What Policy Innovation For Youth in the Era of Prolonged Austerity?  

The Case of Greece †

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Abstract

Greece is experiencing a prolonged crisis that has brought record unemployment across the entire labour force. Youth unemployment is a structural problem predating the crisis, but has been deeply aggravated by it. The first part of this paper examines various facets of youth joblessness in Greece, in comparison to other European countries. It disaggregates unemployment incidence by gender and level of qualification and traces the labour market and poverty risks for youth, against the backdrop of increasing employment flexibility and insecurity. The second part provides a concise overview of the institutional context and policies in respect to transitions from education to the labour market. The focus is on barriers to a (more or less) systematic process of evidence-informed policy making. In the light of this discussion, and in the context of the bailout-instigated reforms, the third part briefly reviews policies for tackling youth unemployment. The Youth Guarantee programme is singled out as an intervention that can potentially trigger innovation in policy management, though it is far from resolving the youth employment crisis.

Keywords: Active labour market policies; Greek crisis; policy-process innovation; unemployment; vocational education and training; Youth Guarantee; youth transitions.

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