



# EU Youth Conference

Vilnius, 9–12 September, 2013

## Final report



EU2013.LT



MINISTRY OF SOCIAL SECURITY AND LABOUR  
REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA



European  
Commission

# STRUCTURED DIALOGUE

The Structured Dialogue is a process for discussions between young people and policy makers about different themes, to make sure the opinions of young people are taken into account in defining the EU's youth policies.

The themes and topics for discussion are decided at European level by EU Youth Ministers, whereas a committee of the current trio of EU Presidency countries, the European Commission and the European Youth Forum is responsible for coordinating the process and deciding upon sets of questions to be asked to young people across Europe twice a year.

These questions are then used as the basis for national consultations in each EU country, which are organised by National Working Groups, which in most cases are led by youth councils and include other youth organisations and stakeholders.

Some international youth organisations also consult their members and give feedback on the questions on an ad hoc basis.

## What is the result of Structured dialogue?

The results of the national consultations and any additional input from international youth organisations are compiled into background documents for EU Youth Conferences, where youth representatives and policy makers have the opportunity to work together and present a joint message to the EU. The EU Youth Conferences take place twice a year and are hosted by the country that holds the EU Presidency. The Presidency country will usually promote the recommendations of its EU Youth Conference and present them to the Council of the European Union to ensure they are reflected in Council Resolutions or Conclusions adopted by EU Youth Ministers.



The conference recommendations are also used by the European Commission to inform its future policy development.

**Video:** *Structured dialogue process explained*

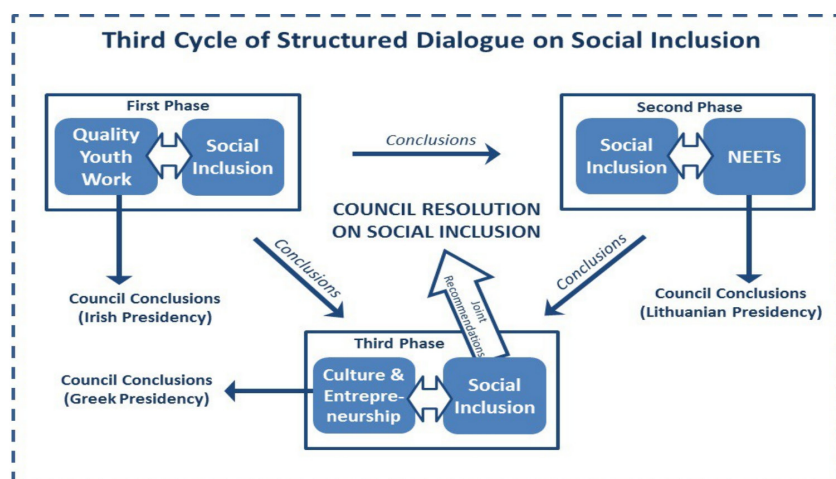
<http://vimeo.com/69176445>



## TRIO PRIORITY AND LITHUANIAN NATIONAL PRIORITY IN THE YOUTH FIELD

During the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU, the main priority in the youth sector is young people who are not in employment, education or training (here and after – NEETs). Following the work started by Irish Presidency on social inclusion, Lithuania plans to prepare Council conclusions on the enhancing of social inclusion of youth who are not in education, employment or training.

Design of the Third Cycle of Structured Dialogue



Based on Eurofound's research, there are over 14 millions young people aged 15-29, who are not in education, employment or training in all member states of European Union in 2011. Economic loss due to the disengagement of young people from the labour market was 153 billions euros. This is a conservative estimate and corresponds to 1,2% of European GDP. Percentage rate of youth who are not in education, employment or training is over 15% in most of EU countries (EU27 average is 15,4%), so this topic is important EU-wide.

Concerning these facts, Lithuanian Presidency is preparing Council conclusions on promotion of social inclusion of youth who are not in education, employment or training. We aim to pull together common effort to find best forms and measures to perform possibilities for young people who are not in education, employment or training to participate in public life, re-engage with education or (and) labour market. During the second semester of 2013 Lithuanian Presidency will put great attention to the questions below:

- 1) enhancing the social inclusion of young people, with particular emphasis on young people not in employment, education and training (NEETs);
- 2) promoting cross-sectoral cooperation as the underlying principle of integral youth policy;
- 3) exchanging good practices on social inclusion of young people;
- 4) promoting cooperation in the youth policy field between young people from European Union and Eastern Europe and Caucasus countries.

## WHAT HAPPENS WITH JOINT CONCLUSIONS?



Seven thematic areas drawn from the results of national consultations provided by 28 Member States and 17 International Non-Governmental Organisations were explored at the Youth Conference via Joint workshop sessions. Young people and Ministry officials from the 28 Member States have jointly defined 21 conclusions. The conclusions present proposals in areas of adapting education to the needs of young people and demands of the labour market, informing and guiding young people in their transitions, facilitating the transition from education to employment, improving the labour market for young people, supporting young people's autonomy, enhancing the role of youth organisations and developing cross-sectoral cooperation. The Lithuanian EU Youth Conference was the second conference within the Trio Presidencies of Ireland, Lithuania and Greece, highlighting the theme of the social inclusion of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs).

The goal of the Lithuanian Presidency EU Youth Conference was to come up with conclusions from the workshops, on the basis of the compiled results of national consultations. The outcome of the Lithuanian Presidency EU Youth Conference is a list of conclusions that can serve as a basis for possible inclusion in policy documents to be progressed through the EU Council of Youth Ministers:

- *Council Conclusions on the enhancing of social inclusion of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs);*
- *Council Resolution on Structured dialogue with young people on social inclusion.*

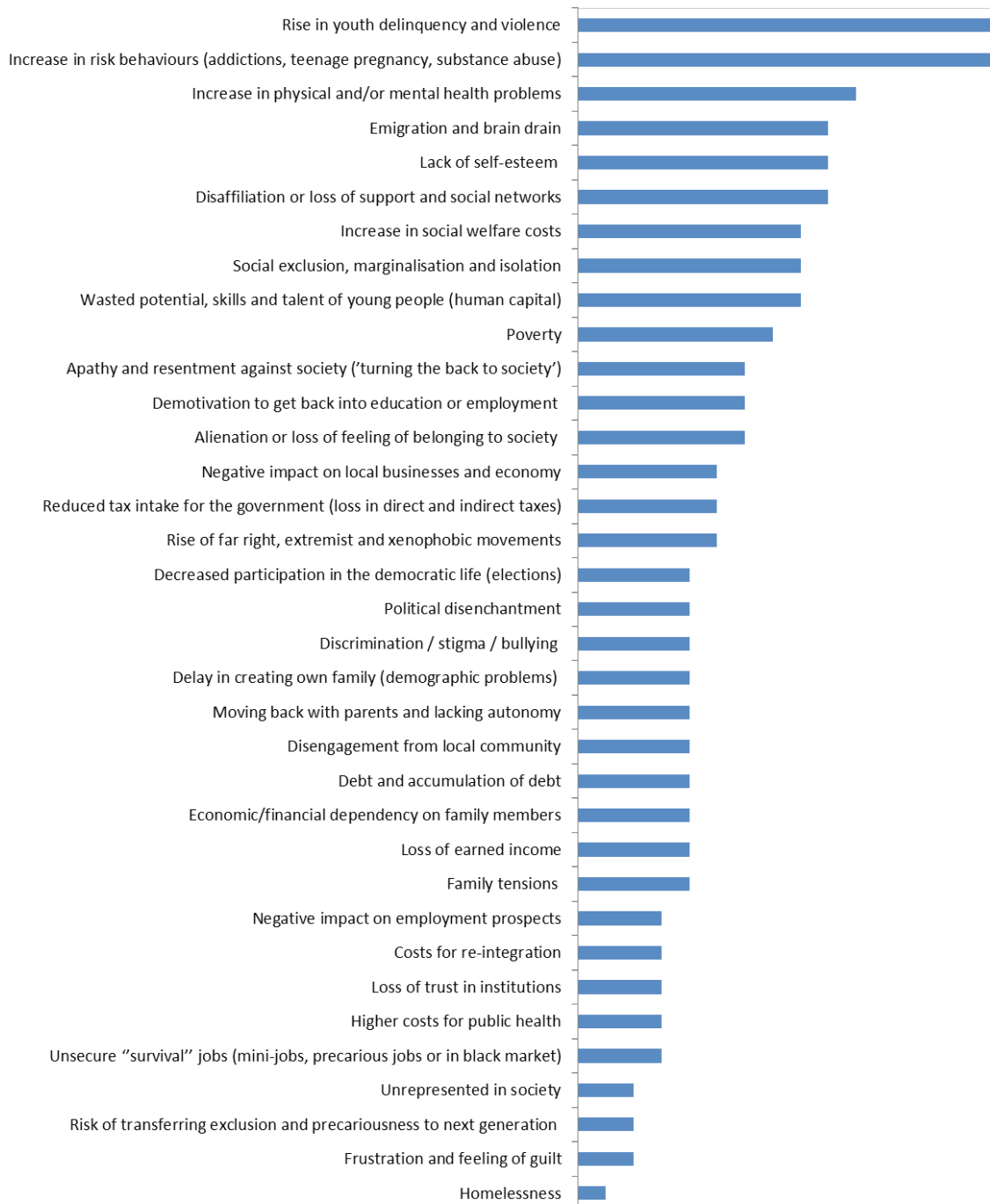
## EU-WIDE CONSULTATIONS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AND EXPERTS

These results are based on the reports of the consultations of National Working Groups in all 28 EU Member States and of the International Non-Governmental Youth Organisations (INGYOs). According to the reports, **more than 20,000 young people** participated directly in the structured dialogue during this first phase on the theme of social inclusion of young people. **17 International Non-Governmental Youth Organisations** organised consultations and contributed with inputs to this phase of structured dialogue. In addition, **more than 1,200 experts and public authorities** in the field of youth, social affairs and welfare services took part in the discussions with young people.

### **BACKGROUND: Consequences that Young People are Not in Employment, Education or Training**

Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) are the young people who are unemployed or inactive, and who are not attending any education or training courses. Therefore, NEETs are not a homogenous group, but very diverse group, including higher education graduates without employment as well as young unemployed who have not completed secondary school (early school leavers), among other sub-groups. Being out of employment, education or training (NEETs) has great consequences upon individuals, community, the economy and the society overall. Below is an indication of which consequences were mentioned most often in the reports of the results of discussions with young people, experts and public authorities across the EU Member States. It should be noted that some reports mentioned more consequences than others:

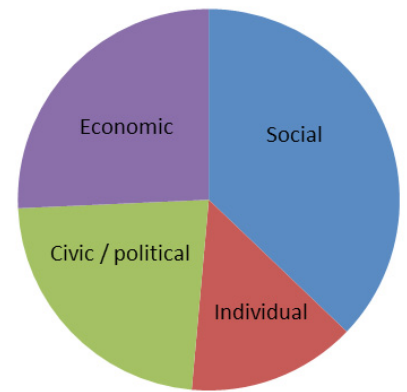




Young people from nearly all Member States identified rise in violence (youth delinquency) and increase in risk behaviours, in particular alcohol and drug abuse, as the most important and visible consequences. Increase in health problems, drain brain and emigration, poverty, waste of human capital and higher costs of social welfare and healthcare are also considered among the most serious consequences of belonging to the NEETs. Alienation, political disenchantment, decrease in participation in democratic life and rise in far right, extremist and xenophobic movements are also reported to be important long-term consequences upon the respective societies.



When analysing the different types of consequences reported by young people across Europe, it is clear that social consequences are perceived as the most serious and have been reported the most often: among others, rise in violence, brain drain, social exclusion, discrimination, poverty, etc. Economic consequences, such as reduced tax intake for government and escalation of costs for public health and social welfare, have been reported as important consequences along with the strong effects of civic and political nature: loss of trust in public institutions and non-participation in elections. Being out of employment, education or training is reported to have serious impact also on the concerned individuals: loss of self-confidence and self-esteem, frustration, loss of social support, apathy and demotivation, among others.



The reported aggregated impact of these social, economic, political and individual consequences is a perceived feeling of failure in life, of not contributing to society, and in short, a feeling of *'worthlessness'*. However, reports highlight that temporary non-participation in employment, education or training does not mean that young people do not contribute to society or are excluded since many do get involved in youth work and volunteering activities. Nevertheless, the consequences are serious when exclusion from education, training or employment is long-term.

Young people across Europe have reported that the economic and social costs of preventing young people from becoming NEETs are far less than the costs of re-integration of NEETs into society. They emphasised that the vicious circle in which young people who have difficulties in finding employment or entering into education face a higher risk of exclusion as time goes by, should be broken.

The results of the dialogue and discussions between young people, experts and public authorities across the EU Member States and the inputs and contributions from the International Non-Governmental Youth Organisations (INGYOs) have been compiled in this background document to serve as a basis for joint discussions at the EU Youth Conference in Lithuania. A visual summary of all inputs from reports can be seen below:



## WORKSHOPS:

- ADAPT Education to the Needs of Young People and Demands of the Labour Market
- INFORM and GUIDE Young People in their Transitions
- FACILITATE the Transition from Education to Employment
- IMPROVE the Labour Market for Young People
- SUPPORT for Young People's Autonomy
- ENHANCE the Role of Youth Organisations
- DEVELOP Cross-Sectoral Cooperation



## PREPARATORY MEETINGS

Team of international and national facilitators ran the 7 workshops of the conference and joint sessions. International facilitators were nominated from the Support structure of Structured dialogue by European youth forum while national facilitators were selected by the Presidency. In order to prepare methodologically and get deeper into the content of the conference, two preparatory meetings were held.

The Presidency has prepared compilation document, which was based on pan-European consultations with young people and results of former EU Youth conferences. It was the main document to refer to during the workshops of the Conference.

The facilitators were expected to facilitate the discussions towards the producing the outcomes of the conference, which would later lead to policy measures.



## CONFERENCE: Youth delegate session



The youth delegate session was organised by the Lithuanian Youth Council (LiJOT) and the European Youth Forum. It gathered all youth delegates present at the EU Youth Conference.

The aims of the session were to prepare, train and familiarise youth delegates with the topic of the conference, social inclusion of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs), including the measures adopted at EU level in the field. By the end of the session, youth delegates were better equipped for the discussions in workshops; attention was drawn to avoid repeating policy proposals that are already in place and thus maximising the quality of the outcomes of the conference.



## OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE TOOK PLACE ON 10TH SEPTEMBER:

Opening speeches by the President of the Republic of Lithuania Dalia Grybauskaitė, Commissioner Androulla Vassilou, Minister of Social Security and Labour Algimanta Pabedinskienė, Vice-president of European Youth Forum Lloyd Russell-Moyle, President of LIJOT, National Youth Council Loreta Senkutė. President of the Republic of Lithuania has greeted the participants and emphasized that young people stimulate positive changes both in their motherland and throughout the EU when engaged into non-Governmental organizations activity and are actively participating in the political life of their country.

Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania has greeted this conference and stated that there is no coincidence that social integration of NEETS has been chosen as one of the main priorities of Lithuanian Presidency because these

people need urgent aid in reintegrating into education and labour market.



## KEYNOTE SPEECHES AND PANEL DISCUSSION

Key note speeches and panel discussion were focused on the Lithuanian Presidency's main priority in the youth policy field: social inclusion of young people with a particular emphasis on the inclusion of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETS).

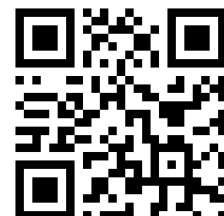


**MASSIMILIANO MASCHERINI, research manager in European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) presented** "NEETS: an

European Picture of the NEET phenomenon". The researcher presented NEETS definition, situation of NEETS in the European Union and the EU member states, also mentioned main problems caused by the situation of NEETS. Based on Eurofound's research, there are over 14.6 millions young people aged 15-29, who are not in education, employment or training in all member states of European Union in 2012. Economic loss due to the disengagement of young

people from the labour market was 162 billion Euros. Massimiliano Mascherini also presented possible solutions to solve the problem of NEETS and suggested prevention of NEETS especially on the transition periods (or drop-outs) is very important, by mentioning concrete prevention measures.

Web-link to the presentation <http://goo.gl/09JuJV>





**Dr. ANNA RITA MANCA, *Statistics Officer in European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)*, presented statistical portrait of NEETs “NEETs: does gender matter?”.**

The presentation showed how important is to study the difference between women and men among the NEETs population. The differences in gender gaps between population 25-74 and NEETs in the break age (15-29) were presented.

The representative of EIGE stated, that there are significant differences between young women and men (NEETs) according to level of education and employment status, the conclusion was that we need to address the intervention in supporting NEETs differently to young women and young men. This analysis showed that there are differences in addressing the needs of young women and young men, and that this topic will be an important future project.

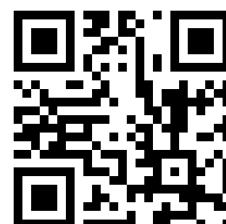
Web-link to the presentation <http://goo.gl/tf5VYf>



**MELISSA C. PAILTHORP, *Senior Manager at Microsoft Community Affairs for Central and Eastern Europe, “Multi-stakeholder partnerships focused on European Youth”***

Cross-sectoral cooperation was discussed during the presentation stating that there is a need for cooperation and partnership in order to solve youth problems. The role and goals of business, inter-sectional cooperation in Europe – tendencies and developments as well as perspective of the youth issues were raised and discussed by the speaker and the audience. Representative of Microsoft presented partnership examples and their impact to young people in European countries.

Web-link to the presentation: <http://sdrv.ms/1f5M6Uv>



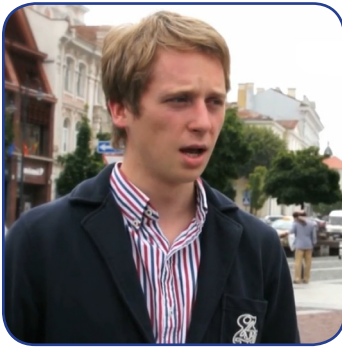
**KRISTINA MAČIULYTĖ, *Youth worker in Public Entity ACTIO CATOLICA PATRIA in Lithuania, in her presentation “Youth Work: helping young people in transition period to become independent”***

named possibilities of youth work to help and encourage young people who need help in youth work as Kristina interacts with them in daily work. Kristina, as a youth worker, not only named the legal regulation which is provided for open youth work in Lithuania, but also explained services for a young person, the way she reaches youth also presenting changes that could be made in the system of youth work. The conclusion by a youth worker was

that “The main goal is that a young person would be independent, happy and live in harmony with others and would not harm anyone.”

Web-link to the presentation: <http://goo.gl/lgqUGX>





The opening plenary was followed by the video “on NEETs in the EU”, prepared by European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA) in cooperation with stakeholders, which was an inspiration for discussions in the workshops: young people themselves expressed their attitude to life, willingness to study, search for suitable job and valuable participation in the life of society.

Web-link to the video: <https://vimeo.com/73959823>



## WORKSHOPS AND OPINION BOULEVARD

Each workshop was facilitated by a pair of facilitators, who chose appropriate methods, aiming to create space for everyone to participate in discussions. The methodology of workshops fostered open debates and seek consensus in the decision-making which conclusions would be put through as most important. The Opinion Boulevard was used in the middle of workshop sessions to provide space for participants to contribute to all 7 workshops topics and to ensure coherence on interim and final conclusions.



# European Union Youth Conference of Lithuanian Presidency

## 9–12 September 2013, Vilnius

### JOINT CONCLUSIONS

The EU Youth Conference is an element of the Structured Dialogue process, which brings together young people and policy makers across the European Union to jointly discuss and inform the development of youth policy at national and European level. The Structured Dialogue process was established by the Council of the European Union in its Resolution for a renewed framework for cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018). The Structured Dialogue process is an important instrument to ensure that the opinions and views of young people are taken into account in the formation of policies in the youth field. For the 18 month cycle from 1 January 2013 to 30 June 2014, the trio Presidency (Ireland, Lithuania and Greece), in cooperation with the European Commission and the European Youth Forum have agreed that the theme of the Structured Dialogue process throughout the cycle is Social Inclusion. Each of the three consultation phases reflects this thematic priority, with the results from each phase informing the next phase, leading towards a collective outcome at the end of the cycle. Specific priorities of Presidency contribute to the overall thematic priority of social inclusion.

The Lithuanian EU Youth Conference was the second conference within the Trio Presidencies of Ireland, Lithuania and Greece, highlighting the theme of the social inclusion of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs).

The goal of the Lithuanian Presidency EU Youth Conference was to come up with conclusions from the workshops, on the basis of the compiled results of national consultations. The outcome of the Lithuanian Presidency EU Youth Conference is a list of conclusions that can serve as a basis for possible inclusion in policy documents to be progressed through the EU Council of Youth Ministers:

- *Council Conclusions on the enhancing of social inclusion of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs);*
- *Council Resolution on Structured dialogue with young people on social inclusion.*

Seven thematic areas drawn from the results of national consultations provided by 28 Member States and 17 International Non-Governmental Organisations were explored at the Youth Conference via Joint workshop sessions. Young people and Ministry officials from the 28 Member States have jointly defined the following conclusions.



# European Union Youth Conference of Lithuanian Presidency

## 9–12 September 2013, Vilnius

### JOINT CONCLUSIONS



#### 1. ADAPT Education to the Needs of Young People and Demands of the Labour Market

- EU Member States should increase the number of social scholarships as well as improve means-tested financial support for covering study-related costs (i.e. text books, school equipment, meals, etc.) and develop learning infrastructure, including access to affordable transportation.
- EU Member States should ensure that education systems are tailored to individual learners in order to develop active citizens with social values, general knowledge, life skills and professional skills. The education systems must facilitate open and flexible transitions between different phases of education.
- Inclusion and diversity training should be ensured for all educators as well as engaging learning environment for all learners. Interactive tools, modern equipment, quality facilities and a variety of learning methods should be provided by the relevant authorities.

#### 2. INFORM and GUIDE Young People in their Transitions

- The EU Institutions and Member States should make it a youth policy priority to improve quality, outreach and capacity of information and guidance services for young people on all levels, specifically regional and local, and to cooperate with information networks.
- The EU Institutions and Member States should ensure ring-fenced funds for specialised information and guidance services and diversity training for practitioners to facilitate the transition of socially disadvantaged youth into education, employment or training.
- The EU Member States should support cooperation between families, educators, schools and information service providers to deliver cohesive information and guidance to young people in transitions in order to help them make informed decisions.

#### 3. FACILITATE the Transition from Education to Employment

- Formal and non-formal education providers should proactively build sustainable partnerships with employers in order to integrate practical job-related experiences into education and to offer more opportunities for quality internships and apprenticeships, structured and monitored training schemes, available for all young people.



- Governments in cooperation with employers and non-formal education providers should develop and promote tools for assessment and self-evaluation of the competences acquired through non-formal education in order to guarantee the recognition of such competences in the labour market and to develop the employability and self-confidence of young people.
- The EU Institutions should adopt a binding framework to ensure that all internships in the European Union are of quality and sufficiently remunerated. Member States should offer tax or other incentives to employers for providing such internships.

#### 4. IMPROVE the Labour Market for Young People

- EU Member States should ensure that their legal frameworks prevent discrimination against young people, based on age, and that young people are entitled to the same employment conditions, remuneration and rights as other workers, therefore leading to strengthening intergenerational solidarity.
- Governments should support entrepreneurship by simplifying administrative procedures through establishing a one-stop shop and online services, and enabling access to free legal advice, as well as providing financial support and tax relief to young entrepreneurs, and incentivising private investments<sup>1</sup> into start-ups.
- Governments should increase youth employment by putting in place tax incentives for employers to create quality jobs under the following conditions: jobs should respect the guidelines from ILO Decent Work Agenda<sup>2</sup>; should be based on long-term contracts and should not replace already existing jobs.

#### 5. SUPPORT for Young People's Autonomy

- EU Member States should develop and implement national policies on access to affordable and decent housing for all young people, including NEETs, students, employees, among others, in order to ensure their autonomous life.
- EU Member States should guarantee easy access to youth-friendly welfare services in order to support the autonomy of young people, in particular those at risk of social exclusion.
- EU Member States should provide and coordinate social integration services and programmes from information and guidance to tailored training for young people. This should be implemented in cooperation with educational institutions, local authorities and youth organisations.

#### 6. ENHANCE the Role of Youth Organisations

- EU Member States should establish or develop national coordinating bodies for the Youth Guarantee involving representatives of the youth sector and other social partners in designing the planning, implementation and monitoring of the Youth Guarantee scheme on national level.

1 Examples of incentivising private investments are angel investors, seed funds and venture capital, among others.

2 International Labour Organisation. Decent Work Agenda. <http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/decent-work-agenda/lang--en/index.htm>



- EU Institutions and Member States should invest in youth organisations to ensure that all young people have access to non-formal education, especially young people who are socially excluded, such as NEETs and young people from remote areas.
- Decision-makers at all levels should recognise the representative role of youth councils and youth organisations by establishing a clear legal framework through which their independence and involvement in the decision-making process will be ensured.

## 7. [DEVELOP Cross-Sectoral Cooperation](#)

- To enhance social inclusion of NEETs, European Commission and Member States should improve coordination and implementation mechanisms of cross-sectoral cooperation based on evidence and practical knowledge, mutual interest, exchange of information, shared responsibility and adequate resources for implementation and follow-up.
- Governments should ensure multi-stakeholder quality cooperation through developing joint goals and implementation mechanisms while guaranteeing youth participation in decision and policy making processes by involving national youth councils and other relevant youth representatives.
- European Commission in cooperation with Member States should produce a study on existing practices of cross-sectoral cooperation in order to increase the quality of youth policies.

## CLOSING OF THE CONFERENCE TOOK PLACE ON THE 12TH SEPTEMBER BY:

- Presenting Joint Conclusion of the Conference, that were presented by the representative of the Ministry from Luxembourg (incoming trio) and Croatian youth representative.
- Closing speeches of the Member of Parliament of Lithuania, DG for Youth in Lithuania, Director of Youth and Sports from the European Commission, vice-president of European Youth Forum and president of National Youth Council.

## SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

The EU Youth Conference hosted by the Lithuanian Presidency was viewed as a success by those who participated.

The logistical and organisational arrangements worked well, with the most positive aspect being the Conference information pack provided to delegates. In addition, the organisation and professionalism of the Conference as well as the atmosphere were strong contributing factors to the overall positive experience. It is recommended that the flight details communicated earlier.

The process of reaching the Joint Conclusions was well received, with the workshop sessions providing opportunity for discussion and a pace, which allowed for the development of quality conclusions. Delegates have valued facilitators very positively. Also youth delegates expressed wishes that DGs would be more involved in the Conference and do not skip so many workshops meetings.

However, delegates valued the presentation of the Joint Conclusions at the closing plenary. The majority of delegates view that the outcomes of the Conference have been achieved.



*'I was impressed by the effectiveness of the practical concerns, which you managed to mix with a great flexibility – good job!'*

*'Things seem to have moved smoothly, the interaction between people was alright, it is good that YDs and DGs were not fully separated but that there was equality and opportunities for discussion.'*

*The organisation was very good, which made the process easier. Facilitators also made excellent job.'*

*'Great work, thank you for all the volunteers'*

*'My workshop was really interesting and well prepared. The facilitators were awesome!'*

*'The interaction between everyone [worked well]. Everyone was able to tell their opinion.'*

*'The methodology in the workshops was great. We had the opportunity to have some nice discussions and were given the chance to contribute to this process in a substantial manner''*

*'Workshops facilitators were good, active and structured.'*

*'There were always facilitators and volunteers leaving an open ear and eye.'*

*'The facilitation, the style of group decision making (efforts to be chose to consensus), programme was well balanced.'*

## LINKS AND CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION



Official Facebook page of the conference: <https://www.facebook.com/sprendimus.priimame.kartu>

Twitter: Official conference twitter account: @euYOUTHconf #euYOUTHconf #EUYouth13

Lithuanian EU Presidency website: <http://www.eu2013.lt/>

Official video of the Conference: <http://goo.gl/v0mBbg>

Explanatory document for the EU Youth Conference- <http://goo.gl/zmHEX9>

JOINT PRESS RELEASES:

**EU Youth Conference kicks off in Vilnius** - <http://www.socmin.lt/index.php?307992297>

**European Youth and Policy-makers have jointly come to the solutions for youth exclusion problems** - <http://www.socmin.lt/index.php?1918369618>

Conference live streaming: The livestream of the plenary sessions for the EU Youth Conference in Vilnius was broadcasted on European Youth Portal, website of Lithuanian National Youth Council and main Lithuanian news portal DELFI.LT. <http://lijot.lt/en/eu-2013>



## ADDRESSING ALL PARTICIPANTS AND UPCOMING PRESIDENCY – GREEKS



Big Lithuanian **AČIŪ** to everyone who contributed to success of Lithuanian EU Presidency Youth Conference. Share your memories, share passion for youth policy-making and lets together work towards implementation on the Conference conclusions.

**Best greetings to upcoming Greek EU Presidency!**





EU2013.LT

