

INTER-GENERATIONAL SOLIDARITY FOR HEALTH AND CARE

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EUROPEAN
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ESO EUROPEAN SENIOR ORGANISATION

ARE MILLENNIALS ANOTHER LOST GENERATION OF EUROPE? WHAT CAN BE DONE SO THAT HISTORY DOESN'T REPEAT ITSELF!

Ana Pirtskhalava, YES and IUSY Secretary General

Once again, young generation – generation of Millennials is going through a very profound, second once-in-a-lifetime crisis, but unlike 2008, this not only economic crises we will face but crises of public health and wellbeing.

But let us, first of all, analyze it from the economic perspective: we entered the workforce during the 2008 crises, the worst downturn since the Great Depression, burdened with debts, with uncertainties, with the inability of buying the property, inabilities of planning our future, stuck in low-benefit, dead-end jobs that do not provide any sense of security and carrier prospects. And once we thought some of the consequences of the 2008 crises were tackled and during the decade of our lives, we were supposed to be taking the first steps for our economic independence, the newer, bigger, most unusual crises hit us again. **It is far too soon to know how different groups will rebound, but unlike the generation of our parents, we have fewer tools, both socio-economical but also mental to deal with it. With smaller savings accounts than prior generations, less money invested, with fewer properties to rent out or sell, with having less income we are much unlikely to recover from it smoother and sooner.**

In the nearest future general wellbeing of sociality and the state of the entire economy will be depended on the well-being, educational success, and labor market integration of this generation of Millennials and Gen Z. It is enough to look at the statistics to realize the seriousness of the matter: According to [Eurostat In August 2020](#), the youth unemployment rate was 17.6% in the EU and 18.1% in the euro area, up from 17.4% and 17.8%, respectively, in the previous month. Based on a [survey on young people and the pandemic](#) conducted by the European Youth Forum 9.7% of young students are not getting any courses, teaching, or testing. This number rises to 15.2% for the most disadvantaged, according to the same source. **The impact of COVID on youth is not limited to the economic consequences, it also had significant impact on the mental health and well-being of young people all over Europe.** Most of the times it is very hard to separate mental health issues from socio-economic realities. According to mentioned YFJ survey: **Young workers who had lost their job were almost twice as likely to be affected by probable anxiety or depression as those who continued to be employed. Average mental well-being was lower for young women. In comparison to the young men surveyed, young women were 7 percentage points more likely to show possible anxiety or depression, and 4 percentage points more likely to exhibit probable anxiety or depression.** As we see mental health

conditions mostly (but not always) are linked to other important socio-economic realities therefore it needs to be addressed, discuss and tackled with intersectional approach. If we try to go into the roots on one issue it will definitely lead us to another problem as they are so much interlinked that it is impossible to separate them as a single issue problem.

So, should we allow those facts and unfortunately realistic forecasts for us to define our future? Should we just wait and be the new lost generation?

The answer is no! Depict young people as mere victims of the pandemic would not do justice to the numerous initiatives, we – youth organizations have implemented to mitigate its impacts.

We also already have seen very important initiatives from EU bodies in the framework of the recovery strategy from the COVID-19 pandemic. On 1 July 2020, the European Commission launched [Youth Employment Support](#) package including commitment for a renewed Youth Guarantee and recommendations for the Vocational Education and Training. These measures are supposed to support young people in entering the labor market, assist them in more qualitative preparation for employment, and provide the skills required in the modern world. In particular, the emphasis is on the competencies needed in terms of green and digital transitions. Because we have seen that **despite having pandemics and their consequences as the main agenda topic for most of the parties, we still have urgent need and demand to respond to the climate emergency. The Fridays for Future school strike still feature predominantly the need for climate justice among the youth today.** Now more than ever we see the importance of **global actions and solutions** to the issues that do not recognize national borders and that require unanimity in decisions. **The pandemic showed us that majority of the problems we are facing of will face in the upcoming future will not be as much national and unique but global and international so our responses also should be such.**