Propositions for the new European Commission

2014
A Union of jobs, growth and competitiveness

1. Reconfigure the Youth Guarantee scheme to support long-term youth employment

The Youth Guarantee scheme has been successful in giving young people on-the-job training, but does not incentivise employers to create permanent jobs. In a perverse twist, the Youth Guarantee scheme has encouraged employees to repeatedly hire new interns and use them as a source of cheap labour. Reforming payment mechanisms would refocus the Youth Guarantee Scheme to support the uptake of young people into full employment:

- Provide comprehensive research into the uptake of full employment among apprentices and trainees under the Youth Guarantee scheme;
- Draft amendments to introduce performance-based payments linked to long-term employment of trainees;
- Issue country-specific guidance to address post-Youth Guarantee employment at a national level.

2. Remove labour barriers between Member States to unlock untapped potential among European workers

Existing barriers in the European labour market are preventing young people from accessing job opportunities in other Member States. This potential can be unlocked by tackling deterrents to relocation and promoting transnational information sharing on job opportunities:

- Work with Member States to fully implement the Qualifications Directive and Services Directive;
- Introduce legislation to harmonise ATM (bank service) commissions across the European Union;
- Introduce country-level indicators tracking growth in job industries and promote access to existing EU job services (EURES).

3. Leverage the Digital Agenda to support jobs and economic growth

Reaping the full growth benefits of the completion of the single market will require a full implementation of the EU digital agenda. New links should be established between current industries and digital innovations rather than focusing funding solely on new companies. This will ensure that productivity in existing industries increases, support job creation, and shift the European economy into an advanced digital age.

- Link Digital Agenda investment to digitisation of existing industries and utilise the Grand Coalition to support necessary retraining;
- Introduce legislation to support the development of Ecommerce transfers across the single market;
- Develop financial support and frameworks to support programming education within national education plans from an early age.
A Union that looks beyond its borders

4. Maintain the momentum for EU enlargement

The EU should keep its current relationships with potential candidates and neighbourhood countries in the East alive and continue accession negotiations with candidate states. We particularly wish to advocate close co-operation in the following areas: energy, migration and common foreign and security policy.

It is also crucial for there to be regular and clear communication between the Commission and potential candidates and neighbourhood countries in the East. The focus should be kept on what can be done together, particularly in the areas mentioned above. That includes making sure that the national governments, and more importantly the general public, are kept up to date about new developments, points of discussion and possible implications.

5. Create a flagship exchange programme aimed at workers outside the higher education system

An exchange programme similar in profile and popularity as Erasmus should be included in the TTIP agreement with the US. This partnership provides a perfect opportunity to enable the mobility of those forgotten by other exchange programmes currently in effect. These exchange programmes have been very beneficial to the EU and such a success can be repeated:

- Support private companies’ initiatives in the framework of this exchange programme;
- Focus on young, non-university-educated employees;
- Short secondment opportunities (6 months – 1 year).

6. Re-think communication on Foreign Policy

The EU should find a better way to showcase its achievements on the international stage and use this as a way of better engaging citizens. Foreign policy is easier to understand than economic policy and is considered to be more ‘sexy’. The general public and national politicians should also be better informed about EU foreign policy objectives, how EU foreign policy works and how it affects them.

- Organise events using popular and tested formats, like Live8 and TedX, to raise awareness;
- Use the digital agenda and focus on successes like the ‘Right to be forgotten’;
- Encourage the personalisation of political figures in traditional and social media (personal video from EU personality, similar to Obama’s weekly addresses);
- Create a EU Goodwill Ambassadors to spark debate (like Emma Watson);

A Union of freedom, security and justice

7. Establish a Europe-wide organisation responsible for developing a counter-terrorism communication strategy

Terrorism is one of the major security issues today and it is an issue that affects everyone in Europe. An EU communication strategy should be created and implemented on both the local and international level, targeting both extremists and potential recruits. On a grass-roots level it is necessary to empower agents of civil society (i.e. NGOs, youth clubs, religious groups) to approach young people in their living environment and online to prevent radicalisation. On an international level, these grass-roots initiatives should share best practices,
exchange information and develop further common strategies.

8. **Develop a unified migration policy on a European level**

Immigration has put a strain on European Member States, their citizens and the immigrants themselves. Improving the language skills of immigrants via mandatory language courses as well as providing vocational or additional training are key elements to such a policy and important means of integration and empowerment. Additionally, it is important to speed up the process of integration and legal recognition.

9. **Initiate a peer-to-peer mentoring system in and across member states**

Developing and supporting projects where young people from various religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds can have direct interaction and provide each other with mutual support will increase tolerance, common understanding, decrease national stereotypes and prejudices and thus enable young citizens to live in and appreciate a truly diverse society. The trick is to think European, and act locally.

**A Union that empowers and protects all citizens**

In light of the low voter-turnout in the last European elections and the growing lack of solidarity between European citizens, the European Union should attempt to foster and nurture a common sense of belonging, identity and European citizenship.

10. **Introduce European content in primary, middle and high schools courses**

Introduce European content in primary, middle and high schools dealing with the history and functioning of the EU with a focus on the rights of junior European citizens via animated interactions (e.g. shadow elections at schools). This process of forming a responsible active European citizenship must be ensured from the earliest stage possible. In order to achieve this, the European Union must take a leading role in the development of the curriculum.

11. **Make the European Union less bureaucratic**

The European Union already provides several programmes to empower young people, such as the European Voluntary Service. However, application forms are complicated to comprehend and represent an obstacle in applying. There should be technological improvements in order to make the online portals more user-friendly and fasten up the application procedure.

12. **Provide a framework for intergenerational learning**

Following the German and Nordic model of the 'community schools', the EU should provide a framework for intergenerational learning. This framework offers courses on a variety of different subjects (such as cooking, language courses, gardening, civic, etc.) at local level for a very cheap price, and will empower citizens, teach new skills and push self-development.

**Golden Tip: Establish compulsory Citizens’ Office Hours**

Politics is a very distant topic to a vast majority of young people. Politicians must therefore engage more actively in communicating with them in order to secure Europe’s future. They must, both at national and European level, not lose connection with reality or forget the concerns of the young whose voice is often left unheard. Politicians must visit schools (primary, secondary, university, vocational, etc. depending on the national education system) and NGOs to bring politics closer to young people.
FutureLab Europe is a project that combines the knowledge and experience of young people from all over Europe and beyond. Its aim is to empower the young generation to have their voices heard and speak up about their expectations and demands for the future of Europe. At their 2014 Annual Forum, FutureLab participants discussed the state of democracy in the EU, equal opportunities for all, and the policy priorities of the new European leadership. Together, they prepared these propositions.

FutureLab Europe is a project of the European Alliance for Democratic Citizenship, affiliated to the Network of European Foundations and coordinated by the Körber Foundation. It is operated by the European Policy Centre.
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