

Let us in! Keep the faith in youth!

Abstract: MIJARC Europe as faith-based youth organisation, active in rural areas, asks for more activity in European policies against youth unemployment. Current measures taken at European level are much too basic. Involving also quality measures against exploitation and fighting precarious working conditions for youngsters has to be the aim of a future European policy, also taking a glance on the responsibility of the Church and empowering rural youth. Therefore, the EU has to provide financial and material support for not losing generations of young Europeans.

Young, well educated, but jobless. This is a reality young people in Europe have to face at the moment. Politicians speak already about a “lost generation” of Europe. 22,2%¹ of young people under 25 are currently unemployed in the EU and not any eager action as in the financial crisis for the banks was started. Banks were funded generously by the EU with 455 billion Euros² but the youth was left behind³. When will the time cometo have “rescue packages” for the young Europeans? In order to have a brighter future in Europe, something has to change. With the method “See. Judge. Act” MIJARC Europe is presenting its demands in the sections of economy, education, geography, discrimination and its postulations on the Church.

See

Economical

We as MIJARC Europe see that youth unemployment is much higher than the general unemployment in most of the European countries. For a majority of youngsters, working conditions are not stable. They work part time, have limited and short term contracts and because there is too much competition in the labour market, the wages are bound to a race to the bottom.

Education and non-formal education

The educational systems in European are facing two defeats: on the one hand 11% of the 15/24 year old are unemployed, not in training and not in studies, on the other hand even the graduated students are threatened by unemployment. As the education system is not directly connected to the labour market, there is a big gap between studies and working life. To earn professional skills young people have to experience a lot of internships which are mostly unpaid and used by companies to replace paid workers.

Non - formal education allows young people to get competences that they don't learn at university and also encourages them to get involved in society.

Geographical

We see that young people and young farmers living in rural areas are going to the cities because there is a lack of perspectives and jobs in the rural areas. We, as MIJARC Europe, see that farmers all

¹ Eurostat: Youth unemployment statistics. Accessible at:
<http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>.

² European Stability Mechanism: Lending capacity. Accessible at:
<http://www.esm.europa.eu/assistance/FCC/index.htm>.

³ 6,4 billion euros spent for fighting the youth unemployment from 2014-2020 (found at: European Council: Youth Employment initiative. Accessible at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1176&langId=en>)

over Europe suffer from the globalisation of the market. It makes it for farmers, and especially for the rural youth very difficult when it comes to finding a job.

Discrimination

We as MIJARC Europe, want to stress the fact that nowadays the youngsters are discriminated, concerning the access to work (e.g. gender equality, age, migration, nationality, religion, sexuality etc.). Without any experience it is nearly impossible to get a job and the result is the social exclusion.

Church

We see that the Church is sometimes too far from reality and is losing the connection with society. In an interview published in Italy's La Repubblica, a daily newspaper, on October 1st, 2013 Pope Francis said:

*"The most serious of the evils that afflict the world these days are youth unemployment (...) the young need work and hope but have neither one nor the other, and the problem is they don't even look for them any more. (...) This, to me, is the most urgent problem that the Church is facing."*⁴

Judge

Economical

The policies against unemployment are only short-term answers and don't solve the problem. They stick too much to the interests of the market and the companies, most of the time influenced heavily by economic lobbyists during their creation. Another problem, related to the capitalistic functioning of the labour market is workforces are competing against each other.

Education

Companies misuse regularly interns who search for experience, as a replacement for paid employees to decrease their costs. Missing guidelines for quality internships create uncertainty and a lack of transparency for young people at the beginning of their working life.

If the connection between theoretical education and practical work would be stronger the integration of youth into job would be more fluent.

Non formal education is not appreciated as enough as it should be.

Geographical

We think that there is a need to step back and take a look at the labour market system, if it is sustainable. At this moment there is only being looked at the economical profit without long term plan. For farmers in Europe the system is already starting to collapse. Youth on the countryside who doesn't want to go to the city, stays and helps at home without having the chances they deserve.

Discrimination

The political and economic system causes prejudices about youth so they are shown as a social problem and considered as a number and not as an individual. Also, the stakeholders or the employers ask for experience from the beginning and if the youth doesn't have it, they are pushed away. It causes frustrations and bad living conditions for youngsters.

⁴ Repubblica: Pope's conversation with Scalfari (01.10.2013). Accessible at: http://www.repubblica.it/cultura/2013/10/01/news/pope_s_conversation_with_scalfari_english-67643118/.

Church

We as a European youth movement are sure that youth unemployment affects your self-esteem, also involving financial and social consequences, and it is up to the society to solve this issue. Together with the church we can change the society and practice our belief and values like Jesus taught us. As stated in the quote of Pope Francis we need to give the youth a proper future to look forward to.

Act

Economical

Therefore, we demand to the political stakeholders to introduce long-term measures going further than one political mandate and a more ambitious European policy on youth unemployment. More money needs to be invested in youth. We also see a need for a common framework on fighting youth unemployment. Politics should focus more on bringing in values and social aspects to the discussion, because individuals matter. Economy should respect human beings and not only serve the economy.

Education

We demand the European Member states to implement the European common framework on internships and transparency. It should not be allowed to replace full-time jobs by unpaid interns. Furthermore, there has to be created a stronger connection between theoretical and practical education to decrease the gap leaving school and finding employment.

Concerning non formal education, society and economy should get aware that it is giving additional abilities to those who are joining them.

Geographical

We need to work together as a society to find sustainable ways for improving the current situation. We need to find ways to strengthen the local markets and local economy and short circuits especially in agricultural production. We demand a change in policies on European level. In Europe the danger that rural areas are set back and being discriminated from the more urbanized and industrialized parts of the country is very evident. Following this way, we can give a future and a perspective for rural youth finding work next to their homes.

Discrimination

We demand equality and global policies concerning the access to work which does not focus only on experienced youth. The issue is to provide young people the means to understand better the structure of society and the labour market. We demand to support the projects led by young people around reflection on life career plans which allow them to find their role in society and to feel part of it.

Church

We demand that youth, society and the Church try to find each other again. Going this way we can find back the balance between economical profit, inner peace and social values and we can form a coalition to restrict the influence of economy on decisions concerning our lives. We as MIJARC Europe are reaching out our hand to the Church to collaborate and find solutions together.