisfied with their involvement. ČMKOS criticised the lack of attention towards youth unemployment and the Czech government's high reliance on EU funds for financing measures of youth unemployment. ČMKOS also made a pledge to the EAfA together with the Czech and Moravian Trade Union of Workers in Education (ČMOS PŠ)⁵⁹. These trade unions are in full support of this measure and other sources report⁶⁰ that they are continuously working towards promoting the EAfA, raising awareness and advocating for apprenticeship placements.

57 See also: case example on ČMKOS (CZ).

58 Bussi M., *Youth Guarantee in Europe*. ETUC, 2014.

59 European Commission. European Alliance for Apprenticeships. Pledge. ČMKOS, PS. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1149&langId=en&idDataTable=90>

60 Framework of Actions on Youth Employment, Second Follow-up Report, Social Dialogue Committee, 2015.

DENMARK

Denmark enjoys a strong tradition of social dialogue and, as a result, Danish trade unions were **extensively involved** in youth employment policies. They were **invited by the government to participate** in all stages of the YG and the EAfA. Trade unions were **satisfied with their involvement** and the overall quality of all measures.

Context

Trade union affiliation rates in Denmark are very high and trade unions have strong influence both over government policies and the Danish labour market system. Traditionally, social partner organisations enjoy strong social dialogue, which has helped them to play a significant role in Danish policy-making.⁶¹ The largest national trade union confederation is the Danish Confederation of Trade Unions (Dk. *Land-sorganisationen i Danmark*, LO). This trade union has always been involved in ALMPs through national, regional and local councils⁶². In addition, Danish trade unions are present on VET institution boards, and are therefore well-positioned to provide support for VET-related measures. While youth unemployment in Denmark does not present a serious issue (it is not alarming compared to other European countries, even though youth unemployment is higher than the general unemployment percent – 10.1% compared with 3.9% in June 2018⁶³), school drop-out rates are more alarming. To tackle this issue, the Danish government and the trade unions are focusing their attention towards improving VET.

Level of involvement

Danish trade unions were involved in all stages of the YG. They were invited by the government to participate in all three stages primarily through stable tripartite bodies and/or working groups for the YG. LO representatives also said to have participated in the design phase through VET institution boards in helping to develop measures targeting NEETs. In the implementation phase this trade union was active by helping to provide NEETs with integrated service packages. LO was invited to consult with state institutions and evaluate the implementation process of the YG measures. The overall Danish trade union involvement in YG measures is strongly based on their traditional role in the policy-making process.

LO was involved in all stages of the EAfA. They were invited by the government to be partners of a national commitment and provide support in developing the existing VET system. Furthermore, this trade union is continuously working to improve VET and cooperates with the relevant ministries to evaluate the ongoing progress of such activities. LO was not involved in any QFT-related measures as they were not invited to participate. However, they are continuously present on VET and apprenticeship quality assessment on a national level.

Satisfaction with the level of involvement

Danish trade unions are satisfied with their involvement in both the YG and the EAfA.

Views on the quality of measures

Danish trade unions are generally satisfied with youth employment measure quality. However, trade union representatives expressed concerns that they could not see any particular results that either the YG or the EAfA has had on broader national policies.

61 Ibsen, C. L., *Trade Unions in Denmark*. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2012. Available at: <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id-moe/09431.pdf>

62 Bussi M., *Youth Guarantee in Europe*. ETUC, 2014.

63 Trading Economics, „Denmark Youth Unemployment Rate 1983-2018“: <https://tradingeconomics.com/denmark/youth-unemployment-rate>.

FINLAND

Previous studies⁶⁴ indicate that the Finnish trade union organisations (i.e. the Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions (Fi. *Suomen Ammattiliittojen Keskusjärjestö/Finlands Fackförbunds Centralorganisation*, SAK), the Finnish Confederation of Professionals (Fi. *Toimihenkilökeskusjärjestö Tjänstemannacentralorganisatione*, STTK), and the Confederation of Unions for Academic Professionals (Fi. *Ammattijärjestöjen keskusjärjestö*, AKAVA)) were involved in the design, the implementation and the evaluation of YG in Finland and are said to be very satisfied with their role. Trade unions were involved at all levels, namely the national, regional and the local. The Finnish YG is structured around vocational education and skill acquisition. Trade unions were said to be a part of a working group for YG design, whereby Finnish trade unions pointed to a number of potential challenges for YG implementation. SAK was said to be involved in the bipartite agreements on youth employment and education. SAK also supported the YG through opinion papers, press releases and lobbying activities. However, other studies⁶⁵ suggest contradictory findings – that AKAVA is said not to have been involved in the implementation of the YG and that the Finnish trade unions in general did not have any representatives in the executive committee.

The Trade Union of Education (Fi. *Opetusalan Ammattijärjestö*, OAJ) in Finland also participated in the EAFa implementation by making a pledge⁶⁶ and committing to improving the VET system quality, apprenticeship and work-based learning in Finland, facilitating access to for further VET student learning and employability, and finally, ensuring quality teaching and supporting teachers and trainers in VET schools, apprenticeship and work-based learning.

FRANCE

French trade union organisations **were involved in youth employment measures in various degrees**. Traditionally trade unions exercise strong influence over labour market policies in France, and therefore **they have a strong capacity** to participate. Trade unions were **generally satisfied** with their involvement, because they managed to achieve positive results. The **quality of the measures** was also said to be **satisfactory**.

Context

Although not being among the EU countries with the highest trade union affiliation rates, French trade unions exercise strong influence on labour market policies. While this is mainly due to strong social dialogue traditions other factors also play a role⁶⁷. Since 2007 the government is legally obliged⁶⁸ to consult all social partners on industrial relations, employment policies or VET. Furthermore, trade union delegates represent all employees irrespective whether they are trade union members or not. This means that French trade unions are well-placed to influence decision-making when it comes to labour market policies. There are five major trade union confederations. The French Democratic Confederation of Labour (Fr. *Confédération française démocratique du travail*, CFDT) is the largest trade union organisation in France, while the General Confederation of Labour (Fr. *Confédération générale du travail*, CGT) and Workers' Force (Fr. *Force Ouvrière*,

64 Bussi M., *Youth Guarantee in Europe*. ETUC, 2014.

65 ETUC, *3 Years of Youth Guarantee: What Next? Annex: Country focus. A follow-up Report by the ETUC Youth Committee*. February 2017.

66 European Commission. European Alliance for Apprenticeships. Pledge. OAJ. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1149&langId=en&idDataTable=114>

67 ETUI. *France, Trade Unions*. 2016. Available at: <http://www.worker-participation.eu/National-Industrial-Relations/Countries/France/Trade-Unions>

68 LOI n° 2007-130 du 31 janvier 2007 de modernisation du dialogue social. Available at: <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000273405&dateTexte=&categorieLien=id>

FO) come second and third respectively in terms of members⁶⁹. French trade unions, while generally supportive of youth employment policy measures, were involved on unequal levels and expressed diverging opinions with respect to measure quality.

Level of involvement

The CFDT was not involved in the design or implementation of the YG due to a lack of coordination between stakeholders. Furthermore, YG was partly based on already existing measures that social partners had no part in negotiating. However, elsewhere⁷⁰ the CFDT representatives said they had been invited to participate on the Steering Committee for the YG, where they proposed ways to improve these measures. In addition, the CFDT negotiated in favour of extending the YG measures towards more young people and ensuring a satisfactory implementation mechanism through the so-called *Mission Locale*. Most importantly, the organisation was in favour of making the YG a universal right (in the framework of the adoption of the “El Khomri” Law on “work, modernizing social dialogue and securing career paths” in 2016). Furthermore, this organisation participated in the evaluation of the YG measures. It was invited by the government to participate, contracted by the European Commission and/or independent evaluators, and actively pursued activities outside ‘traditional’ ways of trade union involvement. The CFDT representatives took part in dedicated monitoring bodies, participated in consultations held by state institutions and independent experts, conducted their own evaluations and finally, publicly expressed opinions about the general success of the YG measures. Most importantly, this organisation published a White Book (Fr. *Livre Blanche*) on the YG implementation throughout France.

The CGT representatives said they had been involved in all stages of the YG alongside the National Federation of Mines and Energy (Fr. *Fédération nationale des mines et de l'énergie*, FNME, a trade union affiliated to CGT). However, there were no further comments upon the detailed activities this organisation was part of.

The FO was involved in all stages of the YG, because it was invited by the government to participate. During the design and the implementation stage this organisation was involved through participation in stable tripartite bodies and working groups. During the evaluation phase, it participated in dedicated monitoring bodies and publicly expressed opinions about the general success of the YG measures.

From all trade union organisations, only FO was involved in the EAfA. It made a commitment to the Alliance in partnership with an employer's organisation, namely the Group EDF France⁷¹. Together they agreed to promote and develop VET in France through a list of common objectives. The CFDT was not involved in this measure mainly due to a lack of coordination between stakeholders. Furthermore, the CFDT representatives stressed that there were very few French stakeholders involved because they were either not aware of its existence or did not know how to implement this measure.

While none of the trade union organisations were said to be directly involved in the QFT-related measures, the CFDT contributed substantially towards reaching agreements and adopting new legislative changes in the area of traineeship regulation. Their involvement is described in more detail in the case example on the Design and Implementation of the Quality Framework for Traineeships⁷².

Satisfaction with the level of involvement

The CFDT representatives said they had been satisfied with their involvement. The FO representatives said they had not reached the desired level of involvement during the design phase because their opinions were not taken into account. The FO members believe that YG educational measures should only be managed by public authorities. Unfortunately, private institutions are also included in delivering YG

69 ETUI. *France, Trade Unions*. 2016. Available at: <http://www.worker-participation.eu/National-Industrial-Relations/Countries/France/Trade-Unions>

70 During a follow-up interview, a CFDT representative said they had been involved.

71 European Commission. European Alliance for Apprenticeships. Pledge. Force Ouvrière. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1149&langId=en&idDataTable=118>

72 See also: case example on Mladi Plus (SI) and CFDT (FR).

training schemes, which results in unequal educational outcomes between youth. This organisation was satisfied with its involvement in the implementation phase, and somewhat satisfied with its involvement in the evaluation phase.

Views on the quality of measures

The CFDT representatives reported that while the YG measures were generally good, they also needed to be further developed to reach the targeted individuals. In addition, the CFDT members pointed out that the age range for those eligible for the YG was too small, while resources allocated towards this scheme were insufficient. Similarly, the EAfA measures were said to be good, and their main drawback consisted in the fact that apprenticeships were often viewed as a 'second-choice' educational pathway.

GERMANY

The main German trade union confederation was both **invited by the government to participate** and **actively pursued activities outside 'traditional' ways of trade union involvement**. It was active in **all stages of the YG** and the **implementation of the EAfA**. Trade union representatives were **dissatisfied with some aspects** of their involvement in the YG, and likewise, expressed **negative feedback** regarding YG **measure quality**.

Context

The largest trade union confederation is the German Trade Union Confederation (De. *Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund*, DGB), representing more than three-quarters of all German employees who are trade union affiliates.⁷³ There are another two trade union confederations and several independent trade unions, but they are much less involved in industrial relations and labour market policies. Some unions, such as IG Metall and ver.di, are very autonomous and exercise significant influence over various issues. In Germany, most tripartite bodies are part of institutions, which deal with the social security system and related issues⁷⁴. Both employer and trade union representatives are always present on the boards of such institutions.

Level of involvement

DGB was involved in all stages of the YG. They were invited by the government to participate and actively pursued activities outside 'traditional' ways of trade union involvement in all three stages of this measure. During the design phase, this confederation participated through stable tripartite bodies and working groups, semi-formal working groups, ad-hoc consultations and VET institution boards. It was active in developing the YG delivery scheme at both regional and sectoral levels, the system of identifying NEETs, and training curricula. However, DGB representatives explained that the trade union was active before the YG measures, because in Germany similar programmes already existed. Similarly, because the YG was more focused towards improving these measures in which the DGB had been involved, this trade union was involved in many implementation activities as well. These include cooperating with other organisations and promoting social dialogue, publishing press releases, position and opinion papers, undertaking lobbying activities, requesting information on YG developments, supervising implementation plans, providing NEETs with integrated packages of services and finally supporting training at company level. The DGB also organised an EU Youth Conference together with the ETUC Youth Committee in 2015.

73 Dribbusch H., Birke Peter. *Trade Unions in Germany. Organisation, Environment, Challenges*. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, May 2012. Available at: <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id-moe/09113-20120828.pdf>

74 Eurofound. *Living and working in Germany*. 18 October 2017. Available at: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/country/germany>

DGB was highly critical towards the YG measures, given that they were not new and there had been no substantial changes. The confederation expressed these opinions during the evaluation phase by participating in dedicated monitoring bodies and taking part in consultations.

DGB was invited to be partners of an EAfA pledge together with BASF works council⁷⁵. Their main role was to provide information to this council, which was then used to help negotiate a pledge. Generally, DGB is active in promoting better apprenticeship regulation and improving apprentice mobility in Europe. The confederation was also invited by the government to help promote the German apprenticeship system to other European countries. However, while DGB is generally supportive of this, it does not see it as means to tackle youth unemployment but rather as a way to improve apprenticeships in the long-run. A DGB affiliate, namely the German Education Union (De. *Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft*, GEW), also made an EAfA pledge in 2013⁷⁶. It made a commitment towards ensuring quality apprenticeship places in enterprises and improving the quality of teaching and training in VET.

During the evaluation stage, the DGB wrote a statement of German actions within the Europäische Ausbildungsallianz (German implementation program of the EAfA). They were also invited by third parties to provide feedback on the EAfA.

The DGB was not involved in any QFT-related activities given that there is already adequate legal traineeship regulation in Germany.

Satisfaction with the level of involvement

The DGB was only somewhat satisfied with its involvement in the design of the YG because they were only invited after the government issued their first draft to which only small changes were possible. The DGB representatives believe that earlier trade union involvement would have been beneficial for all stakeholders involved, including young people themselves.

DGB was satisfied with its involvement in the implementation phase, but only somewhat satisfied with their role during the evaluation phase. This was mainly due to the fact that DGB was rather critical towards YG measure results and as such, could not find an adequate platform to voice its concerns. A trade union representative indicated that a meeting to discuss the programme's effectiveness either with government authorities or other social partners would have helped.

Generally DGB was satisfied with its involvement in the EAfA, but pointed out that the government goals differed from trade union goals.

Views on the quality of measures

The German trade unions believe that YG measures are generally poor. Previous studies report that the DGB was unsatisfied with precarious working conditions and low apprenticeship and internship quality. Furthermore, DGB also criticised the so-called 'transition programmes' because they only provide a temporary solution to youth unemployment.

The DGB representatives believe that the YG ought to operate as an investment programme and offer long-term solutions instead of focusing on short-term job creation schemes. The age range for those eligible for the YG ought to be extended. Finally, the YG in Germany should be focused on developing new measures rather than supporting already existing ones.

The DGB representatives reported that any issues which could seem related to the EAfA were not actually due to the quality of this measure itself but rather were more general (e. g. low apprentice wages). The DGB also stressed that companies needed to be made aware of the EAfA.

75 European Commission. European Alliance for Apprenticeships. Pledge. BASF. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1149&langId=en&idDataTable=4>

76 European Commission. European Alliance for Apprenticeships. Pledge. GEW. Available at : <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1149&langId=en&idDataTable=52>

GREECE

Previous studies indicate⁷⁷ that the General Confederation of Greek Workers (Gr. Γενική Συνομοσπονδία Εργατών Ελλάδας, GSEE) was fully supportive towards YG measures. However, this organisation was not invited to participate in either the design, implementation or evaluation stage and, as a result, was dissatisfied with its involvement. In addition, this confederation reported that YG policy measures were insufficient to tackle high youth unemployment rates in Greece. Other issues, such as precarious working conditions and early school leaving, were also said to be highly problematic and, according to the GSEE representatives, remained unaddressed.

Greece introduced legislative changes to enable unemployed secondary and higher education graduates to gain work experience under the Voucher Programme, which is compatible with the QFT. No trade union representatives reported that they had been involved in the design, implementation or evaluation of this measure.

HUNGARY

Hungarian **trade unions were not invited by government** to take part in youth employment policies due to lack of willingness of the Government to establish an effective Social Dialogue with the trade unions. However, the trade unions were **generally supportive of such measures** and undertook various activities available to them to contribute. As a result, Hungarian trade unions are **only somewhat satisfied** with their involvement and furthermore, believe that **the quality of the measures could be improved**.

Context

Hungarian trade unions are very fragmented and suffer from weak social dialogue with government authorities. Before 2013, there were six trade union confederations competing for trade union membership. However, after some trade unions experienced what they called a “divisive” government policy towards the trade unions, three confederations decided to set up an umbrella confederation, namely the National Confederation of Hungarian Trade Unions (Hu. *Magyar Szakszervezeti Szövetség*, MASZSZ). The three confederations that belong to this single body still retain a lot of independence from each other⁷⁸. The Forum for the Co-operation of Trade Unions (Hu. *Szakszervezetek Együttműködési Fóruma*, SZE) was one of the original three trade unions that decided to join this organisation, but revised its decision in 2015 and quit MASZSZ to remain independent and represent the interest of public service workers. It is the only trade union that expressed its opinions on participating in youth employment policy measures in Hungary. While it remains unclear whether other trade unions were involved, it is likely that due to poor social dialogue, most of them were excluded from participating.

77 ETUC, *3 Years of Youth Guarantee: What Next? Annex: Country focus. A follow-up Report by the ETUC Youth Committee*. February 2017.

78 ETUI. *Hungary, Trade Unions*. 2016. Available at: <https://www.worker-participation.eu/www.worker-participation.eu/index.php/National-Industrial-Relations/Countries/Hungary/Trade-Unions>

Level of involvement

The SZEZ said it had not been involved in the design of the YG and that it needed an invitation by the government to participate. Elsewhere⁷⁹, other trade union representatives said that they were involved in this phase but that they were not satisfied with their role. The SZEZ was active in the implementation of the YG mostly through its advocacy and lobbying activities. This trade union often shared information of the YG via its social media channels, published press releases, position and opinion papers, as well as organised a conference discussing the YG. In addition, it participated in semi-formal working groups for the YG and continuously requested up-to-date information on programme developments. However, other data⁸⁰ suggests that Hungarian trade unions were not invited alongside employer organisations to be a part of the Youth Expert Steering Committee assigned with controlling the YG and ensuring its planning, management and monitoring⁸¹. The SZEZ representatives informed that one seat for trade unions was granted in the mentioned Committee (to be held by MASZSZ in representation of all the unions). They however noted that to their best knowledge, the committee has never been called together and did not have a single meeting. This inconsistency of data could be related to overall trade union fragmentation issues and their resulting weakened positions. The SZEZ representatives said they were invited to participate at the conference on YG evaluation organised by government authorities. Furthermore, trade unions held meetings and events to discuss the YG measure effectiveness.

Hungarian trade unions were not involved in the EAfA. The SZEZ said it needed an invitation by the national authorities or the European Commission to participate. Likewise, trade unions were not involved in any QFT-related measures. The SZEZ representatives believe that an invitation from either government authorities or the European Commission would have been sufficient support to become involved.

Satisfaction with the level of involvement

The SZEZ was only somewhat satisfied with its involvement in the implementation phase of the YG. This was mainly because the government was planning to assemble the YG Monitoring Committee, but did not follow through. Relevant information on the progress of YG implementation should have been discussed in this Committee. The SZEZ was also only somewhat satisfied with its involvement in the evaluation phase. They believe that a more active information flow and a greater level of trade unions involvement were needed. Generally, Hungarian trade unions said that the social partners should be more involved, but the government needs to adopt a different approach towards social dialogue for this to happen.

Views on the quality of measures

While the SZEZ representatives consider YG measures to be of good quality, they nonetheless identified several drawbacks. The measure delivery was considerably delayed and the number of NEETs reached was very low. Measures that specifically target NEETs will only become available from 2018 onwards. Furthermore, the age range for those eligible for the YG is too small and should be extended to cover those until 29 years of age. More sustainable financing and adequate human resources would help to deliver better tailored offers to youth.

The SZEZ representatives consider EAfA measures also to be good quality but nevertheless point out that not all young people enjoy equal opportunities to access apprenticeship schemes: some groups are clearly under-represented based on gender and race. QFT in Hungary currently does not offer sufficient guarantees or social protection, thus while the measure itself is regarded as good quality, there are other issues surrounding traineeships to deal with.

79 ETUC, *3 Years of Youth Guarantee: What Next? Annex: Country focus. A follow-up Report by the ETUC Youth Committee*. February 2017.

80 Ibid.

81 Ibid.

IRELAND

Irish trade unions were either **invited by the government to participate** in youth employment policies or participated via **other means available to them**. While the exact extent to which trade unions were involved remains unclear, all trade unions appear **unsatisfied with their level of involvement**. The measures themselves are considered rather good, but trade union representatives believe **there is considerable room for improvement** nonetheless.

Context

There is only one trade union confederation in Ireland, namely the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), consisting of 48 affiliated trade unions. The largest of these is the Services Industrial Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU). While in the past trade unions in Ireland were influential, their status has been declining over the last decade⁸². Separate TUs report having participated in different activities but nonetheless appear to be equally dissatisfied with their involvement.

Level of involvement

The SIPTU representatives said to have not been involved in the design of the YG measures but to have participated in the implementation and evaluation stages. Previous studies indicate⁸³ that the SIPTU supported the YG through press releases, lobbying, and campaigning activities.

The ICTU representatives said to have been involved in YG measure design and implementation. They were invited by the government to participate in both these stages. During the YG design, the ICTU participated through stable tripartite bodies and/or working groups, while during implementation it supervised YG delivery plans and delivered some training activities in the ICTU training centres⁸⁴. YG evaluation was undertaken by other stakeholders, namely the Department of Social Protection, and therefore the ICTU said to not have been a part of it⁸⁵.

Other studies⁸⁶ report that Irish trade unions participated in the first YG pilot project, namely the Ballymun pilot YG. They participated in the design and the implementation of this project. However, trade unions report to not have been adequately involved in the overall design of the YG in Ireland because the Irish YG was mainly focused on internships and therefore focused on the needs of employer organisations.

While the ICTU was said not to be involved in any stages of the EAfA because they were not invited to participate, an independent ICTU affiliate, namely the Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI) has submitted an EAfA pledge⁸⁷. The TUI committed to promoting apprenticeship quality in Ireland and Europe through an extensive list of activities⁸⁸. These activities include lobbying, campaigning and participating in EAfA-related discussions as well as organising an EAfA conference in Ireland and assisting the European VET conference in 2018.

Irish trade unions were not involved in any QFT-related measures as they were not invited to participate. An invitation from the government would have been a welcome and encouraging gesture for the unions to participate.

82 ETUI. *Ireland, Trade Unions*. 2016. Available at: <https://www.worker-participation.eu/National-Industrial-Relations/Countries/Ireland/Trade-Unions>

83 Busi, M. *The Youth Guarantee*, ETUC, 2014.

84 This information was later denied by another ICTU representative during a follow-up call.

85 Busi, M. *The Youth Guarantee*, ETUC, 2014..

86 European Commission. *Ballymun Youth Guarantee Pilot Project*, March 2016.

87 For more information, see: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1149&langId=en&idDataTable=275>

88 For an extensive list, see the TUI pledge (cf. Above).

Satisfaction with the level of involvement

The ICTU was not satisfied with its involvement in the YG design and evaluation stages and only somewhat satisfied with its role in the implementation stage. The main issue Irish trade unions had with the design phase was that they only had a degree of national rather than local engagement. The ICTU representatives said that this kind of engagement would have been more beneficial because it would have enabled ICTU to contribute to activities directly where they felt it was most necessary. During the implementation stage the ICTU representatives expressed a wish to have had more financial resources to deliver the training they felt was necessary and which they could not deliver at their training centres. The ICTU representatives said that there was a requirement for trade unions to be involved in the YG evaluation stage but that it had not been respected. Furthermore, ICTU noticed that the pilot scheme did not help those it was intended for and as such, the scheme should have been redesigned to help more young people reconnect with the labour force.

Elsewhere⁸⁹ the SIPTU representatives said they were barely involved in the YG measures and called for increasing their participation. This trade union claimed that their participation in the YG was weaker compared to their involvement in other ALMPs.

Views on the quality of measures

The ICTU considers YG measures to be good quality but have also expressed some ideas to improve the YG. According to ICTU representatives, the YG measures need more financial resources and better defined learning objectives or outcomes for training. In addition, more individually tailored programmes that target disadvantaged and marginalised youth need to be included amongst the YG measures.

The ICTU representatives criticised QFT insofar that currently Ireland lacks traineeship legislation. This results in several issues, namely that trainees often provide a service equivalent to an employee but do not receive remuneration, they linger in traineeship positions for too long and the traineeship schemes themselves lack of clearly defined learning objectives.

ITALY

Due to limited social dialogue, Italian trade union organisations were **either not involved** in youth employment policies, or they were involved to a very limited extent by **pursuing activities outside of 'traditional' ways of trade union involvement**. Level of **satisfaction varied** between trade union organisations and the measures within which they had been involved. Trade unions were **rather critical** towards most measure quality.

Context

Italian trade unions are struggling to undertake consistent action due to significant divisions within the Italian labour market. First of all, almost all Italian economy is made up of small businesses with many employees working under atypical employment relationships and especially fixed-term contracts, making it difficult for trade unions to adequately represent the majority of employees. The north/south economic divide is also significant, whereby such issues as youth unemployment and a high level of corruption are significantly more serious issues in the south rather than the north of the country. Finally, social dialogue with government authorities and amongst the trade union confederations themselves is marked by

89 ETUC. *3 Years of Youth Guarantee: What next? Annex: Country Focus*. A follow-up report by the ETUC Youth Committee, ETUC, ETUI, 2017

constant conflict and tension. All these factors make Italian trade union participation in labour market policies highly problematic⁹⁰. The three main Italian trade union confederations, namely the Italian Confederation of Workers' Trade Unions (It. *Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori*, CISL), the Italian General Confederation of Labour (It. *Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro*, CGIL) and the Italian Labour Union (It. *Unione Italiana del Lavoro*, UIL) together with the Confindustria (the umbrella employers' organisation) are the bodies involved in social dialogue and collective bargaining⁹¹.

Level of involvement

Two Italian trade union confederations (CISL and CGIL) were not involved in the design or the implementation of the YG measures⁹². UIL reported a limited involvement. Trade union representatives said that they had not been invited to participate by the government. CISL representatives also indicated other issues such as conflicting priorities between trade union and employer organisations, and a lack of coordination between stakeholders during these YG stages. However, trade unions previously⁹³ said to have been involved in YG design through lightly formalised institutions after the government developed the first draft. Similarly, previous studies⁹⁴ claim that the CISL, the CGIL and UIL (especially through its regional and federal structures) were involved in distributing information and providing guidance for young jobseekers during the implementation phase. Yet, according to the CGIL representatives, regional authorities were responsible for YG implementation and they did not consult the trade unions. Both confederations expressed a wish to be invited by the government to participate in social dialogue.

The CISL was invited by the government to participate in the evaluation of YG measures. However, this trade union confederation also conducted own evaluations, publicly expressed opinions about the general success of YG implementation as well as its drawbacks. The CGIL, on the other hand, actively pursued activities outside of 'traditional' ways of trade union involvement. This confederation also conducted own independent evaluations and publicly expressed opinions on YG measures. UIL also conducted own evaluations especially at regional level, with the objective to evaluate the results achieved by the YG, at local level.

Both trade union confederations did not participate in the EAfA as they had not been invited to participate. The CGIL representatives also indicated that conflicting priorities between trade union and employer organisations was also an obstacle to participate. An invitation from the government authorities or the European Commission would have been a welcoming support.

The CISL participated in the QFT-related measures by actively pursuing activities outside of 'traditional' ways of trade union involvement. This confederation was involved in the design phase by participating in social partner negotiations for a possible QFT design at the national level. During the implementation phase it submitted proposals to improve traineeship legislation and drew publicity to unwanted outcomes of low quality traineeships. Finally, during the evaluation phase, the CISL published a report on adopted policies, analysing the benefits of adopted policies.

Satisfaction with the level of involvement

The CISL was not sufficiently satisfied with its involvement in YG measures because no consultations with government and stakeholders had been held. The CGIL, on the other hand, was somewhat satisfied, even though its representatives said that national evaluations need to be more detailed regarding YG capacities of helping young people. Furthermore, this trade union confederation calls for stricter programme monitoring

90 Namtuh, M. *Trade Unions in Italy*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, January 2013. Available at: <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id-moe/09590.pdf>

91 ETUI. *Italy, Trade Unions*. 2016. Available at: <https://www.worker-participation.eu/National-Industrial-Relations/Countries/Italy/Trade-Unions>

92 Another major organisation, namely the Italian Labour Union (it. *Unione Italiana del Lavoro*, UIL) did not respond to any survey questions.

93 Bussi M., *Youth Guarantee in Europe*. ETUC, 2014.

94 Ibid.

at the European level so that governments are pressured to engage in social dialogue, as the measures would be evaluated on a uniform model. The CISL was satisfied with its involvement in the QFT-related measures. The UIL was not sufficiently satisfied with its involvement in YG measures, because the level of involvement has been limited.

Views on the quality of measures

In previous studies⁹⁵ Italian trade unions said that they generally supported the YG measures, although they criticised the fact that the maximum age to benefit from the YG is set at 25 rather than at 29. However, in a previous ETUC report⁹⁶ they claimed that the YG measures were significantly delayed, their quality was poor, the YG goals and implementation were politicised, and the allocated resources were not well-spent. In the most recent survey, the CISL representatives said that the quality of YG measures was poor because they did not offer long-term solutions and work opportunities, while the resources allocated to this scheme were insufficient. CGIL and UIL representatives also emphasised that the YG measures should be focused on helping young people obtain the skills necessary for the labour market instead of subsidizing temporary employment of young people. UIL said that considering the considerable number of traineeships schemes provided under the YG, it's crucial to have some monitoring data (also qualitative data) in order to be able to evaluate the effectiveness of these measures.

The quality of EAfA and QFT measures was said to be adequate. The CGIL said that apprentice training was an important factor to industry development and therefore the EAfA measures too were important. Besides, the CISL pointed out that apprentices in some sectors were subject to high-risk working environments and that they often lacked mobility opportunities in Europe. The CSIL representatives, while generally satisfied with QFT-related measures, said that existing traineeship legislation was not being sufficiently implemented and, as a result, the QFT did not sufficiently guarantee social protection. However, elsewhere, Italian trade unions reported that they did not see any benefits to traineeships, as less than 10% of traineeships in Italy turn into permanent employment contracts. On the other hand, they have also said that the content of the QFT does not go far enough and should include a requirement for traineeships to be a part of education curricula.

LATVIA

Generally, it seems that trade unions were involved to some degree, and possibly **underwent a change of opinion** regarding their **satisfaction with the level of involvement and measure quality**.

Context

The main trade union confederation in Latvia, namely the Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia (Lv. Latvijas Brīvo arodbiedrību savienība, LBAS) is the only trade union confederation that unites around 20 individual trade unions. In 2014, there were another 216 individual trade unions registered in Latvia, 197 of which were operational and engaged in various activities⁹⁷. Because of the lack of representativeness of individual trade unions, they have limited influence on the economic and social policy developments. As the major trade union confederation in the country, the LBAS, on the other hand, is relatively influential

95 ETUI. Bussi, M., Geyer, L. *Youth Guarantees and recent developments on measures against youth unemployment. A mapping exercise*. Background analysis. 2013

96 ETUC, *3 Years of Youth Guarantee: What Next? Annex: Country focus. A follow-up Report by the ETUC Youth Committee*. February 2017.

97 ETUI. *Latvia, Trade Unions*. 2016. Available at: <http://www.worker-participation.eu/National-Industrial-Relations/Countries/Latvia/Trade-Unions>

and often participates in labour market policy developments through the National Tripartite Co-operation Council, state and municipal institutions, and courts. However, information regarding the LBAS involvement in youth employment policies is inconsistent, because opinions on their participation diverge amongst the trade union members themselves.

Level of involvement

Information regarding trade union participation in youth employment policies varies between previous studies, the survey conducted in 2017, and further follow-up calls. Earlier, Latvian trade unions said that they had been involved in the YG design phase through lightly formalised institutions due to their own initiative⁹⁸. Yet, during the survey, the LBAS representatives claimed that they had participated in stable tripartite bodies and/or YG working groups by government invitation, and also took part in developing YG delivery schemes at both regional and sectoral levels.

Similarly, in earlier studies, Latvian trade unions said that they were not involved in YG implementation except for publishing position papers and engaging in lobbying activities⁹⁹. However, most recently, the LBAS representatives indicated that their confederation was invited by the government to participate in a very wide range of activities. They said to have participated through stable tripartite bodies and/or YG working groups as well as semi-formal YG working groups. The LBAS was active in creating networks, cooperating with other organisations, requesting up-to-date information on YG developments, supervising implementation plans, identifying NEETs and providing them with integrated packages of services, and finally, actively promoting the social dialogue on youth unemployment, publishing press releases, position and opinion papers.

The LBAS was involved in YG evaluation both by having been invited by the government to participate and by actively pursuing activities outside 'traditional' ways of trade union involvement. Both earlier studies and most recent information suggests that LBAS participated in dedicated monitoring bodies, consulted with state institutions and independent experts responsible for evaluation and, in addition, publicly expressed opinions on the general YG success.

The LBAS was invited by national authorities and other organisations to be a partner in the EAfA Latvian national commitment. The confederation emphasised the importance of stronger links between education institutions and the labour market, improved VET attractiveness and training quality. Latvian trade unions committed to improving young people's skills and helping to increase their employment opportunities. The LBAS representatives said that they were also invited by the European Commission and/or independent evaluators to provide feedback. The LBAS representatives said that work-based learning schemes need to be improved, while the VET system must be adjusted to meet labour market demands.

Latvian trade unions were not involved in any QFT-related measures because they said that Latvia already had adequate legal traineeship regulation. However, given more support, such as an invitation by national authorities, European Commission or other organisations, or alternatively, more opportunities for social dialogue, the LBAS might have become more engaged.

Satisfaction with the level of involvement

In previous studies¹⁰⁰, the LBAS representatives said that its views on YG design had not been taken into account and, as a result, the confederation was not satisfied with its involvement. However, during the most recent survey, they claimed to have reached the desired level of involvement. The LBAS representatives have previously expressed similar dissatisfaction with their involvement in implementation and evaluation, but later said that they had reached the desired level of involvement in both policy stages.

The LBAS also reported being satisfied with its involvement in the EAfA.

98 Bussi M., *Youth Guarantee in Europe*. ETUC, 2014.

99 Ibid.

100 Ibid.

Views on the quality of measures

While previously the LBAS identified a number of problems with YG measures¹⁰¹, in the most recent survey LBAS respondents claimed that the YG measure quality was very good. The LBAS previously said¹⁰² that YG measures were too focused on career guidance and VET, instead of focusing on real employment opportunities. In addition, the delivery measures were delayed, young people satisfaction was not addressed and there were too few YG advertising campaigns. No problems with either EAfA or QFT measure quality were reported.

LITHUANIA

Overall, it seems that trade union involvement in youth employment policies was either **merely symbolic or completely absent**, and as a result, trade unions were **dissatisfied with their role**. Likewise, trade union representatives **criticised the quality of the measures** and said more could be done to improve them.

Context

The Lithuanian Trade Union Confederation (Lt. *Lietuvos Profesinių Sąjungų Konfederacija*, LPSK) is the major trade union confederation comprised of 25 affiliates. It is represented at the National Tripartite Council and participates in national discussions on labour market policies and industrial relations. However, given that trade union affiliation rates in Lithuania are very low, trade unions have rather limited power¹⁰³. Generally, Lithuanian trade unions do not participate extensively in labour market or youth employment policies.

Level of involvement

The LSKP was invited by the government to participate in the YG design through stable tripartite bodies and/or YG working groups. However, in the past¹⁰⁴ Lithuanian trade unions said that they had been involved in the design of the YG through their own efforts. While they were informed, consulted and formally negotiated with, this only took place once the government had already issued the first YG draft. The LSKP representatives said that they were not involved in the YG implementation as there was a lack of coordination between stakeholders and a lack of YG schemes that trade unions could use. Lithuanian trade unions said they needed an invitation by the government to participate in social dialogue or an invitation by any other organisation to take part in the YG implementation stage. The government authorities extended an invitation to the LSKP to take part in the YG evaluation stage and, as a result, the confederation participated in dedicated monitoring bodies.

In the most recent survey, a LSKP representative indicated that the confederation was not involved in any EAfA activities because it had not been invited to participate. However, in 2013, the LSKP in partnership with the Federation of Lithuanian Education and Science Trade Unions (Lt. *Lietuvos švietimo ir mokslo profesinių sąjungų federacija*, LSMPFS) submitted a pledge whereby they committed to undertake a number of activities¹⁰⁵. Both trade unions pledged to raise awareness about the EAfA campaign in Lithuania, disseminate best practices on successful apprenticeships and cooperate with ETUC and other educational federations in order to help implement the initiative. Furthermore, these trade unions are actively working to ensure apprenticeship placement quality and improve the quality of VET via multiple available means.

101 ETUC, *3 Years of Youth Guarantee: What Next? Annex: Country focus. A follow-up Report by the ETUC Youth Committee*. February 2017.

102 Ibid.

103 Eurofound. *Living and working in Lithuania*. 18 October 2017. Available at <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/country/lithuania#actors-and-institutions>

104 Bussi M., *Youth Guarantee in Europe*. ETUC, 2014.

105 European Commission. European Alliance for Apprenticeships. Pledge. LPSK and FLETSU. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1149&langId=en&idDataTable=51>

Lithuanian trade unions were not involved in any QFT-related measures as they had not been invited to participate. The LSKP representative said that either opportunities for social dialogue with employers' associations or an invitation by the government or other organisations would have been sufficient support to become more actively involved.

Satisfaction with the level of involvement

While in previous studies¹⁰⁶ the Lithuanian trade unions reported to have been satisfied with their involvement in the YG design, in the most recent survey the LSKP representative said that they only somewhat reached the desired level of involvement. They also only somewhat reached the desired level of involvement in the YG evaluation stage. As such, receiving an invitation to participate in the tripartite committee, was already a significant step forward, but nonetheless did not constitute adequate involvement.

Views on the quality of measures

The LSKP identified YG measure quality as poor. It claims that these measures do not offer long-term solutions and work opportunities, provide only low quality internships, and lack clearly defined learning objectives or training outcomes. Furthermore, there was said to be too much emphasis on career guidance and too little attention given to actual employment opportunities.

While Lithuanian trade unions regard EAfA measures to be good, they have nonetheless identified a number of issues. First of all, not all groups of young people have equal opportunities to access apprenticeships schemes based on gender and race. Furthermore, many apprenticeship schemes do not receive adequate funding with costs not equitably shared between employers and public authorities. Finally, apprentices are paid less than the minimum legal wage and are often enrolled in schemes that lack clearly defined learning objectives.

The LSKP representatives were disappointed with QFT measure quality in Lithuania. They expressed concerns over several issues, namely that trainees often provide services equivalent to that of an employee but do not receive any remuneration and linger in such insecure positions for too long. Furthermore, traineeships lack clearly defined learning objectives and do not lead to long-term employment.

LUXEMBOURG

The Luxembourg Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (Lu. *Lëtzebuenger Chrëschtliche Gewerkschaftsbond*, LCGB) was invited to participate both in the design and implementation phases of YG. During the design phase, this confederation took part in stable tripartite bodies and YG working groups as well as ad-hoc consultations and hearings. It also organised a round table discussion on apprenticeships, and sought to set up an employment contract that targets young people with little or no qualifications. The LCGB representatives did not provide any details on their involvement in the implementation stage, and further indicated that measure evaluation had not yet begun.

Previous studies¹⁰⁷ indicate that another trade union confederation, namely the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions of Luxembourg (Lu. *Onofhängege Gewerkschaftsbond Lëtzebuerg*, OGBL) was not involved in any stage of the YG measures. However, this confederation was active in publishing press releases and position papers to support the implementation of YG measures in Luxembourg. In addition, OGBL representatives said elsewhere that they played an active role in the implementation and monitoring of traineeship quality, while encouraging trainees to report any exploitative traineeship arrangement to employer's trade union representative.

¹⁰⁶ Bussi M., *Youth Guarantee in Europe*. ETUC, 2014.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

MALTA

Given high trade union affiliation rates in Malta, they enjoy considerable influence over labour market policies. Hence, while at first **participation in some policy stages was disorganised and uneven**, the government made an effort to include trade union representatives. All trade unions were **generally satisfied** with their participation in youth policy measures. Trade union representatives also **expressed positive feedback towards measure quality**. However, several aspects **still remain problematic**, and therefore, trade union **representatives called for measure improvement**.

Context

There are three trade union confederations in Malta, namely the General Workers' Union (GWU), the Confederation of Malta Trade Unions (CMTU), and Forum Unions Maltin (FORUM), which was set up in 2004. Generally, trade unions enjoy considerable influence over the Maltese labour market relations and the Maltese economy, given that trade union affiliation rates in Malta are very high (over 50%)¹⁰⁸. All social partners participate in the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development, a national tripartite body that issues opinions and recommendations to government authorities on social issues and economic policy.

Level of involvement

The all confederations (the GWU and the CMTU) report to have been involved in the design of the YG through participation in stable tripartite bodies and YG working groups, as well as ad-hoc consultations and hearings. They were invited by the government to participate and were also active in pursuing activities outside of 'traditional' ways of trade union involvement. The YG was implemented and actively delivered by one of the confederations, namely the CMTU. (The FORUM, on the contrary, did not participate in the design and implementation stages of the YG, but was invited by the government to participate in the evaluation of the measures. Finally, (all) confederations said that they needed an invitation from the government, the European Commission or other organisations to become involved in those policy stages in which they did not participate.

An invitation from either national authorities, the European Commission or other organisations was identified as the desired form of support. The EAfA in Malta was issued through an expression of interest. One confederation, namely the GWU submitted a pledge and was involved in both the implementation and the evaluation of the EAfA. This confederation was invited to lead a pledge¹⁰⁹ and to be partner of a national commitment. Another confederation, namely the FORUM submitted its pledge to the EAfA in 2013¹¹⁰. The FORUM has been carrying out multiple activities in order to fulfil its commitment, including participation in two national committees on apprenticeships, which aim to improve apprenticeship legal framework. However, no feedback was received.

The FORUM representatives said that they were not involved in any QFT-related measures, given that Malta already enjoys adequate legal traineeship regulation. However, the FORUM representative also said that an invitation from other organisations to participate or more social dialogue opportunities with employer organisations would have been welcome.

The GWU was involved in all stages of the QFT. During the design phase it was invited to participate in public consultations between the social partners and the European Commission, while during implementation, it was active through direct participation in creating a quality framework for traineeships. The GWU members also issued proposals to improve traineeship legislation.

108 <https://www.worker-participation.eu/National-Industrial-Relations/Countries/Malta/Trade-Unions>

109 See more at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1149&langId=en&idDataTable=251>

110 See more at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1149&langId=en&idDataTable=50>

The CMTU was also actively involved specifically in the enacting of the Skills Council together with the other social partners.

Given high trade union affiliation rates in Malta, they enjoy considerable influence over labour market policies. Hence, while at first participation in some policy stages was disorganised and uneven, the government made an effort to include trade union representatives. All trade unions were generally satisfied with their participation in youth policy measures. Trade union representatives also expressed positive feedback towards measure quality. However, several aspects still remain problematic, and therefore, trade union representatives called for measure improvement.

Satisfaction with the level of involvement

All representatives said that they were satisfied with their involvement in the YG policy measures. However, the GWU also said that more consultations were needed to improve activities and the overall direction of YG development.

Views on the quality of measures

The FORUM representatives said that the YG measures were a good start, while the GWU and CMTU representatives claimed that the Youth Guarantee had a marked improvement over the years. Currently the youth guarantee offers NEEs the opportunity to be given training in soft skills and are then introduced to a work scheme for 14 weeks.

All representatives reported that the EAfA measure quality was adequate. However, all organisations indicated a number of issues, which pertain to work-based learning in Malta, these being:

- The GWU representative said that apprentices are often paid less than the minimum legal wage and are sometimes bullied at work, without any opportunities to speak up; similarly,
- The FORUM representative said that apprentices did not receive fair remuneration and that due to a lack of clear definition of apprenticeships, their rights and obligations remained unclear;

CMTU claim that while apprentices do get paid, they are not paid adequately, certain other training lack apprentice schemes. Furthermore, the FORUM also stressed that not all groups of young people benefited from apprenticeships due to limited opportunities (based on gender and race.)

All representatives reported that the QFT measure quality was adequate. However, the GWU criticised traineeships, given that they did not lead to long-term job retention, while the FORUM indicated that trainees suffered from precarious working conditions.

THE NETHERLANDS

Previous studies¹¹¹ indicate that the Federation of Dutch Trade Unions (NL. *Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging*, FNV) was not involved in the design or the evaluation of the YG measures. However, this trade union organisation was generally supportive towards the YG and participated in its implementation. The FNV Youth division, together with the Tilburg University, ran a grant scheme that enabled young graduates to get six months of paid work experience¹¹². The FNV representatives said that the YG measures were positive insofar as they provided young people with work experience, matched young people with employers and reduced drop-out rates. However, they also stressed that the quality of job offers should be improved¹¹³.

Traineeship regulations within the Netherlands comply with the QFT, because trainees are regarded as regular employees in matters of social protection. They are covered by health/accident insurance and working conditions are respected.

The General Union of Education Personnel (NL. *Algemene Onderwijsbond*, AOb) participated in the EAfA by submitting their pledge in 2013¹¹⁴. The AOb is actively undertaking activities in order to fulfil its commitment.

FNV representatives argued however that it exists in The Netherlands another transition scheme "stages", which usually offer much less security and are often framed within the scope of the national implementation of European youth employment policies.

FNV expressed that one of the reasons about the existence of this practice in the Netherlands in large is part due to the lack of definitional clarity about traineeships, internships and work placements.

To ensure that young people experience a fair transition to the labor market, FNV claims that it is crucial that clear definitions and distinctions are formulated on a policy level.

FNV has therefore worked on taking the steps for such a clarification at European level (through the Young European Council 2017). FNV also launched a website to gather more data on the exploitation of the above-mentioned schemes (<https://meldpuntstagemisbruik.nl/>). It concerns internships and work placements, in which recent graduates often do exactly the same work they would as a fully-fledged employee yet are only paid a fraction of a normal salary.

NORWAY

The Confederation of Unions for Professionals (No. *Utdanningsgruppernes Hovedorganisasjon*, Unio) participated in the EAfA by submitting a pledge in 2015¹¹⁵. This organisation is working towards improving the quality of apprenticeship placements in cooperation with the Norwegian Government and the Social Partners. Its members are mainly active through carrying out information campaigns and attempting to increase apprenticeship placements wherever they can.

111 Bussi M., *Youth Guarantee in Europe*. ETUC, 2014.

112 ETUC, *3 Years of Youth Guarantee: What Next? Annex: Country focus. A follow-up Report by the ETUC Youth Committee*. February 2017.

113 Ibid.

114 European Commission. European Alliance for Apprenticeships. Pledge. AOb. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1149&langId=en&idDataTable=55>

115 European Commission. European Alliance for Apprenticeships. Pledge. Unio. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1149&langId=en&idDataTable=108>

POLAND

Polish trade unions were involved in some policy measures by **actively pursuing activities outside of 'traditional' ways of trade union involvement**, while in other cases **they were invited by the government to participate**. They were **only somewhat satisfied** with their involvement, given that the government's wish to engage in social dialogue was limited. Trade union representatives expressed mostly **negative feedback toward measure quality**.

Context

There are three main trade union organisations in Poland: OPZZ, NZSS Solidarność (Solidarity) and FZZ - Forum, but many employees are also affiliated to smaller, independent unions. All three organisations participate in the Social Dialogue Council, a national tripartite body. While traditionally, trade unions in Poland were very influential, over the last decade their influence has declined. Trade union affiliation rates are low, and cooperation between them is limited¹¹⁶. As such, trade union influence is also limited when it comes to participating in active labour market policies, including youth employment policies. Nonetheless, the NZSS 'Solidarity' was quite actively engaged and their efforts are described in more detail in the case example on Wide Trade Union Engagement in Youth Employment Policies¹¹⁷.

Level of involvement

Members of the NZSS 'Solidarity' said they had not been involved in the design or the implementation of the YG. They were not invited to participate by the government and were only consulted to a limited extent (there was no in-depth debate with the social partners, e.g. in tripartite Social Dialogue Council) and therefore, would require an invitation to participate in social dialogue as a first step. The NZSS 'Solidarity' was involved in the evaluation of the YG. This organisation actively pursued activities outside of 'traditional' ways of trade union involvement by participating in dedicated monitoring bodies and publicly expressing opinions about the general success of YG implementation and the drawbacks of the implemented measures.

The NZSS 'Solidarity' representatives indicated that its National Education Section was involved in many activities relating to the EAfA. This trade union organisation was invited by the government to participate as partners of the Polish national commitment and they were actively self-involved by making its own EAfA pledge¹¹⁸.

The NZSS 'Solidarity' was not involved in any stage of the QFT-related measures mainly because it was not consulted or invited to participate by the government or the European Commission. However, trade union representatives also said that in Poland there is a lack of high quality traineeship schemes (there are many traineeships offered by the PES, however, they are of very low quality), and indicated that it was actively promoting various activities related to the implementation of QFT.¹¹⁹

Satisfaction with the level of involvement

The NZSS 'Solidarity' representative said that the organisation somewhat reached the desired level of involvement in the YG. The organisation called for stronger cooperation with government authorities in the YG monitoring body and in the Social Dialogue Council.

116 ETUI. *Poland, Trade Unions*. 2016. Available at: <https://www.worker-participation.eu/National-Industrial-Relations/Countries/Poland/Trade-Unions>

117 See also: case example on NSZZ 'Solidarity' (PL).

118 European Commission. European Alliance for Apprenticeships. Pledge. National Education Section of NSZZ Solidarność. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1149&langId=en&idDataTable=49>

119 See also: case example on NSZZ 'Solidarity' (PL).

Views on the quality of measures

The NZSS 'Solidarity' representative criticised YG measures and said that their quality was poor. First of all, the YG did not offer long-term solutions and work opportunities and secondly, it placed too much emphasis on career guidance rather than actual employment opportunities. The NZSS 'Solidarity' stressed that YG measures should be more focused on high-quality employment offers, tailored to individual needs.

The EAfA measure quality was said to be good, but trade union members nonetheless criticised the apprenticeship system in Poland. Major problem areas were said to be financial constraints and lack of proper financial instruments to cover training costs, low apprentice wages, a negative image associated with this type of education and finally, lack of clearly defined learning objectives.

The NZSS 'Solidarity' members stated that QFT measures in Poland were very poor. Trainees often did not receive any remuneration, were not covered by social protection and generally subject to precarious working conditions. Furthermore, traineeships were criticised, given that they seldom lead to long-term job retention and lacked clearly defined learning objectives.

PORTUGAL

Portuguese trade unions were **mostly involved during the YG evaluation stage**, because they had been **invited by the government to participate**. However, they were **only somewhat satisfied** with their involvement due to insufficient working group meetings. Portuguese trade unions expressed **significant levels of criticism** towards the quality of the policy measures.

Context

Two major trade union organisations are continuously consulted about the Portuguese social and economic policy. The General Confederation of Portuguese Workers (Pt. *Confederação Geral dos Trabalhadores Portugueses – Intersindical Nacional*, CGTP-IN) and the General Union of Workers (Pt. *União Geral de Trabalhadores*, UGT) hold seats on the national tripartite body, namely the Standing Committee for Social Concentration¹²⁰. The UGT representatives had considerable influence over youth employment policies through their participation in the European Semester¹²¹ at both national and European levels. The CGTP-IN reported that they are only consulted about labour market policies and in general the governments adopt measures that CGTP-IN does not (fully) approve of.

Level of involvement

The UGT was not involved in either the YG measure design or implementation because it was not invited by the government to participate. However, the confederation received an invitation to participate in the YG evaluation and, as a result, was extensively involved during this stage. It participated in dedicated monitoring bodies and undertook consultations with state institutions or independent experts who were responsible for the evaluation. The UGT also conducted its own independent evaluations and publicly expressed opinions about YG implementation success and YG measure drawbacks. The CGTP-IN had no direct intervention in the implementation of the YG measures. They only expressed their opinion on the architecture of the Youth Guarantee initiative and gave advice on some measures.

¹²⁰ Eurofound. *Living and working in Portugal*. 18 October 2017. Available at: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/country/portugal#actors-and-institutions>

¹²¹ See also: case example on UGT (PT).

The UGT representatives said that their confederation was not involved in any EAfA activities because they were not invited to participate. Likewise, they were not invited to participate in any QFT-related activities and, as a result, were not involved in this measure. However, previous studies¹²² suggest that the other trade union organisation, namely the CGTP-IN submitted several proposals to improve traineeship legislation and denounce abusive practices.

Satisfaction with the level of involvement

The UGT was only somewhat satisfied with its involvement in the YG evaluation. This was mainly because the evaluation meetings were not held frequently enough. This trade union organisation was however extensively involved in the working groups of the European Semester, where it emphasised the need to tackle precarious working conditions for young employees entering the labour market. The UGT was very satisfied with its role in providing recommendations and on re-introducing a more socialist approach towards labour market policies.

Previous studies¹²³ report that in the past neither the UGT nor the CGTP-IN were satisfied with their role in the YG, because their opinions were barely listened to and not adequately taken into account. Both organisations expressed a wish to be more involved in the design phase and said that compared to their participation in other ALMPs, their involvement was much weaker.

Views on the quality of measures

The UGT representatives were supportive of all youth employment measures and said that their overall quality was acceptable. However, they also expressed numerous criticisms, because they believe the measures ought to be improved. The Portuguese YG was based on already existing ALMPs, and no innovative solutions to tackle youth unemployment were proposed. According to the UGT representatives, currently the YG does not offer long-term solutions, provides only low quality employment offers, places too much emphasis on career guidance and lacks clearly defined learning objectives. Furthermore, the resources allocated to YG are insufficient and measure delivery was significantly delayed. Lastly, some companies tend to abuse young workers by asking to cover the costs of their training from the YG grants.

The CGTP-IN claims that Youth Guarantee does not address the youth problems, particularly the precariousness of work and low wages. The situation of young people and Portuguese workers has been worsened by the promotion of low wages and the lack of enforcement of labour rights, among others. Representatives of the CGTP-IN claims that the Youth Guarantee program is based on existing ALMP's and did not solve these issues, despite being presented as good practice. In the area of employment and transition school / job have the following problems:

- Promotion of non-permanent jobs with public financing.
- Low value of the scholarships for traineeships and misuses leading to situations of workers being replaced by trainees.

The UGT representatives also criticised the EAfA, insofar as apprenticeships in Portugal were deficient on many levels. First of all, apprentices often do not receive remuneration, are subject to high-risk working environments, while their acquired skills and competences are not formally recognized. Furthermore, apprenticeship schemes are not properly funded and are often viewed as an inferior educational pathway. Finally, there is a lack of a clear definition of apprenticeships, which makes the rights and obligations of apprentices unclear. This also results in a lack of clearly defined learning objectives, resulting in low quality apprenticeship placements.

122 Framework of Actions on Youth Employment, Second Follow-up Report, Social Dialogue Committee, 2015

123 ETUC, *3 Years of Youth Guarantee: What Next? Annex: Country focus. A follow-up Report by the ETUC Youth Committee.* February 2017.

The UGT representatives stressed several negative features of traineeship schemes and the QFT. They said that young people lingered in traineeship positions for too long, often did not receive remuneration and were not provided with sufficient social protection. In addition, traineeships did not lead to long-term job retention and lacked clearly defined learning objectives.

ROMANIA

Romanian trade union **participation in youth employment policies varied** between organisations and currently, there is **insufficient evidence to assess the general participation trends**. However, one specific organisation **did not participate in measures** due to lack of resources and certain structural obstacles. Trade union members indicated that **measure quality was acceptable**, but also mentioned several aspects that ought to be improved.

Context

There are five main trade union confederations in Romania, two of which provided information regarding their involvement in youth employment policy measures. The National Trade Unions Block (Ro. *Blocul Național Sindical*, BNS) and the National Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Romania – Brotherhood (Ro. *Confederația Națională a Sindicatelor Libere din România-Frăția*, CNSLR-Fratia) are both represented on numerous tripartite bodies and enjoy some influence on labour market policies. Trade union affiliation rates in Romania are well above the EU average but because of the challenges faced in the Romanian labour market, trade union organisations are often unable to cooperate and achieve the desired goals¹²⁴. However, common interests can be found and the implementation of the YG is one of them.

Level of involvement

Previous studies¹²⁵ indicated that the BNS was the only confederation in Romania to take part in the YG design stage. This confederation showed active initiative to become involved and therefore it was included on a national level from the very beginning of the design stages of YG measures. This confederation was also involved in the implementation of the YG by running Youth Guarantee Pilot Centres, which aim to identify NEETs and provide them with integrated service packages. Furthermore, it provided support for the YG through publishing press releases and position papers, as well as organising campaigns and lobbying activities.

The other Romanian trade union confederation, namely the CNSLR Fratia, indicated in the most recent survey that it was not involved in the YG. Trade union representatives said that a lack of human and financial resources was the main reason for not having taken part in the YG. However, it also said that the composition of the Confederation's Youth Committee prevented youth representatives from participating in actions on a national level, thereby making it difficult to achieve active involvement. CNSLR Fratia representatives also advised the government to create an institutional structure to tackle youth employment issues which would have the main objective of implementing such measures. Trade union representatives said they needed an invitation by the Government to participate in the evaluation of YG measures by encouraging social dialogue.

¹²⁴ ETUI. *Romania, Trade Unions*. 2016. Available at: <https://www.worker-participation.eu/National-Industrial-Relations/Countries/Romania/Trade-Unions>

¹²⁵ Bussi M., *Youth Guarantee in Europe*. ETUC, 2014.

The CNSLR Fratia did not participate in any EAfA or QFT-related measures because it was not invited to participate. Trade union representatives said that an invitation by national authorities would have been sufficient support to become involved.

Satisfaction with the level of involvement

Previously¹²⁶, the BNS representatives said that they were satisfied with their involvement in the YG design phase, but that it could have been more involved in other phases of this measure.

Views on the quality of measures

Overall, the CNSLR Fratia representatives consider the YG measures to be of good quality. However, they indicated a number of issues which they believe ought to be improved. Trade union representatives said that the age limit should be increased to cover those between 25 and 30 years of age, there ought to be more national programmes targeting school drop-outs, and school-to-work transitions should be facilitated. Furthermore, measures should help reduce risks of poverty and social exclusion, yet currently there is a high degree of bureaucracy involved in accessing these measures (e.g. complex application procedures). This prevents disadvantaged groups from enjoying their benefits. Educational reforms and life-long learning were also stressed as important factors that could contribute to the success of the YG measures.

While the CNSLR Fratia considers EAfA measures to be adequate, as apprenticeships should not be pay less than the minimum wage established at national level. It has nonetheless expressed several concerns regarding apprenticeships. For example, apprenticeships are seen as a 'second-choice' educational pathway, with no access to other forms and levels of education and training. This said, there are some national programs running aiming at encouraging employers to train and hire apprentices.

The quality of QFT measures was said to be poor, but the CNSLR Fratia representatives claimed they did not have sufficient information for any further details on the topic.

SLOVAKIA

Slovakian trade unions were **only involved in the evaluation of the YG**, having been **invited by the government to participate**. They were **not involved anywhere else** due to a lack of resources and a lack of invitation from government authorities. They were **satisfied with their involvement** during the evaluation stage. Trade union members believe **measure quality was good**, but identified some aspects that needed further improvement.

Context

The most influential trade union body in the Slovak Republic is the Confederation of Trade Unions of the Slovak Republic (Sk. *Konfederácia odborových zväzov Slovenskej republiky*, KOZ SR). While other trade unions, which are either not affiliated to this organisation, or belong to other confederations (e.g. Independent Christian Trade Unions of Slovakia) also have considerable influence, nonetheless KOZ SR remains the key actor due to its high membership numbers. It participates in the Economic and Social Council, a tripartite advisory body that adopts recommendations on employment issues, labour law or minimum wage¹²⁷.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ ETUI. *Slovak Republic, Trade Unions*. 2016. Available at: <https://www.worker-participation.eu/National-Industrial-Relations/Countries/Slovak-Republic/Trade-Unions>

Level of involvement

Slovakian trade unions were not involved in either the design or the implementation of the YG measures. Lack of resources was said to be the main reason why trade unions were not involved in these stages of the YG. However, trade union representatives said that an invitation by the government to participate in social dialogue would have been the preferred kind of support for trade unions to become more involved. The KOZ SR was involved in the evaluation stage by having been invited by the government to participate. They took part in consultations with state institutions and independent experts responsible for evaluation.

Slovakian trade unions were not involved in any EAfA or QFT-related activities because they had not been invited by the government to participate. Trade union representatives said that an invitation by the government to participate would have been welcome.

Satisfaction with the level of involvement

Slovakian trade unions were not satisfied with their involvement in the evaluation of the YG, claiming that the measures did not offer sufficient capacity building for young adults entering the labour market.

Views on the quality of measures

KOZ SR representatives believe that the quality of YG measures is good, however, they said that for the time being, YG measures did not offer long-term solutions and work opportunities, and that there was too much emphasis on career guidance rather than actual employment opportunities. In addition, the delivery of measures was significantly delayed. The quality of EAfA measures was also said to be adequate, but QFT measures were identified as poor (however, trade union representatives did not specify any further particular issues).

SLOVENIA

Slovenian trade union Mladi Plus is uniquely concerned with youth employment issues and therefore has been **extensively involved** in many youth employment policy activities. It was both **invited by the government to participate** and **pursued activities outside of 'traditional' ways of trade union involvement**. This trade union **was satisfied** with its involvement in some policies and **dissatisfied** in others, while its representatives were **highly critical towards measure quality**.

Context

The Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia (Si. *Zveza svobodnih sindikatov Slovenije*, ZSSS) is the most influential trade union confederation in Slovenia. It has 19 affiliated trade unions, one of which, namely the trade union Mladi Plus¹²⁸, specifically represents students, pupils and unemployed youth and young precarious workers. This ZSSS affiliate is uniquely concerned with youth participation in the labour market and their transition between the educational system and the labour market. As such, this trade union participates in most youth employment policy measures and consistently works towards improving labour market conditions for young people. Two case examples present their activities in more detail¹²⁹.

128 See also: case example on Mladi Plus (SI) and on Mladi Plus (SI) and CFDT (FR).

129 See also: case example on Mladi Plus (SI) and on Mladi Plus (SI) and CFDT (FR)

Level of involvement

Mladi Plus was involved in all stages of the YG. They were invited by the government to participate and they also actively pursued activities outside of 'traditional' ways of trade union involvement. During the design phase they participated through stable tripartite bodies and/or YG working groups, semi-formal groups, and ad-hoc consultations and hearings. Mladi plus was a member of a governmental group on YG, which consisted of representatives of five different ministers and four different organisations (youth organisations and Mladi plus). This working group was in charge of preparing, monitoring and evaluating all YG measures established in Slovenia. During YG implementation, Mladi Plus undertook a very wide range of activities. In addition to the same activities as in the design phase, this trade union was also active in creating networks/cooperating with other organisations, requesting up-to-date information on YG development, supervising YG implementation plans, supporting unemployed youth through individual guidance, participating in studies, and carrying out number of other activities such as publishing press releases and opinion papers, organising campaigns and undertaking lobbying activities. During the evaluation stage, this trade union participated in dedicated monitoring bodies and conducted own independent evaluations.

Mladi Plus was not involved in any EAfA measures due to a lack of human resources. However, trade union representatives said that provided an invitation by national authorities or the European Commission, they would have become involved. Mladi plus has been involved in preparation of new legislation on apprenticeships in Slovenia. In the past years, the apprenticeship system has been re-established in the Slovenian educational system. Mladi plus contributed to the legislative framework, advocating for quality apprenticeships and safe and adequate working standards for young apprentices.

Working on (youth) workplace legislation falls directly in line within the activities of Mladi Plus. As a result, this trade union was involved in all stages of QFT by pursuing activities outside of 'traditional' ways of trade union involvement. During the design phase, it participated in negotiations among the social partners for a possible QFT design, while during the implementation phase it directly participated in creating a quality framework for traineeships with national, regional and sectoral authorities. Furthermore, Mladi Plus submitted proposals to improve traineeship legislation, publicized the issues created by low quality traineeships, and organized demonstrations and protests. Mladi Plus representatives held consultations with students and youth organisations to evaluate ongoing progress.

Satisfaction with level of involvement

In previous studies¹³⁰, Mladi Plus representatives claimed that they were not satisfied with their involvement in the YG design stage. In the most recent survey, they once again reaffirmed this opinion, saying that the government only took some suggestions into account without adequate consideration. This trade union was less satisfied with its involvement in the YG implementation stage, as it did not focus on measures that implement long-term employment. However, trade union representatives nonetheless said that the degree of involvement could be even higher. Mladi Plus members were fully satisfied with their involvement in the YG evaluation.

Mladi Plus successfully achieved several aims regarding traineeship legislation and, as a result, were rather satisfied with their involvement. In 2013, Mladi Plus ensured that all unpaid trainees are provided with transport and meals, and in 2014 further demanded to ban all unpaid traineeships/internships altogether. Since then unpaid internships are no longer possible in Slovenia. Mladi Plus believes that a clear EU policy on unpaid traineeships would have been very helpful to achieving their goals and they are working a lot in this field at the EU level, also through international projects.

130 Bussi M., *Youth Guarantee in Europe*. ETUC, 2014.

Views on the quality of measures

In previous studies¹³¹ the ZSSS representatives indicated that they were critical towards YG measures because they did not provide long-term employment opportunities and increased job precariousness. A considerable criticism towards the YG was that the measures were oriented towards promoting entrepreneurship, while their main priority should be increasing job quality. In addition, trade union representatives said that YG measures need to be further developed and financed from a stable source.

SPAIN

Spanish trade unions **were involved in youth employment policies to a very limiting extent**. They had been **invited by the government to participate** in some policy stages, yet this resulted in very formal and ineffective consultations between the social partners. Trade unions are **dissatisfied with their involvement** given that their role was mainly symbolic. Furthermore, trade unions identified the **quality of the measures to be poor**.

Context

The largest trade union organisations in Spain are the Trade Union Confederation of Workers' Commission (Es. *Comisiones Obreras*, CCOO) and the General Workers' Union (Es. *Unión General de Trabajadores*, UGT). The Workers' Trade Unions Confederation (Es. *Unión Sindical Obrera*, USO) also plays a role in industrial relations, it is smaller than the first two organisations in terms of membership, but is the third in the country. There are also many other regionalist-nationalist trade union organisations that are not affiliated to the main bodies and act on their own accord¹³². Even though the Spanish trade union organisations have been enjoying considerable influence over economic and employment policies, pension reforms and the health system via a well-developed system of social dialogue, the recent economic crisis has brought this tradition to a standstill¹³³. Over the last decade, Spanish trade unions have been struggling to regain leverage in negotiations regarding public policy as well as regain public trust, given that they were not successful in protecting the Spanish society from the impacts of austerity policy¹³⁴.

Level of involvement

Representatives of the UGT and CCOO claimed that their involvement in the YG was exactly the same, as the calls from government to participate in the policies were addressed to both organisations and they participated in the same meetings

The UGT was invited by the government to participate, as CCOO and employers, in the design of youth employment measures and the YG. Despite this initial invitation, there were no agreements because the government announced measures that had not been agreed through the social dialogue.

The CCOO and the UGT were not called to a negotiation process prior to the sending of the National Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan to the European Commission, although they did have two non-binding consultation meetings prior to this. As a result, the original Employment document, enriched with some of the contributions (not all) of trade unions, employers and other ministries, was not submitted to sig-

131 Ibid.

132 Eurofound. *Living and working in Spain*. 18 October 2017. Available at: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/country/spain#actors-and-institutions>

133 Kohler, H., Jimenez, P. C., *Trade Unions in Spain. Organisation, Environment, Challenges*. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, August 2013. Available at: <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id-moe/10187.pdf>

134 Ibid.

nature, ratification or similar procedure. Instead the Plan was sent to the Commission on the same night of the second meeting. As of that moment the trade unions were not involved in the implementation or evaluation of the YG at the national level. This was slightly altered in December 2016, when the Government called the social partners for consultations and, without the opposition of the unions, approved some new measures that affected the YG. However, the CCOO and the UGT remain very critical of the National Youth Guarantee System.

Neither CCOO, nor UGT was involved in the implementation of the YG measures, because other institutions were assigned with this responsibility. The UGT and CCOO representatives strongly believe that measures have to be re-evaluated and their implementation needs to be revised, otherwise they cannot support what they currently believe is ineffective, or in some aspects, also leads to negative outcomes.

Nonetheless, the UGT claims that so far there is not a single measure agreed in the framework of the social dialogue on youth employment. The youth employment and youth guarantee policies were applied by the government unilaterally. The result of these policies, according to UGT, has been unsuccessful: few people registered to measures that did not guarantee quality jobs and lack of evaluation of results that showed scarce and low-quality data

In 2017 the CCOO and the UGT were progressively incorporated into spaces for social dialogue related to the YG, such as the Delegate Commission for Monitoring and Evaluation. In 2017 July a specific table was created to negotiate a shock plan for youth employment, with measures of all kinds but also some measures related to the YG (such as the salary supplement), which the CCOO and the UGT refused to sign. However, in September, the Government revised the document proposed in July and, this time, the social partners signed the document.

At the end of 2017, the Government tested UGT and CCOO to act as intermediaries (not as "intermediate bodies") with young people and advise them on matters of YG, in order to broaden their penetration.. But nothing happened.

The CCOO was not involved in any stage of the EAfA or the QFT-related measures. This organisation did not participate in the EAfA mainly due to conflicting priorities between trade unions and employers. Most importantly, however, the CCOO representatives are concerned with precarious working conditions and poor regulatory framework of apprenticeships in Spain. As such, they believe their involvement in this measure would have shown support towards unacceptable Spanish dual-training policies. The CCOO was also not involved in any stage of the QFT. However, they expect to be a part of negotiations regarding a new legal framework, namely the "Scholarship Statute".

The UGT also did not participate in the development of EAfA and QFT. The UGT has been advocating the need to regulate extracurricular practices and scholarship contracts so that they are not used fraudulently as has been happening throughout this stage because of government policies. In addition, the UGT has called on the government to truly promote a system of dual vocational training throughout the territory.

The USO representatives reported that they were not involved in any youth employment policy measures, because they were not invited by the government or by other organisations to participate. This is due to the Spanish trade union legislation, the Organic Law of Freedom of Association, that excludes them from most activities because they do not organise 10% of the representatives of the workers elected in the companies in the country.

Satisfaction with the level of involvement

Previous studies¹³⁵ suggest that both the CCOO and the UGT were not satisfied with their involvement in the YG, because they were only called upon to fulfil formal requirements. The time allocated to present their comments and critical feedback was very short, while meeting time was also used to discuss other topics. In the most recent survey, both organisations said that they were dissatisfied due to several reasons. Their proposals were not taken into account, they were consulted sporadically and overall, their capacity to participate was not well applied. During the evaluation stage, the government only invited the social partners to attend the monitoring commission in December 2016, without having provided any adequate information on YG implementation progress.

Views on the quality of measures

The CCOO representatives said all measure quality was poor. While they explicitly said that reliable information for a thorough evaluation was lacking, they nonetheless identified some negative aspects. The YG was criticised insofar as it did not guarantee quality job placements, favoured abusive practices, and overall had little impact. Their assessment of the functioning of the YG in Spain has not changed substantially since the beginning, but if they had not participated in more social dialogue, negotiation or follow-up meetings, it was not due to their scepticism about how it was designed and implemented, but due to the fact that for a long time the Government did not count on the trade unions to be involved.

The UGT considers that a quality framework was not established for the measures as recommended in the YG system, which has favoured temporary hiring without possibility of stability, generating a turn-over that did not guarantee a true labour insertion and only served to reproduce the precariousness in the Spanish labour market (especially with part-time contracts, temporary contracts and low salaries). The UGT reports that it is not known whether the measures aimed at the training of young people served to improve their labour insertion because there is no information on individual follow-ups.

The CCOO did not explicitly criticise the EAfA as such, but claimed that they were unfamiliar with any relevant measures related to it. Furthermore, given the apprentice precarious working conditions, this organisation stressed the need to address the Spanish apprenticeship regulations first. The QFT was heavily criticised for several reasons. First of all, traineeships do not provide sufficient social protection, lead to long-term job retention or have clearly defined learning objectives. And secondly, trainees did not receive any remuneration or social protection and as such, were subject to precarious working conditions. In the Spanish labour market, trainees were said to be heavily abused.

SWEDEN

Previous studies¹³⁶ report that the Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (Se. *Tjänstemännens Centralorganisation*, TCO) was involved in the design and implementation of the YG. However, this organisation was not satisfied with its involvement in the design phase as its representatives were consulted only one day before the official meeting between the government officials and Social Partner representatives was due.

Another trade union organisation, namely the IF Metall (affiliates of the Swedish Trade Union Confederation, Se. *Landsorganisationen i Sverige*, LO), said that it was involved in all stages of the YG. However, its representatives did not complete the rest of the survey and therefore further information is unavailable.

135 Bussi M., *Youth Guarantee in Europe*. ETUC, 2014.

136 Bussi M., *Youth Guarantee in Europe*. ETUC, 2014.

TURKEY

The Turkish Metal Union (Tu. *Türk Metal Sendikası*, TMS), member of the Confederation TURK-Is representatives said they were not involved in the design or the evaluation of the YG because they were not invited by the government to participate. However, this organisation actively pursued activities outside of 'traditional' ways of trade union involvement during the evaluation phase. Its representatives were somewhat satisfied with their involvement in the evaluation of the YG.

UNITED KINGDOM

Trade union representatives report **conflicting information** regarding their participation. Given the most recent data, it seems that **trade unions were not involved** in youth employment policies, and as a result, **were not satisfied** with their role. Traditionally, their participation in ALMPs is significantly stronger, hence trade union representatives also **wish to be more involved** in youth employment policies.

Context

The Trade Union Congress (TUC) is the only trade union confederation in the United Kingdom that represents approximately 90% of all unionised employees. The British trade union system differs from the standard European model, whereby employment relations are largely decentralised. As such, the UK has very few formal mechanisms or forums for tripartite social dialogue. However, government authorities consult social partners, including the trade unions, regarding public policy decisions on an ad-hoc basis¹³⁷.

Level of involvement

In previous studies¹³⁸, the TUC said it had been actively supporting YG implementation via press releases, position papers, organisation of awareness raising campaigns and lobbying activities. However, in the most recent survey, the TUC representatives said they had not been involved in any YG measure stages. Likewise, the TUC was not involved in any stages of the EAfA or the QFT. The TUC representatives said that an invitation by the government to participate in social dialogue would have been sufficient support to become more involved.

Even though the TUC representatives said they have not been involved in any stage of the EAfA, in 2015 this organisation actually made a pledge to the EAfA as part of their youth employment strategy¹³⁹. They committed to promoting high quality apprenticeships and defending the legal status of apprentices. To reach these goals, the TUC developed an Apprenticeship Charter and undertook a number of other activities, which support apprenticeships on multiple levels. In 2013, another trade union, namely the NASUWT (a teacher's trade union) also made a pledge to the EAfA and committed to improving the quality and accessibility of apprenticeships in the UK¹⁴⁰.

137 Eurofound. *Living and working in United Kingdom*. 18 October 2017. Available at: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/country/united-kingdom>

138 Bussi M., *Youth Guarantee in Europe*. ETUC, 2014.

139 European Commission. European Alliance for Apprenticeships. Pledge. TUC. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1149&langId=en&idDataTable=143>

140 European Commission. European Alliance for Apprenticeships. Pledge. NASUWT. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1149&langId=en&idDataTable=48>

Satisfaction with the level of involvement

The TUC representatives said that their role in youth employment measures is significantly weaker than in other ALMPs and they would like to become much more involved. However, trade unions representatives also said that Brexit negotiations will affect their future engagement.

Views on the quality of measures

In previous reports¹⁴¹ TUC representatives said that the YG measures were ineffective and they criticised the government for lack of attention given to youth employment issues. Furthermore, they emphasised the low quality of traineeship and apprenticeship offers.

141 Bussi M., *Youth Guarantee in Europe*. ETUC, 2014.

ANNEX 2.

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ANNEX 3.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- ALMP: Active labour market policy
- CEEP: **European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public Services and Services of general interest**
(From French: Centre européen des employeurs et entreprises fournissant des services publics)
- EAfA : European Alliance for Apprenticeships
- EQF: European Qualifications Framework
- ETUC: European Trade Union Confederation
- ETUCE: European Trade Union Committee for Education
- ETUI: European Trade Union Institute
- NEET: Not in Education, Employment or Training
- TFEU: Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
- QFT: Quality Framework for Traineeships
- TU: Trade union
- UEAPME: European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
(From French: Association européenne de l'artisanat, des petites et moyennes entreprises)
- VET: *Vocational education and training*
- YEP: Youth Employment Package
- YG: Youth Guarantee

ANNEX 4.

SUMMARY OF METHODS AND APPROACH

Evidence for this report was produced by using the following methods:

- Desk research
- Survey
- Interviews
- Case examples
- Comparative analysis
- Steering Committee meetings

Table 1: Tasks and corresponding data collection and analysis tools to implement them

Data collection and analysis tools	Desk research	Survey	Interviews	Case examples	Comparative analysis	Steering Committee meetings
Tasks						
1. Assessment of implementation of youth employment policy measures at national level and social partner involvement in these policies						
2. Identify good practices of social partner involvement in these policy measures						
3. Cross-compare good practices to derive recommendations at European and national level						

Source: Visionary Analytics.

Desk research was carried out to map existing information regarding the implementation of youth employment policy measures, and identify remaining data gaps to be filled in by field work, to prepare data collection tools (questionnaires, collection of contacts, etc.), and identify any good practices of trade union input in the implementation of youth employment policy measures.

An online **survey** of national trade union officials responsible for youth measures was carried out during the period of June-September 2017. The survey included questions that were used to develop the country briefs and also provided information on good practices of trade union input in the implementation of youth employment policy measures.

Ten good practices were selected from a long-list of good practices and sorted into seven **case examples** on trade union involvement in youth employment policy measures. **Interviews** with trade union officials were carried out to gather in-depth information on selected good practices to develop into case examples. The case examples comprised information gathered via interviews and additional desk research into the selected good practices.

A **comparative analysis** of the selected good practices was carried out in order to derive recommendations to trade unions to boost their participation in European youth employment policy measures. The activities, success factors and challenges reported by the trade unions that implemented good practices were cross-compared. Recommendations to trade unions are based on similar experiences that trade unions reported.

The interim results of the study were validated in two **Steering Committee meetings** on 15-16 May 2017 in Ljubljana, Slovenia, and on 25 January 2018 in Paris, France. The Steering Committee members also provided comments on the draft versions of this study, which were addressed in subsequent rounds of revisions of this report.

ANNEX 5.

LONG-LIST OF GOOD PRACTICES

Good practices from desk research

No.	Title of good practice	Policy stage	Country	Trade union	Short description
1.	QFT	Design, Implementation	PT	CGTP-IN	Presented proposals to improve legislation and denounced several misuses of the work of trainees. CGTP demanded the surveillance of the implementation of legislation regarding short-term contracts as well as traineeship contracts in order to prevent the substitution of open-ended jobs.
2.	QFT	Design	FR	CFDT	Proposed and advocated for stronger legislation on traineeships that would be in line with the QFT. The most recent act on traineeships, Act of 10 July 2014, was drafted in accordance with these demands.
3.	QFT	Implementation	LU	OGBL	In Luxembourg, the government is in negotiations with social partners to set up a new traineeship framework in line with the QFT. However, as of May 2016 it is not known whether the existing framework regarding traineeships will indeed be altered in the light of the QFT or not. TUs also play an active role in the implementation and monitoring of traineeships: they have the right to check that the training aspect of this traineeship is being adhered to by the employer, and trainees are encouraged to report any exploitative traineeship arrangements to the employer's trade union representative. (from desk research)
4.	QFT	Soft measures/ Implementation	NL	FNV	The Youth division of the Netherlands Trade Union Confederation (FNV) launched a website in order to gather more data on the exploitation of trainees. The trainees themselves may anonymously file complaints about any abusive practices. (from desk research)
5.	YG	Design, Implementation	BG	CITUB (KHC5)	CITUB, together with partners, held a conference "European Youth Guarantee – Opportunities and Challenges" during which they set on to drafting an official proposition on the YG to be sent to the government.
6.	YG	Evaluation	FR	CFDT	In 2015, the CFDT published a white paper on the implementation of the YG. The report aims to assess the actual impact of the YG and identify whether the implementation process is in fact meeting the expectations set for the YG.

	Justification why it is a good practice	Links	Employee Affiliation rate	Unemployment rate	Geographical area
	Exemplifies active and successful TU participation in the design and implementation of legislative measures at national level.	http://www.cgtp.pt/cgtp-in/areas-de-accao/emprego-e-formacao-profissional/9785-estagios-e-preciso-criminalizar-os-patroes-sem-escrupulos ; http://www.cgtp.pt/sitio-dos-direitos/pareceres/10549-estagios-profissionais-do-iefp-reformulacao-da-medida ;	Low	High	S
	Exemplifies active and successful TU participation in the design of legislative measures at national level.	https://www.cadrescfdt.fr/actualites/des-stages-de-qualite-pour-tous-les-etudiants-00641029 ; https://www.cadrescfdt.fr/actualites/la-cfdt-obtient-de-nouveaux-droits-pour-les-stagiaires-00639773 ;	Very low	High	W
	Not enough information: TUs play a role in monitoring the already existing traineeship regulation. So if there are changes, the TUs monitor them and it's a good practice example. Yet it is unclear if any changes had been carried out.	http://www.lessentiel.lu/fr/news/story/L-OGBL-veut-lutter-contre-la-precarite-des-stagiaires-11882413 ;	Medium	Low	W
	TUs may use this information to call for new legislation or for more compliance with QFT. Reports enable to identify problems and demand more employer responsibility.	https://meldpuntstagemisbruik.nl/ ; https://fnvjong.nl/over-fnv-jong/nieuws/2015/meldpunt-stagemisbruik	Low	Medium	W
	Exemplifies active and successful TU participation in the design and implementation of measure.	http://www.government.bg/cgi-bin/e-cms/vis/vis.pl?s=001&p=0137&n=112&g= ; http://www.stsb.bg/eu_youth_guarantee/	Low	Very low	E
	Exemplifies systematic engagement with policy evaluation, including proposals for improvement.	Download Livre Blanc: http://synami-cfdt.fr/spip.php?article596&lang=fr ;	Very low	High	W

No.	Title of good practice	Policy stage	Country	Trade union	Short description
7.	YG	Design, Implementation and Evaluation	SI	ZSSS Mladi Plus	<p>In 2013, Mladi Sindikat with other youth organizations advocated the introduction of Youth Guarantee in Slovenia. It developed the Implementation Plan for and prepared proposals for improving the YG. Together with other youth organizations, it commented on the Implementation Plan for Youth Guarantee for 2014-2015¹ and for 2016-2020², presenting its view of the implementation of the scheme, the evaluation of measures and recommendations for the future. Furthermore, it assisted in drafting the final document that consists of 54 measures aiming to improve the situation of young people within the labour market. Mladi Plus also held events and conducted other activities.</p> <p>Some examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work with NGOs to develop the Slovenian Youth Guarantee programme. • carry out research and surveys to analyse the situation of interns, young unemployed people, young precarious workers, and young women, and to propose policies to the Slovenian Parliament, Economic and Social Council, Ministries etc. • analyse and evaluate and give advice on public policies including: labour market reform, Resolution on the National Programme for Youth, Scholarship Act, Youth Guarantee, Slovenia's Development Strategy and operative documents. • campaigns to abolish unpaid internship in all sectors in Slovenia. • Took a leading role in the process of changing the legislation on the jurisdiction of the labour inspection body, in order to improve the conditions of unlawful precarious workers. The new legislation was adopted in 2018 and it ensures greater protection of precarious workers. • Monitoring the job advertisements and reporting unlawful adds to the inspection and informing the public about those employers. So far they have reported more than 110 adds. • Organised campaigns against UBER and changing the legislation for UBER that would lower the working standards of drivers. The proposed legislation was not adopted, also because of the visibility of this issue, where Mladi plus was he most visible and recognised actor in this campaign.
8.	YG	Implementation	RO	BNS	<p>It has been running 22 Youth Guarantee Pilot Centres aiming to identify NEETs and provide them with integrated packages of services. Furthermore, it also contributed to providing support for the YG through press releases, position papers, organised campaigns and lobbying activities. TUs are also involved in other means of benefiting YG, such as engaging in social dialogue on the modernisation of the educational system, the quality and efficiency of VET, as well as assisting the development of relations between educational institutions and employers. (from desk research)</p>
9.	YG	Implementation	NL	FNV Young and CNV Young	<p>In 2013, FNV Young and CNV Young, together with the Tilburg University, introduced a starters' grant (<i>starterbeurs</i>) in the framework of the YG scheme. This grant enables young people to get six months' paid work experience after finishing school and is financed by employers and the local government. However, FNV Young no longer supports this grant after 2016.</p>

Justification why it is a good practice	Links	Employee Affiliation rate	Unemployment rate	Geographical area
Exemplifies continuous and systematic engagement in all stages of policy development, i. e. design, implementation and evaluation.	https://www.mladiplus.si/podrocja-dela/jamstvo-za-mlade/ ; https://www.mladiplus.si/2015/06/06/porocilo-projekta-kdo-jamci-za-mlade/ ; https://www.mladiplus.si/2013/02/21/youth-guarantee-jamstvo-za-mlade/ http://www.mladiplus.si/trade-union-mladi-plus-youth-plus/	Medium	Low	C
Innovative/unique practice of TUs in terms of involvement in YG	http://www.cvlpress.ro/22.05.2014/garantii-pentru-tineri-un-proiect-initiat-de-bns/ ; http://cniptmmr.ro/2014/02/18/conferinta-de-lansare-a-proiectului-garantii-pentru-tineri-in-regiunea-bucuresti-ilfov-2/	Medium	Medium	E
Exemplifies successful TU and other stakeholder cooperation in financing and implementing a YG scheme.	https://www.tilburguniversity.edu/nl/actueel/nieuws/persbericht-onderzoek-startersbeurs.htm ; https://www.tilburguniversity.edu/nl/show/item-evaluatie-startersbeurs/ ; https://www.startersbeurs.nu/	Low	Medium	W

No.	Title of good practice	Policy stage	Country	Trade union	Short description
10.	YG	Design, Implementation, Evaluation	PL	NSZZ Solidarność	<p>In 2013, NSZZ worked together with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy as well as other social partners to propose the implementation plan for the YG. The process was positively evaluated by the TUs.</p> <p>NSZZ initiated a project that aimed to provide a report which presents an overview of actions promoting inclusion and integration of young people in the labour market at European Union level and includes best practices for inclusion and integration of young people in the labour market in selected European Union member states: the macro (public policies) and the micro level (enterprise). Furthermore, youth inclusion in the labour market as a way of their inclusion in trade unions was an important element. The main success of the project is a broad catalogue of good practices, which will help to develop specific and detailed recommendations adaptable in different EU member states.</p> <p>Following the path of lobbying for youth, NSZZ prepared a “youth package” which comprised 5 concrete proposals to make Polish labour market friendlier for young people. This document was meant to be use as guidelines during the negotiations at the Social Dialogue Council and it is the outcome of Youth Forum organised by the Confederation in April 2018⁹.</p>
11.	EAfA, YG	Implementation	CZ	CMKOS	<p>CMKOS is committed to the EAfA and has carried out a list of actions to support VET (see pledge).</p> <p>The Social Partners realized a joint project with the CMKOS “Sector Agreements as a Tool of the Social Dialogue in Addressing Long-term Issues in the Area of Human Resources Development” from February 2014 to June 2015 to find effective solutions in the area of human resources development and needs of the labour market in the context of technological change and new skills and competences development using social dialogue tools. The project resulted in conclusion and implementation of 6 sector agreements, 13 regional sector agreements and a national agreement. The sector agreements were piloted within the project „National Register of Occupations II” realized by a consortium of the SP, the Economic Chamber of Commerce and TREFIMA. Big companies initiated individual projects with the aim to activate young people within their corporate social responsibility activities, e.g. IBM, ČEZ, Škoda Auto, ArcelorMittal etc. (From Framework of Actions).</p>
12.	EAfA	Implementation	MT	MUT	<p>Among various actions that have already been carried out with respect to this topic, the MUT has been involved in an important Cedefop conference on apprenticeships together with employers and government representatives. This conference resulted in a lot of discussion and already today the MUT is involved in two separate national committees on Apprenticeships, one led by the Ministry of Education which is aiming at improving the legal framework for the safeguarding of students, parents, educators and employers, and one intended to become an Authority to monitor and support apprenticeship schemes. (from pledge)</p>

Justification why it is a good practice	Links	Employee Affiliation rate	Unemployment rate	Geographical area
<p>Exemplifies TU willingness to improve their participation in Youth policies and taking action to improve social partner involvement in implementation of these policies.</p> <p>Link with YG not clear - the project was targeted at improving TU involvement in youth employment policies as such.</p>	<p>https://cofund.org.pl/upload/2-zaktualizowany-plan-realizacji-gwarancji-dla-m%C5%82odzie%C5%BCy-w-polsce.pdf; http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/defis/publigrant/public/publications/361/frame;jsessionidpubligrantprod-dc=YJaGwWnchDcoX99hzcfnfrVBcVGmxKDWbsTUSG_00aGI7PWR-ich!-1246045588?publicationLanguage=en;</p>	Low	Medium	E
<p>The YG project that CMKOS is a part of seems like an innovative and successful practice given its main target, namely human resources development in the context of technological change.</p>	<p>http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1149&langId=en&idDataTable=90; http://www.ceep.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/youth-employment-2.pdf</p>	Low	Very low	C
<p>Exemplifies very successful TU engagement with VET policy on a national level.</p>	<p>http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1149&langId=en&idDataTable=50</p>	High	Low	S

No.	Title of good practice	Policy stage	Country	Trade union	Short description
13.	EaFA	Implementation	UK	TUC	In 2015, the Trades Union Congress (TUC) made a pledge to the EaFA as part of their youth employment strategy. They committed to promoting high quality apprenticeships as well as defending the legal status of apprentices. TUC developed an Apprenticeship Charter which sets out the key principles of a high quality Apprenticeship. Furthermore, they negotiate with employers, establish mentoring pilots, sign learning agreements, develop training modules for officers and union representatives in order to support apprenticeships on multiple levels.
14.	EaFA	Implementation	UK	NASUWIT (affiliated to the TUC)	In 2013, NASUWIT (Teacher's TU) made a pledge to the EaFA and committed to improving the quality and accessibility of apprenticeships in the UK. It also tries to raise awareness and disseminate the Joint declaration of the EaFA among its members. However, most importantly, NASUWIT holds meetings and events as well as issues publications in order to ensure the quality of apprenticeship placements and improve the quality of teaching in VET. Furthermore, it contacts enterprises in order to help VET students find placements in various companies.
15.	QFT/ National level policy	Implementation	IT	CGIL	The Organization is very critical towards a new "Jobs act" that Italian government approved, proposed back in 2013 a comprehensive Job plan ("Piano del Lavoro"). This document made concrete proposals on how to create more jobs with special attention towards youth policy
16.	YG	Implementation	IE	The Irish Congress of Trade Unions	The Ballymun Youth Guarantee – delivered. An 'employability skills' programme which included a work placement which the participant researched in the initial module. The pilot project had three broad objectives: 1. To develop and deliver a model Youth Guarantee tailored to the needs of a disadvantaged urban community; 2. Test the effectiveness of this model in Ballymun; 3. Extract the lessons learnt to inform the further development and implementation of the national Youth Guarantee. The aim was to provide the target group with a good-quality offer of a job, apprenticeship, traineeship, work experience or continued education within four months of registration at the public employment service or within four months of an initial guidance interview (depending on the young person's circumstances).
17.	YG	n/a	AT	Organizations involved: Social partner organisations represented in the AMS (such as the Economic Chamber, the Federal Chamber of Labour, the Austrian Trade Union Federation and the Federation of Austrian Industry);	The supra-company training programme aimed to enable the transition of young people into a company-based traineeship as quickly as possible. Supra-company traineeships' were part of the government's wider social safety net for young people, developed to ensure that school leavers up to the age of 18 were able to enter into an apprenticeship if they wished to.

Justification why it is a good practice	Links	Employee Affiliation rate	Unemployment rate	Geographical area
Successful implementation of VET policy that extends to a national level. Furthermore, exemplifies cooperation between stakeholders a TU involvement.	http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1149&langId=en&idDataTable=143 ; https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/TUCSubmissionApprenticeshipsGuidance.pdf https://www.tuc.org.uk/workplace-issues/learning-and-training/apprenticeships?mins=255&minors=254&majorsubjectid=2 https://www.unionlearn.org.uk/apprenticeships-toolkit/	Medium	High	W
Successful TU participation in a VET policy by carrying out activities within the TU as well as outside of it.	http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1149&langId=en&idDataTable=48	Medium	High	W
n/a	n/a	Medium	High	S
Successful engagement of multiple stakeholder groups (especially the TUs) and had considerable impact on target group (youth unemployment reduced by 29% in the area).	https://www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/Key-Learning-Ballymun-Youth-Guarantee-Project.pdf	Medium	Medium	W
This programme was very successful in terms of impact and TU involvement. Link with YG not clear	http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1080&langId=en&practiceId=2 http://ec.europa.eu/social/PDFServlet?mode=mlpPractice&practiceId=2	Medium	Low	C

No.	Title of good practice	Policy stage	Country	Trade union	Short description
18.	YG	n/a	FI	Multiple TUs	The National Youth Guarantee Working Group consists of Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Finance, Finnish National Board of Education, The Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, Confederation of Unions for Professional and Managerial Staff in Finland (Akava), Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK), The Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK), Finnish Confederation of Professionals (STTK), Federation of Finnish Enterprises, The Social Insurance Institution of Finland (KELA), Allianssi - Finnish Youth Cooperation

Notes: GP – good practice, E – Eastern Europe, W – Western Europe, C – Central Europe, N – Northern Europe, S – Southern Europe, n/a – information not available.

	Justification why it is a good practice	Links	Employee Affiliation rate	Unemployment rate	Geographical area
	n/a	n/a	Very high	Very high	N

ANNEX 6.

CASE EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES

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BOHEMIAN-MORAVIAN CONFEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS (ČMKOS) (CZECH REPUBLIC)



Policy and policy stage:	Youth Guarantee – implementation European Alliance for Apprenticeships – implementation
Country:	Czech Republic
Region:	Central Europe
Level of implementation:	Regional and National
Youth unemployment:	Low
Employee affiliation to trade union rates:	Low

Introduction

The Czech economy has been enjoying a period of stable growth since 2014 and unemployment levels remain the lowest in Europe. However, skill shortages are becoming increasingly prominent, with job vacancy rate reaching 4% in 2017¹⁴². Youth employment policy interventions are therefore targeted towards increasing young people's skills and increasing their labour market participation capacity. This case example presents the efforts undertaken by the ČMKOS members to engage in social dialogue and participate in targeted educational activities that are leading towards a successful upskilling of the Czech workforce. Such engagement is exemplary, given that it increases trade union presence within the national policy landscape and boosts their capacity to influence policy agenda.

The Bohemian-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions (Cz. Českomoravská konfederace odborových svazů, ČMKOS) is the main trade union confederation and one of the most influential non-governmental organisations within the Czech Republic. It was established during the early 1990s, and since then, it has become an active social partner, continuously participating in tripartite negotiations and cooperating with employer organisations and government authorities. The ČMKOS comprises 29 trade unions, all of which together have more than 300 000 members. The confederation operates through regional trade union councils and legal assistance offices. It is mostly concerned with fair wages, living and working conditions and employee rights. However, over the recent years, the ČMKOS has also been providing support towards creating better working conditions for the most vulnerable groups in the labour market, namely women, minority groups, old-age workers and the young unemployed.¹⁴³

The ČMKOS was involved in the implementation of the YG and their EAfA pledge, which they made in 2015. In both cases this trade union confederation was actively promoting vocational education and training activities, which are essential to boosting the Czech economy in the long-run. This case example aims to showcase their efforts in more detail as a good practice example to other trade unions.

¹⁴² European Commission. Commission Staff Working Document. Country Report Czech Republic 2018. Brussels, 7.3.2018, SWD (2018) 202 final. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2018-european-semester-country-report-czech-republic-en.pdf>

¹⁴³ The Czech and Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions (CMKOS). Available at: <https://www.cmkos.cz/obsah/326/about-us/13789?language=en>.

Context

13% of employees belong to a trade union in Czech Republic



Source: ETUI.

Youth unemployment is the lowest in Europe



Source: Eurostat.

Trade union membership in Czech Republic has been decreasing during the last decade. While in 2004, every fifth employee belonged to a trade union, making trade union membership rate stand at 20.6%, in 2015 the share of affiliated members fell to just 12.7%. Such membership decline may be due to a significantly decreased share of employees working in heavy industry. On the other hand, the share of employees working in manufacture remains much higher than the EU average¹⁴⁴.

Youth unemployment in the Czech Republic is one of the lowest within the EU. In 2017, the youth unemployment rate was only 7.9%, having fallen from 10.5% in 2016. Strong labour market performance is driven by continuous job creation that enabled both youth and total unemployment rates to fall to pre-crisis levels. However, the Czech economy is facing significant labour shortages. Employers struggle to find new employees with relevant skills, especially in fields requiring specialised technical education. Simultaneously, according to reports published by the European Commission, a large share of labour market potential remains underused¹⁴⁵. Female employment is especially low due to unfavourable childcare conditions. The low-skilled also remain largely unemployed.

All social partners are involved in social dialogue through their participation in the Council for Economic and Social Agreement of the Czech Republic. This tripartite body is generally seen as effective in agreeing on the general direction of various policies related to the country's economic development. Its members take an active role in formulating legal norms, and as a result, shaping the overall landscape of the Czech economy, including social security, working conditions, wages and human resource development.

Trade Union activities

The ČMKOS is extensively active in helping to improve labour market conditions for all employees, but especially vulnerable groups such as young people below 25 years of age, the low-skilled, women with children and national minorities. Its major activity, the 'End to Cheap Labour' campaign launched in 2015, has been successful insofar as it helped to raise the minimum wage for all workers, but it also brought significant benefits to young people, who are often paid less due to their lack of experience. In addition, the ČMKOS has been pursuing activities that fall in line with the Framework of Actions for Youth Employment¹⁴⁶. Its members have been contributing to measures that are helping young people to successfully transition from education to employment via traineeship, internship and apprenticeship schemes.

144 Kaňáková, M.; Czesaná, V.; Šímová, Z. (2016). Vocational education and training in Europe – Czech Republic. Cedefop ReferNet VET in Europe reports. Available at: http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2016/2016_CR_CZ.pdf

145 European Commission. Commission Staff Working Document. Country Report Czech Republic 2018. SWD (2018) 202 final, 07.03.2018 Brussels. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2018-european-semester-country-report-czech-republic-en.pdf>

146 See the case example on NZSS 'Solidarity'.

Implementation of the Youth Guarantee

The Czech Labour Office is the main organisation responsible for delivering the YG measures within the Czech Republic. However, other stakeholders, including the social partners, also became involved in its implementation in accordance to the principles of partnership that enabled them to realise a joint project on sectoral, regional, and national levels.

The project “Sector Agreements as a Tool of the Social Dialogue in Addressing Long-term issues in the Area of Human Resource Development” was oriented towards achieving better labour market integration through the upskilling of young people. This project was part of the wider Operational Programme “Human Resources and Employment” that is funded by the state budget and the European Social Fund. The project took place between February 2014 and October 2015.

Within the project’s framework, social partners and government authorities concluded agreements on national, regional, and sectoral levels. The National Agreement¹⁴⁷, signed in 2015, provides the foundational background for the other 13 regional and 8 sectoral agreements. It focuses on setting the framework for introducing both legislative and non-legislative measures that ought to improve the links between education and the labour market. Government authorities, employer and trade union organisations agreed on the following objectives:

- Support and encourage education in the technical fields, placing strong emphasis on mathematics and the natural sciences
- Provide career counselling that falls in line with labour market trends
- Increase the quality of workplace training and promote vocational school and company cooperation
- Develop a coherent system for continuous vocational education and training, including opportunities for adult re-training
- Continue developing the National Qualifications Framework to improve the quality of services
- Set up Life-long Learning Centres that would cater to both regional and employer needs
- Establish an Advisory Board for Human Resource Development, an expert and advisory body that will deal with human resource development policy on a national scale
- Update the legal framework that regulates recruitment of qualified workers from third countries

Similarly, both sectoral and regional agreements aimed at promoting and improving VET conditions. For example, the textile industry sector agreed to introduce more flexibility within schools to allow pupils, who wish to pursue a career within the industry, to enter work-based training schemes¹⁴⁸. The chemical industry agreed to promote and disseminate good practices of employer and VET school collaboration to advance the industry’s prestige¹⁴⁹. In addition, this particular sector committed to promoting chemistry in elementary schools by providing laboratory equipment kits, holding open days in companies, organising presentations etc. The agriculture sector also signed a sectoral agreement, placing emphasis on training professional staff who would introduce young pupils to innovative technologies¹⁵⁰. This entails enabling school teachers to participate in company training for at least one week each year. In addition, some companies have committed to helping schools acquire technological equipment, which would facilitate their education and bring their skills to the level that employers demand. Other sectors that signed sectoral agreements also set similar goals and introduced a multitude of measures. The content and specific tasks

147 Národní dohoda (National agreement). Available at: http://socialnidialog.cz/images/stories/Sektorove_dohody/Narodni_dohoda.pdf

148 Sektorová dohoda pro textilní, oděvní, kožedělný a obuvnický průmysl. Available at: <http://socialnidialog.cz/sektorove-dohody/sektorove-dohody-v-odvetvich/textilni-odevni-a-kozedelny-prumysl>

149 Sektorová dohoda pro chemii Dorost pro chemický průmysl. Available at: http://socialnidialog.cz/images/stories/Sektorove_dohody/SD_Chemie.pdf

150 Sektorová dohoda pro zemědělství. Available at: http://socialnidialog.cz/images/stories/Sektorove_dohody/SD_Zemedelstvi.pdf

for each sector were negotiated between representative sector associations, employers, trade unions and government authorities. The process for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of individual actions has also been agreed upon.

The ČMKOS participated in the project by assisting the negotiation processes and balancing stakeholder interests. Trade union representatives emphasised the significance of work-based learning and pressured companies to introduce apprenticeship placements, including the upskilling of VET teachers. Furthermore, they negotiated legal measures to ensure adequate working conditions, including stable remuneration and long-term contract provision.

Implementing the European Alliance for Apprenticeships pledge

In 2015, the ČMKOS, along with the Czech and Moravian Trade Union of Workers in Education (Cz. Česko-moravský odborový svaz pracovníků školství, ČMOS PŠ) committed to improving work-based learning of VET students¹⁵¹. The representative of the ČMKOS Youth branch stated that this pledge is an extension of trade union activities within the Youth Guarantee framework.

Lessons learnt

The ČMKOS representatives report that the main success factor to their involvement was their capacity to negotiate on the need for labour market interventions. Such capacity, first of all, entailed thought through and careful reasoning on behalf of trade union representatives who were actively involved in meetings and working groups. Secondly, continuous promotion of trade union goals helped to raise awareness and increase understanding regarding their relevance, and, as a result, contributed to better negotiation outcomes. Finally, continuous presence in all consultations ensured that trade union positions were taken seriously, especially as representatives showed persistency and took considerable time to explain the rationale behind their stance.

The main challenge identified by ČMKOS members was said to be employer opposition towards certain trade union goals and proposed measures. For example, raising the minimum wage or ensuring better working conditions for vulnerable groups was said to be especially difficult. Negotiations were difficult, given that ČMKOS representatives were persistent in bringing uncomfortable topics to negotiations and demanding that their opinions were taken into account.

This practice is transferable to other trade union organisations that successfully maintain good relations with employer organisations and have considerable experience in holding negotiations. However, other organisations may also benefit from this example insofar as it demonstrates persistent engagement and illustrates successful agreement on a national scale between diverse stakeholder groups.

'Tips and tricks' for adoption of a similar practice

- Attend all working groups and meetings to keep up-to-date with negotiations
- Commit to your positions during the negotiations, even if they touch upon uncomfortable issues
- Establish clear positions, which are supported by valid reasoning and clear evidence
- Open up channels of dialogue and negotiation with stakeholder groups, including employer organisations
- Don't underestimate opposite views regarding employment policies
- Continuously put efforts into increasing negotiation capacity

¹⁵¹ European Commission. European Alliance for Apprenticeships. Pledge. CMKOS. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1149&langId=en&idDataTable=90>

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- Sektorová dohoda pro chemii Dorost pro chemický průmysl. Available at: http://socialnialog.cz/images/stories/Sektorove_dohody/SD_Chemie.pdf
- Sektorová dohoda pro zemědělství. Available at: http://socialnialog.cz/images/stories/Sektorove_dohody/SD_Zemedelstvi.pdf

MLADI PLUS (SLOVENIA)



Policy and policy stage:	Youth Guarantee – all stages Quality Framework for Traineeships – all stages
Country:	Slovenia
Region:	Central Europe
Level of implementation:	National
Youth unemployment:	Low
Employee affiliation to trade union rates:	Medium

Introduction

A mismatch between the skills and competences provided by the education system and the labour market needs is a major obstacle for successful youth integration into the Slovenian labour market. A high number of educated young people remain unemployed, because the demand for their skills is low¹⁵². Since 2013, youth unemployment rates have been falling at a relatively steady pace but it remains unclear whether this is due to successful youth employment policies or general economic recovery. This case example presents some of the most noteworthy activities by a youth trade union Mladi Plus that helped shape and maintain a coherent direction within Slovenian youth employment policies.

Mladi Plus is a trade union that represents students, pupils and the young unemployed. This trade union operates within the bounds of the Free Trade Union of Slovenia (si. *Svobodni Sindikat Slovenije*, SSS), which is an affiliate of the largest Slovenian trade union confederation, namely the Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia (si. *Zveza Svobodnih Sindikatov Slovenije*, ZSSS). ZSSS represents 22 trade unions from both private and public sectors¹⁵³, and is one of the most influential trade union organisations in Slovenia. It holds seats in the Economic and Social Council¹⁵⁴, a tripartite body where it negotiates on matters concerning labour market regulation. As a ZSSS affiliate, Mladi Plus enjoys wide stakeholder recognition and is a constant social dialogue participant. Established in 2011, Mladi Plus works to ensure decent work, improve working conditions for precarious workers and disseminate the values of trade unionism amongst youth. In this respect, Mladi Plus is a unique trade union that is focused solely on youth employment issues and, as a result, is extensively involved in most European youth employment policy measures. Mladi Plus has approximately 1200 members, whose average age is slightly above 25 years of age. In 2014, Mladi Plus also obtained the status of a youth organisation, which enabled its members to voice their position in youth-related institutions and therefore occupy an especially advantageous position when it comes to shaping youth policies on a national level¹⁵⁵.

Mladi Plus has been very active in both promoting and helping implement the Slovenian Youth Guarantee (YG) right from the start of this measure. It has also been very active in promoting various measures targeted towards apprenticeships and, furthermore, has been working to firmly establish better traineeship regulation in Slovenia.

152 Hergan, M.; €lebič. (2016). Vocational education and training in Europe – Slovenia. Cedefop ReferNet VET in Europe reports; 2016. http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2016/2016_CR_SI.pdf

153 See more at: <https://www.zsss.si/english/>

154 ESC is a consultative body where decisions are taken unanimously and are binding for all three partners.

155 Trade Union Mladi Plus (Youth Plus). Available at: <https://www.mladiplus.si/trade-union-mladi-plus-youth-plus/>

Context

27% of employees belong to a trade union in Slovenia



Source: ETUI.

Youth unemployment has been decreasing since 2013



Source: Eurostat.

The economic crisis had a distinctly negative effect on employment opportunities for all workers. While reduced economic activity was responsible for the decreases in employment in all age groups, the Slovenian youth was particularly affected¹⁵⁶. During the aftermath of the economic recession the youth unemployment rate in Slovenia kept rising until it reached a peak of 21.6%¹⁵⁷ in 2013. However, since then, the youth unemployment rate has been steadily decreasing. In 2017, it was 11.2% and much below the EU average of 16.8%.

Traditionally, youth issues have not been high in the Slovenia trade unions' agenda. However, Mladi Plus was founded specially to campaign against mini-work (Si. *malo delo*), a form of marginal part-time employment prevalent amongst Slovenian youth. Ever since then, this trade union has been very engaged in youth employment policies and has increased direct trade union participation in these policies as a result¹⁵⁸.

Trade unionism in Slovenia has been in decline ever since the country gained its independence from the Social Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1991¹⁵⁹. While the first two decades after independence were marked by the emergence of several trade union organisations and maturing social dialogue traditions, the share of affiliated employees has gone down from almost 70% to less than 30%. And yet, despite this negative trend, Slovenian trade union affiliation rates remain above the EU average (23%)¹⁶⁰. In 2011, around 27% of all active employees belonged to a trade union in Slovenia¹⁶¹.

Trade Union activities

Mladi Plus was invited by the government to participate in youth employment policy measures and was also actively self-involved outside 'traditional' ways of TU involvement. The government is mostly focused on strengthening the link between the education system and the Slovene economy¹⁶² and, consequently, Mladi Plus has also been working towards the same goal.

156 Hergan, M.; Čelebič T. (2016). Vocational education and training in Europe – Slovenia. Cedefop ReferNet VET in Europe reports; 2016. http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2016/2016_CR_SI.pdf

157 Eurostat. Unemployment by sex and age – annual average. Available at: <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submit-ViewTableAction.do>

158 Trade Union Mladi Plus (Youth Plus). Available at: <https://www.mladiplus.si/trade-union-mladi-plus-youth-plus/>

159 ETUI. *Slovenia, Trade Unions*. 2016. Available at: <https://www.worker-participation.eu/National-Industrial-Relations/Countries/Slovenia/Trade-Unions>

160 ETUI. Trade Unions, 2016. Available at: <https://www.worker-participation.eu/National-Industrial-Relations/Across-Europe/Trade-Unions2>

161 Ibid.

162 Hergan, M.; Čelebič T. (2016). Vocational education and training in Europe – Slovenia. Cedefop ReferNet VET in Europe reports; 2016. http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2016/2016_CR_SI.pdf

Youth Guarantee measures

Mladi Plus was extensively involved in all stages of the YG. Even before the launch of the YG in Slovenia, Mladi Plus members undertook lobbying activities on a national scale to support the initiative and convince Slovenian government to endorse it at the EU level. Mladi Plus works closely with government authorities to ensure that YG measures are being implemented as efficiently as possible and reach those young people who are in most need of help. Furthermore, they have assigned representatives to the European Youth Forum where they are involved in working groups, which discuss the best means towards improving labour market conditions for youth. Mladi Plus regularly monitors YG progress both on EU and national levels by participating in established working groups and continuously advocates for better measure quality, especially traineeship offers.

Right at the start of the YG, Mladi Plus issued a position paper on what their trade union believed the YG in Slovenia ought to look like. Mladi Plus members also sought to include young people in policy making, and therefore established a Youth council¹⁶³ within the limits of their organisation, which is an association of various youth clubs. The council proposes various measures that ought to help young people transition from education to employment from young people's perspective, emphasising their needs and desires at their new workplaces. Mladi Plus members are also active in proposing different kinds of measures to tackle youth unemployment. For example, one of the measures proposed was to encourage youth organisations to offer employment places for young people. Already more than 150 jobs in such organisations (including Mladi Plus itself) were financed under the YG. These jobs were their first proper employment placements.

Mladi Plus members have also been actively trying to push potential employers and employer organisations to offer high-quality job placements. This trade union had enormous success with the Slovene labour market inspection – Mladi Plus representatives convinced this institution to hire interns who would be responsible for checking labour market violations that relate to young people and their working conditions. This is especially important because Slovenian youth is badly affected by precarious working conditions.

The YG scheme in Slovenia consists of something between 40 and 50 different measures. Some of these measures focus on prevention from early leaving, while others focus on improving career orientation and prospects. Some measures consist of scholarships for young people, or subsidies for employers to encourage hiring young employees. Mladi Plus carefully monitors the implementation of these measures and often provides highly critical feedback to both the government and the implementing institutions on the quality of the measures.

Mladi Plus has been very successfully engaged on these issues since 2011 and continuously tries addressing new topics, such as the rights and interests of LGBT people in the labour market and in the society, environmental issues, the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA) and other neglected problems. Introducing new areas to work on ensures a constant renewal of the trade union movement, increases member capacity and most importantly, makes trade union work relevant to the younger generation.

European Alliance for Apprenticeships

While Mladi Plus representatives did not directly participate in the EAfA itself by making a pledge, they nonetheless actively support measures that aim to improve apprenticeship quality and ensure the general success of dual-learning schemes. Dual VET in Slovenia became available only in 2017, Therefore Mladi Plus is working to ensure that the process of setting up this type of learning is smooth and consistent, and most importantly, caters to the needs of young people as well as their potential employers. Mladi Plus members participate in the expert group at the Slovene Apprenticeship Forum.

163 Mladinski Svet Slovenije (2017). Mlad. Sveti lokalnih skupnosti. Available at: <http://mss.si/sodelujemo/mlad-sveti-lokalnih-skupnosti/>

Quality Framework for Traineeships

Mladi Plus was extensively involved in the QFT-related activities, given that this measure falls in line with their traditional activities. More details on their involvement are discussed in the case example on Mladi Plus and CDFT (France), which explores their involvement with traineeships.

Lessons learnt

Members of Mladi Plus are generally satisfied with their current accomplishments. They claim to have achieved a lot, mainly thanks to their hard work and persistence in putting pressure on relevant institutions to introduce new policies. Furthermore, having clearly defined goals allowed this trade union to successfully convince stakeholders to address specific issues and look for appropriate solutions. However, Mladi Plus is also responsible for finding financial help elsewhere. It mostly relies on project-based work, because membership fees are very low (12 EUR per year). From March 2018, 6 people work full time with all youth-related issues and policy measures.

One of the main challenges reported by Mladi Plus representatives was said to be receiving recognition for the relevance of their work. In other words, many members of the SSS to which they are affiliated, as well as most ZSSS members were initially sceptical towards a trade union that mainly represents the interests of unemployed youth. These organisations were slow to recognise the work and capacity of Mladi Plus representatives, who had to undertake many advocacy and campaigning activities as a result. Another challenge reported by Mladi Plus representatives was lack of stable financial resources, as this trade union often receives funding from various grants and project-based activities, and constant member turnover. Members are not permanent, because as soon as they join the labour force they can no longer be represented by Mladi Plus and are encouraged to join a trade union that provides support for their particular occupation. In some respects, this is a desired outcome of Mladi Plus activities, but at the same time, they constantly lose members and activists. The last challenge identified by Mladi Plus representatives was complex relations with the government authorities. While trade union representatives are satisfied with the level of social dialogue as they are given seats on all youth-related bodies, when it comes to the actual co-decision process, young trade union representatives claim that they are not as involved as they would like to be.

Mladi Plus activities are transferable to all trade unions that have a dedicated youth branch. While Mladi Plus is a separate trade union and represents a unique case within the European trade union landscape, their work may be replicated by any youth branch of a trade union with sufficient human resources and clear targets. Likewise, other factors, such as having dedicated members or continuous engagement in social dialogue, are also independent of organisational structure.

'Tips and tricks' for adoption of a similar practice

- Establish and maintain good relations with other organisations
- Retain a critical attitude and be persistent with your position
- Find dedicated people to work on relevant issues
- Continuously expand the range of problems to work on, to include a wider range of young people
- Focus on representing young workers and in defending their rights and interest at the workplace
- Don't get discouraged if other trade union organisations do not show adequate support
- Diversify your financial sources (e.g. projects, grants, as well as membership fees)

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GENERAL UNION OF WORKERS (UGT) (PORTUGAL)



Policy and policy stage:	European Semester
Country:	Portugal
Region:	Southern Europe
Level of implementation:	National
Youth unemployment:	High
Employee affiliation to trade union rates:	Medium

Introduction

The Portuguese economy has been steadily recovering from the financial crisis during the last few years. In accordance with these positive trends, the labour market conditions are also improving, with unemployment rates falling faster than expected. However, young people remain largely excluded from economic activity and their unemployment rates are still high. All social partners are therefore involved in continuous negotiations regarding active labour market policies targeted towards youth. The General Workers Union influences the decision-making process by providing policy recommendations for the European Semester. This case example presents the involvement of a trade union in the European Semester and its effects on retaining trade union relevance within the Portuguese social fabric.

The General Union of Workers (Pt. *União Geral de Trabalhadores*, UGT) is the second largest trade union confederation in Portugal¹⁶⁴. It was established in 1978, after separating from the main Portuguese trade union confederation, the General Confederation of the Portuguese Workers (Pt. *Confederação Geral dos Trabalhadores Portugueses*, CGTP-IN). This confederation represents both public and private sector employees from all sectors of the economy and consists of 50 trade unions and 6 trade union federations, most of which are national. The UGT actively defends workers' rights by focusing on job quality and security, fair wages and engaging in numerous educational activities related to vocational training and life-long learning. Its members believe that social partners need to participate in all aspects of the country's socio-economic policy, given that such policies sustain the direction of overall economic development. As such, the UGT is a fairly influential organisation, and its advice is often taken into account by government authorities.

The UGT is involved in the YG, VET and QFT-related measures at different policy stages and to various degrees. However, this trade union confederation is also extensively involved in the European Semester at the national as well as the European level through bi-partite and tri-partite dialogues. This example illustrates their involvement in more detail, providing insight to how other trade union organisations can become more engaged.

¹⁶⁴ UGT. História. 2018. Available at: <https://www.ugt.pt/historia?area=5>

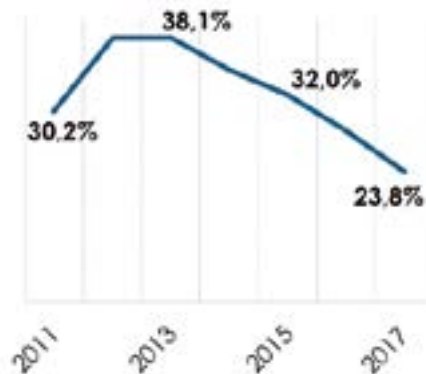
Context

20% of employees belong to a trade union in Portugal



Source: ETUI.

Youth unemployment in Portugal remains high



Source: Eurostat.

Different sources provide diverging information regarding the total number of employees in trade unions¹⁶⁵. According to rough estimates, trade union membership rates fluctuate somewhere between 18% and 20%¹⁶⁶. Several trade union representatives reported that during the last two decades, their organisations experienced significant membership loss. This loss is mostly attributed to a decline in agriculture and manufacturing jobs. Both Portuguese trade union confederations are set to increase their membership rates.

General unemployment rate in Portugal has significantly improved, falling to its lowest levels since 2004. The total unemployment rate was just 9% in 2017¹⁶⁷. However, youth unemployment remains almost three times higher than the overall average. While the youth unemployment rate has been steadily decreasing since 2012, many institutions and organisations agree that youth unemployment still needs to be addressed via active labour market policies. Furthermore, the share of temporary employment contracts in the Portuguese labour market remains exceedingly high and is one of the highest in the EU. Young people are especially affected by unstable work, and many struggle to find permanent, high quality jobs.

All social partners participate in social dialogue through a stable tri-partite body, namely the Portuguese Economic and Social Council. This institutional body enables social partners to influence labour market policies and continuously engage in negotiations on labour market issues, such as minimum wage requirements. However, the quality of social dialogue strongly depends upon government authorities. Trade union organisations report that since 2015 the quality of social dialogue has improved due to a more progressive approach to policy-making pursued by the government.

Trade Union activities

The UGT has been involved in the evaluation of YG measures, active delivery of vocational training and negotiating new types of employment contracts for both young and old-age workers. Its representatives emphasised that active labour market policies need to primarily encourage employers to hire young, inexperienced employees. However, trade union representatives also said that many measures were already operational and the YG was simply another way of ensuring financial support. As such, the UGT members seek to maintain a consistent policy direction, monitor measure progress and guarantee that youth employment remains amongst the top priorities on the government's agenda. The UGT participates in the European Semester to advance a more nuanced approach towards labour market relations and influence policy recommendations to improve labour market conditions for the younger generation.

¹⁶⁵ ETUI. *Portugal, Trade Unions*. 2016. Available at: <https://www.worker-participation.eu/National-Industrial-Relations/Countries/Portugal/Trade-Unions>

¹⁶⁶ Eurofound. *Living and working in Portugal*. 18 October 2017. Available at: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/country/belgium#actors-and-institutions>

¹⁶⁷ European Commission. Commission Staff Working Document. Country Report Portugal 2018. SWD (2018) 220 final. Brussels, 7.3.2018. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2018-european-semester-country-report-portugal-en.pdf>

European Semester

Portugal was exempt from standard European Semester assessment procedure, because it was part of the macroeconomic adjustment programme until 2014. However, since then, the Portuguese debt has been reduced substantially and government spending is no longer subject to strict monitoring procedures¹⁶⁸. Trade union representatives believe it is very important for social partners to be involved in the European Semester, given that social and economic improvements largely depend upon the definition and implementation of policy recommendations formulated during the Semester. The UGT representatives are always invited, alongside other social partners, to attend working groups, both at the national and EU levels.

At the national level, the UGT is regularly invited to meetings to discuss country-specific recommendations. The UGT representatives are given the opportunity to express their views regarding further policy implementation. For example, the UGT members constantly emphasise the negative effects of short-term employment and keep encouraging the Government to adopt policy measures that would encourage employers to retain their workers for longer periods and provide them with more stability. Another issue that the UGT continuously brings up is social protection of employees, especially trainees. Currently, traineeships in Portugal last for nine months, but social protection is only guaranteed for those employees who have worked for a full year. This means that young people are at greater risk of social exclusion. Negotiations are underway with government authorities and employer organisations to introduce a new type of employment contract, the "generational contract". This type of contract would enable older employees to work fewer hours and instead, use this time to assist young employees in their new working tasks. The older workers would receive the same remuneration as previously, while the younger workers would benefit from more work made available for them. The UGT constantly promotes bilateral meetings to discuss policy options with employer organisations to then influence the political agenda at the national level.

The UGT also participates in the European Semester at the EU level. It is involved in bilateral working groups with European Commission representatives, including the local European Commission delegation stationed in Portugal. Furthermore, the UGT is also involved through the ETUC, using it as a mediating platform to access European-level decision-making and influence the general trade union approach towards labour market policies. The UGT representatives have often stressed that they wish to see more socially-oriented and less liberal policy measures being supported by the European Commission.

Overall, the UGT is fairly satisfied with its involvement in the European Semester. Its representatives reported positive outcomes regarding the Portuguese government approach towards labour market policies. Even though Portugal was exempt from standard EU economic governance for a while, including receiving country-specific recommendations, it has managed to achieve economic stability and is well on its way to implementing structural labour market reforms with assistance from the social partners. Government policies are improving, but there is still much to be done to boost the Portuguese economy. The UGT representatives are also satisfied with their participation in bilateral working groups with European Commission representatives, reporting good synergies in terms of common goals and a shared perspective on how to achieve them.

Lessons learnt

The UGT representatives reported that one of the reasons why they were consistently invited to participate in numerous consultations was their negotiation capacity and credibility. In other words, the UGT has an established record of willingness to compromise and ability to build bridges between social partners and government authorities, without resorting to radical means. They continuously promote meetings amongst trade union members to foster the culture of dialogue and, likewise, extend this practice beyond their organisation. The UGT representatives are constantly in contact with employer organisations, organising bilateral meetings and working groups to find common ground as well as advance their position in other meetings concerning the European Semester.

¹⁶⁸ European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. (2016). Role of the social partners in the European Semester. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Available at: <https://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.it/&httpsredir=1&article=1511&context=intl>

The only significant challenge to trade union participation in the European Semester was said to be general opposition towards social dialogue. The UGT representatives said that they faced some hostility regarding social partner engagement from several politically-dominant groups. They were said to show considerable support for the residing government, but not towards establishing and maintaining a dynamic social dialogue. The UGT is alarmed by such lack of prioritisation towards a meaningful exchange of perspectives and emphasise that it could have negative effects on policy development and, consequently, threaten overall social cohesion. In other words, the UGT representatives highlight the necessity of securing a guaranteed political space for proper conversation and likewise, political action.

This practice is transferable to other trade union organisations, which either have already established negotiation capacity, or alternatively, are willing to put substantial efforts in its acquisition. Furthermore, trade union representatives need to be prepared for negotiations by ensuring that they have sufficient expertise on the relevant issues.

'Tips and tricks' for adoption of a similar practice

- Opening up channels of dialogue and negotiation with other stakeholder organisations, especially employer organisations
- Retain willingness to negotiate and seek to increase negotiation capacity
- Gather sufficient evidence to provide solid policy advice
- Employ sufficient number of people with adequate understanding of labour market issues
- Don't get discouraged if several parties remain unwilling to engage in social dialogue
- Don't advocate for radical change unless it is absolutely necessary
- Don't overestimate the economic climate and don't bargain for resources that are hardly available

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INDEPENDENT SELF-GOVERNING LABOUR UNION 'SOLIDARITY' (NZSS 'SOLIDARNOŚĆ') (POLAND)



Policy and policy stage:	Youth Guarantee – evaluation Quality Framework for Traineeships – implementation European Alliance for Apprenticeships – implementation
Country:	Poland
Region:	Eastern Europe
Level of implementation:	National
Youth unemployment:	Medium
Employee affiliation to trade union rates:	Low

Introduction

The Polish economy has been steadily growing during over the last decade but the youth unemployment rate nonetheless remained above the EU average. To tackle this issue, government authorities have introduced various policy measures. NSZZ 'Solidarity' has also been involved in these activities. This case example presents wide-scale efforts undertaken by NSZZ 'Solidarity' members to support youth employment initiatives, which have, as a result, also helped to promote the trade union culture amongst the younger generation.

In the early 1980s, NSZZ 'Solidarity' (pl. *Niezależny Samorządny Związek Zawodowy 'Solidarność'*) was one of the most important Polish political organisations that lead the opposition movement against the incumbent government. Currently, NSZZ 'Solidarity' represents more than 700 000 workers from every sector of the Polish economy. Members range from managerial and professional staff to factory workers in all sectors of production, VET school students and the unemployed. This trade union operates under a territorial-branch structure: 8 105 local union organisations are affiliated to one of 34 regional bodies. Trade union representatives are mostly concerned with issues regarding minimum wage requirements, pensions, fixed-term employment contracts and civil law contracts¹⁶⁹.

NSZZ 'Solidarity' has recently been involved in all three major youth employment measures, namely the Youth Guarantee (YG), the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA) and the Quality Framework for Traineeships (QFT). While this trade union was only involved in the evaluation of YG measures and claimed that their position had not been taken into account, its participation in other policy measures was more successful and involved a wide range of activities. This case example aims to emphasise this extensive variety of actions undertaken by NSZZ 'Solidarity' as a good practice example to other trade unions.

169 NSZZ Solidarnosc. What is the NSZZ. Available at: <http://www.solidarnosc.org.pl/en/>

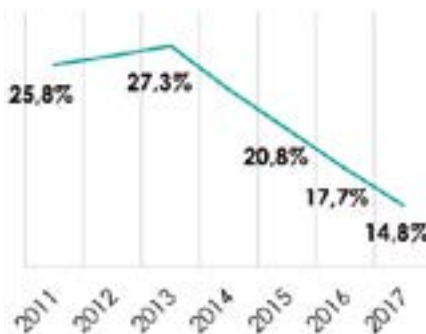
Context

12% of employees belong to a trade union in Poland



Source: ETUI.

Youth unemployment rate fell below the EU average in 2016



Source: Eurostat.

NSZZ 'Solidarity', along with OPZZ and Forum, is engaged in continuous social dialogue with government and employer organisations through the Social Dialogue Council (which replaced the Tripartite Commission for Social and Economic Issues). As such, Polish trade unions are generally quite involved in labour market policies, but their main focus often falls on issues concerning social legislation and the Labour Code¹⁷⁰. NSZZ 'Solidarity' has become more involved in youth employment policies since it established the Youth Committee in 2015. Given the average age of TU members, NSZZ 'Solidarity' agenda was mostly shaped by its older members and while this is starting to change, younger members still struggle to be heard both within the organisation and outside of it.

Despite the historical significance of Polish trade unions, membership rates since 1989 have fallen significantly. While in 1980s, as much as a third of all Polish workforce was affiliated with NSZZ 'Solidarity', membership rates have been decreasing ever since¹⁷¹. In 2014, only 12% of all employees were affiliated to a trade union¹⁷². As such, Polish trade union affiliation rates are one of the lowest in Europe. Furthermore, the average age amongst trade union members is above 40, and trade union officials are approximately 50 years of age. In 2011, trade union membership rates amongst those who were under 35 years of age were just 8%¹⁷³.

GDP growth in Poland has been consistently amongst the highest in Europe for the last several years¹⁷⁴. However, young people remained relatively excluded from increasing economic activity, as youth unemployment rates only fell below the EU average of 18.7% in 2016¹⁷⁵. In 2017, the youth unemployment rate was 14.8%, with those having lowest educational attainment being the least economically active¹⁷⁶. On the positive side, Cedefop reports that existing policy measures are quite successful in preventing early school leaving, as Polish drop-out rates are lower than the EU average¹⁷⁷.

170 Trappmann, V. *Trade Unions in Poland. Current Situation, Organisation and Challenges*. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. Germany, Berlin, 2012. Available at: <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id-moe/08949.pdf>

171 Ibid.

172 Eurofound. *Living and working in Poland*. 18 October 2017. Available at: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/country/poland>

173 Trappmann, V. *Trade Unions in Poland. Current Situation, Organisation and Challenges*. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. Germany, Berlin, 2012. Available at: <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id-moe/08949.pdf>

174 Eurostat. *Statistics Explained. National accounts and GDP*. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/National_accounts_and_GDP

175 Eurostat. *Unemployment by sex and age – annual average*. Available at: <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submit-ViewTableAction.do>

176 Chłoń-Domińczak, A. et al. *Vocational education and training in Europe – Poland*. Cedefop ReferNet VET in Europe reports, 2016. Available at: http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2016/2016_CR_PL.pdf

177 Ibid.

Trade Union activities

The Youth Committee of NSZZ 'Solidarity' is primarily concerned with improving labour market conditions for young people and facilitating their integration. However, they also believe that young people should themselves become more aware of rights and the challenges they face when transitioning from education to employment. Furthermore, they wish to see a positive change in the way young people understand labour market relations and comprehend the social structure. Finally, NSZZ "Solidarity" strongly believes in social dialogue, and all its activities are partly directed towards stronger cooperation between trade union organisations, employer organisations and government bodies. Trade union representatives believe that all efforts must be made of reaching a joint position as this brings the most beneficial results in the long-run.

Evaluation of Youth Guarantee schemes

The Youth Guarantee in Poland was introduced shortly after the Council of the European Union adopted a recommendation on establishing it in 2013¹⁷⁸. The YG scheme implementation begun in 2014 and is mainly being carried out by public employment services¹⁷⁹. NSZZ 'Solidarity' was invited by the government to participate in the YG evaluation through an established monitoring body. Trade union representatives said that the YG measures were very important and should be a priority for EU Member States, given that this scheme provides the main framework for youth-related labour market policies. The representatives who were present in the monitoring group meetings said they were mainly focused on encouraging government authorities to introduce several changes to the scheme. They stressed the necessity of good quality employment offers, putting emphasis on decent remuneration, long-term employment contracts and appropriate on-the-job learning content (cf. implementing the Quality Framework for Traineeships). However, even if there is some progress on these issues, trade union representatives feel that they have not been sufficiently heard. One aspect which they consider positive is a decrease in temporary employment contracts amongst youth. However, this is linked to good economic performance and labour force shortages rather than YG policy.

Implementing the Quality Framework for Traineeships

NSZZ 'Solidarity' has been extensively involved in QFT-related activities, given that this measure falls most in line with their regular actions. Many youth employment measures rest on traineeship or employment offers, which, if inadequate, undermine the value of such measures. NSZZ 'Solidarity' members have been actively working towards a quality framework since 2013. However, already in 2012, trade union members launched the Sisyphus campaign which sought to inform young workers and trainees about the unwanted consequences of signing low quality employment contracts.

In 2017, NSZZ 'Solidarity' representatives participated in a QFT seminar, held by the European Commission, where it presented a briefing document on their work in this area. In June 2017, trade unions and employers organisations participating in the Social Dialogue Council adopted the Recommendations on the quality of traineeships in the open market. NSZZ 'Solidarity' strongly pushed for that document and inspired a debate in that field. The most important measures included in the Recommendation are the following¹⁸⁰:

- A transparent recruitment process, which includes informing about prospective job places to be filled after the traineeship is completed and which provides equal opportunities to all applicants.
- A written agreement clearly stating the purpose of the traineeship and the tasks to be performed must be indicated. A written agreement needs to be concluded between all the parties involved, and the trainee must be assigned a mentor, who provides daily tasks.

178 Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee (2013/C 120/01). Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2013:120:0001:0006:EN:PDF>

179 European Commission. Youth Guarantee country by country - Poland. May 2018.

180 UCHWAŁA Nr 35 (projekt) strony pracowników i strony pracodawców Rady Dialogu Społecznego z dnia 19 czerwca 2017 r. w sprawie zaleceń partnerów społecznych dotyczące jakości staży na otwartym rynku pracy. Document provided by NSZZ "Solidarity" representatives.

- Remuneration guaranteed for all internships longer than one month.
- Social guarantees and social protection provided to all trainees.
- Clearly indicated and limited working time.

Trade union representatives believe that any traineeship must be a means to gain valuable professional experience rather than lead to employee replacement or abuse of cheap labour force. However, these means were only issued as a recommendation, even though the representatives believe they ought to have become a legal obligation. They are, however, quite satisfied with an introduction of a minimum hourly wage for everyone working under standard employment contracts, civil contracts and the self-employed. This is regarded as a necessity for young people, as they often are paid less than adult workers.

In April 2018, NSZZ 'Solidarity' organised a Youth Forum, where it encouraged novel ideas on how to make the labour market more youth-friendly without abusing the employee rights. After the event they prepared a "Youth Package", which comprises 5 concrete proposals to make the Polish labour market more friendly to young people¹⁸¹, and sent it to the Social Dialogue Council in order to launch a debate about the situation of young people in the labour market. Furthermore, NSZZ 'Solidarity' is a constant user of social as well as traditional media to raise awareness of the importance of quality employment for young people. Finally, it often partakes in various lobbying activities, consultations, meetings and campaigns to ensure the continuity of debate regarding these issues. The most recent campaign will be organised in partnership with the Independent Students' Association to inform students on particular features of student employment, including precarious working conditions.

Overall, NSZZ 'Solidarity' considers its participation in this measure quite successful and its members are especially satisfied with good cooperation with other social partners on this issue.

Implementing the European Alliance for Apprenticeships pledge

The National Education Section of NSZZ 'Solidarity' was involved in the EAfA pledge campaign by making a commitment in 2013¹⁸². They pledged to advocate for the importance of apprenticeships, improve apprenticeship quality and enhance stakeholder cooperation. However, this section is separate from the NSZZ 'Solidarity' Youth Committee and, as a result its actions were not coordinated extensively with Committee members.

Framework of Actions on Youth Employment

In June 2013, the European social partners, namely the European Trade Union Confederation along with three major employer organisations¹⁸³, agreed on a Framework of Actions on Youth Employment (FoA). In Poland this agreement was also put into effect, whereby social partners¹⁸⁴ agreed to work together to achieve the following two goals¹⁸⁵:

- Convince the government to change the legal definition of a young/juvenile worker in order to enable more young people to benefit from employment contracts in vocational training.
- Prepare common guidelines for quality traineeships and apprenticeships along with recommendations to government officials, which would encourage the adoption of relevant legislative changes.

181 PAKIET NA RZECZ MŁODYCH - NSZZ „SOLIDARNOŚĆ”. Available at: http://www.solidarnosc.org.pl/images/files/dokumenty/Pakiet_na_rzecz_modych.pdf

182 European Commission. European Alliance for Apprenticeships. Pledges. National Education Section of NSZZ Solidarność. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1149&langId=en&idDataTable=49>

183 The other three employer organisations were UAPME, BusinessEurope and CEEP

184 Framework of Actions on Youth Employment. Third Follow-up Report. September 2016. Available at: <http://www.ceep.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/youth-employment-3.pdf>

185 Framework of Actions on Youth Employment. June 2013. Available at: https://www.etuc.org/sites/www.etuc.org/files/201306_Framework_of_Actions_Youth_Employment_1.pdf

- NSZZ 'Solidarity' has been actively contributing in helping to achieve these goals. The second goal has been discussed more extensively in the section above. The first goal, namely changing the legal definition of who may be considered a young/juvenile worker was important for two reasons:
 - Young apprentices work under employer supervision and have an employment contract. Even though they are enrolled in vocational schools, they do not get various discounts that standard school pupils benefit from. While NSZZ 'Solidarity' is more often concerned with the Polish economy and social issues from a broader perspective, the fact that some young people are not entitled to the same benefits is at odds with their understanding of social and economic justice.
 - According to the Polish Labour Code, pupils may enrol in VET programmes once they become 15 years of age, given that 15 is the age when you are legally entitled to become an employee. However, the school year begins in September, and as a result, many who were born between September and December of the same year cannot enrol in VET programmes.

The Polish Craft Association (Pl. Związek Rzemiosła Polskiego) was the main organisation that proposed these new legislative changes, while NSZZ 'Solidarity' played an important role in providing support. The Polish Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy was originally not in favour of these changes, while the Ministry of National Education was very supportive. Currently, the necessary documents are being drafted and will be submitted to government authorities during the second half of 2018. Until August 2018 a draft legislation by the Ministry of Education was published to enable all pupils that will turn 15 years old during the calendar year to enrol in VET programmes. However, efforts to change the system of benefits are still in progress.

In addition to these activities, NSZZ 'Solidarity' published a report on the European FoA Plan on Youth Employment in 2014, and in 2017, trade union representatives took part in a conference concerning further FoA implementation activities. In June 2017, NSZZ "Solidarność" with support from EZA (European Centre for Workers' Questions) organised a seminar evaluating European youth policies in the area of labour market (focusing on Youth Guarantee schemes). Representatives from many countries, organisations and institutions took part. One of the outcomes were policy recommendations to engage young people in the debate on the youth policies more intensively.

The FoA agreement is noteworthy insofar as it exemplifies successful social dialogue on a European level that had consequences on a national level. In addition, a consensus on the significance of youth employment issues is a considerable achievement given that it forms the foundation to future dialogue as well as future actions.

Lessons learnt

Social dialogue was said to be the most important success factor that enabled NSZZ 'Solidarity' to achieve positive results in youth employment policies. This trade union organisation believes that social dialogue forms the basis of all activities, because it helps to reach consensus and determine common interests. TU members stressed that it was important to establish connections and maintain them with all organisations that shared similar views.

NSZZ 'Solidarity' representatives also identified a number of internal factors that played a considerable role. First of all, good communication between TU members was said to be important, because it helped to coordinate various activities and maintain a consistent position on relevant issues. Additionally, having members who are devoted to the cause was said to be a relevant aspect in achieving the desired results. However, a major success factor, which trade unions members reported as crucial to their participation, was having sufficient resources to participate. Sufficient financial and human resources were said to be necessary, while a lack of thereof was identified as a major obstacle for any activity.

NSZZ 'Solidarity' members reported several challenges to their involvement in youth employment policies. The first of these was internal, and has to a large extent been already resolved. However, at first, younger members did not receive sufficient support from older members, who did not see youth unemployment as a serious issue. The other challenges were related to external factors, and therefore still remain difficult to resolve. Lobbying was said to be particularly challenging for two reasons, first of all because it does not enable stakeholders to state clear autonomous positions which could then be openly considered and discussed, and secondly because NSZZ 'Solidarity' headquarter office is located in Gdansk, while most lobbying activities take place in Warsaw, making it more difficult for trade union members to participate. Another challenge identified by trade union members was cultural: young people are unfamiliar with unionist culture of solidarity and display very individualistic attitudes. They are often unaware of the benefits of collective action and instead, maintain a very liberal perspective on labour market relations. According to trade union representatives, this is especially harmful to young people, because it leads them to becoming abused by employers without being aware of it.

The wide range of activities undertaken by NSZZ 'Solidarity' Youth Committee is transferable to larger and better established trade union organisations that can provide the necessary financial support as well as human resources to manage such activities. Furthermore, given that social dialogue plays an important role in successfully accomplishing desired goals, trade unions that continuously participate in such dialogue will be able to achieve significantly more than those which are excluded from stakeholder level debates.

Tips and tricks' for adoption of a similar practice

- Open up channels of dialogue and negotiation with stakeholder groups, including employer organisations. Create partnerships with other organisations, such as VET providers or student bodies
- Allocate sufficient human and financial resources to youth employment issues
- Ensure smooth communication between trade union members to maintain a consistent position
- Find people who are devoted to these issues and, if possible, establish a dedicated working group (a Youth Committee)
- Try to ensure the continuity of dialogue via various media channels
- Don't get discouraged if the organisation is initially reluctant to support your position and establish it as a priority
- Maintain your opinions even if they seem unpopular between young people
- Put extra effort in activities that are beneficial but difficult to participate in, such as lobbying sessions in a different city

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CONFEDERATION OF CHRISTIAN TRADE UNIONS (CSC-ACV) (BELGIUM)



Policy and policy stage:	Youth Guarantee – design, implementation, evaluation Quality Framework for Traineeships – design, implementation, evaluation
Country:	Belgium
Region:	Western Europe
Level of implementation:	Regional and National
Youth unemployment:	Medium
Employee affiliation to trade union rates:	High

Introduction

The Belgian economy is marked by regional differences and the communities of Brussels-Capital are strongly divided due to increasing economic and social inequalities. Youth unemployment in the Brussels-Capital region is a top priority on the current government's agenda. All social partners, including the Confederation of Christian Trade Unions, have been extensively involved in helping to design, implement and evaluate new measures that target the young unemployed. This case example presents efforts undertaken by CSC-ACV members to ensure that policy measures successfully reach those who are in most need of them and, consequently, to sustain continuous trade union participation in youth employment policies.

The Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (Fr. *Confédération des Syndicats Chrétiens*, Nl. *Algemeen Christelijk Vakverbond*, CSC-ACV) is one of the strongest Belgian trade union organisations¹⁸⁶, comprising of almost 1.7 million members¹⁸⁷. The history of this confederation reaches as far back as 1886, when it was first established as the Antisocialist League of Cotton Workers (Fr. *La Ligue Antisocialiste de Travailleurs du Coton*, Nl. *Antisocialistische Katoenbewerkerbond*). It became a trade union confederation in 1912, and its current title was approved in 1923¹⁸⁸. The CSC-ACV has a lot of influence, given that it has majority of seats in enterprise works councils¹⁸⁹ as well as health and safety committees. While this confederation was traditionally more supported within the Flemish-speaking community, its popularity is also growing in the Brussels-Capital and the Wallonia regions.

The CSC-ACV was actively involved in the YG and QFT-related measures in all policy stages right from the outset of their conception. This case example aims to showcase their participation in these policies on a regional level, namely at the Brussels-Capital region, as a good practice example to other trade unions.

186 There are three trade union confederations in Belgium: the Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (Nl. *Algemeen Christelijk Vakverbond*, Fr. *Confédération des syndicats chrétiens*, ACV-CSC), the General Federation of Belgian Labour (Nl. *Algemeen Belgisch Vakverbond*, Fr. *Fédération Générale du Travail de Belgique*, ABVV-FGTB), and the General Confederation of Liberal Trade Unions of Belgium, Nl. *Algemene Centrale der Liberale Vakbonden van België*, Fr. *Centrale générale des syndicats libéraux de Belgique*, ACLVB-CGSLB). The two more representative ones are the ACV-CSC and the ABVV-FGTB, both of which have more than 1.5 million members each. These trade unions are present on numerous bipartite and tripartite bodies that operate on national and regional levels.

187 ETUI. *Belgium, Trade Unions*. 2016. Available at: <http://www.worker-participation.eu/index.php/National-Industrial-Relations/Countries/Belgium/Trade-Unions>

188 Algemeen Christelijk Vakverbond. *Wie zijn we?* Available at: <https://www.acv-online.be/acv-online/het-acv/Wie-zijn-we/wie-zijn-we.html>

189 Enterprise works councils are established bodies in companies that employ more than 100 employees. Both employer and employee organisations are represented but not necessarily in equal numbers. This body mainly consults on various matter, while its decision-making powers are limited. Council elections take place every four years.

Context

55% of employees belong to a trade union in Belgium



Source: ETUI.

Youth unemployment is higher in the Brussels-Capital region



Source: Eurostat.

Belgium has very high trade union affiliation rates, which have remained stable during the last decade. Contrary to most EU countries, Belgian trade union membership rate was showing modest growth tendencies until 2015. This trend may be explained by the fact that the unemployed also belong to trade unions, given that trade unions pay out unemployment benefits. In addition, many retired workers also retain their trade union membership. In 2013, around 55% of all employees were affiliated to a trade union¹⁹⁰. Generally, many workers tend to support the trade unions even if they are not affiliated members. However, since 2015 trade unions have witnessed a slow decline in membership rates, which is partly explained by the overall decline in unemployment.

The economic structure of Belgium differs across regions in terms of economic activity. Accordingly, the labour market is regulated at the regional level. There are great economic disparities between the regions, which also affect youth employment. While youth unemployment rates during the last five years in Belgium were only slightly above the EU average (in 2016, the EU average was 18.7%), they were much higher within the Brussels-Capital region. In 2017, the overall Belgian youth unemployment rate was 19.3%, while in Brussels-Capital this rate was 33.2%. This is due to the particular economic structure of Brussels: while both Flanders and Wallonia are more heavily dependent on industry, the Brussels-Capital is more focused on administrative and financial services. These sectors require a highly qualified workforce. However, the Brussels-Capital region has a large population of young people who come from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. They are unable to compete for high-profile jobs that the Brussels-Capital heavily depends on.

Belgian trade unions enjoy a strong social dialogue tradition and are involved in labour market policies at both federal and regional levels. They are present in all federal and regional administration committees alongside other organisations, such as the Public Employment Services, and continuously advise government authorities. Trade unions also sit in the Central Economic Council that submits formal opinions regarding the national economy¹⁹¹. However, the quality of social dialogue also depends on who holds the majority of seats in the Government, and due to Belgium's regional structure, this may vary across the regions. Currently, trade unions report best synergy with the Brussels-Capital authorities, since they are the most supportive towards progressive policies and place a high priority on youth employment issues.

¹⁹⁰ Eurofound. *Living and working in Belgium*. 18 October 2017. Available at: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/country/belgium#actors-and-institutions>

¹⁹¹ Eurofound. Central Economic Council. Belgium. Available at: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/efemiredictionary/central-economic-council>

Trade Union activities

The CSC-ACV has been concerned with youth employment for a long time, given that youth is one of the most vulnerable groups that enter the labour market and is heavily affected by the changing economic landscape. This trade union organisation advocated for the introduction of the Youth Guarantee and was further involved in all YG and QFT-related activities from the very beginning. The CSC-ACV coordinated its position with other trade union organisations, and sought common ground with both employer organisations and government authorities. The organisation is very active and is often consulted by the Government on all matters that concern youth employment.

Youth Guarantee

The YG measures in the Brussels-Capital region mainly target the largest and the most problematic group, namely young people below the age of 25 who have either very low or no qualifications. To tackle high youth unemployment, government authorities introduced financial incentives to help at least 6 000 young jobseekers find a job. The CSC-ACV has been fully supportive of these efforts and, together with other social partners, agreed on a number of shared responsibilities (Fr. *priorité partagée*). These shared responsibilities seek to reinforce cross-cutting employment policies, which the trade unions help to coordinate. The financial incentives are mostly focused on vocational training, with half of all jobseekers (approx. 3 000) receiving help to complete some form of vocational education. Another 2 000 jobseekers will be encouraged to undertake an internship, while the remaining 1 000 allowances target those young people who have not found a job within the last 18 months and who have no qualifications. The latter financial incentive falls under a new employment contract type, namely the integration contract (Fr. *Contrat d'insertion*, NI. *Inschakelingscontract*)¹⁹² that was established to simplify previously existing contracts. This contract largely follows the principle of an "IBO, Individuele Beroepsopleiding", meaning the employer pays a low wage to the young employee. But the Employment Service Actiris compensates this with an extra subsidy to the user of the integration contract (largely subsidized by the European Union). This last incentive has been operational since 2016 and is offered by the regional employment services.

All YG measures are financed by the Belgian regional, federal, and European Social Funds that add up to a budget of €9 million. All the measures will be continued for as long as they are necessary. Trade union representatives stressed that these measures need to be evaluated and adjusted in order to be most effective. The CSC-ACV members believe that a repetitive application of these means, when a young person remains constantly supported by such measures, should be avoided. Youth unemployment in the Brussels-Capital region has decreased, but it is unclear whether this is merely due to improved economic conditions or also due to the success of the measures.

The Flemish service for labour and vocational training VDAB (NI: *Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding*) has been tracking the implementation of the Youth Guarantee in the region, providing information about its outcomes on a yearly basis. The report points out that the current implementation of the Youth Guarantee is challenged by an outreach problem to those young people who need such policies. CSC-ACV didn't share some views of the project such as acknowledging counselling as part of the Youth Guarantee schemes, while in practice such service is not always that extensive. Moreover, the trade union representatives argued that it is likely that counselling services will be modified with the adoption of the new VDAB "digital first approach", to be launched in fall 2018¹⁹³.

The region of Brussels has also been undertaking a periodical assessment of the Youth Guarantee. Data until 2017 show that 300 people have been engaged on YG schemes in Brussels Capital Region, which in the opinion of CSC-ACV is far below the EU goal for the region, which aims at creating 6500 traineeship schemes and 3000 training offers¹⁹⁴.

192 Actiris, Brussels. De geschikte medewerker vinden. Available at: <http://www.actiris.be/emp/tabid/957/language/nl-BE/Inschakelingscontract.aspx>

193 Desiere, S., van Dessel, A., Coomans, S., & Struyven, L. (2017). Externe evaluatie van de Vlaamse jongerengarantie in het kader van het Europese jongerengarantieplan. Leuven: HIVA – KU Leuven.

194 Youth Guarantee krijgt de wind van voor. Tracé Brussel. Brussels, 2018. Available at: <https://tracebrussel.be/nieuws/youth-guarantee-krijgt-de-wind-van-voor?from=26716>

Quality Framework for Traineeships

The CSC-ACV was involved in the process of traineeship reform at the regional level via social dialogue and negotiations. Trade union representatives report that it was the first time their Confederation had gone so far into the negotiation process by holding on to their initial position towards what they believe a quality traineeship ought to look like. The CSC-ACV members stressed that it was very important to them that traineeships do not become a means of replacing regular workers with trainees. There are several reasons behind this standpoint, the most important of which are the following:

- Regular workers are pushed out of the labour market by a cheap labour force and must either compete with trainees whose pay is subsidised by the government or, alternatively, compete amongst each other for limited work places. This puts many qualified workers in a disadvantaged position and, consequently, may further lead to many problems such as growing unemployment and increased economic inequality.
- The government has foreseen a large budget of €9 million to cover various traineeship, internship and apprenticeship placements for young people to acquire the necessary skills and increase their employment opportunities. Trade union representatives believe that such a large amount of money should not be wasted on temporary and low-quality employment that benefits only the employers instead of the target group.
- Traineeships are means to acquire skills that lead to actual employment and, as such, must contain properly defined learning content. Trainees must not be abused by carrying out menial tasks such as serving coffee or making photocopies, because these kinds of tasks defeat the purpose of the training process.

To prevent traineeships from becoming a form of cheap employment, social partners negotiated a set of legal obligations. These negotiations took approximately one year and new regulations came into force sometime between 2015 and 2016. According to these regulations, all trainees must sign a traineeship contract to ensure trainee social protection and clearly defined training purposes. However, the key achievement consists in the obligation to ensure that the trainee is supervised by someone who has approved pedagogical competences. This was believed to be a necessary step to guarantee traineeship content quality. The CSC-ACV representatives also said they managed to include a recommendation that all traineeships should lead to a formally recognised certification. In addition, the CSC-ACV wished to impose trainee quotas per company to protect regular employees, but all employer organisations were strongly opposed and, as a result, this measure was not adopted.

Finally, trade union representatives said that traineeship legislation and regulation remains a complex issue in the Brussels-Capital region due to its institutional arrangement. Even though the Brussels-Capital region has its own single regional government responsible for employment policies, the linguistic communities also maintain their own autonomy on matters of education. This makes it difficult to introduce the necessary changes in a coordinated and consistent way.

Lessons learnt

The CSC-ACV was generally satisfied with its involvement in youth employment policies in the Brussels-Capital region. Its representatives especially stressed the importance of involving all stakeholders in each policy stage according to their capacity. Social dialogue helps find common ground and reach a long-lasting consensus on the policy direction. Furthermore, trade union representatives also identified coordination with other trade union organisations FGTB – AVBB and CGSLB-ACLVB to establish and maintain a single position as another major success factor. Overall, the CSC-ACV is content with the quality of social dialogue, because its members were listened to and their opinions taken into account. They were invited to participate right from the start of debates regarding the design of measures, which made it much easier to negotiate with other stakeholders and achieve results that met trade union expectations.

Amongst major challenges reported by the CSC-ACV members, the effective implementation of youth employment policies was said to be especially problematic. Even though the ongoing work seems satisfactory so far, it is necessary to ensure that all agreements and proposals are respected and actually carried out. Trade union representatives pointed out that agreements regarding quality traineeships may be especially difficult, because while the legal framework might exist, this framework alone does not guarantee adequate protection. The CSC-ACV members also said that educational issues posed another major challenge to their work. Some schools and programmes in the Brussels-Capital region remain insufficiently financed by the state, resulting in significant inequalities between schools themselves, and their pupils as a result. Furthermore, young people from impoverished socio-economic backgrounds are also difficult to work with, primarily due to their lack of motivation.

Finally, the CSC-ACV representatives stressed the importance of evidence for policy-making, saying that giving sound advice to government institutions was sometimes challenging due to lack of credible evidence on various aspects of youth employment conditions in the Brussels-Capital. Trade union members would like to be able to act upon robust results of measure evaluation to propose more effective solutions.

'Tips and tricks' for adoption of a similar practice

- Seek common ground with all stakeholders, including employer organisations
- Coordinate and maintain a unified position amongst all trade union organisations
- Establish clear and well-founded goals
- Find means to evaluate ongoing measures
- Don't insist on undertaking activities that are unsuitable within the regional context
- Don't get discouraged if negotiations take longer than expected and measures are not implemented as smoothly

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GERMAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (DGB), AUSTRIAN TRADE UNION FEDERATION (ÖGB), DANISH CONFEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS (LO)



Policy and policy stage:	Youth Guarantee – design and implementation European Alliance for Apprenticeships – implementation
Country:	Germany, Austria, Denmark
Region:	Central and North Europe
Level of implementation:	National/Regional/Local
Youth unemployment:	Low
Employee affiliation to trade union rates:	Medium/High

Introduction

In many EU Member States, the consequences of the economic crisis have had an especially negative effect on young people. Even more disquieting is the fact that many of those between 15 and 25 years of age found themselves excluded from the education system or unable to integrate into the labour market. While figures have improved, currently the share of NEETs still remains high. Nonetheless, very few EU Member States have a well-developed system for identifying and targeting NEETs. The governments of Austria, Germany and Denmark have taken significant steps to develop national systems and address this issue. Major trade union organisations within these countries were also involved. This case example presents their activities in more detail.

Three trade union organisations, namely the German Trade Union Confederation (De. *Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund*, DGB)¹⁹⁵, the Danish Confederation of Trade Unions (Dk. *Landsorganisationen i Danmark*, LO)¹⁹⁶ and the Austrian Trade Union Federation (De. *Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund*, ÖGB)¹⁹⁷, were extensively involved in activities related to identifying and targeting NEETs. All three trade union organisations enjoy strong social dialogue traditions and maintain good relations with both employer organisations and government authorities. The DGB and the ÖGB are organised under a similar structure: the DGB is comprised of eight individual trade union organisations that make many decisions independently, while the ÖGB is made up of seven affiliated trade union organisations that are also quite independent. The DGB has around 6 million members and the ÖGB has around 1.2 million. In contrast to Germany and Austria, there are three main large trade union organisations in Denmark. The LO is the largest of these three organisations and has more than 1 million members.

While all three of these European countries enjoy strong economies and have very low youth unemployment rates, they nonetheless have unresolved issues when it comes to the number of NEETs. Furthermore, many NEETs were not originally born in these countries and, as a result, face many issues related to integration (e. g. language barrier or cultural differences). Reaching out to such young people therefore requires addressing very specific needs. The trade union organisations discussed in this case example participated in efforts to establish and coordinate a system for activating this particular group by taking into consideration all relevant aspects. Within this context, their involvement in the design and implementation of such YG measures is exemplary.

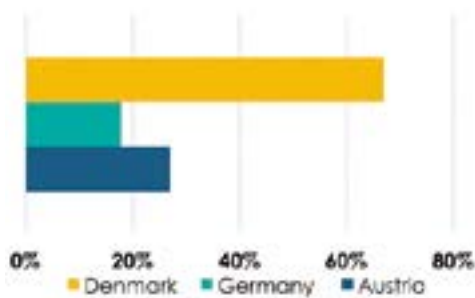
¹⁹⁵ DGB – German Trade Union Confederation. For more see at: <http://en.dgb.de/>

¹⁹⁶ LO Welcome page. For more see at: <https://lo.dk/>

¹⁹⁷ Der ÖGB. For more see at: https://www.oegb.at/cms/S06/S06_0/home

Context

Share of employees who belong to a trade union



Source: ETUI.

NEET rate remained relatively stable between 2013 and 2016



Source: Eurostat.

Trade union affiliation rates in Germany, Austria and Denmark have been steadily declining over the last few decades. Just like in most EU Member States, this decline is attributed to a decline in employment in manufacturing, or the emergence of different types of work that often do not fall in line with traditional trade union representation. In 2014, the trade union affiliation rate in Germany was around 17.7%¹⁹⁸ and was the lowest between these three countries. In Austria, the trade union membership rate is slightly higher than the EU average, with 27.4% of all employees belonging to a trade union in 2013¹⁹⁹. In Denmark trade union affiliation rates have always been very high when compared to the rest of the EU. In 2014, as many as 67% of all employees were affiliated to a trade union²⁰⁰. Overall, trade union organisations in all three countries are putting efforts to attract more members and increase the quality of social dialogue.

Youth unemployment rates in Germany, Austria and Denmark are amongst the lowest in the EU. In 2017, the youth unemployment rate in Germany was only 6.8%, 9.8% in Austria and 11% in Denmark. This is mainly due to successful VET and dual-learning policies in Germany and Austria, and, to a somewhat lesser degree, in Denmark. However, while the economic recession did not have such a significant impact on youth employment in these countries as in other EU Member States, government authorities are still concerned with young people's study and work prospects. In 2017, the share of NEETs between 15 and 25 years of age was also lower than the EU average (10.9%), but due to the arrival of migrants, there is a strong need to tackle this problem in its early stages. The NEET rates in 2017 were 6.3% for Germany, 6.8% for Austria and 7% for Denmark²⁰¹.

In Germany the social partners play a strong role in negotiating labour market relations and ALMPs, given that there are very few laws that are binding at the federal level (i. e. minimum wage and working time). The rest of labour market regulations are decided between the social partners. In Austria, the social partners are also strongly involved in political decision-making, with stakeholders constantly meeting to discuss relevant issues at stable tripartite bodies. The social dialogue tradition is especially strong in Denmark, with social partners involved in both labour and education policies at all levels, i. e. national, regional and local. Trade unions are present at the National Board for VET, the National Council for Employment Policies, and the local councils that continuously work on these issues.

198 Eurofound. *Living and working in Germany*. 18 October 2017. Available at: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/country/germany>

199 ETUI. *Austria, Trade Unions*. 2016. Available at: <http://www.worker-participation.eu/www.worker-participation.eu/index.php/National-Industrial-Relations/Countries/Austria/Trade-Unions>

200 ETUI. *Denmark, Trade Unions*. 2016. Available at: <http://www.worker-participation.eu/www.worker-participation.eu/index.php/National-Industrial-Relations/Countries/Denmark/Trade-Unions>

201 Eurostat. Young people neither in employment nor in education and training by sex, age and labour status (NEET rates).

Trade Union activities

All trade union organisations, namely the DGB, the ÖGB and the LO were invited by their national governments to participate in youth employment policy measures. Given that identifying and targeting NEETs is a complex issue, it requires novel and coordinated approaches from all stakeholders. Interventions need to be carefully considered to provide helpful rather than harmful solutions, especially because this target group is hard to identify and engage with due to its vulnerability. Trade union organisations are well-placed to advocate for better training and working conditions when it comes to NEET integration.

The **DGB** was involved in setting-up and implementing two new measures oriented towards young people.

- The first of those was the German Alliance for Vocational Training and Employment (*De. Allianz für Aus- und Weiterbildung*). This alliance was established mainly to increase the number of apprenticeship placements, given that each year there are around 570 000 potential apprentices and only around 500 000 available placements. The DGB helped to negotiate a benchmark with employer organisations for increasing apprenticeship placements by 20 000 each year. There are also agreements related to improving apprenticeship quality and trainer competences. This measure may be regarded as an example of EAfA implementation on a national level.
- The second measure is a specific assistant-apprenticeship scheme that has a double aim of supporting NEETs and simultaneously encouraging companies to introduce apprenticeship schemes. This scheme falls within the scope of the German YG, but it is also a part of the German Alliance for Vocational Training and Employment. The DGB took part in negotiating the design of this measure and helping set the general framework for its implementation. This scheme targets those young people who do not possess sufficient qualifications to enrol in a regular apprenticeship scheme (e. g. they lack basic skills in mathematics or do not speak sufficient German). The youngsters receive either additional training within the company or they receive vouchers that they may use for courses at a local public school or community college. Simultaneously, the Public Employment Service subsidises companies that hire such youngsters to complete their work-based training. This subsidy is meant to encourage small or inexperienced companies to help them introduce these kinds of schemes. However, each German state is free to choose how exactly to manage and implement this scheme.

The ÖGB was involved in setting up a system for reaching out to NEETs and helping them. While previously most policy measures targeting NEETs were operating on a regional level and all activities were largely fragmented, the government authorities together with social partners decided to introduce a coherent system, which would be based on clear standards. Discussions regarding systematic NEET integration have been going on since 2011-2012. These measures were set up to tackle the following major issues:

- Companies are becoming reluctant to offer apprenticeship schemes, so a big share of vocational education activities happens in full-time vocational schools. However, standard company apprenticeships offer better training conditions and are much better paid than training offered at public vocational schools. Vocational school pupils also often lack the necessary skills to enrol in a full-time apprenticeship programme. The drop-out rates from vocational schools are higher than from standard company apprenticeships and these young people often find themselves excluded from the education system, and simultaneously unqualified to enter the labour market. The ÖGB is conducting negotiations and organising campaigns to provide better training conditions within the public VET schools and to increase wages for apprentices in both apprenticeship schemes. Currently, this organisation managed to enforce a minimum apprentice wage of €500 per month for all pupils who undertake work-based learning. The ÖGB believes this is crucial to offer equal opportunities for all apprentices and minimise the social and economic segregation of young people.

- Many young people who drop out of school and do not enter the labour market come from impoverished or otherwise disadvantaged backgrounds. As a result, re-integrating them back into the system is challenging given that they first need social assistance and guidance. Furthermore, those young people, who may not necessarily originate from such backgrounds, still face learning difficulties or lack motivation because they are unsure about their future career possibilities. Lack of career counselling was said to be another prominent problem that affects young people from all socio-economic groups. The ÖGB has been actively promoting more systematic career counselling services and better social service provision.

The ÖGB played a significant role in helping government authorities to set up a network of 20-30 education centres that help to re-integrate young people back into either the education system or the labour market. These centres are spread out across Austrian regions and are fully operational since 2017. These centres provide integrated social services that reach out to young people and primarily aim to convince the NEET group to attend activities offered at these centres. Only once the young people are ready are they encouraged to undertake an apprenticeship or enrol in a standard VET school. The education centres also offer language classes for young people from immigrant backgrounds to facilitate their integration.

Similarly to ÖGB, the **LO** also took part in negotiating and designing a centralised system for reaching out and providing support for NEETs. However, in contrast to both Germany and Austria, the Danish government, in partnership with social partners, has been supporting measures targeting NEETs since the mid-90s. The *Education for All* programme in Denmark had set a national target that 95% of young people who enter the labour market should have a recognized qualification. However, this goal has never been reached and during the last five years progress towards it has been exceptionally difficult. One of the major reasons behind this setback is the fact that uneducated young people may easily find employment as unqualified workers. However, such employment is temporary and does not allow young people to maintain or progress in their employment. Another reason was said to be large investments oriented towards university education and insufficient attention paid to VET, which resulted in a relatively high share of young people not capable of meeting these kinds of standards and dropping out²⁰². The end result of these two factors is a group of young people who qualify as NEETs. Given that the LO is present on national, regional and local decision-making bodies, this organisation helped to shape the new system.

Previously, there were two options for any person in the NEET category:

1. He or she could enrol in a work-based learning programme administered and financed by local municipalities that would run for 2-3 months. However, this was not a very popular choice.
2. The more popular option was enrolling into local production schools that also offered basic skill training courses, such as basic literacy skills or basic mathematics. These schools offered programmes that lasted around one year, and they were more work-based than most vocational schools. However, these schools operated on an individual basis and some municipalities offered better services, while others had very few options available.

In August, 2018 a new system became operational whereby 25-30 institutions opened across Denmark to ensure a homogenous coverage and equal quality training services. These institutions offer basic training for any school drop-outs to facilitate their re-integration into the standard educational system. The primary goal is to allow these young people to acquire the right skills to be able to attend VET schools. The institutions offer Danish language courses to young refugees. Furthermore, they also ensure social integration and support to those young people who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. LO has a strong influence on all major education policy areas, namely setting out the qualification standards, determining work-based learning regulations and ensuring that such preparatory schools offer adequate training. As such, the LO took part in negotiations and strongly supported the development of standardised training.

²⁰² Statistics show that girls generally perform better in standard academic education and often pursue academic subjects such as medicine. Boys, on the other hand, do not perform so well and, as a result, tend to drop out of the school system altogether. Many in Denmark believe that bringing back VET would offer these young men a chance to pursue an education more suitable to their needs.

In all three instances these measures had been financed by the government authorities, given that these measures are organised on a national level and that private companies find such investment too risky or do not see sufficient returns. Furthermore, in all three instances the measures are new and results will only be visible in a couple of years' time. Overall, measures targeting NEETs always include social services or extra courses, especially language classes. In addition, most efforts are oriented towards offering work-based learning opportunities and focus on hands-on learning experience. Finally, a coherent system with equal standards across the whole country is important to ensure quality training and labour market recognition.

Trade union organisations involved in shaping these measures said that their involvement was very helpful given that in all three countries trade union representatives are well-connected and able to provide an adequate assessment of the general situation. For example, in Denmark, trade union representatives are present on all national, regional and local education boards, which is why they are prepared to contribute to the development of youth measures. Furthermore, in Denmark all apprentices legally fall under the general collective labour agreements that regulate the labour market, which is one of the reasons why the Danish trade unions are invested in youth policies. Similarly, in Austria and Germany, the trade unions are quite involved in all aspects of labour market relations that also cover young apprentices.

Lessons learnt

A major success factor reported by all trade union organisations was said to be adequate cooperation with government authorities and employer organisations. All trade union respondents claimed that such cooperation was mainly due to a strong tradition of social partner involvement in the decision-making process. However, while the social dialogue tradition is very strong in Denmark and Austria, in Germany this tradition is slightly weaker mainly due to differences between East and West Germany. For major part, these differences come down to contrasting trade union traditions and trade unionism culture between these two parts of Germany for historical reasons. In East Germany this tradition is much weaker, given that trade unions did not participate in negotiations with employer organisations, because under the Communist regime the concept of private property and private capital was abolished. In contrast, in West Germany this tradition is much stronger, with trade unions constantly having to bargain with employer organisations. During the economic recession the social dialogue model in Germany was revitalised to help both companies and employees address relevant issues that emerged at the time. The model proved successful and therefore government authorities are keen to involve both employer organisations and trade unions into policy making.

Another significant success factor was said to be ongoing political support and political will to have a functional dual-learning system that also caters to specific NEET group needs. The DGB representatives said that government support on this issue was key, especially given that delivering measures on a national level requires both coordination and sufficient financial resources. Likewise, the LO and the ÖGB representatives said that support from the government was very important. From trade union experience, such support often comes from a shared understanding of the problem and its potential consequences for society at large.

Trade union representatives reported three key challenges that made introducing measures for NEETs difficult:

- Given that many NEETs are originally from immigrant backgrounds, policy interventions are often met with hostility. There is a lot of tension when it comes to providing support and allocating financial resources to young people who are regarded as outsiders to national societies or local communities. There is a general lack of understanding that such people need help to fully integrate into society and that such measures will benefit all in the long-run. Furthermore, continuous negative media coverage also impacts public opinion, which in turn refuses to support inclusive measures.
- Weakening employer associations is a major concern in Germany, but other countries may also potentially face this problem in the future. Having weak employer associations translates into poor links between employers and therefore results in low capacity to involve companies in policy interventions. However, for the dual-learning system to remain fully operational, private company investments and on-the-job training opportunities are crucial. Strengthening employer organisations and their cooperation with trade unions is therefore a part of ensuring that youth employment measures are successfully implemented.

- A systematic approach to NEETs is a relatively new domain. Policy measures targeting this group are still rather experimental and for the time being it is difficult to assess which activities or which measures are the most effective. Most policy interventions were carried out on a local scale without adequate monitoring or evaluation, and as a result, there is limited knowledge on what works best. There is still a lot of work that needs to be done in this domain, and especially to comprehensively measuring quality when it comes to assisting NEETs.

The most important element for successful NEET policy measures is a coordinated approach. This means that this practice is relevant to those organisations that maintain good relations with both employer organisations and government authorities on a regular basis. However, trade unions that operate under a regional structure may propose to implement similar measures on a smaller scale, while cooperating with regional, rather than national authorities.

'Tips and tricks' for adoption of a similar practice

- Opening up channels of dialogue and negotiation with employer organisations and government authorities
- Encourage building a shared understanding of the problem and its potential consequences for society at large
- Create partnerships with other organisations and bodies, such as VET providers or relevant policy councils
- Find means to monitor and evaluate ongoing measures
- Don't get discouraged if negotiations take longer than expected and measures are not implemented as smoothly
- Don't get discouraged if companies seem unwilling to engage in dialogue or help with policy interventions

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MLADI PLUS (SLOVENIA), FRENCH DEMOCRATIC CONFEDERATION OF LABOUR (CFDT)



Policy and policy stage:	Quality Framework for Traineeships – design, implementation
Country:	Slovenia, France
Region:	Western and Central Europe
Level of implementation:	National
Youth unemployment:	High/Low
Employee affiliation to trade union rates:	Medium/Low

Introduction

Over the last decade, traineeships have become almost a standard practice for young people to attain relevant experience and get a foothold in the labour market in many EU Member States. However, many countries still lack proper traineeship regulations. As a result, young trainees are subject to various forms of abuse, such as precarious working conditions, insufficient social protection, non-existent training content or similar. Trade union organisations have traditionally been engaged in various activities that protect, promote and further advance legal rights of employees. Therefore, extending the scope of their traditional activities to advocate for measures regulating traineeships falls most in line with trade union participation capacity. The main French trade union organisation and a trade union representing Slovenian youth have managed to successfully introduce legal change at the national level. These two instances exemplify trade union engagement in youth employment policy measures that have brought positive results.

Mladi Plus is a trade union that represents students, pupils, the young unemployed and young precarious workers²⁰³. This trade union operates within the bounds of the Free Trade Union of Slovenia (Si. *Svobodni Sindikat Slovenije*, SSS), which is an affiliate of the largest Slovenian trade union confederation, namely the Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia (Si. *Zveza Svobodnih Sindikatov Slovenije*, ZSSS). Mladi Plus has approximately 1300 members, whose average age is slightly above 25 years of age.²⁰⁴ The French Democratic Confederation of Labour (Fr. *Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail*, CFDT) is the largest trade union organisation in France. It has more than 600 000 members in both public and private sectors, represented both at sectoral and regional levels²⁰⁵. It should be noted that unlike many European trade union organisations, the CFDT does not have a specific youth branch. However, it is nonetheless committed to youth issues and has regular activists working on them. This organisation believes that young people must be included and integrated within all levels of the organisation, hence there is no need to set them apart on an institutional level.

Over the last decade, common ways to reduce youth unemployment rates have been to offer young people on-the-job training opportunities in the hope that they will gain the necessary experience for full-time employment. However, while youth unemployment rate in Slovenia has been steadily decreasing, young people's prospects have not necessarily improved. Likewise, while France attempts to reduce youth unemployment rates through traineeship offers, stakeholders worry about serious consequences for

203 Trade Union Mladi Plus (Youth Plus). Available at: <https://www.mladiplus.si/trade-union-mladi-plus-youth-plus/>

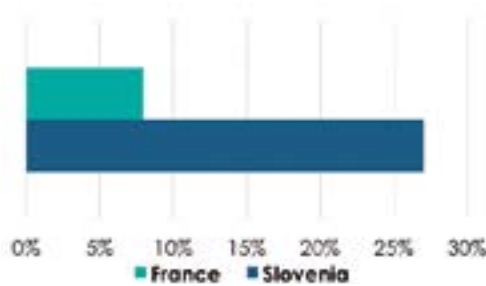
204 More information is available in the case example on Mladi Plus (SI).

205 CFDT Homepage. For more see at: https://www.cfdt.fr/portail/confederation-j_5

young people who end up working without legal protection or remuneration. The Quality Framework for Traineeships (QFT) is meant to provide stakeholders with a tool to ensure that dropping unemployment rates do not translate into young people's rights violations or abusive practices. Within this context, trade union involvement in the design and implementation of national QFT measures is exemplary.

Context

Share of employees who belong to a trade union



Source: ETUI.

Youth unemployment decreased in Slovenia but remains stagnant in France



Source: Eurostat.

Trade union affiliation rate in Slovenia is slightly above the EU average (23%), with around 27% of all employees belonging to a trade union in 2011²⁰⁶. In contrast to Slovenia, the French trade union affiliation rates have been the lowest in Europe for at least a decade. In 2011, only 7.7% of all employees belonged to a trade union²⁰⁷. Yet despite such low rates, French trade unions are prominent for their ability to mobilise members and change government policy. Furthermore, in France, collective agreements negotiated by trade union representatives extend to an entire sector, which means that even though many employees are not affiliated to trade unions, they still benefit from their activities. Both Slovenian and French trade unions are concerned with attracting new members and retaining their organisation's relevance within the social dynamics.

Youth unemployment rates in Slovenia have been steadily declining since 2013. In 2017, this rate was just 11.2% and much below the EU average of 16.8%²⁰⁸. However, before 2014 Slovenia had a very high share of young people working in precarious working conditions, especially under short-term or part-time employment contracts that provide very few social guarantees. In France, the youth unemployment rate is above the EU average, with 22.3% of young people belonging to this group in 2017²⁰⁹. In contrast to Slovenia, since 2013 French youth unemployment rates have changed little over the last few years.

Traditionally, Slovenian trade unions have never been greatly invested in youth employment policies and youth issues have often been neglected. While the ZSSS is present at the official Slovenian tripartite body (the Economic and Social Council for Slovenia), until relatively recently youth-related questions were rarely on the agenda. Furthermore, social dialogue across Slovenia is deteriorating and, as a result, trade unions are struggling to voice their opinions. However, since the establishment of Mladi Plus, trade union participation in youth employment policies has increased substantially. The French trade unions have traditionally been much more inclusive and considerate when it comes to youth and youth policy measures, mainly because all social partners are involved in vocational training development. Even though social partners still retain a rather consultative role, since 2008, when it has become obligatory to consult social partners on issues of employment or vocational training, they have become more influential.

206 More information about trade union membership rates in Slovenia is available in the case example on Mladi Plus (SI).

207 Eurofound. *Living and working in France*. 18 October 2017. Available at: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/country/france>

208 Eurostat. Unemployment by sex and age – annual average. Available at: <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submit-ViewTableAction.do>

209 Eurostat. Unemployment by sex and age – annual average. Available at: <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submit-ViewTableAction.do>

Trade Union activities

Mladi Plus was invited by the government to participate in youth employment policy measures and was also actively self-involved outside 'traditional' ways of trade union involvement. The CFDT was also invited by government authorities to participate, because this has become a legal requirement in France since 2007²¹⁰. Yet this trade union organisation was also self-involved outside 'traditional' ways of trade union involvement. Both organisations were extensively involved in other youth employment measures, such as the Youth Guarantee, but this case example will only focus on their contributions to advance traineeship legislation²¹¹.

Mladi Plus was originally established in 2011 after trade unionists and students joined forces to campaign against the government's proposals to introduce the so-called 'malo delo' or 'mini work' within the student labour market²¹². This type of work was seen as marginal part-time employment that violates young people's rights to decent employment conditions. As a result, Mladi Plus' first priority became advocating for and initiating legal change that protects young people. Traineeship legislation is therefore one of their most important areas of work. Mladi Plus representatives emphasise two major achievements in this domain:

- Mladi Plus members campaigned against unpaid traineeships, which were also known as volunteer traineeships. This trade union emphasised that such traineeships were an unacceptable form of abuse that took advantage of young people's lack of experience, only to replace regular employees without paying them a regular wage. Mladi Plus members worked in opposition with government authorities and side by side with youth and student bodies and other stakeholders to finally achieve a complete ban of unpaid traineeships. This had an especially profound impact on those young people who work in sectors where traineeships are mandatory, e. g. teaching or medical professions, but unpaid. Since 2014 traineeships must provide trainees with adequate remuneration²¹³, but more work needs to be done to ensure how this regulation is respected within different sectors. Government authorities are using the EU funds to cover these trainee remuneration costs.
- Mladi Plus is working towards ensuring traineeship quality. This includes looking at labour laws and assessing what should a quality traineeship look like for each separate profession. Mladi Plus members are working on determining the role of the mentor, standard traineeship duration, training content of traineeships, etc. In Slovenia all these elements are strongly dependent upon each profession, especially because many sectors have their own regulations and separate employment contracts. Since 2016, Mladi Plus is also very active in its efforts to monitor traineeships within diverse sectors. They check employment contracts and monitor job ads that appear on websites to identify illegal activities. Until August 2018, they have successfully intervened in over 110 cases that did not comply with legal requirements²¹⁴.

Activists within the Mladi Plus organisation also emphasise the need for publicity and transparency when it comes to traineeship regulation. The trade union representatives continuously publish information about employers who violate these regulations and by doing so, inform potential trainees about their possible rights violations. In addition, Mladi Plus has asked the government for more rigorous monitoring of the labour market situation and especially when it comes to young labour market entrants who are in a vulnerable position.

210 LOI n° 2007-130 du 31 janvier 2007 de modernisation du dialogue social. Available at: <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000273405&dateTexte=&categorieLien=id>

211 More information on Mladi Plus activities in this area is available in the case example on Mladi Plus (SI).

212 Trade Union Mladi Plus (Youth Plus). Available at: <https://www.mladiplus.si/trade-union-mladi-plus-youth-plus/>

213 Details are further specified within the Prevention of Illegal Labour and Employment Act (ZPDZC-1). Full legal information is available at: <http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO6765>

214 Mladi Plus. STOP kršitvam – ZA dostojno delo!. Available at: <https://www.mladiplus.si/2016/12/21/3446/>

The **CFDT** has been working on youth issues for a while, having a major breakthrough in this area in 2011, when the social partners signed a national agreement on youth on-the-job training prospects and conditions²¹⁵. This agreement was concluded between three employer and three trade union organisations. Within this agreement, the social partners outlined three major themes, namely increasing the number of young people in dual-learning schemes, facilitating the development of dual-learning schemes, and recruiting trainees. This last theme was covered extensively within the agreement, further specifying details on traineeship learning content, pedagogical supervision and mentorship, traineeship duration, remuneration for traineeships exceeding a period of two months and other related aspects. Traditionally in France, such national agreements are often turned into legislation by government authorities. However, until 2014 there were no government activities to transpose this agreement into law.

However, after the European Commission launched the European QFT in 2013, French government authorities decided to return to this issue. While the French social partners, similarly to Mladi Plus members, were slightly ahead of this European initiative, the government authorities only chose to respond to their efforts after an official EU-wide policy was established. In other words, the European QFT was a significant tool for encouraging national authorities to implement legislative changes in this area. As a result, in July 2014, the French authorities passed a law on improving traineeship conditions and establishing rules for traineeship supervision²¹⁶. This law is mainly based on the social partner national agreement. More specifically, the CFDT representatives negotiated the following set of requirements for traineeships, which were then transposed into official legislation:

- All trainees training for longer than a two-month period must receive remuneration.
- All trainees must be introduced to their new work place and met with a welcoming attitude. Any company or organisation must provide each new trainee with a welcome package that contains a booklet on the aims and values of that organisation, the rights, its working culture and other work-related aspects. Furthermore, mandatory mentoring must be organised.
- All traineeships must be linked to a trainee's official education curricula to avoid traineeships lacking relevant learning content.

In addition to achieving these changes, the CFDT representatives also continuously encourage their own members to reach out to trainees at their workplaces and help them integrate. Since 2014, the CFDT members have already noticed some changes, which although welcome, are not altogether positive. For example, the number of traineeships in the healthcare sector has decreased because they are not able to provide trainees with adequate remuneration or ensure mentorship. This means that while the number of traineeship places has decreased, the actual quality has increased, while the number of abusive practices where trainees carry out activities unrelated to their field of training has become much smaller.

While trade unionism traditions and working methods of Mladi Plus and CFDT are rather different, they have both achieved positive results. While the CFDT worked closely with other social partners to establish a national agreement, Mladi Plus was less involved in these kinds of negotiations. Mladi Plus members were in opposition, but simultaneously more cooperative with government authorities regarding traineeship legislation. Both ways are largely dependent on the political and industrial situations in the countries, yet they both demonstrate that legislative changes may be achieved within different and not necessarily supportive environments.

215 *Accord National Interprofessionnel du 7 juin 2011 sur l'accès des jeunes aux formations en alternance et aux stages en entreprise.*

216 LOI n° 2014-788 du 10 juillet 2014 tendant au développement, à l'encadrement des stages et à l'amélioration du statut des stagiaires. Available at: <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000029223331&categorieLien=id>

Lessons learnt

Even though still many issues remain unresolved, Mladi Plus and CFDT representatives are generally satisfied with their work in the domain of traineeship legislation. Possibly the most important reason behind their success is an earnest approach towards youth issues. The CFDT representatives said that they are taking all issues related to youth employment very seriously and have set them as one of their organisation's priority work areas. The CFDT has at least three people dedicated to this area of work, who are continuously striving to reach out to young people and help them integrate into the labour market. Likewise, Mladi Plus members are specialised to work on youth issues, which naturally form the basis of their agenda. Mladi Plus has at least six persons working on these issues full-time. They are able to dedicate their time and efforts to participate in all relevant meetings, organise activities and propose new solutions.

A major challenge for both Mladi Plus and CFDT representatives was said to be an initial scepticism towards the relevance of their work either on behalf of government authorities or even the more conservative members of their organisations. Representatives working on youth issues must continuously point out why this should be on the agenda and why should the trade unions become involved, or even lead campaigns or other activities. Furthermore, both trade unions struggle with proving their worth to government authorities in speaking up for youth employment measures. Mladi Plus representatives said they would like to be taken more seriously, especially during the decision-making process. Overall, both organisations reported having difficulties with being recognised for the value of their work, as well as their capacity to contribute to significant social change. One of the ways both organisations attempt to tackle this problem is to continue proposing novel ideas, adapt to ongoing labour market transformations, and question their role within the 21st century society which is moving away from traditional industrial relations within manufacturing plants. Proposing new topics on trade union agenda, such as equal opportunities, climate change or other neglected issues, even youth employment, is becoming more and more important for retaining trade union relevance and achieving recognition.

This practice is applicable to any organisation that strongly believes it ought to contribute to youth legislation and has the necessary human resources to do so. While for some trade union organisations it might be more difficult to initiate legal change given poor social dialogue traditions, they may nonetheless actively contribute by placing pressure on government authorities. Most importantly, this case example demonstrates how active trade union organisations may lead the way and actually initiate legal changes that could become a reality when an opportune moment arises.

'Tips and tricks' for adoption of a similar practice

- Open up channels of dialogue and negotiation with other organisations and government authorities
- Find dedicated people who will be able to work on relevant issues full-time
- Maintain a consistent position on youth employment issues after having carefully considered the situation at hand
- Initiate and propose new ways of tackling relevant issues
- Monitor the ongoing progress and evaluate whether the legal changes are actually being implemented
- Continuously expand the range of problems to work on and work on including a wider range of young people
- Continue working on relevant issues even if the government is not ready to provide support
- Continue campaigning even if older trade union members are not showing adequate support
- Don't be reluctant to adapt to ongoing transformations or shy away from innovative working methods

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