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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee/Council
Subject:	EMCO review of the implementation of the Youth Guarantee - Key Messages - Endorsement

With a view to their endorsement at the Council meeting on 11 March 2024, delegations will find below the Key Messages of the EMCO review of the implementation of the Youth Guarantee.

The country-specific conclusions of the EMCO review of the implementation of the Youth Guarantee can be found in document 6831/24 ADD 1.

The data collection for monitoring of Youth Guarantee schemes in 2022 as transmitted by EMCO can be found in document 6831/24 ADD 2.

**EMCO reviews of the implementation of the
Council Recommendation on A Bridge to Jobs – Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee**

EMCO Key Messages for the Council

1. Introduction

The Employment Committee (EMCO) is tasked with monitoring the progress made in the implementation of the Council Recommendation on A Bridge to Jobs – Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee. In 2016, 2018 and 2019, the Council (EPSCO) endorsed a set of key messages provided by EMCO on the basis of its monitoring of the *2013 Council Recommendation on establishing a Youth Guarantee*. These underlined the importance of prevention, early intervention, strong partnerships within Member States, as well as the crucial role of Public Employment Services (PES).

Since 2021, monitoring has continued on the implementation of the 2020 Council Recommendation on A Bridge to Jobs – Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee. In October 2021, the EMCO Key Messages on the implementation of the “reinforced” Youth Guarantee focused on the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 crisis on young people, during which Member States maintained a strong political commitment towards its implementation. Steps forward were made in all Member States and new national implementation plans, adopted or to be adopted at that time, pointed towards a more systematic and coherent approach in tackling youth unemployment and inactivity. At the same time, challenges remained in all areas of the Youth Guarantee implementation, with the pandemic in many cases acting as an additional impeding factor. In November 2023, the latest review was carried by the **EMCO Policy Analysis Group (EMCO PAG)**. The current key messages draw on the results of that review, with country-specific conclusions included in annex. Also annexed to this document are the results per Member State of the 2023 data collection exercise, preceded by a summary of the main results at EU level.

2. Progress achieved

Overall, Member States have maintained a strong political commitment towards the implementation of the reinforced Youth Guarantee and most of them reported efforts to improve their capacity to deliver services to young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs). Between 2021 and 2023, progress was registered across all Member States in the implementation of the Youth Guarantee, although its degree varies across the EU and some aspects seem to have deteriorated, according to the data collection results. It is now key to address the challenges and gaps observed.

After the peak during the pandemic, the proportion of young NEETs has resumed its downward trend started since 2014. The recent development can result from the increasing efficiency of activation programmes implemented by Member States and from the good performance of European labour markets, with unprecedented low levels of unemployment and increasing labour shortages across different sectors.

Outreach measures should be strengthened in particular to the most vulnerable NEETs, including NEETs in rural areas, notably by strengthening coordination between ministries and PES. Although many Member States report significant progress as regards digital upskilling, there are still some countries where challenges are observed. The share of timely and positive exits from the Youth Guarantee schemes has improved, but in many cases waiting times remain too long. The coverage rate also decreased. It is therefore necessary to improve the capacity of the Youth Guarantee to reach more young people. As for the sustainability of the results, the proportion of positive outcomes after 6 months has slightly decreased, but efforts are still needed, in general, to improve the quality of follow-up data in many Member States. Improvement is also needed regarding **mapping**, as collection, sharing and the follow-up of the NEET data is seen as important for the follow-up of the measures within the Youth Guarantee schemes implemented at national level.

Substantial differences remain in the quality and effectiveness of service delivery. A shift from the provision of personalised services to more generalised services has been observed, with a risk of considering young NEETs as regular job seekers and of leaving inactive NEETs behind. This is a matter of concern in light of the still high number of young NEETs in vulnerable conditions that poses an issue in most Member States. There is a need to enhance **prevention measures** and focus also on early school leaving.

The 2021-2027 programming period for the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) represents an opportunity to address the challenges Member States are still facing, and adequate resources should be allocated to innovative actions and measures accordingly. Especially in the case of Member States with multi-level governance, a fair allocation of resources and a solid monitoring system could avoid the risk of uneven implementation of the Youth Guarantee throughout the country. On the other hand, it will be important to ensure adequate national funding to past initiatives that proved successful in supporting NEETs and bringing them in the labour market in a sustainable manner. The move from extensive use of ESF+ funds to national programming is crucial in this context. The exchange of good practices among Member States and the organisation of cross-national projects are further encouraged.