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Subject:	Draft Council conclusions on the <i>Youth on the Move</i> initiative - an integrated approach in response to the challenges young people face

In the course of several meetings, the Education Committee has prepared the above set of draft conclusions with a view to their adoption at the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council on 18-19 November 2010.

The text now meets with the agreement of all delegations, subject only to possible linguistic reservations.

The Permanent Representatives Committee is accordingly invited to confirm the agreement reached in the Education Committee and to forward the text to the Council for adoption and subsequent publication in the Official Journal.

Draft**Council conclusions on the *Youth on the Move* initiative - an integrated approach in response to the challenges young people face**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

HAVING REGARD TO

1. the *Europe 2020* strategy, which sets ambitious objectives for smart, inclusive and sustainable growth to be met over the coming decade, highlighting in particular the need for action to improve education levels, increase employment rates and promote social inclusion, and which identifies a specific EU headline target relating to education¹, as well as others relating to employment², social inclusion³ and research and innovation⁴;
2. the Council conclusions on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ("*ET 2020*")⁵, which remains the basis for such cooperation and which complements the *Europe 2020* Strategy in emphasising the crucial contribution that education and training have to make in meeting the many socio-economic, demographic, environmental and technological challenges facing Europe today, and which establish four strategic objectives⁶ aimed at ensuring sustainable economic prosperity and employability, as well as the personal, social and professional fulfilment of all citizens;

¹ The target concerns two areas: *To reduce school drop-out rates to less than 10%, and to raise the share of 30-34 year olds having completed tertiary or equivalent education to at least 40%.*

² *To bring to 75% the employment rate for women and men aged 20-64, including through the greater participation of youth, older workers and low-skilled workers and the better integration of legal migrants.*

³ *To lift at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty and exclusion.*

⁴ *To improve the conditions for research and development, in particular with the aim of bringing combined public and private investment levels in this sector to 3% of GDP.*

⁵ OJ C 119, 28.5.2009.

⁶ Objective 1: *Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality*; Objective 2: *Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training*; Objective 3: *Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship*; Objective 4: *Enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training.*

3. the Council Resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field⁷, which recognises that promoting the social inclusion and professional integration of young women and men is an essential component in reaching the objectives of Europe's strategy for growth and jobs, at the same time as fostering personal fulfilment, social cohesion and active citizenship. It is of vital importance to enable all young women and men to make the best of their potential. The Resolution therefore calls for specific initiatives in the youth field - i.e. policies and actions specifically targeted at young people in areas such as non-formal learning, participation, voluntary activities, youth work, mobility and information, social inclusion, culture and health. It also calls for mainstreaming initiatives - i.e. initiatives to enable a cross-sectoral approach between youth policies and other relevant policy areas.

4. Within the *Europe 2020* Strategy, Member States and the European Union should implement reforms aimed at smart and inclusive growth, i.e. growth driven by knowledge and innovation which enables maximum participation. These should aim at improving the quality of education and training, at strengthening research and at promoting innovation and knowledge transfer throughout the EU. They should encourage entrepreneurship and help to turn creative ideas into innovative products, services and processes that can create growth, quality and sustainable jobs, territorial, economic and social cohesion, and address more efficiently and more effectively European and global societal challenges

⁷ OJ C 311, 19.12.2009.

WELCOMES

the Commission communication *Youth on the Move: An initiative to unleash the potential of young people to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the European Union*⁸, which puts young people at the centre of a framework agenda for the EU,

WHILST LOOKING FORWARD TO

considering the proposals contained in the initiative, which comprises key new actions as well as the reinforcement of existing activities, both within the Member States and at European level, with a view to helping young people to respond to the many socio-economic challenges they face and to succeed in the knowledge society,

RECOGNISES THAT

1. While Europe's prosperity depends to a large extent on its young people, too many of them still face considerable difficulties in realising their potential and making their contribution to society: too many leave school without qualifications or with insufficient skills, fail to secure employment and find themselves at risk of social exclusion, which in turn engenders high costs for the individual as well as for society as a whole. Remedying this situation requires a more integrated, cross-sectoral approach towards education and training, youth, employment and social policies which builds on current strengths and develops effective new measures.
2. The implementation of national lifelong learning strategies and instruments, which are key to enabling not only young people, but also adults, to acquire, maintain and develop knowledge, skills and competences throughout their careers, remains a challenge for many Member States. In particular, more flexible learning pathways are required which will allow men and women at different stages in life to move between different education and training systems, as well as between formal and non-formal and informal learning environments, and which can attract non-traditional learners.

⁸ Doc. 13726/10

3. In the coming years increasing numbers of jobs will require high-level qualifications⁹, yet the EU currently has a lower percentage of people with a tertiary or equivalent level qualification¹⁰, as well as a lower share of researchers, than its competitors. In addition, Europe's innovation capacity will require knowledge partnerships and stronger links between the worlds of education and training, research and business in order to enhance the knowledge triangle. This will also provide a means of ensuring that those in low-skilled employment are better able to adapt to the changing demands of the labour market.

4. In addition to meeting personal and socio-economic objectives, learning mobility can provide a useful way of strengthening employability and of acquiring or enhancing professional, pedagogical, linguistic, interpersonal and intercultural competences. It can also contribute to improving the quality of, and cooperation between, educational institutions. Although EU programmes and policy instruments have made a significant contribution in this area, there remains considerable untapped potential for learning mobility, which all too often remains the exception. Learning mobility opportunities within a formal educational context should be actively encouraged for groups such as young adult learners, teachers, trainers and educational staff. Young adults should also be able to benefit from such opportunities within non-formal or informal learning environments. In addition, new innovative forms of such mobility, including virtual mobility, need to be explored, while access to it should be broadened, paying particular attention to disadvantaged groups and gender.

⁹ The share of jobs requiring high-level qualifications will rise from 29% in 2010 to about 35% in 2020 (Cedefop estimations).

¹⁰ The share of people in the EU with tertiary or equivalent level education attainment was 32.3% in 2009 (Eurostat).

THEREFORE AGREES THAT

1. When working towards the aims of the *Youth on the Move* initiative, the European Commission and the Member States should cooperate within the overall context of the *Europe 2020* Strategy, whilst ensuring consistency with existing arrangements, in particular those made under the "ET2020" strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training, the European employment strategy and the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field. The implementation of actions, monitoring and reporting procedures should all be carried out within these frameworks and in accordance with their respective overall principles and objectives. Actions need to be closely coordinated, with the involvement and cooperation of the relevant stakeholders at every level, including through the structured dialogue.
2. The *Europe 2020* Integrated Guidelines¹¹ provide a framework for coordinated policy actions, the majority of which fall within the responsibility of Member States. Through appropriate monitoring, peer learning and the preparation of input to the European Council, the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport (EYCS) Council should play a key role in implementing the *Youth on the Move* initiative and the broader *Europe 2020* Strategy, including the specific task of achieving the EU headline target in the field of education and training.
3. Additional efforts are needed to help young people to meet the many socio-economic challenges they face. However, at a time of budgetary constraint, such efforts should focus on optimising and rationalising policy objectives and investments, by linking these more closely to the aims of *Europe 2020* and the priorities of the "ET2020" strategic framework.

¹¹ Proposal for a Council Decision on Guidelines for the Employment Policies of the Member States: Part II of the *Europe 2020* Integrated Guidelines.

4. While their scope extends beyond that of the *Youth on the Move* initiative, existing EU programmes such as the *Lifelong Learning*, *Erasmus Mundus* and *Youth in Action* programmes clearly have an important contribution to make towards achieving the aims of this initiative, as well as those of the *Europe 2020* Strategy in general. Both the broad scope of the programmes and their contribution to the initiative should be acknowledged when designing the next generation of programmes.
5. Greater mobility should be actively encouraged, including mobility with third countries and candidate countries, using the appropriate programmes and mechanisms. Learning mobility should also have a qualitative dimension, and be based on well-developed cooperation between education and training institutions. With a view to raising the quality and diversity of mobility, the potential offered by other existing forms of cooperation should be explored. However, mobility should not be regarded as an aim in itself, but rather as a means to enhance the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences and to meet personal and social challenges.

FURTHER AGREES THAT

In order to address the challenges outlined, measures are needed both within the Member States and at European level which - while fully respecting the principle of subsidiarity - will contribute to achieving the broader objectives and headline targets of the *Europe 2020* Strategy, as well as its associated flagship initiatives.

In the framework of the *Youth on the Move* flagship initiative, the following lines of action should be considered:

With specific regard to the field of education and training:

- Promoting the full implementation of integrated lifelong learning strategies;
- Ensuring the acquisition of the key competences that every individual, in particular those with a disadvantaged background, needs for success in a knowledge-driven society;
- Increasing participation in tertiary or equivalent education;
- Enhancing the quality and attractiveness of education at all levels, particularly in higher education and vocational education and training;
- Promoting the benefits of learning mobility in terms of increasing knowledge, skills and experience.

With specific regard to the field of youth:

- Promoting a cross-sectoral approach between youth policies and other relevant policy areas;
- Reinforcing both the quality and the quantity of mobility for all young people, in particular those with fewer opportunities, in non-formal and informal learning environments;
- Promoting non-formal and informal learning outcomes and improving their recognition, in order for young adults to have easier access to formal education and training and to the labour market;
- Encouraging youth participation in democratic life.

With specific regard to the field of employment:

- Education and training, youth and employment policies should cover in a well-coordinated manner the sequence of steps which young people need to take in the transition from education to work. Employment policies should contribute to reducing youth unemployment and to improving youth job prospects, as a key contribution towards the employment target of 75% set out in the *Europe 2020* Strategy for jobs and growth.

ACCORDINGLY INVITES THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION, WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE COMPETENCES,

To fully implement existing actions and develop future policy initiatives aimed at achieving the broad objectives of the *Youth of the Move* initiative within the broad context of the *Europe 2020* Strategy, as well as at meeting the EU headline target that specifically relates to education and training.

When doing so, Member States and the Commission should:

1. Ensure close collaboration between all related policy areas, in particular education, youth, social affairs, employment, research and innovation, with a view to exploring the possibility of common objectives;
2. Ensure that the EYCS Council and other relevant Council formations play their full part in the *Europe 2020* Strategy, notably by providing regular input to the European Council on progress towards the EU headline targets;
3. Rationalise and ensure full and efficient use of EU programmes and budgets, including - where appropriate - by linking these to national and regional resources and by considering use of the European structural and cohesion funds and the European Investment Bank;
4. Seek to maximise the potential of other and possible new sources of funding for the promotion of learning and employment mobility;
5. Consider the implications of these conclusions for the next generation of EU programmes and the next EU Financial Framework.