



# The future of Europe

**Economic crises and an ever-changing labour market have significantly affected young people in Europe, and will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. Finding solutions to these issues and engaging Europe's young people in building a better future are vital to ensure continued prosperity and security in Europe.**

## ► Safer surfing

The EU aims to protect children and young people online through awareness-raising initiatives and by fighting illegal and harmful online content and conduct. One way this is being achieved is through the Safer Internet programme<sup>8</sup>, which finances projects aimed at creating a safer online environment. The programme funds a network of NGOs active in the field of child welfare online, a network of law enforcement bodies who exchange information and best practices, and a network of researchers who gather information about uses, risks and consequences of online technologies for children. The programme also supports two annual events: Safer Internet Day<sup>9</sup> and the Safer Internet Forum<sup>10</sup>.

Industry regulation is also encouraged. European Commission Vice-President for the Digital Agenda Neelie Kroes, for example, recently welcomed progress made by mobile phone operators on their work to keep children safe while using mobile phones<sup>11</sup>. A report just published by the GSM Association, the trade body of the mobile phone industry, shows that 96% of all EU mobile subscribers are benefiting from this agreement.

Operators have been urged, however, to raise parents' awareness of new potential risks children face when using smart phones, such as easier access to adult content on the internet. "I call on the mobile industry to make sure that people of all ages fully understand the risks, and where to find help, as parents are often not as tuned into the latest developments in mobile phones as the younger generation," said Commissioner Kroes.

## Facts and figures

Some 75 million young people between the ages of 15 and 25 currently live in the European Union.<sup>1</sup> This demographic group has been hit disproportionately by the economic crisis, and youth unemployment has been increasing at a faster pace than the overall unemployment rate in the EU since the first quarter of 2008.

Youth unemployment increased by 3.9% between the first quarter of 2008 and the first quarter of 2009 in the euro area to reach 18.4%, reflecting the difficulty youth face in entering a stretched and competitive labour market.

Education itself can be a defining factor: while the unemployment rate in the EU for those who had obtained a tertiary qualification was 4.5%, it reached 12.8% for Europeans with a secondary school or lower qualification.<sup>2</sup>

Europe's young generation will also be affected by demographic change. The working-age population (15 to 64) in the EU will fall by 48 million between 2006 and 2050, with the dependency ratio set to double, reaching 51% by 2050.<sup>3</sup> Today's young population will, therefore, be the carers of tomorrow, and will have to work longer and harder to pay for increased social security costs of an ageing population.

Child poverty is also a very real concern. Some 84 million people in the EU – or 16% of the population, and 19% of the children – are currently living below their national poverty line, since they live on an income below 60% of the median household income of their own country.<sup>4</sup> Eradicating child poverty by breaking the vicious circle of intergenerational inheritance has become a key priority of the EU.

Despite these very real issues and anxieties, young Europeans are, in general, positive about the European Union and its future. Most, for example, associate the EU with the freedom to travel, study and work anywhere within the Union,<sup>5</sup> and a large majority have received information about their rights and responsibilities as a European citizen through the media.<sup>6</sup>

There are also some negative associations however. According to a survey of 15-30-year-olds carried out in 2007, 40% of young adults associate the EU with an excess of bureaucracy and some waste of time and money.<sup>7</sup>



## ► Policy milestones

2001	Youth White Paper
2002	Framework for European cooperation in the field of youth
2002	Resolution on lifelong learning
2005	European Youth Pact
2007-2013	Youth in Action programme

### Future challenges:

2010-2018	Implementing the EU Strategy for Youth
2010-2020	Implementing the ambitious youth aspects of the Europe 2020 strategy

It is vital, therefore, that EU policy directly addresses all these pressing concerns, and that the rights and opportunities that go with being part of the EU are communicated effectively. The young people of Europe are quite literally the future, and must feel they have a say in the future direction of the European Union.

## EU policy

The inclusion of 'youth' as a recognised concept in European policy is a relatively recent phenomenon. The 1993 Maastricht Treaty was the first treaty to explicitly extend the scope of EU policies to include the youth 'field', stating that the EU should "...encourage the development of youth exchanges and of exchanges of socio-educational instructors".<sup>12</sup>

Another major milestone came in 2001 with the publication of a White Paper entitled 'A new impetus for European youth'.<sup>13</sup> This was a response to growing awareness that young people were strongly disaffected with traditional forms of participation in public life. The White Paper proposed a new framework consisting of two components:

increasing co-operation between Member States and incorporating the youth factor into more policies.

Following this, the Council of the European Union established, in 2002, a framework for European cooperation in the field of youth.<sup>14</sup> This framework was updated in November 2005 to take into account the European Youth Pact.<sup>15</sup>

### Active citizens

Since first recognising the need to take into account the youth constituency, EU policy has gradually evolved towards including young people in the decision-making process itself, and in instilling a sense of European citizenship. The Youth in Action programme, for example, which runs until 2013, aims to inspire a sense of active citizenship, solidarity and tolerance among young Europeans aged 15-28 (in some cases 13-30) and to involve them in shaping the EU's future. The Youth in Action programme, which succeeded the 2000-2006 Youth programme,<sup>16</sup> has a total budget of €885 million to support a large variety of activities for young people and youth workers.

The programme is structured around five actions. Youth for Europe<sup>17</sup> encourages young people's active citizenship, participation and creativity through youth exchanges, youth initiatives and youth democracy projects, while the European Voluntary Service<sup>18</sup> helps young people to develop their sense of solidarity by participating, either individually or in groups, in non-profit, unpaid voluntary activities abroad. The third action, Youth in the World,<sup>19</sup> promotes partnerships and exchanges among young people and youth organisations globally, while Youth Support Systems<sup>20</sup> are designed to support youth workers and youth organisations and improve the quality of their activities. Finally, the fifth action covers Support for European Cooperation in the Youth field,<sup>21</sup> in particular by facilitating dialogue between young people and policy-makers.

Other initiatives targeted at encouraging a sense of citizenship are contained in the €7-billion Lifelong

## ► A European education

Erasmus,<sup>31</sup> the EU's flagship education and training programme, enables thousands of students to study and work abroad each year. Since it began in 1987, more than 2.2 million Europeans have been on an Erasmus placement. The programme also funds co-operation between higher education institutions across Europe, supporting not only students but also professors and business staff who wish to teach abroad.

More specifically, Erasmus allows students in higher education to spend between three and 12 months in another European country – either for studies or for a placement in a company or other organisation.

Recently published Commission figures<sup>32</sup> show that 198 600 European students and 36 000 staff in higher education received Erasmus funding to go abroad for studies, placements, teaching or training in the academic year 2008/2009. This represents an annual increase of 8.7% compared with the previous year.

The countries sending out most Erasmus students were France (28 300 students), Germany (27 900) and Spain (27 400), while Spain ranked first as a host country (33 200 students), followed by France (24 600) and Germany (22 000). Social sciences, business studies and law were the most popular subject areas for Erasmus students.



Learning programme,<sup>22</sup> which also runs until 2013. This programme funds a range of actions including exchanges, study visits and networking activities. There are four sub-programmes which fund projects at different levels of education and training: Comenius<sup>23</sup> for schools, Erasmus<sup>24</sup> for higher education, Leonardo da Vinci<sup>25</sup> for vocational education and training, and Grundtvig<sup>26</sup> for adult education.

### Looking to the future

In April 2009, the Commission presented a Communication entitled 'An EU strategy for youth – investing and empowering'.<sup>28</sup> This new strategy, which runs from 2010 to 2018, proposes a cross-sectoral approach involving all key policy areas that affect Europe's young people. It emphasises the importance of youth work and defines reinforced measures for a better implementation of youth policies at the EU level. The strategy, which is a follow-up to the renewed social agenda announced by the European Commission in 2008, has three main goals: to create more opportunities for youth in education and employment; to improve access and full participation of all young people in society; and to foster solidarity between youth and society.

Education and youth also figure prominently in the Commission's Europe 2020 strategy,<sup>29</sup> the successor to the Lisbon Strategy. While the Lisbon Strategy came at a time of the greatest prosperity for a generation, Europe 2020 has emerged at the tail-end of the worst economic crisis since the 1929 Wall Street stock market crash. Europe 2020 seeks not only to navigate a course out of the current crisis, but also to promote renewed economic growth that is at once smart, green and inclusive. One of the strategy's headline targets is to cut the school drop-out rate to below 10% from the current 15%, and to increase the number of young people with a university degree or diploma from less than a third to at least 40%.

Furthermore, the strategy proposes seven flagship initiatives to boost growth and employment. One of these is Youth on the Move,<sup>30</sup> which aims to improve

the performance and international attractiveness of our higher education institutions and raise the quality of all levels of education and training in the EU, combining both excellence and equity. This will be achieved through enhancing the Commission's student mobility, university and researchers' programmes (such as Erasmus, Erasmus Mundus, Tempus, Leonardo da Vinci and Marie Curie) and linking them better with national programmes and resources. The initiative also aims to step up the modernisation of higher education (curricula, governance and financing), explore ways of promoting entrepreneurship through mobility programmes for young professionals promote the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, and launch new youth employment policies to encourage apprenticeships, traineeships or other work experience.

### Did you know that ...

- The EU's working-age population will fall by 48 million between 2006 and 2050
- In 2050, 52% of the population will be of working age (aged 20-64)
- In 2050, only 19% of the population will be aged from 15 to 24, while the over-65s will account for 29%<sup>27</sup>



### From strangers to citizens

In 2008, the Youth in Action programme<sup>33</sup> celebrated 20 years of initiatives that aim to benefit young people and youth workers. More than 1.5 million people have participated in tens of thousands of EU-supported projects since the scheme began.

One recent Spanish-based project, entitled 'From strangers to citizens', brought together a group of young professionals and volunteers from Spain, France, Germany and Poland to learn more about the lives of minority groups in Granada. The project focused primarily on the different situations of immigrant and Roma youth, and their place in the Andalusian community.

The seminar's activities were directed towards inclusion and participation. An element of intercultural learning marked the entire week due to the cultural and ethnic diversity of the participating group. The seminar raised awareness about the possibilities of using Youth in Action as a way of communicating with even more people and getting them involved in follow-up seminars and activities supported by the project.



## Further information

- Youth in Action funding opportunities 2010<sup>34</sup>
- Youth in Action funding opportunities 2011<sup>35</sup>
- Education and youth national contact points<sup>36</sup>
- *The Magazine*<sup>37</sup>
- EuryBase – description of national education systems and policies<sup>38</sup>
- Eve – tool for the dissemination and exploitation EU-funded youth project results<sup>39</sup>

## Communicators' toolkit

- Europa Diary<sup>40</sup>
- EU Youth Report<sup>41</sup>
- Youth in Action – European good practice projects<sup>42</sup>
- European Youth in Action Video<sup>43</sup>

- 20 years of European youth programmes in figures<sup>44</sup>
- Video on 20 years of European youth programmes<sup>45</sup>
- European Youth Portal<sup>46</sup>
- Video on Eurodesk<sup>47</sup>
- European Youth Forum Channel<sup>48</sup>
- VNR on the Development Youth Prize<sup>49</sup>
- Video on Lifelong Learning Programme<sup>50</sup>
- Video on Erasmus<sup>51</sup>
- Europa teachers' corner<sup>52</sup>
- EU in slides<sup>53</sup>
- Quick Links for Schools and Universities<sup>54</sup>
- Quick links for kids: games, quizzes and competitions<sup>55</sup>
- Video on ending child poverty in Europe<sup>56</sup>
- ESF video on helping young people to improve their professional lives and enhance their standard of living<sup>57</sup>

1	<a href="http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/youth/c11182_en.htm">http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/youth/c11182_en.htm</a>
2	<a href="http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Impact_of_the_economic_crisis_on_unemployment">http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Impact_of_the_economic_crisis_on_unemployment</a>
3	<a href="http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/situation_in_europe/c10160_en.htm">http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/situation_in_europe/c10160_en.htm</a>
4	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=751&amp;langId=en">http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=751&amp;langId=en</a>
5	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_202_sum_en.pdf">http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_202_sum_en.pdf</a>
6	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_202_sum_en.pdf">http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_202_sum_en.pdf</a>
7	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_202_sum_en.pdf">http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_202_sum_en.pdf</a>
8	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/sip/index_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/sip/index_en.htm</a>
9	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/sip/events/day/index_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/sip/events/day/index_en.htm</a>
10	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/sip/events/forum/index_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/sip/events/forum/index_en.htm</a>
11	<a href="http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/10/704&amp;format=HTML&amp;aged=0&amp;language=EN&amp;guiLanguage=nl">http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/10/704&amp;format=HTML&amp;aged=0&amp;language=EN&amp;guiLanguage=nl</a>
12	<a href="http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/09/204&amp;format=HTML&amp;aged=0&amp;language=EN&amp;guiLanguage=en">http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/09/204&amp;format=HTML&amp;aged=0&amp;language=EN&amp;guiLanguage=en</a>
13	<a href="http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/youth/c11055_en.htm">http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/youth/c11055_en.htm</a>
14	<a href="http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/youth/c11059_en.htm">http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/youth/c11059_en.htm</a>
15	<a href="http://europa.eu/youth/news/index_1794_en.html">http://europa.eu/youth/news/index_1794_en.html</a>
16	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/youth/archive/program/index_en.html">http://ec.europa.eu/youth/archive/program/index_en.html</a>
17	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc78_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc78_en.htm</a>
18	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc82_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc82_en.htm</a>
19	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc86_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc86_en.htm</a>
20	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc90_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc90_en.htm</a>
21	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc94_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc94_en.htm</a>
22	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc78_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc78_en.htm</a>
23	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc84_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc84_en.htm</a>
24	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc80_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc80_en.htm</a>
25	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc82_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc82_en.htm</a>
26	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc86_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc86_en.htm</a>
27	<a href="http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/situation_in_europe/c10160_en.htm">http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/situation_in_europe/c10160_en.htm</a>
28	<a href="http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2009:0200:FIN:EN:PDF">http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2009:0200:FIN:EN:PDF</a>
29	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/COMPLETE%20EN%20BARROSO%20%20%2007%20-%20Europe%202020%20-%20EN%20version.pdf">http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/COMPLETE%20EN%20BARROSO%20%20%2007%20-%20Europe%202020%20-%20EN%20version.pdf</a>
30	<a href="http://europa.eu/youthonthemove/">http://europa.eu/youthonthemove/</a>
31	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc80_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc80_en.htm</a>
32	<a href="http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/10/267&amp;format=HTML&amp;aged=0&amp;language=EN&amp;guiLanguage=en">http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/10/267&amp;format=HTML&amp;aged=0&amp;language=EN&amp;guiLanguage=en</a>
33	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/youth/pub/pdf/gp-youth-week_en.pdf">http://ec.europa.eu/youth/pub/pdf/gp-youth-week_en.pdf</a>
34	<a href="http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/funding/2010/index_en.php">http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/funding/2010/index_en.php</a>
35	<a href="http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/funding/2011/index_en.php">http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/funding/2011/index_en.php</a>
36	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/education/contact/index_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/education/contact/index_en.htm</a>
37	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/mag_en.html">http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/mag_en.html</a>
38	<a href="http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/eurybase_en.php">http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/eurybase_en.php</a>
39	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/eve/">http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/eve/</a>
40	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/empowerment/cons_education_en.htm#diary">http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/empowerment/cons_education_en.htm#diary</a>
41	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/youth/news/doc/new_strategy/youth_report_final.pdf">http://ec.europa.eu/youth/news/doc/new_strategy/youth_report_final.pdf</a>
42	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/pdf/youth/gp-interculturaldialog_en.pdf">http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/pdf/youth/gp-interculturaldialog_en.pdf</a>
43	<a href="http://europa.eu/youth/video_page.cfm?Lid=EN">http://europa.eu/youth/video_page.cfm?Lid=EN</a>
44	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/youth/glance/doc/youth_in_action_figures/eac_20years_yia.pdf">http://ec.europa.eu/youth/glance/doc/youth_in_action_figures/eac_20years_yia.pdf</a>
45	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/youth/video/video_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/youth/video/video_en.htm</a>
46	<a href="http://europa.eu/youth/">http://europa.eu/youth/</a>
47	<a href="http://www.eurodesk.org/edesk/">http://www.eurodesk.org/edesk/</a>
48	<a href="http://vimeo.com/user2619257">http://vimeo.com/user2619257</a>
49	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/video_prod_en.cfm?type=detail&amp;prodid=8656&amp;src=1">http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/video_prod_en.cfm?type=detail&amp;prodid=8656&amp;src=1</a>
50	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/user/eutube#p/c/B3B3FBF0496049C6/3/hwCwaGXzPiU">http://www.youtube.com/user/eutube#p/c/B3B3FBF0496049C6/3/hwCwaGXzPiU</a>
51	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/video_prod_en.cfm?type=details&amp;prodid=11672&amp;src=1">http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/video_prod_en.cfm?type=details&amp;prodid=11672&amp;src=1</a>
52	<a href="http://europa.eu/teachers-corner/">http://europa.eu/teachers-corner/</a>
53	<a href="http://europa.eu/abc/euslides/index_en.htm">http://europa.eu/abc/euslides/index_en.htm</a>
54	<a href="http://europa.eu/quick-links/schools-universities/index_en.htm">http://europa.eu/quick-links/schools-universities/index_en.htm</a>
55	<a href="http://europa.eu/quick-links/eu-kids/index_en.htm">http://europa.eu/quick-links/eu-kids/index_en.htm</a>
56	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=671&amp;langId=en&amp;videoId=541&amp;vI=en">http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=671&amp;langId=en&amp;videoId=541&amp;vI=en</a>
57	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=668&amp;langId=en&amp;videoId=1581&amp;vI=en">http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=668&amp;langId=en&amp;videoId=1581&amp;vI=en</a>