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Resolution on

The young generation sacrificed: social, economic and political implications of the financial crisis

1. Young people are a key asset for Europe. Conditions must be created for them to participate fully in decision-making, democratic processes and the shaping of a more cohesive, prosperous and just society. Yet the financial and economic crises, together with underlying structural problems, threaten the effective exercise of rights by the young generation, whose autonomy, dignity and well-being are severely affected by growing economic and social inequalities. In some countries, the enormous public debt, financial speculation and the global economic crisis force the young generation to make painful sacrifices.

2. The CDI is concerned by the fact that the young generation in Europe is disproportionately hit by the unemployment/underemployment-poverty-exclusion trap. If no tangible improvements are made, Europe risks not only producing a "lost generation" of disillusioned young people, but also undermining its political stability and social cohesion, justice and peace, as well as its long-term competitiveness and development prospects in the global context.

3. Europe is ageing and needs the dynamism of young people to advance and prosper. Therefore policy makers have a duty to act rapidly and decisively to help deliver real opportunities for young people - or face the backlash of rising extremism and alienation in society. We are convinced that Europe needs to reactivate intergenerational solidarity mechanisms and better share political, social and economic power with the young generation. Adequately supporting young people today, even in times of austerity, is the best investment Europe can make in its future vitality and quality growth.

4. Therefore, we invite the CDI:

4.1. regarding youth policies, to:

4.1.1. focus youth strategies and action plans on better integration of young people into society through active citizenship, social dialogue and sustainable employment opportunities;

4.1.2. ensure that young people have full access to all their human (including social) rights;

4.1.3. ensure adequate remuneration and working conditions for young workers;

4.1.4. ensure that youth policies are put high on the political agenda and receive adequate funding;

4.1.5. reallocate part of unspent budgetary balances and supplementary resources generated through adjustments in taxation to youth-oriented projects, programmes and organisations;

4.1.6. promote the implementation family-friendly policies in support of young parents;

4.1.7. promote the emancipation of young people by developing housing policies specifically addressed to this age group;

4.2. regarding youth employability and skills, as well as the transition from studies to work and between jobs, to:

4.2.1. refocus national macroeconomic policies on sustainable job creation and investment in quality education, training and lifelong learning schemes;

4.2.2. adjust national educational systems towards equipping young people with a wider array of skills and linguistic abilities to better qualify for the evolving needs of labour markets and multiple vacant jobs across Europe;

4.2.3. improve youth access to high quality education, which can be better achieved by greater competitiveness of schools in both the public and private sectors;

4.2.4. remove administrative and tax obstacles to youth mobility for studies, training and work, and stimulate this mobility;

4.2.5. give impetus to youth entrepreneurship through an enabling environment, advisory services, tax facilities, grants and microcredits especially designed for young people;

4.2.6. use the United Nations International Year of Cooperatives 2012 to encourage the creation and development of youth co-operative enterprises;

4.2.7. offer tax incentives for employers who propose apprenticeships to young people while retaining older workers, notably for the inter-generational transmission of skills in the workplace;

4.2.8. subsidise employers' contributions to social insurance schemes or even grant a moratorium on them for a limited period of time so as to stimulate the recruitment of young people;

4.3. regarding social protection, to:

4.3.1. support the implementation of national "youth guarantee" schemes to ensure that no young person is out of employment, education or training for more than four months against their will;

4.3.2. ensure that young people with special needs, notably those with disabilities, can access training and employment adapted to their capacities, be adequately remunerated and become fully integrated in society;

4.3.3. propose targeted programmes and means of integration in order to help young people in precarious situations avoid the scourge of delinquency, prostitution, self-destruction or self-exclusion caused by addictions;

4.3.4. guarantee equal opportunities for young people to choose freely and have effective access to quality education through a systematic use of scholarships having regard to family resources;

4.3.5. enhance public social security coverage and encourage a greater use of private pension schemes for young workers in temporary, low-paid or otherwise precarious employment;

4.3.6. ensure that first-time jobseekers have access to social benefits;

4.4. regarding the promotion of active citizenship and social dialogue, to:

4.4.1. foster social dialogue for addressing youth problems by developing public-private partnerships between educational institutions, enterprises, local authorities, trade unions, employment agencies and social services;

4.4.2. consider setting up multifunctional youth support funds aimed at providing more scholarships for students, fostering the creation of start-up enterprises and access to patents by young entrepreneurs and promoting social inclusion projects for the young generation.