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⁽¹⁾ Text with EEA relevance.

I

(Resolutions, recommendations and opinions)

RESOLUTIONS

COUNCIL

Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Member States meeting within the Council establishing guidelines on the governance of the EU Youth Dialogue

European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027

(2019/C 189/01)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND ITS MEMBER STATES,

UNDERLINE THAT:

1. The EU Youth Dialogue (EUYD) is a central participation tool for young people in the EU and other European countries as appropriate, key elements of which include direct dialogue between decision-makers and young people and their representatives, consultation of young people on topics relevant to them and continuous partnership in the governance of the process at local, national and European levels. With regard to the implementation of the EUYD and in line with the European Union Youth Strategy (EUYS), the European Youth Goals should 'serve as inspiration and provide an orientation for the EU, its Member States and their relevant stakeholders and authorities' ⁽¹⁾.
2. The EUYS emphasises the need to ensure flexibility and room for manoeuvre to Member States in their approach to the EUYD's implementation.
3. The EUYS specifies a number of elements with regard to framing the implementation of the EUYD, namely:
 - a. Building on experiences from the past;
 - b. Aiming at a clearer and leaner process
 - c. Preferably follow 18-months work-cycles;
 - d. One thematic priority per cycle;
 - e. Its Work Plan;
 - f. Flexibility with regard to the actors taking part in the governance and implementation of the EUYD;
 - g. Continuous follow-up to monitor quality outcomes and the impact of the whole process;
 - h. Recognition of the role of National Working Groups. They are the entities at Member State level, that are tasked with contributing to the organisation of consultations, promotion and impact of the dialogue with youth ⁽²⁾. In accordance with the provisions of the EUYS, 'Member States are encouraged to enable youth participation in all phases of implementation of the EU Youth Dialogue by giving, inter alia, a leading role in the National Working Groups to the National Youth Council' ⁽³⁾.

⁽¹⁾ European Union Youth Strategy (OJ C 456, 18.12.2018, p. 2 (point 3, 3rd paragraph)).

⁽²⁾ See the 2019 annual work programme for the implementation of 'Erasmus+': the Union Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport. Online reference C(2018) 6572 of 11 October 2018.

⁽³⁾ EUYS, p. 9 (Annex I, point 4, 3rd paragraph).

4. The Presidency suggestions of December 2018 on the implementation and governance of the EU Youth Dialogue ⁽⁴⁾ and the Commission Communication 'Engaging, Connecting and Empowering young people: a new EU Youth Strategy' ⁽⁵⁾ could serve as guiding documents for anyone involved in the EUYD.

AIM TO:

5. This resolution pursues the objective to provide an orientation with regard to the governance of the EUYD, in particular focusing on the actors involved, their roles, the organisational framework where their activities take place and the governance-related implementation issues. The European youth sector has an important role to play in the EUYD's organisational framework ⁽⁶⁾.

CONSIDER THAT:

6. The Trio Presidency should take the lead role with regard to steering the implementation of the EUYD, in close cooperation with the European Commission and the National Agencies, as well as with the European Youth Forum and other youth civil society representatives ⁽⁷⁾.
7. While the Trio Presidency organises itself as it deems appropriate, priority should be given to fostering the participation of youth civil society as the cornerstone of a quality governance of the EUYD and its ensuing implementation. At EU level, youth civil society should be involved preferably via the European Youth Forum and other representative youth stakeholders, as appropriate. At Trio Presidency level, youth civil society should be represented by the National Working Groups, preferably, where available, via the National Youth Councils, in light of their leading role in this structure.
8. With a view to supporting the governance of the EUYD, regular exchanges should be organised between the Trio Presidency and the structures mentioned in paragraphs 6 and 7; such exchanges should take place inside a coordination group, for example the European Steering Group (ESG).
9. The role of the ESG is to:
 - a. Provide the overall guidance of the EUYD, covering issues such as the cycle's thematic priority, consultation instruments, consultation-relevant events, including the EU Youth Conferences;
 - b. Provide input, tools and support where appropriate, with a view to ensuring the quality of the EUYD and the thematic consistency within a cycle;
 - c. Ensure an effective cooperation with the National Working Groups by providing where appropriate guidelines, tools and support, with a view to ensuring the EUYD's quality implementation;
 - d. Ensure a participatory evaluation of the cycle, as well as its monitoring, follow-up, use and wide dissemination of the EUYD's outcomes;
 - e. Foster the preservation of institutional memory, with a view to passing it on to the next Trio Presidency, with the support of the European Commission;
 - f. Take steps to facilitate a smooth transition process to the next Trio Presidency;
 - g. Cover any other aspects that the Trio Presidency, in consultation with the Member States, might deem appropriate.

⁽⁴⁾ Doc. 15018/18 REV 1 + COR 1 + COR 2.

⁽⁵⁾ Doc. 9264/18 + ADD 1-8 — COM(2018) 269 final + SWD(2018) 168 and 169 final.

⁽⁶⁾ The 'EU youth sector' generally refers to the totality of organisations, youth workers, members of the academia, youth civil society or other experts involved in youth policy development that carry out youth-relevant activities and projects in the EU.

⁽⁷⁾ Reference is being made to the National Agencies in charge of managing the Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps programmes from the Member States that form the Trio Presidency.

10. The Trio Presidency should facilitate the participation of youth civil society representatives in the ESG, which is a deliberation forum where joint solutions should be discussed and fostered. The Trio Presidency can include other actors in the ESG, such as youth organisations which are representative at European and/or Member State level, researchers, experts, etc. The participation of the above-mentioned representatives and actors in the ESG is without prejudice to the competencies of the Trio Presidency as established by the Treaties and the Council's Rules of Procedure.
 11. As a guiding principle for ensuring the representativeness of the ESG insofar as young people are concerned, the Trio Presidency should consider taking measures with a view to including the voice of all young people, including those with fewer opportunities and of those not organised in youth associations.
 12. If needed, in order to ensure the smooth functioning of the ESG, the operational tasks and working methods of the ESG should be articulated in a Working Document.
 13. In order to ensure the predictability on how the EUYD will unfold in each 18-month work cycle, the Presidency should inform in a timely manner the Youth Working Party and the National Working Groups about the organisation and functioning of the ESG, the progress on EUYD's implementation and any other aspects related to those mentioned in paragraph 9 above.
 14. In line with the EU grants set up for this purpose, the National Working Groups should be able to decide on the configuration and operational procedures that best suit their needs in accordance with their Member State's specificities and relevant EUYS provisions, with a view to ensuring the fulfilment of each EUYD cycle's objectives and an adequate representation of policymakers, relevant public institutions, young people and their diverse socio-economic backgrounds ⁽⁸⁾.
 15. This Resolution shall take effect as from 1 July 2019 and be reviewed as appropriate, as a result of the mid-term review of the EUYS to be carried out by the Council in 2024, in order to adjust it to possible new developments and needs.
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⁽⁸⁾ *Ibid* footnote 2.

RECOMMENDATIONS

COUNCIL

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION

of 22 May 2019

on High-Quality Early Childhood Education and Care Systems

(2019/C 189/02)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 165 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Whereas

- (1) The European Pillar of Social Rights⁽¹⁾ states as its 11th principle that all children have the right to affordable early childhood education and care of good quality. This is in line with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union⁽²⁾ which recognises education as a right, with the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child and with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4.2 that foresees that all girls and boys should have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education by 2030.
- (2) In its Communication 'Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture'⁽³⁾ the European Commission sets out the vision of a European Education Area acknowledging the role of early childhood education and care in laying solid foundations for learning at school and throughout life. The Council Conclusions on school development and excellent teaching⁽⁴⁾ and the Council Recommendation on Key Competences for lifelong learning⁽⁵⁾ reiterated the pivotal role that early childhood education and care can play in promoting learning of all children, their well-being and development.
- (3) Both policy makers and researchers recognise that it is in the early years⁽⁶⁾ that children create the foundation and capacity to learn throughout life. Learning is an incremental process; building a strong foundation in the early years is a precondition for higher level competence development and educational success as much as it is essential for health and the well-being of children. Therefore, early childhood education and care needs to be regarded as the foundation of education and training systems and be an integral part of the education continuum.
- (4) Participating in early childhood education and care is beneficial for all children and especially for children in a disadvantaged situation. It helps by preventing the formation of early skills gaps and thus it is an essential tool to fight inequalities and educational poverty. Early childhood education and care provision needs to be part of an integrated child-rights based package of policy measures to improve outcomes for children and break intergenerational cycles of disadvantage. Improving provision therefore helps to deliver on commitments made in the Commission Recommendation on Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage⁽⁷⁾ and the 2013 Council Recommendation of effective Roma integration measures in the Member States⁽⁸⁾.

⁽¹⁾ Doc. 13129/17.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 326, 26.10.2012, p. 391.

⁽³⁾ COM(2017) 673 final.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 421, 8.12.2017, p. 2.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ C 189, 4.6.2018, p. 1.

⁽⁶⁾ Definition of early years is from birth to usually the age of 6, corresponding educational level ISCED 0.

⁽⁷⁾ OJ L 59, 2.3.2013, p. 5.

⁽⁸⁾ OJ C 378, 24.12.2013, p. 1.

- (5) Participating in early childhood education and care has multiple benefits⁽⁹⁾ both for individuals and for society as a whole, from improved educational attainment and labour market outcomes to fewer social and educational interventions and more cohesive and inclusive societies. Children who attended early childhood education for more than one year scored higher in language and maths in the PIRLS⁽¹⁰⁾ and the PISA studies⁽¹¹⁾. Participating in quality early childhood education and care has also been shown to be an important factor to prevent early school leaving⁽¹²⁾.
- (6) Education and care from the earliest stages has an essential role to play in learning to live together in heterogeneous societies. These services can strengthen social cohesion and inclusion in several ways. They can serve as meeting places for families. They can contribute to developing language competences of the children, both in the language of the service and the first language⁽¹³⁾. Through social-emotional learning, early childhood education and care experiences can enable children to learn how to be empathic as well as learn about their rights, equality, tolerance and diversity.
- (7) Returns on investment in early stages of education are the highest of all educational stages, particularly for children in a disadvantaged situation⁽¹⁴⁾. Spending on early childhood education and care is a high return early investment in human capital.
- (8) The availability, accessibility and affordability of high-quality childcare facilities are furthermore key factors that allow women, and also men, with care responsibilities to participate in the labour market, as recognised by the 2002 Barcelona European Council, the European Pact for Gender Equality⁽¹⁵⁾ and the Commission's Work-Life Balance Communication adopted on 26 April 2017⁽¹⁶⁾. Women's employment is directly contributing to improving the socioeconomic situation of the household and to economic growth.
- (9) Investing in early childhood education and care is a good investment only if the services are of high quality, accessible, affordable and inclusive. Evidence shows that only high-quality early childhood education and care services deliver benefits; low quality services have significant negative impact on children and on society as a whole⁽¹⁷⁾. Policy measures and reforms need to give priority to quality considerations.
- (10) Overall, Member States spend significantly less on early childhood education and care than on primary education. As shown by the report assessing progress on the Barcelona targets⁽¹⁸⁾, currently there are not enough places in early childhood education and care services available and demand outstrips the supply in nearly all countries. Lack of availability, accessibility, and affordability has been shown to be one of the main barriers to the use of these services⁽¹⁹⁾.
- (11) The European Parliament, in its Resolution of 14 September 2017 on A New Skills Agenda for Europe⁽²⁰⁾, calls on Member States to enhance quality and broaden access to early childhood education and care and to address the lack of sufficient infrastructure offering quality and accessible childcare for all income levels as well as to consider granting free access for families living in poverty and social exclusion.

⁽⁹⁾ Benefits of early childhood education and care and the conditions for obtaining them, Report of the European Expert Network on Economics of Education (EENEE).

⁽¹⁰⁾ The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS).

⁽¹¹⁾ The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), OECD (2016), Education at a Glance.

⁽¹²⁾ European Commission (2014), Study on the effective use of early childhood education and care in preventing early school leaving.

⁽¹³⁾ First language: language variety (-ies) acquired in early childhood (approximately before the age of two or three years) in which the human language faculty was first acquired. This term is preferred to mother tongue, which is often inaccurate as the first language is not necessarily that of the mother alone.

⁽¹⁴⁾ The Economics of Human Development and Social Mobility. *Annual Reviews of Economics*, Vol.6 (2014), 689-733.

⁽¹⁵⁾ OJ C 155, 25.5.2011, p. 10.

⁽¹⁶⁾ COM(2017)252 final.

⁽¹⁷⁾ A Review of Research on the Effects of Early Childhood Education and Care on Child Development. CARE Project Report (2015).

⁽¹⁸⁾ COM(2018) 273 final.

⁽¹⁹⁾ OECD (2017), Starting Strong 2017: Key OECD Indicators on Early Childhood Education and Care; Eurofound (2015) Early childhood care: Accessibility and quality of services.

⁽²⁰⁾ P8_TA(2017)0360.

- (12) Early childhood education and care services need to be child-centred; children learn best in environments that are based on children's participation and interest in learning. The organisation, the choice of activities and objects for learning are often communicated between the educators and the children. Services should offer a safe, nurturing and caring environment and provide a social, cultural and physical space with a range of possibilities for children to develop their potential. Provision is best designed when it is based on the fundamental assumption that education and care are inseparable. This should be based on the understanding that childhood is a value in itself and that children should not only be prepared for school and adulthood, but also be supported and appreciated in their early years.
- (13) Within a context that is set by the national, regional or local regulations, families should be involved in all aspects of education and care for their children. Family is the first and most important place for children to grow and develop, and parents and guardians are responsible for each child's well-being, health and development. Early childhood education and care services are an ideal opportunity to create an integrated approach because they lead to a first personal contact with the parents. Parents who experience problems could be offered individual counselling services during home visits. To make their involvement a reality, early childhood education and care services should be designed in partnership with families and be based on trust and mutual respect ⁽²¹⁾.
- (14) Early childhood education and care participation can be an effective tool to achieve educational equity for children in a disadvantaged situation, such as some migrant or minority groups (for example Roma) and refugee children, children with special needs including disabilities, children in alternative care and street children, children of imprisoned parents, as well as children within households at particular risk of poverty and social exclusion, such as single-parent or large households. Refugee children, due to their vulnerable situation, need enforced support. Poverty, physical and emotional stressors, traumas and missing language skills can hinder their future educational prospects and successful integration into a new society. Participation in early childhood education and care can help to mitigate these risk factors.
- (15) Providing inclusive early childhood education and care can contribute to delivering on commitments made by Member States in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities that all Member States are signatories of.
- (16) The 2014 publication of a proposal for key principles of a Quality Framework ⁽²²⁾ was the first statement from European experts from 25 countries on quality in early childhood education and care. The statements are based on five dimensions: access; staff; curriculum; monitoring and evaluation; and governance and funding. A total of ten statements are made on strengthening the quality of early childhood education and care provision. This document was shared in many countries by local stakeholders engaged in policy advocacy, research and training initiatives. In these countries, the draft framework acted as a powerful catalyst for change by contributing to policy consultation processes that sustained existing reform pathways.
- (17) All five dimensions of the quality framework are essential for guaranteeing high-quality services. Especially, the work of early childhood education and care professionals has a long lasting impact on children's lives. However, in many countries the profession has a rather low profile and status ⁽²³⁾.
- (18) To fulfil their professional role in supporting children and their families, early childhood education and care staff require complex knowledge skills and competences as well as a deep understanding of child development and knowledge about early childhood pedagogy. Professionalisation of staff is key because higher levels of preparation positively correlates with a better quality service, higher quality staff-child interactions and therefore better developmental outcomes for children ⁽²⁴⁾.

⁽²¹⁾ A *Children in Europe* policy paper (2008), Young children and their services: developing a European approach.

⁽²²⁾ Proposal for key principles of a Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care (2014), report of the Working Group on Early Childhood Education and Care under the auspices of the European Commission.

⁽²³⁾ Eurofound (2015), Early childhood care: working conditions, training and quality of services — A systematic review.

⁽²⁴⁾ European Commission (2011), CoRe: Competence Requirements in Early Childhood Education and Care.

- (19) Many service providers work with assistants whose main role is to support educators, working directly with children and families. They usually hold a lower qualification than educators and in many countries there is no qualification requirement for becoming assistants. Therefore, professionalisation of staff, including assistants, is necessary ⁽²⁵⁾. Continuing professional development is an integral part of raising the competences of assistants.
- (20) A quality framework or equivalent document can be an efficient element of good governance in early childhood education and care. According to expert opinion and a recent policy review ⁽²⁶⁾, countries that develop and implement quality frameworks have more comprehensive and consistent approaches to reforms. It is important that the relevant stakeholders and professionals are involved in the design and feel ownership of the quality framework.
- (21) Member States have set benchmarks and targets on children's participation in early childhood education and care. In 2002, the European Council in Barcelona set targets ⁽²⁷⁾ for the provision of formal childcare to be at least 90 % of children in the Union between the age of three and the mandatory school age, and that at least 33 % of children under the age of three should have access by 2010. These targets were reaffirmed in the European Pact for Gender Equality 2011-2020. Analysis on the progress towards these benchmarks is detailed in the Commission report on the Barcelona Objectives ⁽²⁸⁾. The Strategic Framework for European cooperation in education and training ⁽²⁹⁾ set a 95 % participation benchmark for children between four and the start of primary education.
- (22) Member States have made good overall progress in recent years in improving the availability of early childhood education and care services. The Education and Training 2020 benchmark and the Barcelona target for children under the age of 3 have been achieved. The Barcelona target for children from the age of 3 until mandatory school age has not yet been achieved despite the progress made since 2011. In 2016, 86,3 % of children in that age group participated in early childhood education and care. However, these averages hide significant differences between Member States, regions and social groups ⁽³⁰⁾. Further efforts are needed to ensure that all children have access to high-quality early childhood education and care as early as parents request it. In particular, specific measures are required to create greater access for children in a disadvantaged situation ⁽³¹⁾.
- (23) This Recommendation seeks to establish a shared understanding of what quality means in the early childhood education and care system. It sets out possible actions for governments to consider, according to their specific circumstances. This Recommendation also addresses parents, institutions and organisations, including social partners and civil society organisations as well as researchers seeking to enhance the sector.
- (24) Early childhood education and care as understood in this Recommendation ⁽³²⁾ should be understood as referring to any regulated arrangement that provides education and care for children from birth to the compulsory primary school age — regardless of the setting, funding, opening hours or programme content — and includes centre and family day-care; privately and publicly funded provision; pre-school and pre-primary provision.
- (25) This Recommendation fully respects the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.

HEREBY RECOMMENDS THAT MEMBER STATES:

In accordance with national and European legislation, available resources and national circumstances, and in close cooperation with all relevant stakeholders:

1. Improve access to high-quality early childhood education and care systems in line with the statements set out in the 'Quality framework for early childhood education and care' presented in the Annex to this Recommendation and with the 11th principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

⁽²⁵⁾ Professionalisation of Childcare Assistants in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC): Pathways towards Qualification, NESET II report (2016).

⁽²⁶⁾ The current state of national ECEC quality frameworks, or equivalent strategic policy documents, governing ECEC quality in EU Member States, NESET II Report 4/2017.

⁽²⁷⁾ SN 100/1/02 REV 1.

⁽²⁸⁾ COM(2018) 273 final.

⁽²⁹⁾ OJ C 417, 15.12.2015, p. 25.

⁽³⁰⁾ COM(2018) 273 final.

⁽³¹⁾ European Commission (2017), Education and Training Monitor.

⁽³²⁾ ISCED 0.1 and ISCED 0.2.

2. Work towards ensuring that early childhood education and care services are accessible, affordable and inclusive. Consideration could be given to:
 - (a) supporting child development in a consistent way starting as early as possible by using early childhood education and care services;
 - (b) analysing the supply and demand from families in order to better adapt the offer of early childhood education and care services to their needs, respecting parental choice;
 - (c) analysing and addressing the barriers that families might encounter when accessing and using early childhood education and care services, such as costs, poverty-related barriers, geographical location, inflexible opening hours, barriers related to inadequate provisions for children with special needs, cultural and linguistic barriers, discrimination as well as a lack of information;
 - (d) establishing contact and cooperation with families and especially those in a vulnerable or disadvantaged situation, in order to inform them about the possibilities and benefits of early childhood education and care participation and, where relevant, about available support, and build trust in the services and encourage participation from an early age;
 - (e) ensuring that all families who want to make use of early childhood education and care services have access to affordable high-quality early childhood education and care, ideally by working at the appropriate governance level towards a right to an early childhood education and care place of high quality;
 - (f) providing inclusive early childhood education and care services for all children, including children with diverse backgrounds and special educational needs, including disabilities, avoiding segregation and incentivising their participation, regardless of the labour market status of their parents or carers;
 - (g) supporting all children to learn the language of education while also taking into account and respecting their first language;
 - (h) strengthening preventive actions, early identification of difficulties and adequate provisions for children with special needs and their families, involving all relevant actors, e.g. educational, social or health services as well as parents.
3. Support the professionalisation of early childhood education and care staff, including leaders. Depending on the existing level of professional qualification and working conditions, successful efforts can include:
 - (a) raising the status of the early childhood education and care profession by creating high professional standards, offering attractive professional status and career prospects to early childhood education and care educators, striving to reach a better gender balance and creating professionalisation pathways for staff with low or no qualification as well as specific pathways to qualify assistants;
 - (b) improving initial education and continuous professional development to take full account of children's well-being, learning and developmental needs, relevant societal developments, gender equality and a full understanding of the rights of the child;
 - (c) providing time for staff for the purpose of professional activities such as reflection, planning, engaging with parents and collaborating with other professionals and colleagues;
 - (d) aiming at equipping staff with the competences to respond to the individual needs of children from different backgrounds and with special educational needs, including disabilities, preparing staff to manage diverse groups.
4. Enhance the development of early years' curricula in order to follow children's interests, nurture their wellbeing and meet the unique needs and potential of each individual child, including those with special needs or in a vulnerable or disadvantaged situation. Approaches supporting holistic learning and children's development could include:
 - (a) ensuring a balance in the provision of social-emotional and cognitive development, acknowledging the importance of play, contact with nature, the role of music, arts and physical activity;
 - (b) promoting participation, initiative, autonomy, problem-solving and creativity and encouraging learning dispositions to reason, investigate and collaborate;

- (c) fostering empathy, compassion, mutual respect and awareness in relation to equality and diversity;
 - (d) offering opportunities for early language exposure and learning through playful activities; and
 - (e) considering, where possible, tailored multilingual early childhood programmes, which also take into account the specific needs of bi/multilingual children;
 - (f) offering guidance for providers on the age-appropriate use of digital tools and emerging new technologies;
 - (g) promoting further integration of early childhood education and care in the education continuum and supporting collaboration between early childhood education and care and primary school staff, parents and counselling services for a smooth transition for children to primary school;
 - (h) fostering an educational environment which is inclusive, democratic and participatory, embracing and integrating the voice of all children.
5. Promote transparent and coherent monitoring and evaluation of early childhood education and care services at the appropriate levels with a view to policy development and implementation. Effective approaches could include:
- (a) using self-evaluation tools, questionnaires and observation guidelines as part of quality management at system and service level;
 - (b) using adequate and age-appropriate methods to foster children's participation and listen to their views, concerns and ideas and take the children's perspective into account in the assessment process;
 - (c) implementing existing tools to improve the inclusiveness of early childhood education and care provision such as the Inclusive Early Childhood Education Learning Environment Self-Reflection Tool developed by the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education.
6. Aim at ensuring adequate funding and a legal framework for the provision of early childhood education and care services. Consideration could be given to:
- (a) scaling up investment in early childhood education and care with a focus on availability, quality and affordability, including making use, where appropriate, of the funding opportunities offered by the European structural and investment funds;
 - (b) creating and maintaining tailored national or regional Quality Frameworks;
 - (c) promoting better cooperation among services or further integration of them for families and children, most importantly with social and health services as well as schools, at national, regional and local levels;
 - (d) embedding robust child protection/safeguarding policies within the early childhood education and care system to help protect children from all forms of violence;
 - (e) developing a system that strives at:
 - (1) a strong culture of dialogue and reflection, fostering a continuous process of development and learning between actors at all levels;
 - (2) a high quality of early childhood education and care infrastructures and appropriate geographical distribution in relation to the children's living environment.
7. Report through existing frameworks and tools on experiences and progress regarding access to and quality of early childhood education and care systems.

HEREBY WELCOMES THE COMMISSION'S INTENTION TO:

- 8. Facilitate the exchange of experiences and good practices among Member States in the context of the Strategic Framework of cooperation in education and training and successor schemes, as well as in the Social Protection Committee.
- 9. Support the cooperation of Member States, based on their demand, by organising peer learning and peer counselling.

10. Support the cooperation with the OECD Network on Early Childhood Education and Care in order to facilitate dissemination of results and avoid duplications.
11. Support the development of high-quality inclusive early childhood education and care services by making Union funding available, particularly in the framework of the Erasmus+ programme and, where appropriate, the European Structural and Investment Funds, including Interreg, without any prejudice to negotiations on the next Multiannual Financial Framework.
12. Propose an updated European benchmark or target on early childhood education and care aiming at the provision of services, in line with revised ET2020 benchmark and Barcelona targets, following consultation with Member States. This proposal for a benchmark together with other proposed European education and training benchmarks should be discussed and decided by the Council in the context of setting up the new strategic framework in education and training after 2020.
13. Report to the Council on follow up of the Recommendation in line with reporting modalities of the existing frameworks and tools.

Done at Brussels, 22 May 2019.

For the Council

The President

C. B. MATEI

ANNEX

‘Children have the right to affordable early childhood education and care of good quality.’

The European Pillar of Social Rights

Learning and education start from birth and the early years are the most formative in children's lives as they set the foundations for their lifelong development. This Quality Framework provides key principles and a European approach to high-quality early childhood education and care systems based on good practices in the EU Member States and state of the art research. It comprises ten quality statements which are structured along five broader areas of quality: access, staff, curriculum, monitoring and evaluation, and governance and funding. The ten quality statements describe the main features of high-quality services as identified in practice. The quality framework is a governance tool aimed at providing orientation for the development and upholding of early childhood and education care systems.

The framework's main objective is to describe a system which can provide high-quality early childhood education and care for all children and its development; it is guided by the following principles:

- high-quality services are crucial in promoting children's development and learning and, in the long term, enhancing their educational chances;
- parents' participation as partners of such services is essential — the family is the most important place for children to grow and develop, and parents (and guardians) are responsible for each child's well-being, health and development;
- early childhood education and care services need to be child-centred, actively involve children and acknowledge children's views.

THE EU QUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

ACCESS to quality early childhood education and care services for all children contributes to their healthy development and educational success, helps reducing social inequalities and narrows the competence gap between children with different socioeconomic backgrounds. Equitable access is also essential to ensure that parents, especially women, have flexibility to (re)integrate in the labour market.

*Quality Statements:***1. Provision that is available and affordable to all families and their children.**

Universal legal entitlement to early childhood education and care services provides a solid basis for reaching out to all children. Population data and parents surveys on the demand for early childhood education and care places can serve as a basis for estimating further needs and adjusting capacity.

Provision can address barriers that may prevent families and children from participating. This may include an adaptation of the requested fees for early childhood education and care to allow also low-income households' access. There is also evidence that flexibility in opening hours and other arrangements can enable participation especially for children of working mothers, single-parent families and from minority or disadvantaged groups.

Provision that is equally distributed across urban and rural areas, affluent and poor neighbourhoods, and regions can widen access for disadvantaged groups in society. Availability and affordability of high-quality services in neighbourhoods where poor families, minorities or migrant or refugee families reside is reported to have the biggest impact on supporting equity and social inclusion.

2. Provision that encourages participation, strengthens social inclusion and embraces diversity.

Early childhood education and care settings can actively encourage participation by involving parents, families and carers in decision-making processes (e.g. in parental committees). Reaching out to families — especially to single-parent and disadvantaged or minority or migrant families — with targeted initiatives allows them to express their needs and enables services to take these into account when tailoring provision to the demands of local communities.

Recruitment of staff from marginalised, migrant or minority groups can be encouraged as it has proven to be of advantage if the composition of staff in early childhood education and care settings reflects diversity in the community.

Creating a welcoming environment for children that values their languages, culture and home backgrounds contributes to the development of their sense of belonging. Appropriate continuous professional development also prepares staff to welcome and support bilingual children.

Early childhood education and care settings can develop good practices in families for a smooth transition from the home environment to the setting, as well as foster high levels of parental participation by organising specific initiatives.

STAFF is the most significant factor for children's well-being, learning and developmental outcomes. Therefore staff working conditions and professional development are seen as essential components of quality.

Quality statements:

3. Well-qualified staff with initial and continuing training that enable them to fulfil their professional role.

Effective early childhood education and care systems consider raising the professional status of staff, which is widely acknowledged as one of the key factors of quality, by raising qualification levels, offering attractive professional status and flexible career prospects and alternative pathways for assistants. This can be supported by aiming for a pedagogical staff that is composed of highly qualified professionals holding a full professional qualification specialised in early childhood education, in addition to assistant staff.

State-of-the-art initial education programmes are designed together with practitioners and provide a good balance between theory and practice. It is also an asset if education programmes prepare staff for working collectively and for enhancing reflective competences. Such programmes can benefit from training staff to work with linguistically and culturally diverse groups, from minority, migrant and low-income families.

Staff that are equipped to follow the developmental needs, interests and potential of young children and able to detect potential development and learning problems can more actively support child development and learning. Regular, tailor-made and continued professional development opportunities benefit all staff members, including assistants and auxiliary staff.

Regarding the necessary elements of child development and psychology, competences for staff should, in line with the different structures of training in the Member States, include knowledge on child protection systems, and more generally on the rights of the child.

4. Supportive working conditions including professional leadership which creates opportunities for observation, reflection, planning, teamwork and cooperation with parents.

Early childhood education and care systems that aim at improved working conditions, including more adequate wage levels, can make employment in early childhood education and care a more attractive option for better-qualified staff, looking for proper careers.

Adult-child ratios and group sizes are most adequate if designed in an appropriate manner for the age and composition of the group of children, as younger children require more attention and care.

Professional learning communities, where they exist within and across settings, have shown a positive impact through assigning time and space for staff collegial practices and joint work.

Offering mentoring and supervision to newly recruited staff during their induction can help them to quickly fulfil their professional roles.

CURRICULUM is a powerful tool to improve well-being, development and learning of children. A broad pedagogical framework sets out the principles for sustaining children's development and learning through educational and care practices that meet children's interests, needs and potentialities.

Quality statements:

5. A curriculum based on pedagogic goals, values and approaches which enable children to reach their full potential addressing their social, emotional, cognitive and physical development and their well-being.

Child-centred pedagogical approaches can better sustain children's overall development, provide support for their learning strategies and promote their cognitive and non-cognitive development by building more systematically on experiential learning, play and social interactions.

There is strong evidence that an explicit curriculum is an asset as it can provide a coherent framework for care, education and socialisation as integral parts of early childhood education and care provision. Ideally, such a framework defines pedagogical goals enabling educators to personalise their approach to the individual needs of children and can provide guidelines for a high-quality learning environment. It gives due consideration to including availability of books and other print material to help literacy development of children.

By promoting diversity, equality, and linguistic awareness an effective curriculum framework fosters integration of migrants and refugees. It can nurture the development of both their mother tongue and language of education.

6. A curriculum that requires staff to collaborate with children, colleagues and parents and to reflect on their own practice.

A curriculum can help to better involve parents, stakeholders and staff and to ensure that it responds more adequately to the needs, interests and the children's potential.

A curriculum can define roles and processes for staff to collaborate regularly with parents as well as with colleagues in other children's services (including health, social care and education sectors).

Whenever possible, the curriculum can provide guidelines for early childhood education and care staff to liaise with school staff on children's transition to the primary and/or pre-primary schools.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION sustain quality. By pointing to strengths and weaknesses, its processes can be important components of enhancing quality in early childhood education systems. They can provide support to stakeholders and policy makers in undertaking initiatives that respond to the needs of children, parents and local communities.

Quality statements:

7. Monitoring and evaluating produces information at the relevant local, regional and/or national level to support continuing improvements in the quality of policy and practice.

Transparent information on service and staff or on curriculum implementation at the appropriate – national, regional and local – level can help to improve quality.

Regular information feedback can make the process of policy evaluation easier, also by allowing to analyse the use of public funds and of what is effective and in which context.

To identify staff learning needs and to make the right decisions on how best to improve service quality and professional development, it is beneficial that early childhood education leaders collect relevant data in a timely manner.

8. Monitoring and evaluation which is in the best interest of the child.

In order to protect the rights of the child, robust child protection/child safeguarding policies should be embedded within the early childhood education and care system to help protect children from all forms of violence. Effective child protection policies cover four broad areas: (1) policy, (2) people, (3) procedures, and (4) accountability. More information on these areas can be found in 'Child safeguarding standards and how to implement them' issued by Keeping Children Safe.

Monitoring and evaluation processes can foster active engagement and cooperation among all stakeholders. Everyone concerned with the development of quality can contribute to – and benefit from – monitoring and evaluation practices.

Available evidence indicates that a mix of monitoring methods (e.g. observation, documentation, narrative assessment of children competences and learning) can provide useful information and give account of children's experiences and development, including helping a smooth transition to primary school.

Monitoring tools and participatory evaluation procedures can be created to allow children to be heard and be explicit about their learning and socialising experiences within settings.

GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING are crucial to enable early childhood education and care provision to play its role in the personal development and learning of children and in reducing the attainment gap and fostering social cohesion. Quality results from comprehensive and coherent public policies that link early childhood education and care to other services concerned with the welfare of young children and their families.

Quality statements:

9. Stakeholders have a clear and shared understanding of their role and responsibilities, and know that they are expected to collaborate with partner organisations.

Early childhood education and care provision benefits from close collaboration with all services working for children, including social and health services, schools and local stakeholders. Such inter-agency alliances have shown to be more effective if governed by a coherent policy framework that can proactively foster collaboration and long-term investment in local communities.

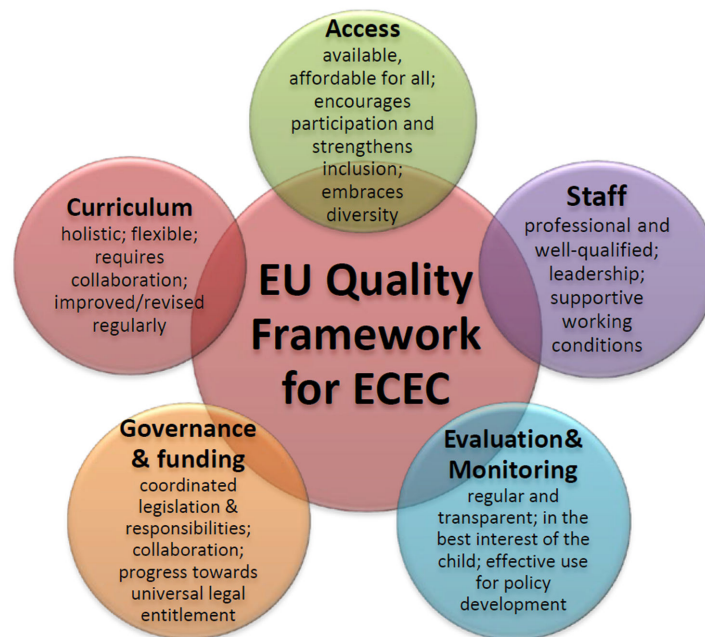
Stakeholders' involvement has been shown as crucial to design and implement early childhood education and care provision.

The integration or coordination of services in charge of different regulations on early childhood education and care can have a positive effect on the quality of the system.

10. Legislation, regulation and/or funding supports progress towards a universal entitlement to high-quality affordable early childhood education and care, and progress is regularly reported to relevant stakeholders.

Improvement of quality in service provision for all children might be better achieved by progressively building up universal legal entitlement. This includes promoting participation in early childhood education and care from an early age. It can be useful to evaluate whether market based early childhood education and care services create unequal access or lower quality for disadvantaged children and, if necessary, make plans for remedy actions.

A close link to labour, health and social policies would clearly be an asset as it can promote a more efficient redistribution of resources by targeting extra funding towards disadvantaged groups and neighbourhoods.



COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION
of 22 May 2019
on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages
(2019/C 189/03)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Articles 165 and 166 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Whereas:

- (1) In the Communication ‘Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture⁽¹⁾’ the European Commission sets out the vision of a European Education Area in which high-quality, inclusive education, training and research are not hampered by borders; spending time in another Member State to study, learn or work has become the standard; speaking two languages in addition to one’s mother tongue is far more widespread; and people have a strong sense of their identity as Europeans, as well as an awareness of Europe’s shared cultural and linguistic heritage and its diversity.
- (2) At the informal working session of the Gothenburg Summit for fair jobs and growth, Heads of State or Government discussed the role of education and culture for the future of Europe. The European Council Conclusions of 14 December 2017⁽²⁾ call on the Member States, the Council and the Commission, in line with their respective competences, to take work forward in this area.
- (3) In its conclusions, adopted in Barcelona on 15 and 16 March 2002, the European Council called for further action in the field of education ‘to improve the mastery of basic skills, in particular by teaching at least two foreign languages from a very early age’.
- (4) Literacy competence and multilingual competence are defined among the eight key competences in the Council Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning⁽³⁾.
- (5) Multilingual competence⁽⁴⁾ is at the heart of the vision of a European Education Area. With increasing mobility for education, training and work inside the Union, increasing migration from third countries into the Union, and the overall global cooperation, education and training systems need to reconsider the challenges in teaching and learning of languages and the opportunities provided by Europe’s linguistic diversity.
- (6) Increasing and improving language learning and teaching could strengthen the European dimension in education and training. It could foster the development of a European identity in all its diversity, complementing local, regional and national identities and traditions and a better understanding of the Union and its Member States. Multilingual competence provides a better understanding of other cultures, thus contributing to the development of citizenship and democratic competences.
- (7) Almost half of Europeans⁽⁵⁾ report that they are unable to hold a conversation in any language other than their first language⁽⁶⁾. The lack of multilingual competence is a source of difficulty, hampering meaningful exchanges between public administrations and individuals especially in border regions⁽⁷⁾.

⁽¹⁾ COM(2017)673 final

⁽²⁾ EUCO 19/1/17 REV 1

⁽³⁾ OJ C 189, 4.6.2018, p. 1.

⁽⁴⁾ While the Council of Europe uses the term ‘plurilingualism’ for referring to multiple language competences of individuals, European Union’s official documents use ‘multilingualism’ to describe both individual competences and societal situations. This is partly due to difficulties making a distinction between plurilingual and multilingual in other languages than English and French.

⁽⁵⁾ Europeans and their languages — special Eurobarometer report summary 2012.

⁽⁶⁾ First language: language variety (-ies) acquired and used in early childhood (approximately before the age of two or three years) in which the human language faculty was first acquired. This term is preferred to mother tongue, which is often inappropriate as the first language is not necessarily that of the mother only.

⁽⁷⁾ Commission Communication on boosting growth and cohesion in EU border regions, COM(2017) 534.

- (8) Only four in ten learners in secondary education reach the 'independent user' level in the first foreign language, indicating an ability to have a simple conversation. Only one quarter attains this level in the second foreign language⁽⁸⁾. A comparative analysis of languages in education and training showed that most Member States face challenges in ensuring appropriate learning outcomes in the field of languages. While challenges exist in all education sectors, they are particularly acute in vocational education and training where less emphasis is put on language learning.
- (9) Limited multilingual competence remains one of the main obstacles to benefit from the opportunities offered by the European education, training and youth programmes. Conversely, enhanced multilingual competence will enable persons to benefit more from the opportunities the internal market offers, such as free movement of workers, as well as take a more informed decision about opportunities in other EU countries.
- (10) Multilingual competence provides competitive advantages for both businesses and job seekers — if it forms part of a broader set of necessary skills. There is positive correlation between foreign language skills and the likelihood of being in employment. However, the results from the latest Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS 2016) show that only 7,9 % of companies (that provide training for their employees) send their employees for language courses (ranging from 22,1 % in Slovakia to 0,5 % in Ireland).
- (11) To sustain current standards of living, support high rates of employment and foster social cohesion in the light of tomorrow's society and world of work, people need the right set of skills and competences. The acquisition of better multilingual competence could support increasing mobility and cooperation within the Union. This is also key in view of ensuring full integration of immigrant children, students and adults.
- (12) New ways of learning need to be explored for a society that is becoming increasingly mobile and digital. In particular digital developments allow for more and more languages to be learned and practiced outside the classroom and curricula. Current assessment procedures do not fully reflect these developments.
- (13) The European Pillar of Social Rights states as its first principle that everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that allow full participation in society and successful transitions in the labour market. Multilingual competence is one of the key competences that could foster employability, personal fulfilment, active citizenship, intercultural understanding and social inclusion; it is defined as 'the ability to use different languages appropriately and effectively for communication'.
- (14) More than half of the Member States officially recognise regional or minority languages within their borders for legal or administrative purposes, including national sign languages. Several of these languages transcend national borders. The languages added by the immigrant or refugee populations complete the linguistic picture in Europe.
- (15) Schools are becoming increasingly aware of the necessity to make sure that all children, regardless of background and first language, acquire a very good level of the language of schooling, if appropriate through special support measures. This supports equity and equal opportunities, and reduces the risk of early school leaving.
- (16) Language-awareness in schools could include awareness and understanding of the literacy and multilingual competences of all pupils, including competences in languages that are not taught in the school. Schools may distinguish between different levels of multilingual competence needed depending on context and purpose and corresponding to every learner's circumstances, needs, abilities and interests.
- (17) The shortage of teachers in some subjects, including modern foreign languages, is mentioned as a challenge in more than half of the European Union's education systems and several Member States have introduced reforms or incentives to tackle shortages of language teachers. Those reforms and incentives could include scholarships to attract language graduates with other professional experience into teaching or reformed teacher education programmes.

⁽⁸⁾ European Commission (2012) — First European Survey on language competences, executive summary.

- (18) Initiatives to improve key competences in school education, including by better linking real life experience with academic learning, using digital technologies and supporting innovation in schools, have strengthened the focus on the learning outcomes. They also supported the acquisition of multilingual competence.
- (19) Content and Language Integrated Learning, i.e. teaching subjects through a foreign language, and digital and online tools for language learning have proven efficient for different categories of learners. Language teachers across Europe could benefit from continuous professional development in both updating their digital competence and learning how they can best support their teaching practice by using different methodologies and new technologies. An inventory of open educational resources could support them in this, taking into account the work of the Council of Europe.
- (20) Various initiatives in Europe have supported the definition and development of multilingual competence. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages supports learning and teaching of all languages as a transparent, coherent and comprehensive reference instrument to assess and compare competence levels. It distinguishes between basic user level, independent user level and proficient user level with the latter enabling a user to work or study in the language assessed. In 2018, the instrument was complemented with new descriptors for mediation, sign languages and other areas and with collations of descriptors for young learners, with a view to making the Framework more accessible to a wider public.
- (21) The Europass Language Passport is a standardised template for self-assessment of language skills, which uses the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. It helps citizens communicate their language skills during a mobility period, either for educational purposes, employment or training, while also helping employers understand the language skills of the workforce.
- (22) The European Language Label ⁽⁹⁾ rewards excellence and innovation in language teaching in all participating countries. It provides an incentive for schools and other institutions to use new methodologies and strategies addressing local, regional, national or European priorities. It has contributed to raising the awareness about European cooperation in the field of language teaching and learning and enhancing the multilingual dynamics across educational sectors.
- (23) All Member States have acknowledged the need to enhance multilingualism and develop multilingual competence in the Union. The European Commission will work on a proposal for a new set of European education and training benchmarks together with options for data collection, which may include a European benchmark on language competences, with the aim to provide a more accurate picture of multilingual competence in the Union. These benchmarks will be discussed and decided by the Council in the context of setting up the new strategic framework in education and training after 2020.
- (24) While acknowledging that multilingual competence is acquired throughout life and opportunities should be made available at all stages in life, this Recommendation addresses in particular primary and secondary education and training, including where possible early childhood education and care and initial vocational education and training.
- (25) This Recommendation fully respects the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.

RECOMMENDS THAT MEMBER STATES:

In accordance with national and European legislation, available resources and national circumstances, and in close cooperation with all relevant stakeholders:

- (1) Explore ways to help all young people to acquire before the end of upper secondary education and training — in addition to the languages of schooling — where possible, a competence level in at least one other European language which allows them to use the language effectively for social, learning and professional purposes, and to encourage the acquisition of an additional (third) language to a level which allows them to interact with a degree of fluency ⁽¹⁰⁾.
- (2) Apply comprehensive approaches to improve teaching and learning of languages at national, regional, local or school level as appropriate, and where relevant, making use of the policy examples set out in the Annex.

⁽⁹⁾ The European Language Label is awarded at national level and supported through the Erasmus+ programme.

⁽¹⁰⁾ The acquisition of classical languages, such as Ancient Greek and Latin, can be part of the learner's linguistic repertoire.

- (3) Ensure that all sectors of primary and secondary education are addressed, starting as early as possible, including initial vocational education and training.
- (4) As part of such comprehensive approaches, support the development of language awareness in schools and vocational education and training institutions by:
 - (a) actively supporting and recognising the mobility of learners and teachers, including by making use of opportunities provided by the relevant Union funding programmes;
 - (b) strengthening the competence in the languages of schooling as the basis for further learning and educational achievement in school for all learners, and especially those from migrant, refugee or disadvantaged backgrounds;
 - (c) helping the learners to broaden their competences in the languages of schooling by supporting teachers in addressing the use of specific language in their respective subject areas, including raising the awareness of different language registers and specific vocabulary;
 - (d) promoting continuity in language education between the different school levels;
 - (e) valuing linguistic diversity of learners and using it as a learning resource including involving parents, other carers and the wider local community in language education;
 - (f) considering opportunities to assess and validate language competences that are not part of the curriculum, but result from informal learning (for example in the case of learners of migrant, refugee or bilingual backgrounds) or from attending a formal school system of another country where the learner has lived previously, for instance through expanding the range of languages that can be added to learners' school leaving qualifications;
 - (g) strengthening the use of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, especially for inspiring developments in language curricula, testing and assessment;
 - (h) ensuring support for schools to define their own approach to language learning, while respecting national legislation and helping schools to actively value and use their linguistic diversity;
 - (i) offering opportunities for schools and training centres to strengthen their European perspective for example through continued implementation of the European Language Label, the development of school labels with a particular European perspective and by organising national events around language diversity.
- (5) Support teachers, trainers, inspectors and school leaders in the development of language awareness by:
 - (a) investing, where appropriate, in the initial and continuing education of language teachers to enhance their competences and to attract and retain staff in order to maintain a broad language offer in primary education and secondary education and training;
 - (b) enhancing voluntary cooperation between institutions in charge of initial and continuing education for language teachers;
 - (c) including preparation for linguistic diversity in the classroom in initial education and continuous professional development of teachers and school leaders;
 - (d) promoting study periods abroad for students studying towards a teaching qualification, while encouraging mobility for all teachers, trainers, inspectors and school leaders;
 - (e) promoting the integration and recognition of learning mobility into the education of language teachers, so that newly graduated language teachers benefit from preferably a semester of learning or teaching experience abroad, especially through the Erasmus+ programme;
 - (f) promoting the use of eTwinning⁽¹⁾ and other forms of virtual cooperation as well as face-to-face network building to enrich the learning experiences in schools and develop multilingual competence of teachers and pupils;
 - (g) promoting collaborative teaching between language teachers and teachers of other subjects.

⁽¹⁾ eTwinning is a community of teachers from pre-primary to upper secondary schools, hosted on a secure internet platform.

- (6) Encourage research in and use of innovative, inclusive and multilingual pedagogies, including for example the use of digital tools, intercomprehension and ways to teach subjects through a foreign language (Content and Language Integrated Learning) and innovate initial teacher education.
- (7) Ensure that language competences acquired at different stages of education and training are monitored, complementing existing information on the provision of language learning.
- (8) Report through existing frameworks and tools on experiences and progress in promoting language learning.

HEREBY WELCOMES THE COMMISSION'S INTENTION TO:

- (9) Support the follow-up of this Recommendation by facilitating mutual learning among Member States and developing multilingual tools and resources in cooperation with Member States, such as:
 - (a) guidelines on how to link language teaching and assessment to the Common European Framework of Reference for language competences ⁽¹²⁾;
 - (b) evidence-based guidance material on new forms of learning and supportive approaches also for languages that are not part of the curriculum;
 - (c) digital tools for language learning and professional development of educational staff, in the field of language learning, such as massive open online courses, self-assessment tools ⁽¹³⁾, networks, including eTwinning and the School Education Gateway's Teacher Academy;
 - (d) methodologies and tools supporting the monitoring of multilingual competence in the Union.
- (10) Strengthen the mobility of school pupils, learners in vocational education and training and teachers, trainers, inspectors and school leaders within the Erasmus+ programme and support overall the use of Union funding, such as Erasmus+, Horizon 2020, Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) or European Structural and Investment Funds, where appropriate, for the implementation of this Recommendation and its Annex, without any prejudice to negotiations on the next Multiannual Financial Framework.
- (11) Strengthen cooperation with the Council of Europe, and the European Centre for Modern Languages, in the field of language learning to enhance innovative methods in teaching and learning of languages and increase awareness of the crucial role of language learning in modern societies.
- (12) Report on the follow-up of the implementation of the Recommendation primarily through existing frameworks and tools.

Done at Brussels, 22 May 2019.

For the Council

The President

C.B. MATEI

⁽¹²⁾ Based on the experiences and expertise developed by the Council of Europe in creating and updating the Framework and by the European Centre for Modern Languages and the European Commission in applying this work to teacher education through jointly financed projects.

⁽¹³⁾ Currently Europass offers a self-assessment tool for language competence and the functioning and effectiveness of this will be reviewed as part of implementation of the Europass Decision.

ANNEX

Language awareness in schools — developing comprehensive approaches to language learning

Comprehensive language approaches could support the implementation of the language learning Recommendation. This annex lists a number of pedagogical principles and good practices, which have in common the aim to increase the general language awareness in schools, with the ultimate goal to improve language-learning outcomes.

The teaching of language is an important element across all subjects looking at the various ways language is used in the classroom and the vital role language plays in learning and understanding subject content. Acquiring a good command of academic language goes hand in hand with the development of subject knowledge and understanding.

Language awareness in schools and vocational education and training institutions could support the understanding that language learning is a dynamic process and a continuum — the acquisition of the first language and its different registers and styles continues and is deeply interlinked with the learning of other languages, in different levels of proficiency, corresponding to every learner's circumstances, needs and interests.

Language awareness in schools and vocational education and training institutions could support reflections on the language dimension in all levels of school organisation, teaching and practice: in literacy development, foreign language learning, in subject teaching, for acknowledging other languages brought in by pupils, in communication with parents and with the wider school environment, etc.

Close cooperation among the different members of the school community, ideally within a concept of the school as a learning organisation or within a whole school approach, can promote such an understanding of language awareness.

In order to support language awareness in schools and vocational education and training institutions, the following examples of good practice have been identified.

1. Multilingualism in schools and vocational education and training institutions

- A positive attitude towards linguistic diversity can help to create a language friendly environment where learning and using multiple languages is perceived as a richness and a resource. Awareness of the importance of language learning, and of the educational, cognitive, social, intercultural, professional and economic benefits of the wider use of languages can be increased and encouraged.
- The development of language competence and of linguistic awareness can be integrated transversally into the curricula. Integrating languages and other subjects can make it possible to provide more authentic learning geared towards real-life situations.
- The motivation of learners to study languages can be enhanced by linking education content to their own lives and interests, taking informal learning into consideration and encouraging synergies with extra-curricular activities. Links between everyday life practice of language and schools or vocational education and training institutions can be strengthened through recognition of prior learning of languages, and offering the possibility to add multilingual competence resulting from informal learning (for example in the case of learners of migrant, refugee or bilingual backgrounds) or from attending a formal school system of another country where the learner has lived previously, to school leaving certificates.
- Learners' entire linguistic repertoire can be valued and supported in school and also used as pedagogical resource for further learning of all learners. Pupils can help each other in learning, explain their language(s) to others and compare languages.
- Schools could offer a wider range of languages in addition to the main global languages of communication. The uptake can be different depending on whether a country has two or more state languages or if there is a declared interest to promote the learning of the language of a neighbouring country.

- Establishing partnerships between early childhood education and care institutions and schools in border regions that will encourage children to learn the language of their neighbour from an early age and decrease language barriers in cross-border regions.
- Further encouraging schools and vocational education and training institutions to use the European Day of Languages and the European Language Label to promote language learning and linguistic diversity. Promoting school labels with a particular European dimension to foster a European perspective for schools and training centres.

2. Efficient and innovative teaching for enhanced language learning

- The potential of digital tools could be fully embraced to enhance language learning, teaching and assessment. Technology can massively support broadening the language offer, provide opportunities for language exposure, and be very useful for supporting those languages which are not taught in schools. Developing critical thinking and media literacy and an appropriate and safe use of technology can be an essential learning element in this context.
- Virtual cooperation between schools through eTwinning and other forms of virtual cooperation can allow young people to improve language learning, work with peers from another country and prepare for mobility to study, train or volunteer abroad.
- Pupils' mobility, including through Erasmus+, could become a regular part of the learning process. This should extend to virtual and wider staff mobility.
- A mix of diagnostic, formative and summative assessment can be used by teachers, trainers and learners to monitor and evaluate language development; individual language portfolios are used to keep track of the progress, for example through the European Language Portfolio or the Europass Language Passport.

3. Support for teachers and trainers

- Teachers of modern languages could be encouraged to take part in exchange schemes with countries where their target language is spoken, as part of their initial education and/or further professional development. Every newly graduated language teacher could have spent preferably a semester of learning or teaching abroad.
- Teachers and trainers of other subjects than modern languages could gain language awareness and knowledge about language didactics, and acquire strategies for supporting learners.
- Language assistants could be included in language teaching, using the opportunities provided by exchange schemes between Member States.
- Continuing professional development opportunities can be made accessible to teachers (through networks, communities of practice, massive online language courses, centres of expertise, cooperative online learning, collaborative action research, etc.) in order to keep them up to date with latest pedagogical innovations and to upskill them.

4. Partnerships and links in the wider school environment to support language learning

- Schools and vocational education and training institutions could cooperate with parents on how they can support their children's language learning, especially when children grow up with more than one language or use a different language at home than the language of schooling.
- Schools and vocational education and training institutions can develop partnerships with language centres/languages laboratories, public libraries, cultural centres or other cultural associations, universities and research centres in order to create more engaging learning environments, to enrich the uptake of languages and to improve and innovate teaching practice.
- Schools, vocational education and training institutions and municipalities can pool resources to create language centres with a larger offer of languages, in order to maintain less-spoken languages, and/or languages that are not taught in school.
- Cooperation with employers in the region or beyond can help increasing the understanding of the importance of multilingual competence in working life and can help to ensure that multilingual competence gained effectively supports employability.

-
- Cross-border partnerships between education and training institutions in border regions could be encouraged. Mobility of students, teachers, trainers and administrative staff, as well as doctoral candidates and researchers could be facilitated by offering information and courses in the languages spoken in the neighbouring country. Promotion of multilingualism within these cross-border partnerships can prepare graduates to enter the labour market in both sides of the border.
 - Promote cooperation between teacher education institutions.
-

IV

*(Notices)*NOTICES FROM EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS, BODIES, OFFICES AND
AGENCIES

COUNCIL

**Council conclusions on the implementation of the Council Recommendation on Upskilling
Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults**

(2019/C 189/04)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

1. RECALLING the political background to this issue as set out in Annex to these conclusions, and in particular that:

- (a) the social dimension of education as stated in the first principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights states that everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that allow full participation in society and successful transitions in the labour market ⁽¹⁾;
- (b) the UN Sustainable Development Goal 4 seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. As noted in the Commission's Reflection Paper 'Towards a Sustainable Europe by 2030', 'everything is changing for everyone. Education, science, technology, research and innovation are a prerequisite for achieving a sustainable EU economy that meets the UN Sustainable Development Goals';
- (c) the Council on 22 May 2018 adopted Conclusions on moving towards a vision of a European Education Area ⁽²⁾, in which it set out that a European Education Area should be underpinned by the lifelong learning continuum, and stressed that initiatives under a European Education Area should include all levels and types of education and training, including adult education and vocational education and training;
- (d) the ageing population in Europe, increased longevity in society and the need to foster intergenerational cooperation, the accelerating changes in the labour market, emerging forms of work and the penetration of digital technologies in all aspects of daily life result in a growing demand for new skills and a higher level of skills, knowledge and competences; this gives added urgency to the need to upskill or reskill all people who have not mastered basic skills or have not gained a qualification to ensure their employability and active citizenship;
- (e) in the light of the major transformations now taking place in labour markets, inclusive and quality education and training — delivered at all stages of life — have become even more crucial, and the Union faces an upskilling and reskilling imperative requiring strategic approaches towards lifelong learning and skills development; some data suggest that as soon as 2022, 54 % of all employees will require significant upskilling and reskilling ⁽³⁾;

⁽¹⁾ Doc. 13129/17.⁽²⁾ OJ C 195, 7.6.2018, p. 7.⁽³⁾ World Economic Forum: Future of Jobs report, 2018.

- (f) the Education and Training 2020 (ET2020) adult learning benchmark has been stagnant in the Union for the last decade: in 2017, 10,9 % of adults had recently undertaken some form of learning activity, against the 2020 benchmark of 15 % ⁽⁴⁾;
- (g) the Country Specific Recommendations within the European Semester have identified upskilling, reskilling and lifelong learning as a key challenge to be addressed in the future for various Member States;
- (h) in 2017, 61 million adults aged 25 to 64 in the Union had stopped their formal education before they had completed upper secondary education ⁽⁵⁾; at the same time the share of early leavers from education and training in 2017 was 10,6 % and is now close to reaching the target set for 2020, namely less than 10 %, however rates between countries vary greatly; 43 % of the Union population has an insufficient level of digital skills and 17 % has none at all ⁽⁶⁾; and around 20 % of the adult population in countries participating in the OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) ⁽⁷⁾ struggles with basic skills like literacy and numeracy. Provision for these adults therefore requires urgent attention;
- (i) there is no one-size-fits-all; employed, unemployed and inactive people and the many different sub-groups all have specific needs; assessing and validating legally residing migrants' and refugees' skills and competences and their upskilling and reskilling will accelerate their entry to the labour market and their smooth integration into their new communities;
- (j) investment in upskilling and reskilling can have a strong economic impact including a higher productivity and economic growth; a more skilled and competent population able to stimulate innovation and technological progress ⁽⁸⁾; growth in tax revenues and reduced public expenditure due to individuals' improved health, social and civic engagement, and lower levels of involvement in criminal activities ⁽⁹⁾;
- (k) for individuals, upskilling and reskilling can lead to enhanced employability, higher earnings, better health and wellbeing, more active citizenship and social inclusion. However, individuals and employers may have difficulties in recognising these effects and therefore underinvest in upskilling and reskilling, which calls for setting the right incentives to stimulate awareness and motivation to engage in further education and training;
- (l) in light of this, the Council on 19 December 2016 adopted the Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults ('the Recommendation') ⁽¹⁰⁾, which calls for a strategic and coordinated approach to providing joined-up learning opportunities to the Union's 61 million ⁽¹¹⁾ low-skilled and/or low-qualified adults and aimed to support adults with low levels of skills and qualifications to enhance their basic skills, i.e. literacy, numeracy and digital competence, and/or to acquire a broader set of skills, knowledge and competences and by progressing towards higher qualifications;
- (m) the Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways recommends Member States to offer to low-skilled and/or low-qualified adults access to upskilling opportunities built around an easily accessible pathway comprising three steps: skills assessment to identify existing skills and upskilling needs; a tailor-made offer of learning and mentoring, to enable them to update skills and fill deficits; and the opportunity to have their acquired skills, knowledge and competences validated and recognised with a view to gaining a qualification or giving access to employment.

⁽⁴⁾ Labour Force Survey, 2018.

⁽⁵⁾ Labour Force Survey, 2018.

⁽⁶⁾ Digital Inclusion and Skills Report, European Commission, 2017 data.

⁽⁷⁾ Austria, Belgium-FL, Czechia, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Spain, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, Slovenia, Slovakia, the UK and Hungary.

⁽⁸⁾ OECD, PIAAC, 2016.

⁽⁹⁾ Skills Matter, OECD, 2016.

⁽¹⁰⁾ OJ C 484, 24.12.2016, p. 1.

⁽¹¹⁾ In 2017, 61,3 million people aged 25 to 64 had at most a lower secondary educational qualification (Eurostat, Labour Force Survey, 2018). In 2012, the year of the PIAAC data collection, the Labour Force Survey recorded that 70 million 25- to 64-year-olds had, at most, lower secondary qualifications. This figure has decreased every year since then, in particular because: a) the educational levels of those reaching 25 years are higher as more young people finish upper secondary education or equivalent, and b) because people of retirement age have, in general, lower levels of education, with the exception of some Eastern European countries.

2. TAKES NOTE OF the Commission Staff Working Document ⁽¹²⁾ taking stock of implementation measures, published in compliance with the provisions of the Recommendation.
3. NOTES the progress that has been made, and in particular that:
 - (a) in some Member States, the adoption of the Recommendation was the stimulus for a national debate and a critical review of existing programmes;
 - (b) some Member States are setting in motion new policy agendas to support the upskilling and reskilling of the adult population, in line with the objectives of the Recommendation;
 - (c) although most of the reported measures focus on unemployed adults, some Member States are also focusing on support for low-skilled workers in employment, who represent a significant share of the target group;
 - (d) many Member States are taking advantage of the different forms of support offered by the Union programmes.
4. UNDERLINES its commitment to the ambition set out in the Recommendation, and CALLS UPON the Member States, in the light of the Recommendation and in accordance with national legislation, circumstances and available resources, and in close cooperation with social partners and education and training providers, where possible, to:
 - (a) put in place sustainable long-term measures for adult upskilling and reskilling as part of a broader strategic approach to lifelong skills development;
 - (b) adopt a coherent strategic approach to basic skills provision for low-skilled and/or low-qualified adults, built upon coordination and partnerships between all relevant actors involved as part of holistic skills strategies or action plans;
 - (c) promote partnerships to take a holistic approach, engaging relevant actors, including social partners from across policy areas (social, employment and education and training) to integrate basic skills provision with other services targeted at low-skilled and/or low-qualified adults;
 - (d) raise employers'— especially SMEs'— awareness of the importance of upskilling and reskilling and of available support mechanisms for adult skills development and encourage them to promote and offer training opportunities to their employees;
 - (e) focus provision specifically on helping beneficiaries to acquire at least a minimum level of the three basic skills, namely literacy, numeracy and digital competence as well as other key competences that are relevant for active participation in a sustainable society and for sustainable employment;
 - (f) where appropriate, ensure that such provision comprises three steps: skills assessment, a tailored and flexible learning offer and validation and recognition of skills, knowledge and competences;
 - (g) offer learning opportunities that are specifically tailored to beneficiaries' individual learning needs, as identified by the skills assessment, and informed by intelligence on labour market opportunities;
 - (h) provide outreach, awareness-raising, guidance and support measures, including incentives to ensure the successful take-up of the initiative;
 - (i) consider developing synergies between effective policies and actions to reduce early school leaving and to reduce the proportion of low-skilled and/or low-qualified adults, for example between measures under the Youth Guarantee and Upskilling Pathways;
 - (j) evaluate the impact of their actions on the progress of the target group towards achievement of the skills and qualifications set out in the Recommendation.

⁽¹²⁾ 'Council Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults: taking stock of implementation measures' SWD(2019) 89 final.

5. INVITES the Commission to:

- (a) continue supporting the implementation of the Upskilling Pathways Recommendation, including through mutual learning among Member States and relevant stakeholders, and through dedicated calls for proposals focusing in particular on assisting Member States to address the challenges identified in the stocktaking report and explore the potential of a strengthened and innovative role for the national coordinators of adult learning;
 - (b) facilitate cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination at European level through links with other initiatives and through Union funding programmes, and exchange of good practices through organised mutual learning activities and via tools such as the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (EPALE) and/or Europass;
 - (c) when formulating policy proposals, including for a post-2020 cooperation framework, take also into account the long term challenge of adult learning, and the issue of adults with outdated or low levels of skills or qualifications who need access to Upskilling Pathways;
 - (d) cooperate with and draw upon the expertise of Union bodies (Cedefop, ETF) and international organisations such as the OECD, UN, and Unesco to address the challenge of upskilling and reskilling, including through relevant research and analysis on adult learning and skills assessments (e.g. PIAAC).
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ANNEX

Political Background

1. Commission Recommendation 2008/867/EC of 3 October 2008 on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market ⁽¹⁾.
2. Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council of 21 November 2008 on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies ⁽²⁾.
3. Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 on policies to reduce early school leaving ⁽³⁾.
4. Council Resolution on a renewed European Agenda for adult learning ⁽⁴⁾.
5. Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning ⁽⁵⁾.
6. Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee ⁽⁶⁾.
7. 2015 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020) ⁽⁷⁾.
8. Council Recommendation of 15 February 2016 on the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market ⁽⁸⁾.
9. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions — A new skills agenda for Europe: working together to strengthen human capital, employability and competitiveness (10 June 2016).
10. Council Recommendation of 19 December 2016 on Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults ⁽⁹⁾.
11. Council Recommendation of 22 May 2017 on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning and repealing the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF) ⁽¹⁰⁾.
12. Decision (EU) 2018/646 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 April 2018 on a common framework for the provision of better services for skills and qualifications (Europass) and repealing Decision No 2241/2004/EC ⁽¹¹⁾.
13. Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning ⁽¹²⁾.
14. Council conclusions on moving towards a vision of a European Education Area ⁽¹³⁾.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 307, 18.11.2008, p. 11.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 319, 13.12.2008, p. 4.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 191, 1.7.2011, p. 1.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 372, 20.12.2011, p. 1.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ C 398, 22.12.2012, p. 1.

⁽⁶⁾ OJ C 120, 26.4.2013, p. 1.

⁽⁷⁾ OJ C 417, 15.12.2015, p. 25.

⁽⁸⁾ OJ C 67, 20.2.2016, p. 1.

⁽⁹⁾ OJ C 484, 24.12.2016, p. 1.

⁽¹⁰⁾ OJ C 189, 15.6.2017, p. 15.

⁽¹¹⁾ OJ L 112, 2.5.2018, p. 42.

⁽¹²⁾ OJ C 189, 4.6.2018, p. 1.

⁽¹³⁾ OJ C 195, 7.6.2018, p. 7.

Council Conclusions on Young People and the Future of Work

(2019/C 189/05)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

WHEREAS:

1. The European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027 recognises that young people are architects of their own lives, contribute to positive change in society and enrich the EU's ambitions, and that youth policy can contribute to create a space where young people can seize opportunities and relate to European values. In light of the changing employment landscape, the European Union should support young people's personal development and growth to autonomy, build their resilience and equip them with the necessary resources to participate in society, thus contributing to the eradication of youth poverty and all forms of discrimination, as well as to the promotion of social inclusion.
2. 'The future of work' is an umbrella term that describes the evolution of jobs in the medium-to-long term as affected by certain trends. In a diverse EU youth context, 'the future of work' is driven among others by:
 - a) Demographic change in the sense that EU's growing economic old-age dependency ratio will put pressure on increasing the productivity levels of those who will enter the labour market in order to compensate for the exit of an experienced labour force into retirement and equally to contribute to the support of increased social expenditures, owing also to a more numerous old-age population. While opening up opportunities in the care economy, these evolutions can also require dialogue on inter-generational fairness issues.
 - b) Advances in technology and innovation, as supported also by EU's Digital Single Market and Research and Development initiatives, are expected to bring about an increased use of digital technology in the economy and make certain jobs obsolete, while employment opportunities in other economy areas can open up. In order to benefit from such transformations, all young Europeans, including those with fewer opportunities, must have access to inclusive and quality formal and non-formal education that will improve their full range of skills.
 - c) Demand for higher skills on the labour market. Already employers are finding it difficult to fill vacancies for higher and medium level jobs, while at the same time the workforce comprises three times more low skilled people than available elementary occupations⁽¹⁾. Since the demand for low-skilled workers is declining further, in varying degrees throughout Member States, young people entering the labour market will need higher levels of education and training, equipping them with the key competences for lifelong learning as well as specific digital, vocational and personal skills that will support them in managing their diverse future career pathways.
 - d) The need to address climate change, where EU's ambitions to move to a competitive low-carbon economy can generate an increased demand on the labour market for skills required in sectors such as renewable energy, environmentally sustainable construction and retrofitting or sustainable agriculture.
 - e) Increase in global value chains where production of goods and services are spread across continents. The process is further facilitated by the advent of new forms of employment as introduced for instance by the platform economy which affects the traditional employer-employee relationship, the evolution of labour market and the employment legislation. Challenges such as income insecurity, lack of social protection, in-work poverty, precarious working conditions and workplace harassment, need to be addressed.
3. Young people in the European Union tend to view their future working life with fear or uncertainty⁽²⁾. The presence of such distress, especially if joined by job rejection, job-match quality issues, precarious work or social pressure to find or keep a job, can adversely impact young people's emotional state, potentially leading also to mental and physical health issues or a growing concern among young Europeans⁽³⁾.

⁽¹⁾ Eurostat (2018) EU Labour Force Survey.

⁽²⁾ International Labour Organisation (2018), Addressing the situation and aspirations of youth, Prepared for the 2nd Meeting of the Global Commission on the Future of Work.

⁽³⁾ Structured Dialogue Cycle VI Thematic report on Youth Goal no. 5 Mental Health and Wellbeing (2018).

4. Today's experience with new forms of employment indicate that in the future there can be a rise in more flexible forms of contracting workers, with potential positive effects on workforce distribution and personal wellbeing for those adopting a freelance lifestyle. Conversely, while such jobs tend to be taken by young people, in particular by those with fewer opportunities, there is an increased risk of being trapped in low-income temporary jobs, with little social protection coverage and low probability of professional advancement.
5. A solid foundation of skills and appropriate guidance backed up by good quality skills intelligence and high-quality, adaptable and responsive education and training systems, including the promotion of lifelong learning, can help young people make successful transitions to and inside the labour market and build rewarding careers.
6. In the context of ensuring a solid cognitive foundation, promoting the formation of skills that foster the effective use and understanding of technology is a prerequisite in the future work setting. The skills should not only focus on mastering new technologies, but also on understanding how they can help influence society. When increasing their capabilities in order to effectively benefit from the changing nature of work, young Europeans should also be equipped with key competences involving soft skills related, inter alia, to problem solving, communication, entrepreneurial skills, critical thinking, creative thinking, self-presentation, self-expression and negotiation.
7. The European Pillar of Social Rights establishes the right of everyone 'to timely and tailor-made assistance to improve employment or self-employment prospects. This includes the right to receive support for job search, training and re-qualification. Everyone has the right to transfer social protection and training entitlements during professional transitions' and also 'to fair and equal treatment regarding working conditions, access to social protection and training'. In preparing them for the future of work, it will be crucial therefore that 'young people have the right to continued education, apprenticeship, traineeship or a job offer of good standing within 4 months of becoming unemployed or leaving education' ⁽⁴⁾.
8. The views and vision of European Youth on work-related issues, as reflected in the Youth Goals, in particular no. 7 'Quality Employment for All', have been integrated in the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 and the Work Plan 2019-2021 that accompanies it.

UNDERLINES THAT:

9. Future generations of young Europeans will enter a work landscape filled with opportunities and challenges, in a global context where the EU will strive to improve the quality of life of its citizens and thus enhance its economic competitiveness, labour productivity and labour force skills, and ensure that young people's goals, expectations and ambitions can be met.
10. The changing nature of work can make a positive impact in the lives of young Europeans and future generations. At the same time, it is necessary to address the relevant concerns and implications -related to, inter alia, employment forms and employment status- that accompany such transformations, especially as regards young people with fewer opportunities who may be low-skilled. In this context, there is a need to increase information and awareness among young people about the implications of different employment forms and employment status.
11. Young Europeans consider that employment should be one of the top three priorities of the EU, and also one of the areas where the EU needs to take action in order to encourage young people to express solidarity ⁽⁵⁾. This shows young people's inclination to take a human-centred approach to their future professional lives.
12. First jobs should create the premises for a rewarding career fostering upward social mobility, especially for young people with fewer opportunities, including young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs). In line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 8, as well as with Youth Goal 7, decent work is to be treated as a legitimate aspiration of young people, starting with their very first remunerated professional experience.

⁽⁴⁾ European Pillar of Social Rights, Chapter I, Principle 4 (Active support to employment) https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_en.

The European Pillar of Social Rights has been jointly signed by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on 17 November 2017, at the Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth held in Gothenburg, Sweden.

⁽⁵⁾ Flash Barometer 455 on European Youth (2018), Survey conducted by 'TNS political & social' at the request of the European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture.

13. Early school leavers and low-educated young people are expected to remain vulnerable in a future of work context, where wage disparities between low and medium-high skilled members of the labour force can be expected to increase, thus potentially generating in-work poverty challenges. While decreasing in number ⁽⁶⁾, NEETs are still highly vulnerable and will continue to be assisted by the Youth Guarantee ⁽⁷⁾. For those who slip through, Upskilling Pathways ⁽⁸⁾ should offer further opportunities to boost their basic skills and to progress towards the qualifications demanded by the labour market.
14. Ensuring smooth school-to-work and work-to-work transitions, together with facilitating employment for young people, including reducing out-of-job spells, are key to avoiding scarring effects in their working careers ⁽⁹⁾.
15. More emphasis should be placed on values and policies that promote work in relation to improving the quality of life of young people themselves, but also to making meaningful contributions to the general wellbeing of the social and physical environment they live in. In this context, sustainable development should underpin approaches to the future of work.
16. There is a continuous need to promote equal access to quality jobs for all young people in the future, and to take measures against all forms of stereotyping that influence today's children job aspirations and limit access to certain jobs, while also perpetuating discrimination and inequality in education and training, as well as in the labour market.
17. In addition to developing skills, youth work has a positive impact in the lives of young people, in particular those with fewer opportunities, including in the context of mental health or emotional issues associated with unemployment or setbacks in the job search process.

INVITES THE MEMBER STATES, IN LINE WITH THE SUBSIDIARITY PRINCIPLE AND AT THE APPROPRIATE LEVELS, TO:

18. Pay special attention to youth at risk of marginalisation or discrimination based on elements such as their ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, religion, belief or political opinion, in order to ensure inclusiveness of all young people in labour markets in the future.
19. Support the full implementation of the Youth Guarantee recommendation, while taking into account national circumstances, policies and measures as appropriate.
20. If necessary, promote and give priority to reforms of both the formal and non-formal education and training sectors, focusing on developing and validating key competences gained by young people in diverse learning contexts, whether in an education, volunteering, traineeship or job setting, with a view to facilitating the matching of such competences to the labour market and the future workforce demand.
21. Enhance cooperation with the overall aim of fulfilling the right to quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning for all children and young people, specifically with regard to reducing early school leaving and increasing opportunities for equal access to education and work for all young people, including for those accompanying their families who relocate for work purposes to another EU Member State ⁽¹⁰⁾.
22. Give ample space to employment-related topics during consultations with young people within and/or outside EU Youth Dialogue processes, in order to better understand their concerns, interests, expectations and capabilities. It is equally important to make the results of such consultations accessible to young people, policy makers and employers in order to ensure a follow-up.
23. Promote youth entrepreneurship, focusing, inter alia, on entrepreneurship education and training, advisory, mentoring or coaching services for young people, and where appropriate on relevant youth work activities. Social and inclusive entrepreneurship are also considered as viable alternatives for securing employment for young people by young people, thus promoting solidarity activities.

⁽⁶⁾ The NEET rate for those aged 15-29 has decreased from an all-time high of 15,9 % in 2012, to 13,4 % in 2017, according to Eurostat (Sustainable Development in the European Union: Eurostat 2018 Monitoring report on progress towards the SDG's in an EU context).

⁽⁷⁾ Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee (OJ C 120, 26.4.2013, p. 1).

⁽⁸⁾ Council Recommendation of 19 December 2016 on Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults (OJ C 484, 24.12.2016, p. 1).

⁽⁹⁾ Eurofound (2017), Long-term unemployed youth: Characteristics and policy responses, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

⁽¹⁰⁾ European Pillar of Social Rights, Chapter I, Principle 1 (Education, training and life-long learning) (ibid footnote 4).

24. Promote the use of the resources made available under the European Social Fund, the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation, the Youth Employment Initiative, Erasmus + or the European Solidarity Corps and their successor programmes. Where appropriate in this context, offer guidance to potential beneficiaries on how to make use of synergies and complementarities between these programmes.
25. Where relevant, make use of EU youth policy instruments such as Youth Wiki or Future National Activities Planners and mutual learning activities to exchange good practices with the aim of fostering concrete policy solutions in the context of young people's future transition to work.
26. Support youth organisations and other relevant actors in the preparation of young people to effectively participate in youth dialogue processes and to become beneficiaries of youth work.
27. Continue supporting young people in cases where unemployment, job expectations or professional/educational choices might make them the target of generational stereotyping.
28. Promote a cross-sectorial policy approach when addressing youth employment issues, both at national and European levels and in the framework of cooperation between Member States.
29. In light of national circumstances, improve access of young people to social protection by improving where necessary the capacity of social protection systems to adapt to the reality of young people's employment prospects, by taking into account the needs of young people who are not in employment.

INVITES THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO:

30. Further build on the positive experience of the Europass⁽¹⁾ and the Youthpass⁽²⁾ frameworks to identify and communicate individuals' skills and qualifications, in order to increase its outreach among young Europeans, in particular those with fewer opportunities, to help them showcase their skills and connect with relevant jobs.
31. Offer guidance to national management structures for raising potential beneficiaries' awareness on how to make use of synergies and complementarities when promoting EU funding opportunities for young people.
32. Give priority to putting in place systems that support Principle 1 of the European Pillar of Social Rights, namely 'everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labour market'⁽³⁾.
33. Continue to conduct more qualitative, quantitative and evidence-based research based on gender disaggregated data on inter and intra-generational social mobility with a specific focus on young people, as well as more qualitative research on young people' attitudes and concerns regarding transition to employment, with a view to supporting the effectiveness of EU Youth Policies on employment issues.
34. Organise mutual learning activities or events with representatives from the youth sector, trade unions, business organisations, and governments, to address from a cross-sectorial perspective, including youth policy, the challenges and opportunities that the future of work will bring to young Europeans.
35. Use all relevant EU instruments, including the EU Youth Coordinator, with regard to the trends affecting the nature of work, with a view to integrating a youth perspective in cross-sectorial policy-making at EU level and encouraging cooperation between Member States.

INVITES THE EU YOUTH SECTOR TO⁽⁴⁾:

36. Take an active approach with regard to ensuring that young people are represented and participate in an effective manner in the EU Youth Dialogue and the social dialogue processes, both at European Union, Member State and sub-national levels, hence fostering solid cooperation with public authorities and social and economic partners on aspects pertaining to young people's professional lives.

⁽¹⁾ <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/>

⁽²⁾ <https://www.youthpass.eu/en/>

⁽³⁾ Ibid footnote 10.

⁽⁴⁾ The 'EU youth sector' generally refers to the totality of organisations, youth workers, members of the academia, youth civil society or other experts involved in youth policy development that carry out youth-relevant activities and projects in the EU.

37. Contribute to the effort of raising awareness among young workers regarding their rights and responsibilities, including as regards workplace harassment and all forms of discrimination, with a view to protecting their educational pursuits and training in the context of work requirements.
 38. Take into account labour market and skills intelligence in order to constantly enhance youth work's methods, with a view to increasing its effectiveness as a skill development tool for young people.
 39. Promote youth work activities among all young people, including those at risk of marginalisation in the labour market due to poverty and social exclusion.
 40. Engage with relevant stakeholders with a view to setting up partnerships at national level and thus contribute to the implementation of the Youth Guarantee.
 41. Make use of available opportunities at EU, national, regional and local levels to increase the quality of youth work opportunities for young people in accessing to employment.
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ANNEX

In adopting these conclusions, the Council recalls in particular the following Resolution, Conclusions and Recommendations:

1. Council Recommendation on establishing a Youth Guarantee ⁽¹⁾
2. Council Resolution on a framework for European cooperation in the youth field: The European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027 ⁽²⁾
3. Council Conclusions on the role of youth in addressing the demographic challenges within the EU ⁽³⁾
4. Council Conclusions on Future of Work: a Lifecycle Approach ⁽⁴⁾
5. Council Conclusions on the Future of Work: making it e-Easy ⁽⁵⁾
6. Council Conclusions on the role of youth work in supporting young people's development of essential life skills that facilitate their successful transition to adulthood, active citizenship and working life ⁽⁶⁾
7. Council Conclusions on smart youth work ⁽⁷⁾
8. Council Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning ⁽⁸⁾
9. Council Recommendation on graduate tracking ⁽⁹⁾
10. Council Recommendation on validation of non-formal and informal learning ⁽¹⁰⁾
11. Council conclusions on moving towards a vision of a European Education Area ⁽¹¹⁾
12. Council Recommendation on access to social protection for workers and the self-employed ⁽¹²⁾
13. Council Conclusions on promoting youth entrepreneurship to foster social inclusion of young people ⁽¹³⁾

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 120, 26.4.2013, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 456, 18.12.2018, p. 1.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 196, 8.6.2018, p. 16.

⁽⁴⁾ Doc. 10134/18.

⁽⁵⁾ Doc. 15506/17.

⁽⁶⁾ OJ C 189, 15.6.2017, p. 30.

⁽⁷⁾ OJ C 418, 7.12.2017, p. 2.

⁽⁸⁾ OJ C 189, 4.6.2018, p. 1.

⁽⁹⁾ OJ C 423, 9.12.2017, p. 1.

⁽¹⁰⁾ OJ C 398, 22.12.2012, p. 1.

⁽¹¹⁾ OJ C 195, 7.6.2018, p. 7.

⁽¹²⁾ Doc. 10134/18.

⁽¹³⁾ OJ C 183, 14.6.2014, p. 18.

Council conclusions on young creative generations

(2019/C 189/06)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

HAVING REGARD TO:

- the political background highlighting the importance of creating a Union where young people receive the best possible education and training and can study and find jobs across the continent and stating the need to provide better opportunities for young people through concrete measures and enhanced EU programmes, as set out in the Annex,
- the New European Agenda for Culture, adopted by the European Commission in May 2018, which underlines the importance of culture and creativity for society and for the competitiveness of the European economy,
- the objectives of the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022, adopted on 27 November 2018, and its recognition that stronger orientation towards the needs of specific groups, such as young people, is necessary for improved cohesion and well-being.

AWARE THAT:

- Engaging young people has to be a cornerstone of future policies, and listening to their voice will therefore be critical in the years to come.
- Children and young people face many challenges in today's globalised world and therefore it is important for them to understand cultural values and diversity as they prepare for life as global citizens.
- Digital developments have changed the creation, production, dissemination, transmission and consumption of cultural and creative works, facilitating those works' global reach. The digital world has shaped innovative patterns of access to culture, and of personal reinterpretation and self-expression, arousing keen interest among young people and engaging them as active audiences.
- Young people need new skills to face specific challenges, such as unemployment, social exclusion, migration, and new technologies that, despite the advantages they bring, may also increase inequalities and reinforce cultural and economic differences.
- The development of artistic and creative skills and the fostering of talent lie at the heart of the cultural and creative sectors, driving innovation, including social innovation, to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.
- Language skills are essential for mobility in the European Union as regards education, training, access to culture and access to the European labour market.

CONSIDERS THAT:

In the light of the above, it is important to take further steps to address the following five priorities:

- promoting better access to culture and participation in culture for children and young people;
- reinforcing cross-sectoral cooperation, with a focus on the synergies between culture and education;
- facilitating youth entrepreneurship in the cultural and creative sectors;
- fostering the emergence of new talent;
- promoting digital skills and media literacy.

POINTS OUT THAT:

- Cultural organisations, educational institutions and youth work play a key role in laying the foundations for creativity, which is crucial for the development of society as a whole.
- A more strategic approach to children's and young people's participation in culture is needed, in order to foster their creativity and critical thinking and help them develop skills that are important for their well-being, learning, sense of belonging, active citizenship, social inclusion and future employability or ability to start a business.

- The cultural and creative skills acquired through formal, non-formal and informal education, including through participation in cultural and creative activities, equip young people with the tools to be creative and inventive, to solve problems and to work collaboratively and experimentally. Experimental approaches are of key importance for promoting creativity and innovation. Artistic and cultural education, as part of a specialised or interdisciplinary approach, therefore plays a vital role both in creating further opportunities for the younger generations, thereby better equipping them to face future challenges, and in fostering empowerment, personal development and mutual cultural understanding.
- It is also important to encourage measures that facilitate a smooth transition from the education system to the labour market, including by supporting youth entrepreneurship, traineeships and apprenticeships in the cultural and creative sectors.
- Young people do not represent a homogeneous group as far as their skills, education level, preparedness for the future and expectations are concerned. Initiatives and actions designed to nurture and enhance the skills necessary for entering the labour market or becoming an entrepreneur, and for adult life in general, should be tailored to the capacities the young generations already possess.
- Inequalities and economic or social barriers that might impede young people's access to and participation in culture as creators, consumers and entrepreneurs, or their access to new technologies, should be identified and addressed to ensure that the input and participation of all young people, including groups with fewer opportunities, can be fully harnessed.
- Special attention should therefore be paid to young people at risk of marginalisation due to their ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, beliefs or political opinions, in order to ensure all young people are included.
- The availability of a rich array of culture thanks to digital evolution does not necessarily guarantee access to high-quality multilingual cultural content. It is therefore essential to consolidate cultural policies promoting equal opportunities for young people, so that they can all experience culture and develop their creative and critical thinking, as well as their critical and analytical skills, all of which are crucial for them to access and interact with digital cultural content.
- Digital technologies have a positive impact on the development of creativity, as they enable new forms of expression, communication, cultural participation and criticism. In addition, creativity can play an important role in making technologies and digital services more user-friendly. Humanisation of technologies can therefore ensure that they are at the service of people and meet their needs. As both cultural creators and cultural consumers, the young generations – often digital natives – prefer new business models that did not previously exist. From this perspective, innovative financial mechanisms can foster entrepreneurship and provide an essential contribution to today's competitive, sustainable and innovation-driven creative economy.
- Acknowledging the outcomes of the Open Method of Coordination working group's report, 'The role of public policies in developing entrepreneurial and innovation potential of the cultural and creative sectors', it is crucial to take into account the particular characteristics of the cultural and creative industries, namely the variety of the value chains and the fact that most companies in these sectors are small or micro enterprises or consist of self-employed persons. Measures supporting the creativity and entrepreneurship of young generations should therefore address these distinctive characteristics.

INVITES MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION, WITHIN THE SPHERE OF THEIR RESPECTIVE COMPETENCE AND WITH DUE REGARD TO THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY, TO ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING FIVE PRIORITIES:

1. Promoting better access to culture and participation in culture for children and young people

Member States and the Commission are invited to:

- (i) continue to create opportunities for children and young people to access and participate in culture, especially for those from disadvantaged backgrounds, in order to reduce disparities and social inequality, and to reach the broadest possible audience; ensure equal opportunities for children and young people both in cities and in rural areas, in order to remove barriers to equal access to and participation in culture, via cultural organisations and events or by digital means;
- (ii) facilitate active participation in culture by promoting co-creation and multilingualism;
- (iii) encourage cultural organisations to promote and adapt the content they offer, including through digital technologies, to better reach children and young audiences and increase their interest in culture, artistic expression and science;

- (iv) advance evidence-based policies through regular monitoring of children's and young people's cultural consumption, behaviour and preferences, as well as of their achievements in terms of creativity and language skills;
- (v) further promote reading among children and young people, as an essential means to discover culture in all its manifestations and expressions.

The Commission is invited to:

- (i) support best practice exchanges and peer-learning activities among the Member States;
- (ii) support innovative initiatives designed to improve young generations' access to and participation in culture as creators, consumers or entrepreneurs.

2. Reinforcing cross-sectoral cooperation, with a focus on the synergies between culture and education

Member States and the Commission are invited to:

- (i) support artistic and cultural education, thereby promoting experiences of and participation in cultural activities, as well as unlocking the potential of digital technologies to help provide access to culture and languages;
- (ii) encourage cooperation between schools, artists, other cultural professionals and cultural organisations in learning activities dedicated to children and young people;
- (iii) promote the education and training of teachers and other professionals to foster creativity in children and young people;
- (iv) support cross-sectoral action on cultural awareness and cultural expression and promote the acquisition of relevant competences and skills, including artistic and language skills.

The Commission is invited to:

- (i) develop projects and actions fostering creativity in education, including by cooperating with international organisations, such as the OECD, the Council of Europe and Unesco, and extend the focus on creative and critical thinking to all levels of education and training, including by promoting STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics);
- (ii) promote and disseminate the results of the above-mentioned initiatives, both in the relevant Council preparatory bodies and to a wider audience.

3. Facilitating youth entrepreneurship in the cultural and creative sectors

Member States are invited to:

- (i) consider optimising the use of available funding to support creativity and youth entrepreneurship projects, where relevant;
- (ii) encourage the development of cultural and creative industry incubators, residencies, business accelerators, clusters and creative hubs, and cultural digital platforms, and promote cross-sectoral partnerships and networks;
- (iii) foster entrepreneurial culture, creativity and innovation through lifelong learning, from an early stage and through formal, non-formal and informal education, paying considerable attention to the use of design thinking and training opportunities, for example in the form of entrepreneurial initiatives both before and after the implementation of a business plan;
- (iv) consider how to create favourable conditions for cultural start-ups managed by young people, supporting cross-sectoral innovation.

The Commission is invited to:

- (i) foster cultural and creative entrepreneurship and cross-sectoral networks among young people, highlighting their potential to stimulate the development of cultural and creative professionals through mobility, including exchanges, co-working and co-creation, study visits and peer-learning activities;
- (ii) support partnerships between cultural and creative professionals and industries, including through the promotion of start-ups, creative hubs and incubation networks, in order to incorporate cutting-edge technology and science within creativity, art and design.

4. **Fostering the emergence of new young talent**

Member States are invited to:

- (i) consider strengthening cooperation between cultural and educational stakeholders in order to support creative talent, encouraging competition related to innovation and rewarding creativity in the cultural sphere;
- (ii) widen access to new technologies, including for young people with fewer opportunities, in order to empower talented young individuals.

The Commission is invited to:

- (i) promote culture and creativity, including through artistic education under the relevant EU programmes;
- (ii) support the development of young creative talent through multilingual platforms, mobility schemes and policies.

5. **Promoting digital skills and media literacy**

Member States are invited to:

- (i) foster digital skills, media literacy and creative and critical thinking, including through the use of relevant EU programmes and funds, as they are vital to ensure the employability of the younger generation and their ability to adapt to structural changes in digital technologies. Public/private partnerships can serve as a link between education, civil organisations and businesses;
- (ii) promote the creative use of technology, creative and critical thinking, and analytical skills through formal, non-formal and informal education, including open education resources, in order to develop young people's ability to assess information;
- (iii) continue the exchange of best practices and research among experts and policy makers so as to enhance the acquisition of media literacy skills.

Member States and the Commission are invited to:

- (i) support media literacy measures, which are crucial for using digital technologies and which have a significant influence on young people's creative and critical thinking, access to culture, understanding of cultural phenomena and ability to create content;
- (ii) support the training of teachers and youth workers in formal, non-formal and informal education, with a view to properly equipping them to address media literacy when working with children and young people.

The Commission is invited to:

- (i) continue its consultation with expert communities in the Member States on the best ways of aggregating and promoting – including through appropriate online tools – existing initiatives in order to build on them and raise awareness among young people of key issues related to the digital media environment, such as participation and creativity, credibility, critical thinking and informed choices, and respect for privacy.

CALLS ON THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION to make use of available resources to prepare the young creative generations for the opportunities and challenges of the future.

ANNEX

European Council

The Rome Declaration of 25 March 2017

Conclusions of the European Council of 14 December 2017, (EUCO 19/1/17 REV 1)

Conclusions of the European Council of 15 December 2016, (EUCO 34/16)

Conclusions of the European Council meeting of 20 and 21 October 2016, (EUCO 31/16)

Bratislava Declaration of 16 September 2016

Council

Council conclusions on cultural and creative crossovers to stimulate innovation, economic sustainability and social inclusion (OJ C 172, 27.5.2015, p. 13).

Council conclusions on fostering the creative and innovative potential of young people (OJ C 169, 15.6.2012, p. 1).

Council conclusions on cultural and creative competences and their role in building the intellectual capital of Europe (OJ C 372, 20.12.2011, p. 19).

Council conclusions on promoting a creative generation: developing the creativity and innovative capacity of children and young people through cultural expression and access to culture (OJ C 301, 11.12.2009, p. 9).

Resolution of the Council of the European Union and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on a framework for European cooperation in the youth field: The European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027 (OJ C 456, 18.12.2018, p. 1).

Commission

Communication from the Commission on 'A New European Agenda for Culture' of 22 May 2018, (COM(2018) 267 final)

Communication from the Commission on 'Engaging, Connecting and Empowering young people: a new EU Youth Strategy' of 22 May 2018, (COM(2018) 269 final)

Communication from the Commission on 'Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture' of 14 November 2017, (COM(2017) 673 final)

Open Method of Coordination reports:

- Cultural awareness and expression handbook (2016)
 - Promoting access to culture via digital means: policies and strategies for audience development (2017)
 - The role of public policies in developing entrepreneurial and innovation potential of the cultural and creative sectors (2018)
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EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Euro exchange rates ⁽¹⁾

4 June 2019

(2019/C 189/07)

1 euro =

Currency	Exchange rate	Currency	Exchange rate		
USD	US dollar	1,1244	CAD	Canadian dollar	1,5111
JPY	Japanese yen	121,62	HKD	Hong Kong dollar	8,8143
DKK	Danish krone	7,4679	NZD	New Zealand dollar	1,7062
GBP	Pound sterling	0,88738	SGD	Singapore dollar	1,5396
SEK	Swedish krona	10,6260	KRW	South Korean won	1 330,90
CHF	Swiss franc	1,1178	ZAR	South African rand	16,4791
ISK	Iceland króna	139,30	CNY	Chinese yuan renminbi	7,7686
NOK	Norwegian krone	9,7860	HRK	Croatian kuna	7,4210
BGN	Bulgarian lev	1,9558	IDR	Indonesian rupiah	15 992,34
CZK	Czech koruna	25,744	MYR	Malaysian ringgit	4,6886
HUF	Hungarian forint	322,00	PHP	Philippine peso	58,207
PLN	Polish zloty	4,2802	RUB	Russian rouble	73,3390
RON	Romanian leu	4,7353	THB	Thai baht	35,188
TRY	Turkish lira	6,5295	BRL	Brazilian real	4,3638
AUD	Australian dollar	1,6116	MXN	Mexican peso	22,1603
			INR	Indian rupee	77,8740

⁽¹⁾ Source: reference exchange rate published by the ECB.

New national side of euro coins intended for circulation

(2019/C 189/08)



National side of the new commemorative 2-euro coin intended for circulation and issued by Slovakia

Euro coins intended for circulation have legal tender status throughout the euro area. For the purpose of informing the public and all parties who handle the coins, the Commission publishes a description of the designs of all new coins ⁽¹⁾. In accordance with the Council conclusions of 10 February 2009 ⁽²⁾, euro-area Member States and countries that have concluded a monetary agreement with the European Union providing for the issuing of euro coins are allowed to issue commemorative euro coins intended for circulation, provided that certain conditions are met, particularly that only the 2-euro denomination is used. These coins have the same technical characteristics as other 2-euro coins, but their national face features a commemorative design that is highly symbolic in national or European terms.

Issuing country: Slovakia

Subject of commemoration: The 100th anniversary of the death of Milan Rastislav Štefánik

Description of the design: The design features a portrait of Milan Rastislav Štefánik. To the left of the portrait are the dates of Štefánik's birth '1880' and death '1919', one above the other. At the left side of the inner part of the coin, in semi-circle, are the name 'MILAN RASTISLAV ŠTEFÁNIK' and the name of the issuing country 'SLOVENSKO'. The year of issuance '2019' is between the portrait and the right side. Below the year are the stylised letters 'PV', the initials of the designer, Peter Valach, and below them is the mint mark of the Kremnica Mint (Mincovňa Kremnica), consisting of the letters 'MK' placed between two dies.

The coin's outer ring depicts the 12 stars of the European flag.

Estimated number of coins to be issued: 1 000 000

Date of issue: April 2019

⁽¹⁾ See OJ C 373, 28.12.2001, p. 1 for the national faces of all the coins issued in 2002.

⁽²⁾ See the conclusions of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council of 10 February 2009 and the Commission Recommendation of 19 December 2008 on common guidelines for the national sides and the issuance of euro coins intended for circulation (OJ L 9, 14.1.2009, p. 52).

New national side of euro coins intended for circulation

(2019/C 189/09)



National side of the new commemorative 2-euro coin intended for circulation and issued by France

Euro coins intended for circulation have legal tender status throughout the euro area. For the purpose of informing the public and all parties who handle the coins, the Commission publishes a description of the designs of all new coins ⁽¹⁾. In accordance with the Council conclusions of 10 February 2009 ⁽²⁾, euro-area Member States and countries that have concluded a monetary agreement with the European Union providing for the issuing of euro coins are allowed to issue commemorative euro coins intended for circulation, provided that certain conditions are met, particularly that only the 2-euro denomination is used. These coins have the same technical characteristics as other 2-euro coins, but their national face features a commemorative design that is highly symbolic in national or European terms.

Issuing country: France

Subject of commemoration: The 60th anniversary of Asterix

Description of the design: For 60 years, Asterix has been a true icon of the French culture. Created in 1959 by scenarist René Goscinny and cartoonist Albert Uderzo, this character embodies the Frenchman with his smartness and sharpness through the Gallic identity. Apart from its artistic line, depicting contemporary society with humour has brought Asterix a great international fame for many years. Since its inception, it has been translated into all the languages of the European Union meeting a huge success. The reputation of Asterix is for example as strong in Germany as in France. It has also been very well established in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, Italy and Scandinavia for many years. Beyond the French icon, Asterix has become a true figure of the European 9th art.

The design represents Asterix in profile wearing his famous winged helmet. He is surrounded by laurels and Roman inscriptions referring to his 60 years. At the top is the inscription 'ASTERIX' and underneath the indication of the issuing country 'RF' (standing for République Française). The year of issuance '2019' is inscribed at the bottom, together with the French mintmark and mintmaster mark.

The coin's outer ring depicts the 12 stars of the European flag.

Number of coins to be issued: 310 000 coins

Date of issue: 28 May 2019

⁽¹⁾ See OJ C 373, 28.12.2001, p. 1 for the national faces of all the coins issued in 2002.

⁽²⁾ See the conclusions of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council of 10 February 2009 and the Commission Recommendation of 19 December 2008 on common guidelines for the national sides and the issuance of euro coins intended for circulation (OJ L 9, 14.1.2009, p. 52).

New national side of euro coins intended for circulation

(2019/C 189/10)



National side of the new commemorative 2-euro coin intended for circulation and issued by Monaco

Euro coins intended for circulation have legal tender status throughout the euro area. For the purpose of informing the public and all parties who handle the coins, the Commission publishes a description of the designs of all new coins ⁽¹⁾. In accordance with the Council conclusions of 10 February 2009 ⁽²⁾, euro-area Member States and countries that have concluded a monetary agreement with the European Union providing for the issuing of euro coins are allowed to issue commemorative euro coins intended for circulation, provided that certain conditions are met, particularly that only the 2-euro denomination is used. These coins have the same technical characteristics as other 2-euro coins, but their national face features a commemorative design that is highly symbolic in national or European terms.

Issuing country: Monaco

Subject of commemoration: The 200th anniversary of the accession to the throne of Prince Honoré V

Description of the design: The design shows the effigy of Prince Honoré V. At the left is the inscription 'HONORÉ V' and at the right the name of the issuing country 'MONACO'. At the bottom, in semi-circle, is the inscription '1819 — Avènement — 2019'.

The coin's outer ring depicts the 12 stars of the European flag.

Number of coins to be issued: 15 000

Date of issue: 1 June 2019

⁽¹⁾ See OJ C 373, 28.12.2001, p. 1 for the national faces of all the coins issued in 2002.

⁽²⁾ See the conclusions of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council of 10 February 2009 and the Commission Recommendation of 19 December 2008 on common guidelines for the national sides and the issuance of euro coins intended for circulation (OJ L 9, 14.1.2009, p. 52).

New national side of euro coins intended for circulation

(2019/C 189/11)



National side of the new commemorative 2-euro coin intended for circulation and issued by Greece

Euro coins intended for circulation have legal tender status throughout the euro area. For the purpose of informing the public and all parties who handle the coins, the Commission publishes a description of the designs of all new coins ⁽¹⁾. In accordance with the Council conclusions of 10 February 2009 ⁽²⁾, euro-area Member States and countries that have concluded a monetary agreement with the European Union providing for the issuing of euro coins are allowed to issue commemorative euro coins intended for circulation, provided that certain conditions are met, particularly that only the 2-euro denomination is used. These coins have the same technical characteristics as other 2-euro coins, but their national face features a commemorative design that is highly symbolic in national or European terms.

Issuing country: Greece

Subject of commemoration: Centenary of the birth of Manolis Andronicos

Description of the design: Manolis Andronicos (1919-1992) was one of Greece's greatest archaeologists. His discovery of the royal tombs at Vergina in 1977 brought to light exquisite finds that attest to the splendour of ancient Macedonian civilisation.

The design features a portrait of Manolis Andronicos. Inscribed along the inner edge at left is the name 'MANOLIS ANDRONIKOS 1919-1992', along with the minting year and a palmette (mintmark of the Greek Mint); inscribed along the inner edge at right is the wording 'HELLENIC REPUBLIC'. Also visible at the right is the monogram of the artist (George Stamatopoulos).

The coin's outer ring depicts the 12 stars of the European flag.

Estimated number of coins to be issued: 750 000

Date of issue: June 2019

⁽¹⁾ See OJ C 373, 28.12.2001, p. 1 for the national faces of all the coins issued in 2002.

⁽²⁾ See the conclusions of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council of 10 February 2009 and the Commission Recommendation of 19 December 2008 on common guidelines for the national sides and the issuance of euro coins intended for circulation (OJ L 9, 14.1.2009, p. 52).

New national side of euro coins intended for circulation

(2019/C 189/12)



National side of the new commemorative 2-euro coin intended for circulation and issued by Greece

Euro coins intended for circulation have legal tender status throughout the euro area. For the purpose of informing the public and all parties who handle the coins, the Commission publishes a description of the designs of all new coins ⁽¹⁾. In accordance with the Council conclusions of 10 February 2009 ⁽²⁾, euro-area Member States and countries that have concluded a monetary agreement with the European Union providing for the issuing of euro coins are allowed to issue commemorative euro coins intended for circulation, provided that certain conditions are met, particularly that only the 2-euro denomination is used. These coins have the same technical characteristics as other 2-euro coins, but their national face features a commemorative design that is highly symbolic in national or European terms.

Issuing country: Greece

Subject of commemoration: Andreas Kalvos — 150 years in memoriam

Description of the design: Born in Zante, Andreas Kalvos (1792-1869) is one the most important modern Greek poets. Combining a solid neo-classicist education with the high ideals of Romanticism and archaicising with demotic Greek, he expressed both the revolutionary ideas of his time and his personal vision.

The national side of the coin features a portrait of Andreas Kalvos. Inscribed along the inner edge at the left is the name 'ANDREAS KALVOS 1792-1869', along with the minting year and a palmette (mintmark of the Greek Mint); inscribed along the inner edge at the right is the wording 'HELLENIC REPUBLIC'. Also visible at the right is the monogram of the artist (George Stamatopoulos).

The coin's outer ring depicts the 12 stars of the European flag.

Estimated number of coins to be issued: 750 000

Date of issue: June 2019

⁽¹⁾ See OJ C 373, 28.12.2001, p. 1 for the national faces of all the coins issued in 2002.

⁽²⁾ See the conclusions of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council of 10 February 2009 and the Commission Recommendation of 19 December 2008 on common guidelines for the national sides and the issuance of euro coins intended for circulation (OJ L 9, 14.1.2009, p. 52).

V

(Announcements)

PROCEDURES RELATING TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPETITION
POLICY

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Prior notification of a concentration

(Case M.9385 — Orange/SecureLink)

Candidate case for simplified procedure

(Text with EEA relevance)

(2019/C 189/13)

1. On 24 May 2019, the Commission received notification of a proposed concentration pursuant to Article 4 of Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 ⁽¹⁾.

This notification concerns the following undertakings:

- Orange SA ('Orange', France),
- SL Bidco BV ('SecureLink', Netherlands).

Orange acquires within the meaning of Article 3(1)(b) of the Merger Regulation sole control of the whole of SecureLink.

The concentration is accomplished by way of purchase of shares.

2. The business activities of the undertakings concerned are:

- for Orange: the provision of electronic communications services mainly in the area of fixed-line, internet and mobile telephony in a number of countries worldwide;
- for SecureLink: the provision of cyber security infrastructure and managed services to corporate and institutional clients.

3. On preliminary examination, the Commission finds that the notified transaction could fall within the scope of the Merger Regulation. However, the final decision on this point is reserved.

Pursuant to the Commission Notice on a simplified procedure for treatment of certain concentrations under the Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 ⁽²⁾ it should be noted that this case is a candidate for treatment under the procedure set out in the Notice.

4. The Commission invites interested third parties to submit their possible observations on the proposed operation to the Commission.

Observations must reach the Commission not later than 10 days following the date of this publication. The following reference should always be specified:

M.9385 — Orange/SecureLink

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 24, 29.1.2004, p. 1 (the 'Merger Regulation').

⁽²⁾ OJ C 366, 14.12.2013, p. 5.

Observations can be sent to the Commission by email, by fax, or by post. Please use the contact details below:

Email: COMP-MERGER-REGISTRY@ec.europa.eu

Fax +32 22964301

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