

**Question for written answer E-003000/2026
to the Commission**
Rule 144
Gerald Hauser (PfE)

Subject: Dire situation of young people in the EU

In 2025, around 15 % of young people in Europe were classified as NEETs, meaning that they were not in education, employment or training.¹

Lockdown and school closure policies during the COVID-19 pandemic compounded this problem, hindering access to education and reducing young people's employment opportunities. Already in 2021, the World Bank spoke of a 'lost generation' as a result of learning losses and the loss of social interaction.²

NEETs do not contribute to tax revenues and often rely on social benefits. The cost to European countries is estimated at around EUR 153 billion per year. This represents around 1.2 % of the gross domestic product of the entire EU.³ Against a backdrop of demographic change, persistent economic weakness, rising unemployment, as well as advancing digitalisation, including artificial intelligence, this situation presents a ticking time bomb.

1. What specific measures will the Commission take to solve this problem, which has so far been downplayed?
2. How will these millions of children and young people be integrated into training programmes and the labour market?
3. What percentage of NEETs in the EU are young people with a migrant background?

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¹ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/w/ddn-20260528-2?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

² https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2021/12/06/learning-losses-from-covid-19-could-cost-this-generation-of-students-close-to-17-trillion-in-lifetime-earnings?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

³ https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/103971468187482224/pdf/98665-WP-P148191-Box393178B-PUBLIC-Understanding-Out-of-Work-and-Out-of-School-Youth-in-ECA-Mauro-Mitra-Working-Paper-final2015.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com.