



**Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council**  
**Brussels, 8 November 2019**

The Council meeting on 8 November 2019 will begin at **9.30** with a joint public debate of ministers of finance and education on ways to achieve **effectiveness, efficiency and quality of education and training for a stronger European economy**. The discussion will be chaired by the Minister of Finance of Finland **Mika Lintilä**, with the Minister of Education of Finland **Li Andersson** providing an introductory statement. The European Commission will be represented by Commission Vice-President **Valdis Dombrovskis** and Commissioner **Tibor Navracsics**.

Education ministers will then hold a lunch debate on **early childhood education and care**.

The afternoon session will only deal with education issues. It will begin at **15.00** and it will be chaired by Minister of Education of Finland **Li Andersson**. Ministers are expected to adopt conclusions on the **key role of lifelong learning policies** at a time of technological and green transition. They will also adopt a resolution on **further developing the European Education Area** and hold a public debate on **artificial intelligence in education and training**.

A press conference with ministers **Mika Lintilä** and **Li Andersson**, Commission Vice-President **Valdis Dombrovskis** and Commissioner **Tibor Navracsics** will be held at **12.10** (tbc).

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*Press conferences and public events by video streaming:* <http://video.consilium.europa.eu>

*Video coverage in broadcast quality (MPEG4) and photo gallery:* <http://nwsr.eu/p/214667>

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<sup>1</sup> This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office.

## **A strong economic base for Europe: pursuing effectiveness, efficiency and quality in education and training - public policy debate**

Based on a presidency discussion paper ([13295/19](#)), ministers of finance and education will hold a public debate on the above topic with the aim at:

- exchanging views on the role of education and training in achieving long-term sustainable growth
- sharing experiences and practices in promoting quality, efficiency and effectiveness of education and training

The importance of education and training, and human capital has been widely recognised at EU level. Education and training have already been part of the Europe 2020 strategy and the role of education, skills and lifelong learning has been highlighted in the 2019 Country Specific Recommendations (CSR's). The European Council's Strategic Agenda for 2019 - 2024 emphasises the importance of education and training for both the economy and the society and calls for investment in people's skills and education to be stepped up.

Figures show that high quality education and training bring benefits to both individuals and the society. The employment rate of adults with a university degree is about 9 percent higher than for those with upper secondary education only. A well-educated workforce contributes to boost productivity and growth, increasing the standard of living for all.

The education system in Europe is funded mostly by public money which often raises the question about the efficiency and the effectiveness of the spending. These are assessed against the attainment, quality and inclusiveness of education and training. The EU average educational attainment in the EU in the age group 30-34 increased from 31% in 2008 to 41% in 2018, whereas, in terms of quality EU scores in the PISA assessment at the average level.

Against this background, ministers will be invited to have an exchange of views based on the following questions:

- Which challenges are the most pressing for your country when it comes to the efficiency and effectiveness of education and training?
- Which policies do you see as most promising when promoting efficiency, effectiveness, inclusiveness and equality in education and training?
- How can high-quality learning outcomes, high levels of educational attainment and equality be achieved simultaneously?
- What could be the role of European cooperation in promoting efficiency, effectiveness and high quality of education and training, and how could European societies anticipate future upskilling and reskilling needs?

## **Conclusions on the key role of lifelong learning policies**

Ministers are expected to adopt conclusions on the key role of lifelong learning policies in empowering societies to address the technological and green transition in support of inclusive and sustainable growth ([13282/19](#)).

The lifelong aspect of learning has been regularly highlighted in recent years. The Council has adopted important recommendations in this area, such as the Recommendation focusing on 'High-quality early childhood education and care' and the Recommendation on 'Upskilling pathways'. The New Strategic Agenda 2019-2024 adopted by the European Council recognises the need to step up investment in people's skills and education in support of long-term and sustainable growth.

The conclusions highlight that investing in basic skills and key competences is more relevant than ever and that lifelong learning is a crucial factor for the participation of the elderly in social and economic life.

The conclusions invite member states to develop strategies to boost lifelong learning policies and to recognise the potential of lifelong learning in support of inclusive and sustainable growth. The text also calls on the Commission and member states to support initiatives that facilitate investment in lifelong learning.

## **Resolution on further developing the European Education Area to support future-oriented education and training systems**

Ministers are expected to adopt a resolution on further developing the European Education Area ([13298/19](#)). The resolution deals with the role of future-oriented education and training systems in the context of the ongoing discussions on the future of Europe as well as in the implementation of the New Strategic Agenda 2019-2024 adopted by the European Council in June 2019. It invites the Commission, when further developing the European Education Area, to recall and take into account the ambition to underpin the area by lifelong learning, stretching from early childhood education and care to continuous adult learning. The resolution also invites member states and the Commission to further develop European cooperation on education at all levels of education and training and invites them to further develop and raise awareness of the European Universities initiative.

The idea for a European Education Area was first brought forward at the Gothenburg Social Summit in November 2017 where EU heads of states and governments underlined the role of education and training for boosting competitiveness, growth, employability and social inclusion. Among the most notable initiatives to achieve this goal is 'the emergence by 2024 of some twenty 'European Universities', consisting in bottom-up networks of universities across the EU which will

enable students to obtain a degree by combining studies in several EU countries and contribute to the international competitiveness of European universities<sup>2</sup>.

### **Artificial intelligence in education and training - public debate**

Ministers of education will hold a debate on the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in education and training based on a presidency discussion paper ([13297/19](#)).

Rapid technological developments are having important impact on people's lives with streaming services, online banking or e-healthcare already changing day-to-day decisions. AI is also among the factors transforming people's lives. It holds a great potential for boosting economic growth, but also for increasing wellbeing and reducing poverty. AI will also transform education and training systems which will have to provide people with skills and competences matching the market needs in times of rapid digitalisation. It will therefore have an impact on education policy-making. Policy-makers will also have to take into account the ethical aspects of AI and consider the implementation of oversight mechanisms to avoid AI being misused or acting in a harmful way.

Against this background, ministers will be invited to exchange views and share experiences in relation to the following questions:

1. What kind of education and training policies and measures at EU and Member State level should be developed to steer AI design and use? How can we ensure that AI benefits society as a whole and that Europe can compete successfully at global level?
2. What actions could be taken by the EU together with Member States in order to enable and advance the use of AI in education and training now and within the next 10 years?

### **Any other business (8/11/2019)**

1. The Slovenian delegation will brief ministers on Slovenia's proposal to establish the International Research Centre on Artificial Intelligence (IRCAI) under the auspices of UNESCO ([13173/19](#)).
2. The incoming Croatian presidency will present its work programme in the area of education.

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<sup>2</sup> [European Council conclusions \(14 December 2017\)](#)