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Main Policy Lines in Education and Training May 2013 - October 2013

I. European Union

1. Institutional context

1.1 The European Semester

The "European Semester" is a cycle of economic and fiscal policy coordination within the EU. Its focus is on the six-month period from the beginning of each year, hence its name – the "semester".

During the European Semester the member states align their budgetary and economic policies with the objectives and rules agreed at the EU level. This way the Semester aims to:

- ensure sound public finances
- foster economic growth and
- prevent excessive macroeconomic imbalances in the EU

For more detailed information on the European semester we refer to former 'main policy lines'. For a graphic representation, [click here](#).

On 29 May 2013 the European Commission published its analysis of the National Reform Programmes and the Stability Programmes sent in by the Member States, together with the **country-specific recommendations**. Taken together, they represent an ambitious set of reforms for the EU economy, with an important attention for the role of education and training.

[Press release](#)

Communication from the Commission : ['Moving Europe beyond the crisis'](#)

[Country-specific recommendations for the EU](#)

The texts have been endorsed by the European Council on 27 and 28 June, concludes and adopted at a meeting of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council on 9 July 2013. This adoption concluded this year's European Semester monitoring exercise.

1.2 The multiannual financial framework (MFF) for 2014-2020

Brussels, Council of the EU, 28 June 2013

Under the Irish Presidency of the EU, the Council reached an agreement with the European Parliament on the draft regulation laying down the EU's multiannual financial framework 2014-2020.

In the agreement, flexibility is ensured so that the EU can fulfil its obligations and cope with unforeseen budgetary needs in spite of limited financial resources.

A review of the MFF would take place in 2016 at the latest.

Read more at the [pages of the Council of the EU](#) (press release, documents related to the agreement, video).

1.3 Economic and Monetary Union

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council Strengthening the social dimension of the Economic and Monetary Union, 2 October 2013

In 2012 the European Commission adopted a blueprint for a deep and genuine economic and money union (EMU). In 2013 the Council recalled that the social dimension of the EMU should be strengthened and emphasised the importance of better monitoring and of taking account of the social and labour market situation in the EMU, notably by using appropriate employment and social indicators. The initiative to strengthen the social dimension of EMU has 3 main points:

- Reinforced surveillance of employment and social challenges and policy coordination;
- Enhanced solidarity and action on employment and labour mobility;
- Strengthened social dialogue.

Strengthening the social dimension should help all Member States achieve their growth and employment potential, improve social cohesion and prevent increasing disparities.

The monitoring of the employment and social developments consists of a series of steps. It starts with the annual Alert Mechanism Report (AMR) and a scoreboard of indicators. This is followed by specific in-depth reviews on countries identified as potentially at risk of imbalances at the AMR stage, and leads to country-specific recommendations and, possibly, to corrective action plans for countries with excessive imbalances.

In AMR there are some new indicators introduced for 2014 European Semester:

- participation rate;
- the long-term unemployment ratio;
- the youth unemployment rate (**complemented by the proportion of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET)**);
- the 'at risk of poverty and social exclusion' rate (complemented by the three sub-indicators: the at-risk-of-poverty rate, the severe material deprivation rate, the proportion of persons living in households with low work intensity).

The Commission also proposes to create a scoreboard of key indicators to be used in its draft Joint Employment Report to follow employment and social developments. It should serve as an analytical

tool allowing better and earlier identification of major employment and social problems, especially any that risk generating effects beyond national borders. This scoreboard would consist of a limited number of key indicators focusing on employment and social trends that can severely undermine employment, social cohesion and human capital, and have negative effects on the growth and competitiveness of a Member State. The following headline indicators could help detect negative trends at a reasonably early stage and help anticipate further deterioration:

- unemployment level and changes;
- **NEET rate (young people not in education, employment or training) and youth**
- unemployment rate;
- real gross disposable income of households;
- at-risk-of-poverty rate of working age population;
- inequalities (S80/S20 ratio).

Together with reinforcement of the monitoring of employment and social developments in the context of the Macroeconomic Imbalances Procedure, the scoreboard of key employment and social indicators will help better integrate employment and social concerns in the overall policy landscape.

[The communication](#)

1.4 Presidencies of the EU

Three consecutive presidencies of the EU (Ireland, Lithuania and Greece) work together (Trojka) for a period of 18 months. They have a common policy programme to which they contribute during their presidency.

Ireland has taken up the presidency from 1 January until 30 June 2013; Lithuania from 1 July until 31 December 2013; Greece from 1 January until 30 June 2014.

1.4.1 The Irish Presidency of the EU

January – June 2013

This [report](#) outlines what has been achieved in partnership with our fellow Member States, our colleagues in the EU and other stakeholders.

In the field of education:

- First Reading Agreement with the European Parliament on 'Erasmus+', the new European programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport
- Council Conclusions on 'Investing in education and training - a response to Rethinking Education: investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes and the 2013 Annual Growth Survey
- Council Conclusions on the social dimension of higher education
- Launch of U-Multirank, a new University ranking system

Website of the Irish Presidency: <http://eu2013.ie>

1.4.2 The Lithuanian Presidency of the EU

July – December 2013

'For a Credible, Growing and Open Europe' is the title of [the programme](#) of the Lithuanian Presidency.

The objectives of the Lithuanian Presidency are as follows:

- **Credible Europe** with a stable financial sector and public finance and effective growth oriented EU economic governance and stronger social dimension,
- **Growing Europe** through greater investment into research and technological development, deeper integration of the internal market, as well as better employment opportunities and sustainable social security,
- **Open Europe** able to tackle global challenges effectively, promoting democratic values, contributing to safe neighbourhood, and actively protecting the rights of EU citizens.

In the field of education and training, the Presidency will focus on the importance of the quality and efficiency of education and training when implementing the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training (ET 2020) and seeking to accomplish the objectives included in the Europe 2020 strategy.

The Presidency will seek to complete the procedures leading to a formal adoption of the new Erasmus + Programme (2014-2020).

In the field of general education and vocational education and training, Lithuania plans to draft and submit to the Council for adoption conclusions that will highlight leadership initiatives in education, factors for the selection of leaders of education institutions, prevention of early drop-out from the education system, as well as the development of entrepreneurship at school.

In the field of vocational training, the Presidency will also discuss issues related to initial vocational education and training in order to ensure the supply of necessary skills to the labour market, and to increase the attractiveness and openness of continuing vocational education and training.

In order to highlight the necessity and the objective of enhancing the quality and competitiveness of European higher education, and in response to the initiative by the European Commission regarding the internationalization of higher education, Lithuania will continue the discussion on the need to modernize higher education. The Presidency plans to propose adopting the Council conclusions regarding the internationalization of the EU higher education sector.

Discussions will include ways of promoting partnerships in the field of higher education, including those with the EU's neighborhood countries, thereby enhancing research and teaching capacities, and promoting a more active role of universities knowledge transfer, thus increasing the visibility of the EU higher education at the international level.

The Presidency will initiate political discussion within the Council concerning Open Educational Resources and digital learning.

Website of the Lithuanian Presidency <http://www.eu2013.lt/>

2. Education and training

2.1 Erasmus +

Dublin, 26 June 2013

The Irish Presidency has secured agreement on Erasmus+ among EU Member States and with the European Parliament. Erasmus+ (2014-2020) is the new €16bn catch-all framework programme for education, training, youth and sport. **The final text will probably be adopted in October 2013.**

Read more at the pages of the [Irish Presidency](#), the [European Commission](#) and the [European Parliament](#).

2.2 Vocational education and training

2.2.1 Launch of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships

Leipzig, 2 July 2013

The Alliance will help to fight youth unemployment by improving the quality and supply of apprenticeships across the EU through a broad partnership of key employment and education stakeholders. It also seeks to change attitudes to apprenticeships. It will in particular identify the most successful apprenticeship schemes in the EU and apply appropriate solutions in each Member State.

The Commission's plan to launch a European Alliance for Apprenticeships was announced as part of its [Rethinking Education](#) initiative and [Youth Employment Package](#). The [European Council of 7-8 February 2013](#) invited the Commission to establish the Alliance as part of measures to tackle youth unemployment. It is also a key element of the Commission's 19th June Communication on '[Working together for Europe's young people](#)'.

[Press release](#)

2.2.2 Benefits of vocational education and training in Europe for people, organisations and countries

CEDEFOP, 2013

This publication focuses on the fact that VET not only brings economic benefits (such as higher wages, improved productivity, economic growth), but also non-economic benefits (such as lower absenteeism and less crime). Some of VET's most important benefits are difficult to express in monetary terms.

One of the conclusions is that VET appears to generate the same types of benefits and similar rates of return as general education. VET's relatively poor parity of esteem compared to general education in some countries is not justified based on the evidence. It is also a mistake to see skills acquired through general education and VET as substitutes. They are complementary. Consequently, the real and most constructive debate is not about whether general education or VET is better than the other, but about which learning track is better for the persons concerned at which point in their working lives.

The [publication](#) can be downloaded at the website of CEDEFOP.

2.2.3 Labour market outcomes of vocational education in Europe. Evidence from the European Union Labour Force survey.

CEDEFOP, 2013, research paper nr 32

There is evidence that, relative to medium-level general education, vocational graduates enjoy a faster transition to work and are more likely to have a permanent first job in line with their qualifications. But there are substantial differences between countries. Benefits for vocational graduates are most prominent in countries with strong VET systems with a close connection between school- and work-based learning.

The [publication](#) can be downloaded at the website of CEDEFOP.

2.3 Higher Education

2.3.1 European Higher Education in the World

Communication from the European Commission, 11 July 2013

This new strategy of the European Commission aims to ensure that European graduates gain the international skills they need to work anywhere in the world, and that Europe remains the most attractive destination for international students.

The Commission underlines that universities and other higher education institutions must also promote an international outlook among the 85% of students who are not mobile, so that they too acquire the international skills required in a globalised world.

[The communication](#) of the European Commission

[Press release](#)

2.4 Opening up education

Opening up Education: Innovative teaching and learning for all through new Technologies and Open Educational Resources, a communication from the European Commission, 25 September 2013

The aim of the Commission:

- stimulating high-quality, innovative ways of learning and teaching through new technologies and digital content.
- helping learning institutions, teachers and learners to acquire digital skills and learning methods
- supporting development and availability of open educational resources (OER)
- connecting classrooms and deploying digital devices and content
- mobilizing all stakeholders (teachers, learners, families, economic and social partners) to change the role of digital technologies at education institutions

The initiative contributes to the EU headline targets for reducing early school leaving and increasing tertiary or equivalent attainment and builds on the recent initiatives 'Rethinking Education', 'European Higher Education in the World', Erasmus +, Horizon 2020 as well as the flagship initiative Digital Agenda.

Facts and figures:

- 63% of nine years olds do not study at a 'highly digitally-equipped school' (with appropriate equipment, fast broadband and high 'connectivity')
- only 30% of students in the EU can be considered as digitally competent; and still 28% of students in the EU have practically no access to ICT, neither at school or at home
- 70% of teachers in the EU recognize the importance of training in digital-supported ways of teaching and learning but only 20-25% of students are taught by digitally confident and supportive teachers
- six teachers out of ten have not received any training on how to use ICT in the classroom while 70% of teachers would like to have professional development on ICT skills
- between 50% and 80% of students in the EU never use digital textbooks, exercise software, broadcasts/podcasts, simulations or learning games
- one third of the 200 European universities consulted were not aware of what a MOOC is (Massive Open Online Courses), and only one third were considering any MOOC-related initiative

EU education is failing to keep pace with the digital society and economy and also risks lagging behind other regions of the world. The USA and some Asian countries are investing in ICT-based strategies to reshape education and training. They are offering their courses globally through Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs).

The benefits of the digital revolution in education: All individuals can learn, Anywhere, Anytime, through Any device, with the support of Anyone.

- Individuals can easily seek and acquire knowledge from sources other than their teachers and institutions, often for free
- New groups of learners can be reached because learning is no longer confined to specific classroom timetables or methods and can be personalised
- Teachers may easily share and create content with colleagues and learners from different countries
- Much wider range of educational resources can be accessed
- Teachers and education institutions can reach thousands of learners from all five continents simultaneously
- Can contribute to alleviating costs for educational institutions and for students, especially among disadvantaged groups
- Combining face-to-face and online (blended learning) can increase student's motivation and the efficacy of learning

The Communication presents **four main parts**:

1. Open Learning Environments: opportunities to innovate for organisations, teachers and learners

Education and training institutions need to review their organisational strategies and improve their capacity to adapt, promote innovation and exploit the potential of technologies and digital content. Yet using ICT in training can reduce costs and increase flexibility in terms of time and space. Teachers should be able to acquire high digital competences, therefore initial teacher education should place a strong emphasis on digital-supported teaching methods (digital pedagogies). Learners expect to acquire the digital skills for the 21st century and have their digitally-acquired skills

easily certified and recognised for further learning or work. Special attention is also needed to disadvantaged groups such as learners at risk of low achievement in e.g. science & technology or with learning difficulties.

2. Open Education Resources: opportunities to use open knowledge for better quality and access

OERs are generally produced in a limited number of languages (mostly English), and used by specific education sectors (especially higher education) and specific disciplines (e.g. ICT). The use of OERs in Europe is still too fragmented and not sustained. High-quality European OER must become more visible and accessible to all citizens. Therefore the Commission will launch a single gateway for OERs produced in Europe, federating existing platforms with advanced browsing and search features to help users find the appropriate content (Open Education Europa).

3. Connectivity and Innovation: partnerships for infrastructures, new products and services, and interoperability

There is a need to enhance local ICT infrastructure (broadband, content, tools) because in many places the lack of hardware devices or the low penetration of broadband impedes the optimal use of technology, impairs the potential to use OER and educational software. Broadband may exist at institutional level but not at classroom or device level, and different devices with different technical specifications (e.g. different software or brands) are currently not providing equal access to educational resources.

Interoperability and portability standards for educational resources also have to be defined and ensured across devices, platforms and brands to provide a level playing field for all market players. Standards should also ensure that resources could be used across different platforms thus enhancing their effectiveness.

Developments in cloud technologies and gaming, personalisation of learning and mobile devices will drive growth in the educational technology market.

4. A concerted effort to seize the opportunities of the digital revolution

The Commission will launch a platform open to all stakeholders (teachers, learners, families, digital communities, economic and social partners, etc.) to record and benchmark the digital state of educational institutions. It also will be established the European Hub of Digitally Innovative Education institutions, showcasing and piloting innovative ICT-based pedagogical and organizational practices, complemented by a specific European Award of Digital Excellence.

The Member States and education institutions should promote networks of volunteer teachers, digital communities and ICT experts in launching initiatives (such as coding courses or back-to-school programmes) and establish teachers' awards for the good pedagogical use of ICT for all educational sectors.

Furthermore, it will continue to work and cooperate with national regional and local authorities, social partners, business, students, new educational providers and other international organisations such as UNESCO, the International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE) and the OECD.

The Commission summarized Key Transformative Actions focused on the above mentioned 4 areas.

Read more: http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/doc/openingcom_en.pdf

2.5 Entrepreneurship education

Entrepreneurship Education: A Guide for Educators, a publication of the European Commission, DG Enterprise and Industry, June 2013

In 2012, DG Enterprise and Industry and DG Education and Culture initialised two transnational events targeting teachers' preparation for entrepreneurship education. The events took place in May 2012 (Dublin, Ireland) and in September 2012 (Brdo, Slovenia). The aim of the events was to bring together actors involved in teacher education and training in entrepreneurship to present good practice, exchange ideas and learn from each other. The outcome is a manual which provides a selection of practical recommendations developed as a result of the events, hoping to inspire practitioners to take action and continue with their own activities to enable teachers for entrepreneurship education.

Support for entrepreneurship is very important because it will have a positive impact on the entrepreneurial dynamism of our economies. Besides contributing to the creation of social enterprise and business start-ups, entrepreneurship education will make young people more employable and more entrepreneurial in their work within existing organisations.

Through the Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan and the Rethinking Education Communication, the European Commission has emphasized the need to embed entrepreneurial learning in all sectors of education including non-formal learning. Both documents call on Member States to provide all young people with a practical entrepreneurial experience before leaving compulsory education. Teachers and educators have a central role, as they have a strong impact of the attainment of learners. Therefore every student teacher and existing teacher should benefit from at least one experience of training on the key topics and methods related to entrepreneurial learning and entrepreneurship education during their career.

The guide identifies features that make an entrepreneurial teacher, and how the entrepreneurial teacher can be supported. It provides examples of practice in initial teacher education and in continuous professional development.

Download the [full guide](#)

2.6 Education expenditure

2.6.1 Government Education Expenditure in the European Union during the Economic Crisis (2008-2011)

Eurydice, 2013

The crucial role of education was set out in the Commission Communication '*Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes*'. The Commission has called on Member States not to cut the spending for growth-friendly policies, such as education. However, there is concern that some Member States do not provide the investments needed to improve or sustain strong and well-performing education and training systems.

The overview analyses how public expenditure for education in the 27 EU-countries developed in the first years after the out-break of the financial and economic crisis. It examines changes in

government education expenditure in the European Union between 2011, focusing on two questions:

- How has total government education expenditure changed during the economic crisis?

The EU-average of government expenditure on education, defined as the amount of public money invested into education in a given year, however, remained surprisingly stable during the crisis. In fact, the EU average government expenditure on education increased slightly from 2008 to 2011. Eighteen EU countries had higher government expenditure on education in 2011 than in 2008. Countries with the highest expenditure increase were Denmark, Germany, France, Luxembourg, Malta and Slovakia. Bulgaria, Estonia, Ireland, Greece and Lithuania, however, dramatically decreased the expenditure over the same period.

- How has the economic crisis affected the share of education expenditure as a proportion of total public expenditure and as a proportion of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)?

The share of education expenditure as a proportion of total public spending was relatively stable between 2008 and 2011. Decreases took place in Ireland, Spain, Latvia, Portugal, Romania and Slovenia, while the share increased in Malta and Slovakia.

The share of education expenditure as a proportion of GDP fluctuated between 2008 and 2011. The EU average spending as a percentage of GDP was about the same in 2011 as in 2008, remaining within half a percentage point above or below the 2008 level in most countries over the period. Bigger decreases than this were seen in Latvia, while bigger increases happened in Denmark, Malta and Slovenia.

In 2011, almost all countries recorded growth in GDP after it had contracted in 2009. Therefore, the decline in the share of education expenditure as a proportion of GDP can be attributed to an increase in GDP, and not necessarily to a decrease in actual education spending.

The main findings of the overview:

- In nine countries, government education expenditure was below the 2008 level in 2011. In the majority of EU countries, total government education expenditure was slightly higher in 2011 than in 2008 even though it fluctuated in between. Ten countries reacted to the crisis by immediately cutting their education expenditure in 2009, while 12 others either increased or kept education spending levels stable.
- Spending on education as a proportion of total public expenditure remained stable on average in the European Union between 2008 and 2011. In the majority of countries, there were only slight increases or decreases in the share of education spending. The decreases were significant in Ireland, Latvia, and Portugal.
- The share of government education expenditure as a proportion of GDP was about the same in 2008 as in 2011 in the European Union on average. Significant drops in the share of government expenditure as a proportion to GDP were visible in Bulgaria and Latvia.

There are some noteworthy limitations to this overview:

- The available data show only the short-term impact of the economic crisis on education spending from 2008 to 2011. The longer-term effects will only become apparent as data for successive years becomes available.
- The overview deals only with total government education expenditure, excluding private investment.
- Examining the amount of public funds invested in education does not reveal whether money has been used efficiently to improve the quality of education.

<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/focus-on/documents/155EN.pdf>

2.6.2 Teachers' and school heads' salaries and allowances in Europe in 2012/2013

Eurydice, October 2013

The report shows that salary increases made between 2000 and 2009 generally outweigh the austerity measures taken between 2010 and 2012. However, the teaching profession remains poorly remunerated.

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/facts_and_figures/salaries.pdf

2.6.3 National Student Fee and Support Systems 2012/2013

Eurydice, October 2013

The report tries to capture all costs charged to students, not only the strict 'fees'. The national information sheets show the amount of fees students pay, but also the financial support available.

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/facts_and_figures/fees_support.pdf

2.7 Structure of education systems

2.7.1 The structure of the European education systems 2013/14

Eurydice, 24 October 2012

The schematic diagrams in [this publication](#) show you what mainstream schooling looks like in 33 European countries and how different levels of education, from pre-primary to tertiary, are broken down. The diagrams also indicate the general ages of students and the programme duration for each level.

2.8 Conferences

2.7.1 International Summit on the Teaching Profession

Amsterdam, 13-14 March 2013

The 2013 International Summit on Teaching Profession is organized by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science in close co-operation with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Education International (EI).

The theme of the third annual International Summit on the Teaching Profession focuses on teacher evaluation and professional standards. During the Summit, delegates will had discussions guided by the following questions:

- How is teacher quality defined by policy makers, the teaching profession and society? What standards are set and by whom?
- How is teacher quality evaluated? What systems are in place and how are the evaluations carried out?
- How do evaluations contribute to school improvement and teacher self-efficacy? What impact can be expected on teaching and learning from teacher evaluation?

<http://www.teachersummit2013.org/>

2.7.2 Leadership in education

Conference under the Lithuanian Presidency of the EU, Vilnius, 9-10 September 2013

The Conference was opened by Ms Androulla Vassiliou, EU Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, and Prof Dr Dainius Pavalkis, Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania.

The plenary of the first day offered two speeches: Dr Michael Schratz, Professor of Education at the Department of Teacher Education and School Research, University of Innsbruck (Austria), and presently Dean of the Faculty of Education, made a report “Leading towards the emerging future in a rapidly changing world” and Dr Pasi Sahlberg, from Finland, who currently holds the position of Director General of the National Centre for International Mobility and Cooperation and leads internationalization of the Finnish education system, made a report “School leadership and the Global Educational Reform Movement”.

Day Two (September 10) Plenary was based on the report “Looking ahead: Trends and perspectives on school leadership” delivered by Dr Beatriz Pont, Analyst in the Directorate for Education of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

The outcomes of the conference will feed into Council Conclusions, which are planned to be adopted by the Council in November, 2013.

[Press Release of the Ministry of Education and Science](#)

[Speech](#) of Androulla Vassiliou, European Commissioner

2.7.3 Horizons for Social Sciences and Humanities

Conference of the Lithuanian Presidency of the EU, Vilnius, 23-24 September 2013

The aim of the event is to define the roles of social sciences and humanities in the future European research and innovation strategies.

One of the major objectives of the conference is to foster the relations of social sciences and humanities with other fields of science and research policy. Another goal is to exchange views on how to integrate the social sciences and humanities into “Societal challenges”, which is the third pillar of the next EU Research programme, ‘Horizon 2020’. The conference focused on topics as varied as health and demographic changes, secure energy, smart transport, climate change and inclusive and innovative societies.

This conference ended up with the Vilnius Declaration – “Horizons for Social Sciences and Humanities”, and a detailed conference report.

Programme and report at the [conference website](#).

3. Developments in other policy domains

3.1 Youth

3.1.1 Working together for Europe’s young people

Communication from the European Commission, 19 June 2013

This Communication is a call to action on youth unemployment. The Communication sets out steps to be taken without delay to get young people back into work, education or training. These steps cover

- The implementation of the Youth Guarantee
- Investment in young people through the European Social Fund
- Kick-starting the Youth Employment Initiative
- Support intra-EU labour mobility with the EURES portal and the ESF
- Steps to ease the transition from education to work by boosting the supply of high-quality apprenticeships (implementation of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships) and traineeships, by opening up cross-border education and training opportunities (Erasmus +), by addressing skills shortages
- Build a European labour market for the longer term
- Take measures to support job creation in the immediate term (support for SMEs)

Full text of the [Communication](#)

3.1.2 EU Youth Conference

Vilnius, 9 – 12 September 2013

About 250 participants discussed youth policy priorities focused on the social inclusion of young people. The Youth Conference adopted 21 joint conclusions drafted by young people and policy-makers from all 28-member states of the EU.

The conclusions focus on concrete proposals to enhance the social inclusion of youth, especially of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs), into the labour market, the education system and social life, which is the overall theme of this cycle of the [Structured Dialogue](#).

These conclusions will contribute to the draft EU Council Conclusions on enhancing the social inclusion of young people not in employment, education or training and that are expected to be adopted by the EU Member States’ Ministers for Youth in November 2013. They will also provide input to the draft Council Resolution on structured dialogue with young people regarding social inclusion, which will be adopted under the upcoming Greek Presidency.

[Read the conclusions](#)

3.1.3 Youth Guarantee

La Hulpe, 17-18 October 2013

The European Commission and Member States have met to discuss practical implementation of the Youth Guarantee at a seminar organised by the Commission.

The Youth Guarantee aims to tackle youth unemployment by ensuring that every young person under 25 receives a good quality offer of a job, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of leaving school or becoming unemployed. Every EU country has endorsed the principle of the Youth Guarantee, and must now submit a Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan setting out how the scheme will function in practice and be financed.

In particular, each Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan should set out

- the roles of public education and employment authorities , youth organizations, employees and employers' representatives
- the structural reforms and other initiatives which will be launched in order to set up the Youth Guarantee
- how the Youth Guarantee will be financed, in particular through the support of the Youth Employment initiative and the European Social Fund (ESF)
- a timetable for implementation and monitoring progress.

The European Social Fund can help EU countries to set up Youth Guarantee schemes. Those Member States with regions of youth unemployment above 25% are eligible for additional EU funding through the Youth Employment Initiative.

Member States eligible for this additional funding must submit Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans before the end of this year. Other Member States have until mid-2014 to submit their plans.

Read more about [the Youth Guarantee](#).

II. OECD

1. Education at a glance 2013

25 June 2013

The launch in Brussels was hosted by Mr Xavier Prats Monné, Deputy Director-General for Education and Culture, European Commission and by Mr Andreas Schleicher, Deputy Director of the OECD's Education and Skills Directorate.

Education at a Glance provides key information on the output of educational institutions; the impact of learning across countries; the financial and human resources invested in education; access, participation and progression in education, and the learning environment and organisation of schools.

The 2013 edition includes new indicators on the links between education levels and employment. The main message is clear: it is a person's education that determines whether he/she will be extremely or only moderately exposed to the economic and social risks in times of crisis: the value of education increases during an economic crisis.

www.oecd.org/edu/eag.htm

2. Do immigrant students' reading skills depend on how long they have been in their new country?

PISA in Focus 29, June 2013

An analysis of PISA data shows that there are no marked differences in reading proficiency between immigrant students who arrived in their new country before they were five and those who arrived between the ages of six and 11. In contrast, in most OECD countries, immigrant students who arrived at the age of 12 or older – and have spent at most four years in their new country – lag farther behind students in the same grade in reading proficiency than immigrants who arrived at younger ages.

An examination of age-at-arrival profiles for the major immigrant groups in selected countries confirms the importance of language barriers. But language may not be the only factor involved. Differences in educational and living standards between the origin and destination countries may also be relevant.

These findings can be used to inform immigration policy: Where late arrival is the result of migration policies that delay family reunification, the intended benefits of these policies should be carefully weighed against the costs of remedial assistance. More immediately, though, targeted help with language skills, targeted help with language skills for those foreign-born students who arrive when they're in their teens can limit the need for future assistance; and flexible arrangements to defer tracking can help to ensure that students perform at their full potential when decisions are taken about further education. Both measures will have a direct impact on these students' employment prospects later on.

<http://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisainfocus/pisa%20in%20focus%20n29%20%28eng%29--Final.pdf>

3. How is international student mobility shaping up?

Education Indicators in Focus, July 2013

The number of students enrolled in tertiary education outside their country of citizenship has risen dramatically over the past decades. Today, almost 4.5 million students are enrolled outside their country, Asian students (from China, India and Korea) account for 53% of all international students. New players are entering the education market, such as Australia, New Zealand, Spain, the Russian Federation and Korea. 77% of all international students are enrolled in OECD countries. The top five destinations for tertiary studies abroad: the United States, The United Kingdom, Australia, Germany and France. As international students primarily go to English-speaking countries to study, often in the fields of social sciences, business and law, some non-English-speaking countries have started to offer courses in English in order to overcome their linguistic disadvantages. The reputation of a country's higher education and of its programmes, immigration policy and language all have an impact on the decision of where to study. Therefore immigration policies have also been recently modified in some OECD countries to make it less difficult for international students to enter the country.

The amount of tuition fees charged can also have an impact on the attractiveness of a destination. In the majority of OECD countries the tuition fees charged are higher for international students enrolled in the same programme than for domestic students. However, high levels of tuition fees, especially in Australia and the UK, are not necessarily a hindrance for students as in some cases they can benefit from loans or scholarships.

Studying abroad helps students to expand their knowledge of other societies, languages, cultures and business methods, and to leverage their labour market prospects. International students are also beneficial for the host countries. Their expenditure on tuition, accommodation and living expenses, furthermore if they stay on after graduation, have a long-term influence on the economy. In Australia, Canada, the Czech Republic and France the stay rate is more than 30%, thereby affecting the labour market.

[http://www.oecd.org/edu/skills-beyond-school/EDIF%202013--N°14%20\(eng\)-Final.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/edu/skills-beyond-school/EDIF%202013--N°14%20(eng)-Final.pdf)

4. Governing Complex Education Systems (GCES)

A CERI project (Centre for Educational Research and Innovation)

Partly in response to the risen complexity in education systems, governments in almost all OECD countries have increased school autonomy. The combination of this new governance with increasingly individualized, informed and demanding populations suggests that complexity and the importance of diverse local contexts can only be expected to increase.

In this context, ministries of education remain responsible for ensuring high quality, efficient, equitable and innovative education. This responsibility is increased by the increasing importance attached to education for building a strong knowledge economy and also by international comparisons such as PISA that increase the visibility of national performance.

One of the crucial questions of this project is therefore how to achieve national objectives for education systems under the condition of increasing complexity. The GCES project focuses on two key elements: governance mechanisms and knowledge options.

[Project documents, reports of conferences, case studies](#)

5. Art for Art's Sake? The Impact of Arts Education.

A CERI publication, 13 June 2013

Arts education is often said to have a positive impact on the three subsets of 'skills for innovation':

- Subject-based skills (including in non-arts subjects)
- Skills in thinking and creativity
- Behavioural and social skills

This report examines the impact of arts education on these kind of outcomes. The kinds of arts education include arts classes in school (music, visual arts, theatre,..), arts-integrated classes (arts integrated as support for an academic subject) and arts study out of school (private music lessons, dance, ..). The report does not deal with education *about* the arts or cultural education.

The [report](#) can be downloaded at the website of OECD/CERI.

6. The OECD Survey of Adult Skills

The OECD Survey of Adult Skills is an international survey conducted in 33 countries, as part of the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC). It measures the key cognitive and workplace skills needed for individuals to participate in society and for economies to prosper. It is the largest and most comprehensive international survey of adult skills ever undertaken. The results have been presented to the public on 8 October 2013.

During the briefing event Andreas Schleicher, Deputy Director of the OECD's Education and Skills Directorate, presented the key findings of the international survey. Mr Xavier Prats Monné, Deputy Director-General for Education and Culture in the European Commission, elaborated the relevance of the findings for European policy making.

Seven findings are specifically relevant for EU education and training policies:

- 20% of the EU working age population has low literacy and low numeracy skills
- Education and skills increase employability
- The high-skilled are progressing well through adult learning, but people with low proficiency are easily caught in a low skills trap as they are less likely to participate in learning activities
- There are significant differences between individuals with similar qualifications across the EU: upper secondary graduates in some Member States score similar or better than higher education graduates in others
- 25% of the adults lack the skills to effectively make use of ICT
- The skills of a person tend to deteriorate over time if they are not used frequently
- Sustaining skills brings significant positive economic and social outcomes

The Survey will contribute to the monitoring of the Europe 2020 strategy and to the implementation of the Education and Training Strategy.

The Commission and OECD will launch a new Education and Skills online Assessment tool later this year. This will allow people to test their skills and benchmark their own abilities in an international context.

Read [more](#) about results, implementation, design and beneficiaries of the study.

7. Innovative Learning Environments

A CERI publication, September 2013

How to design a powerful learning environment so that learners can thrive in the 21st century? This volume is based on 40 in-depth case studies of powerful 21st century learning environments that have taken the innovation journey.

Innovative Learning Environments presents a wealth of international material and features a new framework for understanding these learning environments, organized into eight chapters. It argues that a contemporary learning environment should:

- Innovate the elements and dynamics of its "pedagogical core".
- Become a "formative organization" through strong design strategies with corresponding learning leadership, evaluation and feedback.
- Open up to partnerships to grow social and professional capital, and to sustain renewal and dynamism.
- Promote 21st century effectiveness through the application of the ILE learning principles.

In conclusion it offers pointers to how this can be achieved, including the role of technology, networking, and changing organizational cultures.

Read more about the [ELI project](#)

III. UNESCO

1. Promoting inclusive teacher education

This publication set is a series of five guides designed for anyone who wants to do advocacy to bring about improvements in pre-service teacher education towards more inclusive education. They discuss challenges and barriers to inclusive education in different areas of teacher education and outline ideas for advocates to consider and adapt according to their specific contexts for effective advocacy towards more inclusive practices.

[Introduction](#)

[Policy](#)

[Curriculum](#)

[Materials](#)

[Methodology](#)

2. Envisioning education in the post-2015 development agenda

UNESCO, July 2013

The Global Thematic Consultation on Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda is co-led by the UNESCO and the UNICEF, with the support of the Governments of Senegal, Canada and Germany, and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The overall objective of the consultation was to assess the progress and remaining challenges in meeting the education-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted in 2000 and the broader Education for All (EFA) goals. **'Equitable, Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All'** is proposed as the overarching goal for education.

The key message from the consultation is that universal access to quality education and lifelong learning is key to sustainable development in the post-2015 framework. The provision of education contributes to the eradication of poverty, the promotion of social cohesion, good governance and improved health and gender equality.

The consultation identified several gaps linked to access, quality and learning, equity and gender equality:

- Excluding primary education, progress on education goals remain uneven
- The education-related MDGs are perceived as having narrowed the focus on access and completion
- Education and training are not meeting the needs and demands of all young people to thrive and participate fully in society
- Exclusion from education occurs most often among the most vulnerable groups such as girls, orphans, migrants, rural people, children with disabilities, refugees, linguistic and cultural minorities etc.

- Girls continue to account for the largest number of out-of-school children of primary school age
- Inadequate attention to financial, human capital and resource constraints (inadequate focus on well-trained teachers)
- The emphasis on global targets has imposed one-size-fits-all targets for countries, irrespective of countries' diverse starting points and financial resources

The recommended priorities of the consultation:

- Expanded access to quality learning should be ensured for all and at all levels of education
- Focus attention on the quality education
 - Well-trained and motivated teachers and school leadership
 - Relevant, measurable and equitable learning outcomes
 - Internalizing the principles of sustainable development
 - Strengthening training and skills for work and life
 - Ensuring safe and healthy learning environments
- Focus on equity: most vulnerable groups to acquire literacy, numeracy and other skills
- Gender equality: enhanced access to post-basic and post-secondary education

Framing the goal

Four priority areas:

- All girls and boys are able to access and complete quality pre-primary education of an agreed period
- Equal access to and completion of a full course of quality primary schooling
- All adolescent girls and boys are able to access and complete quality lower secondary/secondary education
- All youth and adults, particularly girls and women, have access to post-primary and post-secondary learning

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002230/223025e.pdf>

3. Glossary of curriculum terminology

UNESCO, September 2013

The curriculum is increasingly viewed as laying the foundation for comprehensive educational reforms aimed at achieving quality learning outcomes. Contemporary curriculum development processes more frequently involve public discussion and consultation with a range of stakeholders.

The curriculum-related terminology is frequently used interchangeably which may generate confusion and misinterpretation. For this reason the IBE (International Bureau of Education) developed this Glossary.

The main purpose of the Glossary is not to establish standard universally applicable definitions. It is intended to be a working reference tool that can be used in a range of activities and help to stimulate

reflection among all those involved in curriculum development initiatives. The glossary is also very useful in helping curriculum developers and educational stakeholders have a common understanding of terms that are often used in curriculum development, implementation and assessment but with varied meanings.

The Glossary is available online and it will continue to be revised based on feedback from specialist and users.

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002230/223059e.pdf>

4. Education transforms lives

UNESCO, 2013

Education has a unique power to act as a catalyst for wider development goals. Therefore all children and young people- regardless of their family income, where they live, their gender, their ethnicity, whether they are disabled-should benefit equally from this power. To unlock the benefits of education, all children need the chance to complete not only primary school but also lower secondary school. Moreover, education needs to be of good quality so that children actually learn. Given education's transformative power, it needs to be a central part of any post-2015 global development framework.

The transformative power of education works in the following fields:

- It increases women's and men's job opportunities
- More equal education leads to faster growth
- It reduces child marriages and reduces early births
- Mother's education saves children's lives
- Education saves mother's lives
- Maternal education improves child nutrition
- Educated people are more tolerant and more concerned about their environment

Download [the full booklet](#) of infographics showing 'Education Transforms'