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## REPORT FORM

**3<sup>rd</sup> round of Structured Dialogue Period:  
Trio Presidency Ireland-Lithuania-Greece**

**DEADLINE: Tuesday, 11<sup>th</sup> of February 2014**

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Please find below a report form allowing your National Working Group or International Non-Governmental Youth Organisation to communicate the results of the consultation to the European Steering Committee. The input you will provide through this form will serve as a common base for the discussions at EU level.

### **Technical details of the consultation:**

Please provide the requested information on your National Working Group or international youth NGO:

<b>Details of the contact persons:</b>	
Name	1. Christina Unterberger 2. Robert Lender
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Institution	1. Austrian National Youth Council (OJV) 2. Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth
Position	1. Coordinating member of the leading team of the National Working Group (Secretary General of OJV) 2. Administrative support to the National Working Group
EU Member State	Austria
<b>Members of the National Working Group (number and names)</b>	
Youth Organisations	Austrian National Youth Council (1 member / leading team): Christina Unterberger (1 additional member): Merete Tschokert
National Authorities (please specify if Ministry for Youth and/or representatives from other Ministries)	Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth (4 members): Robert Lender, Herbert Rosenstingl, Kathrin Schindelar, Maria Wolf  Federal provinces (5 members): Karl Ceplak, Anton Kainrath,

	Reinhard Macht, Wolfgang Schick, Bettina Schwarzmayr	
National Agencies	Youth In Action-NA (1 member / leading team): Gerhard Moßhammer	
Others (please specify)	<p>bOJA - Bundesweites Netzwerk Offene Jugendarbeit (centre of competence for Open Youth Work; 1 member / leading team): Daniela Kern-Stoiber</p> <p>Bundesnetzwerk Österreichische Jugendinfos (i.e. National Network of Austrian Youth Information Centres, 1 member / leading team): Markus Albrecht</p> <p>Youth research (national correspondent to EKCYP et al., 1 member): Manfred Zentner</p>	
<b>Level of the consultation (international, national, regional, local)</b>		
Local	Online consultation of young people	
Regional	Online consultation of young people and consultation processes by the members of the National Working Group (eg. amongst federal provinces)	
National	Positions developed by head offices of the member organisations of the National Working Group; consultation processes (eg. ministries); conduction of a workshop and an expert exchange on national level in December 2013	
International (for international youth NGOs)	-	
<b>What methodologies were used?</b>		
<b><i>Target group consulted</i></b>	<b><i>Specify the methodology of the consultation</i></b>	<b><i>Number of people</i></b>
Young people	<p>A workshop on the topic of "Work situation of young people" was held with young people aged between 18 and 28 on 14 December 2013.</p> <p>In addition, we conducted an online</p>	11 individuals

	questionnaire, which was completed by 243 individuals as well as three groups between 5 December 2013 and 12 January 2014.	243 individuals
Young people represented by youth organisations	The online survey was completed by three groups. The consultation was complemented by written responses by members of the National Working Group on the Structured Dialogue. A contribution was made by the Austrian National Youth Council (OJV).	round about 1.5 mio. members of the national youth organisations and participants of the services provided by Open Youth Work and Youth Information
Experts (e.g. NWG, youth researcher, youth workers, employment agencies, social services, etc.). Please specify.	On the 16 <sup>th</sup> of December an exchange between experts on the topic of "youth entrepreneurship" took place with representatives from the following institutions or organisations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (Wirtschaftskammer Österreich, WKÖ),</li> <li>• Junge Wirtschaft (the representation of young entrepreneurs within the economic chambers of Austria),</li> <li>• Arbeiterkammer (Austrian Chamber of Labour),</li> <li>• Junge Industrie (a network of young entrepreneurs and executives in Austria),</li> <li>• Österreichische Gewerkschaftsjugend (ÖGJ-the youth organisation of the Austrian Federation of Trade Unions)</li> <li>• Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund (ÖGB – Austrian Federation of Trade Unions),</li> <li>• get active (youth forum for a sustainable world),</li> <li>• the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft, Familie und Jugend – BMWFJ),</li> <li>• Austrian National Youth Council (Bundesjugendvertretung – OJV)</li> </ul>	10 individuals

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>as well as the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (Bundesministerium für Arbeit, Soziales und Konsumentenschutz – BMASK).</li> </ul>	
Public authorities in the field of youth or in social affairs and welfare or others. Please specify.	<p>The consultation was complemented by written responses by members of the National Working Group on the Structured Dialogue. In addition to the contribution by the Austrian National Youth Council (OJV), we received contributions from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKÖ),</li> <li>the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture (Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur – BMUKK)</li> <li>the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth (BMWFJ)</li> <li>the Federal Ministry of Science and Research (Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung – BMWF)</li> <li>and the Public Employment Service (Arbeitsmarktservice – AMS).</li> </ul>	
Good practices from the consultation	Mix of methodologies and inclusion of various experts	
<b>Do you have any suggestions / comments on the current process?</b>	<p>The Austrian national working group would again like to underline the fact that the guiding questions were very broad. For the next presidency cycle, we urge the Steering Committee to make sure that the focus themes clearly reflect the overall priority. The number of consultations needs to be reduced; three consultation phases within 18 months are not manageable.</p>	
Please share your plans how to follow-up on the Joint Recommendations to be adopted at the Youth Conference in Greece, to ensure that the results of the third cycle on social inclusion are implemented in your country.	<p>This is to be discussed at the next meeting of the National Working group which will take place on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2014. The National Working Group will invite the youth delegates to summarize their findings and will thus draw up a an action plan to follow-up the recommendations.</p>	

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## GUIDING QUESTIONS

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### **Background Information:**

#### **Structured Dialogue on Youth and Social Inclusion**

The Trio Presidency – Ireland, Lithuania and Greece – together with the European Commission and the European Youth Forum have agreed Social Inclusion as the overarching theme for the 18 months from January 2013 to end June 2014. This theme emphasises the concept of social inclusion involving all young people, in addition to those with fewer opportunities. The Trio Presidency is ensuring support for the overall theme of Social Inclusion via their specific priorities throughout the 18-month mandate. During the first phase of consultation, Ireland focused on what the social inclusion of young people means, the challenges it poses for young people, the groups of young people most at risk of social exclusion and the stages in young people's lives where they are most vulnerable to social exclusion.

Building upon the results of the first phase, Lithuania focused in the second phase on the possible solutions for the social inclusion of young people, with a special emphasis on those who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs).

On the basis of the two previous rounds of consultations, Greece is concluding the 18-month cycle with the third phase of structured dialogue by focusing on concrete recommendations for policy actions for the social inclusion of all young people. Therefore, this third phase aims to collect many specific suggestions and innovative ideas for enhancing the social inclusion of young people. Greece is emphasising youth entrepreneurship, including in the area of culture, as a means to achieving young people's autonomy and contribute to their social inclusion.

#### **Role of youth entrepreneurship in enhancing social inclusion of young people**

Eurostat defines those that are self-employed, entrepreneurs, as persons who work in their own business, professional practice or farm for the purpose of earning a profit<sup>1</sup>. As definitions across countries vary, people that are self-employed can be those who employ others and those that work alone. Entrepreneurship is not only a form of employment but also a mindset, enabling young people to use their skills, gain autonomy and contribute to their own development or that of the community. Entrepreneurship aiming for a social impact can help young people gain their autonomy and promote social inclusion, and hence can contribute to wider society.

Youth entrepreneurship offers a considerable potential for young people. However, compared to other regions, Europeans are less likely to engage in entrepreneurial activities and the levels of entrepreneurship among young people are the lowest.

Encouraging entrepreneurship is particularly important to face challenges related to alarming high youth employment rates in most of the EU Member States. Entrepreneurship and self-employment offer pathways for young people to emerge from unemployment. Entrepreneurship refers to an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. This supports individuals in their

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<sup>1</sup> Eurostat, "Labour force survey: Methods and definitions, 2001 Edition", 2003.

everyday lives at home and in society, and in the workplace. It alerts them to the context they operate in, and makes them more ready to seize opportunities. <sup>2</sup>

The current challenges, restraints and opportunities in Europe raise the need for entrepreneurship that seeks to generate economic value, but also produces social capital and serves the community's interest. Such social entrepreneurship, when it promotes and highlights cultural resources (e.g. historical sites and monuments, traditions and customs, contemporary art, creativity using new technologies etc.), provides a new kind of innovative business-oriented mentality, attracting investors, tourists, ultimately creating employment for young people and thus fostering social cohesion.

## **The Guiding Questions were filled out by the National Working Group**

### **Introduction**

As part of the consultation rounds for the structured dialogue, a workshop on the topic of "Work situation of young people" was held with eleven young people aged between 18 and 28 on 14 December 2013. Two days later, an exchange between experts on the topic of "youth entrepreneurship" took place with representatives from the following institutions or organisations:

- Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (Wirtschaftskammer Österreich, WKÖ),
- Junge Wirtschaft (the representation of young entrepreneurs within the economic chambers of Austria), Arbeiterkammer (Austrian Chamber of Labour),
- Junge Industrie (a network of young entrepreneurs and executives in Austria),
- Österreichische Gewerkschaftsjugend (ÖGJ-the youth organisation of the Austrian Federation of Trade Unions)
- Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund (ÖGB – Austrian Federation of Trade Unions),
- get active (youth forum for a sustainable world),
- the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft, Familie und Jugend – BMWFJ),
- Austrian National Youth Council (Bundesjugendvertretung – BJV)
- as well as the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (Bundesministerium für Arbeit, Soziales und Konsumentenschutz – BMASK).

In addition, young people's attitudes towards the topics of the work situation and entrepreneurship of young people was surveyed by means of an online questionnaire, which was completed by 243 individuals as well as three groups between 5 December 2013 and 12 January 2014.

The consultation was complemented by written responses by members of the National Working Group on the Structured Dialogue. The contributions were made by the Austrian National Youth Council (BJV), the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKÖ), the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture (Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur – BMUKK), the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth (BMWFJ), the Federal Ministry of Science and Research (Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung – BMWF) and the Public Employment Service (Arbeitsmarktservice – AMS).

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<sup>2</sup> European Commission: Focus on young people and entrepreneurship – Youth in Action European good practice projects 2013

To begin with, the National Working Group would like to say that we have a broad understanding of the term “entrepreneurship”. We regard entrepreneurs as people who are able to turn ideas into action. In our opinion, entrepreneurship education is not primarily about acquiring specific skills with the concrete goal of starting up a business, but rather about conveying what entrepreneurial spirit is, which may have a positive impact on many areas of young people’s lives.

**Background information:**

At the **EU Youth Conference in Lithuania**, young people and policy-makers agreed that **“EU Member States should ensure that education systems are tailored to individual learners [...]”**

*The following question aims to explore this proposal further:*

**1. What concrete actions should be taken to tailor education (formal education, non-formal learning and Vocational Education and Training) to individual learners, to provide them with equal learning opportunities?**

Each education measure must aim at providing equal learning opportunities to individual learners. In the workshop for young people, which was held as part of this consultation round, young people suggest introducing a modular course system that gives young people more opportunities to explore their interests and discover their own talents. At the same time, it is important to them that general education is not neglected.

Learning opportunities that comprise cognitive, haptic, musical and social aspects should be expanded.

A validation strategy that aims at demonstrating and recognising also such competences that were acquired through informal learning opportunities, such as volunteering, participation in (inter-)national youth projects, as well as in the school context, should be implemented/enhanced.

The inclusion of non-formal learning environments of young people (e.g. youth organisations, youth centres, etc.) in lifelong learning strategies should be fostered. Apart from this, the cooperation of formal and non-formal education should be enhanced. A greater offer of social work in schools could also help to create equal learning opportunities.

The **validation strategy** is implemented as part of the LLL:2020 strategy.

([www.bmwf.gv.at/fileadmin/user\\_upload/aussendung/Strategie\\_zum\\_lebensbegleitenden\\_Lernen\\_in\\_OEsterreich.pdf](http://www.bmwf.gv.at/fileadmin/user_upload/aussendung/Strategie_zum_lebensbegleitenden_Lernen_in_OEsterreich.pdf))

The **Austrian Academy of Continuing Education** (Weiterbildungsakademie – wba) is an institution for the accreditation and recognition of adult educators. It is part of the Cooperative System of Austrian Adult Education at the Federal Department of Adult Education. [wba.or.at](http://wba.or.at)

In Austria and South Tyrol, **aufZAQ** certifies training courses for people who do extracurricular child and youth work. This way, the BMWFJ, the Austrian provincial youth departments and the Department for Youth Work in South Tyrol confirm that the certified training courses are high-quality educational offers in the area of non-formal education. [www.aufzaq.at](http://www.aufzaq.at)

**Youthpass** is a tool for participants in projects that were funded within the scope of the Youth in Action programme to describe what they have done and to show what they have learned.

[www.youthpass.eu](http://www.youthpass.eu)

Overlapping parts of teacher and youth worker training should be introduced. This training should focus on learner-focused methods. The WKÖ suggests the method of blended learning. Modules for self-learning with the possibility of receiving feedback from teachers/trainers make it possible to adjust them to individual reading and learning speed, while at the same time improving the digital skills of both educators and learners.

Also, the aim is to secure the area of dual/threefold training of apprentices and to introduce additional quality checks at regular intervals.

In Austria, the following systems ensure the greatest possible permeability in the educational system: preparatory courses for final apprenticeship examinations, preparation for the “Berufsreifeprüfung” (vocational matriculation exam), measures for apprentices with learning difficulties, continued education for trainers, measures for promoting young women in non-traditional women’s jobs, internships abroad, etc.

Also the “Lehrlingscoaching” (apprentice coaching) pilot project, which will be expanded to all of Austria, helps to offer equal learning opportunities.

**Lehrlingscoaching** is designed to reduce the rate of young people leaving training and increase the number of successfully completed apprenticeships. Apprentices can approach a personal, professional and independent coach regarding various questions and challenges that arise during their daily training routine, e.g. difficulties at the company, in their private environment or in achieving their training targets. Also, companies can use this service to support their company training.

#### **Background information:**

**The EU Youth Conference in Vilnius** concluded, among others, with the proposal that “EU Member States should ensure that their legal frameworks prevent discrimination against young people, based on age, and that young people are entitled to the same employment conditions, remuneration and rights as other workers, therefore leading to strengthening intergenerational solidarity.”

*With the following questions, we aim to look into concrete actions for ensuring equal treatment of young people in the labour market:*

#### **2. a) What concrete actions should be taken to eliminate and prevent discrimination against young people in the labour market, including actions to reduce the risk of precarious jobs and jobs with income below the poverty line?**

The online survey has shown that young people’s experience or own assessment is that, compared to older people, they are disadvantaged in most areas. They are clearly disadvantaged in the areas of co-determination and remuneration, where 77.6% or 76%, respectively, feel disadvantaged.

Also in the areas of allocation of responsibilities (52.3%), holiday planning (52.1%), promotions (47%), working hours (45.3%) and communication of information (32.4%) young people are (likely to be) disadvantaged.

Regarding dismissal and support in difficult situations, the respondents felt that they had equal rights. Young people feel that they receive preferential treatment in the areas of staff recruitment (50.2%) and vocational, further and continued education (49.3%).

In order to avoid discrimination with regard to payment and employment, it is important to ensure that there are no discriminating special regulations in labour law or income policies.

Therefore, more possibilities to provide advice in issues relating to labour law should be offered. The National Working Group regards the minimum wages and higher entry level wages (flatter wage curve) as demanded by the young people that were consulted to be sensible measures. In contrast to that, the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber proposed introducing graded minimum wages for labour market entrants, which is disproved by the majority, as it is feared that this may lead to even more social exclusion.

A lobby for young employees is absolutely necessary. After all, young people should be provided with sufficient information to advise them of the risks inherent in various types of employment. In addition, young people suggest introducing an unconditional basic income, better protection from dismissal and a prohibition of all-in contracts, longer or unpaid internships as well as unlawful contracts for work and services (applying to bigger companies and the public sector in particular), and the reduction of precarious jobs. They also demand stricter control and harsher consequences in the case of inadequate employment contracts.

In the online survey, respondents also expressed criticism by demanding that politicians should not submit to the (neo-liberal) economy. Government investment in research and development, sustainable development and innovation should be increased in order to offer new opportunities to young people.

Besides, the state should also support young people in less successful phases and ensure that they are insured.

At the workshop for young people, the participants were of the opinion that a sound and practice-oriented education is a key prerequisite for counteracting precarious employment situations. In addition, there should be a greater offer of support, in particular for migrants, whose rights should also be strengthened.

Young people that are especially at risk require programmes that prevent them from early-school-leaving or leaving the apprenticeship system prematurely and that enable them to achieve the highest education possible. In Austria, examples include supra-company training, production schools or youth coaching, which provides orientation and support to young people.

**Supra-company apprentice training:** Every year about 10,000 apprenticeship seekers who do not find employment as apprentices are trained in so-called supra-company training centres (commissioned by the Public Employment Service) and also attend vocational school, like other apprentices. The goal is for these apprentices to start regular apprenticeships in companies during the first year, which about 60% do. This does not mean that additional apprenticeship positions or jobs are created, but young people who would otherwise not have found employment as an apprentice obtain training in a company.

Beyond this, measures to improve the compatibility of family and work should be taken, e.g. through the extended provision of childcare facilities.

## 2. b) What concrete actions should be taken to strengthen the solidarity between generations in order to improve the social inclusion of young people?

The Austrian Youth Monitor tried to establish whether relations between the generations are dominated by what unites or the things that divide. 49% think that the things that unite prevail, while 43% are of the opinion that the dominating element is the things that divide. Hence, urgent action must be taken to strengthen intergenerational solidarity.

If young employees are given fair payment and social protection, they are able to secure our pension system, thereby strengthening solidarity.

Mentoring schemes help both young people and adults, enhance solidarity and therefore a greater number of them should be established. Career starters should benefit from the older generation. After all, the answers provided in the online consultation indicate that only a healthy balance between young and old can help maintain the system in the long term.

Cross-generational housing projects can contribute towards strengthening solidarity as well and should therefore be fostered.

Best practice examples: [www.junior.cc/](http://www.junior.cc/)

**Mentoring for young company founders:** In order to help a young unemployed person becoming self-employed, self-employed people who have been running a company for some time could be encouraged to act as mentors for young entrepreneurs by offering them informal support during the initial phase and to answer any questions they may have. The Economic Chambers could assist in creating such networks.

The Styrian funding call for small-scale projects „**zusammen.wohnen**“ (living together) subsidised initiatives that constructively shape the way people live together in their direct living and housing environment. [www.zusammenlebegestalten.at](http://www.zusammenlebegestalten.at)

### **Background information:**

Young people and policy-makers agreed at the **EU Youth Conference in Vilnius** that **“governments should increase youth employment by putting in place tax incentives for employers to create quality jobs”** [...] and **“offer more opportunities for quality internships and apprenticeships, structured and monitored training schemes, available for all young people”**.

*The following questions build upon this proposal:*

- 3. a) In your view, what measures can be taken to create more jobs for young people and to ensure the quality of the jobs created (e.g. tax incentives, facilitate administrative procedures, regulation of contractual arrangements etc.)?  
Do you have any good examples to mention based on your country’s practice?**

Austria already has subsidies aimed at creating more jobs for young people and ensuring their quality. Examples for this are the **basic support, coaching for apprentices** and incentives to increase quality. A standardised quality level is important so that apprenticeship is accepted by young people and offered by companies.

The **training guarantee** was introduced in 2008 in order to create additional apprenticeships and to give all young people the opportunity to obtain apprenticeship training. The training guarantee ensures that each and every young person obtains a training opportunity. In order to ensure this goal, supra-company, publicly funded training places were established in 1998 and their number was increased in 2008.

The **basic support** is a temporary wage subsidy for companies that give employment to a young person. The young person could be employed either within the scope of a recognised training as an apprentice or as an intern or as a career starter. In Austria, experience has shown that wage subsidies form one of the most effective methods of creating new jobs. (WKÖ)  
In addition to refunding a part of the training costs, incentives for particular measures are offered (training associations, continued training for trainers, internships abroad, etc.).

In the 1980s and 90s Austria's Public Employment Service helped to create thousands of jobs for the most highly qualified and skilled young people by means of **wage subsidies** of about 75% of the labour and non-wage labour costs for a year and subsidised co-financing from other parties. This way, many institutions were established, especially in the social and cultural areas, that have become indispensable in today's social and cultural infrastructure (women's shelters, women's counselling offices, counselling centres for migrants, child protection centres, small theatres, museums, etc.) However, the prerequisite was that communities and provincial governments would co-finance these institutions.

It is important to ensure that measures such as basic support or wage subsidies do not lead to unequal treatment and that they are not implemented at the expense of existing jobs. Mandatory quality checks must be introduced for companies that receive bonus payments for taking on trainees.

Also the AMS, the Federal Employment Office, supports companies that are prepared to employ young people and young adults from particular target groups through monthly flat-rate grants. Specifically, the AMS supports apprenticeship training for

- girls in jobs with a low percentage of women.
- young people that are disadvantaged in the labour market
- participants in integrative vocational training and
- adults (over 18), whose employment problem due to lacking qualifications can be solved through apprenticeship training.

Investments that have a positive impact on youth employment could be supported through easier access to loans (example EU guarantee platform)

**EU guarantee platform – Youth Guarantee:**  
SMEs provide most of the apprenticeship training in the well-functioning apprenticeship systems of Austria, Germany and Switzerland. At the same time, these SMEs have a hard time obtaining access to loans. Especially in southern European states that were severely hit by the economic crisis, SMEs are prevented from expanding (and consequently from hiring staff) due to the credit crunch. This also affects youth employment. The WKÖ suggests that SMEs should be supported through EU guarantees from the youth employment initiative when it comes to funding investments, e.g. for expansion or modernisation of their business, if the investment has a positive impact on youth employment (i.e. if the investment involves the employment of at least one young employee or apprentice).

### **3 b) What concrete actions should be taken to improve opportunities for quality internships and apprenticeships and for training, available for all young people?**

The Austrian National Youth Council emphasises the significance of a sufficient and balanced offer of internships, apprenticeships and continued education programmes as well as adequate youth-appropriate information. Internships should chiefly serve training purposes, which means that qualified support is indispensable.

It must be ensured that an appropriate number of internships are offered and paid adequately. Young people frequently, also in the workshops that were held as part of the consultation, demand that unpaid internships should be prohibited. In addition, young people want the goals of internships to be clearly communicated, and emphasise that menial work must not be declared as an internship. It would also be helpful to introduce definitions for the various types (e.g. traineeship, internship, holiday job, etc.) In the workshop for young people, the participants requested that different pay for the same job, which is exclusively based on the fact that qualifications were obtained through different training, should be avoided. Young people also expressed a desire for the expansion of counselling offers on the rights of interns, and for a Europe-wide platform that gives access to information on internships, training and continued education sorted by different criteria and to experience reports.

As part of the Austrian Youth Strategy, the BMWFJ commissioned the National Network of Austrian Youth Information Centres to develop a **quality internships** checklist in cooperation with the social partners. It serves as initial information to prepare for, accompany and evaluate internships. It gives an overview of the daily practice – subdivided into preparatory phase, time during the internship, and follow-up phase of internship search/internship offer, learning experience, benefit to one's individual educational and professional career/company, remuneration and legal tips. This information is prepared in a manner that is suitable for the target groups, in the form of separate checklists for young people, parents, entrepreneurs and educators.

The European Commission is developing a proposal for Council recommendation on a quality framework for traineeships. ([www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/EU/XXV/EU/00/53/EU\\_05366/index.shtml](http://www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/EU/XXV/EU/00/53/EU_05366/index.shtml)). This proposal aims to provide a quality framework for the learning contents and legal certainty regarding the working conditions. However, it does not include job- and/or training-related internships.

An expansion of the quality framework to job- and training-related internships would be desirable.

The Austrian National Youth Council supports the charter of the European Youth Forum at an international level: [qualityinternships.eu/de/](http://qualityinternships.eu/de/)

To improve young people's access to continued education, a collective agreement should lay down an appropriate right.

In Austria, integrative vocational training either prolongs the apprenticeship period or reduces

the learning contents of the apprenticeship to help young people who have difficulty completing their apprenticeship as scheduled.

#### **Background information:**

The following question continues the debate about enhancing the social inclusion of young people and aims to look for solutions beyond the proposals already formulated in the first and second consultation phases:

- 4. The areas of education and employment, information and guidance, decent housing and youth-friendly welfare services have been addressed in the previous two phases of the dialogue: What measures in other areas are necessary to improve the social inclusion of all young people?**

In the online survey the following were often named as areas that improve the social inclusion of all young people: mobility, political participation, as well as sports and health.

#### **Mobility**

Ensuring the affordability of public transport is a positive contribution to the social inclusion of all young people. Therefore the Austrian National Youth Council demands the nationwide expansion of the public transport network. In addition to this, the free use of public transport for young people in education or training was demanded by the participants in the online survey.

#### **Participation**

Participation is an important basic attitude for youth policy and youth work. Therefore, the participation of young people in decision processes and procedures is a way of expanding democracy, which can lead to greater social inclusion and to more transparency and fairness of systems of power.

Because youth policy is a cross-sectional topic, well-coordinated, targeted measures for young people as well as cross-sectoral approaches are required in order to take into account the impact of other areas of politics on the lives of young people to prevent exclusion and facilitate inclusion.

Social inclusion also means that young people can shape their own living environment and participate in decisions. It is important to provide a wide range of offers.

One of the first steps is to introduce “political education” as a school subject. Furthermore, volunteering, e.g. in youth associations, should be fostered and recognition of this involvement be ensured.

Political representations of young people at all levels should be strengthened, and regular and effective opportunities to participate should be established. With regard to this, suggestions in the online survey included the compulsory installation of a youth representative in all youth-relevant committees. Youth-friendly versions of election programmes were suggested as a way of overcoming the language barrier between politicians and young people. The ideas went so far as to suggest that the votes of young people should count for more in any ballots regarding issues that affect young people in particular.

Young people should be involved more, especially in shaping the public living space, e.g. when it comes to urban and landscape planning (also in the course of large-scale urban development projects) or the artistic design of public space. Spaces for young people, which can be used for events that young people organised themselves, play a role in their self-development and should be offered for free, if possible.

### **Sports and health**

An offer of comprehensive health education in schools as well as a corresponding concept for the promotion of exercise and health for all young people should be ensured. Moreover, the cooperation between in-school and out-of-school offers should be increased.

Apart from this, the exemption from prescription charges was also demanded. In order to guarantee the self-determination of young people, rules for the disclosure of information to parents must be reconsidered and easy access to (free-of-cost) contraceptives be facilitated.

Sports and youth clubs make a central contribution in terms of social inclusion. In the online survey, young people therefore demand more public funding for them.

### **Asylum and integration policy**

It is also particularly important to reduce the legal obstacles for asylum seekers in order to ensure the social inclusion of all young people. The access to the labour market should be given to asylum seekers in particular. Apart from this, asylum proceedings should be handled more quickly and the aliens law should be relaxed.

#### **Background information:**

At the **EU Youth Conference in Lithuania**, young people and policy-makers proposed that **“governments should support entrepreneurship by simplifying administrative procedures through establishing a one-stop shop and online services, and enabling access to free legal advice, as well as providing financial support and tax relief to young entrepreneurs, and incentivising private investments into start-ups.”**

The **Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan**<sup>3</sup> sets out the EU agenda to encourage and support entrepreneurship through measures in the areas of entrepreneurial education and training, the creation of an environment where entrepreneurs can flourish and grow and develop role models and reaching out to specific groups.

Through the following four questions, we would like to find out how youth entrepreneurship, including entrepreneurial activities building on and valuing a country's cultural richness and creativity, can contribute to the social inclusion of young people and how to support it:

### **5. In your view, how can youth entrepreneurship contribute to social inclusion of young people? (e.g. assisting young people, including the unemployed or excluded youth, etc.)**

Under this aspect it seems vital from a youth policy point of view that this is primarily about discovering young peoples' own talents, taking responsibility and strengthening self-efficacy through encouragement and by boosting their attitude. The second step is the foundation of enterprises by young people as a measure to create jobs.

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<sup>3</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/entrepreneurship-2020/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/entrepreneurship-2020/index_en.htm)

The online survey has revealed that, in the opinion of young people, entrepreneurs must fulfil a number of qualities, in particular independence, determination, commitment, good connections and creativity. In order to successfully include young people, it is indispensable to strengthen these qualities.

Since it is proven that **entrepreneurial education**, also in connection with out-of-school youth work, significantly improves young people's employability, regardless of whether they decide to start their own business, the Europe-wide introduction of entrepreneurial education is strongly welcome because it represents another way of fostering the social inclusion of young people.

However, entrepreneurship as such is not regarded as the solution to the problem of social inclusion of young people. In practice, entrepreneurship tends to address the elite of young people in Austria (having completed either school and the dual education system).

For example, the business startup programme of the Austrian Federal Employment Office (AMS) chiefly addresses qualified people with relevant experience and viable business plans. This does not seem adequate, especially for young people without education and/or professional experience. Special support schemes would have to be established in order to achieve social inclusion of these young people through youth entrepreneurship.

But youth entrepreneurship is seen as an opportunity, especially for young people for whom it is not easy or who do not want to adapt, since proactiveness is more important than adaptability when starting a business.

## **6. What concrete measures should be taken in the following areas to help young people to develop entrepreneurial initiatives?**

Helping young people to develop entrepreneurial initiative requires above all measures in the following areas

- **Develop young people's entrepreneurial skills in schools and universities and through non-formal and informal learning activities**

### **At schools**

The topic of entrepreneurship should be more strongly integrated in curricula (e.g. in Economy) Entrepreneurship Education should be applied more broadly in the educational system to teach skills such as assessing risks, knowledge of financing, etc. This necessitates a combination of measures.

Many school leavers lack the necessary economic competences that are indispensable for starting up one's own business. To address this problem, young people suggest doing information work at (tertiary level) schools and to offer practical career days and crash courses in Economy.

Beyond that, project work can contribute greatly towards achieving the goal of developing entrepreneurial skills already at school age, without financial and time pressures. This provides a good starting point for co-operations between schools and non-school facilities.

Programmes such as **Jugend Innovativ**, **aws-FIRST** and **Junior Company** provide such "practice fields". (see question 8)

„**Starte Dein Projekt**“ (Start Your Project) is a pilot project at schools in Vienna addressing young people at advanced level secondary schools (in particular with a focus on business schools such as “Handelsakademie” (advanced level secondary business school) and encouraging young people’s proactiveness. The aim is to use “good practice” examples to encourage young people to find their own way and to pursue goals for their future in school projects.

Lectures by experts (e.g. currently held by startup advisers) can encourage pupils to consider starting a business. It is especially helpful if entrepreneurs are available as mentors.

In Austria, a so-called “**entrepreneurs skills certificate**” for students from the 8th grade onwards was introduced in 2012. [www.unternehmerfuehrerschein.at/](http://www.unternehmerfuehrerschein.at/)

**Apprenticeship training** (dual training) strengthens the entrepreneurial skills of young people. The capacity of the system of apprenticeship training to produce young entrepreneurs is demonstrated by the fact that about one third of management positions in companies are held by people who completed apprenticeship training.

Within the scope of the "Begabtenförderung" (promotion for the gifted) programme, the IFA Association (International Young Workers Exchange), in cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth (BMWFJ), provides financial support for preparatory courses for the master craftsman’s exam.

#### **At universities and universities of applied sciences**

In tertiary educational institutions, support programmes as well as service facilities should be established, supporting the company startups of young academics, e.g. university startup centres, job centres, career centres, alumni services. An offer of interdisciplinary learning and continued education for entrepreneurship in university and other tertiary-level education curricula (e.g. as a “supplement”) aiming at strengthening entrepreneurial skills of students and graduates should be established. In addition to the measures mentioned, it is also essential to promote “dynamic virtues” such as controlled willingness to take risk, spirit of innovation and self-responsibility.

**u:start** is a programme for self-employment and business start-ups of the alumni association of the University of Vienna. This project aims at showing graduates of the University of Vienna self-employment as an interesting career option. Orientation, training, mentoring and advice are the core tasks of this programme. [www.alumni.ac.at](http://www.alumni.ac.at)

The possibility of completing an internship in companies should be expanded. In this context, it is important to know how knowledge and experience gained in school education play together with practical experience gained in a company, which will lead to the successful development of young peoples’ leanings and skills.

The national agency for life-long learning supports internships at companies in EU member states through the Erasmus+ programme\*. These help to enhance entrepreneurial spirit and the development of skills. See also: [www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu](http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu)

- **Recognise and improve the learning value of engaging in youth-led initiatives for developing one's entrepreneurial skills**

Volunteering in youth organisations helps to develop entrepreneurial skills and should therefore be supported more strongly. In the context of the activity in youth organisations, various skills can be acquired and expanded (e.g. compiling applications for subsidies and implementation, documenting quality assurance measures, explaining [project] accounts, ...). These skills, acquired in a non-formal manner, should receive more recognition.

In addition, in accordance with Sec 2 para 2 of the Guidelines for the "Promotion of Education and Upbringing outside Schools and the Promotion of Youth Work" (Richtlinien zur Förderung der außerschulischen Jugenderziehung und Jugendarbeit) (Federal Youth Promotion Act), "vocational orientation" was defined as the promotion focus for 2014.

Priority for support is given to **MINT profession** projects.

[www.bmwfi.gv.at/Jugend/Jugendfoerderung/Documents/bundesgesetzblatt-jugendfoerderung.pdf](http://www.bmwfi.gv.at/Jugend/Jugendfoerderung/Documents/bundesgesetzblatt-jugendfoerderung.pdf)

[www.bmwfi.gv.at/Jugend/Jugendfoerderung/Documents/richtlinien\\_zur\\_foerderung\\_der\\_ausser\\_schulischen\\_jugenderziehung\\_und\\_jugendarbeit.pdf](http://www.bmwfi.gv.at/Jugend/Jugendfoerderung/Documents/richtlinien_zur_foerderung_der_ausser_schulischen_jugenderziehung_und_jugendarbeit.pdf)

- **Reduce administrative burdens for business creation**

The "reduction of bureaucratic obstacles" in order to make the process between founding and opening a company more transparent is of central importance to young people when it comes to making entry into self-employment easier for them. They demand that administrative fees are reduced and that an exemption from costs and expenses is introduced. The "Gründerservice" (founders service) was established as a central point of advice for business founders.

The **Gründerservice** is organised as a one stop shop, i.e. one central point of contact for business founders that offers, among other things, the electronic registration of a trade or business and comprehensive information. [www.gruenderservice.at](http://www.gruenderservice.at)

- **Improve access to finance for setting up a business**

60% of young people who would like to become self-employed think that this is difficult to do in the current situation. The main reasons named for this include lack of starting capital and bureaucratic obstacles. It is therefore vital to take measures in this area to enable young people to become self-employed. (cf. Jugendmonitor Arbeit Welle 7 [Youth Monitor, Wave 7: Opinions and stance of young people on the topic of work])

In Austria, there are a number of measures to support the financing of company startups. Getting the information on the various possibilities for obtaining support to the potential entrepreneurs is a challenge.

Clearly structured information on support offers needs to be provided.

The WKÖ has compiled a **database** that includes information on the various support options. [www.wko.at/foerderungen](http://www.wko.at/foerderungen)

### **Subsidies for young people under 25 for starting up their companies – Jugendunternehmerinitiative (Young Entrepreneurs Initiative):**

If the business startup idea of a young unemployed person is viable, he or she is granted subsidies for further counselling and for the initial phase of up to six months. The young entrepreneur must seek advice from one of the established institutions/organisations and receives continued training, if required. Young unemployed people or employees should also be supported by means of guarantees if they intend to undertake entrepreneurial activity and want to fund investment in addition. In this case, it would also be possible to offer counter-guarantees for loan guarantees besides equity capital guarantees (e.g. guarantees for 30%–50% of the amount invested in the startup by external investors)

The **reduction of required capital** for certain legal forms is aimed at making it easier to found a company. In Austria the minimum capital for GmbH (Austrian limited liability companies) was lowered to EUR 10,000 in July 2013.

Access to alternative forms of funding such as crowdfunding/investing should be made easier. In addition, unbureaucratic access to support for projects, especially to micro grants, should be ensured. Tax relief and awarding a greater number of public contracts to young companies are seen as particularly important to help young people get started as entrepreneurs.

Within the scope of the youth strategy it is intended to introduce **micro grants** (of up to € 500) for young people – possibly following the example of youth banks (see [www.bmwfj.gv.at/Jugend/Jugendstrategie/Documents/AustrianYouthStrategy-Summary\\_online.pdf](http://www.bmwfj.gv.at/Jugend/Jugendstrategie/Documents/AustrianYouthStrategy-Summary_online.pdf)). This enables small projects to be carried out. Thanks to the proximity, immediacy and self-administration, young people experience their self-efficacy

The offer of support in drawing up business plans, which are essential to convince banks and investors, should be expanded. Separate grants for social and green entrepreneurship should be offered.

- **Improve security and stability for young entrepreneurs.**

To improve the security and stability for young entrepreneurs, it is important to establish in people's minds that failure is experience gained, and not a personal fate.

In Austria, self-employed people have the option of **paying unemployment insurance voluntarily** without having been employed or having previous work times recognised, which means that the unemployment insurance is effective immediately. In addition, self-employed people are entitled to sickness benefits.

In the online survey, young people rank the importance of the following measures, which aim at making it easier for young people to become self-employed, in descending order:

- Support in bureaucratic processes (95.1% very important and important)
- Targeted advice and support from public institutions (93%)
- Reduction of bureaucratic obstacles (90.3%)
- Targeted financial support from public institutions (88.7%)
- Lower health insurance contributions/no deductibles (73.9%)
- Support for re-starting entrepreneurs who failed before (69%)

Improved access to social welfare benefits for self-employed people to ensure financial security. Social insurance contributions adjusted to the real income situation. Abolition of double insurance, which is the practice in Austria.

**7. a) What concrete actions can be taken to improve youth entrepreneurship opportunities for young people with fewer opportunities and for those living in remote areas?**

In order to give underprivileged young people living in remote areas the chance to be entrepreneurs, it is important to support networks and, for instance, promote shared offices and co-working spaces. It is also essential, of course, to create infrastructure such as free high-speed internet.

The regional advisory and support services and/or online support should be maintained or expanded.

WKÖ has more than 90 regional information centres in Austria. Online support is available at [www.gruenderservice.at](http://www.gruenderservice.at).

The main idea behind **OTELO** (Open Technology Laboratory) is to give people an open space for creative and technical activities. OTELO is a model that realises this idea in non-urban areas with the help of free basic infrastructure, low-threshold communal space and small labs – so-called nodes.

[www.otelo.or.at/](http://www.otelo.or.at/)

Experts from **HappyLab** visit schools and youth centres throughout Austria armed with 3D printers, vinyl plotters and the like. The workshops take place in the young peoples' own classrooms or in youth centres, and offer children and young people the opportunity to learn how to use digital production instruments in a fun way. In this way, they are familiarised with new production technologies and gain insight into new occupational fields. The mobile "Fab Box" is aimed primarily at regions without a Fab Lab.

[www.happylab.at/junior/fab-box/](http://www.happylab.at/junior/fab-box/)

**7 b) What concrete actions can be taken to promote youth entrepreneurship which have a positive social impact for example through co-operatives<sup>4</sup> and green jobs<sup>5</sup>?**

Sustainability should be rooted in pupils' minds as early as possible. This topic should be given particular weight in the area of entrepreneurship education.

Sustainability should be a determining factor in public tenders, so that young "green" entrepreneurs are given special consideration. Furthermore, there should be more public grants/competitions/awards.

[www.i2b.at](http://www.i2b.at)

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4 According to the International Cooperative Alliance, co-operatives are described as "an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations, through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise".

5 According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), "Green jobs are decent jobs that: reduce consumption of energy and raw materials, limit greenhouse gas emissions, minimize waste and pollution, protect and restore ecosystems."

The presentation of successful company founders and young entrepreneurs in the media and social media sets an example and can motivate others to form junior enterprises with a positive impact. The online survey showed that the public perception of entrepreneurship tends towards the negative and that 74% of young people favour employment. (cf. Jugendmonitor Welle 7 Arbeit [Youth Monitor, Wave 7: Opinions and stance of young people on the topic of work])

For this reason, young people suggest presenting role models and/or best practice models in order to raise awareness of the entrepreneurial reality and to create a more innovation-friendly atmosphere.

By improving the image of entrepreneurs, more young people can be motivated to take the step towards entrepreneurship.

The **Social Impact Award** supports student projects from Austria, the Czech Republic, Romania and Slovakia that offer creative solutions to societal problems. [socialimpactaward.net/](http://socialimpactaward.net/)

## 8. What examples of good practice exist in your country of young people's enterprises, including those building on and valuing a country's cultural richness and creativity, which have a positive impact on young people, their community and/or wider society?

- **Jugend Innovativ** is a competition that strives to promote young talent and that offers participants a setting in which they can learn and gain experience in implementing innovative ideas. Key (social) qualifications like the capacity for teamwork, independence and problem-solving and communication skills are cultivated here. Alumni of this initiative got together to report back on how this competition changed their lives for the better.  
[www.jugendinnovativ.at](http://www.jugendinnovativ.at)
- The project "**JUNIOR – Schüler\_innen gründen Unternehmen**" is geared towards school children aged 15 and up and aims to lastingly embed certain skills and competences in them. Pupils create products or offer services for money on the (school-related) market. The children make all the difficult decisions involved with forming and managing a company themselves. Gaining real experience as a young entrepreneur has been proven to increase the willingness to form a company by 15–20%, according to WIFU/WKÖ.  
[junior.cc](http://junior.cc)
- At **Kinder Business Week** children aged 8 to 14 learn what it means to be an entrepreneur in a fun way. In 2013 some 3,500 children signed up and 77 workshops took place. <http://www.kinderbusinessweek.at> (WKÖ – Junge Wirtschaft)
- The goal of the **Arbeitsgemeinschaft Wirtschaft und Schule (AWS)** is to equip school children with hands-on business knowhow so that they can make up their own minds when it comes to economic and socio-political issues and stand up for their opinion. One of the principles of AWS is: "Entrepreneurship education is an indispensable and vital part of every person's school education – from the first day onwards".
- Examples for creative projects that have benefited from the aws start up funding "Impulse" ([wko.at/aws](http://wko.at/aws)) are Runtastic ([www.runtastic.com](http://www.runtastic.com)), Urbanauts ([www.urbanauts.at](http://www.urbanauts.at)) and whatchado ([www.whatchado.net](http://www.whatchado.net)).