

L'ubica Harakal'ova¹, L'udmila Lipkova², Martin Gress³
**EDUCATION POLICY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND
 ITS REFLECTION IN THE STRATEGY "EUROPE 2020"**

The article analyzes the basic legislative and normative changes in the EU during the last decade related to various social issues within the general frameworks of fighting youth unemployment, illiteracy, disbalance between professional skills and demand, population aging etc. Key challenges to the EU education, social and labour policy, including immigration issues, are also covered.

*Keywords: higher education; youth employment; population mobility; labour market; immigration.
 JEL classification: I21; I25; E61; E62.*

Любіца Харакальова, Людмила Липкова, Мартін Греш
**ОСВІТНЯ ПОЛІТИКА ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКОГО СОЮЗУ ТА
 ЇЇ ВІДОБРАЖЕННЯ В СТРАТЕГІЇ «ЄВРОПА 2020»**

У статті проаналізовано ключові законодавчі та нормативні зміни в ЄС в останнє десятиліття, пов'язані з різноманітними аспектами боротьби з молодіжним безробіттям, неписьемністю, дисбалансом між професійними навичками та попиту на них, старінням населення тощо. Також описано основні виклики соціальної та трудової політикам ЄС на найближчі роки, включаючи питання імміграції.

Ключові слова: вища освіта; працевлаштування молоді; мобільність населення; ринок праці; імміграція.

Табл. 1. Літ. 20.

Любица Харакальова, Людмила Липкова, Мартин Греш
**ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНАЯ ПОЛИТИКА ЕВРОПЕЙСКОГО СОЮЗА
 И ЕЁ ОТОБРАЖЕНИЕ В СТРАТЕГИИ «ЕВРОПА 2020»**

В статье проанализированы ключевые законодательные и нормативные изменения в ЕС в последнее десятилетие, связанные с различными аспектами борьбы с молодежной безработицей, неграмотностью, дисбалансом между профессиональными навыками и спросом на них, старением населения и т.п. Также описаны основные вызовы социальной и трудовой политикам ЕС на ближайшие годы, включая вопросы иммиграции.

Ключевые слова: высшее образование; трудоустройство молодежи; мобильность населения; рынок труда; иммиграция.

Introduction. The economic policy of the EU, common market and regional policy should ensure equal rights for all citizens of the EU. In practice, this means that all EU citizens will be treated equally in each member state, while not favoring individual citizens in one of the member states and vice versa. The basic dimension of the formation of social policy arises from free movement of persons. The issue of social policy as a common policy of the European Union remains controversial in regard to the sovereignty of the member states in this field. Social rights are mainly based on citizen's right for life, nowadays a dignified life – as part of human dignity, equality, freedom and the solidarity (Lipkova, 2011).

The priority objective of the EU and its member states social policy is to enhance employment and mobility of workers in order to improve the quality of jobs and working conditions, to inform and consult workers, to combat poverty and social exclu-

¹ University of Economics in Bratislava, Slovakia.

² University of Economics in Bratislava, Slovakia.

³ University of Economics in Bratislava, Slovakia.

sion, promoting equality between men and women. A common action in the implementation of these objectives promotes cooperation between member states, coordination and harmonization of national policies and participation of all stakeholders.

Within the article, we will discuss the "Europe 2020" Strategy objectives related to educational policy as part of the EU social policy. By 2020, it is estimated that 35% of all jobs will require high-level qualifications, combined with the capacity to adapt and innovate, as compared to 29% today. This means that about 15 mln jobs would require high level of qualification (European Commission, Youth on the move, 2010). The education objective is to reduce early school leaving to below 10% and achieve at least 40% of the population aged 30–34 years having completed higher education (European Commission, Europe 2020, 2014).

Table 1. Strategy "Europe 2020" in education data as of 2013, %
(Eurostat, 2015)

| Region | early leavers from education and training (population aged 18–24) | tertiary educational attainment (30–34) |
|----------------|---|---|
| Austria | 6.9 | 6.9 |
| Germany | 9.7 | 9.7 |
| Luxembourg | 6.5 | 6.5 |
| Malta | 20.2 | 20.2 |
| Czech Republic | 5.5 | 5.5 |
| Poland | 5.4 | 5.4 |
| Hungary | 11.1 | 11.1 |
| Slovakia | 6.6 | 6.6 |
| Portugal | 17.7 | 17.7 |
| Spain | 22.3 | 22.3 |
| Greece | 9.3 | 9.3 |
| EU-28 | 11.3 | 11.3 |

To achieve these social objectives, it is necessary to establish a legal framework for the protection of European citizens. The basic legislative framework of the EU social policy is the Treaty on European Union (Maastricht Treaty) and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Lisbon Treaty). The preambles to both define as basic objectives of European integration: the improvement of living and working conditions of their nations, ensuring economic and social progress of their countries (Maastricht Treaty; the Treaty of Lisbon).

The European Union in 2010 approved the strategic document "Europe 2020 – Strategy for Europe's growth" as a summary of priorities, by which the EU should achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. These objectives are to be achieved through the development of knowledge and innovations, involvement environmental-friendly production methods, adopting tools for strengthening social and territorial inclusion. "Europe 2020" Strategy is the legal framework for action in the social policy of the EU and its member states by 2020, including education policy. The EU institutions have adopted since the beginning of 2010 to May 2014, 74 documents, regulations, reports, announcements, opinions and reports on education policy. Most of the documents follow the materials adopted by the EU institutions before the year 2010 (CEDEFOP, 2015).

Literature review and methodology. From the 7 initiatives approved by the European Commission for implementation in the member states in the framework of the "Europe 2020" Strategy, two initiatives are related to education. In the context of smart growth in "Europe 2020", the European Commission approved an initiative called "Youth on the Move".

As the basis for this analysis, we used the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – "Youth on the Move". We analyzed individual measures considered to be essential for achieving the objectives to unleash the potential of young people and full employment. These measures were compared with adopted and approved secondary EU legal provisions which apply these measures in the EU member states.

We analyzed the selected measures, crucial to attain the goals related to the educational policy of the European Union in the initiative "Europe 2020". There are 27 key actions mentioned in "Youth on the Move", the EU Commission shall be responsible for 5 of these measures and the member states should focus on the 3 (European Commission, Youth on the move, 2010).

Measures have been concentrated in 4 basic groups and we evaluated their fulfilling through secondary legislation. For the purposes of this article, we analyzed the application of the measures adopted by the European Union. The article considers the actions taken after the announcement of the "Youth on the Move" initiative, i.e. since September 2010 (Summary of the EU legislation, 2014).

"Youth on the Move" is a complex of policy initiatives in education and employment of young people in Europe, reducing youth unemployment. This is consistent with the broader objective of the EU – to achieve the 75% employment rate in the population of working age (20–64 years).

The European Commission in the document "Youth on the Move" already in 2010 approved a number of measures which "are the main EU initiatives to respond to the challenges of young people and help them succeed in the knowledge economy. It is a framework agenda announcing new key actions, reinforcing existing activities and ensuring the implementation of others at the EU and national levels, while respecting the principle of subsidiarity" (European Commission, Youth on the Move, 2010).

"Youth on the Move" focuses on the 4 main fields:

- the system of education and training, including lifelong learning;
- increasing the share or higher (or equivalent) level of education;
- learning mobility;
- employment of young people.

It is necessary in the system of contemporary education to draw the attention to reduce early school leaving to 10%. The Council of the EU adopted in 2011 the recommendation on policies concerning early school leaving (Council Recommendation, 2011). In the EU member states it is necessary to improve the ability of students and adults to read. Expert group on high-level literacy released in 2012 a final report analyzing in details the situation in education and literacy in the EU. The report raises some recommendations applicable in the member states without legislative changes and their application is possible directly through educational institutions, parents or students themselves (e.g., number of books at home).

The demand for skilled workers is increasing, even in low-skilled occupations. According to forecasts, in 2020 50% of all jobs will continue to depend on medium-level qualifications provided through vocational education and training (European Commission, Youth on the Move, 2010). Increasing the attractiveness, provision and quality of vocational education and training should provide a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020) adopted by the European Commission in 2011. The European Parliament adopted a resolution on cooperation in vocational education and training in 2012 (European Parliament, 2012).

Education in a workplace under apprenticeship is a powerful tool for integrating young people in the labour market. Provision and quality of apprenticeship training in member states differs significantly. Removing legal and administrative barriers is a necessary condition for the possibility of employment through internships. This process is impossible without the participation of social partners – employers. Consultations with social partners at European level has led to the creation of Quality Framework for Traineeships since 2012 (European Commission, Towards a Quality Framework on Traineeships, 2012).

The EU Council Recommendation of 2012 recommends the member states a uniform method of proving informal learning and participation in internships without affecting the legislation of a member state, via the European Skills/Competences, qualifications and Occupations (ESCO). Europass and Youthpass are uniform and at the same time simple and transparent tools for attesting the obtained informal learning individual. This synergistic system will build on existing European Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and the newly established European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) Act, 2009 (Council Recommendation, on the validation of non-formal and informal learning, 2012).

Higher education has a decisive influence economic competitiveness in the knowledge economy. High quality tertiary education constitutes a key element in achieving economic and social objectives. With the increasing number of jobs requiring high-level skills by more young people should begin to attend and complete higher education, and so fulfill the aim of the EU in terms of the ratio achieved higher education or its equivalent in population set in Europe 2020 to 40%. The main objectives are to maintain high quality of higher education and its internationalization. Increase in the EU innovation capacity requires the creation of the so-called triangle between education, research and innovation.

Spending on R&D investment in human capital, level of education, innovation capacity and effective dissemination of knowledge through the centers of knowledge are becoming driving force (Pasztorova, 2014).

The European Commission in its Communication in 2011 introduced a new reinforced agenda for higher education called "Supporting growth and jobs – an agenda for the modernization of European higher education systems" (European Commission, working document on recent developments in European high education, 2011). The European Commission introduced in early 2014 U-Multirank a new evaluation and information tool. It is a new global multidimensional classification of universities and faculties focused on user needs. It covers many aspects of higher education, research, teaching, learning, international focus, knowledge transfer and local involvement. U-Multirank is independent classification, financially supported by the

European Union. Through U-Multirank it will be able to create a picture of higher education institutions in order to radically improve the transparency of higher education sector (U-multirank, 2014).

The priorities for higher education, research, innovation and entrepreneurship were set by a measure of the draft of multiannual strategic program for innovation. In 2013 European Parliament in 2013 adopted a strategic innovation agenda and defined the role of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) in this program (European Parliament, Strategic Innovation Agenda of the EIT, 2013).

The third direction of the EU "Youth on the Move" initiative concerns educational and occupational mobility. The website called "Youth on the Move" provides information on education and mobility in the EU. The EU Council published its recommendations on promoting learning mobility of young people in 2011. The recommendations relate in particular to motivating young people to learning mobility, information and counselling. The member states should prepare students on language and become familiar with the culture of another country. The quality of learning mobility should be not only in content, but also on the social site. The member states should seek to eliminate administrative and institutional barriers and should recognize educational practices.

The European Commission, in cooperation with Eurostat introduced an efficient system of data on higher mobility and employment. The creation of a European Skills Passport, the so-called Youthpass facilitated the information on competencies and skills acquired within informal education.

In terms of future labor shortages at the labor market of Europe there is a need to retain many highly skilled workers and also to attract those with the right skills for the increased demands. The EU suffers from the so-called brain drain, in certain professions the EU citizens moving for certain professions to third countries and on the contrary, less highly-skilled immigrants come to the EU. This may be due to ignorance of their rights civil rights and social security. The measures taken should increase occupational mobility of young people in Europe, thus reducing the migration from the continent. The EU should be presented as a good destination for study. The EU must build contacts with students outside the EU member states and improve the monitoring of students from third countries. One tool for this is the European Network for development policies in the education for children and young people with migrant background.

Project "Your first job" helps young people to find work in any EU member state. The European Vacancy Monitor helps young people get an overview of vacancies by several criteria.

The fourth direction of the "Youth on the Move" initiative focuses on youth employment, which is the most important topic of the current political debate within the EU. Measures to reduce high youth unemployment and increasing the employment rate of young people under tight public budgets must be efficient and sustainable in the short term and long term. In this area, the coordination of policies in the member states is important. Particularly important is the employment of young people in neighboring and other EU partner countries. The proposed key measures are aimed to the Commission Recommendation and to the legislative of the member states.

The issue of youth employment has certain specific features, taken into account while determining the priorities for "Youth on the Move":

- help in finding a first job and career start;
- support youth at risk;
- social network for young people;
- support for young entrepreneurs (European Commission, Youth on the move, 2010).

The European Commission action can refocus on coordination and recommendation documents. Under these measures, the European Commission will determine the most effective ways of youth employment policy; strengthen international dialogue with the EU's strategic partners (G20, OECD, ILO). The EU through Europe-wide data monitors the situation of young people who do not work and neither continue education or training.

The European Council issued a recommendation in 2013 on the implementation of safeguards for young people who are not employed, do not continue education or training (i.e. "NEET"). Young people get a period of 4 months from the end of education to find employment or further educate or retrain (European Commission, New skills for new job, 2010).

Specific measures for member states and their application is in the responsibility of the member states. Funding and monitoring are the responsibilities of the European Council (Council Recommendation on Establishing of Youth Guarantee). The European Commission is an essential partner in policy guidelines and recommendations. The European Commission advises those member states where youth unemployment is above the EU average.

The shortage of skilled professionals, deficiencies in management and technical skills and specific skills deficits for certain jobs are obstacles to achieving the objectives of sustainable growth in the EU. Most skills shortage appears in the automotive industry, electronic industry, "green" economic sectors, "blue" economic sectors and in healthcare. "If we want to implement the concept of sustainable development and use the theory of Blue economy, we must try understand the mechanism, which is based on the existence and interaction of natural ecosystems" (Dziura, 2015). Deficit of experts will be reflected also in research by 2020. It is estimated that by 2020 the shortages of qualified professionals in these sectors in the EU will be about 6–7 mln.

Another priority of the program is to remove the mismatch between skills and their supply. This discrepancy has a geographical aspect, in some areas unemployment remains high in certain occupations and elsewhere there is a lack of necessary skills. Commission in 2012 launched the "Skills Panorama" containing updated forecasts of the supply of skills and labour market needs by 2020. In 2013, the Commission published the first version of the European classification of skills, competences and occupations (ESCO).

If we want to ensure the sustainability of social security systems in the member states of the EU, we need to increase the number of workers. One way to reverse this situation is to use the potential of immigrants. Without immigration, the number of working-age population would fall by 12% by 2030 and 33% by 2060 as compared to 2009. Economic immigration is of strategic importance in complementing the missing skills. It is necessary to better exploit the potential of legal immigrants with high

levels of education, who now have low-skilled labor due to non-recognition of their actual qualifications. It is not be the breach of the principle of prioritization of EU citizens. Currently, this issue may seem controversial and counterproductive.

In 2012, the European Commission and the Council adopted a number of recommendations related to the recognition of professional qualifications. Also, the Commission by its communication from 2014 introduced the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of highly qualified employment, the so-called the EU Blue Card (Council Directive, 2009).

The main financial instrument of the EU social policy is the European Social Fund. Its aim is to expand employment opportunities and to increase their geographical and occupational mobility within the Union and facilitate their adaptation to industrial changes in production systems, in particular, through vocational training and retraining (Lisbon Treaty, 2009). Currently, the fund is concentrated mainly on increasing the active role of the EU labour market to ensure that all regions and citizens have equal opportunities in their working life (Lipkova, 2011). It is also a key instrument to support youth employment, learning mobility of young workers, preventing early school leaving and increasing skills levels.

Given the current constraints of the national budgets of the member states the Commission should focus on better use of the EU funds. Cohesion policy already contributes to the development of new skills and jobs, including in the burgeoning field of "green" and blue economy. It is necessary to exploit the potential of financial instruments and the EU regulations used to support reforms in the areas of employment, education and training: notably the European Social Fund (ESF), but also the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), the Lifelong Learning and the Progress program, which was established to promote microfinance through a wide range of instruments, in particular, guarantees and funded instruments (Kordos, 2014).

"Youth on the Move" gets financial support from several programs at the same time. In the area of education and training it is the Lifelong Learning Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, Comenius and Grundtvig. For specific target groups there are targeted financial support for Erasmus Mundus, Tempus and Marie Curie Actions. Erasmus for young entrepreneurs serves to support business mobility. These programs are not able to cover all financing of measures and activities within "Youth on the Move". It is necessary to accumulate funding from public, private and community resources too.

The multiannual financial framework for the period 2014–2020 allocates 508,921 mln EUR for smart and inclusive growth, of which 142,130 mln EUR go for competitiveness and employment, and for economic, social and territorial cohesion – 366,791 mln EUR. The Employment and Social Innovation program get 7,057,69 mln EUR. The Erasmus plus which shall improve the employability in the EU by improving education systems obtains 14,774.52 mln EUR. Through "Horizon 2020" the EU has to ensure global competitiveness via innovation investment in key technologies. For this program 79,401.83 mln EUR are allocated (European Commission, 2014).

"Youth Employment Initiative" (3,221 mln EUR) supports young people in education, employment or training in the regions of the European Union with youth

unemployment more than 25% in 2012. The initiative focuses on integrating these young people into the labour market, 3,000 mln EUR of the funds come from a dedicated budget line supplemented by 3 bln EUR extra from the European Social Fund (European Commission, 2014).

Output analysis. When analyzing the key actions of the EU and the member states it can be concluded that a common and coordinated EU approach can be applied to the recommendations on the reduction of early school leaving, analysis of the literacy of students and adults in the member states and information on the validation of non-formal and informal learning. Support for improving access and participation in high quality traineeships is the responsibility of the member states, in particular, in terms of legislative framework that governs legal relations between social partners (safety and health at work, remuneration issues, and quality of working conditions).

The EU Institutions recommend the member states and educational institutions to use their skills in developing the curricula for educational mobility be a part of the curriculum, with the effective credit recognition and implementation of the EU Visa Code. Increasing interest in higher education must contribute to a wide range of education and regular publication of data on employment. Regarding financing – universities should be funded by alternative sources, financial incentives should be directed to the promotion of the so-called non-traditional students. Educational institutions should develop partnerships with business community. The EU institutions should provide advice, analysis, data and monitoring activities according to the recommendations provided by the European Council, the European Commission, the European Parliament.

Conclusion. Analyzing the measures of the EU educational policy arising from the strategic material "Europe 2020" a conclusion could be made that they are set wide and synergistic effect can be achieved through their implementation. In particular, it is clear that the responsibility for the implementation of individual measures bear the EU member states. Here we show the greatest challenge of the domestic legislation of the member states related to labour law. Involving the European Court of Justice is expected in this field. Great progress has been made on the issue of mutual recognition of education, skills and abilities of employees.

The role of the EU institutions is in strong coordination of individual actions, monitoring their implementation and funding through various programs. The EU institutions have issued a number of legislative documents on the realisation of "Europe 2020". We can conclude that most of them were approved at least one year after the planned adoption. Thus, the implementation and execution is postponed. Anyway, the documents establish a legal framework for implementation of the measures. An important task of the EU is the mutual information among the member states, which has a great influence on the coordination of certain provisions on educational and labour mobility.

Controversial issue may seem, given the current political and security situation, the measures promoting economic growth through immigration. Migration policy of the member states is facing serious examination; however, it shows that immigration of highly qualified experts from third countries will be essential for the EU economy.

At present, there are 2.5 mln unemployed persons at the age of 20–64 the EU, but there are only 2 mln of vacancies. In 2060, the EU will lack 33% of its working

population as compared to 2009. These are the challenges for the EU – not only to reduce unemployment to an acceptable level, but especially to create new jobs in some sectors of the economy. It will also be necessary to ensure sufficient labour force for the next decade.

References:

- Council EU (2012). Council recommendation on policies to reduce early school leaving // eur-lex.europa.eu.
- Council EU (2012). Council recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning // eur-lex.europa.eu.
- Council EU (2013). Council directive on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of highly qualified employment, 2013 // eur-lex.europa.eu.
- Council EU (2013). Council recommendation on establishing of Youth Guarantee // eur-lex.europa.eu.
- Dziura, B.* (2014). Modra ekonomika a jej vyvojove trendy. In: Conference proceedings 15th International Scientific Conference 2014 (pp. 145–154). Bratislava: Publishing House EKONOM.
- EU high level group for literacy (2012). Final report // ec.europa.eu.
- EURES European Job mobility portal (2014) // ec.europa.eu.
- Europa portal (2014). Summaries of EU legislation // europa.eu.
- European Commission (2010). Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European economic and social committee and the committee of the regions youth on the move an initiative to unleash the potential of young people to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the European Union // eur-lex.europa.eu.
- European Commission (2011). Commission working document on recent developments in European high education systems // eur-lex.europa.eu.
- European Commission (2012). Towards a Quality Framework on Traineeships, 2012 // ec.europa.eu.
- European Commission (2014). Financing programme and budget // ec.europa.eu.
- European Parliament (2012). European cooperation in vocational education and training to support the Europe 2020 strategy // eur-lex.europa.eu.
- European Parliament (2013). Decision of the European parliament and of the Council on the Strategic Innovation Agenda of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT): the contribution of the EIT to a more innovative Europe // eit.europa.eu.
- European Vacancy and Recruitment Report (2014) // ec.europa.eu.
- Euskills panorama (2014). Key Indicators // euskills panorama.cedefop.europa.eu.
- Kordos, M.* (2014). Role of innovations in the EU industrial policy and competitiveness enhancement. In: Proceedings of the 2nd international conference on European integration 2014 (pp. 335–342). Ostrava: VSB.
- Lipkova, L'.* (2011). Evropska unia. Bratislava: Sprint dva.
- Pasztorova, J.* (2014). Finsko: inovacie a zeleny rast. In: Vedecke state Obchodnej fakulty 2014 (ss. 529–539). Bratislava: Vydavatel'stvo EKONOM.
- U-multirank (2014) // www.u-portal.org.

Стаття надійшла до редакції 16.03.2015.