

Preface

by
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The economies of the 28 Member States of the European Union are more than ever picking up. Since 2013, ten million jobs have been created in the EU. The unemployment rate is at its lowest since 2008. For the first time, unemployment has shrunk in all EU Member States, compared to the previous year. These results indicate that Europe is ready to turn the page of the crisis.

Nevertheless, differences in performances are outstanding and unemployment remains still too high in several Member States, some regions and among certain groups. Young people and workers with a migrant background in particular are worse off than others. Their employment rate is falling further below the average rate and remains substantially below the level of ten years earlier, despite some improvements since 2013. The gender employment gap may have been shrinking over the last ten years, but is still a reality: only 65.3% women are in employment, which is significantly lower than the average employment rate of 71%.

These results show the big need for target-group-specific employment policy action. Inclusive entrepreneurship policies, supporting entrepreneurship for under-represented groups and the unemployed can be part of that. This fourth edition of the ‘The Missing Entrepreneurs’ maps the barriers to entrepreneurship the above groups are facing and possible tools for policy makers to help those with sound business ideas in creating sustainable quality businesses.

Addressing labour market disparities, while responding to the rapid changes and challenges in our societies and the world of work, the ageing of our work force, the impact of digitalisation and globalisation – is exactly at the heart of the European Pillar of Social Rights we launched in April 2017. Along twenty key principles, the Pillar serves as a compass towards labour markets that are fair and function well. It should also be a driver for a renewed progress of convergence towards better working and living conditions among participating Member States.

Inclusive entrepreneurship policies and programmes perfectly feed into the principles, the scope and the purpose of the Pillar. Even though it will not solve all of the labour market and economic challenges we face, it has an important role to play in getting more people into employment while fighting social inequalities in our societies.

I thank the OECD for its partnership on the inclusive entrepreneurship work programme. We hope that local, regional and national authorities, as well as the social partners, and civil society at large in Member States will read and use this report, seek inspiration and advice for developing strong policies and programmes that support all in

entrepreneurship. Building an inclusive, fair and competitive European Union is a joint responsibility that we all share.



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