



# Round-Table 2 / WORK PACKAGE 4

## EUROPEAN GOVERNANCE & THE TWIN NECESSITIES OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH UNDER DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE



# RESEARCH NOTE

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RT2's (WP4) central empirical **objectives** are to evaluate the state-of-affairs on the policies in the area of youth (un)employment at the EU level; analyse the geography of skilled work for those with no work experience or in early career; and explore how questions of skills and workforce are linked to bigger debates on demographic change in Europe. Further, the aim is to understand the different modes of governance at play, including traditional modes of governance at the EU level, innovations emerging from the crisis, and the role of professional networks.

The **challenges** of particular concern (as they function as important signifiers of employment and related social policies) are both the current youth employment crisis and its resulting mobility trends; as well as larger demographic shifts in the EU.

**Transversal questions** to be discussed include: (1) How have the modes of governance and legitimacy of the EU's employment policies evolved in light of fast and slow burning crises; (2) What are the different dimensions of youth unemployment in a fast burning crisis period – notably with regards to youth intra-EU migration; and (3) What are the links between the fast burning youth employment crisis and the slow burning crisis in achieving inclusive growth?



# ARE HARD TIMES THE MOTHER OF INVENTION?

*Enlightening European Responses to Fast and Slow Burning Crises*

## PART I - RESEARCH AGENDA

The onset of the crisis in the late 2000s intensified problems of youth unemployment in several European countries while highlighting difficulties in matching supply and demand for skills in a European-wide context and bringing to the fore the challenges of long-term decision making on investing in higher education and ensuring intergenerational equity. As an immediate reaction to the crisis of youth employment, measures were adopted in several European countries to tackle budgetary deficits placed renewed stress on objectives relating to employment and long-term inclusive growth. Away from the national stages, the employment crisis has also called for a coordinated response and brought about discussions about allocation of financial resources to manage what is a fast-burning crisis.

In research terms, it is possible to identify several strands of work actively discussing these developments and dealing with:

- The mode and level of policy-making: for example, in spite of coordinated efforts at the European level in terms of employment, notably through the Open Method of Coordination (OMC), research confirms that employment-related activities remain firmly rooted in national contexts and that as a result, we need to look specifically at national institutional contexts, capacity and intergenerational bargains to assess the opportunities for success stories in youth employment.
- The policies: with the Youth Guarantee chief among them, several EU level initiatives are targeting those under 25 who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs). Research focuses on both how the extent of the issues made the EU level a focal point for fast-burning crisis management and actions but also, early assessments of the policies.
- The nature of the European labour market: research is exploring the mismatch between aspirations for an EU-wide labour market and practical realities in the movement of people. Specifically, significant strands of research focus on skilled migration within Europe, with special emphasis on the 'young' broadly defined (to include early career more generally). Data for work-motivated movements is being analysed with home/host country parameters taken into account.
- The legitimacy of relevant actors: electoral politics and the relative urgency of an increasing number of citizens failing to progress through the long-standing traditional career pattern following their education vary across the EU. Research on intergenerational equity has a long-standing place in studies of Comparative Political Economy and current research focuses on the challenges raised by the crisis and austerity policies but also the types of actors seen as legitimate in handling them.
- The demographic trends linked to longer-term employment policies: 'demographic change' and 'ageing' are common features in discussions about public finances (especially in relation to pension reforms) but seldom included in considerations of the slow-burning crisis of inclusive growth. Emergent research is focusing on policy and professional discussions around skills as linked to the needs of productive economies, and also enabling choice for citizens in democratic societies about employment and family formation. Research also seeks to highlight equality and gender issues as they relate to citizen choice and the role and influence of EU policies in this context.



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## PART II – RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How well are EU-level policies suited to the national institutional realities of EU countries with especially high youth unemployment levels?
- What is the European geography of skilled work among the young and how well matched are the demand for and the supply of skills?
- Is there a role for EU policies in addressing intra-European migration among the young?
- What are the tensions emerging between the fast-burning and slow-burning crises of youth employment and inclusive growth?
- What is the nature of the debate inside EU institutions and within expert networks on the tension between unemployed youth and demographic change?
- Is there a role for EU policies in addressing intergenerational equity under demographic change?
- How can EU resources best be mobilised to deal with these fast- and slow-burning crises and what type of policies would be considered legitimate by EU citizens?

## PART III – RELEVANT REFERENCES FROM PROJECT RESEARCHERS

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