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Subject: Council Conclusions on the role of youth work in supporting young people's development of essential life skills that facilitate their successful transition to adulthood, active citizenship and working life
- *Council Conclusions (22 May 2017)*

Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on the role of youth work in supporting young people's development of essential life skills that facilitate their successful transition to adulthood, active citizenship and working life, adopted by the Council at its 3541st meeting held on 22 May 2017.

Council Conclusions on the role of youth work in supporting young people's development of essential life skills that facilitate their successful transition to adulthood, active citizenship and working life

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

RECALLING:

1. The political background to this issue as set out in Annex I to these conclusions;

ACKNOWLEDGES THAT

2. The European Union is facing significant economic and social challenges, in part as a result of increasing migration, the aftermath of the financial and economic crisis.
3. These developments present particular challenges to democratic values, social cohesion, employment prospects and working life as well as to the inclusion and well-being of young people, particularly those at risk and with fewer opportunities.
4. Strengthening young people's concept of active citizenship, its rights and responsibilities, its recognition and respect for democratic values, cultural diversity, its guarantee of freedom of expression and belief, through the acquisition of the necessary life skills¹ is essential if these challenges are to be successfully addressed.

¹ A definition of life skills as understood in these Council Conclusion can be found at Para. 10– 12 and in Annex II

5. Developing life skills is of equal importance in not only addressing the economic, political, social and human costs arising from high youth unemployment, but in helping young people to determine and forge their futures through quality employment, social inclusion and active citizenship.

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT

6. The Council Resolution on *A New Skills Agenda for an Inclusive and Competitive Europe*² and in particular its acknowledgement that *"It is important to go beyond the immediate needs of the labour market and focus also on those aspects of education and training that are able to drive innovation, entrepreneurship and creativity, shape sectors, create jobs and new markets, empower people (including the most vulnerable), enrich democratic life, and develop engaged, talented and active citizen"*.
7. The review of the Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning³ which provides an opportunity for an inclusive approach to developing competences that can assist young people and facilitate their successful transition to adulthood, active citizenship and working life. Albeit with different terminology, the current European Framework of Key Competences already refers to many of the life skills defined in these Council Conclusions.

² Council Resolution on A New Skills Agenda for an Inclusive and Competitive Europe. OJ C 467, 15.12.2016.

³ Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning. OJ L 394, 30.12.2006.

UNDERLINES THAT

8. While there are many aspects to meeting the challenges posed by youth unemployment and the resulting social dislocation and political alienation, the youth sector, through effective youth work, has a role in enabling young people to acquire and develop life skills that help maximise their potential and support them in achieving and sustaining fulfilling and productive personal, social and working lives. Such life skills can also help prevent marginalisation and counter propaganda, rhetoric and behaviour that might be linked to radicalisation that can lead to violent extremism.

RECOGNISES THAT

9. While youth work can mean a wide range of measures, projects, programmes, activities and initiatives offered by diverse providers in a variety of settings, a defining feature of youth work practice and focus is the personal and social development of young people.
10. Effective youth work can result in positive outcomes for young people through
 - developing their competences and thus enhancing their personal development,
 - promoting and encouraging positive social values, behaviours and attitudes particularly in their relationships with others,
 - fostering their creative and innovative capacities and potential that will enable them to successfully participate in working life,
 - promoting democratic values thus enhancing active citizenship and democratic participation.

11. Life skills are positive, affirming and problem solving behaviours used appropriately and responsibly in everyday life - in the home, on-line, in the community, in education/training and in the workplace. They are a set of personal and social skills acquired through education and training, youth work and non-formal and informal learning that can be used to address issues, questions and problems commonly encountered in the course of daily human life.

AGREES THAT

12. Life skills are important for all young people but have particular significance and importance for young people at risk and those with fewer opportunities and for their employment needs, social inclusion and democratic participation.
13. The promotion of and provision for young people's acquisition and development of life skills can be an integral part of youth policy at both European and Member State level.

NOTES THAT

14. Annex II provides a compendium of life skills indicating a number of attributes. This compendium is neither prescriptive nor exclusive and reflects those life skills that youth work can best promote and help young people acquire.⁴
15. Life skills, as defined in Annex II, are evolving and the determination of how life skills are to be prioritised, presented and promoted is a matter for the Member States and relevant European, national and local, stakeholders.

⁴ For the purpose of these Council Conclusions Youth work providers are understood as any organisations, agencies and other bodies, both state-aided and voluntary, which provide youth work based programmes, projects, initiatives and activities for young people.

INVITES THE MEMBER STATES WITH RESPECT TO THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY
TO

16. Foster the contribution of youth work in developing young people's life skills in youth policy frameworks and measures directed at supporting young people.
17. Disseminate and promote among youth work providers, learning tools, methodologies and practices particularly those developed by youth workers that can support young people in acquiring life skills.
18. Further support education, training and peer learning activities for youth work providers to enhance their capacity to support young people in acquiring life skills.
19. Where appropriate, recognise and validate education and training programmes that enhance the capacity of youth workers, whether paid or voluntary and youth leaders to successfully use learning tools, methodologies and practices that help young people identify, acquire and develop life skills, employing assessment and self-assessment tools and methods.
20. Promote and strengthen volunteering among young people which can facilitate their acquisition of life skills and contribute to their participation alongside youth work providers in youth work projects and initiatives.

INVITES THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION WITHIN THEIR
RESPECTIVE POWERS TO

21. Promote and provide peer and mutual learning opportunities, projects and initiatives for youth work providers to share knowledge, tools and experience in fostering and developing life skills in young people.
22. Consider which and how life skills acquired by young people through youth work can be identified, and documented, in order to facilitate assessment and certification through mechanisms for the validation of non-formal and informal learning⁵.
23. Maximise the use of Erasmus+ and other EU funding programmes in support of youth work practice to foster and develop life skills in young people.
24. Strengthen the dialogue between youth work, youth policy and youth research and the coordination between local, regional, national and European levels, thereby facilitating networking, cooperation, peer learning and exchange with regard to the promotion and development of life skills among young people.
25. Identify, support and disseminate existing and innovative tools, methodologies and practices that foster life skills in diverse youth work settings.
26. Promote and support cross-sectoral partnerships and initiatives, in particular between youth work providers, education and training institutions, social and employment services, and social partners that help young people acquire and develop life skills.

⁵ Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning - OJ C 398, 22.12.2012

INVITES THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO

27. Contribute to knowledge building on the life skills fostered and developed through youth work and support Member States in promoting capacity building and professional development of youth workers.
28. Promote youth work as an integral part of the *New Skills Agenda* that both add value to and complement and support all aspects of the agenda.
29. Promote and support a cross-sectoral approach in helping young people acquire and develop the necessary competences to facilitate their successful transition to adulthood, active citizenship and working life.
30. Ensure that these Council Conclusions contribute to the review of the Recommendation of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning with a view to strengthening and being consistent with the life skills dimension in the European Framework of Key Competences.

ANNEX I

Political background

- Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on key competences for lifelong learning - OJ L 394, 30.12.2006, p.10.
- Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning - OJ C 398, 22.12.2012, p.1.
- Council Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults - OJ C 484, 19.12.2016.
- Council Conclusions on the contribution of quality youth work to the development, well-being and social inclusion of young people - OJ C 168, 14.6.2013, p.3.
- Council Conclusions on maximising the potential of youth policy in addressing the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy - OJ C 224, 3.8.2013, p.2.
- Council Conclusions on enhancing the social inclusion of young people not in employment, education or training - OJ C 30, 1.2.2014, p.5.
- Council Conclusions on promoting youth entrepreneurship to foster social inclusion of young people - OJ C 183, 14.6.2014, p.18.
- Council Conclusions on re-enforcing youth work to ensure cohesive societies - OJ C 170, 23.5.2015, p.2.
- Council Resolution on encouraging political participation of young people in democratic life in Europe - OJ C 147, 15.12.2015, p.10.
- Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-18) - OJ C 417, 15.12.2015, p.17.

- Council Conclusions on the role of voluntary activities in sport in promoting active citizenship - OJ C 324, 20.12.2011.
- Council Conclusions on maximising the role of grassroots sport in developing transversal skills, especially among young people - OJ C 172, 27.5.2015.
- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament , the Council , the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled *A New Skills Agenda for Europe - Working together to strengthen human capital, employability and competitiveness* (2016).
- Council Resolution on A New Skills Agenda for an Inclusive and Competitive Europe - OJ C 467, 15.12.2016.
- Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism - OJ C 467, 15.12.2016.

Studies, Expert Group Reports and Declarations

- Working with young people: the value of youth work in the European Union (2014).
- Developing the creativity and innovative potential of young people through non-formal learning in ways that are relevant for employment (2014).
- Quality Youth Work - A common framework for the future development of youth work (2015).
- The contribution of youth work to address the challenges young people are facing, in particular, the transition from education and employment (2015).
- Declaration of the 1st European Youth Work Convention (2010)
- Report and Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention (2015).

ANNEX II⁶

A compendium of life skills and their attributes			
Interpersonal	Communication	Cognitive	Personal
Leadership, conflict resolution, planning and <u>organising</u> , teamwork, negotiating, inter-cultural awareness.	Expressing (and listening to) views and opinions, discussing and debating, digital and media literacy, presentation, advocacy.	Critical thinking, reasoned analysis, thinking creatively, problem solving, decision making, interpreting, judgement.	Self-confidence, self-esteem, resilience, autonomy, initiative, empathy.
<p>The characteristics of such life skills are:</p> <p>holistic, in that they seek to develop the whole person and help them achieve positive self-realisation both as individuals and as social beings.</p> <p>of value in their own right, offering young people positive and enriching learning experiences that support their development.</p> <p>complementary and reinforcing, supporting young people's learning and development in education and training, family, community, civic and social life and in the workplace.</p> <p>transversal and cross-sectoral, regardless of the context, whether it be in education, in the workplace, in the community or in pursuing cultural, social or political activities, the skills acquired are of immediate relevance and use.</p> <p>empowering and enabling, allowing young people's talents, abilities and capacities, as well as their <u>behaviours</u> and attitudes, to find constructive expression in personal, civic, cultural and working life.</p>			

⁶ *The compendium of life skills comprises some of the most commonly mentioned skills and competences referred to in the international literature and in particular in the Studies and Expert Group Reports listed in Annex I*