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Objet:	Conclusions du Conseil sur une stratégie européenne visant à renforcer les établissements d'enseignement supérieur pour l'avenir de l'Europe

Les délégations trouveront en annexe les conclusions du Conseil visées en objet, que le Conseil "Éducation, jeunesse, culture et sport" a approuvées lors de sa session tenue les 4 et 5 avril 2022.

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Council conclusions on a European strategy empowering higher education institutions for the future of Europe

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Recalling the political background to this issue set out in Annex to these conclusions,

RECALLING THAT:

1.   Higher education institutions (HEIs)[1] in Europe largely participate in knowledge creation, distribution and certification. They are irreplaceable in achieving both the European Education Area and the new European Research Area, in synergy with the European Higher Education Area. HEIs are key to reaching the target set out in the Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030) – namely that the share of 25 to 34 year olds with tertiary educational attainment should be at least 45 % by 2030.

2.   In the coming years, growth in higher education enrolments – which has been a fundamental global trend in recent decades – will intensify. The number of 25 to 34 year olds with a tertiary qualification in OECD and G20 countries is expected to reach 300 million by 2030[2].

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[1]   For the purposes of these conclusions, the term 'higher education institutions' is used as a reference to the whole sector, representing the entire area of tertiary education, thus covering all types of higher education institutions, including, in accordance with national law or practice, research universities, university colleges, universities of applied sciences, higher vocational education and training institutions, and higher arts institutions.

[2]   OECD (2020), *Resourcing Higher Education: Challenges, Choices and Consequences*, Higher Education, OECD Publishing, Paris.

3.	Numerous opportunities and challenges will influence the future development of HEIs in Europe. World demographic trends and globalisation will challenge Europe's position as a prominent hub of knowledge creation. Global warming and environmental degradation, the acceleration of technological change and the growing race for digital technologies already affect HEIs' strategies and positioning within Europe and in the global context. The availability of a large pool of talent with excellent education and training will become increasingly crucial for Europe to maintain and assert its position as a world leader in a context of heightened global competition.

4.	In the meantime, the growing demand for high-quality and inclusive education as well as excellent research and innovation in emerging countries is increasing global networking, while new threats are emerging to the fundamental values and principles that European democracies aim to uphold. At the European and global level, increasing inequalities and the challenges posed by aging societies will transform the labour market and deepen the need for inclusion and for higher education attainment, which will entail new expectations for lifelong learning.

5.	The economic recovery after the pandemic and the rapid evolution of knowledge, skills and competences related to the digital and green transitions will make it necessary for HEIs to consider further developing their infrastructure, to adopt new pedagogical tools, provide flexible and short learning experiences, prepare learners for the ever-changing societal and labour market environment and enable researchers to work together to find innovative solutions to current global challenges.

6. Achieving inclusion and excellence requires significant general investment in the EU's higher education sector, considering current average spending on tertiary education in the EU, and in the light of the increasing numbers of students and learners, as well as the challenges faced by HEIs.

7. The unique position of higher education to serve the intersecting missions of education, research, innovation and service to society is an opportunity to be seized in order to exploit the potential for synergies between these four missions.

8. Harnessing those synergies is key to addressing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Multi-stakeholder partnerships and cooperation between and with HEIs will need to be fostered.

9. In this context, the Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030) called for the establishment of an *'agenda for higher education transformation, with a focus on inclusion, innovation, connectivity, digital and green readiness and international competitiveness, as well as fundamental academic values and high ethical principles, as well as employment and employability'*.

10.   In this same context, the Council conclusions on the New European Research Area identified *'institutional transformations, research careers, science education, training, international cooperation and knowledge circulation as possible fields of a more determined cooperation'* between the European Research Area, the European Higher Education Area and the higher education dimension of the European Education Area. The Council also took note of *'the Commission proposal to develop a roadmap of actions for creating synergies between higher education and research'* and expressed support for the further development of the *'"European University Alliances" as a flagship example for modern and inclusive higher education institutions of the future in Europe'*. The ERA policy agenda for the period 2022-2024 annexed to the Council conclusions on the future governance of the European Research Area (ERA) identified actions targeting HEIs.

11.   In its conclusions on the European Universities initiative – Bridging higher education, research, innovation and society: Paving the way for a new dimension in European higher education, the Council acknowledged that ʻEuropean Universitiesʼ should be guided to *'contribute to strengthen the research and innovation dimensions of higher education institutions in Europe by developing a common agenda, shared infrastructures and resources'* as well as to *'establish ever stronger alliances by exploring the feasibility of joint enrolment of students and joint recruitment of academics and researchers, within the different national systems, to make their education and research careers more attractive, sustainable, and flexible within the alliances'*. It also invited the Commission and the Member States to *'consider more sustainable funding instruments for the "European Universities", including through exploiting synergies of regional and national with European schemes, so that they are able to deliver on their ambitious strategy'* as well as to develop clear proposals, starting from 2022, to *'help remove where necessary the obstacles for cooperation at the European level, by exploring, for example, the need and feasibility for joint European degrees within the alliances of "European Universities"'*.

12. In its conclusions on 'Deepening the European Research Area: Providing researchers with attractive and sustainable careers and working conditions and making brain circulation a reality', the Council called on the Commission *'to support Member States in designing policy measures for seamless and ambitious transnational cooperation between higher education institutions in Europe notably in the area of academic and research careers which are often intertwined, promoting inclusiveness, leveraging excellence and raising the international competitiveness of Europe's higher education sector, thereby increasing attractiveness for talents from within and outside Europe'.* It also agreed that European Universities alliances and their partnerships with local ecosystems were *'suitable platforms to test possible models fostering interoperability of research careers, and to explore possibilities for joint recruitment schemes, training and career development systems accommodating both research and teaching aspects, as well as for testing new reward and assessment systems, including for research-based teaching'.*

CONSIDERS THAT:

13. Transnational cooperation between HEIs across Europe is further strengthened, deepened and simplified if the abovementioned challenges can be effectively addressed at European level. In this respect, the Commission has put forward an ambitious European strategy for universities, which aims to empower and support these institutions in all their missions to enhance their cooperation and leverage their strengths, in view of their critical contribution to Europe's response to the challenges ahead. The different types of ongoing collaboration should be increased, and the related outcomes and best practices should be shared in order to inspire the whole higher education sector in Europe, while respecting Member States' competences, academic freedom and HEIs' institutional autonomy.

14. In order to achieve this, four equally important key objectives are to be pursued as part of a joint effort at institutional, national and European level:

- strengthening the European dimension in higher education, research and innovation as well as the synergies between them;

- driving Europe's global role and leadership;

- bolstering Europe's recovery and response to the digital and green transitions;

- deepening the European sense of belonging based on common values.

INVITES THE COMMISSION AND THE MEMBER STATES, IN LINE WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE COMPETENCES AND WITH DUE REGARD FOR THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY, TO ENGAGE WITH HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND STAKEHOLDERS WITH A VIEW TO ACHIEVING THE FOLLOWING KEY OBJECTIVES:

Strengthening the European dimension in higher education, research and innovation as well as the synergies between them

15. Deeper transnational cooperation contributes to achieving the European Education Area and the new European Research Area in full synergy, by making HEIs stronger and increasing the quality of higher education, research and innovation in Europe as a whole. Through new dimensions, formats and opportunities for mobility across disciplines and sectors and across borders, together with attractive and sustainable academic and research careers as well as open education and open science, it enables them to better tackle societal challenges and equip students, lifelong learners and researchers with the right knowledge, skills and competences for their future professional and personal development. Particular attention should be paid to students and young researchers who have seen their studies and careers strongly impacted by the pandemic, as well as those from rural and remote areas, such as outermost regions.

16.	Alliances of HEIs, such as the 'European Universities', can demonstrate the potential of extensive and long-term institutional higher education cooperation. Such alliances have the potential to generate real European added value by achieving critical mass on a European scale through the long-term commitment of all involved parties. They facilitate free movement across Europe for study, work and research purposes based on common interests. Through a strong degree of integration, transparency and openness, they can have a transformative impact within and for Europe. Coordination and complementarity with other European, national, regional, local, and, where relevant, international initiatives and networks will enhance their transformative impact.

17.	Unlocking the full added value of alliances of HEIs such as the 'European Universities' calls for further support at European and, where appropriate, national level through a step-by-step approach. As catalysts of institutional transformation, these alliances should, where appropriate, be supported in developing a strong research and innovation dimension and in implementing innovative joint educational programmes at all levels, within a student-centred, research and innovation driven approach, which could possibly award joint degrees based on European criteria co-created with Member States and relevant stakeholders, in accordance with the instruments of the Bologna Process. These alliances should also be supported, where appropriate, in improving human resources management, in terms of possible joint recruitment of academics and researchers; in promoting the development of attractive and sustainable careers; and in mutualising resources and structures, for instance laboratories and platforms.

18. While fully recognising the value of face-to-face learning and physical mobility, as well as the need for balanced brain circulation, HEIs should be encouraged to further support all types of mobility of students, staff and researchers, which contributes to academic success and personal achievement by enabling all students, staff and researchers to acquire international and intercultural competences through the internationalisation of curricula or participation in innovative international environments in their home institutions.

19. The European Year of Youth has an enabling role in this respect. It is worth recalling the target that at least 20 % of the graduates in the European Higher Education Area should have experienced a study or training period abroad, as reaffirmed in the Rome Ministerial Communiqué of 19 November 2020, and the support to be given to the European Universities initiative to reach the ambitious target of 50 % mobile students, as set out in the Council conclusions on the European Universities initiative – Bridging higher education, research, innovation and society: Paving the way for a new dimension in European higher education.

20. To achieve these targets, Member States and the Commission, in cooperation with HEIs, should also strive to simplify administrative procedures for institutions, including by further widening the implementation of the European Student Card initiative and by further implementing the automatic mutual recognition of academic qualifications and study periods abroad, in cooperation with the National Academic Recognition Information Centres (NARIC). HEIs should be encouraged to make full use of digital tools for mobility and recognition, promote multilingualism, interculturality and inclusion of students with fewer opportunities on their campuses, and embed mobility in their curricula.

Driving Europe's global role and leadership

21. The internationalisation of higher education and research is of strategic geopolitical importance for Europe, as outlined in the joint communication on 'The Global Gateway'. Global higher education collaboration needs to be based on fundamental values and principles, with academic freedom, institutional autonomy, open education and open science at their core. The principles of reciprocity and of a level playing field should be a prerequisite for international cooperation. The guiding principle 'as open as possible, as closed as necessary' should be followed in research and innovation relations and in negotiations with global partners. HEIs should be supported through a coordinated European approach in order to promote these European values and principles at global level with a view to achieving balanced and mutually beneficial collaboration, which is part of Europe's soft power and capacity as a global standard setter. Collaboration with third countries in the area of higher education and research needs to be based on a common understanding and sharing of these values and principles promoted at European level in line with other strategic interests of the Union in accordance with the Marseille Conference on the Global Approach.

22. Deeper European cooperation can be beneficial to support HEIs and equip researchers, trainers, students and staff with the necessary tools to deal with the challenges to fair global collaboration, such as inequity, foreign interference, and obstacles to open science. It is also necessary to promote an informed and independent understanding of third-country counterparts. In order to position the European Union as a safe haven for the freedom of scientific research and democratic values, HEIs should be supported through European and national schemes, fully respecting the excellence principle, to welcome students, researchers and academics whose freedom is under threat.

23. In order to enhance their competitiveness at global level, HEIs should be encouraged to mobilise local or regional ecosystems, thus fostering territorial cohesion, through strong partnerships with research organisations, innovation actors, funders and economic and social partners, while enhancing close interactions with local, regional and national authorities. In order to promote the diversity and excellence of European HEIs at global level, further work should be carried out and further support provided at European level for Member States to promote national policies, for example through excellence initiatives and regional and local hubs.

24. Transnational cooperation between European HEIs adds to their attractiveness to international students, researchers and global partners and increases the quality of educational offers and research and innovation potential. Existing European programmes, such as Erasmus+, the Union's external action instruments and Horizon Europe, should be used within the remit of the actions included in their legal bases and evaluated according to their respective evaluation criteria to support alliances of HEIs such as the 'European Universities' and the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) in developing joint internationalisation activities and strategies across higher education, research and innovation. This would help them to project themselves internationally, build networks with key partners around the world, strengthen the capacities of partners in third countries and bolster the international (inward and outward) mobility of students, researchers, academics and staff. Full advantage should be taken of the UNESCO 2019 Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education as it facilitates international student mobility and thus unlocks potential for the internationalisation of European higher education. Common European efforts towards third countries could also, through a 'Team Europe' approach, further promote the European higher education offer and engage in mutually beneficial capacity-building activities.

Bolstering Europe's recovery and response to the digital and green transitions

25.   HEIs should be further encouraged to turn knowledge into skills, competences and innovation. This can be done in full respect of academic freedom by developing close cooperation with economic, social and industrial partners within local and regional research and innovation ecosystems, and facilitating intersectoral mobility between HEIs and other partners, building notably on smart specialisation strategies and the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) and the KICs. This cooperation could also be highly beneficial for local businesses and SMEs and give students, researchers, academics, trainers and staff the opportunity to be trained, e.g. in intellectual property management, knowledge transfer and entrepreneurship, including access to finance, at any stage of their careers. The full variety of academics' activities both within and beyond academia, on all dimensions of HEIs' missions, needs to be taken into account in their career assessments. HEIs should also improve their capacity to engage with their ecosystems by instilling the necessary knowledge, skills and competences, especially for strategic industrial sectors and by fostering transfers of knowledge and technology and the creation of spin-offs.

26.   HEIs could be supported with a view to enhancing student-centred and research-based learning, which aims to provide students with up-to-date competences, skills and knowledge as well as to develop their research skills and experience. Students should also be supported in working across disciplines in challenge-based approaches.

27. HEIs can play a key role in lifelong learning and in responding to the labour market transformation by opening up to all types of learners and fostering their employability, including by reskilling and upskilling. To that end, HEIs should be supported in their use of digitalisation to foster innovative learning and teaching methods, and in designing and implementing flexible and tailor-made learning pathways, including, where appropriate, shorter courses or learning experiences that can lead to micro-credentials, while not deviating from the core principle of full degree programmes. In order to develop learners' relevant skills, competences, attitudes and entrepreneurial spirit, HEIs should be encouraged to cooperate with their ecosystems, to promote work-based experiences such as internships, apprenticeships and volunteering opportunities and, where appropriate, to further develop entrepreneurship tracks enabling students to carry out entrepreneurial projects during their studies.

28. HEIs have a key role to play in supporting the green transition and addressing the Sustainable Development Goals as a distinctive quality feature at global level. In this respect, HEIs across Europe should be supported to introduce sustainability and green approaches using a whole institution approach as part of their missions, infrastructures and operations, where relevant.

29. In order to address the green transition, HEIs should be encouraged to develop interdisciplinary knowledge, skills and competences, support the acquisition and use of knowledge about sustainability among all learners and communities, and embed sustainability education as part of curricula in all relevant sectors. They should be encouraged to commission and conduct research that builds on the knowledge base around sustainability.

30. As evidenced during the COVID-19 pandemic, digital technologies are a powerful transformation tool for higher education systems in Europe, and HEIs are in turn instrumental to accelerating the digital transition in Europe.

31. It is necessary to provide HEIs with high connectivity and high-performing digital infrastructures and services, which should to the greatest possible extent be interoperable and shared across Europe, rely on European standards[3] and use trusted technologies in keeping with HEIs' specific needs, such as secure data.

32. Accelerating Europe's digital transition implies providing digital and data literacy to all students, trainers, staff, academics and researchers, and, where relevant, to the wider public. HEIs have a key role to play to that end in terms of equipping learners with emerging digital competences and their ethical component – such as data stewardship, artificial intelligence, high-performance computing and cybersecurity – and conducting research and innovation.

33. While fully recognising the value of face-to-face learning, HEIs should make full use of digital means in order to enhance the quality of the learning experience for students, staff, academics and researchers and to address social inequalities. In order to bridge the digital divide, initiatives providing equal access to individualised learning opportunities for all should be supported, using, for example, virtual or hybrid teaching in remote learning places. HEIs should be accompanied in their efforts to share platforms and interoperable tools that allow for data exchange while providing high-quality, user-friendly education resources such as online courses.

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[3]   Carretero Gomez, S., Vuorikari, R. and Punie, Y., DigComp 2.1: The Digital Competence Framework for Citizens with eight proficiency levels and examples of use, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2017.

Deepening the European sense of belonging based on common values

34. To deepen the European sense of belonging and promote our European way of life, it is key to uphold and protect European democratic values, foster diversity, inclusiveness and gender equality and strengthen the quality and relevance of higher education for future-proof skills. HEIs are autonomous and academic and scientific freedom is a central principle of their mission and activities.

35. HEIs should be supported in their efforts to protect education and science against disinformation, to support open science and to defend democratic values. In that respect, HEIs are a safeguard for democracy and a primary forum for citizen science, preparing students for active citizenship and public engagement.

36. HEIs can drive public debate with grounded and insightful information, through wider access to publications and research data and by organising public events in order to disseminate and discuss research results. HEIs can be key actors in combating the distorted use of research and represent the interface between education, research, innovation, public authorities and civil society. This role could be further strengthened and used by HEIs to engage more systematically with all societal actors, including public and private innovators, regional and local public authorities, including schools, the media, science popularisation organisations, and civil society organisations such as consumer, user or patient associations.

37. HEIs should ensure that students, academics, researchers and staff participate in their governance, as full members and constructive partners of the higher education community. In that respect, students may be involved in decision-making mechanisms, including with regard to curricula, as an aspect of fundamental academic values, a sign of democracy and a culture of dialogue in HEIs.

38. HEIs should be supported and encouraged in their efforts to ensure the inclusion and success of their students, academics, researchers and staff, and to promote equal opportunities, irrespective of gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, social and economic background, health, disability, age, sexual orientation, migrant background and geographical location. To these ends, HEIs should be supported in ensuring the well-being of all in keeping with greater social diversity. In this respect, HEIs should be encouraged to reach out to under-represented groups in order to improve their access to higher education and help them to complete their studies, taking into due consideration students and young researchers who have seen their studies and careers strongly impacted by the pandemic as well as those from rural and remote areas, such as outermost regions.

39. HEIs should be supported and encouraged to take relevant actions to improve gender balance in their student and staff bodies, including in the context of academic career advancement.

40. HEIs may use innovative teaching tools and pedagogies, including digital tools, in order to offer a student-centred approach to learning regardless of socio-economic or learning background. In order to reduce inequality and promote personal achievement, HEIs should be encouraged to provide tailor-made guidance and support services, in particular to newcomers, taking into account the learning style and pathway as well as the socio-economic background of each learner.

41. MORE SPECIFICALLY INVITES MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION, IN LINE WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE COMPETENCES AND WITH DUE REGARD FOR THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY, TO SUPPORT ALLIANCES OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS THE 'EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES':

42. All types of alliances of HEIs should be further supported by all appropriate and relevant means in order to facilitate cooperation activities based on high quality, excellence, impact, inclusiveness and geographical balance, and to identify obstacles and solutions that could be common to all alliances. More specifically, on the basis of the mid-term review of the first pilot alliances, the European Universities initiative should be further rolled out. This would also allow activities to be clustered in order to share best practices on higher education, research and innovation and service to society.

43. In the first instance, alliances of HEIs should be encouraged to make full use of existing funding programmes as well as of enabling tools at European, national and regional level with a view to increasing and deepening their cooperation.

44. Where relevant and in close cooperation with national authorities, alliances of HEIs and stakeholders, steps should be taken to overcome the obstacles to a deeper, long-term and flexible transnational cooperation and design institutionalised cooperation instruments, based on a preliminary thorough assessment of their necessity, benefits and feasibility. The aim is to give alliances, on a voluntary basis, the latitude to act together, make common strategic decisions, experiment joint recruitment, design joint curricula or pool resources and human, technical, data, education, research and innovation capacities.

45. While putting an emphasis on the implementation of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes, further steps should be taken to recognise the value of innovative transnational learning experiences and to increase the visibility, attractiveness and reputation, both in Europe and beyond, of such joint programmes provided by alliances of HEIs. Common criteria should be explored that could lead to a potential European label for joint programmes. Later on, the possible design and delivery, on a voluntary basis, at national, regional or institutional level, of joint degrees at all levels, based on these co-created European criteria, could be envisaged, in accordance with the existing instruments of the Bologna Process. This process should occur in close cooperation with national authorities, alliances of HEIs and stakeholders.

46. The outcomes of the exploratory processes mentioned in paragraphs 43 and 44 would be, at each step, reported to the Council for further decision.

47. Efficient and effective quality assurance processes should be enabled at national level to facilitate a European Quality Assurance approach for joint programmes, according to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), taking into consideration the importance of quality, research and employability.

48. To enable alliances of HEIs to reach their full potential by addressing the financial costs of transnational cooperation to cover all their missions in the longer term, steps should be taken to move towards a more sustainable, holistic and integrated EU funding perspective. In that regard, pilot approaches for possible solutions should be tested by the Commission in close consultation with the Member States and relevant stakeholders by 2024, followed by a reporting exercise to the Council for further decision.

BY WAY OF NEXT STEPS, WITH DUE REGARD FOR THE PRINCIPLES OF
SUBSIDIARITY AND INSTITUTIONAL AUTONOMY, AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH
NATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES:

49.   CALLS on the Commission and the Member States to promote and protect fundamental
academic values, including academic freedom and integrity in line with the 2020 Rome
Ministerial Communiqué and the Bonn Declaration on Freedom of Scientific Research.

50.   INVITES the Commission and the Member States, in collaboration with relevant
stakeholders, to jointly take forward actions for creating synergies between higher education,
research and innovation within the strategic framework for European cooperation in education
and training and the European Research Area governance structures. These actions should
demonstrate real added value at European level and work towards the abovementioned key
objectives, and be carried out by the Commission and, on a voluntary basis, by Member States
through any appropriate means according to national contexts.

51.   INVITES the Commission to submit to the Council, for information and further decision, a
roadmap by mid-2022 to co-design the new instruments. The roadmap would indicate key
milestones and the expert groups involved. In implementing the key objectives, the following
will be taken into consideration: actions identified by the Commission Communication on a
European strategy for universities; the Council Resolution on a strategic framework for
European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and
beyond (2021-2030); and the relevant actions identified in the European Research Area policy
agenda 2022-2024 annexed to the Council conclusions on the future governance of the
European Research Area (ERA) as well as the values and principles set out in the Council
Recommendation on a Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe.

52. INVITES the Commission, the Member States and stakeholders to engage in enhanced cooperation in order to implement these synergies, building on the existing governance structures of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training and the European Research Area, in close synergy with the European Higher Education Area, and by capitalising on HEIs' best practices. In this regard, joint meetings of Directors-General for higher education and ERAC could be considered when relevant and with clearly defined topics of joint interest and a common objective.

53. INVITES the Commission and the Member States to work towards these key objectives through close collaboration with EU-level and international umbrella organisations, or other appropriate organisations which are relevant at EU level, and representative of stakeholders, such as: HEIs, including alliances of European HEIs, student associations, quality assurance agencies, research and technology performing organisations, R&I-intensive businesses, including SMEs, individual researchers and innovators, research infrastructures, R&I funding organisations and academies of sciences. Regular meetings such as the Forum of Universities for the future of Europe could be considered in order to discuss the implementation of the strategy and to foster the sharing of good practices. The outcomes of that Forum should inspire further developments and work by the relevant groups of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training and the European Research Area, in synergy with the European Higher Education Area.

54. INVITES Member States to make use of multilateral exchanges with the support of the Commission in order to foster the sharing of good practices and peer learning from other Member States.

55. NOTES the Commission's intention to rationalise the higher education monitoring tools. This could enhance their potential and relevance for policy makers, HEIs, students and researchers, without increasing the administrative burden on the Member States or the HEIs, in order to provide information on progress achieved in the implementation of the European strategy empowering higher education institutions and help Member States wishing to build the actions to which they intend to contribute on solid evidence and data. Member States' participation in this process is voluntary. PROPOSES to base further discussions on a mapping study regarding the potential and legal framework of the relevant monitoring tools. STRESSES that this task should be developed in synergy with the ERA policy coordination and monitoring process, including the ERA dashboard.

56. INVITES the Commission to present regular updates to the Member States on progress on the implementation of the aforementioned actions, and to submit a comprehensive overview in the full report from the Commission on the European Education Area in 2025, also taking into consideration progress made on the implementation of the European Research Area.

POLITICAL BACKGROUND

European Council

- European Council conclusions, 14 December 2017 (EUCO 19/1/17 REV 1)

Council of the European Union

- Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/2122 of 26 November 2021 on a Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe (OJ L 431, 2.12.2021, p. 1)

- Council conclusions on the future governance of the European Research Area (ERA) (14308/21, 26 November 2021)

- Council conclusions on the Global approach to Research and Innovation – Europe's strategy for international cooperation in a changing world (12301/21, 28 September 2021)

- Council conclusions on the European Universities initiative – Bridging higher education, research, innovation and society: Paving the way for a new dimension in European higher education (OJ C 221, 10.6.2021, p. 14)

- Council conclusions on 'Deepening the European Research Area: Providing researchers with attractive and sustainable careers and working conditions and making brain circulation a reality' (9138/21, 28 May 2021)

- Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030) (OJ C 66, 26.2.2021, p. 1)

- Council conclusions on the New European Research Area (13567/20, 1 December 2020)

- Council Recommendation of 26 November 2018 on promoting automatic mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary education and training qualifications and the outcomes of learning periods abroad (OJ C 444, 10.12.2018, p. 1)

- Council conclusions on moving towards a vision of a European Education Area (OJ C 195, 7.6.2018, p. 7)

- Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching (OJ C 195, 7.6.2018, p. 1)

European Commission

- Tackling R&I Foreign Interference (SWD(2022) 12 final)

- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a European strategy for Universities (COM(2022) 16 final)

- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the Global Approach to Research and Innovation – Europe's strategy for international cooperation in a changing world (COM(2021) 252 final/2)

- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – A new ERA for Research and Innovation (COM(2020) 628 final)

- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on achieving the European Education Area by 2025 (COM(2020) 625 final)

- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience (COM(2020) 274 final)

European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

- Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank – The Global Gateway (JOIN(2021) 30 final)

Declarations

- Rome Ministerial Communiqué (19 November 2020)

- Bonn Declaration on Freedom of Scientific Research (20 October 2020)

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