I. A Europe of Solutions
We, the leaders of the European Pact for Youth believe in a Europe of solutions. A Europe that offers its young people the horizon, the motivation, the skills and job opportunities they need to help them achieve their potential and to secure Europe’s future prosperity. We strive for an inclusive ‘pro-youth Europe’ where, together, we create more shared value through shared responsibility.

Therefore, we must confront the seriousness of the situation: over 7 Million 15-24 year olds in Europe are neither in employment, education or training (NEETs). One active young person in four is currently looking for a job. This figure is one in two in some countries. Overall, this situation has an annual cost of over 150 billion Euros. Currently, young people are the group at highest risk of poverty and social exclusion. Furthermore, there are large numbers of young refugees and migrants arriving in Europe who bring with them hopes, skills and talent.

The current situation should be seen as a catalyst for youth, parents, employers, schools and governments to open up to Europe’s rapid demographic change, the changing world of the internet of things and the circular economy. We need this in order to further develop a sustainable economy and inclusive society aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. Core to this is better preparation of young people for the jobs of tomorrow.

II. Our commitment, our offer
That is why, through the European Pact for Youth, we propose a strong vision for Europe, commit to engage in immediate action and propose policy to enable the above.

A clear vision: We propose to build a fair and equitable culture of partnership between business, education and youth throughout Europe to prepare young people for quality jobs and responsible citizenship.

Supported by action: We commit creating, by the end of 2017, 10,000 business-education partnerships to boost youth employability and inclusion, and to strive for 100,000 new good quality apprenticeships, traineeships or entry-level jobs. 28 national action plans will also be created in which business, education, youth and governments will set their priorities and commitments for 2020.

Our proposals: We call for a consensus among the European leaders and the Ministers for Education, Labour and Economy on the following three proposals that are currently under development:

1. To make vocational education and training (VET) an attractive, quality and equal choice for all young people, while strongly boosting the mobility of VET learners, teachers and trainers.
2. To make business-education partnerships ‘the new normal’, to better understand, anticipate and support the development of basic, job-specific, transversal and high-end skills necessary for the professional and social development of young people.
3. To embed entrepreneurial and creativity skills in all education provision, be it formal or non-formal.

III. Our timing
The results of the Pact and our proposals will be presented at the 1st European Enterprise-Education Summit on 23 November 2017.
Our first proposal - Making VET and Apprenticeship an attractive, quality and equal choice for Youth in Europe:
(Note: These policy proposals are being developed by the supporters of the Pact for Youth)

VET and apprenticeships provide opportunities for young learners to obtain the qualifications and skills that facilitate their access to employment. To be competitive, enterprises need people with the right skills and attitudes. A joint effort to further increase the opportunities provided to VET learners and apprenticeships is our shared commitment.

Learner mobility lies at the heart of the European Union. We believe that mobility opportunities for young apprentices and those working towards VET qualifications should be strongly reinforced.

What Europe has been proven capable of doing 30 years ago for its university graduates, both in terms of mobility and the Bologna Process, we believe it can and must do again today for its vocational learners. Therefore, building upon our current efforts, our commitments for further action and by making better use of existing European and national programmes and tools, we propose a concerted focus on three key strands of action, that will enable young apprentices, VET learners as well as their teachers and trainers to lead in our Europe of tomorrow.

Making VET/apprenticeships an attractive, quality and equal choice to support youth transition to jobs

Youth Mobility Programme
1 Million young people gain new professional qualification, fluency in another language, transversal skills and a cultural outlook

Excellence Platform
A European platform as driver for excellence and support to intermediary organisations that support VET and apprenticeship schemes

Teachers and Trainers Mobility Programme
Enhanced practical learning and exchange on VET/Apprenticeships, thanks to connected teachers, trainers and business people participating in the programme

European networks of intermediary organisations
Supporting and in conjunction with National Reforms

It is critical that we also consider how Europe can offer a brand that is easy to understand and highlights the importance of vocational education and learning. This brand will allow citizens, learners, teachers and business people to understand and experience that Europe is an ally that offers a vision and supports practical solutions for developing more and new professional qualifications that can directly support youth in their transition to jobs and social integration. It should also be a brand that gives a strong signal that VET and apprenticeships are at an equal level with academic studies.
IV. About the Leaders Joint Proposals

1. Mandate
In the Pact it is stated that “To contribute to the EU and national policies on skills for competitiveness and employability, we commit, as business leaders to work with the supportive organisations of the Pact, to elaborate joint action proposals (...) leading to more significant and long standing impact for the benefits of young people and companies”.

The Leaders will elaborate these joint proposals on the basis of short documents with key messages, which are sufficiently directional and strategic, without pre-empting solutions. Such solutions, on the basis of a working document prepared by CSR Europe and the Sherpa group, will be elaborated in close liaison with all stakeholders. Considering the high level support to the Pact of the Presidents of the European Parliament, Martin Schultz, the European Council, Donald Tusk, and the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, they will be associated to the progress and overall success of the Pact.

2. The credibility of any proposal will depend on current efforts and continuous commitment by all the Pact members
Capitalising on the experiences and other results accumulated during the Pact at national, European and international level, and fully aware of the continuous and collaborative efforts needed, the Leaders will examine how they can practically support the solutions that they present in the first joint proposal.

3. Each joint proposal will articulate concrete solutions that:

- Respect the principle of subsidiarity and possible ways to leverage it
- Are ambitious, and make full use of existing initiatives and financial instruments and new ones if necessary, that aim for long term impact
- Tackle the bottlenecks and obstacles across different Member States and between different actors (business, youth, educational institutions, ...)
- Bring clear benefits that can be felt by the people; teachers, learners, parents and the wider public should sense that new, quality opportunities are arising. EU programmes should also speak directly to citizens and offer them practical solutions
- Are easy to engage for the actors (e.g. companies, schools, learners/apprentices)

If you have any questions on the proposal, please contact pact4youth@csreurope.org