



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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INFORMATION NOTE

from: General Secretariat of the Council
to: Council

Subject: Youth Employment Initiative
- *Information from the Austrian delegation*

Delegations will find attached an information note from the Austrian delegation on the above subject, which has been included on the agenda under "Other Business" for the next Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council meeting on 16-17 May 2013.

Youth Employment Initiative

Background

The importance of tackling the issue of youth unemployment has been recognised on several occasions at various political levels: the European Council stressed that the highest priority should be given to promoting youth employment. It devoted a special meeting to this theme in January 2012 and gave it a strong emphasis in the Compact for Jobs and Growth. This is also reflected in the European Council conclusions of February 2013.

Following the European Council's expectations, the Council has recently decided to adopt the recommendation on a Youth Guarantee.

Recognising the particularly difficult situation of young people in certain regions, the European Council has furthermore decided to create a Youth Employment Initiative to add to, and reinforce the very considerable support already provided through the EU structural funds.

Austria highly welcomes the Commission's Youth Employment Initiative (*presented in December 2012*) which would in particular support young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs). Under the Youth Guarantee, young people should receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of leaving school or becoming unemployed. Education plays a crucial role in the youth employment Initiative. Austria deems it essential that the employment and education sectors are interlinked at national, as well as at EU level, also as regards this initiative.

In its conclusions on “Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes” the EYCS Council in February 2013 stressed the key role of education and training in preventing unemployment and agreed on a stronger role for education ministers in the implementation of the European semester as well as on enhanced cooperation with the employment sector. Following up this agreement and taking into account that the European Council of December 2012 called on the Council to give consideration to the proposals of the Youth Employment Package, it seems reasonable to inform education ministers at the May Council about the state of play and the next steps regarding the European Youth Initiative and to briefly set out how the Education Council can best support this initiative. This would not only contribute to the coherence of the Council's work, but also correspond to the high political priority of promoting youth employment, which has been acknowledged by the Heads of State and Government.

Objective

Austria would like to ask the Presidency and the Commission to inform education ministers at the May Council about the state of the play and the next steps regarding the European Youth Initiative and to briefly set out how the EYCS Council can best support this initiative.