

Who are the NEETs?

The concept of NEET – young people not in employment, education or training – has been useful in enabling policymakers to better address the disjunctions between young people and the labour market. While the traditional labour market dichotomy of employed or unemployed is valid, it fails to capture modern school-to-work transitions and the legions of young people who are outside the labour market and not accumulating human capital and hence who may be vulnerable to a range of social ills. In 2015, some 4.6 million young people aged 15–24 were unemployed. This is just a subgroup of the broader category of NEET, which comprises 6.6 million young people, meaning that had the concept of NEET not found currency, 2 million young people would have attracted limited attention from a policy perspective. NEET has put previously marginalised populations such as young mothers, young people with disabilities and young labour market drop-outs back into the policy debate about youth unemployment.

NEETs is a broad category encompassing a heterogeneous population. Disentangling the subgroups within it is essential for a better understanding of their different characteristics and needs, and for tailoring effective policies to reintegrate them into the labour market or education.

Identifying the subgroups also aids in identifying who is most vulnerable to poverty and social exclusion. While individuals in the NEET category often experience multiple disadvantages, including a low level of education, poverty and difficult family backgrounds, the population of NEETs is made up of both vulnerable and non-vulnerable young people who have in common the fact that they are not accumulating human capital through formal channels.

Find out more: [Living and working in Europe 2016](#)

ESMA updates its MiFID II Q&As

03 October 2017

MiFID – Secondary Markets

The European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) has updated today its (Q&As) regarding the implementation of the Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (MiFID II).

Today's Q&As include news answers to questions regarding:

The purpose of the Q&As is to promote common supervisory approaches and

practices in the application of MiFID II and its implementing measures.

Closing statement by Michel Barnier at the Plenary Session of the European Parliament on the state of play of the negotiations with the United Kingdom

Thank you, President.

At the end of this dense, lively, and lengthy debate, I would first like to thank the European Parliament for the numerous messages of support for the work I have the honour of doing, with the trust of President Juncker and the services of the Commission, as well as with the team of Guy Verhofstadt, all the members of the Brexit Steering Group, and the Presidents of the Groups.

We need this support and trust. We need unity, which the Parliament demonstrates by a vast majority. At the end of this debate – and please forgive me for not replying individually to you as I usually do, even though I did listen carefully to what you have said – I would like to say a few short words.

First, to those who spoke, there are two words which I cannot accept because they are not at all part of my state of mind or attitude. They are: revenge and punishment. I have had the greatest admiration for the United Kingdom for a long time. I often recall that my first vote as a young French citizen in 1972 – at the age of 21 – was to campaign in the French referendum on the accession of the United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark and Norway. And it was not that easy to do as the young member of the Gaullist party that I was at the time. I never regretted that vote. I have the greatest admiration for your country and – honourable members from the United Kingdom – never, ever will you find the slightest bit of revenge or punishment in my attitude – never!

There is another word, Mr. Farage, that I cannot accept and which you mentioned once again. And that is the word “ransom.” There is no ransom. There is no exit bill. There is simply the fact that at the point in time that you leave, we are asking you to settle the accounts. No more, no less. To pay what you have committed to pay.

And I would add that this is an important point if – as you have wished – we are to begin a different, but solid and lasting relationship in trade, security, the fight against terrorism, and defence. We need to have this trust between us if we are to create a lasting relationship in the future. And the key to this trust is that you accept to settle the accounts objectively.

There is something which you have said, ladies and gentlemen, which I do not understand: the idea that I, as a European negotiator, or the European Union as a whole, are delaying things, or are trying to keep the United Kingdom in the Union. Ladies and gentlemen, the referendum in the United Kingdom took place on 23 June 2016. We received Theresa May's letter notifying us of the UK's intention to leave on 29 March 2017. Because of the elections in the UK, we waited until the end of June 2017 to begin the negotiations. We are not using delaying tactics. You took your time, and we respected that, but frankly I cannot accept your criticism. We are ready to intensify the rhythm of the negotiations, as much as necessary.

I would like to quickly run through a few points that should be well understood, or even better understood. The United Kingdom decided to leave the European Union. That was its sovereign decision. It is also leaving – as the UK government made clear – the Single Market and the Customs Union. After 44 years of integration, I would recommend that nobody underestimates the complexity and the legal, human, social, economic, and financial difficulties of this decision. And I recommend that those who made this decision should shoulder the consequences.

A second point: we respect the sovereign choice of the British citizens. We are putting in place the withdrawal that they wanted. We want this withdrawal to be orderly. And for a number of reasons, I think that it is better that you leave the European Union on 30 March 2019 with an agreement, rather than without one. It is in the common interest. We respect this choice. We ask you to respect the European Union. We ask you to respect the fact that we are uncompromising on the integrity of the Single Market, and on the respect of the rules on the functioning and the autonomy of decision-making in the European Union. European Union taxpayers cannot pay for the consequences of Brexit. Brexit cannot weaken the Single Market and the four freedoms, of which they are an intrinsic part.

Finally, all of us, including you honourable members, are elected representatives. We will have to be accountable to our citizens, whose rights are our priority. We will have to be accountable to taxpayers. We will have to be accountable to businesses. We will also have to be accountable – if I may say so – to those who have built the European Union over the past 60 years, of which we are the co-guarantors and for which we share responsibility. Ladies and gentlemen, I simply want the accounts that we render at the end of this negotiation to be fair and true accounts.

I will not touch upon the different points of the negotiations, as they are currently ongoing. We made some progress, and clarified a lot of points. It is in the general interest to deal with things in stages. We have little time between now and October/November 2018 to reach an agreement on the orderly withdrawal and – as the British government has requested – a possible transition period, for which the conditions have been clearly defined by your resolution in April, again today, and also by the European Council's guidelines.

This period will be short and supervised, and will involve the full regulatory structure, as well as budgetary and legal conditions, and the role

of the European Court of Justice. It was your request to have a short transition period. It is our right to say that this will be subject to the conditions of the Single Market. We were not surprised by this request for a transition period. We foresaw it. We will discuss it at the appropriate time, and that time has not yet come. I would need a mandate for this. I would like to tell Mr. Farage a simple legal point: the trade deal you want cannot be signed by a Member State of the Union. You need to have legally left before we sign this trade deal.

Ladies and gentlemen, throughout this process, we hope that the constructive tone that Theresa May adopted in her speech in Florence will be maintained and consolidated, so that we can continue as soon as next week to make more progress. As for me – and the responsibility with which I have been entrusted, and with your continued trust and support over the coming months – I will continue to lead negotiations which will remain dignified, calm and firm on the European Union's principles.

Thank you.

College read-out: Commission initiative to carry out public procurement more efficiently and in a sustainable manner

Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness Jyrki Katainen

Today we have adopted an important initiative on public procurement.

Public procurement may sound bureaucratic, but it is an issue of utmost importance.

Because every year, your public administrations spend €2 trillion yearly in buying public services and goods. €2 trillion! That is the equivalent of 14% of GDP of the EU28!

We are talking about an issue which either has or hasn't a big impact on growth perspectives.

These €2 trillion is your taxpayer money. And it's the public services you enjoy on a daily basis: the bus you take to work, your child's school, your electricity supply, your local swimming pool, the cleaning or catering at university...

It is very important to make public procurement function properly, efficiently and innovatively.

For instance innovation could be included much better in public procurement than we do at the moment. And the circular economy should be taken into account when doing a public tender.

One example of an innovative way to promote circular economy can be found in The Netherlands. The military had a tender on clothing. One of the preconditions was that clothes should be made of recycled material.

I would like to highlight two important dimensions of today's initiative:

1) Investment

When we talk about €2 trillion per year spent on public procurement, everybody can understand that this has a big impact of on the quality of public investment. Everything depends on how the money is used and how public procurement is run. Public investment can make a change; can make a difference, if the tender and public procurement is run well and innovatively.

2) International dimension

When we negotiate a trade agreement, we always want to talk about access to public procurement – and reciprocity is a key element for our trade and investment negotiations. In some areas, for instance in the trade agreement with Canada (CETA), we got a very good and far reaching result on this.

Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs Elżbieta Bieńkowska

We already have solid legislation in the EU on public procurement.

These rules were further simplified in 2014. But what we have found and we have been working on this with Jyrki [Katainen] the last several months also using our previous experience, especially my previous experience: We found out that public authorities are not making enough use of the new opportunities that were established in 2014.

So to use public procurement in a more strategic way, especially in these times of technological change to use them to reach environmental, societal, technological objectives when buying goods and services.

Sometimes we notice the rules might be new, not known, challenging or difficult. So there is a quite big fear against potential irregularities and we come back to the known old comfort zones and established practices.

Public procurement constitutes of 14% of GDP. We cannot afford not to have a coordinated renewed focus and political ownership in this area.

This is why we have been working on this package. This package is of course not a legislative package, but I am quite sure as it was warmly welcomed and

appreciated by all of the Member States, that this package will help the public authorities to use public procurement – this huge amount of money – strategically as a tool to obtain better value for taxpayers money and to contribute to a more innovative, resource-efficient, inclusive and competitive economy.

The initiative has four main strands:

1. We have defined priority areas for Member States to improve: We encourage Member States to develop a strategic approach to procurement policies, focusing on six priorities:

- o Make greater use of innovative, green and social criteria in awarding public contracts;
- o Make sure that public buyers have all the necessary professional skills;
- o Improve access for SMEs to procurement markets in the EU, to stimulate cross-border procurement, and for EU companies in third countries;
- o Increase the transparency, integrity and quality of procurement data;
- o Fully use digital technologies;
- o Increase cooperation among public buyers across the EU.

2. Voluntary ex-ante assessment of large infrastructure projects:

o Large infrastructure projects are important are complex, they are often affected by delays and budget overruns. We are setting up a voluntary mechanism to help national authorities with a proper application of public procurement laws

o We will advise on smaller questions on an early stage of the process and create a so-called help-desk. This will save time, avoid potentially costly mistakes, and ultimately help stimulate investments in infrastructure projects

o The mechanism is voluntary, the Commission's advice is non-binding, and information will be subject to strict confidentiality requirements

3. Recommendation on professionalisation of public buyers, the skills

4. Consultation on stimulating innovation through public procurement: Today we are also launching a consultation to collect feedback on how to stimulate innovation through the procurement of goods and services.

It is important to underline that each element of the package is accompanied by immediate support from the Commission.

How will the package benefit citizens?

Public procurements are all around: public transport, roads, conference centres, city squares, schools, hospitals ...

Our goal is it that before launching a call for infrastructure works – before taking out of the drawer old dusted former called tenders, before relying on the “lowest price”-selection-criteria (which is in the majority of the Member States the number one criteria) – before all of this: the authorities should ask themselves a number of questions, for example:

- Can I reserve a part of the execution of the contract to disadvantaged workers?
- Can I build a special access facility for disabled people?
- Can I condition the performance of the contract on the use of environmentally friendly materials?

We try to answer these questions together with Member States and stakeholders. Hopefully there will be a real culture shift. No more exclusive lowest-price-criterion, but a much bigger emphasis on the overall society benefit objective.

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