



### Youth unemployment: EU cities and regions' contribution debated at "Youth on the Move" conference

Mr. Ramón Luis Valcárcel, President of the Committee of the Regions (CoR), emphasised that "local and regional authorities' support and expertise are crucial for the successful implementation of measures to fight youth unemployment" during the "Youth on the Move" conference organised by the CoR. Politicians from all levels of government gathered today to debate the critical issues of youth unemployment, training and mobility of young people from a local and regional perspective.

CoR President underlined that "Cities and regions have the best understanding of the realities facing young people today and it is them who should be designing and developing youth programmes. It is the local and regional authorities which, for example, are best placed to develop links with SMEs and it is these authorities which can play a role in identifying skills mismatch, providing appropriate vocational training and incentivising investment in response to local demand". President Valcárcel also insisted on the need for increased interregional cooperation so that regions can work together in promoting the mobility of young people.

Also addressing the event, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, **László Andor**, presented the "[Youth Employment Package](#)" adopted earlier this month and introducing a "Youth Guarantee" to ensure that all young people are in a job, education or training within four months after leaving school. "The European Commission is calling on all Member States to establish a Youth Guarantee. Regional and local authorities have a vital role to play to make these schemes a success. We must establish strong partnerships between all the actors concerned urgently, in order to ensure smoother transitions from education to work", he said.

Presenting the work of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in the field, **Yves Leterme**, Deputy Secretary-General of the OECD in charge of Education, Social Affairs, Governance and Entrepreneurship, stressed that "It is a great idea to get local and regional authorities involved in the drawing up of policies in the fields of youth, education and vocational training at the OECD. We need European policies but also to make sure that these general measures are adapted on the ground".

**Androulla Vassiliou**, European Commissioner for Youth, Education, Multilingualism and Culture, insisted on the added value provided by the EU in education and training policy: "The Europe 2020 strategy – with its headline targets in education and its Youth on the Move package – marks a significant change in European cooperation in education. The EU is adding new value to the work of our national and local authorities, and I believe we should celebrate it. Youth on the Move is certainly contributing to effective decisions on education and training policy, as well as investment at national, regional and local level. But I think that, together, in partnership with governments, educational authorities, institutions and staff, we can do much more". This view was shared by CoR First Vice-President, **Mercedes Bresso**, who stressed that: "In the field of youth policy, Europe can not solve everything. It has neither the means nor the competence to do so. But without European incentives, youth policies at national and regional level would lack perspectives and convergence".

The conference was also the occasion for the coordinator of the CoR's Europe 2020 Monitoring Platform, **Michel Delebarre**, Senator and Mayor of Dunkirk, to present the [results of a survey](#) assessing the extent to which "Youth on the Move" has provided the intended benefits to cities and regions. The results show that from a local and regional perspective, the initiative is providing added value by addressing multiple, interrelated issues together (e.g. higher education and vocational training, life-long learning, mobility, and unemployment). It also, however, underlines that cooperation between the different levels of government is critical because the EU and national governments set

the broader parameters of policy while implementation details are best done by local authorities.

The event was the first of a series of conferences being organised over the next 12 months to look at the implementation of the seven Europe 2020 flagship initiatives at the local and regional level. By linking education with employment, the "[Youth on the Move](#)" initiative aims at increasing levels of education and training and reducing levels of youth unemployment, in line with the wider EU target of achieving a 75% employment rate for the working-age population by 2020. EU cities and regions are increasingly challenged to support youth employment: local and regional expenditure for social and employment policies are being cut, while the number of unemployed young people is dramatically increasing as a result of the crisis.

The conclusions of the conference will feed into the CoR's contribution to the mid-term evaluation of the Europe 2020 strategy. This CoR contribution is to be adopted at the 2014 European Summit of Regions and Cities.

**Further information:**

- [Youth on the Move conference](#)
- [Youth on the Move Flagship Initiative](#)
- [Committee of the Regions and Europe 2020](#)
- [Assessing "Youth on the Move" - Survey of the EU Local and Regional Authorities](#)