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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Draft Council conclusions on Smart Youth Work

Delegations will find attached draft Council conclusions on the above topic in preparation for the Youth Working Party meeting on 7 July 2017.

DRAFT

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON SMART YOUTH WORK

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

TAKES NOTE OF:

1. The political background to this issue as set out in Annex to these conclusions.
2. The current European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2016-2018 that contributes to addressing the challenges and opportunities of the digital era for youth policy, youth work and young people.
3. The policy recommendations by the expert group on “Risks, opportunities and implications of digitalisation for youth, youth work and youth policy”.

RECOGNISING THAT:

4. Digital media and technologies are increasingly part of everyday life and one of the supporting pillars for innovation and development in society. Young people are the catalyst for societal change. This is also evident when considering how actively youth embrace digital media and technologies.
5. Technological developments open great potential for empowerment of youth by providing access to information and by enriching opportunities for enhancing one’s personal capabilities; providing borderless opportunities for connectivity and interaction with others but also for voicing one’s opinions, for self-realisation, realisation of one’s digital rights and active citizenship.

6. The need for empowerment through better adaptation to technological developments is also evident from the perspective and needs of future job market and career perspectives of youth specifically.
7. The development of technologies enables smart solutions, data-rich analyses as well as innovation in approaches and methods of youth work, thus supporting the planning, implementation, evaluation and visibility of youth work and youth policy.
8. The realisation of the positive potential of digital media and technologies depends on a number of preconditions and competences. For example, limited access to technologies and respective support and training hampers the impact of the use of digital media and technologies and deepens the digital gap in society even further. As for the competences, for example, information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, digital content creation, safety and problem solving in digital environments are important both for youth and for those working with young people.
9. Smart, informed and well-targeted actions are important to develop relevant competences and safe tools to prevent and manage the risks of digital era, like negative effects of screen-time, cyberbullying, sexting, spread of fake news, online violence, violent radicalisation and other forms of potential harm. Youth work and youth policies play a crucial role in raising the awareness and competences of young people, their parents, youth workers and other stakeholders supporting youth.
10. The digital era brings along a complex set of different challenges and opportunities. It is a societal phenomenon that still needs discovery and development of appropriate responses. In order to support and bring added value to the activities of the Member States from local to national level, the cooperation in the youth field in the European Union is of utmost importance.

WELCOMES:

11. The concept of smart youth work as an approach to the development and innovation of youth work that builds upon existing principles, knowledge, practices, methods and other assets of youth work and harnesses the full potential of technological developments in the digital society.

UNDERLINES THAT:

12. Smart youth work means making use of digital media and technologies in order to:
 - a) enrich the opportunities of young people for information, access, participation and non-formal learning by exploiting new spaces and formats for youth work in meaningful ways;
 - b) support the motivation, capacity and competence building of youth workers and youth leaders to be able to develop smart youth work;
 - c) create better understanding of youth and youth work and support the quality of youth work and youth policy through more efficient use of data-driven developments and technologies for analysing data.
13. Smart youth work builds upon the needs of young people, youth workers, youth leaders and other stakeholders supporting youth. It also takes into account the wider societal context, including globalization, networking, e-solutions etc., providing opportunities for experimentation, reflection and learning from these experiences.
14. Development of smart youth work should be built upon active engagement of young people themselves, allowing them to best contribute their already existing digital competences as well as to develop additional ones, while also benefiting from respective peer support.

INVITES, WITH DUE REGARD TO THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY, THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION TO:

15. Create conditions for the development of smart youth work, where and as appropriate, including:
 - a) developing and implementing smart youth work in youth work and youth policy goals, strategic and financial instruments;
 - b) mapping and addressing the digital gap and inequalities to access the technological developments from the viewpoint of young people, youth workers and youth leaders and other stakeholders supporting youth;
 - c) supporting the development of competences relevant for smart youth work of young people, youth workers and youth leaders as well as other stakeholders supporting youth, including:
 - on issues such as information and data literacy, communication and collaboration through digital media and technologies, safety in digital environments etc.;
 - through diverse approaches to teaching and learning in all possible formats and levels, for example by incorporating smart youth work into relevant training programmes, youth work occupational standards and guidelines etc.;
16. Develop cross-sectoral partnerships, including with the research and development field, start-up companies and the business sector at large for the achievement of above-mentioned ambitions. While doing so, synergies with the Digital Single Market Strategy, existing structures, public and private services and programmes, such as Horizon 2020, should be sought.

CALLS ON THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION:

17. Within their respective spheres of competence and in co-operation with different actors in the youth field and beyond, to continue to work together to ensure that these conclusions are acted upon in the context of ongoing work on strategic perspectives for European cooperation in the youth field post 2018.
18. To organise an international event for further exploration of perspectives of smart youth work between interested Member States during the years 2017-2018.

In adopting these conclusions, the Council recalls in particular the following:

1. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled A Digital Single Market Strategy for Europe (2015).
2. 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).
3. Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on promoting new approaches in youth work to uncover and develop the potential of young people (2016/C 467/03).
4. Council conclusions on maximising the potential of youth policy in addressing the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy (2013/C 224/02).
5. Council conclusions on strategic perspectives for European cooperation in the youth field post 2018 (8035/17).
6. Declaration on Promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education (2015). Paris, 17.03.
7. Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention „Making a world of difference”, 27-30.04.2015 in Brussels.
8. EU-CoE youth partnership, Symposium on youth participation in a digitalised world, Budapest, Hungary 14-16 September 2015, Key messages of participants
9. EU Kids Online. Multinational research network.

10. European Commission (2017). DigComp 2.1: The Digital Competence Framework for Citizens with eight proficiency levels and examples of use.
 11. European Commission (2016). The Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition.
 12. European Commission (2017). Europe's Digital Progress Report.
 13. European Commission (2017). White Paper on the Future of Europe. Reflections and scenarios for the EU27 by 2025. 1st of March 2017. COM(2017) 2025 final
 14. Expert group on "Risks, opportunities and implications of digitalisation for youth, youth work and youth policy" (2017). Mandate and policy recommendations on the development of digital youth work.
 15. Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on key competences for lifelong learning - 2006/962/EC
 16. Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on youth work (2010/C 327/01)
 17. Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on a European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2016-2018 (2015/C 417/01).
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