



A boost for Europe's younger generations **Adopted by the PES Presidency of 25 June 2021**

Young people across Europe have suffered massively and disproportionately from the impact of the COVID-19 crisis, and they must now receive full support. As we look ahead to a post-pandemic Europe, we, PES, believe that the recovery should be an opportunity to give a boost to the younger generations. We want to empower Europe's youth with a boost for jobs, a boost for social rights, and a boost for Europe's ambition.

A boost for jobs. Since the beginning of the pandemic, youth unemployment has grown by over 400,000, reaching a rate of 17.1%. Our response must be to increase efforts to provide quality job opportunities. Therefore, PES supports:

- Massive public investment, to create quality jobs, harnessing the opportunities and the priorities of the Green Deal led by European Commission Executive Vice President Frans Timmermans.
- Making full use of the "Effective Active Support to Employment" (EASE) instrument carried by European Commissioner Nicolas Schmit to boost quality jobs.
- Promoting stable contracts through employer penalties for repeated short-term contracts.
- Tackling bogus self-employment and giving platform workers full social protection.
- Putting an end to unpaid internships, traineeships and apprenticeships and to unfairly low minimum wages for younger workers.
- Revising existing European instruments, such as the Quality Framework for Traineeships and the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships.
- Applying strict quality criteria for placements supported by the European Youth Guarantee. This should include the principle of fair remuneration of trainees and interns, access to social protection, sustainable employment and social rights.
- Ensuring the Youth Guarantee also tackles the gender gap and other forms of discrimination in employment prospects.

Boosting social rights. The pandemic has highlighted the inequalities in access to fundamental public services, notably for young people. Thanks to our proposal, the European Child Guarantee will fight child poverty through European targets and free access to quality public services such as education and care, healthcare and one healthy meal a day, as well as to decent housing and adequate nutrition. Furthermore, at all levels of government, PES will continue to defend:

- The right to education: we must invest in quality education, that is affordable and accessible to everyone. The new realities created by the pandemic need to be taken into account, notably by ensuring universal access to the internet and digital tools for students and learners of all levels and types of education, as well as catch-up classes for all that need them in order to gradually redress the inequalities of the past year.



- The right to connectivity: we must invest in digital infrastructure to ensure internet access for all young people, irrespective of background or location.
- The right to social protection: all should have access to social security and unemployment benefits, regardless of employment history and age.
- The right to health: mental health services has been neglected for too long; urgent measures should be put in place to support the many young people who are suffering from the consequences of the stress and isolation of the pandemic.
- The right to housing: investment and regulation are needed to improve the living conditions and financial stability of “generation rent”.
- The right to culture: we reiterate our long-standing plan for European Culture Cheques.
- The right to participate: we must empower young people to make the changes Europe needs by offering them the means to participate in the EU’s political and civic life and to actively contribute to the debates on the Future of Europe.

These actions are necessary today, to ensure that Europe’s youth has a better tomorrow, built on equality, social progress, shared prosperity and sustainability. In order to support immediate social investment in quality jobs and quality public services for young people, we support the frontloading of core European programmes. This will allow national and regional governments to support the young and old alike without delay, in addition to their recovery and resilience plans. The European Union should make sure all recovery plans pursue the goal of offering more opportunities for young people, increase social standards and lead to sustainable development. Incorporating these objectives into the European Semester will push all member states to live up to citizens’ expectations.