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Youth and the Skills Agenda - A New Boost for European Jobs, Growth and Investments

The EU is working to reduce youth unemployment and to increase the youth employment rate in line with the wider EU target of achieving a 75% employment rate for the working-age population (20-64 years). More than 4.5 million young people (aged 15-24 years) are unemployed today in the EU. Although it has decreased – from more than 23% in 2013 to less than 21% today – the youth unemployment rate is still very high in the EU (with peaks of more than 40% in several countries). Long-term youth unemployment is still at record highs. With regards to these challenges, the European Commission is launching a new initiative for youth: this includes a proposal for the creation of a European Solidarity Corps and priority measures to implement the youth aspects of the Skills Agenda.

The Skills Agenda

Launched in 2010, it is part of the EU's overall strategy – Europe 2020 – promoting smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the next 10 years and beyond. The Agenda also contributes to achieve the EU's targets to get the early school-leaving rate below 10% and more young people in higher education or equivalent vocational education (at least 40%), as well as to have at least 20 million fewer people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion by 2020.

Coming proposals from the European Commission for the Skills Agenda will include: **(1)** a quality framework for apprenticeships and a legislative proposal on increased mobility for apprentices, **(2)** modernising school and higher education (non-legislative proposal, will likely be published in the second quarter of 2017) and **(3)** a proposal for improved tracking of outcomes for graduates but also young people who have followed vocational education and training (non-legislative proposal, will also likely be published in the second quarter of 2017).

More about the Skills Agenda for Europe can be found [here](#).

More about the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) can be found [here](#).