Final Report Summary - STYLE (Strategic Transitions for Youth Labour in Europe)

Executive Summary:
• An executive summary
The STYLE project set out to examine how strategic transitions for youth labour in Europe have been taking shape in the shadow of the Great Recession and the obstacles and opportunities affecting youth employment in Europe.
This involved 25 research partners, an international advisory network and local advisory boards of employers, unions, policy-makers and Non-Governmental Organisations from 19 European countries. The aim of the project was to provide a comprehensive understanding of the causes of very high unemployment among young people and to assess the effectiveness of labour market policies designed to mitigate this phenomenon.
The project identified some distinctive characteristics of the current phase of youth unemployment relating
to the consequences of increased labour market flexibility, skills mismatch, new patterns of migration and family legacies, as well as an increasing role for EU policy (O'Reilly et al. 2015). These characteristics summarise some of the key findings and analytical dimensions of the project.

First, the expansion of labour market flexibility through the liberalisation of temporary work, new forms of zero hour contracts and self-employment have made it increasingly difficult for young people to secure a stable foothold in good quality employment.

Second, the reduction in early school leaving and the expansion of higher education have made European youth more qualified than they were in previous decades. However, debates about skills and qualification mismatches illustrate how the expansion of education has been poorly aligned to the changing structure of skills required by employers.

Third, young people are more mobile and more likely to migrate to find work within the EU than in previous recessions. While this may result in reducing unemployment rates in their home countries, there are concerns about the effects of ‘brain drain’ on the domestic labour market. Further, relatively little attention has been given to what happens to those who return home: do they experience a bonus from having worked abroad, or is it more difficult for them to reintegrate?

Fourth, our research indicates the importance of taking account of the influence of families on contemporary youth transitions. The legacy of parental work histories, their social background and resources impact on the type of transitions their children make. Evidence suggests that these legacies are associated with new forms of polarisation for younger generations.

And, fifth, policy-making has seen a growing influence from EU institutions expanding their role in promoting and investing in policies to support national and regional initiatives, and in encouraging a greater degree of learning and policy transfer to address these problems. However, the effectiveness of these policies is closely linked the capacity of policy entrepreneurs in contrast to governance regimes associated with inertia.

Project Context and Objectives:

- A summary description of project context and objectives

Context

In the immediate aftermath of the Great Recession (2008–2009), European youth joblessness soared, especially in those countries facing the largest financial difficulties. Youth was particularly hard hit in Southern Europe, Ireland, and the Baltic countries. For some countries, this was not a new problem. For decades preceding the crisis, they had struggled with the problem of successfully integrating young people into paid work.

The current evolution of youth labor markets reveals traditional and emerging forms of segmentation along education/class, nationality/ethnicity, and, to some degree, gender dimensions. Some countries are better able to contain labor market segmentation between well-protected prime-age workers and poorly protected younger workers. In others, segmentation has resulted in the involuntary concentration of young workers in temporary and precarious jobs, or it has left them without hope of finding a decent job.

Some of the trends in youth employment during the Great Recession could be contextualized in relation to broader global and historical changes to the organization of work resulting from technological change, globalization and demographic transformation, but these only tell part of the story. These three trends are major drivers affecting aggregate labor demand and supply, and policy decisions in advanced industrialized countries, but their effects on youth labor markets cannot be read off simply. The impact of
global trends is mediated through labor market institutions and distinctive patterns of local demand for young workers have their roots in employers’ behaviour before the Great Recession. While youth unemployment soared after the economic crisis the causes of this are complex and vary between different categories of youth, as well as between different countries.

From a long-term perspective the decline of manufacturing jobs in the northern hemisphere has decimated sectors that traditionally supported the integration of large cohorts of young men through apprenticeships. The speed of recent technological change is reshaping work on new digital platforms, but the impact of these changes on employment is neither theoretically nor empirically fully understood, and the consequences for young people are ambivalent. On the one hand, youth have an advantage over older generations, if systems of vocational education and training (VET) adequately respond to the technological trends and changing job opportunities where labor market entrants benefit from their up-to-date competencies. On the other hand, as low-skill jobs diminish, those young people with few or limited qualifications encounter higher barriers to entering the labor market. Although the digital economy opens up new opportunities for consumers, it raises various challenges for workers, related to the types of jobs it generates and how these are regulated. This includes questions about remuneration, social protection and more generally externalization of risks to workers, for example in the emerging gig economy, where young people are increasingly finding employment. In addition, occupational choice becomes more difficult for young people, as job profiles continuously change and investment in a specific vocational training or university study program may quickly become out-dated. As a result, certain groups of young people may be “left behind” in the process of accelerated technological change.

Processes of globalization allow companies to relocate more easily and to reap the benefits of low-cost production regions. While many jobs have been moved to the Far East, in the European context firms do not have to move to very distant shores, but can often relocate to destinations in Central and Eastern Europe and thereby create employment for young people in Europe’s periphery. Nevertheless, unemployment continues to be high in these eastern regions, and it is unclear to what extent offshoring and globalization affect the overall volume of youth labor in Europe. Firms do not only relocate due to wage-cost differences but also as a consequence of lower labor standards and more employer-friendly labor law. Relocations or the threat of relocations to regions with low labor standards pose a challenge for national and European policy makers by restricting the policy options available. Nevertheless, despite these global trends Grotti, Russell and O’Reilly (this volume) show how young Europeans are more likely to find work in service sector jobs of retail, accommodation and food, health and social work, sectors involving face to face delivery that are not as vulnerable to offshoring strategies.

We might expect demographic changes would have a favourable effect on youth employment opportunities as the number of workers per retiree is projected to decline substantially in the EU28. Projected population trends indicate an uneven distribution of where these are rising or declining across individual EU member states: half of the EU Member States projected to show rising population trends and the other half declining trends between 2014 and 2080. Population numbers are predicted to rise by more than 30% in eight of the 28 EU member states while they are predicted to decline by around 30% or more in 6 member states (for details see Eurostat 2015). To meet potential future labor shortages immigration trends can only partly compensate for declining fertility rates and increasing life expectancy, so it should, in theory, be easier for young people to find work. But these demographic trends have not resulted in more jobs for youth across the OECD. What is more likely is that young people will have to work longer and are likely to receive lower pensions in the future.

While these global trends of accelerated technological change, globalization and demographic
transformation mark a significant change to the world of work it is not easy to untangle their specific impact on youth employment. The relationship between cause and effect is complex and varied, not only in explaining the differential outcomes between groups of countries, but also amongst different groups of young people in these countries. Rather than seeing ‘youth unemployment’ as a unitary problem, a more refined understanding of what kind of problem this is needs to be specified.

Objectives
The STYLE project set out to examine how strategic transitions for youth labour in Europe have been taking shape in the shadow of the Great Recession. The STYLE project examined the obstacles and opportunities affecting youth employment in Europe. This involved 25 research partners, an international advisory network and local advisory boards of employers, unions, policy-makers and Non-Governmental Organisations from 19 European countries. The aim of the project was to provide a comprehensive understanding of the causes of very high unemployment among young people and to assess the effectiveness of labour market policies designed to mitigate this phenomenon.

The central concept informing this project is based on a policy performance and learning approach to the problems of overcoming youth unemployment for different groups of young people. Using a comparative framework, that is sensitive to the impact of historical and regional legacies, our analysis enables us to both identify where policies are working and why. It illuminates when and how labour market analysis informs policy formulation, implementation and evaluation. This requires a multi-disciplinary and internationally comparative perspective. It provides a recent historical analysis accounting for factors prior to, and following on from the recent periods of economic crisis. This involves an on-going process of including a wide range of EU stakeholders to inform the research and disseminate the results about what works under different institutional conditions.

The project was set out to achieve 10 objectives organised within 12 work packages
1. Achieve a critical mass of resources in collaboration with stakeholder communities (WP2)
2. Provide a critical evaluation of the performance of countries and regions (WP3)
3. Assess the prospects for policy transfer mechanisms (including those under the European Social Fund) (WP4)
4. To provide a critical review of the mismatch in supply and demand (WP5)
5. To examine the consequences of mismatch in terms of labour mobility and migration for young people within the EU (WP6)
6. To analyse the nature, rate and success of business start-ups and self-employment for young people (WP7)
7. To examine the cultural context of family organisation and the pathways to enhancing independence (WP8)
8. To map out the voices of vulnerable young people by identifying their different values and aspirations (WP9)
9. To analyse the nature and mechanisms of flexicurity regimes and how they contribute to overcoming youth unemployment (WP10)
10. To advance the knowledge base by publishing an ‘International Handbook on Strategic Transitions for Youth Labour in Europe’ (WP11)
The organisation of work packages and objectives were to meet the expected impacts:
i) to ‘advance the knowledge base that underpins the formulation and implementation of relevant policies in Europe with the aim of enhancing the employment of young people and their transition to economic and social independence’, and

ii) to engage with ‘relevant communities, stakeholders and practitioners in the research with a view to supporting employment policies in Europe.’ Contributions to a dialogue about these results can be made through the project website www.style-research.eu or by following us on twitter @STYLEEU.

Project Results:
• A description of the main S&T results/foregrounds

The central concept informing this project is based on a policy performance and learning approach to the problems of overcoming youth unemployment for different groups of young people. Using a comparative framework, that is sensitive to the impact of historical and regional legacies, our analysis enables us to both identify where policies are working and why. It illuminates when and how labour market analysis informs policy formulation, implementation and evaluation.

Policy Performance and Evaluation Methodologies (WP3)
The objective of WP3 was to map out and compare dynamics, performance and effectiveness of youth labour markets in Europe in different institutional and policy settings, using qualitative and quantitative analyses. In order to assess the performance of youth labour markets and the effectiveness of implemented policies 27 countries of the European Union and Turkey were covered. Macroeconomic as well as microeconomic indicators were analysed in order to explain structural, cyclical and individual factors affecting school-to work (STW) transitions. Furthermore, a single index measure of youth labour market performance was developed to simplify the evaluation of multi-dimensional influencing factors (Hadjivassiliou et al., 2015, Carreras et al., 2015).
Additionally, an in-depth analysis was carried out for eight selected countries (DE, EE, ES, NL, PL, SE,
TR, UK) by Eichhorst et al. (2015). This provided detailed information about the education system as well as institutions responsible for the STW transition. The selection of country case studies was informed by youth transition regime clusters to capture, compare and contrast the existing diversity and variety of STW transitions not only between but also within regimes (Hadjivassiliou et al., 2015). Local experts (comparable groups of policy makers and policy implementing organisations) were asked to give their assessment of national systems and how these can be improved – or have been improved – by recent policy innovations (Eichhorst et al., 2015).

Although the labour market situation of young people is improving, youth unemployment remains very high. In January 2016, the EU-28 youth unemployment rate (15-24 years) was 19.7%. There is, however, a large divergence between Member States ranging from 7.1% in Germany to 45% in Spain. High youth unemployment rates reflect young people’s difficulties in securing employment, or in the efficiency of the labour market. However, this does not necessarily mean that the total number of unemployed young people aged 15-24 is large, since many in this age group are in full-time education and are, therefore, neither working nor looking for a job. This, in turn, may make meaningful comparisons between countries difficult. Some analysts prefer the youth unemployment ratio, reflecting the proportion of the unemployed youth in relation to the total youth population (O’Reilly et al. 2015). The unemployment ratio, however, does not reveal if young people are economically inactive because they are in education or because they are discouraged. This is why the rate of young people aged 15-24 who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET) is preferable for cross country comparisons. The NEET rate ranges from 15.6% in Spain to 4.7% in the Netherlands in 2015 (Hadjivassiliou et al., 2016).

Germany and the Netherlands have established the most effective institutions to achieve a high integration of 15-19 year-olds in education and employment. High performance is consistent over time showing that institutional effectiveness is robust at different stages of the economic cycle. The picture is slightly less positive for 20-24 year olds, although both countries are amongst the highest performing in the EU. Austria and Denmark also achieve good youth labour market and employment outcomes. For 20-24 year-olds, performance is highest in Austria and has, since 2004, improved for 15-19 year olds. This coincided with the extension of job search instruments, the introduction of youth guarantees and the extension of active labour market policies for young people in Austria (Hadjivassiliou at al., 2015).

Independent of the educational attainment, work experience can be seen as one important pillar for sustainable STW transitions in every country. Whereas countries like Germany, the Netherlands or Sweden achieve this by well-established schemes where school or study and work is combined, countries like France and the UK try to facilitate STW transitions by lowering labour costs through subsidies or low employment protection respectively.

Overall, although with some notable exceptions, such as Germany and the Netherlands, vocational education and training (VET) has been generally associated with a lower status and quality than general/academic education, meaning that fewer students voluntarily choose the VET track. Crucially, there has been a convergence in policy across the EU, in that VET are now being promoted as a high quality route to achieving improved outcomes for young people (Hadjivassiliou et al., 2016). Consistently shown to be key to the success of particular VET schemes, notably apprenticeships, is the extent, type and nature of social partner involvement. However, this involvement varies considerably between Member States and VET programs. The role of social partners is clearly prescribed in highly regulated VET/apprenticeship systems with a corporatist form of governance such as Germany and Sweden. This results in very strong and active social partner involvement. In contrast, in market-led systems such as the UK, social partner involvement is rather uneven. Likewise, social partner involvement
in school-based VET systems tends to be less extensive than in work-based VET systems. Given the importance of educational attainment in determining a young person’s employment chances, there has been a major policy push (at both the EU and national levels) to prevent early school leaving. Despite this policy focus, a number of young people do unfortunately drop out of school and need help in reengaging with the world of education.

As Eichhorst et al. (2015) and Hadjivassiliou et al. (2016) show, improving the situation of many millions of young Europeans failing to find gainful employment and, more generally, suffering from deprivation and social exclusion, has been identified as a clear priority for both national (EU Member States) and EU-wide initiatives. Indeed, EU and national policies have, in recent years, intensified support for young people with a much greater focus on enhanced VET and youth-related ALMPs.

Well-integrated VET systems with strong employer involvement and clear labour market connections and supportive ALMPs have emerged as important institutional characteristics that have historically enabled the comparatively better performance in countries like Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden. Likewise, there is currently a major policy drive across the EU regarding Youth Guarantees/ALMP interventions for young people at risk of disengagement, which have been found to be effective policy instruments in the Scandinavian countries or Austria.

Furthermore, integrating or centralizing the support for young people by ensuring effective cooperation between administrative bodies can be another important pillar in fostering smooth STW transitions because it prevents young people from getting lost between different policy domains. Early vocational guidance in combination with early job search assistance and further support is another promising approach in improving STW transitions, especially for more disadvantaged young people (Eichhorst et al., 2015).

Despite EU funding, reforms are, in most cases, being introduced against a backdrop of tight public finances, austerity and spending cuts, which undermines their effective implementation. Moreover, a general lack in labour demand will soon show the limitations of ALMPs or VET systems, if these are used on their own as a means for addressing youth unemployment. This is because incentive mechanisms for employers and potential employees, like those included in ALMPs, are quite unsuitable under difficult macroeconomic conditions. Against a fragile economic recovery in many Member States the scope for providing training places (such as apprenticeships and jobs) to young people may be limited. Furthermore, Hadjivassiliou et al. (2015) show that just reducing labour costs by increased flexibility does not improve the STW transition per se.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

WP3 identified favourable policy changes that would improve the STW transition. However, strong labour demand shocks can only partly be tackled by employment and education policy at least in the short run. This project aims to understand underlying causes of differences in school-to-work transition. It consists of interrelated tasks analysing the role of labour market actors, policies and institutions in facilitating better school-to-work transition. It covers a number of EU countries with a strong comparative component where qualitative and quantitative methods and various data sources like the European labour force survey or interviews of relevant stakeholders are used. This reveals the role of institutional or macroeconomic factors, and identifies important differences across countries and over time.

Policy Transfer and Comparative Frameworks (WP4)

The main objectives of this work package were to critically examine the triggers of, and barriers to, innovative policies for better youth labour market outcomes among the countries studied, to analyse policy
transfer and policy learning processes, and to develop a database of effective youth employment measures in selected member states. In addition, it aimed at integrating the findings across the work packages of STYLE with regard to how gender and ethnicity affect youth employment trajectories. Research focused on nine countries (France, Belgium, the Netherlands, the UK, Denmark, Greece, Spain and Slovakia) that joined the European Union at different stages of enlargement, including Turkey as an accession country. These countries also represent different social protection patterns and STW transition regimes. The primary research consisted of interviews conducted in each of the nine countries with policy experts, officials, academics, and researchers on the basis of semi-structured, in-depth interviews (following a common format). Also the available literature on each country has been scrutinized with the aim of unravelling the major planks of academic and public debate on facilitators or constraints of policy innovation. The explanatory framework used for assessing the way policy transfer and change take place, and what the major aims change and innovation are, draws upon a combination of the main typologies developed in the respective literature.

Our main findings indicate that local/regional administrations and agencies are more likely to exchange knowledge on policy processes and tools between themselves and also to get involved in cross-country mutual policy learning. Policy experimentation is facilitated by a mode of policy governance based on regional/local partnerships and networks of public services, professional bodies and education/training providers, employers, youth associations, and other stakeholders. The role of policy entrepreneurs in promoting policy learning and transfer is crucial in this respect too. Yet, for policy learning and innovation to yield results of sustained labour market integration of youth, a national policy environment is required that is conducive to coordinated sharing and diffusion of information and experience between different levels of administration and joint stakeholders’ bodies, from the bottom up and vice versa. Denmark, the Netherlands, the UK and, to some extent France, stand out as rather ‘proactive’, though to varying degrees and through different mechanisms. Belgium, Greece, Spain, Slovakia and Turkey show a higher inclination to path dependency or inertia. Nevertheless, in France and the UK, innovative policies do not seem to yield significant outcomes in dealing with the youth problem of drastically reducing youth unemployment (particularly in France). In particular effectively tackling the NEETs problem and the risk of poverty and social exclusion among the young (as well as gender disparities in this respect) remains a significant issue.

A public debate on the mismatch between the skills provided by the educational and VET systems, and those required at the workplace, constitutes a significant driver of policy change in Denmark, the Netherlands and, partly, in the UK. In the first two countries coordinated diffusion of evidence/knowledge between different levels of government and stakeholders feeds into policy decision making, while in the UK competition and choice leave little room for this, except for policy fine-tuning. France, Greece, and Slovakia provide some examples of EU influence opening a “window of opportunity” for local policy entrepreneurs to act as pull factors for major reform in VET/education.

(1) Foci of innovation

The case studies conducted in the nine countries have shown three main foci of innovation for addressing STW transition barriers and difficulties: (a) A novel way of governance in policy design and delivery often referred to as a “triple” or “multiple” helix, which involves collaboration between the public administration, professional bodies and education/training providers, employers, youth associations, and other stakeholders interested in employment growth and youth labour market integration. This is illustrated by two regions in the Netherlands: Mid-Brabant and Amsterdam. Both cases involve extensive cross-regional learning and develop a partnership-based mode of policy governance. (b) A commitment to an integrated
preventive and proactive approach that combines services and provides comprehensive support tailored to individual needs (in Denmark, the Netherlands, and partly in the UK and France). And (c) in countries where the active path of a youth guarantee is a novel policy (Greece, Slovakia, Spain) designing and delivering individually tailored services and coordinating the system at the national level pose a challenge. The strengthening of traineeships and apprenticeships, combining school- and work-based learning (dual VET) in parallel with the mobilization of employers to play an active role in the design and delivery of VET is a high priority.

(2) Major barriers to policy learning and innovation
Among the main barriers to policy learning and innovation are: (a) Fragmentation of competencies among different levels of administration, hindering cooperation across regions and with other actors, thus slowing innovation diffusion (e.g. in Belgium and Spain). (b) Over-centralized administrative structures, dominance of fragmented project-based solutions and inability to convert such projects into long-term sustainable policies (e.g. in Greece and Turkey). (c) Political culture and values (e.g. a strong liberal tradition in the United Kingdom) and party-political expediency (e.g. in Slovakia), not allowing for a systematic and coordinated flow of information into high levels of (strategic) policy decision-making.

(3) Mechanisms of policy learning and innovation
These embrace: (a) Evidence-based incremental changes in policy delivery and policy instruments (e.g. in Denmark and the UK) and/or a “layering” process with new elements drafted on existing policies that alter the focus of a policy (an example being the VET reform in Denmark). (b) Multiactor/multiagency partnerships with the potential to trigger a paradigm shift in policy design and implementation in specific regions (e.g. in the Mid-Brabant region in the Netherlands, and in some regions in Belgium and Spain, though with a less wide-ranging impact), or in specific policy fields (VET in France, Slovakia, and the United Kingdom). And, (d) the mobilization of policy entrepreneurs (Greece and Slovakia) - mainly under the influence of EU-level initiatives (such as the “Youth Guarantee” and the “European Alliance for Apprenticeships”) - have introduced and developed new ideas and instruments.

(4) Pathways of learning
These range from more or less systematic diffusion of policy knowledge among the different levels of administration (e.g. in Denmark and in specific regions in the Netherlands) and peer-to-peer learning (in Denmark, the Netherlands, the UK), to weak (or highly fragmented) diffusion channels (e.g. in Slovakia, Spain, Greece and Turkey). Markedly, devolution of policy functions tends to facilitate learning and experimentation with innovative interventions because local/regional administrations and agencies are more likely to exchange knowledge on policy processes and tools among themselves and also get involved in EU-wide mutual policy learning. EU influence through conditions linked to programme funding, mutual learning activities, EC country recommendations, or coerced transfer (under the bailout deal for Greece) has had varying degrees of importance in most of the countries studied. Finally, manifestations of policy learning and innovation hardly embrace the intersection of disadvantage linked to youth, gender, ethnicity and employment. Yet the segmentation of youth labour markets has lifelong repercussion on the risks of vulnerability.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS
The analysis of a number of youth-related programmes in the countries studied revealed a range of interventions that proved effective in facilitating STW transitions, including those youth at risk/NEETs. The following policy pointers can serve as recommendations for successful policy learning and innovation in relation to effective STW transitions in the EU:
• Prevention and early intervention at key transition stages over the full cycle of school-to-work transition • Policies designed with enough flexibility to cater for the different needs of specific sub-groups of NEETs, or targeted at particular sub-groups
• Proactive outreach work, including through active involvement of NGOs and/or youth organisations and e-outreach • Systems for diagnosing vulnerable young people’s specific needs
• Early, integrated and person-centred interventions to address complex needs • Effective case management combined with individualised action planning together with personalised mentoring, help and support as well as follow-up well after the end of the
• Sufficient PES capacity and resources to properly service youth at risk who require much more intensive and personalised attention
• Programmes integrating and combining services to offer a comprehensive approach tailored to young people’s individual needs in relation to school-to-work transition • Involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including youth organisations and youth workers
• Partnership/multi-agency working and co-ordination for an integrated service to youth at risk, especially at local level • Individualisation of learning pathways based on good understanding of how the young person actually learns, flexible/modularised curricula and alternative learning environments together with a focus on attitudes/self-esteem, ‘soft’ and basic skills
• Programmes combining work and study such as quality apprenticeships, traineeships and work experience placements together with, where required, pre-vocational/pre-apprenticeship training
• Financial support acting as a safety net for vulnerable NEETs taking part in an intervention.

Overall, the improvement of coordination capacities vertically and horizontally among key policy actors is crucial for facilitating the spread of good practices nationwide. Moreover, a more consistent gender mainstreaming approach with regard to education and youth employment policies needs to be adopted across EU countries, so as to systematically tackle gender gaps in youth labour markets and their intersection with ethnicity and migrant status.

Mismatch: Skills and Education (WP5)
The objectives of Work Package 5 were to critically review the mismatch in supply and demand, the reasons and drivers for the low levels of employment among young people, as well as the recruitment strategies and decisions taken by employers. The various transitions that young people make between school and work and the decisions that they take regarding their human capital development have substantial implications for future life prospects. The research reports published under Work Package 5 inform policy under a number of key aspects of young people’s lives. The research undertaken here seeks to inform policy with respect to the following key aspects of young people lives (a) the nature of human capital development in third-level institutions (b) transitions from education to work and (c) the relative exposure to employment mismatch and separation in employment.

The nature of human capital development in third-level institutions
Two aspects of human capital development are considered (i) the implications of the composition of higher education delivery on subsequent labour market outcomes (McGuinness et al. 2015a & b) and (ii) the impact of part-time working among students on the general labour market (Beblavý et al. 2016). With respect to course composition, there is clear evidence that a higher concentration of work-related components such as research projects, work placements, the acquisition of facts/practical knowledge and project/problem-based learning can reduce the probability of graduate mismatch in first employment. The research shows that there is a strong inverse relationship between the aggregate number of vocational course components in a degree programme and the probability of mismatch in first job. The pay-off to
increasing the practical aspects of programme delivery appear largest in degree courses generally classified as more academic in nature suggesting that practical learning approaches and placements should be adopted in most, if not all, degree programmes. In terms of the impact of part-time working, the evidence indicates that students labour market are dispersed across the low- to medium-skilled segment of the labour market and is not exclusively concentrated in the least skill-intensive jobs/occupations. The findings support the ‘complementarily view’ of the coexistence of student employment and low-skilled employment rather than the crowding out theory.

(b) Transitions from education to work
In terms of routes into the labour market, the research shows that higher education work placements with the potential to develop into permanent posts and the provision of higher education job placement assistance have very substantial impacts in reducing the incidence of graduate overeducation. The research supports the view that by strengthening links with employers and investing more heavily in career-support functions, universities and third-level institutions can play an important role in matching graduates with jobs. The research also shows that the use of private employment agencies significantly heighten the risk of subsequent mismatch. Therefore, higher education institutions can play an important role in terms of educating students in the job search methods to undertake and avoid.

(c) The relative exposure to employment mismatch and separation in employment.
Dealing firstly with young people’s relative exposure to transition between the states of inactivity, unemployment and employment, we found that young people “churn” through the labour markets relatively more frequently than their prime-age counterparts. Specifically, young people are more likely to become unemployed (from employment) but are also more likely to move from unemployment to employment (relative to prime-age workers). The patterns are consistent across countries although there are some variations in the rates. With respect to the individual characteristics that influenced labour market transitions, higher levels of schooling were a key factor influencing the likelihood of exiting unemployment to employment. The result suggests that young people’s relative exposure to job loss is particularly high during recession.

In terms of within employment mismatch, the evidence suggests that while overeducation rates in Europe are converging upwards over time, the general pattern of overeducation is linked across many countries suggesting that the phenomena responds in a similar way to external shocks and, consequently, is likely to react in similar ways to appropriate policy interventions. However, the evidence suggests that overeducation within peripheral states evolves somewhat differently relative to the rest of Europe, suggesting that a separate policy response is likely to be appropriate. While the overall results are complex for the determinants of youth overeducation a number of impacts are consistently present for all or most country groupings. Specifically, youth overeducation is highly driven by the composition of education provision, and will tend to be lower in countries with more developed vocational pathways. Furthermore, youth overeducation tends to be heavily related to the level of aggregate labour demand, proxied in the model by variations in the participation rate and GDP per capita. Finally, youth overeducation tends to be lower the higher the employment share of part-time workers suggesting that the phenomenon may be partly driven by labour market flexibility.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS
Human capital development in third-level institutions
The findings emphasise the importance of practical learning within degree programmes and suggest that students can further develop their human capital through part-time work while studying without imposing additional costs on low-skilled workers. In terms of university provision, the research demonstrates that
there are large positive impacts associated with learning elements, such as, research projects, work placements, the acquisition of facts/practical knowledge and project/problem-based learning. Furthermore, the research also demonstrates that a graduates likelihood of experiencing either overeducation or over-skilling on entering the labour market is lower the higher the number of practical learning elements within their degree programme. The payoff to practical learning tends to be highest within degree programmes traditionally considered to be academic in nature. Given that the negative impacts of worker mismatch are known to be substantial and long-lasting with respect to earnings, job satisfaction, and career progression, the research suggests that the formulation of workplace and practical skills, specifically through elements, such as, work placements etc., should be a key component of all European degree programmes, irrespective of field of study.

The importance of work relevant human capital formation is highlighted in this research suggesting that the acquisition of practical work-based learning through part-time employment, in combination with study, also has the capacity to enhance the quality of job match in first employment. The finding that students can acquire such skills without imposing additional costs on low and medium skilled workers is also positive. However, there is not sufficient evidence to conclude that the impacts of part-time work on students total human capital formation is strictly positive, as it likely that an increase in part-time work may also have some negative impacts on classroom based human capital formation. More research is needed to inform policy on the net effects of part-time work on subsequent total skill acquisition and labour market outcomes.

Transitions from education to work

The research generates important lessons for higher education institutions in terms of degree structure, but also with respect to routes into the labour market. The authors McGuinness et al. (2015b) show that acquiring a job with the aid of a university substantially reduces the incidence of labour market mismatch in first employment. By strengthening links with employers and investing more heavily in career-support functions, universities and third-level institutions can play an important role in matching graduates with jobs by eliminating many of the informational asymmetries that can lead to graduate mismatch. Higher education institutions can play an important role in terms of educating students in the job search methods to employ and those to avoid. For instance, the research clearly shows that the use of private employment agencies significantly heighten the risk of subsequent mismatch, perhaps due to the fact that such organisations are primarily motivated by achieving a job placement and have little incentive, or capacity, to ensure the quality of any match. However, a limitation of the study is that it focuses on a relatively narrow period following graduation and more research is certainly required into the more long-run impacts of the role of job search on labour market outcomes.

Exposure to employment mismatch and separation in employment

The findings indicate that in many countries young people face (i) a higher risk of exposure to overeducation throughout the economic cycle and (ii) a higher risk of job loss during recession. Given that young people are less likely to have their qualification fully recognised within the labour market and are most likely to be fired during a downturn in the economic conditions. The research suggests that policy has a role to play in reducing transitions into overeducation and unemployment, both of which have potentially devastating impacts on future labour market outcomes and progression, amongst young workers. With respect to youth overeducation, the initial findings show that the unrestricted expansion of higher education supply and increased labour market deregulation tend to stimulate rates of overeducation. The principal policy implication from the study is that, in order to prevent the growth in overeducation,
governments should take more full account of the prevailing structure of labour demand within an economy before formulating policies around higher education expansion or increasing labour flexibility. With respect to the higher incidence of job loss amongst young workers, the findings suggest that policy needs to be more focused on protecting the position of young workers in the labour market during recession. While job losses are inevitable when growth declines, it is both inequitable and inefficient to have higher concentrations of unemployment amongst the youngest sections of society. The research points strongly towards the needs to strengthen employment protection for young people in order to align it more fully with the rights enjoyed by older workers. Furthermore, the research by Flek & Mysíková (2016) also implies that at the outset of any recession, activation policy should be heavily focussed on developing strategies to incentivise employers to retain younger workers in order to stop any future rapid rise in rates of youth. Finally, again with respect to activation policy, the research suggests that policy instruments that are triggered at a particular point in a claimants unemployment spell, such as the Youth Guarantee, should be designed to take account of variations in the pattern of unemployment durations across countries.

Youth labour mobility and unemployment (WP6)
This work package aimed to understand under what conditions intra-EU mobility improves labour market outcomes of young people. It consisted of interrelated tasks analysing the selectivity of recent intra-EU migration, migrants’ and returnees’ labour market integration patterns, and the role of labour market actors, policies and institutions in facilitating better labour market outcomes of migrants and returnees. It covered a number of receiving and sending countries in Europe, it had a strong comparative component and we used mixed methods and various data sources (LFS, European Social Survey, administrative data, online data, web survey, and interviews). This enabled us to understand better the role of institutional or macroeconomic factors, and identify important differences across countries and over time that help us to get further insights regarding the underlying causes and consequences of intra-EU mobility, and ensuing policy challenges.

Free movement of labour represents one of the cornerstones of European integration. Labour mobility was in particular realized after the Eastern enlargements of the EU that were followed by unexpectedly high flows of young and well educated migrants. A further spur to mobility came from the Great Recession that affected very harshly several Southern European countries and encouraged young people (aged 15-34) to look for work elsewhere in Europe. How does intra-EU mobility influence labour market outcomes of young people in the EU? Does labour migration help to fight youth unemployment? These are pertinent questions that were addressed by a set of interrelated research tasks in Work Package 6 of the STYLE project. We looked at the differences and similarities in patterns of mobility from South to North and from East to West as well as over time, in order to understand the relevance of institutional factors and macroeconomic environment in explaining the role of youth labour mobility in alleviating unemployment and labour market mismatches. We were interested to understand how the Great Recession shaped mobility of youth in terms of return migration and new migration streams.

Our work confirmed existing research, but we were also able to fine-tune knowledge about performance of youth labour migrants, and to generate new insights into the role of labour market intermediaries and public institutions in the process of migration and return.

Performance of intra-EU migrants
We departed from understanding that migrants are often disadvantaged in receiving country labour markets and found further evidence showing large inequalities especially with respect to quality of employment. Young migrants from Central and Eastern Europe in particular, in spite of high employment rates, continue to face high risk of being overeducated, underpaid and of having atypical forms of
employment in host countries. While this disadvantage also holds for the new streams of migration from Southern to Northern Europe, it is much less prevalent and disappears completely in the context of West-West mobility where intra-EU migrants are treated equally in labour market. Importantly, we do not find negative evidence of the Great Recession on labour market outcomes of young migrants and returnees. In sum, while youth labour migration helps to decrease unemployment in home countries, it falls short of providing equal level playing field in a cross-European context, in particular for the Eastern European migrants.

Return migration in the crisis

Foreign work experience generally brings positive benefits to individuals and is viewed rather positively also by employers in Estonia and Slovakia on which we focused in the analysis. Estonian returnees reap benefits in terms of higher wages, but no evidence was found of a positive effect of migration and return on the upward occupational mobility. In Slovakia, individuals with post-accession foreign work experience are more attractive in the labour market than those without such a record. Return migrants in Slovakia initially face a higher risk of short-term unemployment, but they exit unemployment registries at a higher rate than stayers.

While employers perceive returnees mostly positively, it matters what type of experience the returnees gained with larger benefits for having worked in a matching field or having developed skills needed in the labour market. In both countries, migrants as well as employers attribute a set of skills conducive to success in the job search and good performance at work to foreign work experience. In addition to language, social skills, a positive approach, a problem-solving attitude, greater cultural sensitivity and tolerance are also seen as assets. Evidence in the Slovak case study implies that return is typically not driven by worsened labour market conditions abroad, but a combination of individual-level factors and opportunities in home country. From this perspective, the recent financial crisis had more of a contextual rather than deterministic effect on return decisions of Slovak migrants.

Role of actors in labour mobility: Labour market intermediaries and public institutions

Private labour market intermediaries have powerful positions in the triangular relationship between themselves, employers and young migrants. They strongly impact working conditions, but in an ambivalent manner. They are, on the one hand, able to secure good working conditions for young migrants by counselling and controlling the employer. However, since they conceive of employers as their main clients, their level of commitment is higher to employers than to migrants. The position of young migrants is, therefore, often fragile, bearing the risk of exploitation.

Regarding the role of institutions in the re-integration process after return, especially high-skilled young returnees bypass institutions and tend to rely on personal networks and family, while the internet serves as the key job search tool. Welfare policy is not a key driver of return or re-integration, but access to public services is considered and evaluated in the migration decision and upon return, especially with respect to family-related issues (i.e. maternity benefits, health care). Unemployment benefits provide a framework for possibly better job-skill matching for returnees. Return migrants are a diverse group where gender or ethnicity act as factors that make re-integration difficult.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Enhancing the role of public institutions

This research underlines the importance of labour market intermediaries for youth migration in Europe. We advocate drawing more attention to the needs of young migrants. To this end, public labour market intermediaries could take a more active role in transnational job search, recruiting and matching processes of young migrants in Europe. Furthermore, there is scope for public institutions to provide better
assistance upon return and to facilitate integration. For example, return migrants can become a target
category in labour offices. Importantly, inequalities exist among returnees and not all returnees are on an
equal footing in terms of their abilities. While many returnees circumvent formal institutions, there are still
many who approach them and can be reached by effective policy that they most likely also need. In
particular, returnees disadvantaged in terms of gender, age or ethnicity might need assistance in their re-
integration process.

Addressing labour market segmentation of intra-EU migrants

In order to better address de facto discrimination of CEE and Southern European migrants, we propose
the following measures:

• Strengthen the role of public labour market intermediaries
• Increase monitoring and regulation of private intermediaries to secure good working conditions for young
migrants
• Improve career and training opportunities to help young migrants to develop their country-specific skills
to help them in accessing jobs that fit their skills and interests
• Consider providing financial support and counselling to young migrants, following best practice of
Jobbresan scheme offered to Swedish migrants in Norway

Improving matching of migrants’ and returnees’ skills to jobs

Over-qualification of intra-EU migrants and poor matching continue to be a challenge. From this
perspective, tools facilitating the matching of migrants to jobs, such as EURES, employment agencies or
well-designed job portals can be very useful. Matching should be encouraged by decreasing information
asymmetries in the intra-EU mobility. A further focus to enhance matching should be given to improving
language skills of migrants. An increased focus on intra-EU exchange during education may be one way,
subsidised language courses or increased opportunities for financial support for participating in language
training are further forms of facilitating language skills development. To deal with non-recognition of
foreign qualifications and experience, public (or private) labour market intermediaries or labour unions
could mediate between employers and employees. These services could be set up as a web-based
service or as an actual contact point for migrants. Continued efforts to standardise educational criteria and
to develop a European qualification framework may be another strategy to help migrants get adequate
positions by enhancing employers’ understanding of their skills.

Business Start-Ups & Youth Self-Employment (WP7)

Overall, self-employment as a proportion of all employment in Europe has remained small and relatively
stable over-time. Nevertheless, it remains important in a number of southern and some eastern European
countries reflecting economic structures where ‘agriculture’, service-based and informal work are
prominent. In the context of high levels of youth unemployment, self-employment is often seen as a viable
strategy to increase youth employment opportunities.

The objective of this work package is to evaluate the nature, rate and success of business start-ups and
self-employment for young people. To achieve this, first, a literature review of business start-ups and youth
self-employment in Europe was conducted. Second, patterns of self-employment were presented utilising
data from the EU and national data sources. Third, firm-level case studies were conducted with start-ups
in the ‘Creative and Cultural’ (‘CCI’) and the ‘Information and Communications Technology’ (‘ICT’)
industries along with policy interviews. A summary synthesis report of the findings and policy
recommendations was also available on the project website.

We examined the factors facilitating start-ups by young people, in particular, policy interventions; the
individual characteristics of the young self-employed and their enterprises; and the outcomes for the self-
employed individuals (e.g. job quality, sustainability, innovation rates of these enterprises). Focus was placed on six EU countries: Estonia, Germany, Ireland, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom. We find that self-employment if often not be a viable path for young unemployed people given the human and financial capital needed for success.

The job creation capacity of young people is quite limited. Reviewing policy provisions across the EU to encourage business start-ups and youth self-employment, we distinguished between ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ policies: policies that provided financial support and those that provided professional and social skills. Hybrid forms of assistance and greater employer engagement are found to enhance job creation efforts. Formal and timely evaluations of policy interventions were quite limited across the EU. The presence of more business incubators, a greater focus on entrepreneurial education and the provision of pension and healthcare benefits are needed to sustain the viability of youth self-employment.

1. Youth Self-Employment: While the rate of self-employment in Europe has remained around 14 -15 per cent, the rate of youth self-employment is low (3.86% for the EU-28, average 2004-2013), in particular, compared to older workers. Emphasis needs to be placed on removing barriers and assisting the youth - in particular reducing risks – for those wanting to become self-employed.

2. Job Creation Capacity: Although self-employment has potential for enhancing job creation, there has recently been a decrease in the percentage of the self-employed with employees (from around 4.8% in 2004 to 3.2% in 2012; and only 0.56% of 16-24 year olds had employees in 2012). This reflects recent economic and financial conditions that have depleted job creation opportunities for self-employment. In the case study findings, the majority of interviewees did not have paid employees. Some of the key challenges in hiring employees included financial costs, finding people with the relevant skills/experience, alongside legal obligations. Nevertheless, a high percentage of self-employed youth from our case studies had plans to hire in the future. To increase job creation opportunities, the focus must be on reducing these challenges. This can be achieved by providing a hybrid form of assistance to the youth self-employed i.e. hard and soft assistance and greater employer engagement. The creation of jobs need to be prioritised as this can facilitate business sustainability and growth and also reduce unemployment.

3. Evaluation of Policies: Outlining the policies underpinning business start-ups, policies are classified by 1) financial (hard) assistance, 2) non-financial (soft) assistance or 3) ‘hybrid’ assistance and target specific groups i.e. self-employed females, self-employed young people and the unemployed.

In the case study countries, of those policies that target specific groups, approximately one third targeted young people with a further one in ten targeting the unemployed in general. All case study countries had at least one initiative to facilitate the young unemployed in starting a business. Yet, evaluations of such policies are minimal. Evaluations become complex when policies do not target specific groups. The absence of a standard EU definition of self-employment also intensifies difficulties in developing policies to target self-employment and hence to conduct evaluations. More timely and rigorous evaluations are needed, particularly given concerns of deadweight i.e. policy intervention(s) to encourage business actions which would have occurred in any manner, regardless of the policy intervention(s).

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

1. Youth Unemployment. While self-employment can be one potential response to youth unemployment, the rate of youth self-employment is overall low. In part, current policies are not presenting self-employment as a viable career trajectory for many young people. To reconcile this, three policy recommendations are presented:

a) At a local, regional and national level in all EU countries, more business incubators, and creative centres/co-working spaces need to be established. Providing a workspace and a meeting point, business
incubators are important for business start-ups, particularly by the youth whose knowledge and experience of start-ups may be limited. Co-working spaces are evident in Berlin that supports business start-ups. In Estonia, creative cities are fundamental for the youth self-employed.

b) Entrepreneurial education must be strengthened where focus is placed on how to start up a business and its reach is extended to younger ages e.g. at primary level. Policy makers in Ireland highlighted the need for more practical entrepreneurial education for young people, including a greater focus on how to start a business. In the creative and cultural industry, there is a need to have a more business-orientated focus (in particular, training in accounting and taxation and a greater awareness of government policies aimed at supporting the self-employed).

c) EU wide policies to provide pension and health care benefits for all self-employed are necessary along with policies to minimise risks and insecurities if a self-employed person becomes unemployed in the case of business failure. In Spain, such risks are reduced by policies that allow the self-employed to avail of temporary sick leave, maternity/paternity cover and in the event of ceasing self-employment, social welfare provisions can be accessed. While the case study analysis found that many young people had concerns about health care, pension and general financial planning matters, many interviewees felt that they were ‘too young’ to be concerned about these issues.

2. Job Creation Capacity. Overall, the job creation capacity of the young self-employed is limited. Given a key priority of the European Commission is the creation of new jobs, poor employability opportunities can lead to higher unemployment costs, reduced consumer spending power and weaker growth prospects for Europe.

Policy interventions to encourage job creation should adopt a hybrid form of assistance that targets the young self-employed. Hard interventions should focus on financial assistance and focus on reduced insurance and tax contributions for the first year of work in relation to new employees. For example, national Insurance contributions consist of a flat tax in Spain, but such a tax must target specific groups e.g. youth self-employment and women.

Soft assistance should also be available in terms of mentoring young people in preparing public and private sector financial assistance applications, job specifications and employment contracts. Second, greater employer engagement in educational and training programmes could strengthen the work readiness skills of prospective employees. Encouraging business forums could facilitate greater employer engagement and mentoring opportunities. Business forums can help identify the key issues on the ground whilst informing policy making at the ‘top’. Finally, government bodies such as those who facilitate the unemployed back to employment and other members from the community (education providers; business representative groups) are important engagement stakeholders.

3. Evaluation of Policy. Policy evaluation is required given the lack of rigorous and timely evaluations. Concerns are further intensified with potential dead-weight losses from policy interventions. All of this can result in inefficient use of resources. A policy recommendation is to ensure more rigorous and timely evaluations are conducted with a focus on those policies which target specific groups e.g. youth, women and less educated. In the UK, policy experts emphasised that policy must not adopt a ‘one size fits all’ approach and that the needs of specific groups (e.g. young people, women) must be specifically incorporated.

Family drivers of youth unemployment (WP8)
Our analysis of the role of parental background in shaping strategies of young people in Europe to establish an independent living consisted of interrelated tasks analysing the role of family resources and of policies and institutions in labour market outcomes and own family formation outcomes. It was based on
secondary data analysis, based on various cross-country comparative, both cross-sectional and longitudinal survey data (EU-LFS, EU-SILC, SHARE, Generations and Gender Programme).

We analysed how the family affects young Europeans’ early employment and family formation focused on six key questions. (1) How do parental employment patterns affect young people’s employment outcomes; (2) what family strategies are used to cope with poor labor market outcomes; (3) what affects decisions to leave and return to the parental home; (4) which factors affect the intra-household sharing of resources; (5) when and how do families provide regular economic support to young people when they have left the parental home and (6) what factors affect family formation for young people. Particular attention was given to comparing country differences, gendered outcomes and the role of the Great Recession.

Work-poor and work-rich families
There is a strong negative effect for young people’s employment opportunities if they come from a work-poor household. Those living with parents in low work intensity households displayed a higher unemployment risk than those with one working parent. Young people from work-rich households where both parents worked had a lower unemployment risk compared to other household types especially in Anglo-Saxon, Mediterranean and Central-Eastern countries. Young people living in workless households are also considerably less likely to be enrolled in education. Employed siblings, also when non-cohabiting, were associated with young people’s own higher employment rates. Parental effects, however, vary by country, by gender and by whether it is the fathers or mothers, or both, who are employed. Legacies of worklessness persist across generations, with some striking gender differences (Berloffa et al. 2015).

Family strategies to cope with poor labour market outcomes
Families stratify young people’s educational and occupational achievements, opportunities, strategies and prospects in the labour market. Their influence looms large, both when living within and outside the parental household. Parental labour market attachment proved crucial in explaining young people’s school-to-work trajectories: those who lived in families where most of their members were not working, were less likely to have a speedy school-to-work trajectory and more likely to experience continuous unemployment or inactivity. Entering the labour market during the crisis (2008-2011) had a similar effect, buffered for those from a work-rich household. Higher-class families were more successful in securing effective employment decisions for young people. This might reflect their advantageous capacity to inform (through advice and guidance), support (through social networks, aspiration building, more effective guidance through the educational and employment systems) and back-up (economic support and/or longer co-residence) their young members (Berloffa et al. 2016).

Leaving and returning to the parental home during the economic crisis
Leaving home rates are lowest in Southern, Central-Eastern, Baltic countries and Turkey. Except for the Nordic and Central-Eastern countries, home-leaving rates decreased in all welfare regimes during the crisis. Males are more likely to co-reside with their parents. During the crisis, all countries but the Central-Eastern European member states, experienced an increase in the share of people returning home. There is an association between young people’s and their households’ resources and their decisions to leave or return to the parental home: higher parental resources seem to facilitate separation, while unemployment and precarious work negatively affect adulthood transitions to independence. Access to housing benefit allowances appears to be associated with a higher probability of leaving the parental home; the lack of such benefits is associated to more frequent decisions to return to the parental home (Gökşen et al. 2016).

The role of parental material resources in adulthood transitions
In households with higher income, young adults contribute less to the household budget and are more able
to decide about their personal expenses. The unemployed and students contribute less and have lower ability to decide over personal expenses. Most young adults seem to benefit from co-residence when considering intra-household sharing of resources and support from parents. There is a strong social gradient (in terms of class and employment status) across countries in the likelihood to be recipient of regular inter-household cash transfers. While non-employed children seem more likely to benefit from regular parental income support across all social backgrounds, parental resources are more important than young people’s needs. The risk of poverty among young people is higher than the population average and increased considerably during the economic crisis. The at-risk-of-poverty rate of the youth living independently, compared to those living in parental home, rose from 2005 to 2011. The relative poverty risk for young adults with low educated parents also increased during this period (Filandri et al. 2016a).

Family formation strategies

Parental background provides a strategic resource to young people in case of difficulties in establishing independence. Parental resources lowers risk of unfavourable outcomes, such as having a child when lacking financial independence. Young men and women from low socio-economic status families tend to get married earlier. No strong gender differences were identified in the way labour market status affects family formation strategies. This symmetry can be understood as evidence that young women in Europe are using the labour market to gain financial independence to the same extent as young men. Contextual characteristics (e.g. welfare generosity, housing and labour market characteristics) also point to the relevance of greater gender equality in employment. Higher female employment rates are significantly associated with more young people having advanced through all the steps of the process of transition to adulthood: independent living, employment, partnership and parenthood (Filandri et al. 2016b).

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Employment services and guidance for young people

Family resources stratify labour market participation and social integration opportunities for young people. Policy interventions need to redress the intergenerational transmission of disadvantages. Focusing on young people whose parents or other family members do not work and on lower class families, key steps would be: (1) increasing opportunities for low and middle class children, and for low work intensity households to have their children pursue higher education; (2) offering later guidance for young peoples’ strategic planning through the initial steps of their career, focusing both on young people’s aspirations and motivation, and on giving them access to an effective service of job search. Policies and interventions should invest in educational programs (already from a young age) to increase self-awareness about one’s abilities and interests; to equalise educational aspirations and expectations; as well as to provide more broadly some of the soft-skills that better-off parents can afford to their children. Specifically, interventions should aim at securing a more even access to tertiary education by family background. Finally, providing wider and more access to opportunities for internships or company-based training, be it through investments in educational institutions’ career-support functions or through employment agencies, could contribute to counterbalancing the advantages of wealthier families’ resource capacities and personal networks.

More gender equal opportunities in the labour markets

Securing better employment prospects for women (as the mothers of young entrants) would both benefit employment outcomes for young people and favour family formation (Berloff et al. 2016, Filandri et al. 2016b). There is a strong association between mothers’ employment and their children’s later occupational outcomes. For younger cohorts in recent times, a more gender equal participation in the labour market is associated with a greater advancement in the transition to adulthood, for both genders.
With growing levels of education and of uncertainty in the labour markets, self-realisation, and personal autonomy (also through gaining an independent income) might be increasingly perceived as a necessary precondition to family formation by both genders. Addressing gender gaps early in the life course could help avoiding later inequalities and their long-term consequences. Anti-discrimination policies that promote gender equal access to employment and equal career opportunities, as well as conciliation policies to retain women in the labour force, might offer support to young people establishing an independent living and form their own families, while contributing to pursuing the objective of a more inclusive and sustainable growth at the societal level (Berloffa et al. 2016).

Income support for unemployed and first-job seekers
In most European countries, flexible jobs (agency work, fixed-term contracts, part-time work, mini-jobs, some forms of self-employment) risk becoming a lower segment of the labour force, catering especially for young people. But these jobs are unable to protect them from the risks of incurring a ‘trap jobs’ career, unemployment, parenthood or illness, or securing income guarantees in old-age. Young people from low social classes are most affected. There is a need to harmonise benefit systems to include young people, since segmentation of the labour markets, prolonged turbulence and informal work can easily become traps for those young people with disadvantaged social background and less parental resources. Redistributive policies aimed at supporting the income level of the lower class, especially during non-employment, through a universal system of unemployment benefits for young people unrelated to the previous contributions history and/or housing allowances, could readdress these inequalities. The analyses from Tasks 8.4 and 8.5 support a measure by which government social protection programs ought to guarantee regular cash transfers to poor young adults in periods of non-employment, conditioned either on active job search or on participation in ALMPs (Filandri et al. 2016a & 2016b).

Vulnerable Voices & Cultural Barriers: Attitudes & Aspirations (WP9)
Too often the voices of young people are neglected in the analysis of youth labour markets. Little account of their attitudes and aspirations is given to understand how these determine labour market outcomes and influence the values attached to work. Do work values differ between birth cohorts? How does unemployment and outsidersness affect young people’s social and political attitudes? What is the nature of the work aspirations of vulnerable young people and which major obstacles do they face in realising them? These are some of the questions examined in this work package that focused on the attitudes and aspirations of young Europeans from a diverse range of backgrounds.

The analysis of work values between birth cohorts highlighted the lack of significant differences among them regarding the centrality of work, employment commitment and extrinsic or intrinsic work values in evaluating a job. The analysis of work values between birth cohorts (task 1) was based on the analysis of pooled data from the World Values Survey/European Values Study (WVS/EVS), the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) and the European Social Survey (ESS) between 1980 and 2010.

A second line of investigation sought to identify the systematic effect of individuals’ labour market status on their behavioural trust and trustworthiness, i.e. their social capital. The analysis highlighted the importance of distinguishing amongst different types of NEETs. Precariousness in employment was found to have severely damaging consequences for young people’s trust. Temporary employment appears to be at least as damaging to young people’s behavioural trust as unemployment.

For this task broadly representative groups of young people were invited to participate in experimental sessions implemented in three European countries, Hungary (Budapest), Italy (Naples) and the UK (Oxford). Young people (aged 18-29) were drawn from outside the usual university background. In doing
so, the task was innovative in several respects, as it is relatively unusual to undertake experiments on the general population, rather than university students. Moreover, the experiment was one of the first to look at the effects of labour market status on behaviour. The only precursor we are aware of is the experimental work reported in Fehr et al. (2003). A second treatment used in the experiment further sought to test the extent to which – and in which direction - subjects’ trusting and trustworthy behaviour is affected by the information on the labour market status of their counterpart.

The third research area aimed to understand the work aspirations of a group of vulnerable young people in foster care and the barriers they face in terms of finding work. A co-produced resource was developed and implemented. The approach was brought to life through interactive activities that carers, young people and professionals can use in support of promoting resilience for young people in care. Through their work the young people shared stories and role models that had been significant in supporting their own resilience, such as Malcolm X and other celebrities, alongside telling their own personal stories; such stories are illustrated for the benefit of other young people using this media. The resource details the young people’s pathways through foster care and the resilient moves that have been important in their lives in overcoming barriers to success. Members of the project team have used the resource in numerous training and conference presentations. The book was also exhibited in an art, play therapy and theatre studio in Greece.

The final task examined Youth Labour Market Outsiderness (YLMO) in Europe. The prevalence and dimensions of YLMO vary considerably across Europe. Institutional arrangements can significantly impact on its prevalence, the support available for young outsiders as well as their political and social participation. This task took a mixed-method approach to examining Youth Labour Market Outsiderness (YLMO) in Europe. The conceptualization of YLMO used the standard employment relationship as a reference point (Mückenberger 1985; Standing 2009). Accordingly, a person would be considered an outsider if their employment is not full-time, or not permanent, or does not lead to financial independence. This definition broadens the employment dimension of labour market outsiderness to include inactivity, as well as atypical employment. We analysed data from the EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) to shed light on the extent and types of YLMO in different European countries and on the complex association between YLMO and key outcome measures for young people. These quantitative analyses were complemented by a review of the relevant institutional structures in Austria, Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK and by 134 semi-structured interviews with young people and experts in each of the country cases.

With respect to social participation we did not find significant differences among the various groups of young people, with the exception of young people in education showing a higher level of social participation. Concerning political participation our quantitative analysis highlights the overall lower rates of formal political participation by young people, with no significant differences for YLMOs. However, for Italy and Spain a comparatively higher level of political participation by YLMOs was observed. We speculate that this might be the result of youth labour market outsiderness having become ‘normal’/’standard’ situation for a large part of the young population, which in turn provides the basis for a shared identity, facilitating the formation of and participation in political movements.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Generational differences: a myth

The generational differences in relation to work attitudes often referred to in public debates and in political discourses are myths. Therefore, EU or national policies should not fail because of generation specific cultural deviations. If we accept that work values have significant impact on values in general, then the
The stable nature of work values across the generations provides policy-makers firm ground to act. However, we did find some differences in work values by age and period, as well as between two groups of eastern and western European countries, so we should be aware that generational stability does not mean full-scale similarity.

The high level of commitment to employment in the youngest cohorts suggests that employment-generating policies can be important to help the young enter into the labour market; at a later stage of the career, policies to develop alternative non-employment forms can be more useful.

Youth unemployment: an insufficient focus

A sole focus on the dimension of unemployment is insufficient to analyse the labour conditions and their impact on young people in Europe. Youth labour market outsidership and/or precarious employment can have similar effects as unemployment. The implication is that the increasing diffusion and promotion of flexible employment is likely to have long-term negative consequences for young people's labour market attachment. The negative effects of precariousness in employment will affect young people's social capital. This provides a further reason for doubting the efficacy of temporary employment forms as a means to promote the long-term stable employment of young people.

Institutions matter

Institutional arrangements affect the prevalence of labour market outsidership. The deleterious effects on social capital of specific unemployment and unstable employment are of more concern in some countries and contexts than others – interventions need to be targeted to suit local circumstances. Future (EU) youth policy initiatives should have a stronger element of institutional capacity building in order to facilitate their effectiveness in countries with comparatively weak institutions in the domain of school-to-work transitions and youth policy in general.

Co-production of research: implications for policy and practice

Including young people with complex needs as co-researchers should be encouraged, as it can lead to research that more readily reflects the realities of young people's lives. Policy makers and practitioners should take note that tackling youth unemployment from a resilience-based approach, that takes into consideration all aspects of the young person's life, can increase the likelihood of change. It also emphasises the importance of working at an individual and social level to tackle youth unemployment, rather than solely focusing on the individual. Co-produced resources, such as the One Step Forward book, can be valuable tools for use in training practitioners (for example social workers, teachers, psychologists, therapists and nurses), as well as foster carers. The resources are available to download from: [UK edition](https://www.example.com/uk) [Greek edition](https://www.example.com/greek).

Adopting a Youth Participatory Action Research approach (YPAR) the focus of task 3 was to build the capacity of fifteen young people in Greece and England, enabling them to identify the issues they faced in relation to unemployment, and to consider helpful strategies to overcome them. They acted as young researchers to further understand the nature of the issues, and were supported to develop a resource that would be useful to other young people, foster carers and practitioners. The young people themselves developed highly illustrated multi-media resources. The One Step Forward resource begins by supporting everyone to understand the concept of resilience and the benefits of adopting a resilience approach. The approach is brought to life through interactive activities that carers, young people and professionals can use in support of promoting resilience, and is available in English and Greek.

Flexicurity and the Crisis for Youth (WP10)

'Flexicurity' is a controversial concept but at the core is the delicate balancing act between matching labour market security and flexibility. Labour market flexibility is usually captured by contractual flexibility...
but can also relate to internal flexibility through adaptation of working time. On the security side there is i) job security’ commonly measured through the strictness of employment protection legislation (EPL) ii) employment security provided by active labour market policies or life-long learning and iii) income or social security. In recent years European countries have seen a trend from job security to employment security with limited focus on social security. The challenge of matching security and flexibility is key to young people’s effective and sustainable integration in the labour market. As such policies labelled as ‘flexicurity’ have, in principle, much to offer young people. However, the implementation of flexibility and security policies have tilted towards flexibility, with heightened risks for young people starting work on flexible contracts.

The research adopted a broad definition of the concept of flexicurity in order to avoid controversies around the political interpretation of the term and maximise the analytical power for the exploration of labour market policy and outcomes related to flexibility and security for young people. In this way we were not constrained by specific definitions and debates. For example, we analysed the often overlooked income security dimension of the initial concept, alongside the more widely implemented active labour market policies (employment security), and labour market flexibility. Our methodologies embraced a wide range of data sources and analytical approaches in order to develop a thorough analysis of the policies and outcomes of flexicurity. This included individual-level micro data from the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) and the European Social Survey (ESS) which were complemented by policy-level data from the Labour Market Reforms Database (LABREF) and analysis of more than a decade of Country Specific Recommendations (CSR) issued by the European Council to member states.

This project conducted a comprehensive exploration of policy and outcomes on the flexibility-security interface for young people. Firstly, we identified the institutional configurations and related outcomes for young people across EU countries. Secondly, we assessed the early labour market experiences of youth with a specific focus on the quality of their employment and the impact of the parental household. Thirdly, we analysed the impact of configurations of “flexicurity” policies on young people’s objective and subjective insecurity and their well-being. Finally, we explored developments in employment policy making before, during and after the crisis with a particular focus on ‘flexicurity’ and youth.

One of the challenges of implementing so-called flexicurity policy has been its mixed interpretation and application across countries. A comprehensive mapping exercise of flexibility-security indicators and outcomes showed that country groups with similar institutional settings do not necessarily have similar labour market and/or social outcomes for young people: institutional and outcome-type indicators of flexibility-security might not be correlated. There are a variety of combinations of flexibility-security policies and a range of forces beyond flexicurity policies shaping outcomes on youth labour markets: it is not possible to find a one-size-fits-all model of security and flexibility. The variety of outcomes further underlines for policy makers and researchers alike that youth are far from a homogenous group. Relevant measures are required for the youth labour market. By using the unemployment ratio – the proportion of the population that is unemployed – instead of the conventional unemployment rate (share of active population) we show a greater level of stability on youth labour markets. Our results also confirm that external numerical flexibility is very high among youth. Indeed young people find themselves in a ‘vicious relationship’ between flexibility and security with higher levels of flexibility and lower levels of security.

Temporary contracts allow youth to gain first-hand labour market experience but result in a trade-off between flexibility and security. Young peoples’ over-representation in temporary employment implies that
their employment fluctuates more than that of adults, making them more prone to unemployment. With shorter average tenure, more limited labour market experience and greater difficulty fulfilling eligibility conditions they have more limited access to the security of unemployment benefits. The segmentation of young people into precarious jobs and unemployment also places them at greater exposure to feelings of subjective insecurity. This perception of insecurity is influenced by the institutional context and the family situation and although we find some country clustering of results there is no neat mapping onto flexicurity regimes. The analysis of youth trajectories into permanent positions underlines the need to consider quality of outcomes. The medium-term trajectories of young people (5 years) can be categorised into three relatively successful outcomes (speedy, long search, in&out successful), two unsuccessful outcomes (in&out unsuccessful, continuously unemployed/inactive), and one where young people return to education. The country differences are stark across the 17 EU countries analysed. From a policy perspective the study shows a positive correlation between active and passive labour market policies (ALMP and PLMP) and successful pathways but a negative correlation with employment protection legislation (EPL). However, we suggest that the current mix of ALMPs and PLMPs is not necessarily effective in helping young people enter secure employment. We also demonstrate the importance of considering the household context for young people when assessing and understanding the quality of their labour market trajectories. The results suggest that trajectories are affected by household characteristics and that those coming from work-rich households – where two parents work – have better labour market outcomes in terms of employment than those from households with a single breadwinner. There were important gender differences here, working mothers have a positive effect on the integration into employment of their daughters and their sons. Our analyses of the country specific recommendations (CSRs) explored the key way in which the European Employment Strategy (EES) exercises its influence on member states policy. The results showed a progressive shift of attention from gender issues towards older workers and then somewhat belatedly from older workers towards young people during the crisis. The general recommendation to implement labour market reforms to enhance flexibility tended to be translated into the so called ‘reforms at the margin’ – an important area of policy making not directly targeted on young people, but with indirect effects for segmentation of young people. Subsequent reforms were supposed to rebalance flexibility with security. Our parallel analysis of the intensity and direction of policy activity by member states illustrates how policy making changed both in intensity and focus throughout the period. In line with the CSRs, national policy towards young people was rather limited over the period analysed but the intensity of policy making aimed at young people increased.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS
Our research findings have a number of important implications that inform policy towards young people. Firstly, the results underline the implicit trade-offs at the core of the flexicurity model for young people. There are risks associated with these trade-offs, shaped by the institutional configurations and the protective role of the household. The high use of external numerical flexibility – temporary or short-term contracts – means that benefits accrue to employers and generate volatility for young people. Policy makers need to be aware that young people, similarly to other vulnerable groups, do not experience the same wins that regular employees might gain from flexibility-security policies. From the security perspective youth are more prone to becoming unemployed yet less likely to have access to unemployment benefits. Policies towards young people are required that improve their security on the labour market.
Secondly, our analysis underlines the risks for policy makers of adopting a common policy framework. EU-wide or country cluster policy prescriptions require careful consideration of the heterogeneity of institutional arrangements, composition of the labour market, the different securing role that households play and recognition that youth is not a homogenous group. The results of the comparative analysis across institutional settings underline that there is no clear link between so-called flexicurity regimes and performance.

Thirdly, our results stress the need for effective metrics for policy development and evaluation. We raise a number of questions about the applicability of institutional-level variables for the analysis of cross-country differences in labour market outcomes. This weakness is particularly problematic for assessing the impact of flexicurity policy. Our analysis also questions the common reliance on standard measures of EPL. Reliable metrics are particularly important when considering the impact of policy on women and men and different groups of young people. Similarly when it comes to outcomes new measures are required including more nuanced unemployment metrics and measures of well-being and life satisfaction.

Finally adequate policy development also requires recognition of the complexities and inter-linkages of influences on labour market behaviours and outcomes. Our results underline the complexity and layers of influences within different national contexts and the need for the widest consideration of the impact of policy changes on individuals, households and labour markets in order to assess impacts. Policy makers need to give careful consideration to the scope of policies for their intended, and unintended consequences. For young labour market entrants with their working lives in front of them, this perspective is crucial. A gender-mainstreamed approach to policy is required in order to both recognise gender gaps and reduce the risk of future gaps in order to promote more gender-equal outcomes.

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Potential Impact:

The potential impact (including the socio-economic impact and the wider societal implications of the project so far) and the main dissemination activities and exploitation of results (not exceeding 10 pages).

The European Commission’s expected impact from the project was:

1) to ‘advance the knowledge base that underpins the formulation and implementation of relevant policies in Europe with the aim of enhancing the employment of young people and their transition to economic and social independence’, and

2) to engage with ‘relevant communities, stakeholders and practitioners in the research with a view to supporting employment policies in Europe.’

The first of these expected impacts have been achieved through:

Open Access publications:

1) the ebook ‘Youth Employment: STYLE Handbook’,
2) the forthcoming book with Oxford University Press: ‘Youth Labour in Transition: Inequalities, Mobility
and Policies in Europe'

iii) the list of working papers and policy briefs on the project website

International collaborations with other EU funded projects:
Several special sessions were held at significant international conferences in collaboration with relevant Horizon 2020 funded projects. These included the Council of Europeanists Conference in Philadelphia, US (April) in collaboration with NEGOTIATE and WHATLIVE; the European Social Policy Association Network (ESPNET) Conference in Rotterdam, NL (September 2016) also with NEGOTIATE; the Work, Employment and Society Conference in Leeds, UK (September 2016) with EXCEPT and CUPESSE. Attending the European Youth Event (EYE 2016) at the European Parliament in Strasbourg (May 2016): We organised for 17 young LAB members from the UK, Spain and Poland to participate at the European Youth Event (EYE 2016) at the European Parliament in Strasbourg (May 2016). EYE was organised by the European Youth Forum, by one of our CAN members, Clementine Moyart who is one of the editors of the e-book. This group also included four young people with learning difficulties participating in debates in the Parliament. Over 7000 young people from across the EU attended this event. This was a wonderful learning experience for our young advisors. Their reports are published on the project website blog http://www.style-research.eu/events/european-youth-event with pictures of the participants included later in this final report.

The second of these expected impacts to engage with ‘relevant communities, stakeholders and practitioners in the research with a view to supporting employment policies in Europe’ was achieved by i) the implementation of Local Advisory Boards (LABS) of policy makers, NGOs and trade unions in 19 partner countries from the outset of the project and ii) the professional support of the European news agency EurActiv as a consortium partner. Here we briefly summarise how these contributions have developed the potential impact from the project in engaging with relevant communities.

LABS
To achieve this expected impact the project was from its conception tightly organised to engage with ‘relevant communities’. This was achieved through the consultation with Local Advisory Boards in 19 countries. These LABs met on an annual basis locally. The reports from these meetings are published on the project website http://www.style-research.eu/publications/lab-reports.

EurActiv
EurActiv, a European Media Network dedicated to EU affairs, was responsible for the cross-European dissemination of findings from the project throughout the life of the project. EURACTIV provides in-depth information to the Community of EU Actors. This target group consists of EU officials, national civil servants, policy-deciders and policy-influencers, business and trade unions, academia, experts, Civil Society Organisations and journalists, acting as multipliers across European countries.

Social Europe & Jobs Section Readership (access the section here)
The following table presents the overall readership figures for the Social Europe & Jobs Section during the whole project. It includes total page views and unique visitors.
All content produced and published by EURACTIV will remain accessible on its website for free, becoming a point of reference for future readers. Coverage of youth unemployment and related topics will therefore have an impact beyond the end of the project itself.

Project related coverage
During the implementation of the project, the Social Europe and Jobs Section included a total of 426 articles covering topics related to the project’s focus policy, as summarized below. The editorial coverage also included interviews and opinion pieces by Commissioner Thyssen and other Commissioners, MEPs and other stakeholders. Additional coverage was ensured thanks to 352 articles published in French and German on EURACTIV.fr and EURACTIV.de respectively, as well as in Spanish on EuroEfe, EURACTIV’s Spanish website, in Polish on euractiv.pl in Greek on euractiv.gr and in Slovak on euractiv.sk.

LinksDossier
The LinksDossier, titled “Fighting youth unemployment: an EU priority”, published on EURACTIV.com in the Social Europe & Jobs Section.
The LinksDossier includes the following parts: overview of the policies of interest, issues at stake, positions of relevant stakeholders, timeline with past and future key dates, external links to relevant information.
It was first published on 7 July 2017. By the end of the project, it received 6,424 page views, among which 4,439 were unique page views.

Special Report
The Special Report, titled Youth Unemployment, was one of the key deliverables of Work Package 2 Communications. The Special Report remains a reference in-depth analysis for readers also past the week of publication, continuing to attract interested visitors.
The first of the five articles composing the Special Report was published on 21 September 2015, followed by the other articles in the same week. By the end of the project, the publication received 13,104 page views, among which 10,186 were unique page views.

The Special Report was also promoted through a banner ad campaign on euractiv.com.

A PDF document of the Special Report is available on euractiv.com for a quick and easy print and distribution of the report.

Video coverage

During the project, 25 videos relevant to the project’s policy focus were published on euractiv.com.

4 videos were also published on other EURACTIV Network website in the original language.

Final event and launch of the handbook

On 14 September 2017, EURACTIV organised the final event to promote the findings of the STYLE research and launch its handbook. The event aimed at concluding the project, raising its profile among policy influencers to create a long-lasting impact that goes beyond the end of the project itself.

The event took place in the EURACTIV conference room in the evening and saw the participation of 76 attendees, including STYLE project partners and other relevant stakeholders.

The speakers were:

- Vasiliki Kokkori, Member of Commissioner Thyssen’s Cabinet, European Commission
- Anna Widegren, Secretary General, European Youth Forum
The event was promoted on social media before and during the event, including live tweeting during the event with #eaDebates and #YouthEmployment. Overall, there were 58 tweets and 249 engagements on social media. See some examples below.

A video was published on euractiv.com with interviews to all speakers following the event. In two weeks, the video was viewed 296 times and shared 53 times on Facebook.

Apart from being circulated through email invitation to more than 800 invitees, the programme of the event was also shared on the dedicated EURACTIV website events.euractiv.com. A special page with information about the event and the project was created there. The page also featured the top tweets from the event and the video, becoming a sort of hub of information about the event. The page will remain accessible online. The page was visited 467 times, including after the event.

Synergies and cooperation

To continue editorial coverage about youth unemployment, EURACTIV received a grant from the European Parliament in 2016. EURACTIV used the opportunity offered by the grant and the events to be
organised within this framework to involve the STYLE partners and provide them with a platform to present their work.
All partners were invited to contribute to the editorial coverage with opinion pieces and to take part in the face-to-face events organised by EURACTIV to bring MEPs to event with young people. For example, the Grenoble School of Management participated in the debate “L’engagement des jeunes en Europe” organised by EURACTIV France in Paris on 23 March 2017.

Co-production of a Resilience Handbook:
Aspirations of vulnerable young people in foster care

This was a particularly innovative aspect of the project that is reported in the working paper by Hart, Stubbs, Plexousakis, Georgiadi and Kourkoutas (2015)
STYLE Working Paper WP9.3 Aspirations of vulnerable youth in foster care

Access to the resource produced by the researchers and the young people are available in electronic format in both Greek and English.
UK edition
Greek edition

Contributions to a dialogue about these results can be made through the project website www.style-research.eu or by following us on twitter @STYLEEU.

Through all these various multi-media channels the project has achieved a significant impact in contributing to and advancing our knowledge across a broad range of communities in Europe. This is illustrated by the comments from one of the panel members of the e-book launch

“Fighting Youth Unemployment is among the top priorities of the Commission, and the Style Project contributed by shedding light upon the implementation of Youth Guarantee, the EU’s flagship initiative, across the EU.

I particularly welcome the comprehensive scope of the project, which allowed for a thorough and in-depth look at the different driving factors behind youth unemployment, allowing to properly reflect the challenges but also the solutions/good practices; Moreover, as successful policy-making is only the one that makes a real difference on the ground, I would like to positively comment on the selection of experts from different Member States working on the project. It allowed to illustrate the divergences among our Member States
in terms of starting points and performances, the different policy approaches and ultimately show the way forward for the implementation of the Youth Guarantee.

Best Regards,
Vasiliki

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