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Published at: 17-09-2014

Source: [Portal Europe](#)

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"The Youth Employment Initiative can achieve important results. Intelligent implementation of schemes by Member State governments that fall under the Initiative have the potential of breaking the vicious cycle of heavy reliance on state benefits which can further consolidate increasing discontentment", said David Casa MEP, EPP Group Spokesman in the Employment and Social Affairs Committee of the European Parliament.

With youth unemployment in the EU at 22.5% and with a few Member States reaching a staggering 50%, the European Parliament today debated the roll-out of the European Youth Initiative, which fundamentally means €6 billion of EU money for programmes to boost youth employment over the next 2 years.

"Youth unemployment is an extremely serious problem that creates irreparable damage to those generations representing the future of our continent. This is why it is an EPP Group priority. We need to have a pragmatic approach and we cannot waste time. The Youth Employment Initiative is good but even more important is to ensure that these funds are spent by Member States in the best way possible and in a timely manner", said Lara Comi MEP, Vice-Chairwoman of the EPP Group responsible for youth and communication.

David Casa continued: "When young people are unable to find employment for prolonged periods of time, their prospects only diminish as time goes by. Disillusionment turns into complacency which is usually compounded by a heavy reliance on generous benefits that further increase reliance on them. However, if government schemes are crafted in such a way as to encourage education, training and employment, as this youth initiative does, then I say this spending is worth it."

"It is unfortunate that despite this Initiative being in force since last year, its funds have largely not been used. I urge Member States to craft smart proposals in order to implement the tools at their disposal in the best way possible."

"Relatively speaking, the EU suffers from a deficiency of entrepreneurial culture. Our young people must be helped to find employment but they should also be strongly encouraged to start their own businesses and create employment for themselves", concluded Casa.