

NEGOTIATE

Overcoming early job-insecurity in Europe

Strategies to improve labour market integration of young people: Comparing policy coordination in nine European Countries

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Summary

Youth unemployment and job insecurity have become an increasing concern of national governments and the European Union (EU) during the last decade. In 2013, the European Council launched the Recommendation of the Youth Guarantee (YG) and member states made a commitment to ensure that young people below 25 years “receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education” (European Council 2013). Not only is the clear objective innovative but the YG also provides financial resources through the European Social Fund and the Youth Employment Initiative.

Countries implementing the YG have different starting positions regarding the active labour market policy (ALMP) approach, the spending for ALMP, unemployment protection as well as vocational education and training (VET) systems. Against that background the paper aims to analyse the strategies of national governments to implement the YG. Our purpose is, to assess what kind of impact the YG had on national policies and if changes go along with ‘new’ forms of policy coordination. Switzerland and Norway, two non-EU-members, serve as a reference group as these two countries carried out similar approaches even before the idea of the European YG.

The paper draws on country reports worked out within the NEGOTIATE project, based on primary and secondary sources as well as 4-6 expert interviews in each country. The countries involved are Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Germany, Poland, Spain and UK, plus Norway and Switzerland.

Using a neo-institutionalist policy approach, different youth employment policy regimes in the respective nine countries are typologised as a baseline for reform. A relevant indicator is the general youth activating policy approach defined as ‘enabling’ when education and training is fostered or ‘work-first’ in case immediate labour market integration is enhanced. Additionally, we consider the transition-to-work institutions in each country. All in all, we discovered three regime types: an *enabling/systematic SWT-regime* in Germany, Switzerland and Norway, a *work-first/guided SWT-regime* in UK, Czech Republic and Poland and a *work-first/solitary SWT-regime* in Spain, Greece and Bulgaria.

Beyond the fact that all EU countries – except for UK – acknowledge the YG and take the formulated demands as inspiring to domestic policy reforms, we identify a path dependent YG implementation strategy in line with the different regimes. However, in all countries changes to improve coordination can be identified. These include reforms in VET policy, public employment services and closer collaboration with social partners or third sector organisations concerning outreaching measures. The improvement of coordination, however, addresses rather different aspects in different countries. All in all, we characterise these changes as ‘system building’ as in the long run such incremental change may lead to the establishment of different VET systems. Only in Germany changes are considered as ‘system refinement’, as only at one point some major reforms are stated.

Against that background, we even may confirm the misfit-hypothesis as changes with respect to these institutions seem to be stronger in the *work-first/solitary SWT-regime* than in the *work-first/guided SWT-regimes* or even in the *enabling/systematic SWT regime*. The YG has a supportive impact on changes in the countries with *enabling SWT-regimes* (and the UK), while it was a trigger for new policy elements in the *work-first/guided SWT-regimes* and even a trigger for new system elements in countries with *work-first/solitary SWT-regimes*. Hence, the implementation of the YG is dominated by the institutional context.

Content

1. Introduction	1
2. The European Youth Guarantee	4
2.1 What is special about the YG?	4
2.2 Evaluation reports concerning the YG	6
3. State of the Art	7
3.1 Types of (youth) activating labour market policies	8
3.2 Institutionalised school-to-work transitions	9
3.3 Europeanization and Policy Change	10
4. Analytical Approach and Research Design	11
5. Point of Departure – the National Contexts	16
5.1 Different types of youth employment regimes	16
5.2 Intervening influences: Problem pressure and YG/YEI acceptance	20
6. Strategies to implement the YG and resulting change	23
6.1 Enabling/systematic SWT regimes	23
6.2 Work-First/guided SWT-regimes	27
6.3 Work-first/solitary SWT-regimes	29
6.4 Changes in the different SWT-regimes	33
7. Conclusion	36
Annex – Database and Explaining the SWT-Index	39
A 1. Relevance of apprenticeship programmes in the vocational education and training system	39
A 2. Access to unemployment benefits as incentive to registration with PES	42
A 3. Public expenditure on active labour market policies	47
References	48

List of Tables and Figures

Table 1: Categorizing the degree of institutionalization of School-to-Work-Transitions	19
Table 2: Types of Youth employment Policies	20
Table 3: Youth unemployment and NEET rate in 2013	21
Table 4: YEI funding according to member states	23
Table 5: Preliminary assessment – YG implementation and the extent of change in SWT policies	35
Table A 1: The role of vocational training and work-based training in VET 2012	42
Table A 2: Unemployment benefit access and coverage	45
Table A 3: Expenditure on active measures and labour market services per person wanting to work (in PPS) in 2010	47
Figure A 1: UI eligibility and benefit duration	44

Strategies to improve labour market integration of young people: comparing policy coordination in nine European Countries

Irene Dingeldey, Marie-Luise Assmann, Lisa Steinberg

1. Introduction

Youth unemployment and job insecurity have become an increasing concern of national governments and the European Union during the past decade – especially after youth unemployment in some countries had reached sky-scraping levels after the 2008 economic crisis. The European Union launched several programmes tackling youth unemployment such as ‘Youth guarantee’, ‘Youth initiative’ and ‘Youth on the Move’ which were underpinned by EU financing. In the following paper the impact of the Youth Guarantee (YG) or similar instruments in nine selected European countries is analysed as being the most important of the named programmes. YG is intended to provide all young people under the age of 25 years with entitlement to a ‘good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education’ (European Council 2013). Special emphasis is given to the group of NEETs (those not being in Employment, Education or Training), including young unemployed who are inactive and not looking for a job and are possibly not registered at the employment office (EC 2016f) (Eurofound 2016).

The guidelines formulated with respect to the implementation of the YG are based on six axes: (1) building up partnership-based approaches, (2) early intervention and activation, (3) supportive measures enabling labour market integration, (4) use of European Union funds, (5) assessment and continuous improvement of the scheme, and (6) its swift implementation. These axes aim at preventing early school leaving, fostering employability and removing practical barriers to employment. They can be supported by Union funds and should be continuously monitored and improved (EC 2016f). The respective goals are fostered by additional financial support through the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) that provides support for YG measures in regions with particular high youth unemployment.

All in all, the YG can be seen as a new element of the European Employment Strategy (EES) that now constitutes a part of the Europe 2020 Strategy, thus following the tradition of activating labour market policy, which is to be characterised as a supply-side oriented approach and closely linked to the Social Investment idea (La Porte and Heins 2015). Previous EU youth (un)employment policies were characterised by scholarly writing as focussing primarily on labour market inclusion (Lahusen *et al.* 2013). The Europe 2020 Strategy was understood to combine activation and conditionality of benefits with the commitment to the concept of ‘flexicurity’ (Muffels *et al.* 2014). This meant that the flexibilisation of employment forms or the lowering of youth wages in order

to facilitate an immediate integration into the workforce, although it would be in 'bad jobs' (Kal-leberg 2011), was accepted according to the requirements of economic competitiveness and labour market flexibility (Lahusen *et al.* 2013). In contrast, the 'good quality of job offers' required in the YG Recommendation could be interpreted as a gradual change of this strategy towards a more enabling approach, meaning to enhance individual capabilities by tailor made services, training and education (Lahusen *et al.* 2013); (Maydell and *et al.* 2006)).

Hence, the YG created high expectations for policy reforms in the member states. These, however, were not only to successfully address existing problems of young people to enter the labour market, but also to change the governance of (youth) labour market policies with respect to an improved coordination. This is indicated by a citation from the European Trade Union Institute:

"From the start, the Youth Guarantee represented, in the eyes of most stakeholders, a good opportunity, in particular for some countries, to rethink and reorganize active labour market policies targeting young people and to help identify the linkages between the labour market, education and the welfare systems that need to be improved in order to ensure smoother transitions into the labour market" (ETUC 2016).

However, the YG is not defined within narrow parameters, but more likely can be seen as a toolbox including preventive and corrective measures aimed at smoothing young people's entry to the labour market (EC 2016d; Bussi and Geyer 2013). Even in the Recommendation itself leeway for quite diverse implementation is indirectly opened when the different starting points of member states as regards levels of youth unemployment, institutional set-up and capacity of the various labour market players are emphasised (European Council 2013).

In order to explore whether these high expectations have been fulfilled and what impact the 'Youth Guarantee' had on the national level, we answer the following questions: ***"Which types of activation strategies to implement the YG are chosen by the national governments?"*** ***"Does this imply a change of domestic policies and lead to 'new' forms of policy coordination?"*** and ***"To what extent is this development influenced by domestic environments?"***

The empirical research is based on nine in-depth country studies. This allows us to identify different types of youth employment policy regimes and to discuss the strategies chosen to implement the EU policies within the respective clusters. As two of these countries are non-EU members, we use them as a reference group to identify developments where no compliance with EU recommendations is required. Theoretically we draw on existing typologies of activation policies and school-to-work-transition regimes in order to identify different implementation strategies. Furthermore we refer to literature on Europeanization and policy change to assess and explain changes in the national context. We are going to assess whether the implementation of the YG takes place path dependently and/or whether the misfit-hypothesis can be confirmed in the way that most deviant regimes perform the biggest transformation. The particular problem pressure, the discursive perception of the youth guarantee idea and the options of financing, however, are supposed to influence the change of the established activation approach, institutional settings or coordination efforts.

In order to develop this argument, in the first part of this paper we give more information on the YG in its historical development and as a governance instrument (2). We reflect the state of the art literature on the topic and discuss the comparative labour market and youth policy research as well as the school-to-work-transition-literature with particular emphasis on different typologies. Definitions of policy change and Europeanization are reported briefly (3). On that basis, we further develop our research approach and line out the research hypothesis. Additionally, criteria to identify different youth policy regimes in the selected countries are discussed. These will not only refer to different approaches of (youth) employment policies, but also address institutionalised paths of school-to-work transitions. Some of these criteria will also help to classify the strategies developed to comply with the YG (4).

Within the second part, we present the empirical analysis that is mainly based on the findings of the country studies. First of all, we identify the different types of national youth employment regimes in the countries under research (5). Drawing on the particular problem pressure the different countries face with respect to youth unemployment and lining out the discursive reception of the YG in the national context, we indicate further domestic influences on the implementation of the YG (6). Then, we line out the different strategies developed in the member countries to improve labour market integration of young people when implementing the YG or similar instruments and assess policy change within the field of youth employment policies in the nine countries under investigation. Finally, we summarise our findings on the impact of the YG in different youth employment policy regimes, paying particular attention to the development of 'new' forms of policy coordination and discuss our previous assumptions (7).

2. The European Youth Guarantee

2.1 What is special about the YG?

As a reaction to the economic crisis that had a severe impact on young people's employment in many member states, the Commission launched the Youth Employment Package and formulated a proposal for a Council Recommendation on establishing a Youth Guarantee in 2012. This may be seen as an example of cross border, multi-level policy learning, because in the 1970s youth guarantees were established for the first time in several Scandinavian countries (Escudero and López Morelo 2015). The respective idea was taken up by the Council in 2005 when it was agreed to guarantee a new start for every young unemployed before reaching six months of unemployment. Then several initiatives on the European level followed, emphasizing the introduction of a YG. At the end of this process the Council Recommendation was finally adopted in April 2013 (Escudero and López Morelo 2015). All member states committed to *'ensure that all young people up to the age of 25 years receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education'* (European Council 2013).

Being launched as a Council's Recommendation, the YG does not have a binding character and non-compliance is not sanctioned. In this sense, the YG can be seen as soft form of governance, closely linked to the Open Method of Coordination, which is regarded as being the EU's dominant strategy to implement social policy (Heidenreich 2009; Heidenreich and Zeitlin 2009). As the YG is linked to the recently introduced procedures of the European Semester, this introduces a semi-binding character (Costamagna 2013). The outcome-oriented approach of the YG nevertheless allows member states to implement programmes according to national and local circumstances. All in all, the construction of the YG as well as its implementation in the multi-level-governance system contains some particular features:

First, the term 'Guarantee' relates the initiative to the idea of employment promotion as a 'Social Right' (Sainsbury 1994) or even as a 'right to work', which – if taken seriously – creates a great obligation for member states' governments. The notion of a 'good quality of job offers' even goes further and suggests policy intervention that aims at enabling the young unemployed. The success of such labour-right programmes first and foremost depends either directly on the capacity of labour demand or on the state, acting as 'employer of last resort' to fulfil the commitments made (Dingeldey 2013). Furthermore, the YG defines some minimum criteria concerning policy implementation. These are the timeframe of intervention (four months) and the age range of the young people targeted (14-24 years, with particular emphasis on NEETs) (Bussi and Geyer 2013: 42). In combination with the policy guidelines a rather comprehensive frame on how policies should be implemented at the national level is provided. Even if the lack of precision in the formulation of these guidelines has been subject to criticism, three fundamental principles of the YG are mentioned, namely the early intervention and activation principle, the orientation of the services towards labour market integration and the need to build up a partnership approach (Dhéret and Roden 2016: 10). Compared to other goals of the Europe 2020 strategy *the recommendation of*

the YG seems exceptional with respect to the strong commitment requested from member states, the concreteness of its implementation guidelines and the tentatively formulated suggestion of an enabling policy approach.

Second, overall the support of NEETs gives particular priority to programmes for reducing early school-leaving and training drop-outs and to outreaching programmes that address and support young people that might not even be registered at the employment office (EC 2016f). In order to implement these goals effectively, coordination and partnerships across policy fields (employment, education, youth, social affairs, etc.)¹, as well as between public and private actors and particularly the involvement of the social partners are seen to be crucial and actively demanded (European Council 2013). *Hence, the implementation of the YG requires an intensification of policy coordination, especially in the context of for preventive or outreaching measures.*

Third, for the first time the EU dedicated a budget to youth employment when the European Council created the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI). This made EUR 6.4 billion available to NUTS 2 regions that had a youth unemployment rate above 25 % to finance the Youth Employment Package (including YG). Six billion Euros should immediately be disbursed during the first two years (2014-2016) of the next Multiannual Financial Framework². During the same period member states could make use of Euro 6.3 billion provided by the European Social Fund (ESF) in order to implement the YG (EC 2016f). In September 2016 the Commission stated that the YEI and YG will be prolonged and have an extended funding of EUR 2 billion for the period of 2017-2020 (with EUR 1 billion of matching funding to be provided from the European Social Fund), if the Council and the European Parliament adopt the Commission's proposal (EC 2016d). *The provision of particular funding implies a rather strong commitment of the EU that may have a significant influence on national employment policies –especially in countries with regions at NUTS 2 level.*

Fourth, the European Commission sees the main responsibility for the fight against youth unemployment as lying with the member states. The incorporation of the YG into the Country-Specific Recommendations of the European Semester monitoring includes a particular advice to member countries' policies. The European Semester was launched in 2011 and is considered as one of the main pillars of the Europe 2020 Strategy. The country-specific recommendations and the Semester policies have targeted national policies for unemployed young people³. Even if this is interpreted by scholarly writing as indicating only a medium level of surveillance and enforcement if the programs are co-funded (La Porte and Heins 2015), *it may signify an increased monitoring compared to other EU social policy implementation.*

¹ In this respect also on EU level several initiatives were taken alongside the YG. In 2013 the European Alliance for Apprenticeships was launched to improve the quality, the supply and the image of apprenticeships in Europe. The Recommendation on the Quality Framework for Traineeships was adopted in March 2014 and in 2015 the European Pact for Youth built on these initiatives to promote quality business-education partnerships.

² In 2015 the prefinancing to member states was speed up by almost EUR 1 billion.

³ For youth employment policies a total of 31 recommendations were adopted in 2014, 32 in 2015 and 37 in 2016. The country specific recommendations addressing the implementation of the YG issued in 2014 were 12; in 2015 8, and 15 in 2016 (ETUI 2016).

To sum up: within the EU multi-level governance system the YG-Recommendation may be characterised as being a new form of soft governance that sets rather concrete and ambitious goals for national policy making, including the demand for an enabling policy approach and an improved coordination between actors and policy fields. This makes it most relevant to assess how this instrument affects national policies and possibly leads to policy changes within the established youth employment regimes in the member countries. So far, the monitoring of the Commission in 2016 and first evaluation reports show a mixed picture on how these expectations have been met.

2.2 Evaluation reports concerning the YG

A first assessment of the YG, conducted by the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI), mirrors the labour market situation of young people in the EU. Furthermore, the YG as a policy instrument is characterised and a first reaction of governments and stakeholders in the member states to the new European policy is given, with a particular emphasis on trade union positions (Bussi and Geyer 2013). A more recent evaluation by ETUI (ETUC 2016) highlights a rather path dependent implementation of YG-measures, suggesting a variety of approaches and designs of Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans. It is emphasised that in many countries youngsters are disproportionately hit by atypical forms of employment and low wage employment. Hence, it is supposed that the quality aspects of the YG are not met. Furthermore, it is declared unacceptable that some national governments have not made use of all financial resources available (ETUC 2016: 7).

A study of the International Labour Office (ILO) also characterised the YG and its key success factors on a theoretical basis. An evaluation guided by the question whether the main features of the YG were included in the implementation plans published by the European Countries until the first half of 2014 followed. In the evaluation, it is stated that capacity building and employment intermediation measures as well as the creation of adequate institutional frameworks have been addressed in the majority of the respective plans. However, it is criticised that the allocation of resources reported is not sufficient to match the recommendations in two thirds of 15 reported countries (Escudero and López Morelo 2015). This is hinting at particular limits inherent to the YG: Although particular EU-financing is provided, the capacity of member states to fully implement a national YG will depend on the financial capacity of each country to fund or co-finance the requisite schemes. Furthermore, the supply-side character of the proposed measures leaves the impact on employment rates to be highly dependent on the overall macro-economic situation (Bussi and Geyer 2013: 42).

The study by the European Policy Centre analysed the compliance of the YG in five EU regions (Brussels-Capital, East Slovakia, Lombard, South West Scotland and North-Brabant) (Dhéret and Roden 2016). It confirmed that that the YG has pushed forward important reforms in the area of education and labour market policies. Additionally, progress with regard to policy evaluation and monitoring is highlighted. Furthermore, the general increase of attention devoted to youth unemployment is underlined. However, *“undeniable weaknesses in many of the YG schemes and an uneven level of Europeanisation”* are stated. According to these results, main points of criticism relate to *“the lack of continuity in the measures adopted over time, the disconnection between activation*

and protection measures, the incompleteness in the partnership approach and the insufficient efforts to reach out to the non-registered NEETs. These shortcomings are most often related to aspects in which member states and regions have been historically weak, highlighting therefore a strong path dependency logic” (Dhéret and Roden 2016: 5f.). Hence, a complementary and coherent policy approach of youth related measures is demanded, hinting at a better coordination.

Three years after the publication of the YG Recommendation the Commission presented a rather encompassing report on its impact (EC 2016f). Within this report, the YG is supposed to have helped to improve young people’s labour market performance since 2013 – indicated by declining rates of unemployment, NEET and early school drop-outs as well as rising rates of employment for the under-24-year-olds. Furthermore, the YG is seen as a powerful policy driver, although differences between member states with respect to policy change are mentioned. Altogether, three groups of countries are distinguished: first, countries with major challenges receiving significant EU funds which perform an accelerated policy development. Second, in those countries where comprehensive instruments were already in place, the YG has contributed to a scaling-up or an adjustment of existing measures. The third group are countries with more limited changes. The explanation given is for example a lower prioritization, delays or discontinuity in key measures (EC 2016f: 8). Across all countries, however, positive effects with respect to an improvement of the governance of youth labour market policies are stated, including the approach towards non-registered NEETs. Structural reforms were initiated with respect to apprenticeship and traineeships as well as with respect to an improvement of public employment services. Furthermore, the comprehensive monitoring framework is seen as helping member states to monitor the implementation of the YG. Outcomes are discussed along selected programme types across countries and a quantitative assessment of the impact of the YG measures is given. Finally, the distribution of funds is mirrored (commission staff working document). However, the Commission’s report has not taken into account, how previous national policies and institutions may have interacted with implementing the YG. Furthermore it was not discussed whether changes had been originated by the YG or by other policies.

To sum up: the existing studies provide very important insights into the implementation of the YG in the member states. However they also contain some shortcomings. Although it is mentioned that the respective member countries start from different baselines, this is not analysed in depth. Neither the different level of youth unemployment nor the institutional background of school-to-work-transitions or the relevance of vocational training systems is considered systematically. Furthermore, it is not clear if the indicated enabling goals of the YG or the ‘new’ forms of coordination are implemented or not. Neither the previous approach of national youth employment policies nor institutional settings are reflected.

3. State of the Art

The state-of-the art literature gives a brief overview on different types of activating labour market policies, although youth labour market policies are hardly typologised. However, we find types on

institutionalised school-to-work transitions in the literature, reflecting also the different educational and vocational training institutions. The conjunction of the two streams of literature therefore may give indicators on how to develop youth employment regime types in order to classify the domestic policy formations. With the literature on policy change and Europeanization of social policy, we learn about most relevant factors that may influence the implementation of the YG and policy change in the member countries.

3.1 Types of (youth) activating labour market policies

The discussion on different types of activating labour market policies is closely connected to the emergence of a new welfare state paradigm that started to be discussed at the end of the 1980s. Within that debate different terms to address the 'new' welfare state were used, such as the activating (OECD 1989), the enabling (Gilbert and Gilbert 1989; Gilbert and Terrell 2002), the workfare (Torfing 1999, 2000) or the social investment state⁴ (Giddens 1998; Morel *et al.* 2012); (Hemerijck 2015). The theoretical debate inspired fundamental policy reforms that aimed at a decrease of 'passive' benefit provision. More and more, social policy was understood as an investment to increase active societal participation and individual self-responsibility. Overall, labour market policy became central stage and was to be understood to enable all individuals to actively take part in the labour market. Hence, an improvement of counselling and placement services as well as the provision of (vocational) training programmes were closely connected with the improvement of other social services, as for example child care provision (Dingeldey 2010; Jenson 2009). At the same time incentives to take up employment were increased, meaning the introduction of tax credits and in work benefits, combined with increased conditionality on benefit receipt. Not explicitly discussed within the new paradigm was the flexibilisation of labour contracts and wages that contributed to an increase of precarious forms of employment going along with new social risks (Taylor-Gooby 2004). Overall, the promotion of the 'flexicurity' approach as a combination of flexible employment and social security became rather prominent since the 1990s in the EU (Muffels *et al.* 2014; Viebrock and Clasen 2009).

Although the new goals of an activating welfare state were accepted widely all over the Western world, the bundle of policies implemented showed a great variety. As a result we see different reform trajectories and transformation paths that often relate to different welfare state types. The first classifications differentiated overall between an enabling and a workfare approach, highlighting the orientation towards either training and qualification measures or the enforcement to work through the increased conditionality of transfers (Barbier and Ludwig-Mayerhofer 2004; Torfing 1999). The two types were linked to the social-democratic and the liberal welfare state model, indicating a possible third policy model for the conservative welfare states. Later, a distinction between *work first/pro market oriented policies* in contrast to *a human capital investment approach* was suggested (Bonoli 2010). Along the specification of these dimensions, four types of

⁴ In the following we refer to an 'activating welfare state' as being the most neutral term to name the new paradigm.

labour market policies are detected: 1) *incentive reinforcement*, 2) *employment assistance*, 3) *occupation* and 4) *upskilling*.⁵ Others, however, objected to this understanding and indicated that the workfare-element was a general characteristic of activation policies, being even stronger in countries with an enabling approach (Dingeldey 2007).

Furthermore, convergent trends of labour market policy development were highlighted with respect to the integration of unemployment benefit systems (Clasen and Clegg 2011) and the change of governance. The latter overall meant the introduction of New Public Management, the decentralization and marketization of services, but also interagency cooperation and partnership approaches to provide more encompassing services (van Berkel *et al.* 2011). Another typology tried to combine these aspects combining the focal point of labour market programmes with policy coordination. Country studies of a social-democratic, a liberal and a conservative welfare state model indicated the emergence of the following types: 1) '*encompassing social enablement*' based on the provision of high quality training and encompassing social services, holistic forms of governance and strong enforcement; 2) '*making work pay*' which prioritises direct labour market integration and focuses on the coordination of financial incentives to work and 3) '*flexibilisation and institutional dualisation*' based on rather strong deregulation of employment security, a neglect of the increase of quality training and a rather low level of coordination and enforcement (Dingeldey 2011). However, none of the named typologies particularly pays attention to youth employment policies. These are rather to be found with school-to-work-research.

3.2 Institutionalised school-to-work transitions

Pohl and Walther (2007) assume that youth transitions to adulthood have become de-standardised (due to lack of qualification, no access to or dropout from training/study, blocked labour market entry/lack of labour demand, etc.). They take a life-cycle perspective and highlight a holistic policy for guiding successful transitions. On that basis they identify five transition regimes, namely a 'Universalistic' (Denmark/Finland), 'Employment Centred' (Austria/Germany), 'Liberal' (UK), 'Sub-Protective' (Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain) and 'Post-Communist Countries' type (Pohl and Walther 2007). Although they identify the most relevant criteria such as the selectivity of the general education system, the standardization/flexibility of vocational training, social security provided by the state or the family and the employment policy focus, as well as the risk intensity of the employment system, the authors apply them selectively. In the respective article two types are distinguished by the universality or selectivity of programmes and protection, one by the policy orientation and the other two by political and welfare regime type characteristics.

Furthermore, the different types of VET systems are not systematically included, although they strongly structure institutionalised transitions from school to work – at least for those with low and/or medium qualification levels. These are vocational and technical schools (part of secondary

⁵ According to Bonoli (2010) the type of labour market policy implemented in different countries is not much influenced by welfare regimes, although he states that the Nordic countries continue to invest considerable more in this field and spend a bigger proportion on training. The employment assistance type is assigned to policies implemented since the mid-1990s in Denmark, UK, Sweden and Germany.

education; providing practice-oriented knowledge and skills required in specific occupations), formal apprenticeships (workplace training, combined with institutional instruction) and dual apprenticeship systems that combine school training with a firm-based approach and require a strong involvement of social partners⁶ (Eichhorst *et al.* 2015).

Referring to (Gangl 2001), Hora *et al.* (2015) suggest that the dominance of a (dual) apprenticeship system implies rather smooth transitions from school to work. In school-based systems the greatest difficulties of the youth in entering the labour market exist, partly because of the large proportion of low-skilled entrants and the lack in work-experience (Gangl 2001). Furthermore, literature on labour market segregation indicates that the risk of entering the labour market on a precarious status is increased through a high level of flexible employment, prevalent in Southern countries (Gebel and Giesecke 2016; Greve 2012; Kongshøj Madsen *et al.* 2013). So far, however, no encompassing typology for youth employment regimes is available that systematically relates the relevant criteria.

3.3 Europeanization and Policy Change

The Europeanization literature investigates policy changes within member states caused by EU (social) policies. Overall, with respect to the implementation of the EES, a kind of path dependent development is stated when countries implement mainly according to national priorities (Copeland and Ter Haar 2013). This is supported by the argument that policy programmes like the YG have been layered onto Europe 2020, but are still governed by relatively weak instruments and processes so they would affect member states only through voluntarism (La Porte and Heins 2015). Another strand of literature highlights the 'fit/misfit' hypothesis, namely the (dis)similarity of policy structures at both levels saying that a significant policy misfit would lead to strong adaptation pressure and finally domestic change (Green Cowles *et al.* 2001). Similarly, the role of national policy legacies and of the EU social funds were used to explain different effects of the EU 2020 strategy (Jessoula 2015). Others pointed at preferences of key institutional and social actors to be even more relevant than institutional design (Graziano 2011). Hence, the explanation concerning the domestic implementation of EU policies highlight path dependent developments but also point at institutional factors, discourse and financial resources.

What is hardly addressed in the Europeanization literature, however, is the classification of 'change' achieved, as often it is referred only to convergent or divergent developments. In order to differentiate policy change with respect to domestic policy making, we therefore draw on welfare state and policy analysis literature. First of all, a path dependent change means that the adoption of new policies will happen within the established institutional settings (Pierson 2000). Hence, a path breaking change is associated with institutional reforms that create new incentive structures for actors and change patterns of strategic interaction (Deeg 2001: 14). This is closely related

⁶ Although the authors relate these systems to particular countries, it has to be admitted, that for example in Germany a dual apprenticeship system and vocational and technical school systems are established side by side, albeit the first more likely for male dominated craft professions and traditional services like retail, hairdressing etc., and the later for female dominated social and health services professions (Powell and Solga 2008; Protsch and Solga 2015).

to Hall's definition of a third order change, referring to a change of problem perception and strategies that guide the change of instruments. This is distinguished from a substantial program reform, without altering original goals and problem perceptions (second order) and incremental adaption of existing policy instruments and programs (first order) (Hall 1993). Another definition highlighted that a change of institutions does not necessarily lead to an immediate change of outcomes – as these are additionally influenced by third factors like economic performance, etc. Hence, a differentiation between change of 1) discourse, 2) institutions, 3) output and 4) outcome was suggested (Andersen 2007).

To sum up: so far, no encompassing and systematically developed typologies of youth employment policy regimes exist. However, most relevant aspects have been identified to characterize activating employment policies, respectively transition from school-to-work regimes. Furthermore, the Europeanization literature has identified the most relevant influences on the implementation of policies that also may help to explain the domestic variety concerning the implementation of the YG as well as changes of national policies.

4. Analytical Approach and Research Design

In line with the Europeanization literature we focus on the institutionalised domestic policies, identifying different youth employment regimes. As our research questions deal with the impact of the YG on national policy strategies, we do not aim at building up an encompassing typology, but focus on those aspects that seem to be relevant according to the particular goals of the YG. In line with the state-of-the-art report, we therefore mirror the activation approach chosen and the institutionalization of school-to-work transitions, highlighting particular elements of established coordination. Furthermore, the availability of financial resources is mirrored. The indicators that define the different regimes are – at least partly – useful to define also the particular activation strategies to implement the YG. A comparison between youth employment regimes established before 2013 and the respective implementation strategy gives evidence on policy change of different levels as well as the introduction of 'new' forms of coordination.

Drawing on the institutionally based regime literature we expect that the YG is going to be implemented rather path dependent in line with the pre-existing youth employment regime. Accordingly, we assume that countries that previously had established an enabling approach within a highly institutionalised system of school-to-work transitions create predominantly enabling measures to implement the YG, while countries with an established work-first approach are more likely to support measures aiming at immediate labour market integration. This, however, is in contrast to the Europeanization literature that in line with the misfit-hypothesis would assume that countries with a work-first approach – being more distant to EU policy goals – would possibly induce more changes in order to meet the set goals. This might be overall true with respect to an increase of coordination related to vocational training policy or measures that may help to particularly address NEETs, possibly by following a partnership approach. As we do not know which of

these competing assumptions holds true, we have to wait for evidence according to the empirical findings.

Furthermore, we do not expect that the implementation of the YG is fully ‘determined’ by the established youth employment regime. Again, in line with the Europeanization literature, we will mirror the positive/negative perception of the idea of a YG by relevant national actors, high/low problem pressure in form of high/low youth unemployment, the availability of financial resources and the influence of direct financing of measures by the EU, respectively. A positive reception of the YG or additional financial resources might influence the establishment of a more enabling reform trajectory. High unemployment might result in a less targeted policy approach. Hence, the strategy chosen to implement the YG, the introduction of new forms of coordination and the effective change caused are understood to depend on the interplay of the domestic youth employment regime, the perception of the goals promoted by the YG in national discourse, the particular problem pressure and (additional) financial resources.

The analysis of these assumptions is based on secondary literature and data, and – as a main source – the comparison of nine country studies delivered within the NEGOTIATE project. In order to reflect the diversity of youth employment policies and their institutionalization across the member states, we use a rather broad country sample, including Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Spain, Poland and the UK as well as Norway and Switzerland. According to the above mentioned typologies, the sample is supposed to represent different institutional settings, i.e. types of welfare states, different systems of school-to-work-transition in line with divergent VET systems and different approaches of active labour market policies (work-first or enabling). Different economic situations, defined in line with the level of youth (un)employment, are also considered. With Greece and Spain we include two so called ‘programme countries’, subject to ‘hard’ requirements according to compromises for budget consolidation that may also influence employment policies. Finally, the sample includes old and new European member states as well as two non-EU members that can serve as a reference group where change is not necessarily driven by EU recommendations. However, both non-EU countries in our sample are rather advanced with respect to youth employment policies, and overall Norway is supposed to be a pioneer when it comes to implementing a YG, given that a similar programme has been in place since 1979 (Lindholm et al., 2016b: 6). This allows us to analyse support and mutual learning within and beyond European member states.

In order to distinguish different **youth labour market regimes** in these countries prior to 2013, we draw on the particular difference between an ‘enabling’ and ‘a work first’ approach of activating policy as well as on a joint indicator concerning the institutionalization of school-to-work transitions and their coordination. An *enabling approach* is predominated by the improvement of skills (upskilling towards the next professional or educational grade) and the achievement of a *formal* qualification or a school-leaving certificate. Relevant instruments are the existing educational/vocational institutions as well as long-term pre-vocational/educational and vocational programmes. The prevalent goal is that the low qualified youth finally integrates into the labour market as skilled workers (long-term perspective). A *work-first approach* is defined by the predominance of

measures to integrate young people quickly/immediately into jobs. The respective instruments are subsidies for employers and short-term training with no or few formal qualifications. Other instruments are subordinated to the category ‘pricing young workers into (low income) jobs’, meaning the regulation of special youth minimum wage rates or particular employment forms that include relative cost advantages for employers compared to standard employment relationships. The predominant goal is to avoid unemployment and provide access to the labour market, even though it would mean to work in ‘bad jobs’ (Kalleberg 2011).

With respect to the *institutionalization of school-to-work transitions*, we draw on different institutional settings: a) the particular model of vocational training system, b) access to unemployment benefits as an incentive for young unemployed to register with the Public Employment office (PES) and c) the public expenditure on active labour market policies:

a) As the quality of transitions into the labour market – especially for young people without tertiary education – very much depends on the particular type of the *prevalent vocational education and training (VET) system* (Solga *et al.* 2014: 1), we mirror this institution as a relevant aspect of the youth employment regime. Within an apprenticeship system the direct contact to an employer helps to acquire practical and labour market relevant skills and eases the access to the first job (EC 2013b: 8). According to Eichhorst *et al.* (2015), we differentiate between a school-based VET system, a focus on apprenticeships in the VET system, and an established dual vocational training system: The difference between a *school based system* and an *apprenticeship based system* is the share of VET programmes in a VET system, in which a certain amount of the training time is spent with work-based training⁷. The difference between an *apprenticeship based system* and a *dual vocational training system* is the role that dual tracks play in the respective country. We understand a dual track in line with the EU Commissions’ definition of apprenticeships as “*systematic, long-term training alternating periods at the workplace and in an educational institution or training centre. The apprentice is contractually linked to the employer and receives remuneration (wage or allowance). The employer assumes responsibility for providing the trainee with training leading to a specific occupation*” (EC and IKEI 2012: 21). We add to this definition that a dual track ends with the achievement of a standardised and certificated qualification as an ‘output’ and that the duration of the qualification period is at least two years. The indicators for assessing the relevance of the respective systems in a national context are the number of participants and the perceived attractiveness of the different VET programmes (school-based programme, work-based programme and dual track).

b) Young people with no work experience may not have access to contribution-based unemployment benefit systems. Due to means testing with respect to the household, young people do not receive unemployment or social assistance either, but depend on their parents. As access to ben-

⁷ Eichhorst *et al.* (2015: 318) use here the term “formal apprenticeship” as a differentiation criterion, which describes a combination between institutional instruction and workplace training. We focus on work-based training for distinction instead.

efits, however, is a clear incentive for the registration in the PES, a low rate of young benefit recipients is supposed to go along with a low rate of registration (compared to that of adults). This might be compensated by other benefits or services related to the status of adolescents being unemployed, for example, access to health insurance or child allowances paid to the parents. As the level of registration of young unemployed with PES seems to be a precondition to address and activate *the young unemployed*, we distinguish between systems that provide young people with moderate, limited or very limited access to any kind of unemployment benefits according to the ratio of benefit recipients/number of registered unemployed (Hora et al. 2016a).

c) *Spending on active labour market policies* is used as another relevant indicator for the institutionalization of labour market policy. As this indicator is not available for youth labour market policy in particular, we have to use the “expenditure on active measures and labour market service per person wanting to work (in PPS)”⁸. Thereby, we distinguish between countries with a *high* (more than 2000 PPS per person wanting to work in 2012), *medium* (between 1000 and 2000 PPS) and *low* (below 1000 PPS) level of public expenditure on active labour market policies.

All countries in our sample will be grouped according to these criteria in order to identify different youth policy regimes. These are considered as an ‘independent’ variable marking the national institutional background that is going to influence the strategy to implement the YG. At the same time, the outlined policy regimes define the baseline against which a possible policy change is going to be estimated.

The enabling/work-first differentiation is also applied to distinguish strategies to implement the YG, according to the focal point of the respective measures. An activating and overall enabling approach to integrate young people and NEETs (with particular problems) into employment requires coordination between different policy fields, services and administrative organisations (Champion and Bonoli 2012). We also mirror strategies that aim at the institutionalised school-to-work transition system – due to the implementation of the YG – or as part of the general youth activating labour market policy. As ‘new’ strategies of coordination we overall refer to the reforms of the vocational training system that lead towards a dual track apprenticeship system as we consider this in line with the establishment of a more enabling labour market policy approach. But also the creation of ‘one-stop-institutions’ which provide a single gateway for young unemployed within the PES (Minas 2014) or outreaching measures particularly aiming to address NEETs are considered as ‘new’ forms of coordination. Within this context, the cooperation of different public

⁸ “Active measures” or “LMP measures” (Categories 2-7 in the corresponding Eurostat data) cover activation measures for the unemployed and other target groups including the categories of training, job rotation and job sharing, employment incentives, supported employment and rehabilitation, direct job creation, and start-up incentives while “LMP services” (Category 1 in the corresponding Eurostat data) cover all services and activities of the PES together with any other publicly funded services for jobseekers (Eurostat and EC). We decided to sum up these two variables because in our view counselling as well as activation measures are part of an active labour market policy. “Public expenditure for active measures as a percentage of GDP” is not used as it does not reflect the level of unemployment in a country, despite the fact that this indicator would be more sensible for the different levels of economic development in the respective countries.

and private actors and of social partners might foster the implementation of a (new) partnership approach.

In line with the above mentioned definitions concerning different subjects and grades of change we first elaborate if and how the introduction of the European YG has influenced the activating policy approach as well as institutional settings: a *path breaking change* (third order) is assumed if the introduced ideas lead to a redirection of the former policy approach, for example from 'work first' to 'enabling' or include substantial reforms to establish a different vocational training system, for example an apprenticeship based system in a formerly school-based VET-system. An incremental reform towards the establishment of a (dual track) apprenticeship is called 'system building' (second order) and could – in the long run – turn to be path breaking. In contrast, 'system refinement' would be an improvement of existing measures (first order).

Although we focus on change, the research approach has to be open to the fact that the European employment policy, respectively the YG, may not have much impact on the development of labour market policies on the national level. Additionally, changes may occur, but may not be related to the EU YG. This might be displayed by convergent policy developments also in the non-EU-Member countries that are part of the sample. In this case, we may look for influences beyond EU policies as well as policy learning in a wider context.

5. Point of Departure – the National Contexts

5.1 Different types of youth employment regimes

The identification of different types of youth employment regimes is produced inductively along the ‘value’ for each indicator mentioned above (policy approach, type of vocational training system, access to unemployment benefit as incentive for registration with the PES and public expenditure on active labour market policy)⁹. As some countries display similar ‘values’, we can identify different groupings for each single indicator and for the respective accumulation to different youth employment regimes.

An enabling policy approach has been practised in *Germany as well as in Switzerland and Norway*. In these countries, the lack of a school certificate¹⁰ makes it difficult to enter vocational training. Without a vocational training certificate or university degree, young people have a hard time finding work. Therefore, education is seen as a central element to support young people to find work and measures focus on the attainment of school or vocational training certificates. For young people with low or no education the emphasis lies on enabling – meaning to complete general educational and/or to enter vocational training. As many of these measures are often provided by the educational system, they do not necessarily show up in statistics on active youth labour market policies.

In Germany, most young people participate in career choice and vocational training measures (BA 2015: 39) or enter the so called ‘transition system’. These measures either focus on young people who are at risk of leaving school without qualification or programs promoting the start, continuation or completion of vocational training. The transition system consists of prevocational measures to facilitate the transition from school to training. Similarly, *Switzerland* offers so called ‘bridging measures’ mainly with an educational focus to support the transition from compulsory to upper-secondary education. As these measures support young people to find an apprenticeship or to enrol in a continuing school, they display an enabling approach (Kilchmann *et al.* 2016: 21,23). *Norway* also enables the low-skilled youth to return back to upper secondary education (Directorate of Labour and Welfare Norway 2013: 7). In order to achieve this, a follow-up service is provided that addresses young drop-outs (16-21 years old) by motivating them to gain an educational or vocational training or alternatively to get a job (Lindholm *et al.* 2016b: 21).

All three countries also have work-first elements to activate young people. Especially for young unemployed with an upper secondary degree, the main goal is to integrate them into the labour market. A comparison within this group indicates that the established Youth Guarantee in Norway has a comparatively strict follow-up that enhances work or education (Directorate of Labour and Welfare Norway 2013: 10).

⁹ For details with respect to the different countries see Annex.

¹⁰ In Switzerland, there is not such a strong emphasis on the formal school certificate. It is important that young people complete the ninth grade. Swiss employers also focus on soft skills when hiring apprentices.

A work-first approach for young people is pursued by all other countries in the sample, the Southern European countries *Spain* and *Greece*, the Eastern European countries *Czech Republic*, *Bulgaria* and *Poland* and the liberal country *UK*. Here, employment policy aims at integrating young people quickly into jobs, although the instruments used might slightly differ. All of the countries except the UK are using subsidies for employers. In *Poland*, refunds of equipment costs or social insurance contributions as well as reimbursements for remuneration are long established labour market programs (MPIPS 2013: 4–5) and dominate the offer of employment measures. Similarly, subsidies to reduce employers' costs represent a traditional instrument of *Spanish* labour market policies (Ayllón and Ferreira-Batista 2016a: 18). In *Greece*, *Bulgaria* and *the Czech Republic* we also find that reimbursements for social insurance contributions (Employment Agency Bulgaria 2013: 9; OAED 2013: 4) or for costs no less than the minimal social security contribution threshold for the respective position (BG) are frequently used instruments to integrate the young into the labour market (Hora *et al.* 2016c; Kominou and Parsanoglou 2016; Spasova *et al.* 2016). Only in the *UK* subsidies are not commonly used. Here, the approach is client-orientated with a focus on gaining work-experience and providing job-search strategies (Bussi and O'Reilly 2016a: 23,26). Measures are short-term orientated towards bringing young people quickly into employment of any kind including low paid jobs. Overall, in *countries severely hit by the crisis* youth employment policies included wage cuts for the young (*Greece*) (Kretsos 2014: 40) as well as an expansion of flexible and insecure jobs (*Spain*) (Madsen *et al.* 2013). All six countries also have enabling policies targeting young people. Training measures are often short-term and generally not characteristic for the general approach.

The institutionalization of school-to-work-transitions is displayed by a so-called *School-to-Work-Transition-Index* (SWT-Index). This adds up the relevance of apprenticeship programs in the vocational education and training system of a country, the access to unemployment benefit as a registration incentive and the public expenditure on active labour market policies in general (indicating a low to high relevance/incidence of institutionalization of each indicator with scores between 1 and 3¹¹).

In line with the findings in the literature we defined criteria that assess a high relevance of a dual track system with a high institutionalization of successful school-to-work transitions. Within our sample, such *dual vocational training systems* exist in Germany, Switzerland and – to a lesser degree – also in Norway. In these countries the initial VET-systems at upper secondary level have a focus on work-based training (more than 50 per cent of all students in VET) and the major part of the VET-system (as well more than 40 per cent of all students in VET) include dual tracks. The high numbers of enrolment in these education tracks show that the dual vocational training system is perceived as an attractive education path by the young. *The Czech Republic, Poland and the United Kingdom have an apprenticeship based VET-system*. This means that although VET-programmes that include work-based training are rather frequent (having a range of 10 to 50 per cent of all students in VET), these programmes do not incorporate dual tracks and/or only a very small amount of places follow a 'real' dual track (this is defined by a range lower than 10 per cent of all students in ISCED3). *A school based VET-system dominates in Greece, Bulgaria and Spain*, so that

¹¹ Thus, all three indicators are weighted equally in the SWT-Index.

work-based training plays a minor to marginal role. Dual tracks in the sense of our definition do not exist or only a small number of dual track places is provided.

The incentives to register with the PES are additional criteria for the institutionalization of SWT systems. This is 'measured' as *access to unemployment benefits* by the coverage rate of young unemployed. According to these criteria, we see *moderate incentives for young people to register with PES* with coverage rates of 50 or more per cent in *Germany and the UK* as well as *Switzerland and Norway*. This, however, is often due to the receipt of means-tested benefits. In contrast, we assess *limited access* to unemployment benefits that go along with coverage rates for young unemployed below 20 per cent in *Bulgaria, Poland* and the *Czech Republic*. We categorize the access to unemployment benefits as *very limited* in *Greece and Spain*. In Greece, a social assistance system also targeting young people was only introduced in 2014. In Spain, although the coverage rate is higher, the access conditions are very narrow. Young people only have access to unemployment benefits in case they have previously received unemployment insurance (see Table A 2 in the annex).

Another criterion for the institutionalization of SWT systems is the spending on active labour market policy of the countries. As particular data on the expenditure for youth active labour market programmes do not exist, we refer to general *expenditure on active measures and labour market services* per person wanting to work (in PPS) in order to assess the institutionalization of activating labour market policies in general. Accordingly, only *Norway* and *Germany* score 'high' because they are spending more than 2000 PPS per person wanting to work on active measures and labour market services in 2010. *Spain, the United Kingdom, Poland* and the *Czech Republic* are 'medium', spending between 1000 and 2000 PPS a year, while *Greece* and *Bulgaria* score 'low' with less than 1000 PPS.

Adding up the different values we assess a high institutionalization of school-to-work transitions if the total SWT-Index reaches a score between eight and nine points (see Table 1 below). As this is true for *Germany, Switzerland and Norway*, we conclude that these countries have a *systematic school-to-work transition system*. The *UK, Poland and the Czech Republic* medium SWT-score between five and seven hints at support-mechanisms to ease the transition of young people into the labour market, but they are less encompassing than in the previously named countries. Hence, we speak of a *guided school-to-work transition*. The third group comprises countries with a low SWT score between three and four: *Greece, Spain and Bulgaria*. Here, efforts to support young people during their entrance into the labour market are made, but in many cases young people are left alone throughout their transition into the labour market. Therefore, these countries are supposed to have *solitary school-to-work-transitions*.

Table 1: Categorizing the degree of institutionalization of School-to-Work-Transitions

	<i>BG</i>	<i>CZ</i>	<i>DE</i>	<i>EL</i>	<i>NO</i>	<i>PL</i>	<i>ES</i>	<i>CH</i>	<i>UK</i>
Relevance of apprenticeship programs in Vocational education and training system (high- 3/ medium -2/ low - 1)	low	medium	high	low	High	medium	low	high	medium
	1	2	3	1	3	2	1	3	2
Access to unemployment benefit as a registration incentive (moderate - 3/ limited – 2/ very limited - 1)	limited	limited	moderate	very limited	moderate	limited	very limited	moderate	moderate
	2	2	3	1	3	2	1	3	3
Public expenditure on active labour market policies (high - 3/ medium - 2/ low - 1)	low	medium	high	low	High	medium	medium	high	medium
	1	2	3	1	3	2	2	3	2
SWT-Index (3-9)	4	6	9	3	9	6	4	9	7

The combination of the differentiation of the activating labour market policy approach and the SWT-Index indicates a youth employment regime that combines an enabling activating policy approach for the youth with systematic school-to work transitions. This is to be found in Germany, Switzerland and Norway. As all other countries pursue a work-first approach, however, we distinguish regime types along a work-first/guided school-to work transition in the UK, the Czech Republic and Poland and a work-first/solitary school-to work transition in Spain, Greece and Bulgaria.

Table 2: Types of Youth employment Policies

Level of institutionalization of school-to-work transitions	Type of activating labour market policy	
	Enabling approach	Work-first approach
Systematic school-to work-transitions (High SWT-Index: 8-9)	Germany Switzerland Norway	
Guided school-to work-transitions (Medium SWT-Index: 5-7)		United Kingdom Czech Republic Poland
Solitary school-to work-transitions (Low SWT-Index: 3-4)		Spain Greece Bulgaria

5.2 Intervening influences: Problem pressure and YG/YEI acceptance

Since the financial and economic crisis in 2009, youth unemployment and NEET rates in Europe had been rising and were still high when the YG was adopted in 2013. However, there were huge differences in the unemployment figures and, thus, the problem pressure to lower youth unemployment varied across countries. Apart from the UK the YG was mainly well received. The positive acceptance may also have been influenced by additional financial resources provided by ESF and YEI funding.

In countries with work-first/solitary and guided *SWT regimes*, youth unemployment and NEET rates are particularly high (Table 3). The work-first/solitary *SWT regimes* in Spain and Greece are most severely hit, with youth unemployment rates above 50 per cent and NEET rates way above the EU-28 average. Therefore, articles referred to a “lost generation” (Bosque Homs 2013). In both countries, young people have been negatively affected by austerity policies and by strict fiscal adjustment policies which have been most influential in Greece (Kretsos 2014: 41). Bulgaria has the highest NEET rate (21.6 per cent), but youth unemployment is just below 30 per cent. Countries with a work-first/guided *SWT regime*, by contrast, have only medium scores in unemployment. With 25 per cent in Bulgaria and Poland, respectively, these are slightly above EU-28 average. The UK and the Czech Republic show rates around 20 per cent or less. Countries like Germany, Switzerland and Norway that have an enabling/systematic *SWT regime*, however, have far lower youth unemployment and NEET rates. The data for our sample thus confirms the findings presented in the literature that, overall; systems with stronger institutionalised labour market systems have lower youth unemployment and NEET rates and, thus, face rather low problem pressure in this field.

Table 3: Youth unemployment and NEET rate in 2013

Youth unemployment rate U25 in %, 2013		NEET Rate U25 in %, 2013		Problem pressure
Greece	58.3	Bulgaria	21.6	High problem pressure
Spain	55.5	Greece	20.4	Spain, Greece
Bulgaria	28.4	Spain	18.6	(Bulgaria)
Poland	27.3	UK	13.2	Moderate problem pressure
United Kingdom	20.7	Poland	12.2	UK, Poland, Czech Republic
Czech Republic	18.9	Czech Republic	9.1	
Norway	9.1	Switzerland	7.1	Low problem pressure
Switzerland ^a	8.5	Germany	6.3	Norway, Germany, Switzerland
Germany	7.8	Norway	5.6	
EU-28 average	23.7	EU-28 average	13.0	

^a Unemployment rate for Switzerland from OECD data (OECD 2017).

Sources Eurostat (2017a): annual average - people less than 25 years as percentage of active population; data for Switzerland not available and Eurostat (2017b): Young people U25 neither in employment nor in education and training in 2013.

In almost all EU countries in our sample, the Recommendation of the YG was welcomed, in spite of differences concerning the problem pressure or the differences of the youth employment regime. Discussions in the member states highlighted slightly different key aspects, but hardly any controversial or heated debates concerning specified goals of the YG arose, except for the UK. Here, the binding character of the YG was criticised and the ‘within four month’ period to present an offer to the unemployed was seen as being ‘too long’. Additionally, the UK government argued that it already had a ‘Youth Contract Programme’ (2012-2016) targeted at 16-17-year-old NEETs to support them to enter education, training or a job with training as well as a programme supporting 16-24-year-olds to find work (Bussi and O'Reilly 2016b: 7). In consequence, the UK neglected the implementation of the YG (Bussi and O'Reilly 2016b: 4). In 2012, however, the Conservative Government adopted a ‘Youth Contract’ that acts as a YG (Bussi and O'Reilly 2016b: 3f., 7). Further, some areas in the country (most of the money goes to Southwest Scotland and to the West Midlands) are eligible to receive YEI funds (Bussi and O'Reilly 2016b: 10).

The Czech Republic and Poland emphasised that the YG is seen as an incentive to further develop already existing programmes (Hora *et al.* 2016c: 10–11; Michón and Buttler 2016). In Poland, the

government described the YG as “a stimulus to increase *the scale of the country’s reform (...) and name the previously conducted (...) with a new, attractive name, which might increase interest in activation measures among young people*” (interviewee from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in Michón and Buttler 2016: 3). In the Czech Republic, when the YG was adopted, the youth unemployment rate was decreasing and there was a general belief of a stabilisation as well as an improvement of the youth labour market situation. As indicated in Table 4, Poland also receives a rather high amount of money from the YEI (PL: 235.83 million Euros; CZ: 12.71 million Euros), whereas in the Czech Republic only one region qualifies to the target of 25 per cent of unemployment set for additional funding by the YEI (EC 2013a).

In *Spain, Greece and Bulgaria* – countries that face the highest problem pressure – the YG was broadly accepted. In Greece, the public debate about the concrete implementation of the YG was rather poor (Kominou and Papazachariou, 2016: 5). In Bulgaria, the focus was on measuring issues rather than on the usefulness or effectiveness of YG instruments. Although the topic measuring was addressed, a discussion about how independent research could contribute to the evaluation of measures was lacking (Spasova et al., 2016: 8). In Spain and Bulgaria, the additional funding of YG and YEI was particularly acknowledged. Spain received 1/3 of the total initial YEI budget (see Table 4) and Bulgaria was pleased by the increase of funding for their measures (Ayllón and Ferreira-Batista 2016b: 17; Spasova et al. 2016: 10).

According to the low incidence of youth unemployment and NEETs in Germany, the government argued that the Council’s Recommendation for a YG had already been implemented (Assmann et al. 2016: 5). The YG was seen as an instrument to further pursue a downward trend. Accordingly, the public discussions focused more on the YG as an EU-wide policy than on the incentive for national reform. The political commitment of the EU to combat high youth unemployment was acknowledged. However, other political actors and NGOs in Germany questioned whether the YG was sufficient to support the unemployed youth in Europe (Assmann et al. 2016: 3–4).

As Norway and Switzerland are non-EU members, they were not addressed to implement the EU Youth Guarantee. Nevertheless, similar initiatives have been implemented in these countries many years before: In Norway, a Youth Guarantee was already introduced in 1979 (Lindholm et al. 2016b: 6). In Switzerland, a rejected referendum in 2003 concerned an *Apprenticeship initiative (“Lehrstelleninitiative”)* that aimed at assuring a state regulated guarantee on vocational education and training (Kilchmann et al. 2016: 3). Furthermore, two Swiss cantons, Jura and Geneva, have a VET guarantee in their constitutions (Kilchmann et al. 2016: 10). In Switzerland, the referendum was accompanied by a much more controversial policy debate than in the EU member states. This is probably due to the fact that the (proposed) guarantee was much more ‘binding’ for employers and PES than the European YG Recommendation (for more information see below).

Table 4: YEI funding according to member states

Member state	YEI allocation (€ million)^a	Number of young unemployed (<25-year-olds in thousand in 2013)
Spain	881.44	951
Poland	235.83	407
UK	192.54	939
Greece	160.24	184
Bulgaria	51.56	65
Czech Republic	12.71	69
Germany	Not eligible	340
Norway	Not eligible	35

^a Member states have to match these amounts by at least the same amounts from their European Social Fund allocation
Source: EC (2014)

6. Strategies to implement the YG and resulting change

According to the above outlined criteria, we distinguish enabling and work first strategies to implement the YG. We follow the assumption that coordination with other policy fields as well as within the PES is needed, in order to address the particular needs of the young unemployed and the NEETs. We also indicate changes of the institutionalised school-to-work-transition systems, namely the vocational training system, the PES and the relevance of outreaching measures.

In our sample, Germany is the only EU member state that follows an enabling approach to implement the YG. In the other six countries, a work-first strategy dominates. Although enabling measures exist, they play a minor role within activating labour market policy. In order to reflect possible differences with respect to changes of the SWT-system, we look at solitary SWT regimes and guided SWT regimes separately.

6.1 Enabling/systematic SWT regimes

Germany, Norway and Switzerland were all classified as enabling/systematised SWT youth labour market policy regimes, with *Germany* being the only EU member country. However, there seems a continuity of an enabling strategy in the three countries that all faced comparable low youth unemployment rates – and thus did not have high pressure for short-term programmes to lower unemployment rates.

Germany, the only systematic SWT country that has to comply with the YG, continues with an enabling strategy based on already existing labour market policy instruments (Assmann *et al.* 2016:

5). Many measures focus on the attainment of school or vocational training certificates. Employment assistance in terms of vocational orientation instruments and counselling services are other very important features in the German YG. The majority of educational and labour market measures is preventive and aims at pupils, job or training seekers or young unemployed. To a far lesser extent, there also exist 'job first' measures such as an integration subsidy which aims at placement in employment (Assmann *et al.* 2016: 5). The German YG particularly addresses specified target groups with low educational levels, with disabilities and with migration backgrounds. NEETs are not a new target group as such, as they have been addressed before, the term, however, has received new attention. The heterogeneity of NEETs also makes it difficult to find an overall strategy. Outreaching measures for non-registered NEETs exist and are pursued further under the YG, even though there is no comprehensive approach addressing this group (Assmann *et al.* 2016: 7). All in all, the YG works as a stimulus that raised awareness and served as an impetus to push ahead with previously initiated reforms.

When designing and implementing the YG, municipalities participated via the local authority associations. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy also invited social partners, welfare associations or cooperation networks to a meeting where a raw version of the YG implementation plan was presented. Partners were given the opportunity to provide written feedback (Assmann *et al.* 2016: 12). Social partners constitute a strong part of the dual vocational training system as they participate in the approval of vocational training regulations (BIBB 2015). The *Alliance for Initial and Further Training* represents another form of network governance in which employers, ministries and other governmental institutions as well as the Federal Employment Agency agree to further strengthen vocational training and create more training positions (Assmann *et al.* 2016: 9,42). Beyond the continuous adaptations of the dual vocational training system and the growing importance of a school based training system that is overall relevant for (social) service professions, no significant institutional changes in this field were promoted. Already existing structural coordination will be further strengthened with respect to combine public employment services, educational measures, social youth services and other relevant institutions to support youth's school-to-work transitions. An important reform in this respect is the establishment of one-stop youth career agencies that started already before the YG implementation. The concept of youth career agencies varies in the several federal states, and the establishment of an actual building combining these services is a new development and so far mainly found in large cities (Assmann *et al.* 2016: 6).

Switzerland and Norway – as non-European member states – did not implement the YG, but have similar approaches in their countries (see below).

Referendum on a vocational training guarantee in Switzerland

Similarities of the European Youth Guarantee and *Swiss Apprenticeship Initiative*

As a non-EU member state, Switzerland did not implement the YG. Some years earlier, a Swiss referendum proposed a state-regulated guarantee on Vocational Education and Training (Apprenticeship Initiative¹²), which was clearly rejected in 2003 (Kilchmann *et al.* 2016: 3). Both, the European YG and the Apprenticeship Initiative, focus on the supply side, giving a guarantee to a 'high quality measure', explicitly named as a vocational training position in Switzerland. In two (out of the 26) cantons in Switzerland, a vocational training guarantee forms part of the constitution.

Political debate on the *Swiss Apprenticeship Initiative* and its rejection

The political and societal debate on the Swiss Initiative was much more detailed with respect to the proposed policy content than in the other European countries. Opponents, the Federal Council, the Parliament as well as economic organisations criticized the excessive government regulation and stressed that market mechanisms are seen as well functioning. The proponents and the leader of the campaign, the Swiss Federation of Trade Unions, argued that 15-20 per cent of yearly school-leavers do not acquire certified vocational training qualifications. Furthermore, the Federation pointed to a shortage of training positions and the free-rider problem concerning employers who do not offer training positions, but benefit from a well-trained workforce. Interestingly, the counterproposal by the Swiss government addressed this issue by employers' solidarity contributions for VET – a training levy (Kilchmann *et al.* 2016: 5–7). The Swiss people rejected the referendum (68.4 % opponents to 31.6 % proponents), corresponding to a political left-right pattern (Kilchmann *et al.* 2016: 4,7).

The introduction of a cantonal fund for VET – typical for enabling/systematic SWT regimes?

Eight (out of 26) cantons decided to carry out a cantonal fund for vocational education and training implied by the government's counterproposal. The idea behind is to create solidarity between companies that provide training positions and the ones that are not offering apprenticeships. The contributions to these funds range from 0.1 to 8 per cent of the total wage sum. The regulations vary across cantons, as sometimes local authorities provide part of the funding. The money is used for VET infrastructure, training for students and teachers or contributions to education centres (Kilchmann *et al.* 2016: 5). However, it may be seen as a supportive element to pursue an enabling strategy.

Canton Jura – a guarantee for vocational training

The Canton Jura as well as Geneva are the only two cantons that have a vocational training guarantee embedded in their constitution. In Jura, the guarantee was established already in 1977¹³ and is today described as "a humanistic idea that probably never had a fundamental impact" (Swiss report: 10) due to some problems regarding the number of apprenticeship positions. Low levels of NEETs and the fact that the number of apprenticeship positions is higher than the number of apprenticeship seekers never called the guarantee into question. A legal claim, however, does not exist. In Switzerland, it is impossible to claim any rights from the constitution (Kilchmann *et al.* 2016: 10).

The horizontal cooperation in Canton Jura is effectively pursued by informal networks in which administrative representatives, governmental authorities, social partners, social welfare offices, companies, and other local actors communicate and exchange their views. Additionally, the above-described cantonal funds for VET provide another form of coordination that strengthened the trust of employers in the local government administration (Kilchmann *et al.* 2016: 10).

¹² In Switzerland, it is called "Lehrstelleninitiative".

¹³ During this time, Jura split up from the Canton Bern Kilchmann *et al.* (2016: 10).

Improving a YG with a long tradition in Norway

Well-positioned with more than one YG in Norway

Norway as a non-EU member does not implement the European YG as such, but it can be seen as an important pioneer of the guarantee idea. In Norway, the introduction of the first YGs started in 1979. Currently, there are three different YGs in Norway which are differentiated by the age groups they are targeting (Lindholm *et al.* 2016b: 4; 7). There are some differences between the Norwegian YGs and the YG of the EU, even though they are similar in principle: In Norway, the time until young unemployed people have to receive an offer under the YGs is not four but six months and the quality of the measures is not explicitly mentioned in the guarantees (Lindholm *et al.* 2016b: 8). In any case, current developments in the Norwegian youth policy in the context of recent reforms and evolutions of their YGs have to be seen, above all, in connection with domestic and not with European influences (Lindholm *et al.* 2016b: 29).

The current implementation of the YGs in Norway – typical for enabling/systematised SWT regimes?

Despite the fact that the youth employment policies in Norway generally follow an enabling approach, previously strict employment protection regulations have been liberalised during the past years (reforms in 2000 and 2015) and, therefore, flexible forms of employment gained importance also for young people. In this sense, a new tendency towards a work-first approach in youth employment policy can be observed in Norway (Lindholm *et al.* 2016b: 30).

The school-to-work transitions in Norway have already been systematic for a long time, but a fine-tuning of the instruments was initiated in some areas as soon as the influences of the crisis were noticeable (Hora *et al.* 2016a: 28). During the last years, for instance, the focus of the follow-up services on addressing non-registered NEETs was strengthened (New Possibilities reform in 2010) and outreaching activities gained importance (Lindholm *et al.* 2016b: 25f.). On the other hand, the support for other target groups such as people with migration background or young parents and women, is still rather weak in Norwegian youth employment policies. At least young people with disabilities have traditionally been addressed ¹⁴ (Lindholm *et al.* 2016b: 30). Bigger reforms concerning the VET system or the registration system did not take place in Norway since the crisis. Only in 2005, a public sector reform had merged employment services, social insurance administration and municipal social services into one-stop-shops. Since then, some local welfare and employment offices have their own youth teams (Hora *et al.* 2016a: 28).

So far, the current developments in Norwegian youth employment policy are very similar to the situation in other enabling/systematised SWT regimes. Like in Germany, for example, there are no major reforms taking place in order to rebuild the SWT system. We rather observe a refinement of instruments – in Norway especially a refinement of coordination. A deviant development is, however, the increased flexibilisation of the labour market, which is not in line with the previous policy approach.

¹⁴ Furthermore, the Job strategy of 2012 brought new measures for young people with disabilities (Hora *et al.* 2016a: 28).

6.2 Work-First/guided SWT-regimes

Poland, the Czech Republic and the UK are countries classified as having work-first/guided SWT regimes. Concerning the implementation of the YG, however, the UK has an outstanding performance. It did not implement the European YG, but the Conservative Government implemented the “Youth Contract” as substitute in 2012 and thus was able to receive EU funding. Furthermore, the improvement of counselling and the transformation of the VET system were initiated already before 2010. Most important, however, the implementation in all three countries is dominated by a work-first strategy, combined with an expansion of work-based learning as well as the initiation or intensification of dual track VET programmes. Furthermore – at least in Poland and the Czech Republic a reinforcing of counselling efforts¹⁵ and a partnership approach was emphasised, although a bit “bumpy” and sometimes delayed (Hora *et al.* 2016c: 12f.; Michón and Buttler 2016: 9f., 39; MLSA 2014; MLSP and MID 2014: 19f.).

In *Poland*, because of the YG the general diversity of activating measures grew with the introduction of different vouchers¹⁶ (Michón and Buttler 2016: 3f.). A focus on NEETs is given, as some measures were created to activate especially unregistered young unemployed (Michón and Buttler 2016: 39), although these measures are still rare. Most of the programmes related to the YG support work practice or employment in form of subsidies for employers and do not include theoretical training (MLSP and MID 2014: 36f.). Hence, the work-first character of the previously established policies is continued (Michón and Buttler 2016: 11f). Single measures have an enabling character, as for example a training voucher, to be used for example to finance vocational qualification courses or courses that lead to a professional license (Michón and Buttler 2016: 11). Furthermore, the introduction of the “apprenticeship for adults” has to be mentioned (MLSP and MID 2014: 34), where practical and theoretical classes are combined and which ends with an exam similar to a dual track. The unemployed person receives benefits during the time of the apprenticeship (MLSP and MID 2014: 34).

As the personnel situation in the local labour offices is critical, there is a need for action that so far has not been addressed along YG reforms (Michón and Buttler 2016: 2). The implementation of the YG in Poland emphasizes the cooperation between local labour offices and the so-called “Voluntary Labour Corps” that closely cooperate with many social service partners, the local governments, NGOs and other associations (Michón and Buttler 2016: 20). However, these Voluntary Labour Corps existed in *Poland* already before the introduction of the YG. As non-registered NEETs are hardly addressed, outreach activities still do not play a major role in implementing the YG in Poland (Michón and Buttler 2016: 6). Social partners have been involved during the consultation processes of the YG implementation, but their influence on the YG implementation, monitoring

¹⁵ In Poland, for example, individual action plans were established as a mandatory tool for the PES (MLSP and MID 2014: 10).

¹⁶ For example, subsidies for mobility in the country were introduced as a “settlement voucher” and subsidies for telework for people who care for dependents as a “telework grant” (Michón and Buttler 2016: 12).

and evaluation was rather marginal (Michón and Buttler 2016: 35). Overall, a stronger involvement of employers in this field is regarded to be desirable (Michón and Buttler 2016: 37).

In the *Czech Republic*, the YG is implemented with a focus on the strengthening of already existing measures by backing them with more money (Hora *et al.* 2016c: 5)¹⁷. This applies for example to a job subsidy scheme (Hora *et al.* 2016c: 12)¹⁸. Hence, the scope of measures increased (Hora *et al.* 2016c: 53), but although a focus on NEETs is given, these measures are still in an early phase of their development (Hora *et al.* 2016c: 9). Enabling measures like professional apprenticeships and return-to-education-programmes were also put into practice, but come only in second place (Hora *et al.* 2016c: 10, 13f.). As a more preventive measure, internships for future graduates (in secondary and tertiary education) were funded in the framework of the YG in the publicly well-known programme "Internships for youth" (Hora *et al.* 2016c: 7). Another important measure was the project "Professional traineeship for young people up to 30 years". Both measures focused on providing young people with practical skills and work experience but did not (or only to a small degree) combine it with theoretical training (Hora *et al.* 2016c: 40).

The efforts to improve the performance of the PES or to increase registration incentives for the young were marginal (Hora *et al.* 2016c: 52), although the PES lacks efficiency and effectiveness because of an insufficient personal capacity. This leads to shortcomings in the support of young peoples' transitions into the labour market (Hora *et al.* 2016c: 7)¹⁹. The coordination of employment and education oriented measures with other social services is still not a focus (Hora *et al.* 2016c: 54) – even though it was mentioned in the implementation plan. Although with the measure "Support to return to education" some efforts in reaching particularly young NEETs with outreach strategies were made, they still have to be improved (Hora *et al.* 2016c: 8; 14). The social partners were actively involved during the "design" of the national YG programme and were able to push through some of their proposals (Hora *et al.* 2016c: 6). But there were also complaints that involvement was a bit too late, since some decisions on the YG implementation plan had already been taken (Hora *et al.* 2016c: 21).

In the *United Kingdom*, the measures implemented as part of the Youth Contract and financed by the YEI or other European funds are very much in line with the existing domestic policy approach. In contrast, however, target groups are rather differentiated, as single parents and people with a history of migration are specified and different sub-groups of NEETs are addressed²⁰ (Bussi and

¹⁷ All in all, the emphasis on ALMP has been intensified in the *Czech Republic* as between 2010 and 2015 the expenditure on active measures and labour market services per person wanting to work (in PPS) more than doubled from about 1200 PPS to about 2800 PPS (Source: Eurostat LMP expenditure "DG EMPL"). However, the motivation for this increase is seen in the change of government in the Czech Republic in 2013 and not related to the YG (Hora *et al.* 2016c: 9).

¹⁸ The low interest in training by employers and potential participants might have contributed to the preferred use of supported work places in the Czech Republic.

¹⁹ The reason for this condition in the PES was a reform in 2011, which merged a minimum income scheme/social assistance administration with the employment offices and was accompanied by redundancies (Hora *et al.* 2016c: 14).

²⁰ The NEETs were further differentiated as "Marginalised NEETs" (like care leavers or ex-offenders e.g.) as well as "NEETs with low qualifications; NEET who are not claiming any benefits; NEETs with more complex needs such as

O'Reilly 2016b: 11f.) Overall, programmes for the older youth cohorts between 25 and 29 years follow a clear work-first approach (Bussi and O'Reilly 2016b: 12). When it comes to the younger age-group between 16 and 24, a slightly more enabling approach is used as training leading to qualifications and apprenticeships is stronger, although a return to full-time education is not enhanced (Bussi and O'Reilly 2016b: 13). All in all, however, short pre-employment work experience and wage incentives for potential employers for the young are prioritised (Bussi and O'Reilly 2016b: 7, 12f.).

This goes along with incremental reforms to strengthen the apprenticeship system that started already before 2010. During the last years, reforms by the Conservative Government focused on the expansion of dual track programmes, also as part of the Youth Contract under which an “Apprenticeship Grant” was adopted in 2012 (Bussi and O'Reilly 2016b: 7). Other reforms followed with the “Apprenticeship Trailblazers” in 2012 that increased the participation of employers in the design and implementation of apprenticeships (Bussi and O'Reilly 2016a: 17) which were not linked to the Youth Guarantee or the Youth Contract. For 2017, the introduction of an “Apprenticeship Levy” is planned (Bussi and O'Reilly 2016a: 67).

Due to the emphasis on NEETs it does no surprise that the YEI-funded projects on the local level often address outreach activities (Bussi and O'Reilly 2016b: 12). Furthermore, the EU funded programmes helped to enhance coordination at the local level in certain areas, as documented by the case of Birmingham or the Working Futures Program in Liverpool (Bussi and O'Reilly 2016b: 21). The inclusion of social partners – formulated as an explicit goal of the European YG – was put into practice as they belonged to the central actors on the national level that coordinated the ESF and ESIF programmes, such as the Growth Programme Board and the ESIF-sub-committees (Bussi and O'Reilly 2016b: 16). Furthermore, social partners were involved in the consultation process for the ESF 2014-2020 and in designing strategic plans at the local level in some regions. Nevertheless, the general involvement of the social partners did not mean that their advice was taken into account in the end. In addition, especially trade unions are not involved in the delivery of programmes financed by the ESF and/or YEI (Bussi and O'Reilly 2016b: 17), which provoked a comment in the national recommendation to “systematically include trade unions [in the future] in the design and strategic consultation particularly when apprenticeship, training schemes and skills development are discussed” (Bussi and O'Reilly 2016b: 34).

6.3 Work-first/solitary SWT-regimes

Spain, Greece and Bulgaria – classified as having work-first/solitary SWT regimes – implemented the YG with a work-first approach. All three countries show high preferences for subsidised employment in their focal measures. This approach is accompanied by implementing structural reforms of vocational training policies with a focus on the improvement of attaining formal qualifications in combination with apprenticeship programs. At least in the VET system, enabling elements are improved. The YG, however, is not the trigger of these developments, but a reinforcing

homeless and travellers; y]oung people with mental health problems or with learning difficulties and those who have been qualified as ‘at risk’ of becoming NEETs” (Bussi and O'Reilly 2016b: 11f.).

and supportive instrument. Although NEETs are addressed in all countries, in Bulgaria the YG initiated a stronger focus on NEETs and NGO's participation in the implementation of the YG.

In *Greece*, the problem of youth unemployment is not primarily understood as a problem of low-skilled labour, but as a lack of demand. In the first place, labour market policy measures give financial incentives to companies to hire the adolescents also in times of uncertain conditions (Kominou and Parsanglou 2016: 9,18). Therefore, the Greek YG includes several voucher programs combining short training periods with work experiences. The Greek YG targets mainly young people between 15-24 years (MLSSW 2014: 31) and some selective measures are also for people up to 29 years. YG programmes rather foresee enabling measures for younger age groups (15-19 years) and work-first orientated or entrepreneurship programmes for older youths (20-24). Thereby, the implementation plan does neither distinguish between educational levels nor are particular target groups named due to ethnic origin or gender (MLSSW 2014: 13). Similar to Spain, Greece has 'second chance' schools in which young people who dropped out of school due to personal or social reasons are able to re-enter education (Kominou and Parsanglou 2016: 4). The overall focus of Greek's programmes, however, is the placement in subsidised job positions (Kominou and Parsanglou 2016: 18).

Nevertheless, the Greek government seeks to make the VET system more attractive (Kominou and Parsanglou 2016: 21). So far its low prestige is expressed by the fact that the majority of students rather chooses a general school with the option of tertiary education (Kominou and Parsanglou 2016: 12-13). To modernize the VET policy, a new legal framework of apprenticeships (law 4186/2013) was created in 2013 (MLSSW, 2014: 24-25; Kominou and Parsanglou 2016: 6). Objectives are to establish a quality framework, create a monitoring mechanism, strengthen private sector funding for VET, identify future skills needs and adjust the VET system to the needs of the labour market (EC 2016b: 5). The rate at which former trainees are hired by apprenticeship program companies is low (Kominou and Parsanglou 2016: 22). Nevertheless, there have been delays in the reforming process and it is too early to estimate the outcome. Other novelties in line with these objectives are the introduction of the "apprenticeship class" (Kominou and Parsanglou 2016: 6). Vocational training schools offer one year apprenticeship programme to provide work place experience that lead to a higher qualification (MLSSW, 2014: 25). Furthermore, career offices are created within vocational training schools to strengthen the link between labour demand and supply (Kominou and Parsanglou 2016: 8). For Greece it is stated, however, that the recession is a limiting factor and many Greek companies lack the necessary structures and financial resources for apprenticeship trainings. VET policy therefore still remains "underdeveloped" for providing smooth school-to-work transitions (Kominou and Parsanglou 2016: 12,28).

The YG implementation plan underlines restructuring the Greek PES [OAED]. The reform aims at internal changes such as a better alignment between organisational units, to engage hundreds of new employees to improve quality of services as well as the above outlined reforms for OAED's vocational schools. Besides, it includes the establishment of an online portal and a call centre for employers and job seekers (Kominou and Parsanglou 2016: 5). Overall, the objective is to introduce more individual approaches for unemployed persons and settling IAPs (Kominou and Parsanglou

2016: 8). Nevertheless, these reforms already started before the implementation of the YG, promoted by international institutions as part of fiscal discipline policies under the Memoranda of Understanding between Greece and its creditors (Kominou and Parsanglou 2016: 23). Regarding the participation of social partners in the design and implementation of the Greek YG, it is difficult to assess their influence (Kominou and Parsanglou 2016: 5). The role of social partners, in particular at the beginning of the phase of planning, seems rather marginal. In an ETUC report from 2014, the Greek trade union GSEE complains that it was not involved in the design of the YG. Furthermore, due to the lack of social dialogue and a deficient business implementation plan, the YG had to be revised (ETUC 2014: 40).

In *Spain*, the work-first approach to implement the YG is mainly based on the “Strategy of Entrepreneurship and Youth Employment” (EEEJ) and 80 per cent of the measures consider an incentive for hiring (Ayllón and Ferreira-Batista 2016b: 21). Another focus is to foster entrepreneurship (Piqué *et al.* 2015: 695). A line to promote employability by training exists including *Certificados de Profesionalidad*, in which training actions may lead to professional certificates or *Second Chance programmes* to re-enter education²¹. The majority of measures, however, focus on supporting young people’s immediate transition to the labour market, while enabling measures that lead to certificated professions play a minor role. These efforts within activating policy are paralleled by reforms put forward in November 2012 to “establish the basis for the progressive implementation of a dual training system” (Royal Decree 1529/2012) (Piqué *et al.* 2015: 694). The aim is to facilitate labour market integration for young people by matching vocational skills with labour market needs. The royal decree, however, implies several modalities of dual vocational offers that may vary between the options to get training combined with employment exclusively within a training centre or within an enterprise. Another option is to receive training offered by a training centre in combination with work-based training at an accredited company (ICF GHK 2012: 6). Although the number of participants increased rapidly from 4,292 in 2012/13 to 15,304 in 2014/2015, with the number of cooperating companies growing from 513 to 5,665 (EC 2016e: 59), we cannot assess if this is a step towards establishing a more dual-like training system as the quality of the programmes is not clear.

The Spanish YG implementation strategy involves the creation of multiple registration systems with strict eligibility criteria mainly targeting NEETs up to the age of 29: even those young Spaniards who have already been registered as unemployed at the regular PES registration system have to register in a particular system for the YG. This was delayed and became possible only in October 2014 (law 18/2014; Ayllón and Ferreira-Batista 2016b: 10–11). The region of Catalonia has its own YG database including additional information about the youth (Ayllón and Ferreira-Batista 2016b: 16). The inscription modalities are criticised as complicated and not target group orientated since it is the young people who need to get actively involved²² (Ayllón and Ferreira-Batista 2016b: 11).

²¹ For an overview of measures see Piqué *et al.* (2015: 696–97).

²² There are several ways to register and young people either need an electronic ID card or need to hand in a completed paper form at the registration office.

Among all countries under investigation, Spain's YG has the strongest focus on NEETs: young people qualify for the YG in case they have not worked in the last 30 days and have not received any training or educational action that involves more than 40 hours by month in the last 30 calendar days before application²³ (Ayllón and Ferreira-Batista 2016b: 12). Nevertheless, prior to implementing the YG, the offered measures already existed without the eligibility criteria. Therefore, with the implementation of the YG, the target group narrowed and the four months' limit set by the YG was also extended by one month (Ayllón and Ferreira-Batista 2016b: 12).

Social partners' involvement especially in the YG design can be considered as weak – at least on the national level. Meetings regarding the YG were rather information meetings on already taken decisions and did not provide a discussion forum (Ayllón and Ferreira-Batista 2016b: 5). The involvement and influence of social partners may be stronger at regional and local level, although big differences might exist. Additionally, within YG implementation, sector organisations, trade unions and employers can be beneficiaries to implement YG measures (Ayllón and Ferreira-Batista 2016b: 30).

Furthermore, the access to services regarding PES, unemployment benefits and welfare services for the youth is fragmented. Several administrations exist at national, regional and local level. Effective coordination between educational policies, employers and labour market policies still needs to be strengthened (Ayllón and Ferreira-Batista 2016b: 6,36). Nevertheless, a new outreach campaign in collaboration with NGOs already working with vulnerable groups was established to contact (administratively) excluded young people (EC 2016c: 32). These approaches in collaboration with NGOs are of crucial importance (Ayllón and Ferreira-Batista 2016b: 11, interviewee regional PES representative), although they are still of rather limited relevance.

In *Bulgaria*, the work-first approach of the YG implementation is expressed by a focus on subsidizing employment through incentives for employers. Employers receive reimbursement for costs for wages and social benefits to integrate young people into work. Furthermore, training packages (motivation training, key competences training, vocational training) are often combined with a subsidy for subsequent employment with the same employer (Employment Agency Bulgaria 2013: 9). Enabling measures in the sense of upskilling are rarely (next professional or educational grade) implemented. The age of the target group is extended to 29 years. Although different educational attainments are distinguished, young people with all educational levels are addressed. Since introducing the YG, there is a new focus on NEETs and a few measures target them explicitly (Spasova *et al.* 2016: 17).

With the introduction of the YG policy experts also become aware that the improvement of skills has become a compulsory and important part of policies (Spasova *et al.* 2016: 26). Most recently, reforms to modernize the mainly school based VET system were put in place. In 2014, the law of vocational education was reformed to improve provided work-based learning, adjust the VET sys-

²³ The Law 18/2014 (passed in 15/10/2014) has changed the period for not receiving an educational action from 90 to 30 days (Ayllón and Ferreira-Batista 2016b: 12).

tem to labour market needs and develop a validating system for informal and formal learning outcomes (EC 2016a: 7). The Bulgarian government signed an Agreement for project implementation on “Swiss Support for Introduction of Dual-Track Principles in Bulgaria Vocational Education System”. Bulgaria seeks for a VET system with a combination of vocational schools and work place training. The implementation is progressing quickly. For the school year 2016/2017, it is planned to establish 22 professional classes with dual training in 16 professions in 12 districts (Stoilova *et al.* 2016: 17). The focus on apprenticeship is stronger since 2014. Last year, schools with a dual vocational system made up about ten per cent of the professional schools. It was a strong increase, though, and it is planned to double the number each year (Spasova *et al.* 2016: 11). However, similar to Spain neither the definite quality of training nor the quantitative relevance can be estimated clearly at this time.

Profound reforms concerning the creation-of-one-stop services or restructuring PES institutions are not part of the implementation strategy (Spasova *et al.* 2016: 10, 13-14). Instead, the Bulgarian YG focuses on single employment assistance measures such as mediation for finding work, supporting entrepreneurship or application services. The “Youth Mediator” measure aims at NEETs who are not registered and aims at making them interact with public institutions to support their educational or social development and orientate them to employment. Mediators with tertiary education identify and make contacts with inactive persons up to 29 years old (EC 2016e: 39; Spasova *et al.* 2016: 12).

The participation and involvement of social partners was well developed before the implementation of the YG (Spasova *et al.* 2016: 15–16), so that they also were consulted for the design of the YG and a tripartite committee oversees the management of the YG (ETUC 2014: 42–43; Spasova *et al.* 2016: 10). NGO participation, however, was massively strengthened due to agreements and established committees linked to the YG (Spasova *et al.* 2016: 10,28)²⁴. Although the coordination of stakeholder networks and different policy fields has improved, a connection between combatting youth unemployment, social integration and family support policies is still missing. In line with the new focus on NEETs, outreaching activities are developed.

6.4 Changes in the different SWT-regimes

The implementation of the YG was accompanied by various changes of policies and institutions in the member countries. The YG effectively triggered some of these changes, while it only supported others that were already underway or had been initiated due to other processes. Furthermore, the respective changes were of different intensity and addressed different policy measures and institutional structures.

The assessment of these changes has to be related to the starting point in the respective countries, particularly to the different youth employment regimes. Hence, minor changes that just increase or specify existing measures or institutions are classified as ‘system refinement’. If, however, from

²⁴ Councils and committees are among others: Coordinating Council for Execution and Monitoring of Activities under the Bulgarian YG and a Committee monitoring HRD OP (for YEI and ESF) (Spasova *et al.* 2016: 15–16).

the point of national departure, 'new' institutional structures are introduced, we assess 'system building'. This may also include new forms of cooperation within administrations or with non-state actors when implementing a partnership approach – as long as this was not established before or only to a limited extent.

According to these criteria, we see a dominance of changes to be qualified as system refinement in the Czech Republic and Poland. Here, the newly introduced VET-measures are only punctual and so far do not promise severe and enduring institutional change. As regards Germany, only the introduction of one-stop institutions for the young as part of the reform of the PES may lead to system building with respect to the public administration (see Table 5).

In contrast, in Bulgaria, Greece, Spain and the UK VET reforms are advanced by legal acts and may thus be assumed to lead to a system building towards apprenticeship-based vocational training systems. Spain and Greece also initiated PES reforms that might lead to structural changes, for example with respect to the registration practice. However, this might depend on further development. Finally, in Bulgaria, network coordination was initiated and has to be regarded as a structural reform in the sense of system building.

It is highly interesting that the YG has triggered quite different elements of the named changes in the countries under review: in the Czech Republic, Poland and Bulgaria new policy elements were introduced in line with the YG Recommendation. In Bulgaria, the network cooperation was initiated due to the YG implementation, while in Spain a new registration system for the young unemployed was introduced in addition to the one already established within the PES. In Germany, the UK and Greece it had 'only' a supportive character for already initiated reforms of the PES or the VET system.

Hence, we can conclude that the YG indeed is to be regarded as an instrument of the Open Method of Coordination that leaves the scope of action very much with the member countries. Different institutional settings and problem pressure in the member countries lead to a broad variety of implementation strategies and promote a path dependent selection of the policy approach. Furthermore, the subject and intensity of policy changes that are supposed to improve labour market integration of young people vary enormously between countries.

Table 5: Preliminary assessment – YG implementation and the extent of change in SWT policies

Country	System refinement	System building	YG influence
Germany	Strengthening: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • outreaching measures for NEETs • social partner cooperation • VET policy 	New system elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative coordination via Introduction of one-stop institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive impact on existing policies • Supportive impact on introduction of one-stop institutions
United Kingdom	Strengthening: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focus on different target groups • focus on NEETs • outreaching measures 	New system elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VET reform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive impact on VET reform • Supportive impact on existing policies
Czech Republic	New policy elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • outreaching measures • focus on NEETs • preventive measures Strengthening: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scope of measures • VET policy 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trigger for new policy elements • Supportive impact on existing policies
Poland	New policy elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing diversity of measures • focus on NEETs Strengthening: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cooperation with social service partners and NGOs • VET policy 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trigger for new policy elements • Supportive impact on existing policies
Bulgaria	New policy elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • outreaching measures • focus on NEETs Strengthening: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scope of measures • social partner cooperation 	New system elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VET reform • network cooperation with NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trigger for new policy elements • Trigger for network cooperation with NGOs • Supportive impact on VET reform
Greece	Strengthening: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scope of measures 	New system elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VET reform • PES reform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive impact of VET reform • Supportive impact on PES reform
Spain	Strengthening: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scope of measures • strong focus on NEETs (narrowly defined target group) • outreaching measures with NGO participation 	New system elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VET reform • PES reform (YG registration system) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trigger for a new YG registration system • Supportive impact on VET reform

7. Conclusion

At the beginning of this report, we highlighted that the Recommendation of the European YG tentatively promotes an enabling policy approach to enhance individual capabilities. Although the idea of the YG was welcomed in nearly all member countries reviewed – only in the UK it was rejected - we see different implementation strategies. The previous chapter made clear, however, that an enabling approach was not dominant with respect to the implementation of the YG. In the majority of countries, measures aiming at an immediate integration of young people – i.e. a ‘work-first’ approach – characterised the YG implementation strategy. Overall, in countries where youth unemployment is exceptionally high, namely in Greece, Spain and Bulgaria, YG measures intend to stimulate labour demand by giving subventions to employers. To a lesser degree, this is even the case in countries with medium unemployment, namely in Poland and the Czech Republic. Although the UK does not subsidise employers, the employment strategy for young people also aims at immediate labour market integration. Furthermore, according to our assumption, we find a broader targeting of different groups that, however, is not particular for countries with high unemployment. In most countries, the age limit was extended to 29 years, while only in a few countries subgroups of NEETs were specified and addressed by special programmes.

The only EU member state in the sample that may be characterised to follow primarily an enabling approach is Germany. However, that is not unusual for countries with enabling/systematic SWT-systems as Switzerland also follows the respective track for the younger age cohorts without compulsory or vocational education. This is less true for Norway which in parts moved towards a more work-first orientated approach when increasing the flexibilisation of employment forms in order to integrate young people into the labour market.

These findings confirm a rather path dependent implementation of the YG and the development of activating labour market policies for the youth since 2013. But that is only half the story, as reforms of the SWT system have taken place in nearly all countries, thereby addressing distinct institutions with different intensity. Both in the work-first/solitary SWT-regimes and work-first/guided SWT-regimes, we find initiatives to introduce a more apprenticeship based VET system. Overall, in the solitary SWT-regimes this goes along with reforms to change the registration system or the organisation of the PES with respect to address the young unemployed. In spite of these reforms, we may state that in Spain reforms of the PES have hardly progressed. The introduction of a double registration structure may even hinder the implementation of YG measures. In Poland and the Czech Republic, the institutionalisation of the PES with respect to responsibilities and formal competences is higher, although efficiency and staffing are still low.

Beyond that, we observe many incremental reforms in these countries with respect to the VET system. Inspired by the idea that dual track VET systems produce a smoother transition from school to work, we understand a move towards a dual track VET system as an improvement of coordination between labour market and training policies for the young. To some extent, EU funds

related to the YG are used to support these reforms. Although at present this may be characterised 'only' as second order change (Hall 1993), in the long run a pathway to a 'system building' is indicated (which would mean a path breaking, third order change). With regard to several aspects the UK has to be considered exceptional as it did not ratify the YG and the reforms of the VET system were initiated long time ago.

Due to an increased awareness of the particular problem to address NEETs, we also see an establishment of outreaching measures in nearly all countries – albeit to a rather different extent. In some countries also the relevance of a partnership approach grew by including social partners as well as third sector organisations in policy formulation and implementation. Hence, with the implementation of the YG, 'new' forms of coordination across policy fields and in form of outreaching measures have become more important. In some cases, as for example in Germany, these forms of coordination had been well established before 2013. However, the YG has given tailwind to initiatives aiming at the introduction of one-stop-agencies for young unemployed within the PES. The accumulation of these first order changes in Germany can be seen as 'system refinement'. This also holds true for Norway and Switzerland – even without inducement to implement the European YG.

The intervening influence of high problem pressure may have inspired policy reform, but – as it went along with scarce financial resources – has also limited the national reform options. Thus, we do not find a particular influence on the implementation of the YG. In addition, the perception of the YG within the national discourse as an intervening variable had little influence in most of the countries. In the UK, however, the perception of the YG was a decisive factor and led to the non-ratification of the YG.

Compared to the respective starting point of the countries, the accumulated reform efforts and policy changes indeed seem to be stronger in the work-first/solitary SWT-regimes than in the work-first/guided regimes or in the enabling/systematic SWT regimes. Beyond the path dependent development approach within activating labour market policy and with respect to the reforms of the SWT system, we may confirm the misfit hypothesis: the institutional reform intensity towards a better coordination of school-to-work transitions is higher in countries that are more distant to EU-set goals. The YG has a supportive impact on changes in countries with enabling/systematic SWT-regimes and in the UK, which is a country with a high SWT-Index-score and therefore close to the group of systematic SWT-regimes. Compared to this, the YG had a more innovative impact in the other countries as it was a trigger for new policy elements in the work-first/guided SWT-regimes and even a trigger for new system elements in countries with work-first/solitary SWT-regimes.

However, these developments should not conceal the fact that in all countries the coordination in form of an improvement of targeting NEETs and implementing outreaching measures is still in the process of development. Furthermore, the very high unemployment rates indicate a problem of labour demand rather than a problem that relates to a mismatch of supplied human capital and

demanded skills. The uncertain economic conditions in these countries make it difficult for employers to hire young people after the termination of the labour market measure. Hence, activating labour market policies, even if supplied with higher financial resources, are not sufficient for solving this problem.

Annex – Database and Explaining the SWT-Index

A 1. Relevance of apprenticeship programmes in the vocational education and training system

A dual vocational training system exists in *Germany* and *Switzerland* and – to a lesser degree also in *Norway*. Here initial VET-systems at upper secondary level with a focus on work-based training (more than 50 per cent of all students in VET) and the major part of the VET-system (as well more than 40 per cent of all students in VET) are included in dual tracks. The high numbers of enrolment in these education tracks show that the dual vocational training system is perceived as an attractive education path by the young:

Germany has a longstanding tradition in dual tracks (EC and IKEI 2012: 21). Its' VET-system is smaller than in *Switzerland*. About half of the students in upper secondary education were participating in vocational programmes in 2012. But the number of students in programmes including work-based training as a share of all vocational training programmes was with 88 per cent really high in 2012 (see Table A 1). Student-enrolment in dual track programmes made up 51 per cent of all student-enrolment in vocational programmes at upper secondary education in this year (ISCED 3, Type 2 and 3) (Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung 2014: 98). These programmes in general last three or three-and-a-half years and usually include work in an enterprise for three or four days a week during the whole training period (EC and IKEI 2012: 145; Solga *et al.* 2014: 8).

In *Switzerland* the Initial VET-system at upper secondary school is very well developed – and even bigger than in *Germany*. In 2012, e.g. two-thirds of young people participating in upper secondary education were enrolled in the VET-system (see Table A 1). In 2012, 92 per cent of all students participating in vocational programmes in upper secondary education in *Switzerland* were enrolled in programmes that combine school- and work-based training²⁵ (see Table A1). Most of the VET-programmes are organised in a dual-tracked way (“duale berufliche Grundbildung”) (SERI 2016: 11). These programmes last between two and four years and generally include work in a company for three or four days a week during the whole training period (Bliem *et al.* 2016: 34; Schweizerische Koordinationsstelle für Bildungsforschung 2014: 2; SERI 2016: 11). In 2013 three out of five students entering upper secondary education in *Switzerland* were enrolled in dual-tracked programmes (SERI 2016: 11).

Norway is a country that has a dual vocational system, but the system is less established than in *Switzerland* and *Germany* with a 52-percent-enrolment in VET-programmes in comparison to overall enrolment in upper secondary education in 2012. A bit less than a third of the students taking part in the vocational programmes were registered in programmes combining school- and work-based training in the corresponding year (see Table A1). In *Norway* dual tracks in form of the so-called “two-plus-two system” exist: Mostly they consist of two years of school and then two years in an enterprise (Bjerkeng 2015: 4). Other forms are a “one-plus-three-“ and a “three-plus-one-model” (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training *et al.* 2012: 10). In 2011, there were

²⁵ It is important to mention, that the definition of a “programme combining school- and work-based training” in the OECD data is quite wide. It requires only that the programme includes at least 25% of work-based training (OECD: 2).

about 34.000 students in dual tracks in upper secondary VET in Norway which made up approximately 41 per cent of all students enrolled in Norwegian VET in the corresponding year and 17 per cent of all students enrolled in upper secondary education (own calculations based on (Jakobsen 2012: 16; 21).

Countries with **apprenticeship based training systems** are *the Czech Republic, Poland and the United Kingdom*. Although VET-programmes that include work-based training are rather frequent (10 to 50 per cent of all students in VET), these programmes do not incorporate dual tracks or the number of dual track places are very limited (up to 10 per cent of all students in ISCED3).

In *the Czech Republic* the VET-system is extraordinarily strong in 2012 with a 73 per cent enrolment in VET as a share of overall-enrolment in upper secondary education. A high percentage (44 per cent) of VET-students is taking part in programmes including work-based training (see Table A1), but this is organised mainly in form of short work placements (6-8 weeks) in the “academic” or the “technical track”. In the “apprenticeship track”, which lasts two to three years, practical training makes up 35-45 per cent of the training time, but it is conducted in special premises in the school and not in companies and “real work places” (cedefop 2011: 144; Straková 2015: 171). Therefore, the “apprenticeship track” in Czech Republic cannot be equated with a dual track as defined in this report.

Poland has a midsized VET-system in 2012. Only a small share of all students enrolled in the VET-system (15 per cent) is participating in programmes that combine school-based and work-based training in 2012 (see Table A 1). Dual tracks in the narrow sense of the term do exist in Poland – the young participants are called juvenile workers (“Kształcenie młodocianych pracowników”) (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie and BQ-Portal). These vocational training programmes normally last between two and three years (cedefop 2011: 31). But the quantitative importance of these dual tracks is rather marginal: in the school year 2011/2012 e.g. the number of juvenile workers trained in enterprises made up only about six per cent of all students enrolled in upper secondary education in Poland (own calculations based on (ReferNet Poland and cedefop 2012: 3; 18).

The United Kingdom has a relatively small VET-system, too. Only 39 per cent of all students in upper secondary education were enrolled in the VET-system in 2012. But a large percentage of these students (44 per cent) took part in programmes which incorporate work-based training (see Table A 1). Also dual tracks in the sense of our definition do exist in the UK (cedefop 2013: 2). Their duration is one or two years and the time spent with work-based training during the dual track is four days a week (BQ-Portal).

A school based training system dominates in *Greece, Bulgaria, and Spain*. Work-based training plays a minor to marginal role. Dual tracks in the sense of our definition do not exist or only a small number of dual track places are provided.

In *Greece* the VET-system is rather small with a 33 per cent of all enrolment in upper secondary education in 2012 (see Table A 1) The VET-programmes in Greece lack prestige and most of the young people in Greece prefer studying to an education in a VET-track (Kominou and Parsanglou

2016: 12f.). The education tracks at the EPAS and EPAL vocational schools in Greece sometimes provide school-based training in combination with practical training, but the latter takes place in premises of the school only (ReferNet Greece and cedefop 2009: 33). Nevertheless, special dual track vocational schools exist (“EPAS Mathiteias”). The duration of formation in these schools is two years and they include company-based training during the whole time of the programme at four or five days a week (ReferNet Greece and cedefop 2009: 37). Although recent data for Greece were not available, in 2007 the VET-system made up about 27 per cent of the education at upper secondary level. However, apprentices made up a share of only about 4 per cent of all students in upper secondary education (own calculations based on (ReferNet Greece and cedefop 2009: 7; 37). Hence, work-based training plays only a marginal role in the Greek VET-system.

Spain has a middle sized VET-system with a share of 46 per cent of all students enrolled in upper secondary education in 2012 (see Table A1). The attractiveness of the programs is not perceived as being very high by the young. A reason might be that many of the jobs available for VET graduates are short-term and often not paid very well (Souto-Otero and Ure 2012: 96ff.). Only two per cent of all students enrolled in VET in 2012 were participating in programmes that incorporate work-based training as well (see Table A1). The introduction of a dual track system in the narrower sense of our definition started in Spain only recently in 2012 (ReferNet Spain and cedefop 2012: 26) and did not exist before the implementation of the YG.

The VET-system in *Bulgaria* is also mid-sized as about 51 per cent of young people enrolled in upper secondary education participate in vocational programmes, but work-based training makes up less than 10 per cent of all training (cedefop 2014: 5). Hence, vocational programmes in Bulgaria are mainly school-based, but include practical training (cedefop 2011: 143). Continuing vocational training centres in Bulgaria offer workplace-based vocational training programmes, which are called “dual tracks”. Although they are all short-termed and aim at partial or upgrading qualifications (cedefop 2014: 2) that do not fit our definition of dual tracks. But work-based training makes up less than 10 per cent of all training.

Table A 1: The role of vocational training and work-based training in VET 2012

Country	Students enrolled in vocational programmes as a share of all students enrolled in upper secondary education (in some cases prevocational training programmes included)	Students enrolled in vocational programmes that combine school- and work-based training (at least 25%) as a share of all students enrolled in vocational programmes	Students enrolled in vocational programmes that combine school- and work-based training (at least 25%) as a share of all students enrolled in upper secondary education
Switzerland	65%	92%	60%
Germany	48%	88%	42%
Czech Republic	73%	44%	32%
UK	39%	44%	17%
Norway	52%	29%	15%
Poland	48%	15%	7%
Spain	46%	2%	1%
Greece	33%	n.e.	n.e.
Bulgaria	51% ^e	n.e.	n.e.

Source: OECD "Education at a Glance 2014" (OECD Publishing 2014: 314),

^eSource: Eurostat "UOE data collection on education systems" (cedefop 2014: 5)

A 2. Access to unemployment benefits as incentive to registration with PES

According to our research outline, we analyse the unemployment benefit system with respect to the incentive for young people to get registered with PES. Hence, the access conditions to unemployment benefits as well as the unemployment benefit coverage rate of 15-24 years-old will be used as indicators for the institutionalization of the system²⁶. Thereby, we draw on previous Negotiate work by (Hora et al. 2016a: 35-42) as well as national country reports.

²⁶ Supportive programmes during unemployment include unemployment insurance (UI), unemployment assistance (UA) and social assistance (SA) benefits. UI is earnings-related and usually funded by employer and/or employee contributions. UA and SA represent secondary benefit schemes for people whose access to unemployment insurance benefits expired or are not eligible for it. Persons usually need to actively look for a job when receiving any of these benefits. In this report SA access will only be considered if it is linked with employment benefit schemes and PES registration (Regalia and Gasparri 2013: 3).

The eligibility criteria and coverage rates of unemployment protection for young people show a high variance across countries. Although unemployment insurance (UI) schemes exist in all European countries, young people often do not have access to it as it depends on previous earnings, a particular contribution period and former working contract conditions. Based on (Maquet *et al.* 2016: 14), Figure A 1 compares the option and the maximum duration of receiving UI benefits for a 24-year old with 11 months and a 45-year-old with 10 years of working experience in selective countries. Only in Bulgaria and UK, the adolescents are entitled to benefits, although for a limited period (no more than 6 months). In most countries the working history of at least one year (and not the age) is the dominant eligibility criteria for UI benefits. This holds true for countries marked with an asterisk.²⁷ In Norway UI eligibility criteria is based on a previous minimum income (Lindholm *et al.* 2016a: 31). Therefore, young people rather depend on means-tested unemployment assistance or social assistance transfers (UA/SA) when being unemployed. In contrast to UI, these benefits are tax-financed, means-tested at the household level and less generous. As indicated in Table A 2, the eligibility criteria and coverage rates of unemployment protection for young people show a high variance across countries.

Countries with **moderate access to unemployment benefits** due to eligibility criteria have stronger incentives for the young to register with PES services, so that in consequence the coverage rate of registered 15-24 years-old, receiving unemployment benefits is rather high. *Switzerland, Germany* and *UK* belong in this category as unemployment benefit coverage levels for unemployed people below the age of 25 are above 50 per cent. Nevertheless, the different unemployment benefit schemes have different characteristics and eligibility criteria. Whereas in Switzerland and Germany, SA/UA is means-tested at parental income and household level until the young reaches age 25, in the UK²⁸ SA/UA is means-tested only at household level. Means-testing at household level or even at parental income may limit the autonomy and independence of young people to create individual households. For *Norway*, we do not have comparative coverage numbers. Norwegian UA/SA benefits are strongly linked with participation in active labour market programmes and the eligibility criteria for these benefits (not UI) are broad²⁹. Therefore, we anticipate a strong institutionalization of the labour market system and a tight connection between recipients and PES. In Germany additional incentives to get registered as unemployed are the access to health insurance and the entitlement to child care allowance to be claimed by the parents of young unemployed.

²⁷ In Greece, people need 125 days working record in the last 14 months prior to 200 working days in the last 2 years. People who apply for benefits for the first time need additional 80 days in the past two years (Karamessini *et al.* 2016: 20).

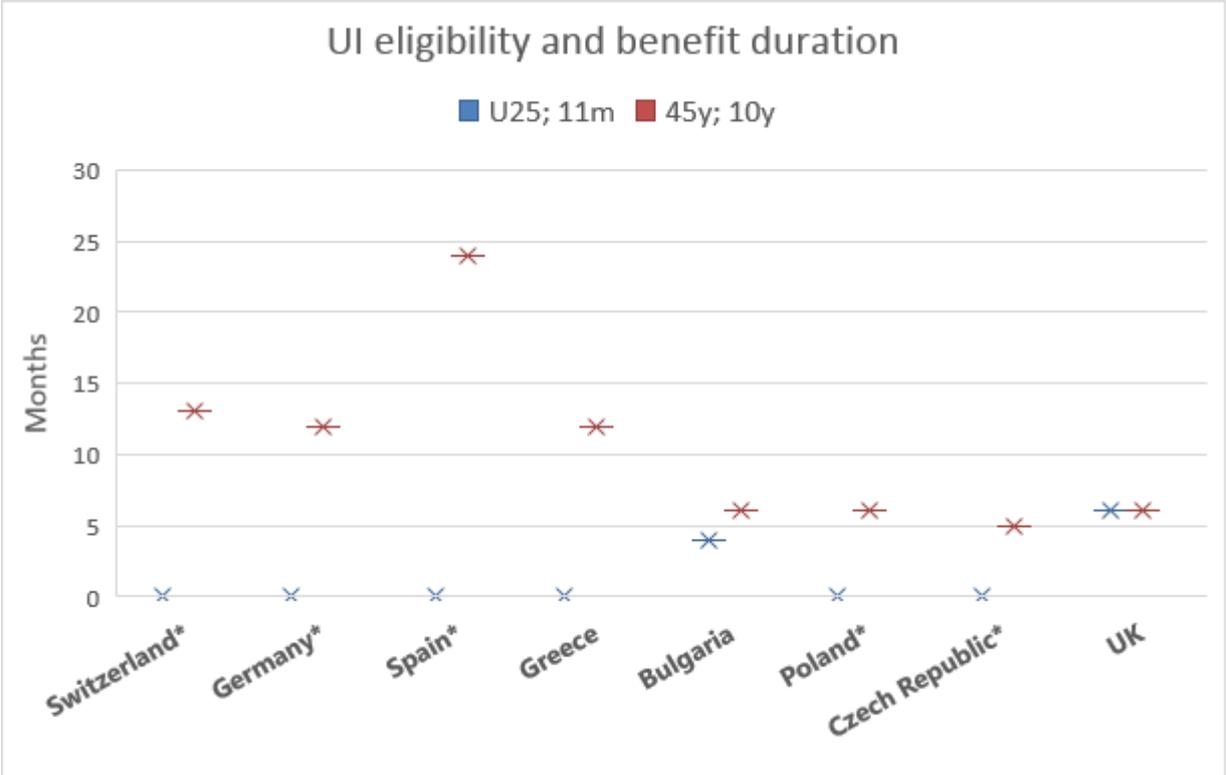
²⁸ In the UK, however, young people below the age of 18 are not entitled to any unemployment benefits regardless of their work history.

²⁹ In Norway SA is means-tested at household level and different schemes exist: *Employment scheme benefits* are connected to participation in an active labour market programs. Furthermore, *work assessment* that is targeted at young people with health problems and disability benefits. *Qualification allowance* is targeted at people who received social assistance for a long time to participate in a Qualification program. The program consists of work-orientated vocational training and people below the age of 25 receive only 2/3 of the overall benefit to make a regular path in the educational scheme more attractive (nonetheless 1/5 of participants are young people below 25 (Lindholm *et al.* 2016b: 32–34).

Limited access to unemployment benefits for young people is stated in *Bulgaria, Poland* and the *Czech Republic*. The proportion of young unemployed for three months or more in receipt of benefits is less than ten per cent in Bulgaria and Poland. Social assistance benefits are means-tested at household level. Nevertheless, Polish young may register with PES to get health insurance or access to scholarships (OECD 2009: 7). In Bulgaria, besides mean-testing, claimants need to be registered for at least nine months at PES before applying for unemployment assistance (Stoilova *et al.* 2016: 57). In the Czech Republic the unemployment benefit coverage for young people is below 20 per cent. For Czech youth, similar to Poland, social assistance is means-tested at household level, but young people who temporarily live in different places are counted as if living in the same flat (Hora *et al.* 2016b: 49).

In *Greece and Spain*, young people have **very limited access to unemployment benefits**. In Greece, a social assistance system also targeting young people was only introduced in 2014 (Hora *et al.* 2016a: 37). In Spain (although the coverage rate is higher), the unemployment assistance depends on previous unemployment insurance receipt, excluding young people without previous work record. There is a minimum income guarantee paid at local level. These schemes, however, differ across regions and young people are often excluded.

Figure A 1: UI eligibility and benefit duration



Source: Maquet *et al.* (2016: 14); Switzerland added and figure is modified.

Table A 2: Unemployment benefit access and coverage

Countries	Access to UB	Eligibility criteria UI; SA/UA		Coverage of 15-24 years-old in 2011 ³⁰
		UI	SA/UA	
Germany	Moderate access	min. contribution: 12 m / 2 y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> means-tested at household level and or parental income level until child is 25 y Registered with PES, actively looking for work 	High <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Around 60%
Switzerland	Moderate access	min. contribution: 12 m / 2 y <ul style="list-style-type: none"> U25 with no training completed cannot receive UI for 120 days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> means-tested at household level Parents responsible for child until it is 18 or 25 (if completed education) Registered with PES, actively looking for work 	High <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Above 50 per cent
Norway	Moderate access	Depends on previous income ³¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For people 18 years and older Registered with PES, actively looking for work 	n.e.
UK	Moderate access	min. contribution: about 6 m / 1 y or 12 m / 2 y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Means-tested (JSA, income support (18-19 y) at household level For people 18 years and older Registered with PES, actively looking for work 	High <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Above 50 per cent
Czech Republic	Limited access	min. contribution: 12 m / 24 m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Means-tested at household level Young people who temporarily live in different places are counted as if living in the same flat Registered with PES, actively looking for work 	Low <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Below 20 per cent
Poland	Limited access	min. contribution: ca. 1 y / 18 m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Means-tested at household level Young people who temporarily live in different places are counted as if living in the same flat Other benefits are available for youth registered with PES such 	Very low <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Below 5 per cent

³⁰ Proportion of young unemployed for three months or more in receipt of benefits. For numbers see Matsaganis *et al.* (2014: 27).

³¹ Previous income must have exceeded the income threshold (1.5 times the National Insurance Basic amount (G) during the last year (Lindholm *et al.* 2016a: 31).

			as health insurance or access to scholarships (OECD 2009: 7)	
Bulgaria	Limited access	min. contribution: 9 m / 15 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Means-tested SA at household level • Registered with PES, actively looking for work 	<p>Very low</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Below 5 per cent
Spain	Very limited access	min. contribution: 12 m / 3 y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricted access: UA depends on previous receipt of UI • means-tested family/household income • Registered with PES, actively looking for work • SA, minimum income guarantee³² at local level 	<p>Low</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Below 15 per cent
Greece	Very limited access	<p>min. contribution: ca. 4 m (125 d)/14 m prior to 6.5 m (200 d) /24 months</p> <p>First claimants: additional 80 days / 1 y</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No access for young people; only for people over 45 years • Social assistance system introduced in 2014 	<p>Very low</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Below 5 per cent

Table A.2 is based on Table 4.4a in Hora *et al.* (2016a: 67) and Matsaganis *et al.* (2014: 27) + Negotiate country reports: Assmann *et al.* (2016); Ayllón and Ferreira-Batista (2016a); Bussi and O'Reilly (2016a); Hora *et al.* (2016b); Karamessini *et al.* (2016); Kilchmann *et al.* (2016); Lindholm *et al.* (2016a); Michón and Buttler (2016); Stoilova *et al.* (2016)

³² Minimum income guarantee paid at local level (different schemes in 17 AC, often young people are excluded (Ayllón and Ferreira-Batista 2016a: 23).

A 3. Public expenditure on active labour market policies

On the base of Eurostat data concerning the “Expenditure on active measures and labour market services per person wanting to work” (in PPS) in 2010³³ (see Table A 3) we categorize the countries in our sample according to high, medium and low level of public expenditure on active labour market policies.

Countries with a **high level of public expenditure on active labour market policies** like *Norway* and *Germany* spend more than 2000 PPS per person wanting to work on active measures and labour market services in 2010. We indicate also Switzerland as a country with a high level of spending, although no comparative data are available³⁴.

Countries with a **medium level of public expenditure on active labour market policies** are *Spain*, *the United Kingdom*, *Poland* and *the Czech Republic* as they invested between 1000 and 2000 PPS per person wanting to work in active measures and labour market services in 2010.

Countries with a **low level of public expenditure on active labour market policies** are *Greece* and *Bulgaria*, because they spent less than 1000 PPS per person wanting to work on active measures and labour market services in 2010.

Table A 3: Expenditure on active measures and labour market services per person wanting to work (in PPS) in 2010

Country	Expenditure on active measures and labour market services per person wanting to work (in PPS)
Norway	5,951.97
Germany	4,571.27
Spain	1,520.22
United Kingdom	1,388.63
Poland	1,218.99
Czech Republic	1,224.05
Greece	751.59
Bulgaria	161.66
Switzerland	-

Source: Eurostat LMP expenditure (DG EMPL) (2010)

³³ We decided to use data from 2010 here because the numbers were not available for all the countries in our sample for 2012.

³⁴ OECD-data show that Switzerland invested 3.6 billion Swiss francs in active labour market policy (LMP services and measures) in 2010, which were about 2.6 billion euros at that time³⁴ while only 176.000 people were registered as unemployed at the beginning of 2010 in Switzerland SECO *et al.* . All in all, Switzerland spent about 15.000 Euros on active labour market policy per registered unemployed (which is not the same as „person wanting to work“) in 2010, which is not exactly the expenditure in PPS but in any case a really high amount.

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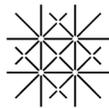
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