

**GUIDEBOOK TO EU DECISION-MAKING  
IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
SPRING 2020 EDITION**

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# INTRODUCTION

## WHY A EUROPEAN GUIDE ON ADVOCACY IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING?

**Luis Costa**

LIFELONG LEARNING PLATFORM  
PRESIDENT



This guide is written as a simple introduction to the working procedures and set-up of the EU, and is meant to be used by our members and anyone who wants to have a better understanding of Europe. Talking about Europe and the European Union is a complex matter. After all, we are speaking about an association of 27 countries with around 500 million inhabitants and 24 languages. We want our members and every person who wants to have a better grasp of Europe to have an easy way of understanding Europe and its mechanisms. We want our members and the general public to know what to do and where to go if they want to voice their concern around education in the EU.

**Europe is about the future of its citizens and Education is the passport to the future.**

As such, it has been our commitment, as an organisation, to promote the values of lifelong learning and make it accessible for all European citizens. As a humanistic and holistic approach of learning, **lifelong learning is of continued and increasing**

**relevance in today's world** and a viable foundation for the rethinking of education in knowledge intensive societies. Adopting a vision, whose rationale is not limited to a single objective, but comprehends its multiple facets is not only relevant but also necessary in today's context. It is with this in mind that we are advocating for education, because **our future and the goals we want to achieve depend on education.**

One way of achieving this goal is by comparing the educational institutions of the member states and helping them share their experiences. For that reason, we are working as an umbrella that gathers over 40 European organisations active in the field of education, training and youth. These organizations come from all over Europe and beyond, which represent more than 50,000 educational institutions and associations covering all sectors of formal, non-formal and informal learning. Their members reach out to several million learners, volunteers, educators and academics, to name a few.

# WHO'S WHO?

## EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

Anyone interested in European affairs should start by having basic knowledge on how the main European Union institutions work. This section will focus on key institutions; many more exist but will not be mentioned for the sake of simplification. Another very important thing to remember is that **the EU is only competent for what is provided for in its Treaties.** The EU has three types of Competences: exclusive

competences; shared competences and supporting competences. For instance, **in the field of education the EU has a supporting competence** which means it supports Member State action in a certain number of areas (for further information, see part II).

## THE INSTITUTIONAL TRIANGLE

The institutional configuration of the EU can feel like entering a labyrinth to someone unfamiliar with it. This confusion is enhanced by the fact that over the years, the EU institutional structure has become both more expansive and more stratified, with multiple sub-structures and overlapping areas of competence.

But to make it simple, we can say that the institutional structure of **the EU has evolved into a triangular relationship between the European Commission (EC), the Council of the EU, and the European Parliament (EP).**

Of course, other institutions also intervene such as advisory bodies like the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the Committee of Regions (CoR) which address opinions to the Council, the European Commission and the European Parliament on specific issues. However, their opinions are not binding upon the institutions.

# THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

## What is it?

The term “Commission” refers both to the College of Commissioners and to the institution itself. The President of the European Commission is now chosen based on the results of European Parliament elections. In 2019 the European People’s Party led by Manfred Weber won the most seats in the European Parliament, making Weber the leading candidate to become the next President of the European Commission. Despite this, after the election the **European Council decided to nominate Ursula von der Leyen as the new Commission President**, because she was believed to be more suited to gain transversal consensus.

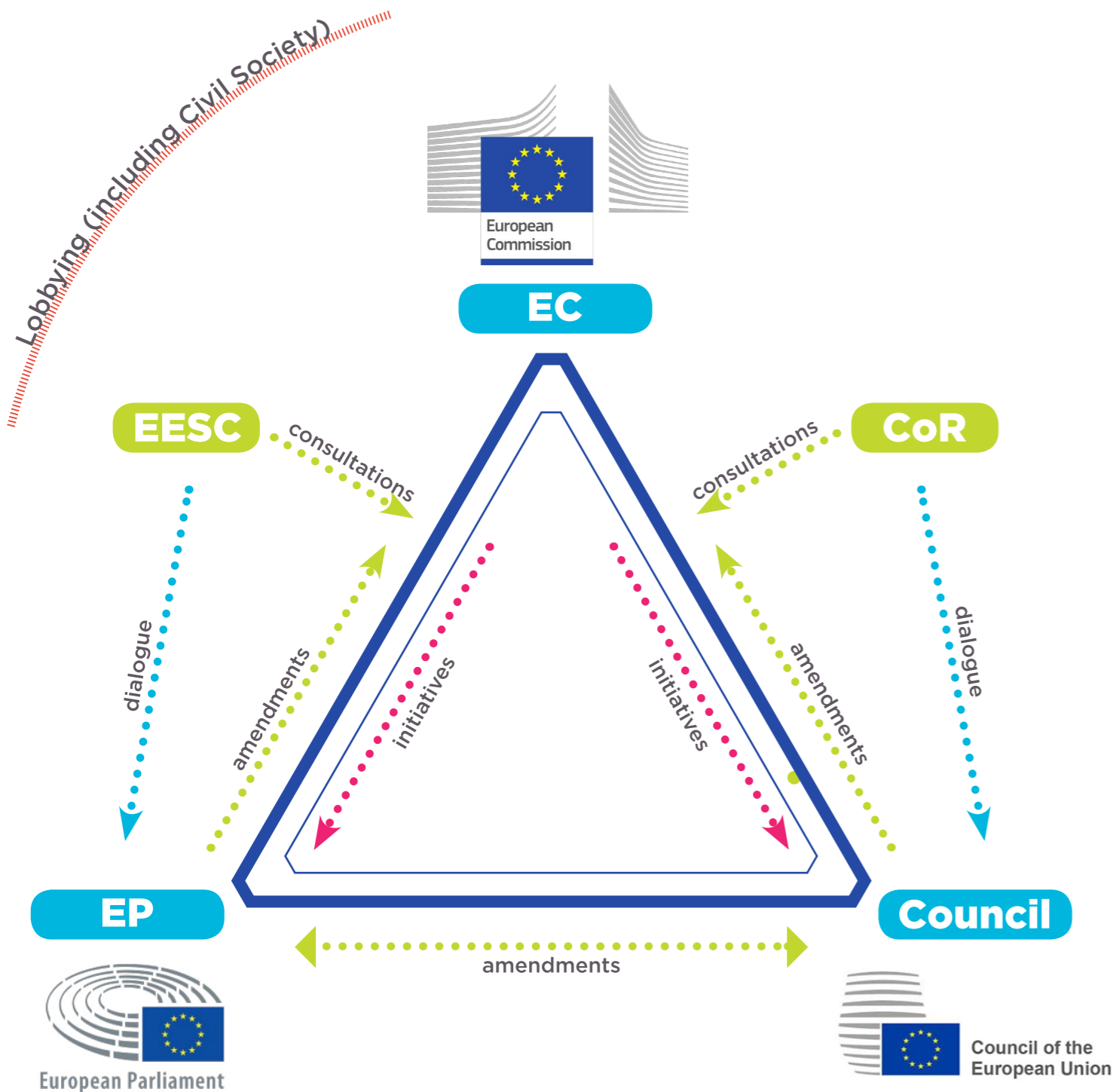
The College of Commissioners is elected by the European Council after the Parliamentary elections and serves for a period of five years (the current period 2019-2024). Commission designates, nominated by the Member States, have to be approved by the European Parliament as a whole; after the organisation of hearings by each of the relevant Parliament’s committees.

Education remains a main responsibility of Commissioner Mariya Gabriel as her extended portfolio is titled “Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth”, and education appears in other portfolios such as the “Promoting our European Way of Life” of Vice-President Schinas. The skills agenda, adult education and VET are covered by Commissioner Nicolas Schmit under “Jobs and Social Rights”.

Ursula von der Leyen stated that her intention is to “strengthen the links between people, nations and institutions. Between expectations and delivery. Between words and deeds. My Commission will listen to the people of Europe and be bold where it makes sense for us to act, leaving national, regional and local actors to deliver where they are best placed to do so.”

## WORK PROGRAMME 2020

The European Commission Work Programme for 2020 sets out the actions it intends to take over the next 12 months to make a real difference for jobs, growth and investment and bring concrete benefits for citizens. As part of Europe’s Recovery, to protect lives and livelihoods, the European Commission has adjusted its Work Programme for 2020. The priorities that were set at the beginning of the mandate and presented in January 2020 remain valid in addressing today’s challenges. The Commission remains fully determined to deliver on its flagship initiatives, the European Green Deal and the Digital Strategy, as they are key to relaunching the European economy and building a more resilient, sustainable, fair and prosperous Europe. At the same time, with the adjusted Work Programme for 2020, the Commission is responding to the coronavirus pandemic by refocusing its work and prioritising the actions needed to propel Europe’s recovery and resilience.



## What does it do?

The European Commission acts as the executive body of the European Union. It is responsible for proposing legislation, implementing decisions, upholding the Union's treaties and the day-to-day running of the Union.

**The European Commission has four main tasks.**



*Ursula von der Leyen,  
President of the European Commission*

### 1 Proposes Laws

The Commission is the sole EU institution tabling laws for adoption by the Parliament and the Council that:

- protect the interests of the EU and its citizens on issues that can't be dealt with effectively at national level;
- get technical details right by consulting experts and the public.

### 2 Manages EU policies & allocates EU funding

- Sets EU spending priorities, together with the Council and Parliament.
  - Draws up annual budgets for approval by the Parliament and Council.
  - Supervises how the money is spent, under scrutiny by the Court of Auditors.

### 3 Enforces EU law

Together with the Court of Justice, the European Commission ensures that EU law is properly applied in all the member countries.

### 4 Represents the EU internationally

The Commission speaks on behalf of all EU countries in international bodies, in particular in areas of trade policy and humanitarian aid.

## Structure and organisation

**Political leadership is provided by a team of 27 Commissioners** (one from each EU country) – led by the Commission President, who decides who is responsible for which policy area.

The College of Commissioners is composed of the President of the Commission, 3 Executive Vice-Presidents (a new feature), 5 Vice-Presidents, including the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and 17 Commissioners, each responsible for a different portfolio.

### INVESTMENT PLAN

In 2020 the Commission presented the European Green Deal's Investment Plan: the Sustainable Europe Investment Plan. The plan is set to mobilise public investment and help to unlock private funds through EU financial instruments needed for the transition to a climate-neutral, green, competitive and inclusive economy. The plan is based on three dimensions:

- **Financing:** mobilising at least €1 trillion of sustainable investments over the next decade.
- **Enabling:** providing incentives to unlock and redirect public and private investment.
- **Practical support:** the Commission will provide support to public authorities and project promoters in planning, designing and executing sustainable projects

The day-to-day running of Commission business is performed by its staff (lawyers, economists, etc.), organised into **54 different departments known as**

**Directorates-General (DGs) and Executive Agencies (EAs).** Each DG covers a specific policy area or service, and is headed by a Director-General who reports to the Commissioner. Each DG is subdivided into directorates and each directorate, in turn, is divided into units. All the DGs and services are coordinated by the Secretariat-General, headed by a Secretary-General that reports directly to the President of the Commission. The two main DGs in charge of education are Directorate-General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) and Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL).

The other DGs dealing with education, although to a lesser extent, are DG Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME), DG Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO), DG Informatics (DG DIGIT) and DG Communications Networks, Content and Technology (DG CONNECT).

### Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC)

DG EAC is the executive branch of the European Union responsible for policy on education, youth, sport, and culture. DG EAC also supports these issues through a variety of projects and programmes, notably Creative Europe and Erasmus+.



*Mariya Gabriel, Commissioner for Innovation,  
Research, Culture, Education and Youth*

It is led by a Commissioner, who reports to the European Parliament, and Director General, who is not a politician but rather a technical profile.

**DG EAC is currently divided into five directorates:**

- Policy Strategy and Evaluation
- Youth, Education, and Erasmus+
- Performance Management, Supervision, and Resources
- Innovation, International Cooperation, and Sport
- Culture and Creativity

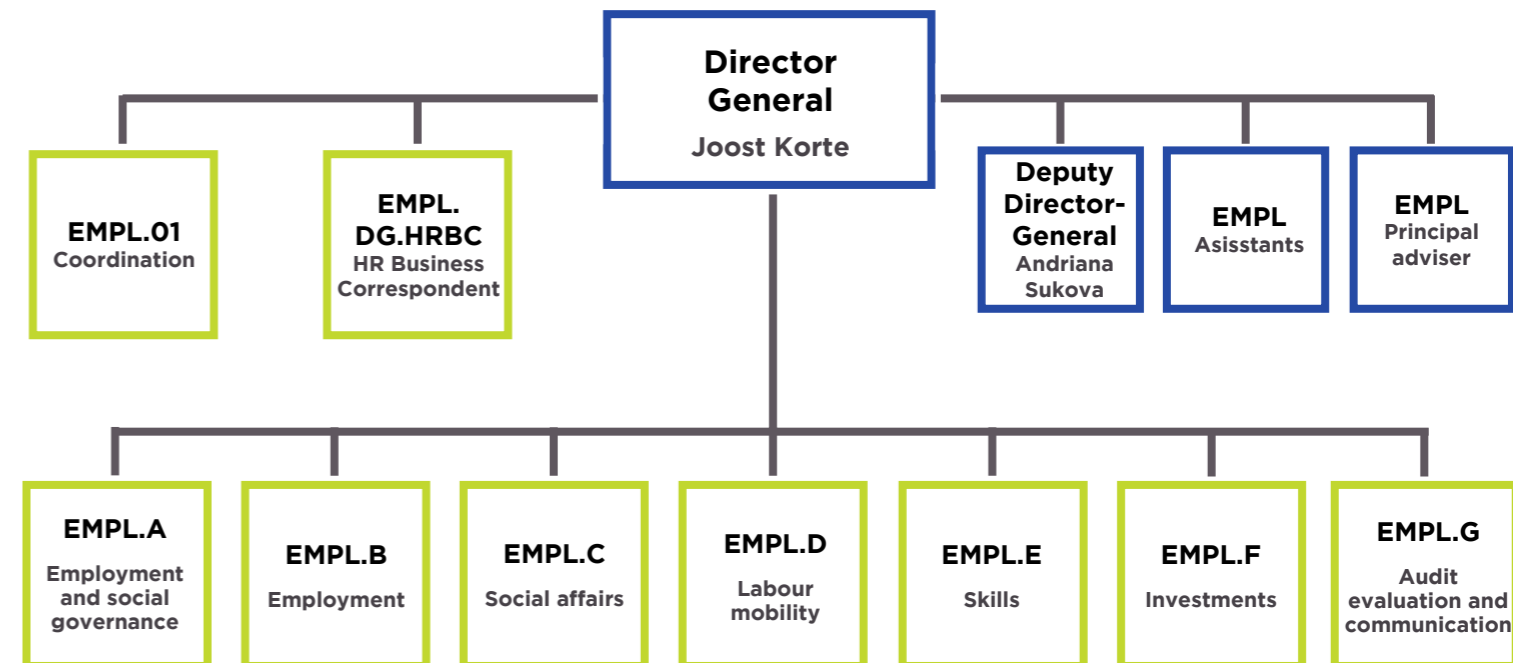
The main policy areas under the DG EAC responsibility are the modernization of European Education and training systems; mobility policies and programmes; the European Institute for Innovation and Technology (EIT); and international relations in the field of education, culture and youth.

The European Commission staff is changing frequently, a new programme is thus posted on DG EAC website in July and

January each year. If you are interested to meet the European Commission the best is to look for the Unit who deals with your sector of activity knowing that Directorate A is focused on policies, Directorate B more on programmes while C is organized by sector. You can search for specific staff of the Commission here.

**EACEA**

The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) is an agency of the European Union, established in 2006, to manage parts of the Unions' programmes in education, culture and audiovisual fields. Fully operational since 1st of January 2006, EACEA operates under the supervision of its four parent Directorates-General of the European Commission (DG EAC, DG CONNECT, DG HOME and DG EC).



**Directorate-General Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion**

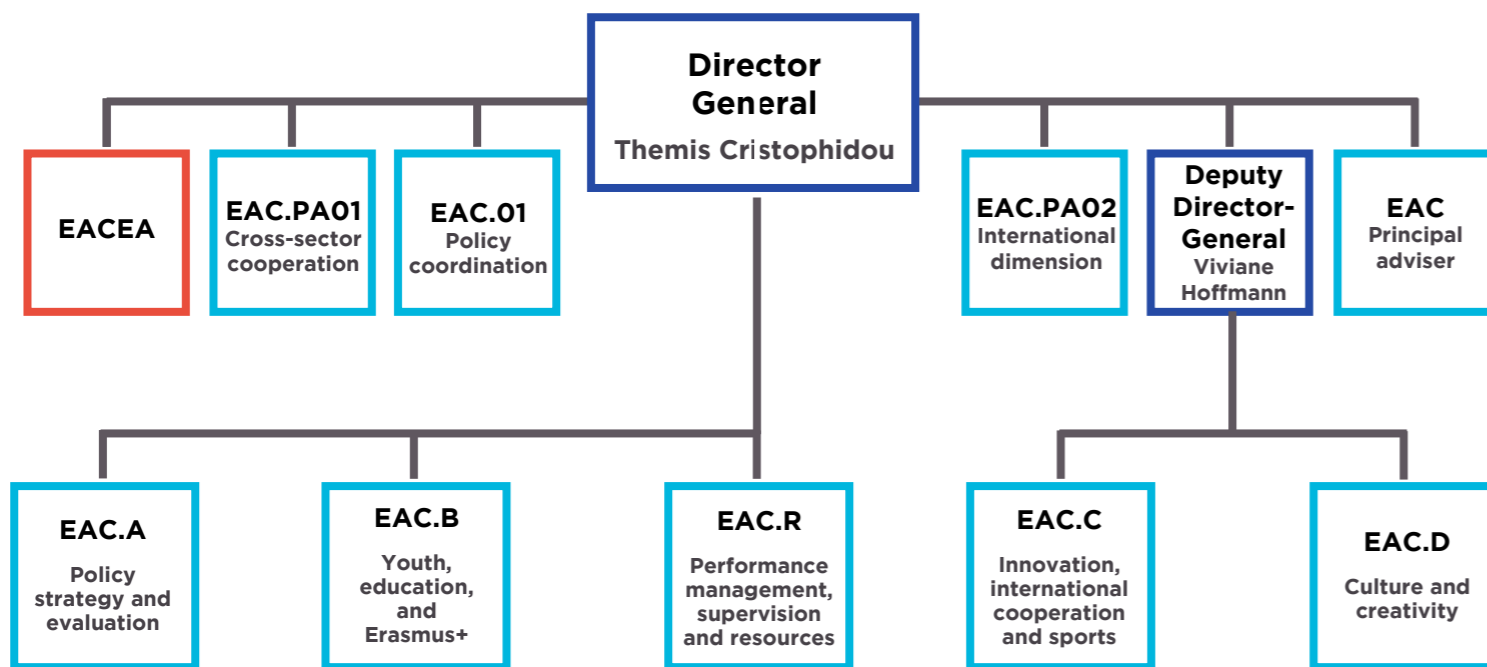
The Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion DG pursues policy, legislative and financial initiatives to build a highly competitive social market economy in the European Union. Through the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy it aims to create more and better jobs, promote skills and entrepreneurship, improve the functioning of the labour markets, confront poverty and social exclusion, modernise social protection systems including pensions, health and long-term care, facilitate the

free movement of workers, promote workers' rights, health and safety at work, and protect the rights of persons with disabilities. DG EMPL has also been responsible for **EU policies on skills and qualifications, vocational education and training and adult learning** since 2014.

EU employment and social policies bring practical benefits to citizens, e.g. in finding a job, moving to another Member State for work or other reasons and upgrading skills. In partnership with national authorities, social partners, civil society organisations and other stakeholders, DG EMPL addresses challenges linked to globalization, the ageing of Europe's population, and changing social realities. The European Commissions' priorities are set out on the Annual Management Plan of DG EMPL.

Examples of the areas in which DG EMPL is active include support for:

- More and better jobs through the European Employment Strategy and the European Social Fund (ESF);
- Free movement of workers and coordination of social security schemes;
- Better working conditions through common minimum standards in the workplace, by supporting social dialogue



Nicolas Schmit, Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights

## LOBBYING?

When a legislative process is initiated at EU level, an important number of actors intervene in order to voice their particular concerns and needs. Actors can also ask for new regulations to be adopted or revised. This is what is usually called lobbying. It is reported that more than 30 000 professional lobbyists are present in Brussels, more than the number of European Commission public servants. Of course, this concept covers various groups (for-profit actors versus NGOs who advocate for general interests). It thus covers various practices aimed at influencing policy makers on behalf of a special interest. The EU is trying to establish rules to ensure transparency such as the Transparency Register and a Code of Good Administrative Behaviour. Directors-General for example are required to publish information on meetings held with organisations or self-employed individuals. If you intend to play in this field you shall register on the Transparency Register.

at European level;

- Social inclusion by supporting efforts to combat poverty and social exclusion, reform social protection systems, and assess new demographic and social developments.

### Decision Making in Education within the European Commission

Countries are responsible for their own education and training systems, but the EU helps them set joint goals and share good practices. On the basis of articles 165 and 166 TFEU (Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union), the European Parliament and the Council may adopt

incentive measures (that must not infringe Member state power in that matter), while the Council may adopt recommendations.

Once a legislative process is launched, a unit is usually in charge of the drafting. If you are interested in a particular policy initiative, the best is thus to contact the Unit in charge. The DG EAC also publishes an annual Management Plan that will help you to know what initiatives are planned. The EU also has funding programmes on education, training and youth, with the aim of promoting mobility and encouraging cooperation. For further information, see part III.

As regards decision making, the European Commission has set up various **advisory groups with external stakeholders** to inform its work, in addition to its broad consultation procedures. These groups meet several times each year and contribute with their expertise to help the Commission prepare its communications and other initiatives. The list of consultative entities is available here.

### Consultations

When the European Commission starts working on a new policy initiative or revises existing legislation, it usually opens a **public consultation for relevant stakeholders to provide inputs and feedback**. The main goal is to improve the efficiency, transparency and public involvement in large scale projects, laws or policies.

For example, a public consultation on the “Evaluation of European Social Fund support to education” was launched by the EU in November 2019. The objective of the consultation was to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and EU added value of actions funded by the European Social Fund actions during the period 2014-2018. It also addressed the complementarity and

coherence with other initiatives in this field during the period concerned, in particular relating to skills.

Another example is the public consultation on the “Validation of non-formal and informal learning- evaluation” was launched by the EU in October 2018. The objective of this consultation was to check what EU countries and the Commission are doing to help people obtain qualifications for skills acquired outside formal education and training.

## EU CITIZENS' INITIATIVE

The ECI was introduced with the Treaty of Lisbon (articles 225 and 241 TFEU), aimed at increasing direct democracy in the European Union. It allows one million EU citizens from more than 7 different Member States to participate directly in the development of EU policies, by calling on the European Commission to make a legislative proposal.

# THE COUNCIL OF EUROPEAN UNION

## What is it?

The Council of the European Union (often referred to as “the Council”) is the principal decision maker of the EU and jointly with the European Parliament has the power to adopt, amend or reject laws (legislative power), which are initiated by the European Commission. It brings together Member

State government representatives at ministerial level on a specific policy area. It reflects the national interests and views of each Member State within the EU.

## What does it do?

As the main decision making body of the EU, the Council is responsible for the:

1

**Adoption of laws (ordinary in co-decision with the European Parliament)**

2

**Coordination of economic policies across Europe**

3

**Definition and implementation of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy, and conclusion of international agreements**

4

**Adoption of the EU annual budget, in conjunction with the European Parliament**

The Council also has a mediation role, which has grown in importance throughout the years and is undertaken mostly by the Council Presidency.

## Structure and organisation

The Council functions according to a **six-month rotational presidency**. However, since 2007, the Council works on the basis of a common 18-month programme established by trios of succeeding Presidencies (and prepared in collaboration with the European Commission).

The current trio is composed of Romania (January–June 2019), Finland (July–December 2019) and Croatia (January–June 2020). It will then turn to Germany (July–December 2020), Portugal (January–June 2021) and Slovenia (July–December 2021). These presidencies set up priorities for their term and define areas of heightened EU policy focus, events and activities. As chair of most of the Council configurations,

### DO NOT GET CONFUSED

The Council should not be mixed up with the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe is a non-EU organisation of 47 States, including for instance Russia, based in Strasbourg (France). Established in 1949, it is the oldest international European level organisation and it represents 820 million citizens.

The Council of the EU should not be confused with the 'European Council' either, which is the EU institution that defines the general political direction and priorities of the European Union. It consists of the heads of state or government of the Member States, together with its President, Charles Michel, and the President of the Commission.

the country holding the rotating presidency plays an important role in organizing the work of these Council configurations, both in terms their political agenda and in terms of advancing legislative procedures.

The Council is a single legal entity.

### CO-DECISION

Under the Treaty of Lisbon, codecision officially became the 'Ordinary Legislative Procedure' and the general rule for passing legislation at EU level, covering the vast majority of areas of Union action.

The main characteristic of the ordinary legislative procedure is the adoption of legislation jointly and on an equal footing by Parliament and the Council. It starts with a legislative proposal from the Commission (normally for a regulation, directive or decision) and consists of up to three readings, with the possibility for the co-legislators to agree on a joint text - and thereby conclude the procedure - at any reading.

However, in practice, it is divided into several different councils. Each council is responsible for a different functional area and composed of the relevant ministers from each state government. There are currently 10 council formations. The Education, Youth, Culture and Sport (EYCS) Council brings together education, culture, youth and communication Ministers around three or four times a year. It usually adopts its decisions by a qualified majority (apart from cultural affairs, where it acts unanimously) and in co-decision with the European Parliament.

All the work of the Council prepared or coordinated by the committee of National

Representatives (COREPER - after its French acronym). COREPER comprises high-level national civil servants on permanent assignments to Brussels and plays a significant role in the day-to-day running of the Council. Its members prepare the agenda and brief their ministers who attend meetings in Brussels. Furthermore, COREPER is where the first examination of Commission proposals takes place. If a Commission proposal produces a consensus at this level, it is accepted without any discussion at ministerial level. The work of this Committee is itself prepared by more than 150 committees and working groups consisting of delegates from the Member States. For example, the Education Committee prepares the work of the EYCS Council on education issues.

### Voting in the Council

There are three types of voting procedures, depending on the issue under discussion: Simple majority (14 Member States out of 27) vote in favor; Qualified majority (55% of Member States vote in favor), or Unanimous vote (all votes are in favor).

**Simple Majority** is used for procedural issues, such as rules governing Council Committees. It requires the majority of member states (14 out of 27) to vote for the proposal.

**Qualified majority** is used in 80% of EU legislation adopted through the ordinary legislative procedure, also known as co-decision. A qualified majority is reached if 2 conditions are met: 55% of Member States vote in favor (15 out of 27) and the proposal is supported by Member states representing at least 65% of the total EU population. This is the double majority rule. Proposals can be blocked by a group of 4 Member States, representing more than 35% of the EU population. This is called a blocking minority. This qualified majority

rule is in use from November 2014 but Member states can still request to use the previous rule. Under this previous rule, each member state has a certain number of votes, based on their population size. Reaching a qualified majority needs 260 votes, out of a total 352, from at least 15 member states.

**Unanimity** requires everyone to agree, or abstain. If a Council member abstains, the other ministers can still reach unanimity.

### EDUCATION COUNCIL

The Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council (EYCS) consists of the EU Ministers of Education, Youth, Culture and Sport and assemble three to four times a year. It works to ensure a high standard of education and vocational training and to contribute to the flourishing of national cultures. This is done whilst fully respecting that the responsibility for teaching content, structure of education systems and cultural diversity lies with the Member States. When doing advocacy campaigns, the education attachés can play a role of intermediary to pass civil society concerns to the EU and its Member States.

Unanimity voting is used for some specific areas mentioned in the EU treaties, such as citizenship, EU membership and taxation.



# THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

## What is it?

The European Parliament (EP) is the only directly elected institution in the EU, since 1979. Currently, it is made up of 705 Members elected in the 27 Member States. Since 1979, MEPs have been elected by direct universal suffrage for a five-year mandate. The Lisbon Treaty gives the EP a more prominent role by extending the co-decision procedure to new policy areas, including education and training policies.

EU institutions, and in particular the Commission. The Parliament approves or rejects the college of Commissioners (including the President) upon nomination, and it has the right to censor it, in both cases as a whole. MEPs regularly ask the Commission and the Council written and oral questions, and the Council President takes part in plenary debates.

- Budgetary role: both the Council and the Parliament can amend and must approve the annual EU budget.

## What does it do?

The European Parliament has three main roles:

- Legislative role: the Parliament, together with the Council, can accept, amend or reject the content of European law, even though the right of initiative in terms of legislation lies within the Commission.
- Democratic supervision: of other

## Structure and organisation

Members of the European Parliament are elected by universal suffrage throughout the Member States. The number of MEPs is determined proportionally to the country's population. Currently, the European Parliament is made up of 705 members elected in 27 member states.

Countries	seats		
Germany	96	Austria	19
France	79	Bulgaria	17
Italy	76	Finland, Denmark, Slovakia	14
Spain	58	Ireland	13
Poland	52	Croatia	12
Romania	33	Lithuania	11
Netherlands	29	Latvia, Slovenia	8
Belgium, Greece, Hungary, Portugal, Sweden, Czechia	21	Estonia	7
		Cyprus, Luxembourg, Malta	6
<b>Total</b>			<b>704</b>

Even though MEPs are designated on a national basis, the parliamentary groupings are formed according to political, rather than national lines: once elected, they represent the European people. Currently, there are thirteen political groups, of which the biggest are European People's Party group (EPP), the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D), Renew Europe (previously ALDE), the Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens-EFA) and Identity and Democracy (ID).

month in Strasbourg.

**Parliamentary Committees** bring together smaller groups of MEPs that specialise in particular areas of EU policy. They do much of the preparatory work for the debates and votes carried out later in plenary. Currently there are 20 committees, which have been formed thematically. The Culture and Education Committee (CULT) and the Employment and Social Affairs Committee (EMPL) have education and training as of their portfolio elements.

**Plenary sessions** are attended by all MEPs and are normally held for one week each

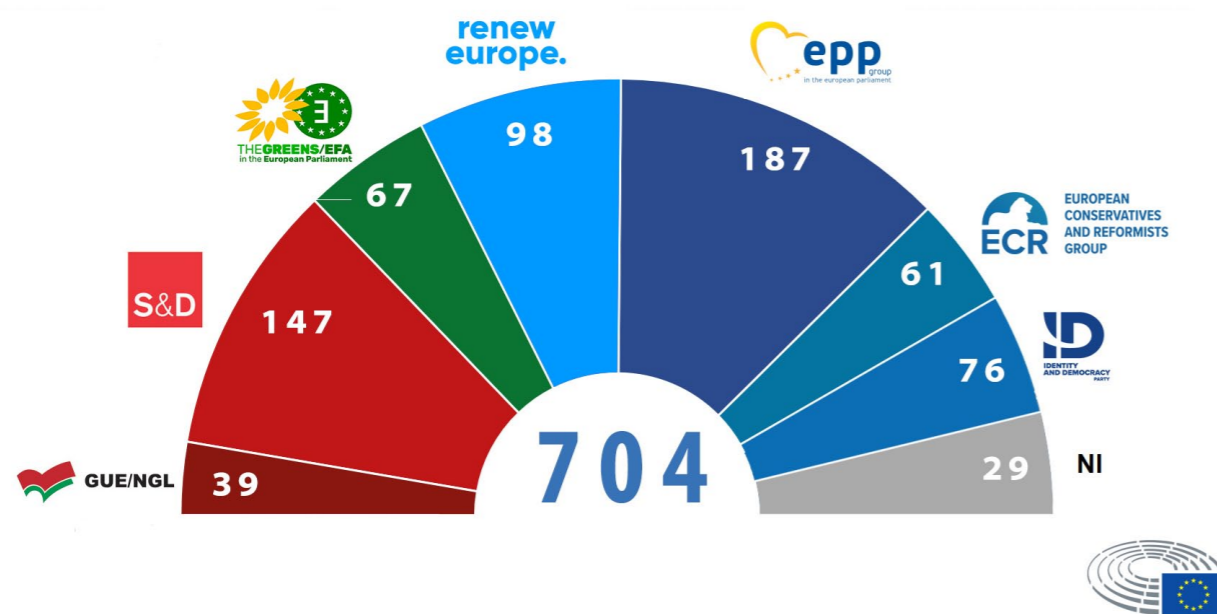
MEPs can meet in unofficial, voluntary, cross-party groups known as Intergroups. They bring together MEPs as well as civil society representatives to discuss issues of common interest that transcend political divisions, such as Youth Intergroup. In addition, informal interest groups exist, such as the Lifelong Learning Interest Group. The European Parliament also has delegations of MEPs handling relations with parliaments in non-EU countries.

### LLL INTEREST GROUP

The Lifelong Learning Programme and the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) and have initiated an interest group on lifelong learning together with six Members of the European Parliament. The group brings together civil society representatives and several MEPs to discuss various key issues connected to lifelong learning.

### Main Committees in charge of education

The committees of the European Parliament are designed to help the European



Commission in initiating legislation.

The Committee on Culture and Education (CULT) is responsible for improving the knowledge and dissemination of culture, safeguarding cultural heritage and the protection and promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity. It deals with the EU's education policy and programmes, audiovisual policy, the cultural and educational aspects of the information society, youth policy and the development of a sports and leisure policy. It plays a strong budgetary role in the adoption of the EU funded programmes in its fields.



*Sabine Verheyen,  
Chair of the CULT Committee*

In that regard, the committee on culture and education is responsible for the 'Erasmus+' programme for education, training, youth and sport, 'Creative Europe' which supports European Cultural and Creative sectors and the 'Europe for citizens' programme. The chair of the Committee on Culture and Education is Sabine Verheyen (Germany, EPP) from December 2019.

The **CULT Committee** consists of 60 members representing the various political groups in the European Parliament. All the meetings of CULT are public and livestreamed on the EP website.

The **Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL)** is mainly responsible for employment policies and all aspects of policy, working conditions, vocational training and the free movement of workers and pensioners. The Chair of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs is Lucia Duriš Nicholsonová (Slovakia, European Conservatives and Reformists Group) since December 2019.



*Lucia Duriš Nicholsonová,  
Chair of the EMPL Committee*

## THE CONSULTATIVE BODIES

Other institutions intervene in the law-making process. **The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the Committee of the Regions (CoR) are almost systematically consulted by the Commission and the Member States** during

the law drafting period. Their intervention is a way of ensuring decisions are taken only after a variety of stakeholders from European and national levels have been able to express their opinion, in light of the principle of subsidiarity.

### THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

#### What is it?

Set up in 1957, the EESC functions primarily as a consultative body on issues of social policy, education, social and economic cohesion, and health. The EESC gives Europe's interest groups - trade unionists, employers, farmers, etc. - a formal say on EU legislative proposals.

The EESC must be consulted before decisions are taken on economic and social policies.

On its own initiative it may also give opinions on matters it considers important. On average, the EESC delivers 170 advisory documents and opinions a year (about 15% of which it issues on its own initiative). All opinions are forwarded to the EU decision making bodies (Commission, Council, and EP) and then published in the EU's Official Journal.

#### Composition

The EESC is based in Brussels and has 326 members, drawn from economic and social interest groups across Europe, nominated by national governments and appointed by the Council of the European Union for

a renewable five year term. It has three groups of members.

#### - Group I: Employers

This group has 117 members, entrepreneurs and representatives of entrepreneur associations working in industry, trade, services and agriculture in the 27 Member States of the European Union.

#### - Group II: Workers

It comprises representatives from national trade unions, confederations and sectoral federations. Its members represent over 80 trade union organisations.

#### - Group III: Diversity Europe

From farmers' organisations to consumer and environmental organisations and NGOs.

**The EESC is structured around 6 sections, dealing with particular policy areas, including the section for Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship (SOC), responsible for education and training, among other policy items.**

In February 2004, a **"Liaison Group" with organized civil society** was set up. It is composed of EESC members and

representatives of European civil society organisations and networks. It holds regular meetings, as well as hearings, conferences and seminars. Currently it is made up of 15 EESC members and representatives of 36 main sectors of European Civil Society. The Lifelong Learning Platform is among the organizations participating in the liaison group's activities, representing Education and Training.

This group prepares contributions to the work of the EESC and organises debates and events, such as the **Civil Society Days** in Brussels since 2009 to highlight the contribution and added value that civil society organisations are making to the building of the European project. Its main aim is to promote civil dialogue and

participatory democracy (as envisaged under Article 11 TEU).



*Luca Jahier, President of the European Economic and Social Committee*

## THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

The Committee of the Regions (CoR) was set up in 1994 as an advisory body composed of nominated representatives of Europe's regional and local authorities. It is consulted by EU Institutions (Commission, Parliament and Council) when issues and proposals have local or regional repercussions, for example, on employment and education policy. It does so by issuing **'opinions' on European Commission proposals**.

Based in Brussels, **the CoR has 329 members from the EU 27 countries and its work is organised in 6 different commissions**, including one for Social Policy, Education, Employment, Research and Culture (SEDEC).

Members are appointed for a five-year term by the Council, acting on proposals from the EU countries. Each country chooses its members in its own way, but delegations should reflect the political, geographical and regional/local balance in their country. Throughout the EU, local and regional levels have key responsibilities for policies and activities related to education, culture, youth and sports. They are also key players in developing regional research and innovation strategies, and in harnessing the full potential of information and communication technologies to benefit society.

## THE OMBUDSMAN

**The European Ombudsman investigates complaints about maladministration in the institutions and bodies of the European Union.** It seeks fair outcomes to complaints against EU institutions, encourages transparency, and promotes an administrative culture of service. It aims to build trust through dialogue between citizens and the European Union and to foster the highest standards of behaviour in the EU's institutions.

The European Ombudsman was established by the Maastricht Treaty and the first, Jacob Soderman of Finland, was elected in 1995. The Ombudsman is elected for a five year mandate after each European Parliament election. Emily O'Reilly has been the European Ombudsman since 2013. This institution is playing a more and more important role in **monitoring transparency**.



*Emily O'Reilly, Ombudsman since 2013*

## THE COURT OF JUSTICE

Established in 1952, the mission of the Court of Justice is to **ensure that "the law is observed" in the interpretation and application of primary and secondary law**.

The Court of Justice of the European Union reviews the legality of the acts of the EU institutions, ensures that the member States comply with their obligations under the Treaties, and interprets EU law at the request of the national courts and

tribunals. The Court thus constitutes the judicial authority of the European Union and, in cooperation with the courts and tribunals of the member states, ensures the uniform application and interpretation of the European Law.

The Court is also responsible for many evolutions in EU law that influence the future of the Union as a whole.

# SPECIALISED AGENCIES

## EUROPEAN AGENCIES

### CEDEFOP

Founded in 1975, the Cedefop is located in Thessaloniki, Greece. It is an EU decentralized agency that works closely with the European Commission, Governments and representatives of trade unions, researchers and practitioners in VET, with the goal of strengthening European cooperation in the area of VET and lifelong learning by providing expertise, for example on validation, learning outcomes or qualification frameworks

### EURYDICE

The Eurydice network supports and facilitates European cooperation in the field of lifelong learning by providing information on education systems and policies in 38 countries and by producing studies on issues common to European education systems. It consists of 41 national units based in 38 countries participating in the Erasmus+ programme (27 Member states, United Kingdom, Bosnia and Herzegovina, The Republic of North Macedonia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland and Turkey) and a coordinating unit based in the EU education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency in Brussels.

### ETF - European Training Foundation

The European Training Foundation is an EU Agency that helps transitioning and developing countries to harness the potential of their human capital through the reform of education, training and labour market systems in the context of the EU's

external relations policy. It is based in Turin, Italy, and has been operational since 1994.

### JRC - Joint Research Center

The Joint Research Centre is the European Commission's science and knowledge service which employs scientists to carry out research in order to provide independent scientific advice and support to EU policy. It collaborates with over a thousand organisations worldwide whose scientists have access to many JRC facilities through various collaboration agreements. JRC tries to create, manage and make sense of knowledge and develop innovative tools and make them available to policy makers and anticipate emerging issues that need to be addressed at EU level and understand policy environments.

### EIT - European Institute of Innovation and Technology

The institute is a body of the European Union which was established in 2008 in order to address Europe's innovation gap. It creates collaboration between innovation and excellence centers and is the first EU initiative to fully integrate all three sides of the knowledge triangle. The EIT contributes strongly to the objectives set out in Horizon 2020, in particular by addressing societal challenges in a complementary way to other initiatives in these areas.

### EUROSTAT - Statistical Office of the EU

EUROSTAT is the statistical office of the European Union situated in Luxembourg.

Its task is to provide the EU with statistics at European level that enable comparisons between countries and regions. International statistics are a way of getting to know your neighbours in Member States and Countries outside the EU. They are an important, objective and down-to-earth

way of measuring how we all live.

## NETWORK OF RESEARCHERS

### Network of European Experts on Economics of Education (EENEE)

EENEE is an EU Think Tank sponsored by the European Commission, Directorate General for Education and Culture. The network is coordinated by the IFO institute. EENEE aims to contribute to the improvement of decision-making and policy development in education and training in Europe by advising and supporting the European Commission in the analysis of economic aspects of educational policies and reforms.

### Network of Experts on the Social Dimension of Education and Training

NESET II is a network on Academics across Europe and beyond working on social aspects of education and training. Being the successor to the NESSE (2007-2010) and NESET (2011-2014) networks of experts, the mission of NESET II is to advise and support the Commission in the analysis of educational policies and reforms, and to consider their implications at national, regional and EU level. NESET II also contributes to the dissemination of knowledge on social aspects of education and training

# INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

### COUNCIL OF EUROPE

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It includes 47 member states, 27 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The **CDPPE** is the Steering Committee for Education Policy and Practice within the CoE. A few

civil society organisations representing the stakeholders have observer status. In addition, the CoE organises regular consultation meetings with INGOs during the INGOs Conference.

### Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

The OECD promotes policies to improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world. It provides a forum in

which governments can work together to share experiences and seek solutions to common problems. The OECD Directorate for Education and Skills helps individuals and nations to identify and develop the knowledge and skills that drive better jobs and better lives, generate prosperity, and promote social inclusion. It encourages countries to compare their experiences and learn from each other, and it accompanies them in the difficult process of policy implementation.

### United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO)

Since its creation in 1945, UNESCO's mission has been to contribute to the building of peace, poverty eradication, lasting development and intercultural dialogue, with education as one of its principal activities to achieve this aim. The Organisation is committed to a holistic and humanistic vision of quality education worldwide, the realisation of everyone's right to education and the belief that education plays a fundamental role in human, social and economic development. UNESCO has 7 specialised institutes for education including the International Institute for Education Planning and Lifelong Learning Institute. The consultation with NGOs is well organised and regulated in various ways. The most important being the Internal Conference of INGOs

### UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning

The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) is one of the 7 specialised institutes for education of the UNESCO. The mission of the Institute is to promote the recognition of and create the conditions for the exercise of the right to education and learning. The Institute undertakes research, capacity-building, networking and publication on

lifelong learning with a focus on adult and continuing education, literacy and non-formal basic education. UIL responds to the concerns of all UNESCO Member States, giving priority to least developed countries.

### International Labour Organization (ILO)

The International Labour Organization (ILO) was founded in 1919 to pursue a vision based on the premise that universal, lasting peace can be established only if it is based on social justice. The ILO became the first specialised agency of the UN in 1946. The main aims of the ILO are to promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection, and strengthen dialogue on work-based issues.

# EU POLICY-MAKING

Education has always been regarded as a national rather than EU competence. To date, **the EU has only a supporting competence over education and training**, meaning that its role is limited to support, coordinate and supplement member state actions, without superseding their competence. However, the Maastricht Treaty already recognised a European dimension to education and allowed the EU to contribute to the development of quality education and the promotion and improvement of vocational training, now included under articles 165 and 166 of the Lisbon Treaty.

A turning point in the EU's involvement in education was the formulation of the Lisbon Agenda and the application of the Open Method of Coordination to the area of education. Formulated at the Lisbon Summit of 2000, the Lisbon Agenda aimed at "making the European Union the most competitive economy in the world by 2010". In June 2010 the European Council adopted the so-called Europe 2020 strategy (2010-2020), which succeeds the Lisbon strategy (2000-2010) and where education, training and lifelong learning play even a greater role. In this section you will learn more about the Europe 2020 and ET2020 strategies.

## EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY

**Europe 2020 is the EU's growth strategy for the decade 2010-2020.** It identifies three key drivers for growth, to be implemented through concrete actions at EU and national levels:

- **Smart growth:** fostering knowledge, innovation, education and digital society.
- **Sustainable growth:** ensuring that the

European economy makes a transition towards a low-carbon economic model.

- **Inclusive growth:** raising participation in the labour market and reducing poverty.

Education, training and lifelong learning play a key role to achieve these strategic priorities, in particular when it comes to smart and inclusive growth. To render this more tangible, five key targets in the areas

of employment, innovation, education, poverty reduction and climate/energy were set for the EU to achieve by 2020.

For education the aim has been to improve attainment level, in particular through the headline targets of reducing the early school leaving rate to less than 10% and increasing the share of young people with

a third-level degree or diploma to at least 40%. As of 2019, these rates stand at 10.6% and 40.7% respectively.

The future of the Europe 2020 strategy, in other words, whether or not there will be a “Europe 2030” strategy, remains unknown and still to be decided by the EU institutions.

## FIVE TARGETS

1. **EMPLOYMENT:** aiming to raise to 75% the employment rate for people aged 20-64;
2. **RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT:** improving the conditions for research and development, particularly with the aim of raising combined public and private investment levels in this sector to 3% of GDP;
3. **CLIMATE CHANGE:** reducing

greenhouse gas emissions by 20%, increasing the share of renewable to 20% and improving energy efficiency by 2018;

4. **EDUCATION:** improving education level, in particular by aiming to reduce school drop-out rates to less than 10% and increasing the share of young people with a third-level degree or diploma to at least 40%;

5. **POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION:** Ensuring at least 20 million fewer people are at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

## SKILLS AGENDA FOR EUROPE

The Skills Agenda for Europe was adopted by the Commission in June 2016 with the aim to **create the right conditions to modernise labour markets, allow people to acquire new skills in order to raise employment levels and ensure sustainability of social models**. It launched the following 10 actions to achieve this aim:

1. Upskilling pathways: new opportunities for adults
2. Revision of European Qualifications Framework
3. Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition

4. Launch of Blueprint for sectoral cooperation on skills
5. Launch of EU skills profile tool for third-country nationals
6. Making vocational education and training (VET) a first choice
7. Revision of Key competences for Lifelong Learning
8. Revision of Europass
9. Graduate tracking
10. Analysis of brain flows

The 10 actions are designed to improve the quality and relevance of training and

other ways of acquiring skills; make skills more visible and comparable; and improve information and understanding of trends and patterns in demands for skills and jobs (skills intelligence) to enable people make better career choices, find quality jobs and improve their life chances. More information about each action can be found on the website of the European Commission. All actions have been delivered or their implementation is ongoing.

In July 2020, the European Commission launched an update of the Skills Agenda. An ambitious set of measures, this update places a major focus on upskilling and reskilling in the context of the green and digital transitions.

## THE EUROPEAN PILLAR OF SOCIAL RIGHTS

The Pillar of Social Rights is about **delivering new and more effective rights for citizens**. It builds upon 20 key principles, structured around three categories:

- **Equal opportunities and access to the labour market** - this includes the right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning; equality of treatment and opportunities between women and men and equal pay for work of equal value; the right to equal treatment and opportunities regarding employment, social protection, education, and access to goods and services available to the public; the right to timely and tailor-made assistance to improve employment or self-employment prospects.
- **Fair working conditions** - this includes the right to fair and equal treatment regarding working conditions, access to social protection and training and flexibility of working hours or time;

the right to be informed, in writing at the start of employment, about their rights and obligations resulting from the employment relationship and the right to be informed of the reasons and be granted a reasonable period of notice prior to any dismissal; the right to participate in work unions and express their views and concerns; right to suitable leave, flexible working arrangements and access to care services; and the rights to healthy, safe and well-adapted work environment and data protection

- **Social protection and inclusion** - this includes Childcare and support to children, workers' right to Social protection, unemployment benefits for the unemployed, minimum income, old age income and pension, health care, Inclusion of people with disabilities, long term care, housing and assistance for homeless people and access to essential services.

# EUROPEAN SEMESTER

**The European Semester is an annual cycle of economic and fiscal policy coordination.** Through this process, the European Commission evaluates whether and to what extent the commitments undertaken by Member States allow the EU to meet its headline targets for a specific year of the future in essential areas such as employment rates and/or education, and provides them with recommendations for the next 12-18 months.

At the end of the first semester of the solar year, the European Commission publishes Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs). Once these recommendations are endorsed at the June European Council and formally adopted by the Council of Ministers in July, they are meant to help Member States to prepare and adopt their national economic policies and budgets for the following year. More information on the different elements and timeline of the Semester process can be found on the website of the European Commission.

## SPRING EU COUNCIL

In March, EU Heads of State and government issue EU guidance for national policies on the basis of the Annual Growth Survey. The Spring meeting of the European Council, based on the Annual Growth Survey, takes stock of the overall macroeconomic situation, the progress towards the five EU-level targets and the progress under the flagship initiatives. It provides policy orientations covering fiscal, macroeconomic structural reform and growth enhancing areas, and advises on linkages between them.

Throughout the year, Member States are encouraged to implement peer review activities in specific policy issues at EU and national level to see its compliance with the recommendations and monitor progress towards the EU's headline targets.

Education, training and skills-related issues have become more prominent in the European Semester Country Reports and CSRs in recent years. In February 2020 the EYCS Council adopted a resolution on education and training in the European Semester which highlights the importance of investment in education and training and calls for comprehensive lifelong learning strategies and policies. It also calls for closer involvement of education policymakers in the Semester process.



## STABILITY AND CONVERGENCE PROGRAMMES (SCPS) & NATIONAL REFORM PROGRAMMES (NRPS)

The Spring European Council gives strategic guidance on the priorities to be pursued during the Semester Cycle. It invites Member States to take into account these priorities in their SCPs and NRPs, including their national Job Plans. In April, Member States submit to the European Commission both their medium-term budgetary and economic strategies (SCPS) and set out actions and measures to be undertaken in areas such as employment, education, research, innovation, or social inclusion in line with EU2020 objectives (NRPs).



## ANNUAL SUSTAINABILITY GROWTH SURVEY

The European semester starts when the Commission adopts its Annual Growth Survey (AGS), usually towards the end of the year, which includes a review of the progress achieved and sets out EU priorities for the coming year to boost growth and job creation, in line with EU 2020 objectives.

In the 2019 Autumn, the Commission rebooted the AGS with the release of the Annual sustainable growth survey (ASGS). The new name reflects the Commission's focus on a sustainable and inclusive economic model that will put people and climate first.

The ASGS is built around four dimensions:

- Environmental sustainability,
- Productivity gains,
- Fairness and
- Macroeconomic stability.

These priorities will run throughout the entire Semester Process and – with the integration of the UN SDGs into the Semester – aims to ensure that the new growth model works for people and the planet



# EDUCATION AND TRAINING 2020

The strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020) is a forum which allows Member States to exchange best practices and to learn from each other. Its main aim is to support Member States in further developing their education and training systems from a lifelong learning perspective, covering all levels and contexts (including non-formal and informal learning).

The ET2020 framework pursues this aim through the following four common objectives:

- 1. Make lifelong learning and mobility a reality**
- 2. Improve the quality and efficiency of education and training**
- 3. Promote equity, social cohesion, and active citizenship**
- 4. Enhance creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training**

To achieve these objectives the EU monitors the performance and development of the education and training system in each country according to a set of benchmarks and indicators, as follows.

## 1 Early school leaving

Early school leaving: The share of 18 to 24 year-olds having attained ISCED level 0-2 and not receiving any formal or non-formal education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey.

Target: <10%      Current: 10.6%

## 3 Early childhood education

The share of children aged 4 to the age of compulsory primary education who are participating in education.

Target: >95%      Current: 95.4%

## 5 Employment rate of recent graduates

The share of employed 20 to 34 year-olds having successfully completed ISCED 3-8 one to three years preceding the survey and who are no longer in education or training.

Target: >82%      Current: 81.6%

## 2 Tertiary educational attainment

The share of 30 to 34 year-olds having successfully completed ISCED level 5-8.

Target: >40%      Current: 40.7%

## 4 Underachieving in reading, mathematics and science

The share of 15 year-olds failing to reach level 2 in the OECD's PISA for reading, mathematics and science. The EU target is below 15%.

Target: <15%      Reading: 21.7%  
Maths: 22.4%  
Science: 21.6%

## 6 Adult participation in learning

The share of 25 to 64 year-olds who received formal or non-formal education or training in the four weeks preceding

Target: >15%      Current: 11.1%

The progress in meeting these targets is reported every year in the Education and Training Monitor comprising a cross-country comparison and 28 in-depth country reports. Additionally, the Monitor provides insights into the measures taken by Member States to address education-related issues as well as offers suggestions for policy reforms in terms of societal and labour market needs. The findings of the Monitor are likewise key to identify where EU funding should be targeted. More information can be found here.

In addition to the Monitor, the ET2020 framework is implemented through a variety of other tools and instruments under the EU's **Open Method of Coordination** (a voluntary form of intergovernmental policy-making based on networking, peer-learning and measuring progress against commonly agreed objectives and indicators, rather than binding legislation). These include:

- **Thematic Working Groups** composed of experts nominated by Member States and key stakeholders. They offer a forum for the exchange of experiences and good practices. For the period 2018-2020 the Working Groups are: Early Childhood Education and Care, Schools, Vocational Education and Training, Higher Education, Adult learning, Promoting Common Values and Inclusive Education, Digital Education: Teaching, Learning and Assessment

- **Peer Learning Activities (PLAs)** hosted by a Member State to showcase an existing good practice at the national level or explore a specific issue with other Member States
- **Peer Reviews** involving a group of Member States to provide guidance to another Member State on a specific national challenge
- **Peer counselling** bringing together expert from a small number of national administrations to provide advice, at the request of a Member State, on designing or implementing a policy to address a specific national challenge
- **Consultation and cooperation activities with stakeholders**, including civil society such as the European Education Summit and the Education, Training and Youth Forum.

The current ET2020 framework expires at the end of 2020. A proposal for the successor framework is expected to be put forward by the European Commission in the third quarter of 2020. Many of the current benchmarks and working methods are expected to remain to a large extent, although some modifications or new features may be added.

The role of the EU in education and training is to support, coordinate and supplement member state actions, without superseding their competence. The European Commission regularly publishes Communications giving political directions for the years to come such as the 2012 "Rethinking Education" and the 2013 "Opening up Education" Communications - what is referred to as soft law.



Contribute to the development of quality education and the promotion and improvement of vocational training (ex art. 165 & 166 TEU)



BENCHMARKING  
SETTING COMMON OBJECTIVES  
EU PROGRAMMES  
PEER LEARNING





## EUROPEAN LEGAL INSTRUMENTS

The term European legal instruments refers to the instruments available to the European institutions to carry out their tasks. As EU has only a supporting competence over education and training, it mostly issues softlaw policy measures, which are non binding, but nonetheless carry political weight:

- **Communications** usually set out a Commission action plan. They may also include concrete proposals for legislation.
- **Green Papers** are usually used to launch a consultation process. They present Commission policy orientations to interested parties that may wish to comment. The Commission will generally prepare a subsequent proposal.
- **White Papers**, which are often the followup of a Green Paper, set out concrete proposals for action by the Commission in a specific area.
- **Council Conclusions** are policy guidelines adopted at Council meetings. Although not legally binding, the conclusions have political power as a frame of reference.
- **Council Resolutions** are documents that are produced at the end of thematic debates at the European Council. While they are not legally binding, they have often been transposed into EU law through the work of the European Commission, Council of Ministers, or the European Parliament.
- **Recommendations and Opinions** are non-binding instruments issued by the Commission to define its view and suggest a line of action for a specific issue. Though they have technically no legal force, they do carry political and moral weight.



## EUROPEAN EDUCATION FORUM / SUMMIT

The **Education, Training and Youth Forum** aimed to bring together various stakeholders to discuss key policy developments linked to the Europe 2020 strategy, the ET2020 strategy and the European Youth strategy. The last edition (2016), focused on the New Skills Agenda for Europe, which aims to ensure that people develop a broad set of skills and competences from early on in life in order to make the most of Europe's human capital, as well as to improve employability and competitiveness.

LLL always praised this partnership dialogue between decision-makers, social partners and civil society representatives and called to step it up in a richer, open, more regular and sustainable way to discuss the future of education and training in Europe. This is especially true for the successful implementation of reforms at national and regional level, in particular through the opportunities offered by the new EU education, training and youth programme 2014-2020 "Erasmus+".

Building on these ideas, in 2018 the Commission hosted the First **European Education Summit**, focused on laying the foundations of the European Education Area: for an innovative, inclusive and values-based education. The Summit gathers ministers, experts, and teachers from across Europe to exchange experience, insights, and ideas on the future of education in the EU. The summit emphasises the critical role education plays in promoting resilience, fairness and social cohesion. The 2019 edition focused on the teaching profession and the key role it has in building a true European Education Area by 2025.

# MAIN POLICY INITIATIVES IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

## EUROPEAN EDUCATION AREA

In November 2017, the Commission set out its vision and concrete steps to **create a European Education Area by 2025**:

*«A Europe in which learning, studying and doing research would not be hampered by borders. A continent, where spending time in another Member State - to study, to learn, or to work - has become the standard and where, in addition to one's mother tongue, speaking two other languages has become the norm. A continent in which people have a strong sense of their identity as Europeans, of Europe's cultural heritage and its diversity.» This vision was set out building on the New Skills Agenda for Europe and investing in Europe's youth initiatives. Education is considered part of the solution to get more people into decent jobs, respond better to the economy's skills needs and strengthen Europe's resilience in a context of the rapid and profound changes induced by the technological revolution and globalisation».*

The Area is set to be underpinned by the **lifelong learning continuum**, and concern all education sectors from early childhood education and care, through school and vocational education and training, to higher education and adult learning. This shared agenda has at its heart the idea of working jointly based on trust, mutual recognition, cooperation and exchange of best practices, mobility and growth, including via: making learning mobility a reality for all; removing obstacles to the recognition of qualifications, both at the

level of schools and higher education; modernising the development of curricula; boosting language learning; creating world-class European universities that can work seamlessly together across borders; improving education, training and lifelong learning; driving innovation in education in the digital era; giving more support to teachers; and preserving cultural heritage and fostering a sense of a European identity and culture.

## KEY COMPETENCES FOR LIFELONG LEARNING EUROPEAN REFERENCE FRAMEWORK

The European Reference Framework for key competencies for lifelong learning was adopted in 2006 by the Council Conclusion and revised in 2018. The eight key competences framework for lifelong learning is a tool for policy-makers across the EU which identifies the essential skills that people need to lead successful lives in today's world. This framework defines eight key competences and describes the essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to each of these. These key competences are all interdependent, and the emphasis in each case is on critical thinking, creativity, initiative, problem solving, risk assessment, decision taking and constructive management of feelings. As of January 2018 the eight key competences are:

- Literacy competence
- Multilingual competence
- Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology and engineering
- Digital competence
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence
- Citizenship competence

- Entrepreneurship competence
- Cultural awareness and expression competence

This is a **revision of the 2006 framework** where the competences were communication in the mother tongue; Communication in foreign languages; Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology; Digital competence; Learning to learn; Social and civic competences; Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship and Cultural awareness and expression.

The European Commission's Joint Research Centre has developed reference frameworks for specific key competences in order to provide a more comprehensive description of the knowledge, skills and attitudes that they encompass. So far these include EntreComp: the European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework and DigiComp: The European Digital Competence Framework. The development of a framework for the personal, social and learning to learn' competence or LifeComp has been underway since 2019.

## EUROPEAN QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK

The European Qualification Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF) aims to better **link different national qualifications systems**, acting as a translation device for employers and individuals to better understand qualifications from different EU countries, thus making it easier to work, study or hire staff abroad. Its eight common European reference levels are described in terms of learning outcomes: knowledge, skills and competences. This allows any national

qualifications frameworks (NQFs) and qualifications in Europe to relate to the EQF levels. Learners, graduates, providers and employers can use these levels to understand and compare qualifications awarded in different countries and by different education and training systems. The rapid development of NQFs at national level has set the scene for the development of other initiatives such as the **validation of non-formal and informal learning**.

## THE EUROPEAN QUALITY ASSURANCE IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (EQAVET)

EQAVET was adopted by the European Parliament and the European Council in 2009. It is designed to **promote better vocational education and training by providing authorities with common tools for the management of quality**. The Reference Framework forms part of a series of European initiatives which aim to

recognise qualifications and competences received by learners across different countries or learning environments, thereby promoting modernisation, mutual trust and mobility in vocational education and training (VET)

## THE EUROPEAN CREDIT SYSTEM FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (ECVET)

This tool was initiated in 2004 along the lines of the ECTS. It has been developed to **help the transfer and recognition of learning experiences** in Europe, including those outside formal training systems. The aim of the ECVET is to:

- Make it easier for people to get validation and recognition of work related skills and knowledge acquired in different systems and countries
- Make it more attractive to move between different countries and learning

environments

- Increase the compatibility between the different vocational education and training (VET) systems in place across Europe, and the qualifications they offer
- Increase the employability of VET graduates and the confidence of employers that each VET qualification requires specific skills and knowledge.

## EUROPASS

Europass is an EU initiative designed to **increase the transparency of qualification and mobility of citizens in Europe**. It is generated through the implementation of five documents to make your skills and qualifications clearly and easily understood in Europe. Two of these documents (the curriculum vitae and language passport) are freely accessible, while three of

these documents (the europass mobility, certification supplement, and diploma supplement) are issued by education and training authorities. Europass aims to help citizens communicate their skills and qualifications effectively when looking for a job or training, help employers understand the skills and qualifications of the workforce, and help education and training authorities

define and communicate the content of curricula.

In every country of the European Union and the European Economic Area, a National Europass Centre coordinates all activities related to the Europass documents. It is the first point of contact for any person or organisation interested in using or learning more about Europass.

In 2016, **the Commission adopted a proposal to revise the Europass Decision with the aim of simplifying and modernising these tools** for the digital age and to add a new feature using big data to map and anticipate labour market trends and skills needs. The objective is to ensure the

realisation of the tools' full potential and to update them so that they meet ever-shifting requirements (for instance, the increasing role of non-formal skills and digitalisation). The proposal was adopted by EU Member States in April 2018. An Advisory Group, of which the LLLP is a part of, was established with the Member States and stakeholders representatives. After a series of user-tests, the new Europass platform was launched in July 2020.

## NATIONAL ACADEMIC RECOGNITION INFORMATION CENTRES (NARIC)

NARIC provides information and advice on the academic recognition of diplomas and periods of study abroad. It consists of national centers in the countries covered by the Erasmus+ programme and works closely with the wider European Network of Information Centres covering the whole

of the European Higher Education Area. It is part of the European Commission's Erasmus+ programme and is aimed at improving the mobility of students and staff between higher education institutions.

## EUROPEAN SKILLS, COMPETENCES, QUALIFICATIONS AND OCCUPATIONS (ESCO)

ESCO (European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations) is the European multilingual classification of Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations. It works as a dictionary, describing, identifying and classifying professional occupations, skills, and qualifications relevant for the EU labour market and education and training and it enables users to exchange CVs and job

vacancies stored in different IT systems. The aim of ESCO is to support job mobility across Europe and therefore a more integrated and efficient labour market, by offering a "common language" on occupations and skills that can be used by different stakeholders on employment, education and training topics.

## YOUTHPASS

Youthpass is part of the European Commission's strategy to foster the recognition of non-formal and informal learning in youth work. This tool is for projects funded by Erasmus+ Youth in Action and Youth in Actions programmes. The Youthpass certificates are available

for Youth Exchanges, European Voluntary Service, and youth workers' mobility within Key Action 1.

## STUDY IN EUROPE

Study in Europe is a project which aims to showcase European Higher Education worldwide and provide information about organising and funding study and research periods in Europe. On the other hand, it seeks to help European Higher Education organisations connect with potential students and partners. The project, which

covers 34 European countries (these countries participate in the Erasmus+ programme), is implemented by a consortium of partner organisations and is supported by an Advisory Group composed of national higher education promotion agencies. It will be integrated into the new Europass and may be likely to change.

## MOBILITY TOOL

In 2017, the Commission and the European University Foundation launched the Erasmus+ Mobile App. This tool serves as a step-by-step guide for students taking part in a mobility experience, before, during and after the mobility period. In order to facilitate the exchange of student

information and support mobility, the Commission is also backing the European Student Card initiative.

# SECTORAL POLICIES

## EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

Early childhood education and care refers to any regulated arrangement that provides **education and care for children from birth to compulsory primary school age**, which may vary across the EU. One of the main initiatives for facilitating this is the ET2020 Thematic Working Group on Early Childhood Education and Care; introduced in 2018 the Working Group has had a broad mandate to monitor the EU benchmark of 95% of children above 4 years old attending early childhood education and care has globally been reached, but there are still wide differences across countries, regions and areas.

This Working Group discusses how to develop high-quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) systems across Europe. It builds on the results achieved by the previous Working Group (2012-2014), which developed the European Quality Framework for this sector. Its main priority areas are:

- Professionalisation of staff as a key element of creating an attractive, sustainable and competent profession. This part of the work focuses on both initial and continuous professional development, career pathways and opportunities, diversity of staff (e.g. tackling the gender gap, ensuring diversity of ethnic background), as well as working conditions.
- Social inclusion which focuses on promoting broad participation in early childhood education and care, which aims at narrowing skill gaps between children of different backgrounds (including children with special

needs), improving social cohesion and supporting early language learning of children from newly arrived migrant or minority groups.

The Working Group will also reflect on how to measure quality at different levels of ECEC systems

### NGOs IN THE FIELD

- Learning For Well-being Foundation
- European Parents' Association (EPA)
- Eurochild
- Save The Children
- COFACE Families Europe
- International Step by Step Association (ISSA)
- Make Mothers Matter
- EU Alliance for Investing in Children

## SCHOOL EDUCATION

Because each country is responsible for the organisation and content of education and training systems, there are often advantages by working together on similar issues of concern. The European Commission supports national efforts in two main ways: it works closely with national policymakers to help them develop their school education policies and systems, and it gathers and shares information and analysis while encouraging the exchange of good policy practices. One of the main initiatives for facilitating this is the **ET2020 Thematic Working Group on Schools**. Since 2016, the Working Group has had a broad mandate to develop the governance of school education systems to promote improved quality by enhancing sustainable innovation and inclusion.

The Erasmus+ Programme invests millions of Euros each year in projects that promote school exchanges, school development, the education of school staff, school assistantships, etc.

As regards the priority areas, education ministers from EU countries have come together to identify these key priority areas:

- All pupils should develop Key Competences for Lifelong Learning. This can be supported by redesigning curricula and assessment, providing training for school staff, and enhancing the availability and use of good quality learning tools and resources;
- Each pupil should benefit from high-quality learning experiences and Early Childhood Education and Care should be more widely available;
- Support for learners with special educational needs, including migrants to the EU, must to be improved at school level, and Early School Leaving should be reduced

### NGOs IN THE FIELD

- European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education (ECSWE)
- European Forum for Freedom in Education (effe)
- European Parents' Association (EPA)
- European School Heads Association (ESHA)
- International Federation of Training Centres for the promotion of new education (FICEMEA)
- Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions (OBESSU)
- European Council of National Associations of Independent Schools (ECNAIS)
- European Association of History Educators (EUROCLIO)
- Association for Teacher Education in Europe (ATEE)
- Cités des Métiers International Network
- Youth for Understanding (EEE-YFU)
- European Federation for Intercultural Learning (EFIL)
- SIRIUS
- Solidar

- Teachers, school leaders and teacher educators need to receive more support, including continued opportunities for professional development and flexible, attractive career options;
- Quality assurance should be further developed to ensure a more effective, equitable and efficient governance of school education and to facilitate mobility for those undertaking and delivering education and training.

## VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Based on the Copenhagen Process, the European Commission acts in partnership with national governments, employers' and workers' groups and countries outside the EU to:

- Improve the quality of training (initial education, continuing development);
- Improve the quality of teachers, trainers and other professionals in the sector;
- Make courses more relevant to the labour market.

The Commission's work on vocational education and training is supported by

### NGOs IN THE FIELD

- **European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (EfVET)**
- **European Vocational Training Association (EVTA)**
- **European Association of Institutes for Vocational Training (EVBB)**
- **European Federation of Professional Circus Schools (FEDEC)**
- **The Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions (OBESSU)**
- **European Association of Regional and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning (EARLALL)**
- **Foundation of European Regions for Research in Education and Training (FREREF)**

two agencies: the **European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop)**, which provides information and analysis of education and training systems, policies, research and practice in the EU and the **European Training Foundation (ETF)**, which works to develop education and

training systems in the Western Balkans, neighbouring countries and Central Asia.

On 7 December 2010, European Ministers for vocational education and training (VET), the European Social Partners and the European Commission adopted the Bruges Communiqué on enhanced European cooperation in VET for 2011-2020. The Communiqué defined common objectives for 2020 and an action plan, combining national measures with European support.

The **2015 Riga Conclusions** further built on the Bruges Communiqué to identify a number of priorities for boosting competitive and innovative vocational education and training until 2020, including the promotion of work-based learning in all its forms with special attention to apprenticeships and strengthening key competences in VET curricula. In 2018 the Advisory Committee on Vocational training endorsed an opinion on the future of VET which will contribute to the Commission's policy work beyond 2020.

## HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education, research and innovation play a crucial role in personal and societal development and in delivering the European Union's strategy to achieve and maintain growth. The Europe 2020 strategy set a target that by 2020 40% of young Europeans should have a higher education qualification, which has now been achieved according to the most recent figures. The contribution of higher education to jobs and growth, and its international attractiveness, can be enhanced through effective links between education, research, and innovation, which are key drivers of a knowledge-based society. Education, research and innovation are the three sides of the so-called "**Knowledge Triangle**".

In 2017, the Commission put forth a renewed EU agenda for higher education. In this document four key goals are identified concerning European cooperation in this area: tackling future skills mismatches and promoting excellence in skills development; building inclusive and connected higher education systems; ensuring higher education institutions contribute to innovation; and supporting effective and efficient higher education systems.

For achieving these goals the Commission proposed concreated actions which are supported by the Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020 programmes. More specifically, the Commission supports the exchange of good policy practices between different countries through the ET2020 higher education working group, the Bologna process and the development and use of mobility and recognition tools, such as the ECTS system and the Diploma Supplement. Following the 2017 Gothenburg Social Summit, the Commission is also currently working on three key priorities: a network of European Universities, the automatic mutual recognition of diplomas and the

### NGOs IN THE FIELD

- **European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE)**
- **European Students' Forum (AEGEE Europe)**
- **European Distance and E-Learning Network (EDEN)**
- **Erasmus Student Network (ESN)**
- **European Students Union (ESU)**
- **European University Continuing Education Network (EUCEN)**
- **European University College Association (EucA)**
- **Mediterranean Universities Union (UNIMED)**
- **Association for Teacher Education in Europe (ATEE)**

European student card. These priorities are aimed at boosting mobility and student exchanges for all.

The **Bologna process** through which the European Higher Education Area was established, has been key in facilitating studying and training abroad for students and staff as well as in strengthening higher education institutions and systems. Launched in 1999, this process aims to bring more coherence to higher education systems across Europe. The intention is to allow the diversity of national systems and universities to be maintained while the European Higher Education Area improves transparency between higher education systems, as well as implements tools to facilitate recognition of degrees and academic qualifications, mobility, and exchanges between institutions. All participating countries (48 as of 2020) have agreed on a comparable three cycle degree system for undergraduates (Bachelor degrees) and graduates (Masters and PHD

degrees).

The EU has an important role promoting effectiveness and efficiency in higher education. This is done through support for research and policy cooperation among Member States as well as cooperation with international organisations such as the OECD. Furthermore, the Commission coordinates peer learning activities to foster mutual learning on good practices in governance and funding. Regarding funding, between 2014 and 2020, 17 EU Member States invested European structural and investment funds (ESIF) in higher education and 5.2 billion from the European Social Fund (ESF) was invested on training individuals, reforming programmes and aligning education with the needs of the labour market.

Furthermore, a common framework for

ensuring accountability at European, national and institutional level was established in 2015 (ESG). Similarly, the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) was created to develop quality assurance at European level. Among other initiatives, the Commission has launched a STEAM action to bring together diverse stakeholders to promote the uptake and modernisation of relevant STEM subjects and other curricula. The STE(A)M approach incorporates interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral aspects into the teaching and learning of STEM subjects. Finally, the Commission has backed a number of initiatives and funding projects that aim to support the integration of migrants and refugees into higher education. More specifically, two key issues that have been looked into are language skills and the recognition of qualifications, in particular those from outside the EU.

## ADULT LEARNING

The European Commission works to implement the **European Agenda for Adult Learning**. This agenda highlights the need to increase participation in adult learning of all kinds (formal, non-formal, and informal learning). Adult learning is considered to play a major role in achieving the Europe 2020 goals, by enabling adults (in particular the low-skilled and older workers) to acquire work skills and improve their ability to adapt to changes in the labor market and society. Furthermore, adult learning fosters active citizenship and personal development and fulfilment.

The Agenda set specific priorities for the 2015-2020 period such as improving governance, increase the supply and demand for high-quality provision, ensure effective outreach, guidance and motivation strategies to reach and assist adult learners,

offer more flexible opportunities for adults to learn and improved access through more learning at the workplace and enhance the quality of adult learning by monitoring the impact of policies and improving the training provided to adult educators.

The EU countries had set as a target for 2020 that 15% of adults aged 25-64 should be taking part in learning. According to the **ET2020 Monitor** published in 2019, the European average in 2018 was 11.1% with only 8 member states having already reached and surpassed the target.

The European Commission coordinates a **network of national coordinators** who promote adult learning in their countries, provide policy advice and support, and gather and distribute the best practices. The European Commission also works with

a range of European associations, networks, and labor organizations to promote adult learning. Furthermore, the Commission facilitates exchange of good practices and publishes indicators and data on the current situation in member countries, reports on progress in implementing policies and proposes new policy and facilitates exchange of good practices.

### NGOs IN THE FIELD

- European association for the Education of Adults (EAEA)
- European Federation for Catholic Adult Education (FEECA)
- European University Continuing Education Network (Eucen)
- SOLIDAR
- International Sport and Culture Association (ISCA)
- The International Language Association (ICC)
- All Digital
- VOLONTEUROPE Network
- Association for Teacher Education in Europe (ATEE)

The **Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (EPALE)** funded under the Erasmus+ programme is one of the main points of reference for adult learning professionals in Europe. EPALE began in early 2014 with the support of EACEA and became operational in 2015. The website offers a pan European Calendar of events, a Newsroom, a Resource center, and five Thematic pages which focus upon topics important in the adult learning sector. The platform offers a multilingual online space to exchange, showcase and promote best practices in adult education as well as peer learning. For more information, visit

Moreover, in EPALE, information about the work of the ET2020 working group on adult learning can be found. This group consists

of national experts, representatives of European social partners and civil society members who get together to exchange and analyse information as well as develop policy guidance in the field of adult learning based upon best practices taken from across Europe.

The Council adopted in 2016 a **Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways** to help adults acquire a minimum level of literacy, numeracy and digital skills and/or a broader set of skills by progressing towards an upper secondary qualification or equivalent (level 3 or 4 in the European Qualifications Framework). The target population are adults with a low level of skills such as those without upper secondary education and who are not eligible for Youth Guarantee support. To have access to Upskilling pathways, participants are supposed to follow three main steps: skills assessment, an offer of education and training meeting the needs identified by the skills assessment and finally validation and recognition. The EU supports the implementation of the Upskilling pathways through the European Social Fund, Erasmus+, European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), among other programmes.

### THE SURVEY OF ADULT SKILLS (PIAAC)

The Survey of Adult Skills is an international survey conducted in over 40 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. The first results from the Survey were released on 8 October 2013. It is organised by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

## YOUTH POLICIES AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

The EU Youth Strategy is the **new framework for cooperation on youth for the 2019-2027 period** that seeks to bring the EU closer to young people and to help address issues of concern to them. The Strategy is based on the Council Resolution of 26 November 2018 and its main aim is to empower young people and build their resilience by focusing on three areas of action, around the three words: Engage, Connect and Empower:

- The **engagement** of young people in civic and democratic participation.
- **Connecting** youngsters across the EU to promote solidarity, intercultural understanding, opportunities to learn, work, and volunteer abroad.
- The support of **youth empowerment** through boosting innovation, quality and recognition of youth work.

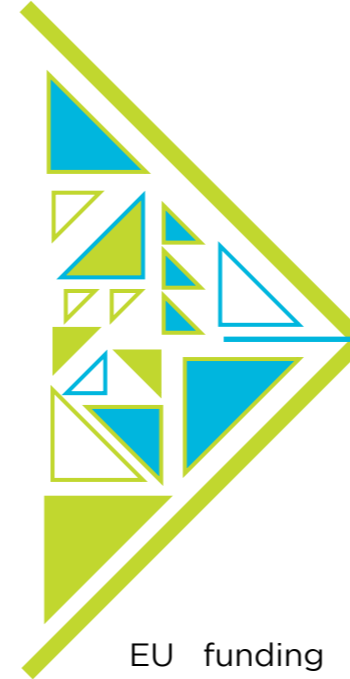
During a 2017-2018 dialogue process which involved young people from all over Europe, 11 European Youth Goals were developed. These goals identify cross-sectoral areas that affect young people's lives and point out changes. They are as follows:

- Connecting EU with Youth
- Equality of all genders
- Inclusive societies
- Information and constructive dialogue
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Moving rural youth forward
- Quality employment for all
- Quality learning
- Space and participation for all
- Sustainable green Europe
- Youth organisations and European programmes

The Commission's proposal for the **EU Youth Strategy** also included the establishment of an EU Youth Coordinator that would have the role to work hand in hand with

various stakeholders in order to enhance cross-sectoral cooperation, knowledge development and exchange of youth issues within the EC services.

Apart from this strategy, there is also the **Youth Guarantee**, to which all Member States have committed to implement. The Guarantee seeks to ensure that all young people under the age of 25 years receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship and traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. A renewed Youth Guarantee is scheduled to be proposed on June 24, 2020.



## EU FUNDING

EU funding programmes are also key policy implementation instruments. EU funds, managed mostly by the European Commission, can be granted to public or nongovernmental organisations. The funds are intended to aid the implementation of EU policies or to further pursue EU interests in specific policy areas. The funds are especially important in areas where the EU lacks formal competence, such as education and training.

The funding for each programme is allocated within the framework of the long-term EU budget or the **EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)** which runs in a seven year cycle. The current MFF has been in place since 2014 and will finish at the end of 2020. The next MFF, for the period 2021-2027, remains under negotiation by EU leaders.

## ERASMUS+

Erasmus+ is the EU's programme to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe. It aims to boost skills and employability and to modernise Education, Training, and Youth work. Its current envelope is 14 billions euros for the period of 2014-2020. Even though the negotiations are still under way at the moment, it is proposed that the budget for the Erasmus+ programme will be increased for the seven coming years 2021-2027. During these years, the number of participating citizens is expected to rise to 12 million, which compared to the number of participating citizens of the previous years of 2014-2020 will be tripled.

The programme has been conceived with

a simplified architecture based on three key actions which are expected to remain broadly the same in the next programming period:

**Key Action 1** - Learning mobility of individuals supporting mobility of learners and staff, joint master degrees and the master student loan guarantee. The actions supported under this Key Action are expected to bring positive and long-lasting effects on the participants and participating organisations involved, as well as on the policy systems in which such activities are framed;

**Key Action 2** - Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices

supporting strategic partnerships, sector skills alliances and knowledge alliances, as well as capacity building projects and IT sectoral platforms. This Key Action is expected to result in the development, transfer and implementation of innovative practices at organisational, local, regional, national or European levels;

**Key Action 3** - Support for policy reforms encouraging stakeholders' participation, evidence based-policy-making, the Open method of Coordination and prospective initiatives from public authorities.

These actions are managed partly at the national level by National Agencies and partly at the European level by the EACEA. The European Commission is responsible for

Erasmus+ policies and oversees the overall programme. Erasmus+ provides grants for activities in the fields of education, training, youth and sport. It offers opportunities for:

- **individuals** to spend a mobility or volunteering period abroad and to receive linguistic training,
- **organisations** to collaborate in project partnerships in the fields of academic and vocational training, schools, adult learning and European sport events.

## EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

The European Social Fund is the **main EU financial instrument for improving employment opportunities and promoting social inclusion**. It belongs to the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds) which were set up to promote the EU's economic, social and territorial cohesion. The Fund has an envelope of 86.4 billion euros for the current 2014-2020 period. One of its main thematic objectives is investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning.

For the 2021-2027 period it will be updated to the **European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)**. With a provisional budget of 101.2 billion (current prices) still under negotiation, the ESF+ will merge the existing European Social Fund (ESF), the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), and

the Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived (FEAD), the Employment and Social Innovation Programme (EaSI) and EU Health Programme. The new fund will concentrate its investment in three main areas: education, employment and social inclusion.

The main objectives of ESF+ in education will be: quality of education and training systems; equal access to inclusive education and training; lifelong learning, notably up-skilling and reskilling taking digital skills into account; more effective anticipation of change and new skills requirements.

## EUROPE FOR CITIZENS

The aim of the Europe for Citizens Programme is to contribute to citizens' understanding of the EU, its history and diversity and to encourage the democratic participation of citizens at EU level. Europe for Citizens has a budget of 187.7 million euros for the current ongoing period. It offers support to actions under two 'strands' or thematic areas: "European Remembrance", focusing on Europe as a peace project, and "Democratic engagement and civic participation" aimed at strengthening the general public's understanding of how EU policies are shaped today and involvement of civil society in European policy-making.

After 2020 Europe for Citizens will be merged with the current Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme to create a new

**Rights and Values programme.** This merge is expected to bring simplification, mutual reinforcement and increased effectiveness. The general objective of the programme will be to protect and promote the rights and values enshrined in the EU Treaties and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. This will be achieved through three specific objectives:

- Promotion of equality and rights (Equality and Rights Strand)
- Promotion of citizen engagement and participation in the life of the Union (Citizens' engagement and participation Strand)
- Fight against all forms of violence (Daphne strand)

## CREATIVE EUROPE

Culture has a positive role to play in reinforcing the resilience of European society and the economy. The cultural and creative sectors fully contribute to the EU's economic development, generating jobs and growth. In light of this, the European Commission established the Creative Europe programme with the aim to **support the culture and audiovisual sectors**. The programme, with a current budget of 1.46 billion euros, is divided into two sub-programmes, Culture and MEDIA, and is supported by a cross-sectoral strand.

The stated aims of Creative Europe are:

- Help the cultural and creative sectors seize the opportunities of the digital age and globalisation;
- Enable the sectors to reach their economic potential, contributing to sustainable growth, jobs, and social cohesion;
- Give Europe's culture and media sectors access to new international opportunities, markets, and audiences.
- In the period 2021-2027 the Commission has proposed an allocation of 1.52 billion euros, still to be negotiated.



# HORIZON 2020

Horizon 2020 is the EU framework programme for research and innovation. Its aim is to help achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive economic growth in Europe by promoting world-class science and technology, removing barriers to innovation and making it easier for the public and private sectors to work together in delivering solutions to big challenges facing our society. The budget for the current period 2014-2020 is of 74.8 billion euros and it is expected to have an increase to 94.4 billion euros in the period 2021-2027, still under negotiation. The three main priorities that the current programme tackles are excellent science, industrial leadership and societal challenges.

Horizon 2020 will be replaced by **Horizon Europe** in the next programming period. It is reported that Horizon Europe will be more policy and objective driven than the current programme with an even greater focus on innovation and closer synergies with other funding programmes.

# SOME EUROPEAN NGOs IN THE FIELD



## AEGEE - European Students' Forum

AEGEE is one of Europe's biggest interdisciplinary student organisations. As a non-governmental, politically independent, and non-profit organisation AEGEE is open to students and young people from all faculties and disciplines. Founded in 1985, today AEGEE has grown to a network of 13000 AEGEEans, in 161 cities and in 40 countries all over Europe.



## ALL DIGITAL Europe

All Digital (previously known as Telecentre Europe) is a leading pan-European association based in Brussels, representing member organisations across Europe that work with 25,000 digital competence centres.



## ATEE - Association for Teachers' Education in Europe

The Association for Teacher Education in Europe (ATEE) is a non-profit European organisation, whose aim is enhancing the quality of Teacher Education in Europe and supporting the professional development of teachers and teacher educators at all levels.



## DARE - Democracy and Human Rights Education in Europe

The Democracy and Human Rights Education in Europe (DARE) Network is a Europe-wide network of primarily NGOs, academic institutions and training providers devoted to promote active democratic citizenship and human rights through formal education, non-formal and informal education, and life-long learning.



## DLEARN - European Digital Learning Network

The European Digital Learning Network - DLEARN - is a no-profit association. It aims to embrace the challenges brought by the digital transformation in terms of digital skills mismatch and digital learning opportunities.



## EAEA - European Association for the Education of Adults

The European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) is the voice of non-formal adult education in Europe. EAEA is a European NGO with 133 member organisations in 43 countries and represents more than 60 million learners Europe-wide.



### EARLALL - European Association of Regional & Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning

EARLALL is a Brussels-based network of regions aiming to contribute to EU policy-making and cooperate in projects in the field of lifelong learning. Based on the unique strengths of every region and local authority, EARLALL facilitates regional collaborations and partnerships, as well as an open and rapid exchange of knowledge in a context of trust and confidence.



### ECNAIS - European Council of National Association of Independent Schools

ECNAIS is a non-political, non-confessional, international association for collaboration between national associations of independent schools in European countries. ECNAIS Supports and pursues the values embedded in a democratic approach to pluralism in the national educational systems, and the respect of the parental choice.



### ECSWE - European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education

The European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education is an international non-profit organisation (AISBL). It consists of 26 national Steiner Waldorf school associations, representing 775 Steiner Waldorf schools across 28 European countries.



### EDEN - European Distance and E-Learning Network

The European Distance and E-Learning Network exists to share knowledge and improve understanding amongst professionals in distance and e-learning and to promote policy and practice across the whole of Europe and beyond.



### EEE-YFU - European Educational Exchanges - Youth for Understanding

EEE-YFU is an international non-profit organisation under Belgian law (AISBL) and the umbrella organisation of Youth For Understanding (YFU) in Europe. EEE-YFU supports its 28 European Member Organisations to have a strong impact in youth exchanges and intercultural education and be a visible and growing community.



### EFFE - European Forum for Freedom in Education

The European Forum for Freedom in Education (effe) is a non-governmental organization working in the field of general education. effe is based in Germany and connects people all over Europe who want to shape the future of education.



### EFIL - European Federation for Intercultural Learning

EFIL contributes to peace and justice in a diverse world threatened by inequity and intolerance, by promoting intercultural understanding and sensitivity among European and other countries, organisations and citizens.



### EfVET - European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training

EfVET is a leading European-wide professional association. EfVET offers a network of, and for, professionals to foster connections between researchers, business people, and practitioners in Vocational Education and Training and lifelong learning.



### EMDR Europe

EMDR Europe is the official professional association of National EMDR Associations, establishing, maintaining and promoting the highest standards of excellence and integrity in EMDR therapy practice, research and education throughout Europe.



### EPA - European Parents' Association

EPA gathers the parents associations in Europe which together represent more than 150 million parents. In the field of education, EPA aims to promote the active participation of parents and the recognition of their central place as the primary responsible of the education of their children.



### ESHA - European School Heads Association

ESHA, the European School Heads Association, is a professional organization for European School Heads. Members of ESHA are national organisations for school heads and deputy school heads within (pre-) primary, secondary and vocational education. Nearly all European countries (both EU and non-EU) are represented within ESHA by one or more organisations.



### ESN - Erasmus Student Network

Erasmus Student Network (ESN) is a non-profit international student organisation. Our mission is to represent international students, thus provide opportunities for cultural understanding and self-development under the principle of Students Helping Students.



### ESU - European Students' Union

ESU is the umbrella organisation of 46 National Unions of Students (NUS) from 40 countries and represents over 20 million students. ESU promotes the educational, social, economic and cultural interests of students at the European level towards all relevant bodies.



### EucA - European university college Association

The European university college Association was founded in 2008 to bring together and represent University Colleges and network of Colleges in Europe. The aim was to exchange experiences and best practices, facilitating the students with new international opportunities.



### eucen - european continuity university education network

eucen aims to contribute to the social, economic and cultural life of Europe through the promotion and advancement of lifelong learning within higher education institutions in Europe and elsewhere.



### EUF - European University Foundation

The European University Foundation aims to accelerate the modernisation of the European Higher Education Area. The Foundation focuses its action on five pillars and it stands for diversity and social fairness in Higher Education.





### European network for Education and Training

The “European Network for Education and Training e.V.”, shortly EUNET, is a network for European educational-facilities. The network consists of Non-Governmental-Organisations that inform, educate or in any other way spreads the European Idea to teenagers and adults.



### EURASHE - European Association of Institutions in Higher Education

EURASHE is the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education that offer professionally orientated programmes and are engaged in applied and profession-related research within the Bologna cycles.



### EuroClio - European Association of History Educators

EuroClio was established in 1992 with the support of the Council of Europe. Its mission is to inspire and support educators to engage learners in innovative and responsible history and citizenship education.



### EVBB - European Association of Institutes for Vocational Training

The European Association of Institutes for Vocational Training (EVBB) is the European umbrella association of free and non-profit educational providers. Its objective lies in the qualitative improvement of vocational education and training in European countries.



### EVTA - European Vocational Training Association

EVTA is a network of European organisations in the field of human capital development, which comprises 23 members from 16 European countries, representing thousands of national training centre’s and, in certain cases, national employment services.



### FEDEC - European Federation of Professional Circus Schools

Founded in 1998, FEDEC is a European and international network of more than 60 members located in more than 20 countries in Europe and beyond. FEDEC’s main vocation is to support the development and evolution of training, teaching and creation in the field of circus arts education.



### FEECA - European Federation for Catholic Adult Education

FEECA is a European network of national umbrella-organisations of catholic adult education. FEECA see their task in the effort in human dignity and the human right of holistic education in a pluralistic European society.



### FICEMEA - International Federation of Centers for Training in Active Education Methods

FICEMEA gathers 42 organisations present in Europe, South America, Africa and the Indian Ocean. For the last sixty years, the Federation has been working to promote active education working towards change in social and educational practices.



### FREREF - Foundation of European Regions for Research in Education and Training

FREREF was created in 1991 as an initiative of several European Regions. The network currently gathers about thirty Regions and Regional bodies and organisms acting in the area of lifelong learning.



### ICC - The International Language Association

The International Language Association (ICC) gathers professionals from all areas of language education and intercultural communication promoting excellence in the teaching and learning of languages by defining professional standards and disseminating these standards and practice to the widest possible public.



### ISCA - International Sports and Culture Association

ISCA, the International Sport and Culture Association, is a democratic, non-governmental and not-for-profit umbrella association with 41 European member organisations and 140 member organisations world-wide.



### L4WB-F - Learning for Well-Being Foundation

The Learning for Well-being Foundation is an advocacy foundation, working to inspire people to listen more to children and young people and to take more responsibility and initiative towards their holistic development, enabling them to live in harmony with themselves, others and the world at large.



### OBESSU - Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions

OBESSU is the platform for cooperation between the national school student unions active in general secondary and secondary vocational education in Europe. It was founded in April 1975 in Dublin and brings together Member, Candidate and Affiliate Organisations from all over Europe.



### Réseau International des Cités des métiers

A Cité des Métiers is a place managed in partnership by different stakeholder organisations, open to anyone in search of information to build one’s professional future, according to principles of open access, and free of charge and anonymous use. Its mission is to direct users to all the resources allowing them to formulate and achieve their career aims and to guide and support them in their choices.



### SIRIUS

SIRIUS is a European platform that brings together key stakeholders in migration and education from around Europe, including policy makers, researchers, practitioners and representatives of migrant communities.



### SOLIDAR

SOLIDAR is a European network of NGOs working to advance social justice in Europe and worldwide. With 60 member organisations based in 27 countries (22 of which are EU countries), member organisations are national NGOs in Europe, as well as some non-EU and EU-wide organisations, working in one or more of our fields of activity





### UNIMED - Mediterranean Universities Union

UNIMED, the Mediterranean Universities Union, founded in October 1991, is an association of Universities from Mediterranean basin countries. It counts 113 associated Universities coming from 23 countries of both shores of Mediterranean.



### Volonteuropa

Volonteuropa is an international network promoting volunteering, active citizenship and social justice in Europe and beyond. Volonteuropa works at all levels, from the local to the international, and across the public, private and third sectors.



### WOSM - World Organisation of the Scout Movement

The Scout Movement is a voluntary non-political educational movement for young people, open to all without distinction of gender, origin, race or creed. Scouting offers young people the opportunity to develop their full emotional, intellectual, physical, social and spiritual potentials as individuals, as responsible global citizens, and as members of their local, national and international communities.



### YEU - Youth for Exchange and Understanding

YEU is an international youth led organisation working on mainstreaming youth issues in society by encouraging development of young people's competences by using non-formal education and youth work as tools.





# LIFELONG LEARNING PLATFORM

EUROPEAN CIVIL SOCIETY FOR EDUCATION



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