Main Policy Lines in Education and Training

(September 2015 – February 2016)

European Union

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1. **European Union**

# Institutional context

## European Commission Work Programme 2016: ‘No time for business as usual’

27 October 2015

The working programme translates the ten priorities of this Commission into concrete proposals. The majority of the proposals is related to:

* A new boost for growth, jobs and investments
* A deeper and fairer internal market

Actions related to education and training are to be situated in first of the ten priorities (A new boost for growth, jobs and investments): The new Skills Agenda will promote lifelong investment in people from vocational education and higher education through to digital and high tech expertise and life skills need for citizens’ active engagement into changing workplaces and societies. The Agenda aims at promoting skills development including the mutual recognition of qualifications, supporting vocational training and higher education and reaping the full potential of digital jobs.

[Working programme and annexes](http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/key-documents/index_en.htm)

## The European Semester

All Member States have committed to achieving the [Europe 2020 targets](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/europe-2020-in-a-nutshell/targets/index_en.htm) and have translated them into national targets. But only if the individual efforts of all countries are coordinated and focused, can they result in the desired impact on growth. Therefore, the European Union has set up a yearly cycle of economic policy coordination called the **European Semester**. Each year, the Commission undertakes a detailed analysis of EU Member States' plans of budgetary, macroeconomic and structural reforms and provides them with recommendations for the next 12-18 months.

In [October 2015](http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/economic-monetary-union/docs/single-market-strategy/communication-emu-steps_en.pdf), the Commission decided to further streamline the European Semester.

On 26 November 2015, the European Commission published a package that launches the annual cycle of economic governance:

* The **annual growth survey** (AGS); It sets out general economic and social priorities for the EU; In the annual growth survey 2016 the Commission recommends building on the three main pillars identified last year for the EU's economic and social policy: re-launching investment, pursuing structural reforms and responsible fiscal policies.

<http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/2016/ags2016_annual_growth_survey.pdf>

* The **alert mechanism report** (AMR). The AMR aims to identify risks of imbalances that require further in-depth investigation as imbalances may hinder the performance of national economies, the euro area, or the EU as a whole.

<http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/2016/ags2016_alert_mechanism_report.pdf>

* **The draft joint report on employment.**

<http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/2016/ags2016_draft_joint_employment_report.pdf>

For the first time, the package also contains a council recommendation for the economic policy of the euro area (<http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/2016/ags2016_euro_area_recommendations.pdf> ); this is an important change in comparison with earlier semesters, when the recommendations where only published at the end of the cycle, together with the country specific recommendations.

## Presidencies of the EU

### The Luxembourg Presidency of the EU

July – December 2015

The programme of the Luxembourg Presidency was placed in the context of the implementation of the [Strategic Agenda for the Union in Times of Change](http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-79-2014-INIT/en/pdf) adopted by the European Council of 26 and 27 June 2014 and which outlines the key priorities for the European Union over the next five years. The programme takes also account of the [policy orientations of the President of the Commission](http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/docs/pg_en.pdf), the [annual work programme of the Commission](http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/pdf/cwp_2015_en.pdf) and the [work of the 'Trio'](http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%2011258%202014%20INIT) made up of Italy, Latvia and Luxembourg.

Priorities in the field of education and training:

* Early childhood education and care (language development, valorizing diversity);
* Tackle early school leaving: Council conclusions on 23 November (see 2.4)
* Inclusive education: implementation and quality;
* Joint report ET 2020 (adoption at the 23 November Council) (see 2.3)
* Youth Guarantee

[www.eu2015lu.eu](http://www.eu2015lu.eu)

### The Dutch Presidency of the EU

January – June 2016

#### The Presidency Trio

The Netherlands will work together in a trio with Slovakia and Malta. The EU Presidency Trio states in its [programme](http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-12396-2015-INIT/en/pdf) that ‘inclusive, smart and sustainable growth, jobs and competitiveness remain the top priority over the next 18 months.’

Elaborating, the programme talks about ‘creating new green jobs’ and ‘promoting a climate in which SMEs thrive’ resulting in ‘the potential for the Union to generate further growth and create jobs.’

Unemployment remains a major concern in most Member States. Therefore, ‘proposals which help tackle unemployment and which open up opportunities for European citizens will be a key priority.’ The area of youth, long-term and structural unemployment, is singled out for particular attention with the launch of new initiatives.

The three Presidencies ‘are determined to work together on the forthcoming Labour Mobility Package removing the remaining obstacles to EU mobility.’

A review of the youth guarantee implementation is among the priorities as is a proposal for a Council Recommendation on the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market.

Related priorities include investment in human capital, education and skills, performance and innovation, which are essential for a competitive knowledge-based economy, and rapid measures to modernise educational systems and facilitate training and jobs for young people as well as develop lifelong learning.

The Presidency Trio ‘will work on preserving Europe's social model in its various expressions.’ It will ‘focus on the role of inclusive high quality education for all in promoting social equity, social inclusion, citizenship and shared European values.’

A priority in this context will be the new Skills Agenda for Europe.

#### The Dutch Presidency

The Netherlands holds the Presidency of the Council of the European Union from 1 January to 30 June 2016 and has presented, together with the Slovak and Maltese Presidencies that will follow, the Council's work programme for the period to June 2017.

The Netherlands Presidency will focus on the following priorities:

1. a comprehensive approach to migration and international security;

2. Europe as an innovator and job creator;

3. sound, future-proof European finances and a robust eurozone;

4. forward-looking policy on climate and energy.

As stated on the [Netherlands Presidency’s website homepage,](http://english.eu2016.nl/) ‘it wants a Union that focuses on the essentials, creates growth and jobs through innovation, and connects with civil society.’

The European Commission announced a **new Skills Agenda** in its 2016 Work Programme (see 2.9). The new agenda, which will be discussed by this Council, will promote investment in skills development so that workers are better equipped to deal with the changing labour market and society. The Netherlands Presidency will also address the mutual recognition of qualifications, which will support vocational training and higher education and help realise the full potential of digital jobs.

Furthermore, the Netherlands Presidency will seek to encourage debate on the role of education in the **reception and integration of migrants** and the role of education and youth work in combating **youth radicalisation**. This will be coordinated with the conclusions of the Luxembourg Presidency, current developments and any Commission initiatives.

[Programme of the Netherlands EU Presidency](http://english.eu2016.nl/documents/publications/2016/01/07/programme-of-the-netherlands-presidency-of-the-council-of-the)

# Education and training

## Council meetings

### Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council November 2015

23 November 2015

At the agenda:

* The promotion of language learning and inclusion with the focus on high-quality early childhood education and care

Ministers discussed during working lunch how to foster general access and at the same time ensure high quality early childhood education and care.

* The Paris declaration

Most ministers acknowledged the importance of education in preventing exclusion and radicalisation, but several ministers pointed out that it cannot be the only answer: employment, health and cultural aspects must be addressed also. Ministers underlined the relevance of the Paris declaration of March 2015. The French delegation underlined the need to maintain the political momentum by making it a long-term commitment under Erasmus+ and in the framework of ET2020.

The Commission recalled that it had highlighted the key role of education and youth in promoting common European values in its communication on a [European Agenda for Security.](http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8293-2015-INIT/en/pdf) (5 May 2015)

* The Joint report on the implementation of ET2020

The council adopted the 2015 Joint Report (see 1.3)

* Reducing Early School Leaving

The Council adopted conclusions on reducing early school leaving and promoting success in school (see 1.4).

* Education and migration

Ministers discussed strategies for integrating recently arrived migrants and people with a migrant background. Ministers agreed to focus on the following issues: ensuring effective learning of the language(s) of the host country; speeding up assessment and validation of prior qualifications; promoting European common values systematically at all levels of education; avoiding geographical concentration of migrants; preparing teachers and trainers – but also learners and parents – for more multicultural diversity in the learning environment; increasing the exchange of best practices among member states.

[Main results of the council](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/eycs/2015/11/23-24/)

### Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council February 2016

24 February 2016

The meeting was chaired by the Minister for Education, Culture and Science of the Netherlands, Ms Jet Bussemaker. The Commission was represented by Commissioner Tibor Navracsics and Commissioner Marianne Thyssen participated in the policy debate on skills.

The Council was preceded by a working lunch during which ministers addressed the subject ‘Education and the refugee crisis’, focusing on the role of citizenship and language education.

The Council adopted a resolution on promoting socio-economic development and inclusiveness through education (see also 1.8). Tibor Navracsics underlined the fact that education is crucial not only for employability but is also one of the best means of preventing social inclusion.

Ministers discussed how to better connect education, the labour market and society, focusing on issues related to development of skills. A similar debate is foreseen at the EPSCO Council of 7 March 2016. After the EPSCO Council, both ministers will send a letter to the Commission presenting the key conclusions from both Councils. The outcome of the debates will provide input to the Commission's forthcoming communication on a new skills agenda for Europe (see 1.9).

Education ministers had an exchange of views on how to promote citizenship and fundamental values through education. This debate is a follow up to the Paris declaration, made in February 2015 in the wake of terrorist attacks. Three member states presented a concrete example of a policy or project in their country, focusing on citizenship education (Czech Republic), empowering teachers (Spain), and media literacy (France). The discussion was based on a [Presidency discussion paper.](http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-5545-2016-INIT/en/pdf)

[Main results of the Council](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/eycs/2016/02/st06361_en16_pdf/)

## Joint Report on the implementation of the Strategic Framework for European cooperation in Education and Training (ET 2020)

23 November 2015

The Council and the Commission have adopted the 2015 Joint Report under the ET2020 strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training. The report sets new priority areas and identifies concrete issues for further cooperation up to 2020. It is the outcome of the ET 2020 mid-term stocktaking combined with input from stakeholders during the Forum discussions.

For more information on the Joint Report, see the ‘Main Policy Lines’ April-September 2015.

[The Joint Report](http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13858-2015-INIT/en/pdf)

## Council Conclusions on reducing early school leaving

23 November 2015

The conclusions take stock of the progress made so far, with a view to reviewing, consolidating and improving measures. According to 2014 data, 11.1 % of 18 to 24 year olds have left education and training without completing an upper secondary programme (around 4.4 million young people). Huge discrepancies remain within and between member states and the comprehensive strategies advocated in the 2011 Council Recommendation are still lacking in many countries.

For this reason, the EU and the member states acknowledge the need to actively pursue efforts to achieve, and where possible exceed, the Europe 2020 target. The Council asks to pursue implementation of the 2011 Council Recommendation by continuing the process of developing and implementing comprehensive strategies, with a strong emphasis on prevention, and by ensuring the committed participation of and long-term cooperation between stakeholders from all relevant areas (notably education and training, employment, economic affairs, social affairs, health, housing, youth, culture and sport).

The Conclusions emphasise generalised, equitable access to affordable, high quality early childhood education and care, and collaborative (‘whole-school’) approaches to reducing early school leaving at local level.

[The Conclusions](http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13860-2015-INIT/en/pdf)

## Modernisation agenda for higher education

Consultation closes on 29 February 2015

The European Commission has started to review the EU's modernisation agenda for higher education, published in 2011, to ensure EU activities in higher education are as useful as possible.

As part of this review, the Commission has launched an online consultation to collect the views of stakeholders about the current situation in Europe's higher education systems, as well as on priorities for change. Specifically, the consultation questionnaire focuses on:

* the current strengths and weaknesses of higher education in the EU
* the priority areas where those in charge of higher education should focus their attention and
* how you think the EU should support efforts to improve higher education.

[The consultation](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/more_info/consultations/new-modernisation-agenda_en.htm)

The public online consultation will be complemented by targeted stakeholder consultations. A summary of the contributions to the online consultation will be published on the Commission's Europa website one month after the publication closes.

## ET2020 Thematic Working Group on Schools’ Policy

### A whole school approach to tackle early school leaving

November 2015

This paper presents the findings of the European Union’s ET2020 Working Group on Schools Policy (2014-2015) on its priority theme of ‘early school leaving’. Building further on the results of the Thematic Working Group on Early School Leaving, this new working group has focused on prevention and early intervention of early school leaving at the school and local level. Through the development of an online ‘European Toolkit for Schools for inclusive education and early school leaving prevention’ (available end 2015) the Working Group wants to provide concrete support to schools to prevent drop-out, respond quickly to the first signals of disengagement.

The main message is that a ‘whole school approach’ to early school leaving is needed. In this approach the entire school community (school leaders, teaching and non-teaching staff, learners, parents and families) engages in cohesive, collective and collaborative action, with strong cooperation with external stakeholders and the community at large. The key conditions for a ‘whole school approach’ have been organised around five interconnected thematic areas. Each area is further elaborated in the Toolkit:

* School governance. Competent and effective school leadership is necessary; the following aspects are essential: greater flexibility/autonomy to schools; selection, support and training for school heads; distributed leadership; whole-school improvement processes; external monitoring and assessment (quality insurance) mechanisms; networking between schools
* Learner support: engaging and stimulating curricula and effective teaching approaches; nurturing of learners’ well-being; early detection mechanisms; a systemic support framework; specific support for non-native speakers; the learners’ voice and participation in school life; career education and guidance; extra-curricular activities.
* Teachers: teachers have to understand early school leaving; teachers competences in the field of differentiation, active learning, formative assessment, more project-based and cooperative teaching and learning; support teachers to be leaders; give student teachers practical opportunities to enhance their understanding of early school leaving; develop and promote a culture of peer-to-peer learning, among teachers and with pupils; embrace diversity, attracting teacher candidates representing the whole society; and provide additional support to teachers working in schools with high early school leaving rates.
* Parents and families. Education is a shared responsibility. Effective family-school partnerships need to be based on mutual respect and acknowledgement of the expertise and assets of each; participation in school decision-making and in school life; parent access to information on the educational system and the school options; opening up and improving channels of communication; offering opportunities for parents’ education.
* Stakeholder involvement. It is important that a wide range of stakeholders are involved from the start: social workers, youth services, outreach care workers, psychologists, nurses, therapists, child protect services, guidance specialists, police, unions, business, intercultural mediators, migrants associations, NGOs from sport, culture and active citizenship sectors, …. There must be political support to promote cooperation and strong leadership to steer the process. A common action plan can help structure cooperation between stakeholders.

[The policy messages](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/expert-groups/documents/early-leaving-policy_en.pdf)

### Shaping career-long perspectives on teaching. A guide on policies to improve initial teacher education.

November 2015

The guide presents the findings of the European Union’s ET2020 Working Group on Schools Policy (2014-2015) on its priority theme ‘Initial Teacher Education.’

The Working Group started from a consensus on the urgent need to improve initial teacher education (ITE). Starting from u set of agreed principles, the guide outlines a number of targeted policy actions in three fields:

* The continuum. Initial teacher education needs to be considered as the first part of a longer and dynamic process, not as a stand-alone and complete phase. Its success will depend on mechanisms allowing for interaction with later stages of teacher development and its position within broader policies affection schools and teachers.
* Collaborative learning. A significant share of teachers have never experienced collaborative learning; promoting it entails changes in practice, mind-set and the development of new work cultures and environments.
* Governance. Initial teacher education is defined by its institutional framework, setting out the degree of providers’ autonomy, and the extent to which it is subject to governmental influence. The role of stakeholders varies between countries. Nevertheless, whether a system is more or less centralized, it still can be collaborative.

[Summary of the guide](http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/reports/initial-teacher-education-sum_en.pdf)

## Erasmus+ mid-term evaluation

Expected start last quarter 2015; expected end last quarter 2017

The Erasmus+ programme (2014-2020) has integrated all previously existing programmes in the domains of education, training, youth and sport. The programme pursues its objectives through three types of actions: Key Action 1, learning mobility for individuals; Key Action 2, cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices; Key Action 3, support for policy reform.

The programme is implemented through 60 national agencies in the programme countries and through the executive agency EACEA.

This mid-term evaluation will

* assess the effectiveness of the actions to achieve the programme’s objectives and evaluate the efficiency of the programme and its EU added value.
* asses the long-term results and impact of the predecessor programmes.

Before addressing evaluation consultants, an inventory of existing knowledge on results and impact of the programme actions will be made by the Commission, in cooperation with EACEA, national agencies and national authorities.

External consultants will conduct the following tasks:

* Summary of national reports from the countries on the implementation and impact of Erasmus+ in their country (to be delivered 30 June 2017);
* Synopsis of public consultations carried out for the evaluation. (There will be an open online public consultation + targeted consultations of beneficiaries and participants of the programme and other key stakeholders (e.g. national and European policy makers, staff of national agencies …).
* Develop a problem definition for the possible successor programme.

The Commission will produce a Staff Working Document on the evaluation.

[Evaluation roadmap](http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/roadmaps/docs/2015_eac_014_evaluation_erasmus_en.pdf)

[The Erasmus+ 2014 report](http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/statistics/erasmus-plus-annual-report_en.pdf?pk_campaign=Email-Feb2016&pk_kwd=Studies1)

## Council Resolution on promoting socio-economic development and inclusiveness in the EU through education

24 February 2016 (Education, Youth, Culture and Sports Council)

This text is **the contribution of education and training to the European Semester 2016**.

It focuses on:

* ensuring effective investment in education

Targeted reforms of education systems, with a view to improving their performance in terms of learning outcomes as part of the overall efforts needed to restore jobs and sustainable growth. Since it is growth-friendly and supports both short-term recovery and long-term economic growth, investment in education and training should be prioritised both at regional, national and EU level. This need not in all cases be a matter of increasing budgets, but may instead be one of better targeting expenditure and providing the right quality-enhancing incentives.

* responding to skill gaps and anticipating skills requirements

Skills mismatches and skills gaps should be addressed as a matter of priority by both the education and the employment sectors. Amongst other things, this means that greater emphasis is needed on the development of transversal skills and that work-based learning, the anticipation of future skills requirements and education-business partnerships should be promoted.

* addressing education for citizenship and social inclusion

Education systems should seek to increase their emancipatory effect, for all regardless of socio-economic status, migrant background or gender. This means opening up education systems to respond to the increasing diversity of learners and forging links with all relevant stakeholders.

[The draft resolution](http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-5685-2016-INIT/en/pdf)

## A new Skills Agenda for Europe

### Conference: Skills for a lifetime – towards a future proof VET

16-17 February 2016, Dutch Presidency of the EU

This conference is focusing on VET that provides fundamentals for a starting position on the labour market, and is at the same time capable of responding to learning needs that may arise in a subsequent career.

The core of the conference involved demonstrating best practices and bringing together people employed in education and business. The aim of the Dutch Presidency is that the conference results in new ideas which could be input for the broader ‘Skills Agenda’ announced May 2016 and related discussions in the Council (24 February 2016).

Attention was given to the three following themes:

* Excellence in I-VET: flexible solutions in a changing labour market;
* Facilitating careers through VET: lifelong learning for lifelong employability;
* Internationalisation in VET.

[The programme](http://english.eu2016.nl/documents/publications/2016/02/16/programme-skills-for-a-lifetime-%E2%80%93-towards-a-future-proof-vet)

### Discussion during the Education, Youth, Sports and Culture Council

24 February 2016

Ministers discussed on the following statements:

* Statement 1: Curricula and teaching methods should focus on developing a broader range of skills needed for the jobs of the future and society at large;
* Statement 2: To reduce skills gaps and mismatches, education institutions should open up by actively engaging in partnerships with business and other relevant actors;
* Statement 3 Member States should step up their efforts in identifying, activating and fully utilising the skills and qualifications of present and future generations. To support national policies and cross-border mobility, better use should be made of all relevant -improved- EU instruments.

[Presidency discussion paper](http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-5745-2016-INIT/en/pdf)

# Studies, conferences and tools

## Education and Training Monitor 2015

12 November 2015

This yearly report gives a picture of trends, improvements, challenges at all stages of education in the EU. It is the starting point for assessing EU countries’ performance as a basis for the yearly country reports in the framework of the European Semester.

The Monitor shows:

* The share of pupils leaving school too early is 11,1 % (target 2020: maximum 10 %; in 2011: 13,4 %);
* The share of pupils completing tertiary education is 37,9 % (target 2020: 40 %; in 2011: 34,8 %);
* The employment rate of recent graduates is 76,1 % (target 2020: 82 %; in 2008: 82 %);
* Participation early childhood education and care is 93,3 % (target 2020: 95 %; in 2010: 92,9 %);
* Adult participation in learning is 10,7 % (target 2020: 15 %; in 2011: 8,9 %);
* Underachievement in reading is 17,8 % (target 2020: max 15 %; in 2009: 19,7 %);
* Underachievement in maths is 22,1 % (target 2020: max 15 %; in 2009: 22,3 %);
* Underachievement in science is 16,6 % (target 2020: max 15 %; in 2009: 17,8 %).

There is progress to reach most of the targets. Nonetheless, big gaps remain between and within Member States. The social divide does not disappear. And there is the refugee crisis. In this context, two central issues for the near future will be:

* Boosting investment in education and training (invest more and invest smartly);
* Promoting inclusion through education.

[The monitor](http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/et-monitor_en.htm)

The [Eurydice report](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Publications:Structural_Indicators_for_Monitoring_Education_and_Training_Systems_in_Europe_%E2%80%93_2015) ‘Structural indicators for monitoring education and training systems in Europe 2015’, also published on 12 November 2015, provides background and complementary information to the Education and Training Monitor 2015; it includes detailed information on each structural indicator for the reference year 2014-2015.

## Civil Society Day on the follow-up of the Paris Declaration

15 December 2015

The European Commission DG EAC and the Lifelong Learning Platform (EUCIS-LLL) organised a Civil Society Day focused on the follow-up of the Paris Declaration. After the Education, Training and Youth Forum organised in October this year, this meeting aimed for a more in-depth debate with civil society organisations around the place and role of education in promoting equity, non-discrimination, fundamental values, intercultural competences and active citizenship.

Participants were invited to discuss two strategic questions: what are the main concerns and challenges ahead and what policies and actions are needed from the EU level? They shared the view that many local, regional, national and European initiatives are taking place all over Europe. Key success factors include working in partnership and ensuring a strong political commitment to address some of these issues (e.g. outreach strategies, charters and codes of conduct). The challenge is then to mainstream and upscale good initiatives, address existing gaps with adequate measures and funding as well as ensure greater policy coherence. More awareness is needed on the role of education to foster inclusion and active citizenship.

The results of these discussions will feed in the work of DG EAC related to the follow up of the Paris Declaration as well as of the related priorities of the ET 2020 Joint Report adopted by the Council on 23 November 2015.

[Civil Society Day Policy Recommendations](http://www.eucis-lll.eu/eucis-lll/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Civil-Society-Day-Policy-Recommendations-6Jan15.pdf)

## EU Skills Panorama

Official launch of the new website, 1 December 2015

Skills Panorama helps to keep up with the latest developments in labour markets and skills needs and make useful comparisons to previous trends or identify anticipated changes. Skills Panorama aims to improve Europe’s capacity to assess and anticipate skill needs to help make education and training systems more responsive to labour market needs and to match better skill supply and demand across Europe.

Skills Panorama is a tool by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion and powered by Cedefop, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training. The European Commission ensures the strategic steering to the Skills Panorama, in line with EU policy objectives while Cedefop is responsible for the technical development of the site and the provision of data and information.

The new website will provide a more comprehensive and user-friendly central access point for information and intelligence on skill needs in occupations and sectors across Europe.

<http://skillspanorama.cedefop.europa.eu/en>

## Internationalisation of higher education

European Parliament, Committee on Culture and Education, July 2015

The study is based on two surveys, an analysis of the role of digital learning and ten national reports from Europe and seven from outside Europe. The study results in conclusions and recommendations on the future of internationalisation of Higher Education in Europe.

Recommendations on the internationalisation of higher education (IoHE) for all policy levels:

* Address the challenges of credit and degree mobility imbalances and institutional

cooperation, stemming from substantial differences in higher education systems,

procedures and funding;

* Recognise the growing popularity of work placements and build options to combine

them with language and cultural skills training and study abroad;

* Support the important role of academic and administrative staff in the further

development of IoHE;

* Foster greater higher education and industry collaboration in the context of mobility

of students and staff;

* Pay more attention to the importance of ‘Internationalisation at home’, integrating

international and intercultural learning outcomes into the curriculum for all students;

* Remove the barriers that impede the development of joint degrees;
* Develop innovative models of digital and blended learning as an instrument to

complement IoHE;

* Align IoHE with internationalisation at other levels of education (primary, secondary,

vocational and adult education);

* Stimulate bilingual and multilingual learning at the primary and secondary education

level as a basis for a language policy based on diversity;

* Remove barriers between internationalisation of research and education, at all

levels, for greater synergy and opportunity;

[The study](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/540370/IPOL_STU(2015)540370_EN.pdf)

## Languages in secondary education

Eurydice, 25 September 2015

The main objective of this report is provide a clear understanding of the current national testing regimes for languages in European countries.

The linguistic and cultural diversity in Europe calls for the promotion of language learning at school At European level, the learning of foreign languages at school is recognised as crucially important and is strongly encouraged. The results of the first European Commission survey on language competences published in 2012 showed great variety in language proficiency across Europe, and pinpointed the need to sustain efforts in promoting and improving the teaching and learning of languages at school. It is therefore essential that national authorities in Europe continue their efforts to improve the teaching and learning of languages. Moreover, as stressed by the Council of the European Union in the Conclusions on multilingualism and the development of language competences in 2014, the assessment of language competences is a key factor in the effective teaching and learning of languages at school. In this context, the European Commission asked Eurydice to provide a Europe-wide comparative overview of the national tests for assessing the language competences of secondary school students. The current report covers the 28 EU Member States as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Turkey, Montenegro and Serbia. The reference year is 2014/15.

[The report](http://bookshop.europa.eu/is-bin/INTERSHOP.enfinity/WFS/EU-Bookshop-Site/en_GB/-/EUR/ViewPublication-Start?PublicationKey=EC0115598)

## Teachers' and School Heads' Salaries and Allowances in Europe – 2014/15

Eurydice, 5 October 2015

This annual report provides a comparative analysis on teachers' and school heads' statutory salaries and allowances in Europe for 2014/15. It also includes individual country sheets with detailed information on issues such as annual gross salaries, salary progression and available allowances.

One of the main findings of this publication is that, following several years of stagnation due to the economic crisis – or even significant decreases in some countries – teachers' salaries have started to increase again in the majority of European countries in 2014/15.

[The report](http://bookshop.europa.eu/is-bin/INTERSHOP.enfinity/WFS/EU-Bookshop-Site/en_GB/-/EUR/ViewPublication-Start?PublicationKey=ECAM15002)

## National student fee and support systems in European higher education 2015/16

Eurydice, 21 October 2015

This annual report shows how fee and support systems (including grants and loans) work in higher education in Europe. In particular, the publication describes the range of fees charged to students and specifies which categories of students are required to pay, and which may be exempt. Similarly it explains the levels of public support available in the form of grants and loans, as well as tax benefits and family allowances where applicable.

The report focuses on fees and support in public or government-dependent private higher education institutions for the first (Bachelor level) and second (Master level) cycles and does not cover private higher education institutions.

[The report](http://bookshop.europa.eu/is-bin/INTERSHOP.enfinity/WFS/EU-Bookshop-Site/en_GB/-/EUR/ViewPublication-Start?PublicationKey=ECAE16001)

## The Structure of the European Education Systems 2015-2016: Schematic Diagrams

Eurydice, Facts and Figures, 23 November 2015

This report provides an overview of the structure of education systems in Europe from pre-primary to tertiary level for 2015/2016; 42 education systems are represented. Diagrams show how the national education system is organised.

[The diagrams](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/images/0/05/192EN.pdf)

## National sheets on education budgets in Europe 2015

Eurydice, 7 January 2016-01-11

The report provides the most recent data on planned education budgets by country and makes it possible to identify changes in education budgets within a country between 2014 and 2015. National education budgets are presented by type of expenditure and education level.

[The report](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/images/8/8f/194EN.pdf)

## European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning

Cedefop, 11 February 2016

The second edition of the guidelines is now available. The guidelines are targeted at individuals and institutions responsible for initiating, developing, setting up and operating validation arrangements. These arrangements will enable individuals to increase visibility and value of their knowledge, skills and competences acquired outside formal education and training: at work, at home or in voluntary activities.

This publication is the result of a cooperation between the European Commission and Cedefop in consultation with the Member States. The guidelines complement the European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning compiled by Cedefop and the European Commission with Member States.

[The guidelines](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/3073)

## Entrepreneurship education at school in Europe

Eurydice, 22 February 2016

This report is a new analysis, after the 2012 Eurydice report on entrepreneurship education. It provides updated and more detailed information on strategies, curricula and learning outcomes; it covers new themes such as funding and teacher education.

In the context of the report, entrepreneurship education is defined as being about learners developing the skills and mind-set to be able to turn creative ideas into entrepreneurial action. This is a key competence for all learners, supporting personal development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employability

Countries are at various stages in developing policies on entrepreneurship education. Specific entrepreneurship education strategies are concentrated in northern Europe and the western Balkan region. Employability is a common objective across all entrepreneurship education strategies.

However, learning outcomes linked to entrepreneurship education remain fragmented and are not yet a strategy priority; and stable and comprehensive funding streams still need to be developed across Europe.

Over half of the countries have very few or no guidelines on teaching methods for entrepreneurship education; entrepreneurship education is rarely addressed in initial teacher education but is more common in continuing professional development.

[The report and highlights](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Publications:Entrepreneurship_Education_at_School_in_Europe_-_2016_Edition)

# Developments in other policy fields

## EU Youth Report

15 September 2015

This report presents a picture of the situation of young people in Europe and how policymakers addressed it in 2013-2015. The Joint report is prepared by the Commission and adopted by the Council.

The report evaluates progress towards the objectives of the [EU Youth Strategy](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52009DC0200&from=EN) (2010-2018), as well as priorities defined for the latest work cycle. It identifies good practices and serves as a basis for establishing priorities for the next work cycle.

The EU Youth Report reveals that generally young people are better educated than their predecessors and less young people drop out of school in the EU. Yet, 8.7 million young people aged 15-29 are unemployed, 13.7 million are not in employment, education or training (NEETs) and close to 27 million are at risk of poverty or exclusion. Since 2013, the EU and Member States have taken action to support young people, particularly to help them find a job. This requires more systematic cooperation across policies and actors under a comprehensive approach that reflects the scale of the challenge ahead. There is a particular need to reinforce links with sports and education in order to increase social inclusion and increase youth competences and employability. It is thereby essential to give young people a strong political voice in the process.

[The EU Youth Report](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/implementation/report_en.htm)

During the Education, Training, Culture and Youth Council on 23 November 2015, the Council adopted a Resolution on a new Work Plan for Youth (2016-2018); it is an operational plan with a precise timetable to enable the EU and its member states to continue to tackle high youth unemployment rates and the consequences of the economic crisis for young people. It sets out six priorities:

* Social inclusion of all young people;
* Participation of all young people in democratic and civic life;
* Transition of young people from youth to adulthood;
* Support for young people’s health and well-being;
* Addressing challenges and opportunities of the digital era for youth policy;
* Responses to the opportunities and challenges presented by the increasing number of young migrants and refugees in the EU.

[The resolution](http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13631-2015-INIT/en/pdf)

## Employment and Social Developments in Europe

21 January 2016, European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

The ESDE review provides an overview of the most recent developments, trends and challenges in the employment and social fields, followed by an in-depth look into several themes linked to the Commission’s current social and employment policy agenda.

Given the increased attention for skills, this review has more and more links with education and training. Education and training are mostly addressed in the second (‘Improving labour markets’ efficiency’) and third (‘Removing obstacles to job creation) part of the review.

* Improving labour market’s efficiency:

Low participation in lifelong learning and training especially affects low-skilled; whilst analysis shows that long-term unemployed who have participated in training or education (and have previous work experience) are far more likely to move to a sustainable job, especially among the low-skilled.

It also appears that, despite recent progress, a large portion of third-country migrants have low levels of education. Analysis also shows that the share of third-country migrants with at least upper secondary education who work in low-skilled occupations (‘brain waste’ or ‘over-qualification’) is significantly higher than that of the native population.

* Removing obstacles to job creation:

Four out of ten EU employers surveyed in 2013 reported difficulties in finding staff with the right skills.

Adults’ current skills are largely determined by the education and training opportunities available in youth, through initial education and training. Work-based learning programmes provide young people with work experience and a mix of job-specific and transversal skills. Improving the quality and relevance of VET systems is also a key prerequisite for enhancing the attractiveness of apprenticeship and vocational tracks.

Nevertheless, the rapidly changing needs of the labour market require continuous updating of skills and knowledge.

Adult learning and professional learning plays an important role in ensuring that skills are updated. An average of 10,7 % of adults aged 25-64 in the EU stated that they attended some education or training in the four weeks prior to the interview. This is far from reaching the 2020 target of 15 %. In case of low-skilled adults the average is under 4 %. In total, only 40 % of adults participate in education annually (in the US, it was close to 60 % in 2012).

Employers can play a role in reducing skills shortages, including through upgrading the skills of their staff. It appears that training opportunities depend on the size of the company (large companies provide fare more training opportunities than small companies).

* Conclusions

Well designed, efficient and accessible education systems and training schemes, with strong links to the labour market, are crucial for building up and maintaining the required level of skills in the labour force. When it comes to education and training of adults, particular attention should be devoted to the workers currently disadvantaged on the labour market (low-skilled, unemployed and inactive). Job-oriented training appears essential for assuring a transition from school into the labour market.

Employers could be encouraged to engage in continuous improvement of their staff’s skills. In addition, motivation by workers themselves to upgrade their skills is necessary.

Finally, there is a particular role for Europe with regard to transnational skills recognition.

[The review](http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=7859&furtherPubs=yes)