



# EPR Public Affairs e-bulletin

November 2016

European Platform for Rehabilitation, Avenue des Arts 8, c/o CCI, B-1210, Brussels, Belgium  
Tel: +32 2 736 54 44, Fax: +32 2 736 8622, Website: [www.epr.eu](http://www.epr.eu)

## Social Affairs & Social Services p.2

One in four children at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU

Statement by Commissioner Marianne Thyssen on the occasion of the International Day of Persons with disabilities

## Employment & Disability p.2

European Commission Rewards British city Chester for enhancing accessibility in its city life

Second quarter 2016 compared with first quarter 2016- 1 in 5 unemployed persons in the EU found a job

Tri-partite opinion on quality and effective apprenticeships and work-based learning

## Education & Vocational Training p.3

Education & training in Europe: investment on the rebound but inclusion remains a challenge

EU boosts 2017 commitment to education for children in emergencies

Commission launches Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition to help Europeans in their career and daily life

## Health and Medical Rehabilitation p.4

Europeans live longer, but extra years are not always spent in good health

## Other relevant EU Affairs p.4

European Semester Autumn Package: Working for a stronger and more inclusive economic recovery

EU budget deal focuses on strengthening the economy and responding to the refugee crisis

Investing in Europe's youth: Commission launches European Solidarity Corps

Commission welcomes Member States' agreement on extension and reinforcement of the Investment Plan for Europe

## EU funded programmes p. 5

Funding

Calendar of events

## Social Affairs & Social Services

### **20 November: Universal Children's Day - One in four children at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU - 25 million children in this situation in the EU**

In 2015, around 25 million children, or 26.9% of the population aged 0 to 17, in the European Union (EU) were at risk of poverty or social exclusion. This means that they were living in households in at least one of the following three conditions: at-risk-of-poverty after social transfers (income poverty), severely materially deprived or with very low work intensity. Since 2010, the proportion of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU has slightly decreased, from 27.5% in 2010 to 26.9% in 2015. However, contrasting trends were observed across the EU Member States. These figures are published by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union, on the occasion of the Universal Children's Day celebrated on 20 November.

Full article: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/7738122/3-16112016-AP-EN.pdf/c01aade1-ea44-411a-b20a-94f238449689>

### **Statement by Commissioner Marianne Thyssen on the occasion of the International Day of Persons with disabilities**

The [International Day of Persons with disabilities](#) is about people and their rights. It is an occasion to recall how people with disabilities and their representatives have been and remain drivers of policy change around the world.

10 years ago, the [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) was adopted. The human rights based approach to disability became a worldwide legal reference point.

This did not happen overnight. It is the result of many years of campaigning and awareness-raising, in particular by the disability movement. This kind of work remains important today, because barriers of all kind remain in place.

The European Commission is committed to breaking down these barriers and to supporting the implementation of the UN Convention in the European Union, within its areas of competence. Concrete steps have been taken under the [European Disability Strategy 2010-2020](#) and a progress report is under way. Among recent steps, the [Accessibility Act](#), which the Commission proposed one year ago, uses the full potential of the Single Market to make key products and services accessible for people with disabilities. I hope that the proposal from the Commission can soon be adopted by the European Parliament and the Council. I also welcome the recent adoption of the [Web Accessibility Directive](#): new digital services and products offer new opportunities for people with disabilities to take part in society and in the labour market.

Read more: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_STATEMENT-16-4181\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-16-4181_en.htm)

## Employment & Disability

### **European Commission rewards British city Chester for enhancing accessibility in its city life**

The European Commission today announced the British city of Chester as the winner of the Access City Award. Chester was chosen out of 43 cities from 21 EU countries, because of its inclusive measures for people with a disability in different sectors, in particular the tourism sector.

Full text:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=2682&furtherNews=yes>

## Second quarter 2016 compared with first quarter 2016- 1 in 5 unemployed persons in the EU found a job

The **euro area** (EA19) seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate was 10.0% in September 2016, stable compared to August 2016 and down from 10.6% in September 2015. This is the lowest rate recorded in the **euro area** since June 2011. The **EU28** unemployment rate was 8.5% in September 2016, stable compared to August 2016 and down from 9.2% in September 2015. This is the lowest rate recorded in the **EU28** since February 2009. These figures are published by **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**.

Full article: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/7751102/3-25112016-AP-EN.pdf/d23f4c05-5cd7-4f8b-add8-f16e14512e12>

## Tri-partite opinion on quality and effective apprenticeships and work-based learning

On 2 December 2016, the tri-partite Advisory Committee on Vocational Training (ACVT) adopted unanimously an [Opinion on a Shared Vision on Quality and Effective Apprenticeships and Work-based Learning](#). The opinion represents an important call from governments, trade unions and employers' organisations from EU Member States and partner countries to further strengthen efforts to increase quality and effectiveness of apprenticeships and work-based learning.

It comes at a right moment and supports the actions to modernise vocational education and training (VET) defined in the [Investing in Europe's Youth](#) package adopted this week by the Commission.

Read more:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=2691&furtherNews=yes>

## Education & Vocational Training

### Education & training in Europe: investment on the rebound but inclusion remains a challenge

This year's edition of the Commission's Education and Training Monitor shows progress towards important EU targets, but also highlights that Member States need to make their education systems more relevant and inclusive, in particular regarding the integration of newly arrived refugees and migrants.

Europe relies on effective education systems to equip young people with the skills they need to build their lives as citizens and develop their professional careers. Schools, universities and vocational education and training institutions are the foundation of growth,

jobs, innovation and social cohesion. In its 2016 edition of the Education and Training Monitor published today, the European Commission analyses where the European Union and national systems stand, and shows that Member States face a dual task of ensuring adequate financial investment and offering high quality education to young people from all backgrounds – including refugees and migrants.

Read more: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-16-3577\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-3577_en.htm)

## **EU boosts 2017 commitment to education for children in emergencies**

Access to education for children in emergency situations among top priorities for humanitarian funding in 2017.

Today the European Commission is announcing a further increase of the share of its humanitarian aid budget to lead the way in supporting education projects in emergency situations around the world. The increase from 4% in 2016 to 6% in 2017 of the humanitarian aid budget, puts the Commission well ahead of the global average. Education in emergencies is one of the most underfunded areas in humanitarian aid worldwide, with less than 2% of the global humanitarian funding being dedicated to this area.

*"Education is not a privilege, education is a right. It is one of our top priorities in our humanitarian aid programmes, from the Middle East to Africa and beyond. Our aim is to enable access to quality education in a safe learning environment for vulnerable children caught in situations of emergency. By funding education, we can make a real investment in children's futures and their hope for a better life. The EU is leading by example and I call on other international donors and stakeholders to step up their efforts worldwide."* said Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides, who is taking part at the Education in Emergencies Forum which is hosted by the European Commission today in Brussels.

Full press release: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-16-4090\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-4090_en.htm)

## **Commission launches Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition to help Europeans in their career and daily life**

On 1<sup>st</sup> December, the Commission launched the Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition, together with Member States, companies, social partners, NGOs and education providers, to help meet the high demand for digital skills in Europe which are essential in today's job market and society.

The Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition is one of the ten key initiatives proposed by the Commission under the [New Skills Agenda for Europe](#), presented in June this year. Today a series of partners, including over 30 organisations and groups such as [European Digital SME Alliance](#), [ESRI](#), [SAP](#), [ECDL](#) and [Google](#) are pledging to further reduce the digital skills gap as part of the [Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition](#). The Commission calls on more stakeholders to join the Coalition and endorse its [Charter](#). Members of the Coalition commit to tackling the skills gaps at all levels, from high-level ICT specialist skills to the skills needed by all European citizens to live, work and participate in a digital economy and society. This is both crucial for European industry to remain competitive in the face of rapid

advances by its competitors, and for European society to remain inclusive in the digital age.

Read more: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-16-4081\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-4081_en.htm)

## Health & Medical Rehabilitation

### Europeans live longer, but extra years are not always spent in good health

"Health at a Glance: Europe 2016" European Commission/OECD joint report shows that policies that aim at promoting good health and preventing diseases as well as more effective healthcare could save lives and billions of euros in the European Union.

Life expectancy now exceeds 80 years in most EU countries reveals "Health at a Glance: Europe 2016", a European Commission/OECD joint report, published today. However, this record-high life expectancy is not always matched by healthy life years. Around 50 million people in the EU suffer from several chronic diseases, and more than half a million people of working age die from them every year, representing an annual cost of some 115 billion EUR for EU economies.

Full press release: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-16-3749\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-3749_en.htm)

## Other Relevant EU Affairs

### European Semester Autumn Package: Working for a stronger and more inclusive economic recovery

The Commission has set out its views on the EU's economic and social priorities for the year ahead, building on the guidance from President Juncker's 2016 State of the Union address and on the latest economic data from the Commission's Autumn 2016 Forecast.

Read more:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=2670&furtherNews=yes>

### EU budget deal focuses on strengthening the economy and responding to the refugee crisis

On 17 November the EU institutions reached an agreement on the 2017 EU budget.

As proposed by the Commission earlier this year, in 2017 the EU will spend more money on making Europe more competitive and more secure. Likewise, more money will go to providing support for the reception and integration of refugees and to addressing the root causes of migration in the countries of origin and transit.

European Commission Vice-President Kristalina Georgieva, in charge of budget and human resources, said: *"We have left no stone unturned to secure the money for a budget that will work in the best interest of our people. The 2017 EU budget will thus help buffer against shocks, providing a boost to our economy and helping to deal with issues like the*

refugee crisis. We continue to focus our budget on results, ensuring that every euro from the EU budget will make a difference."

Read more: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-16-3743\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-3743_en.htm)

## Investing in Europe's youth: Commission launches European Solidarity Corps

The European Commission is launching the European Solidarity Corps, just two months after people President Juncker [announced](#) it and as a first deliverable of the priorities for action identified in the [Bratislava Roadmap](#). As of today, young between the ages of 18 and 30 can sign up for new opportunities to make an important contribution to society across the EU, and to gain invaluable experience and acquire valuable skills at the start of their career. The Commission is also presenting a series of measures to boost youth employment, improve and modernise education, more investment in skills of young people, and better opportunities to learn and study abroad.

With the new European Solidarity Corps, participants will have the opportunity to be placed with a project either for volunteering or for a traineeship, an apprenticeship or a job for a period between 2 and 12 months.

Participants will be able to engage in a broad range of activities such as education, health, social integration, assistance in the provision of food, shelter construction, reception, support and integration of migrants and refugees, environmental protection or prevention of natural disasters. Young people registering for the European Solidarity Corps will need to subscribe to the European Solidarity Corps Mission Statement and its Principles. Each participating organisation will need to adhere to the European Solidarity Corps Charter, setting out the rights and responsibilities during all stages of the solidarity experience.

Read more: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-16-4165\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-4165_en.htm)

## Commission welcomes Member States' agreement on extension and reinforcement of the Investment Plan for Europe

EU Member States today agreed their position on a Commission proposal to extend, expand and reinforce the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the heart of the Juncker Commission's Investment Plan for Europe.

EU Finance Ministers gave their backing to the Commission's proposal to extend the [European Fund for Strategic Investments \(EFSI\)](#), in terms of duration and financial capacity ("EFSI 2.0"). Today's agreement is crucial as it demonstrates the dedication of all stakeholders to contribute to the continued success of the EFSI and the [Investment Plan for Europe](#) as a whole.

Member States committed at a summit of 27 in [Bratislava on 15 September](#) as well as at the [October European Council](#) to agreeing their negotiating position on the Commission's proposal at today's Ecofin meeting, taking into account an independent evaluation. That independent evaluation was delivered on 14 November. The European Council will take stock of progress on the EFSI at its meeting on 15 December.

Read more: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-16-4282\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-4282_en.htm)

## EU funded programmes

- Erasmus+ [new calls 2016](#) and [New calls for proposals 2017](#)
- DG EMPL – PROGRESS / EaSI [calls](#)
- Horizon 2020 – various [new calls](#)

## Calendar of upcoming events

Date	Title	Venue	Contact
04/11/2016	FreSsco seminar: Recent developments in the coordination of family benefits, unemployment benefits and student aid	Luxembourg	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&amp;catId=88&amp;eventId=1103&amp;furtherEvents=yes">http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&amp;catId=88&amp;eventId=1103&amp;furtherEvents=yes</a>
29-30/11/2016	European Day of People with Disabilities	Brussels	
5-9/12/2016	The European Vocational Skills Week	Brussels	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&amp;catId=88&amp;eventId=1125&amp;furtherEvents=yes">http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&amp;catId=88&amp;eventId=1125&amp;furtherEvents=yes</a>
23/01/2017	Conference on European Social Pillar	Brussels	