

**The new College of Commissioners:
More synergies between education and training, but at what cost?**

On September 17th, President von der Leyen disclosed the [composition of the College of Commissioners](#), a crucial step for the EU. The new College of Commissioners will now go through [parliamentary scrutiny](#): each Commissioner-designate will be invited to appear before the appropriate committee or committees for a single confirmation hearing, publicly live streamed.

As far as education and training is concerned, President von der Leyen entrusted the role of Executive Vice-President for People, Skills and Preparedness to Roxana Mînzatu (Romania). As the [press release](#) confirms, she will have the “responsibility for skills, education and culture, quality jobs and social rights. This is under the umbrella of demography. [She] will notably lead on a Union of Skills and the European Pillar of Social Rights”. [Her mission letter](#) clarifies that she will be supported by DG EMPL as well as DG EAC in her endeavours.

Glenn Micallef (Malta) will be “Commissioner for Intergenerational Fairness, Culture, Youth and Sport. Intergenerational fairness is a cross cutting topic. It affects all of us – and especially young people”. [His mission letter](#) entrusts him with responsibilities for youth, sport and culture (including the educational dimensions of these sectors) and his work will be supported by DG EAC as well, but he will work under the supervision of Vice President Mînzatu. We look forward to understanding their specific responsibilities and how their offices will collaborate to provide them adequate support in the ambitious agenda set up by the European Commission.

The Lifelong Learning Platform welcomes the proposal of a Vice President that looks over education and skills altogether; as a matter of fact, LLLP focused a large part of its advocacy efforts during the summer to push a Vice President for Lifelong Learning to Member States’ governments, receiving positive feedback from many - and notably from Romania. It is reassuring to see such an ambitious portfolio that brings together education, social affairs and employment priorities, ensuring synergies between DG EAC-DG EMPL, and presenting a joint European Commission approach to the EPSCO-EYCS and CULT-EMPL dyads in the Council of the EU and European Parliament. The commitment to prioritise learning and refer to it as a transversal priority under the portfolio of an Executive Vice-President is a sign of a long-term approach to education and training. **At the same time, we cannot help but notice that including the wording lifelong learning in the official title would have been more appropriate.** This is not only a question of semantics or terminology: an emphasis on learning that happens throughout life in all settings and forms would make clear that the focus on

education and skills is not merely to satisfy labour market needs but a true sign that the new Commission will care for all learners.

The College's new architecture allows for a holistic perspective over policies for competence development and recognises the importance of the European Pillar of Social Rights' first principle. At the same time, this must not limit the overarching objective of education solely to labour market needs. The Mission Letter of Vice-President Mînzatu underlines skills and labour gaps, it details the urgency for productivity, while framing the scope of her work through the lens of jobs. Fearing education as subservient to the needs of the labour market, LLLP looks forward to working with the Vice-President on promoting a truly holistic vision of education and its universal and social mission. As President von der Leyen said in [her political guidelines](#), **we need to unite Europe through education** - a reminder for us all that education, in all of its forms, should have the upper hand in Vice-President Mînzatu's work.

Another source of concern is the division between historically united education sectors. Innovation and research are entrusted to Commissioner Ekaterina Zaharieva (Bulgaria), whose competences are said to be at the centre of the European economy. This is in discontinuity with the previous mandate of Commissioner Ivanova. With culture, youth and intergenerational dialogue on Micallef, we risk undermining the policy coherence of education programmes, notably risking that the Erasmus+ suffers from yet another partition between different Commissioners and, potentially, DGs. **LLL strongly recommends that deeper synergies are sought between the Commissioners and, crucially, between the areas they supervise.**

The composition and scrutiny of the College of Commissioners remains a crucial step in shaping the European Union for the current mandate of the Parliament and the Commission itself. It serves not only executive roles, but represents a statement in itself. At LLLP we are pleased with the ambition of bringing (back) together education and skills in the portfolio of Vice President Mînzatu; however, we demand that education and training are kept in due consideration and do not yield to labour market needs solely. We will keep on working to ensure that the same holistic vision is reflected in a learner-centred approach to all education and training files and we hope that the focus on a social Europe will prevail over military and defence concerns.

To this end, and in anticipation of the European Parliament hearing, LLLPlatform would like to see more clarity and actionable points in the Vice-President's portfolio on:

- Implementation of the 2012 Council Recommendation on the Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning - Including an Action Plan on Validation which would feed into the Skills Portability Initiative
- An adaptation of the Action Plan on Basic Skills into an Action Plan on Basic Competences - in line with the competence frameworks of the EU
- An EU Educator Agenda, which improves the working conditions, training and career prospects of teachers but also reflects on the broader professionals working in the sector and the trainers present in non-formal and informal learning contexts
- Participation to training, lifelong learning entitlements and paid training directive

- Equity and quality of education and training - considering that this remains the greatest challenge at the EU level
- Clear commitment to a 'Follow-up to the European Education Area'

For further information and enquiries, please reach out to policy@lllplatform.eu