

A GUARANTEE SYSTEM
FOR YOUTH POLICIES

ONE STEP AHEAD
TOWARDS EMPLOYMENT
AND AUTONOMY



OSA



2013

**A Guarantee System for Youth.
“One Step Ahead” Through Regional Policies**

2013



**To the memory of
Karl-Heinz Dullmaier**

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Editorial notes

Chapters 1, 2 and 3 are mainly inspired and partially based on results achieved in an European Study carried out by the Scientific Director on behalf of the European Commission-DG Research (see *Adult and Continuing Education in Europe: Pathways for a skill growth governance*, Luxemburg, 2013).

Chapters 3-11 are based on OSA Survey results. Texts on regional issues are by their own representatives as listed below:

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Welsh Government - *Steven Fletcher*

The other texts are under the responsibility of the assigned authors and editors.

Chapters 6-7-8-9 are partially based on the research "Youth" (2008) carried out on behalf of the European Commission-DG Employment and coordinated by ISFOL. This research was published in 2008. The policies referred to were current at that time and are only used here to give examples of types of policy from that time, although in many countries policies have changed significantly.

1. A best performer and jobless generation

Paolo Federighi

1.1. The best generation ever

The global rise of youth unemployment, the fact that even in developed countries live some of the 290 million unemployed young people aged between 15 and 24 years has prompted *The Economist* (27th April 2013) to talk about the "jobless generation". First of all the phenomenon does not equally affect all countries in the world, in which some have seen an increase in the number of young people with decent jobs, and above all this is true for many, but not for all of them.

Young people who belong to the Y and Z generations (born the former between 1980-1996 and the latter after 1996) are probably the most fortunate in the history of the twenty- and thirty-year-olds in Europe. Infant mortality has never been so low. Epidemic diseases have drastically decreased. For decades, the cases of young Europeans dying in war are rare. Deaths on the workplace are gradually decreasing, as are serious accidents. Education levels increased significantly everywhere, and since the 2000's all major firms have adopted a policy of talent development and growth. Never in the past as today have so many young people had the opportunity of being employed in types of work that are rich in intellectual content, and are able to move freely - not only out of necessity - in a global labour market, frequently changing employer.

From this point of view there has been no lack of public and private policies - so far - aimed at ensuring a skill supply to some extent meeting the needs of economic growth. They confirmed, albeit with contradictions that we will examine later, the availability of young people ready to enter the job market with the skills required and ensuring "a more skilled workforce that thanks to new models of work organisation (would be) able to contribute to technological change and adapt to it" (European Commission, 2010).

Thanks to this, part of the young people in the younger generation is facing a more promising future than in the past.

There is not yet a better future for all young people. The processes of polarisation, the increase of the distance between different ranges of belonging are harsh at all levels: from training to work. The solution for a reduction of the gap must aim at taking a step forward, without sacrificing support to the best and envisaging the best opportunities for growth to everyone.

1.2. A future full of opportunities for learning

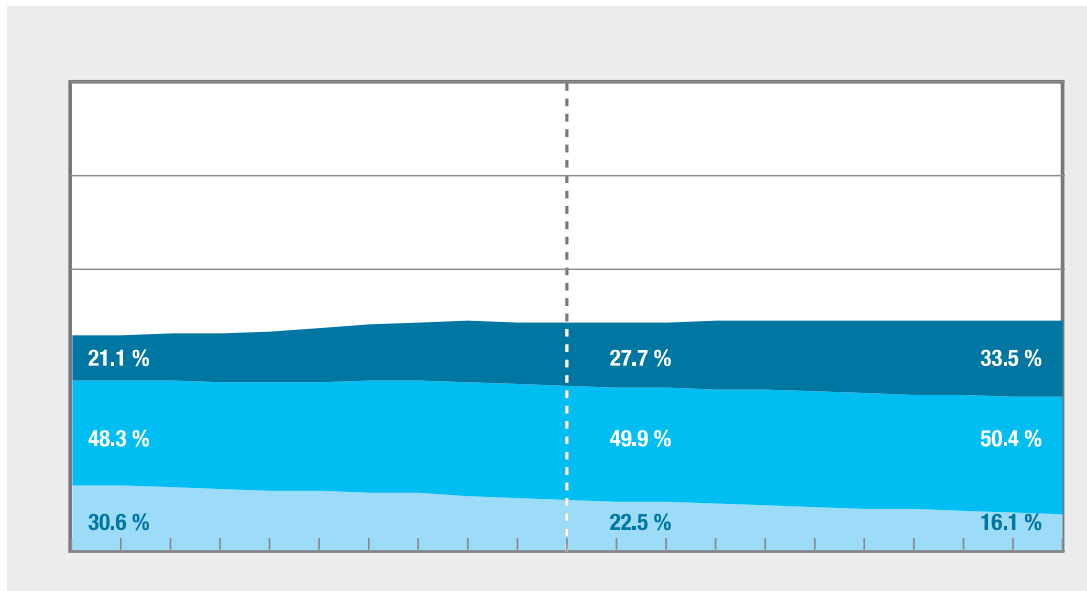
Young people today are faced with it the possibility of a future of continuous learning guaranteed primarily by their productive capabilities and supported by the various training opportunities both on and off the job.

With the increase of high knowledge-intensive work and less physical effort work, the maximum level of productivity is moving progressively towards older ages. Support for the steady growth of their skills will be possible because it can ensure returns on investment in training. Thus they will have a future of constant training growth.

Some indicators are unequivocally positive for these groups of young people:

- a. the increase in the number of employees with a higher level of qualifications is a factor that will cause an increase in the propensity and the demand for learning. "The baseline scenario projects that between 2010 and 2020 the labour force of Europe (EU-27+) aged 15+ holding high-level qualifications will increase by more than 15 million" (Cedefop, 2010:50).

Box 1 - Supply trends in labour force (15+) by qualification, EU-27+



Source: Cedefop (IER estimates based on E3ME and StockMOD)

The increase of 5.8 points in the percentage of highly skilled workers leads to the increased need for intervention in the maintenance and development of skills possessed and constantly exposed to the risk of obsolescence because they are higher. Eurostat research and surveys confirm that the segment of the population participating more than others in lifelong learning activities consists of the population with high levels of education.

The analysis of participation in education and training as found by the Eurostat survey shows that over the nine years considered, the propensity to participate is doubled because of the level of education.

Box 2 - Participation in formal or non-formal education and training by educational attainment - % [trng_ifs_10]. Age 25-64 years

Isced levels 1997	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
0-2	3,3	3,6	3,7	3,7	3,6	3,8	3,9	3,8	3,9
3 and 4	8,3	9,5	8,8	8,5	8,2	8,3	8,1	8,0	7,6
5 and 6	17,1	19,5	18,5	18,0	17,5	17,5	16,9	16,7	16,0
All	8,5	9,8	9,5	9,3	9,1	9,2	9,2	9,1	8,9

Source: Eurostat data

- b. The changing occupational structure of employment, together with the growing number of jobs that are becoming increasingly knowledge- and skill-

intensive increases the dynamics of the professional growth of workers. "Many jobs (...) require more highly-skilled/qualified people than in the past changes in the skills/qualification composition within each of these job categories" (Cedefop, 2010:71).

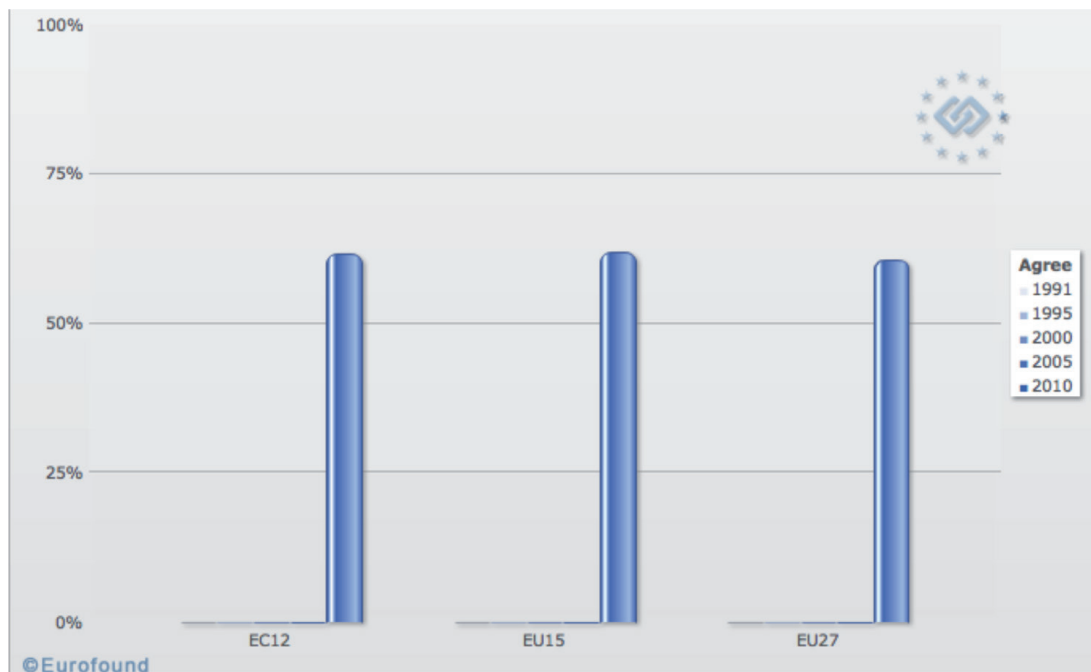
"There is a clear trend of increasing requirements with an increased deployment of high and medium-level qualified people, and a decrease of those with low qualifications. On qualifications, however, an increase in skills requirements is expected in all jobs" (Cedefop, 2010:70-71).

This means that almost 15 million workers will be affected by processes of up-skilling that will be achieved through training both on- and off-the-job and will be accompanied by processes of horizontal and vertical mobility within the same company or that will affect companies even in varied productive sectors.

1.3. New work conditions

With regard to working conditions, over 60% of young workers believe that "The organisation I work for motivates me to give my best job performance" (see Box 3). The figure is certainly encouraging (even though it concerns 2 young people out of 3).

Box 3 - The organisation I work for motivates me to give my best job performance. Young under 30 yrs



Source: Eurofound Data Base 2013, www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/smt/ewcs/ewcs2010_11_07.htm

The data is correlated to the ability of workplaces to offer value to the persons employed, i.e. to ensure conditions for growth and well-being. The hypothesis that the work conditions of young people - or at least the majority of them - are generally satisfactory would have some confirmation here.

It's a fact that all workplaces offer a context that has its own learning potential. This means that all firms help the people who work for them to grow simply because it is impossible to think of a company that does not base its existence on its ability to produce knowledge with respect to what to produce, how to produce, who to sell to and how to sell (Vicari, 2008:55). The firm exists because it is a cognitive system in which growth is the result of technological progress produced by the very economic work and no longer just from external transfer: "technological advance comes from things people do" (Romer, 1994:12) and "arises (...) because of intentional actions taken by people who respond to market incentives" (Romer, 1990:71).

This is why work is central to the growth of young people and is the factor that, after school, makes the difference. Work is the place where you can learn to become independent. The growth of people in the workplace is achieved in three different ways:

- a. The **self-directed learning**, i.e. training based on individual commitment and fed by individual characteristics (perception, emotions, attitude, capability, motivation, memory), as well as the opportunity for learning experiences in which to release their potential. This means understanding what type of training may help the individual generate the processes of self-directed learning and knowledge production.
- b. The person's **participation** in situations where new knowledge is created, not yet codified, that does not yet exist in the organisation, but is obtained through the work of its members. This type of work includes the situations in which a person is asked to be part of a research project, as well as the less complex and more common analyses of work errors made, sometimes aimed at learning from mistakes made.
- c. But when knowledge already exists inside or outside the organisation, the **transfer** actions put in place aim at having the person acquire knowledge, whether or not codified, through special transfer actions. This type of action includes the usual training opportunities (on workplace safety, for example), and OJT (On the Job Training).

1.4. Workplaces with high training potential

The growth of skills and therefore workplace performance depend on the factors that create the training potential of a workplace. "We learn through work tasks, from colleagues and work mentors, through trial and error, by solving challenges and changing job positions, as well as through the continuing training that employers may provide" (Cedefop, 2011:17).

Analysis of the training potential of workplaces in Europe sheds light on a framework that highlights the existence of real and potential problems, as well as a range of young people who live in contexts that guarantee jobs with a high potential for personal and professional growth.

Among all the factors taken into consideration by the Fifth European Working Conditions Survey (Eurofound, 2012b) we can focus on some that, even in view of research on Human Resources Management (Minchington, 2010; Ulrich, and Brockbank, 2005) have a direct impact on the Learning Value Proposition that a

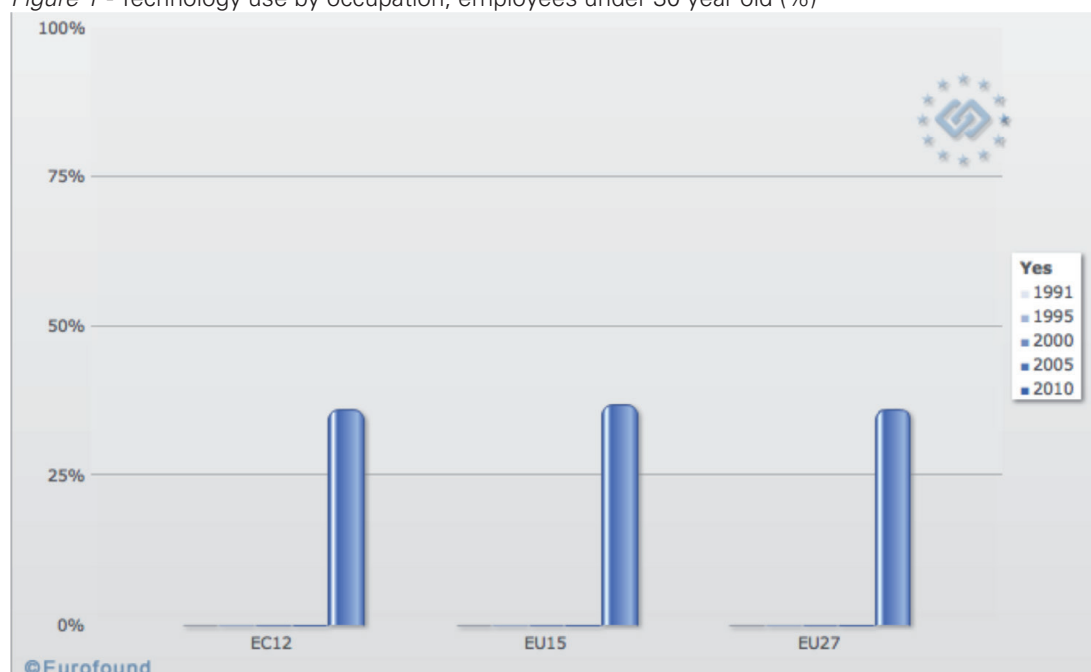
workplace offers young people who are part of the organisation, in exchange for their services. The value consists in the learning opportunities offered - structured and not - stimulated or directly produced by factors which we describe below (in addition to Eurofound, 2012b see also Bassanini, 2005; Simpson, 2009):

a. Work content

The work contents are the primary source of learning for the worker. The variety of tasks, the challenges faced, the degree of autonomy, feedback received from colleagues and managers, the opportunity to be part of a team, the technologies with which they work are a daily source of learning, whether or not encoded. The Fifth European Working Conditions Survey provides data on the various components of this factor.

For example, if we consider the answer to the question: "Have new processes or technologies been introduced in the workplace in the past three years?", we see that about 36% of young people have a job that puts them in constant contact with artifacts that represent the capitalisation of the know-how accumulated by the company and, at the same time, intervene with the production of new knowledge. There still remains a substantial presence of young workers excluded from the use of technology and, therefore, engaged in jobs with minor challenges and educational content.

Figure 1 - Technology use by occupation, employees under 30 year old (%)



Source: Eurofound (2012b)

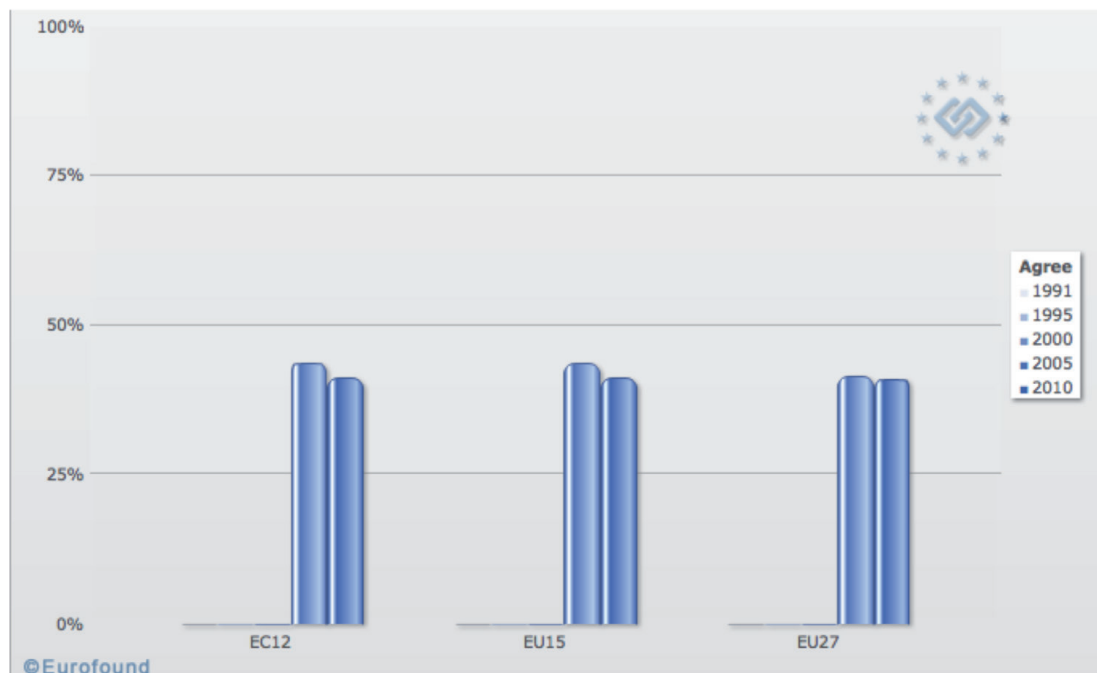
b. Career perspectives

The possibility to be engaged in work that offers prospects for promotion, security and personal growth is a factor that increases motivation and enhances the commitment to continuous improvement. The possibility to have one's own development plan urges the young worker to increase their professionalism and

to build their future roles by changing different jobs, accompanied by other forms of learning.

The results of the Fifth European Working Conditions Survey show how the expectation of good prospects for career advancement are widespread among a significant part of young employees (over 40%). The expectations of a promotion are present among all the levels of workers. This means that a substantial number of employees are immersed in training processes of evaluation and self-evaluation, acquisition of new knowledge through daily work and different types of structured learning opportunities, through participation in projects and managing new challenges. The positive picture that emerges with respect to on-going dynamics does not exclude the need to question the adequacy of the percentage of people involved in the processes of career development, and whether the productive organisations concerned offer contexts capable of shaping the development of the skills of people through professional development. In addition, the unequal distribution of opportunities heavily concentrated among the ranges with higher levels of qualification should be recognised.

Figure 2 - My job offers good prospects for career advancement . Under 30 years old employee (%)



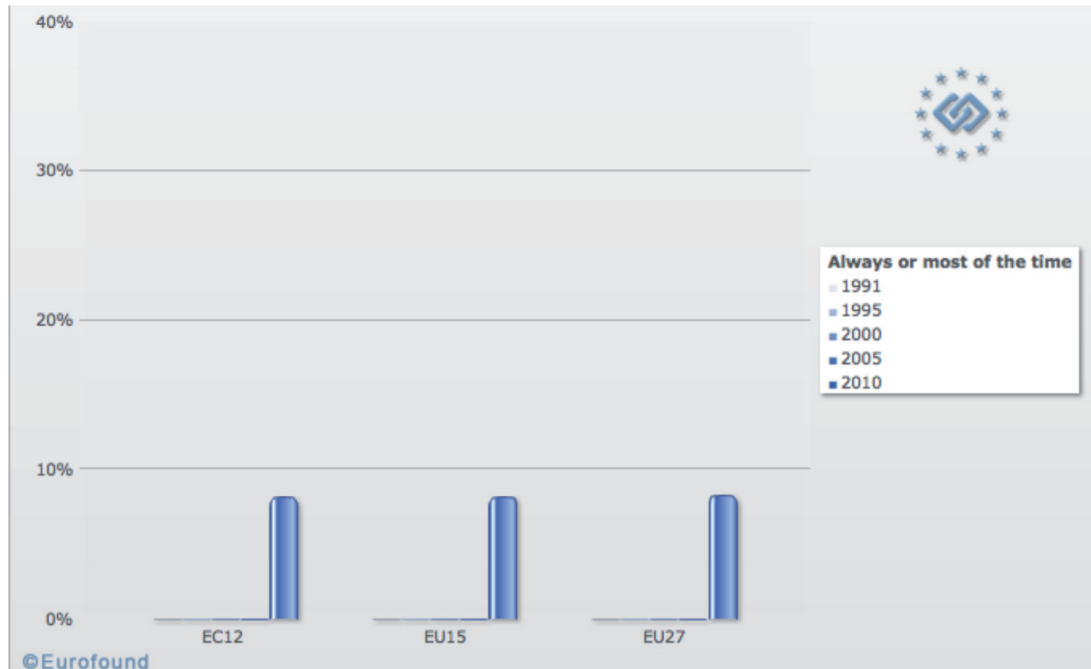
Source: Eurofound (2010), www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/smt/ewcs/ewcs2010_08_09.htm

c. Affiliation

The ethical and cultural dimension of a workplace is an important factor for the professional growth of people, a precondition for sharing the objectives of an organisation. The educational potentials of work are determined by the wealth of meanings that an individual finds within his own productive organisation. A job may be considered “full of meaning when it is done responsibly, not only for the way it is done, but in relation to the product and the consequences it generates, it opens us up to another often neglected dimension of the organisational models: the ethical and moral correctness of the workplace” (Morin, 2004:7).

The results of the Fifth European Working Conditions Survey show how “only a small proportion of workers suffer from the absence of a feeling of work well done or doing useful work, there are substantial differences between sectors. (...) Around 9% of workers report that their work ‘always’ or ‘most of the time’ involves carrying out tasks that conflict with their personal values. The variation between sectors is not large, but value conflicts appear to be most prevalent in construction and least prevalent in industry and education” (Eurofound, 2012b:56).

Figure 3 - Your job involves tasks that are in conflict with your personal values. Under 30 years old employee (%)



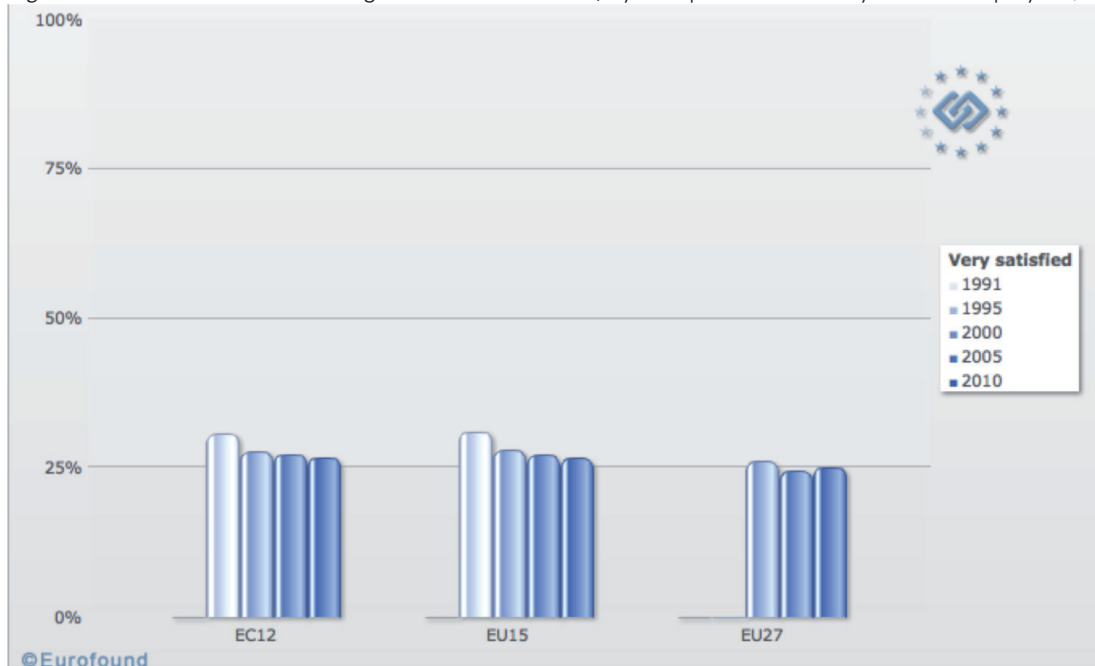
Source: Eurofound (2010), www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/smt/ewcs/ewcs2010_06_05.htm

d. Benefits

The work conditions, time and rhythms, meaning the chance to dedicate the time necessary for reflecting on work and relationships, hygienic and health conditions (noise, physical risk, etc.), respect for diversities (age, gender, physical and cultural characteristics) are factors that determine the quality of the workplace since it is a learning environment.

The degree of satisfaction with respect to working conditions is significant because it judges the “learnability” of the workplace, or its usability for cognitive purposes.

Figure 4 - Satisfaction with working conditions over time, by occupation under 30 years old employee (%)



Source: Eurofound, (2010), www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/smt/ewcs/ewcs2010_11_04.htm

The results of the Fifth European Working Conditions Survey show how “the differences in satisfaction with working conditions for different groups of workers are largely in line with the differences for intrinsic rewards and positive elements of the job. The same groups of workers who commonly report high levels of intrinsic rewards and positive job elements often also have high levels of satisfaction with working conditions” (Eurofound, 2012b:86). Specifically concerning young people under the age of 30, we see that satisfaction with work done is stated by 1 youth out of 4. Although this is a definite minority, the data indicates the existence of people who have a chance for positive work experience. However the downward trend should be recognised in the percentage for the years of the recent economic crisis.

e. Employment contracts

Research considers the type of employment contract to be one of the key tools that influences and can foresee and regulate all or part of the factors considered above. It can encourage professional growth by linking wage increases to the contribution in terms of skills that an individual guarantees to the organisation, or link them to seniority. In addition, the relationship between types of employment contracts and propensity for training is a subject of research. A widespread concern with the recent diffusion of flexible employment practices, such as temporary labour contracts, is that these contracts may be detrimental to economic performance because temporary workers are less likely to be trained.

The results of research in this area do not give consistent results. Some report exactly contrary evidence showing that the demand for education is higher among young people who have unstable employment. According to LLL2010, “in almost all countries inactive persons have a much higher chance for participating in formal

learning than regularly employed (either full- time or part-time) or unemployed persons. Among the unemployed this is only the case in the Wallonian part of Belgium, in Spain and in Finland. On the other hand, labour market status seems to make no significant difference to participation in Estonia, the Netherlands, Norway and the UK, meaning that unemployed or inactive persons have the same chance of participation in formal adult education as those with a regular job. Working part-time seems to be a supporting factor for participation of employed individuals in formal adult education in Austria, Germany, Denmark, Finland, Ireland and Sweden, meaning that part-time workers have a greater chance for participation in these countries than full-time workers. We conclude that 'formal adult education' and 'labour market status' are both interrelated and dynamic during the period of participation in formal adult education. Individual participants may combine work and study differently during the various periods of their programmes, but not completely at will" (LLL2010, 2011:113-114).