

Ladies and Gentleman,

- The discussion we've had here today on the European Court of Auditors special report has been very fruitful. Future of our citizens, future of our youth, is the topic that must be and must stay in the capital letters on the top of the agendas of our policy makers.
- The problem of youth unemployment and inactive young people is, from the point of view of economic development, a serious economic burden for society with negative effect on economic growth and productivity. But this is only one side of the coin. The core of the issue is the sense of belonging of the young generation, the sense of participation and the opportunity to put their skills into practice. An opportunity to see a promising future.
- Europe is not successful and the member states are not successful if our younger generation is not successful if they do not feel themselves as full members of society. There is a lot at stake.
- The assessment of Youth Guarantee and Youth Employment Initiative is very relevant in helping us stay on track. So we are very thankful for the report. It is a recognizable document showing us how much effort has been put into ensuring a happy and active life for the youth of today and of the future. The document is also critical in some aspects and brings out a number of relevant areas for improvement.
- The results of the report show that we should place more emphasis on NEET youth. It is something we all have in common. The very same challenges are to be tackled in Estonia as well.
- We believe that, on the one hand, it is vital to implement measures preventing youth unemployment and, on the other hand, it is

necessary to ease up on the regulations limiting youth entering the labour market. Since 2013 Estonia's youth unemployment rate has decreased to 12,7%. There is room for improvement, but the situation is much better than it was before. Yes, demographic factors and improvement of economic environment have also contributed to this, but there is also the influence of specialised measures - labour market services initiated by the government and the municipalities. That gives us in Estonia the confidence that the battle for the future of young people may be successful. If there is lot of will and consistency.

- Supporting the work habits must start at an early stage. For example, in addition to labour market services, we have simplified our labour law for minors and in the near future we want to offer wage subsidies for employers hiring 13-16 year olds during summer holidays. Besides the labour market measures there must also be strong support from education system.
- Tackling youth unemployment and inactivity is and must remain as a policy priority.
- It is of key importance to involve young people into society so they can contribute to the challenges the society is facing. As you already know, in less than two months Estonia starts its first Presidency of the Council of the EU. We are waiting to see the proposals under the European Solidarity Corps and plan to take forward the discussions in the Council. We don't know all the aspects of this proposal as the Commission is still working on the document. But as much as we know, the focus is on volunteering and occupational strands. In principal especially both volunteering and occupational strands give valuable experience to young people allowing them to be more

successful in labour market. This proposal will be high on our agenda during our Presidency.

- When talking about the future of youth, it is also important to think about the future of work, which influences all of us. We should also pay especially close attention to the global trends in modern information society that change our jobs and lifestyle. Our society is becoming more and more information driven, people are using digital tools in their everyday lives increasingly more. This has an impact on the jobs requiring new skills as well as on the way public services are delivered.
- In this context, we should seize the opportunity to use the technological changes in our advantage. In order to open the subject and to enrich the discussion also through practical solutions, high-level conference “Future of work: Making it e-Easy” will be held in Tallinn in September. We are also planning Council Conclusions on that topic.
- To take it all together - a lot has been done, but more is to do. The future of youth is in our hands, the more we do, the more we achieve.
- I would like to thank European Court of Auditors for the report. It has given a lot to think about and to work with for all of us.
- Also, I would like to thank all the speakers of the conference for your practical and useful comments on the issue. We have received important input for our policy making and many thoughts for the presidency.

Thank You!