OUTCOME OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

3693rd Council meeting

Education, Youth, Culture and Sport

Brussels, 22 May 2019

Presidents

Constantin-Bogdan Matei
Minister for youth and sports of Romania

Ecaterina Andronescu
Minister for national education of Romania
CONTENTS¹

ITEMS DEBATED

YOUTH ................................................................................................................................................. 4

Young people and the future of work ................................................................................................. 4

Guidelines on the governance of the EU Youth Dialogue .................................................................. 5

Young people as agents of democracy in the EU .............................................................................. 6

EDUCATION ........................................................................................................................................... 7

Comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages .............................................. 7

High quality early childhood education and care systems ................................................................. 8

Implementation of the Council recommendation on upskilling pathways: new opportunities for adults .......................................................... 8

Building the future of Europe: the contribution of education and training to strengthening social cohesion ........................................................................................................................................ 9

OTHER BUSINESS ............................................................................................................................... 11

World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth and the Youth Forum “Lisboa +21” – Lisbon, 22-23 June 2019 ............................................................................................................................... 11

DiscoverEU .......................................................................................................................................... 11

WorldSkills Competition 2023 ............................................................................................................. 11

Education Summit .............................................................................................................................. 11

Education and combatting antisemitism .............................................................................................. 11

Work programme of the incoming Finnish presidency ......................................................................... 12

¹ Where declarations, conclusions or resolutions have been formally adopted by the Council, this is indicated in the heading for the item concerned and the text is placed between quotation marks.

• Documents for which references are given in the text are available on the Council's internet site (http://www.consilium.europa.eu).

• Acts adopted with statements for the Council minutes which may be released to the public are indicated by an asterisk; these statements are available on the Council's internet site or may be obtained from the Press Office.
OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

GENERAL AFFAIRS

- Public access to Council documents - 2018 report

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

- EUCAP Sahel Niger
- ACP-EU Council of Ministers draft agenda
- ACP-EU Relations - delegation of powers

RESEARCH

- Renewal of the agreement on cooperation in science and technology with Russia

TRANSPORT

- Aerodynamic lorry cabs

ENERGY

- Clean Energy package

TRANSPARENCY

- Public access to documents
ITEMS DEBATED

YOUTH

Young people and the future of work

The Council adopted conclusions on young people and the future of work. (8754/19) Employment has been recognised as one of the major challenges within the EU, but also worldwide, in particular for young people. They are extremely vulnerable to fluctuations in economic trends, especially at a time where the traditional notions of ‘work’ are being seriously challenged and reconceptualised.

In a specific youth context, the ‘the future of work’, as a general term describing the evolution of jobs in the medium-to-long term, is driven by demographic change and increased social expenditure due to an ageing population, the increased use of digital technologies and growing demand for higher skills, the need for higher levels of education and training and new forms of employment.

Youth employment has been high on the social policy agenda of the EU and the conclusions focus on the specific problems facing young people in the current labour environment:

– insecurity
– lack of social protection
– in-work poverty
– precarious working conditions

The conclusions propose a number of measures to address those problems:

– adaptable and responsive education and training systems
– promotion of lifelong learning
– ensuring smooth school-to-work and work-to-work transitions
– ensuring equal access to quality jobs for all young people in the future

The conclusions also recognise that the European Union should support young people’s personal development and growth to autonomy, build their resilience and equip them with the necessary resources to participate in society, thus contributing to the eradication of youth poverty and all forms of discrimination, as well as to the promotion of social inclusion.
Guidelines on the governance of the EU Youth Dialogue

The Council also adopted a resolution establishing guidelines on the governance of the EU Youth Dialogue. (8760/19) 'EU Youth Dialogue' (EUYD) means the dialogue with young people and youth organisations involving policy and decision makers, as well as experts, researchers and other relevant civil society actors, as appropriate. It serves as a forum for continuous joint reflection and consultation on the priorities, implementation and follow-up of the European cooperation in the field of youth. The EUYD is the evolution of the Structured Dialogue process that had been established by the resolution on a renewed cooperation framework in the youth field (2010-2018).

The EUYD's inception took place in the context of the preparations of the EU Youth Strategy (EUYS) 2019-2027, adopted in November 2018. The Youth Dialogue should contribute to the overall objectives of the EUYS through:

– encouraging the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe

– promoting equal participation between young women and men

– including diverse voices and to ensure openness to all young people to contribute to policy-shaping

– bringing about positive change in youth policy at local, regional, national and European level

– strengthening young people's' citizenship competencies and sense of belonging to the society and the European Union
Young people as agents of democracy in the EU

Ministers held a policy debate entitled 'Young people as agents of democracy in the EU', based on a presidency discussion paper. (8763/19) The debate was kick-started by two Romanian students. Their interventions focused on the message that the good functioning of the European project depended on young people's involvement in the present and future decision-making process.

Ministers were invited to present their views on the following questions:

1. What can Member States and EU institutions do to respond to the challenges highlighted in this paper, with a view to fostering young people’s commitment to democratic principles?

2. Considering the strengths, interests and profile of today’s young generations, what measures would be most effective in increasing their participation in the democratic life of the EU and its Member States?

Ministers exchanged examples of best practices on how to involve young people in policy-making and how to mobilise them to participate in elections. Strengthening the role of NGO’s and further involvement of social media in policy-making were identified among the possible ways to achieve these goals. Ministers also stressed the importance of education in developing and fostering critical thinking. It was highlighted that young people had to be better informed that participating in elections would have an impact on their lives. They would only engage when they can feel that their concerns are taken on board by decision-makers.

The debate took place ahead of the European elections, but also in the context of a number of elections taking place in 2019 in different EU Member States at national, regional and municipal levels. Against this background the issue of young people's involvement in politics and democratic processes is both crucial and very timely. There are recent signs that young Europeans are increasingly interested in public affairs, politics and democracy. The results of a Eurobarometer survey, released on 30 April 2019, show that 72% of young people interviewed say that, from the moment they were allowed to participate in elections until today, they voted in local, national, or European elections. The survey addressed around 11,000 young people aged between 15 and 30 years old in March 2019.
EDUCATION

Comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages

Ministers adopted a recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages. (8638/19) The aim of the recommendation is to explore ways to help all young people to acquire competences in two other languages in addition to their mother tongue/first language. The promotion of language learning has been a long-time target of the EU. In March 2002 the Barcelona European Council noted the need for further action 'to improve the mastery of basic skills, in particular by teaching of at least two foreign languages from a very early age'. The heads of state or government reiterated in their conclusions of 14 December 2017 the ambition of 'enhancing the learning of languages, so that more young people will speak at least two European languages in addition to their mother tongue'.

Against this background, the recommendation addresses:

– the need to invest in language learning by focussing on learning outcomes

– options to improve language learning in compulsory education by increasing language-awareness in school education

Education was chosen as the first topic for the Leaders’ Agenda for the Gothenburg Summit in November 2017. In December 2017 the European Council called on Member States, the Council and the Commission to take work forward on a number of key initiatives, including language learning, which is a key to facilitating learning mobility in Europe.

The Commission submitted its proposal on 22 May 2018 as part of the so-called second education package, consisting of a communication and proposals for Council recommendations on language learning, mutual recognition of diplomas and early childhood education and care.
High quality early childhood education and care systems

Ministers adopted a Council recommendation on high quality early childhood education and care systems. (7976/19) Definition of early years is usually from birth to the age of 6. The aim of the recommendation is to support Member States in their efforts to improve access to and quality of their early childhood education and care systems, whilst recognising that Member States are primarily responsible in this area. It states that investing in early childhood education and care is a good investment only if the services are of high quality, accessible, affordable and inclusive. It also refers to evidence that only high-quality early childhood education and care services deliver benefits and that low quality services have significant negative impact on children and on society as a whole.

The importance of early childhood education and care has been widely recognised. The European Pillar of Social Rights calls for access to affordable and good quality early childhood education and care and the UN Sustainable Development Goal 4.2 foresees that all girls and boys should have access to quality early childhood development care and pre-primary education by 2030.

Along with the recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages and a recommendation on the mutual recognition of diplomas, the recommendation on high quality early childhood education and care systems is part of the Commission's second education package presented on 22 May 2018.

Implementation of the Council recommendation on upskilling pathways: new opportunities for adults

The Council also adopted conclusions on the implementation of the Council recommendation on upskilling pathways: new opportunities for adults. (8639/19)

In November 2016 the Council adopted a recommendation on upskilling pathways, which was part of the wider 'Skills package' published by the European Commission in June 2016. The recommendation called for a strategic and coordinated approach to provide learning opportunities to the Union's low-skilled and low-qualified adults in order to enhance their basic skills or to allow them to progress towards higher qualifications. The recommendation also called on member states to inform on the implementation measures at national level and on the Commission to issue a report on the implementation. The conclusions are a response to the Commission's report, presented to the Council's Education committee in March 2019.
The conclusions recognise the progress achieved at national level and call on the member states, among others, to:

– put in place sustainable long-term measures for adult upskilling and reskilling

– adopt a coherent strategic approach to basic skills provision for low-skilled and/or low-qualified adults

– raise employers’– especially SMEs’– awareness of the importance of upskilling and reskilling and of available support mechanisms for adult skills development

**Building the future of Europe: the contribution of education and training to strengthening social cohesion**

Based on a presidency discussion paper, ministers held a policy debate, entitled 'Building the future of Europe: the contribution of education and training to strengthening social cohesion'. (8653/19)

The presidency put to ministers the following questions:

1. Which are the necessary next steps in European cooperation in education and training in order to achieve the objective of creating the European Education Area by 2025?

2. What are the most successful projects or practices in your country promoting a learning culture based on common values and strengthening social cohesion? How can cooperation in education and training at European level strengthen such a learning culture between learners of all ages?

The aim of the debate was to reflect on the concrete future steps for the development of the European Education Area by 2025, in particular with respect to strengthening social cohesion.

Before the start of the discussions, a 16-year-old student from Romania briefly addressed ministers on the role of young people in decision-making, highlighting the message: 'We all have the right to participate!'
During the debate ministers agreed on the importance of building a well-functioning European education area and making the Erasmus+ program more effective. It was highlighted that young people needed to acquire the widest possible range of basic skills so as to be prepared for professions which will emerge in the near future. Lifelong learning was also identified as a way to equip people to face the fast-changing nature of the labour market. In the area of European cooperation, the importance of mutual recognition of diplomas across the EU was also highlighted.

The first leaders discussion in the process towards the European education area, held at the Social Summit in Gothenburg, Sweden, on 14 November 2017, was devoted to the role of education and culture. On that occasion, the Commission presented a vision for a European Education Area by 2025. In this context, the European Council conclusions of 14 December 2017 recognised education and culture as “key to building inclusive and cohesive societies, and to sustaining our competitiveness.” At the same time, the European Council called for the Commission, the Council and the member states to examine possible measures addressing “the need for an inclusive, lifelong-learning-based and innovation-driven
OTHER BUSINESS

World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth and the Youth Forum “Lisboa +21” – Lisbon, 22-23 June 2019

The Portuguese delegation briefed ministers ahead of a conference, which will take place in Lisbon on 22-23 June 2019. (8825/19)

DiscoverEU

The European Commission presented a report on the first results of the ‘DiscoverEU’ initiative. The Commission also gave an overview of the next rounds of this European Parliament Preparatory Action in 2019, as well as the proposed integration of DiscoverEU into the new Erasmus programme as of 2021. (8819/19)

WorldSkills Competition 2023

The French delegation presented France’s bid to host the WorldSkills Competition in 2023 in the city of Lyon. (8771/19)

Education Summit

The Commission informed ministers about the second Education Summit, which will take place in September in Brussels, focusing on the essential role of teachers in ensuring high quality and inclusive education in the European Education Area. (9120/19)

Education and combating antisemitism

The Commission informed ministers about two projects in the area of the fight against antisemitism. (9384/19)
Work programme of the incoming Finnish presidency

The Finnish delegation presented the priorities of the incoming Finnish presidency in the areas of youth and education.

In the area of youth the Finnish priorities are the following:

– advancing European Solidarity Corps negotiations

– enhancing the development of youth work and its quality

– promoting the education and training of paid and voluntary youth workers

– increasing the holistic understanding of and strategic approach to the use of digital media and technology in youth work.

In the area of education the Finnish delegation presented the following priorities:

– advancing Erasmus+ negotiations

– fostering continuous learning

– promoting future-oriented learning

– promoting investment in human capital

– strengthening equity, equality and effectiveness

– enhancing cooperation between education and research
OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

GENERAL AFFAIRS

Public access to Council documents - 2018 report

The Council approved its annual report on the implementation of Regulation 1049/2001 regarding public access to documents.

For more information, see the press release.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

EUCAP Sahel Niger

The Council modified the mandate of EUCAP Sahel Niger to extend the area of operations to other G5 Sahel countries in the context of the second phase of the regionalisation of the EU’s CSDP activities in the Sahel.

Regionalisation is intended to strengthen civilian and military support to cross border cooperation and regional cooperation structures, and to reinforce capacity and ownership of the G5 Sahel countries to address challenges in the region.

The Regional Advisory and Coordination Cell established within EUCAP Sahel Mali will support EUCAP Sahel Niger.

EUCAP Sahel Niger was established on 16 July 2012, and was last extended on 18 September 2018 with a budget amount until 30 September 2020.

The first phase of the regionalisation was agreed by the Council on 20 June 2017, which reiterated the importance of regionalisation in its conclusions of 25 June 2018.

On 18 February 2019, the Council approved a joint civil-military framework for regionalisation of CSDP action in the Sahel.

EUCAP Sahel Niger (website)
ACP-EU Council of Ministers draft agenda

The Council agreed on the draft agenda for the 44th session of the ACP-EU Council of Ministers.

The ACP-EU Committee of Ambassadors agreed on the draft agenda on 12 April.

The meeting will take place in Brussels on 23-24 May, and will be co-chaired by Mr. Tjekero Tweya, Minister of Industrialisation, Trade, and SME Development of Namibia, and Ms. Maria Magdalena Grigore, Secretary of State of Romania.

ACP-EU Relations - delegation of powers

The Council approved the delegation of powers from the ACP-EU Council of Ministers to the ACP-EU Committee of Ambassadors, concerning the adoption of transitional measures until a new ACP-EU Partnership Agreement comes into force.

Negotiations towards a new ACP-EU Partnership Agreement were launched in September 2018. In case a new agreement is not reached by the expiry date of the current legal framework, it will be necessary to adopt transitional measures.

The ACP-EU Partnership agreement, in Article 95(4) provides for the Council of Ministers to adopt any transitional measures that may be required until an agreement enters into force. Furthermore, Article 15(4) allows for the Council of Minister to delegate such powers to the Committee of Ambassadors.

As transitional measures have not been agreed in time for the yearly ordinary meeting of the ACP-EU Council of ministers, it is necessary that the decision to adopt transitional measures be delegated to the Committee of Ambassadors.

RESEARCH

Renewal of the agreement on cooperation in science and technology with Russia

The Council decided to renew the agreement on cooperation in science and technology between the European Community and the Government of the Russian Federation for an additional period of five years. (7683/19)
**TRANSPORT**

**Aerodynamic lorry cabs**

The Council adopted a decision amending the directive on maximum weights and dimensions for certain road vehicles. (8745/19; PE-CONS 40/19) The amendment concerns the time limit for the implementation of the special rules regarding maximum length for cabs delivering improved aerodynamic performance, energy efficiency and safety performance.

Germany abstained.

For more information, see the press release.

**ENERGY**

**Clean Energy package**

The Council adopted a regulation on risk-preparedness in the electricity sector following a first-reading agreement with the European Parliament. (8736/19, PE-CONS 73/18)

The Council adopted a regulation establishing a European Union Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (recast) following a first-reading agreement with the European Parliament. Germany abstained and submitted a statement. (8739/19 REV1 + ADD1, PE-CONS 83/18)

The Council adopted a regulation on the internal market for electricity (recast) following a first-reading agreement with the European Parliament. Bulgaria, Czechia and Slovakia abstained. The Commission, Greece and Croatia submitted statements. (8737/19 + ADD1 REV1, PE-CONS 9/19)

The Council adopted a directive on the internal market for electricity (recast) following a first-reading agreement with the European Parliament. The Commission submitted two statements. (8735/19 + ADD 1 + ADD1 COR1, PE-CONS 10/19)

For more information, see the press release.
TRANSPARENCY

Public access to documents

On 22 May 2019, the Council approved the replies to confirmatory applications

– No 10/c/01/19 (doc. 8287/19)

– No 11/c/01/19 (doc. 8290/19 REV1)