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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Permanent Representatives Committee/Council

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Subject: Draft Council Conclusions on enhancing cross-sectorial policy cooperation to effectively address socio-economic challenges facing young people
- *Adoption*

In the course of several meetings, the Youth Working Party has prepared the above set of conclusions with a view to their adoption at the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council on 18-19 May 2015. The text now meets with the agreement of all delegations.

The Permanent Representatives Committee is accordingly invited to confirm the agreement reached on the draft conclusions in the Youth Working Party and to forward the text to the Council for adoption and subsequent publication in the Official Journal.

Council conclusions on enhancing cross-sectorial policy cooperation to effectively address socio-economic challenges facing young people

THE COUNCIL OF THE EU

RECALLING THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND TO THIS ISSUE, AS SET OUT IN THE ANNEX, AND IN PARTICULAR THE FOLLOWING

1. The overall goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy and Member States' respective targets to increase youth employment, reduce early school leaving and increase participation in tertiary education are of a particular relevance to youth and their socio-economic situation.
2. The Renewed Framework for European Cooperation in the Youth Field (2010-2018)¹ emphasises the need for initiatives to enable a cross-sectorial approach where due account is taken of youth issues when formulating, implementing and evaluating policies and actions in other policy fields which have a significant impact on the lives of young people.
3. One of the three main priorities set out in current EU Work Plan for Youth 2014-2015² is enhancing cross-sectorial cooperation within the framework of EU strategies.
4. The Council Conclusions on Maximising the potential of youth policy in addressing the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy³ underlined that cross-sectorial and inter-institutional coordination is central to the implementation of an effective youth policy and in addressing the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy for young people.

¹ OJ C 311, 19.12.2009, pp.1-11.

² OJ C 183/02, 14.6.2014, pp. 5-11.

³ OJ C 224, 3.8.2013, pp. 2

AWARE OF

5. The continuing socio-economic challenges currently faced by young people in the European Union, including high rates of youth unemployment⁴, and the social consequences thereof that require efficient cross-sectorial policy responses.

CONSIDERS THAT

6. A strong and visible, well-defined and coordinated youth policy has a lot of potential to bring added value to cross-sectorial policy cooperation. This in turn can yield positive results for the young people benefitting from the synergies of such cooperation.
7. The youth sector can address the issues in a way that other sectors cannot. It can offer evidence and knowledge on the various issues affecting young people, outreach to a greater number of young people, including those with fewer opportunities, and a flexible, youth-friendly, non-stigmatising, holistic and innovative approach to address the needs of young people.

POINTS OUT THAT

8. While systemic approaches should be developed to enhance cross-sectorial cooperation at all levels, it is of great importance to focus on addressing the concrete and urgent socioeconomic challenges that young people are currently facing.

⁴ Over 5 million young people (under 25) were unemployed in the EU-28 area in the second quarter of 2014. This represents an unemployment rate of 21.7%, while the NEET (young people not in education, employment or training) rate was 13%. Source: Eurostat.

9. A cross-sectorial approach towards youth policy is important not only to offer more efficient solutions to tackle socio-economic challenges, but also to ensure policy responses that aim to meet the needs of all young people.
10. In order to maximise the role of the youth sector in cooperation with other sectors, its value and contribution should be widely presented and recognized.

IDENTIFIES, WITH DUE REGARD TO THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY, THE FOLLOWING PRIORITIES WITH A VIEW TO ENHANCING CROSS-SECTORIAL YOUTH POLICY TO ADDRESS THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES OF YOUNG PEOPLE:

I. Develop, implement and evaluate a systemic approach towards cross-sectorial youth policy.

MEMBER STATES ARE INVITED TO:

11. Strengthen institutional cooperation including enhanced communication and sharing of information at national, regional and local levels to ensure that youth issues are fully taken into account when formulating, implementing and evaluating policies in other policy fields - such as education and training, employment, health and well-being, social policy, urban planning, sport and culture - which have an impact on the socio-economic situation of young people.
12. Involve all relevant sectors both in horizontal and vertical governance structures when developing youth policy at local, regional and national level.
13. Consider implementing overarching youth strategies connecting relevant policy actions that address issues faced by young people, and consult and engage young people and youth organisations in the process where appropriate.

14. Use the existing or consider establishing new mechanisms to monitor the situation of young people and work towards evidence and knowledge based policies integrating data and research results into policy development across fields, including when designing concrete policy measures.

THE COMMISSION IS INVITED TO:

15. Regularly update the Council and its preparatory bodies on key policy documents and initiatives at the EU level that affect the socio-economic situation of young people.
16. Consider how to effectively apply the new coordinated cluster policy approach of the Commission when addressing challenges faced by young people and developing concrete cross-sectorial actions.
17. Assess through the EU Youth Report or other relevant instruments how youth issues are taken into account in other policy fields which have a significant impact on the lives of young people.
18. Further contribute to evidence-based policy development by drawing up research projects in cooperation with other relevant policy sectors.

MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION ARE INVITED TO:

19. Envisage the cross-sectorial approach as one of the implementation principles in the future EU level youth policy including a possible future EU Work Plan for Youth and envisage concrete cross-sectorial measures in the post-2018 framework for cooperation in the youth field.
20. Strengthen cross-sectorial cooperation through fully exploiting the opportunities of the Erasmus+ programme, including those dedicated to supporting policy reform.

21. Collect evidence, including as part of the Expert Groups established by the EU Work Plan for Youth, on how cross-sectorial policy cooperation can yield positive results and spill over effects to other areas of society benefitting from the synergistic effects of increased cooperation.
 22. Encourage cooperation with other policy sectors in drawing up the EU Youth Report, as well as to take the findings of the report into account when monitoring the Europe 2020 Strategy.
- II. Use tailor made cross-sectorial approaches to projects, initiatives and programmes addressing socio-economic challenges faced by young people.**

MEMBER STATES ARE INVITED TO:

23. Strengthen partnership approaches across sectors on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee and other measures and exchange best practices, especially with regard to youth outreach.
24. Seek appropriate support for long-term development and implementation of activities that are currently funded under the Youth Guarantee initiatives and where the youth sector is involved.
25. Strengthen targeted cooperation between formal education institutions and non-formal learning providers to address early school leaving and foster holistic development of competences, including through the use of flexible and youth-friendly approaches.
26. Promote cooperation between youth work and social services to jointly address the social inclusion of young people and to ensure early interventions, where necessary.

27. Involve the world of work when planning and implementing initiatives focused on the development of the competences of young people.
28. Strengthen all services directed towards young people in cooperation with local authorities, youth workers and other professionals working with young people, where appropriate.

THE COMMISSION IS INVITED TO:

29. Facilitate networking and exchange of good practice at a European level among youth policy makers and NGOs involved in the implementation of the Youth Guarantee.
30. Strengthen internal coordination between relevant Commission services in relation to the development of youth related initiatives and discussion of youth issues at EU level.

MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION ARE INVITED TO:

31. In order to effectively tackle the socio-economic challenges of young people via concrete cross-sectorial projects, consider using European Structural Funds and Erasmus+ programme funding opportunities.
32. Address the issues raised above in the forthcoming peer learning among Member States on strengthening cross-sectorial youth policy at national level that is organised in the framework of the EU Youth Work Plan.
33. Invite stakeholders representing other sectors to events such as European Youth Week and EU Youth conferences when relevant, and facilitate feedback and discussion among sectors.

III. Strengthen the visibility of the value of youth work and the other tools of youth policy and their complementary role in effectively addressing the challenges of young people.

MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION ARE INVITED TO:

34. Engage young people in key policy decisions affecting them by using the existing or new channels of youth participation, including the structured dialogue process.
35. Further promote the recognition of youth work and of non-formal learning and concrete tools such as Youthpass among other sectors such as employment, education, training and culture and among other relevant stakeholders.
36. Further advance the recognition of youth work and validation of non-formal and informal learning by exploring the possibilities of mainstreaming the Youthpass certificate outside the Erasmus+ programme and using it as a national tool for recognition, if relevant.
37. Promote and regularly raise awareness among other sectors of the achievements of professional and voluntary youth work.
38. Develop initiatives to make volunteering known, understood, used and recognised as a non-formal learning process.
39. Support and promote implementation of collaborative initiatives between formal and non-formal learning settings with a potential to maximise learning outcomes.

THE COMMISSION IS INVITED TO:

40. Create possibilities and support Member States in their use of the Youthpass certificate outside Erasmus+ programme as a national tool for recognition, if relevant.

RECALLING THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF THIS ISSUE

POLITICAL BACKGROUND

1. The Council conclusions on enhancing the social inclusion of young people neither in employment nor in education and training that notes that a holistic approach and cross-sectorial cooperation should be ensured. All policy instruments, measures and actions should be coordinated at local, regional, national and European levels and should include a wide range of stakeholders in the design and delivery of youth social inclusion measures.⁵
2. The Council Recommendations on establishing the Youth Guarantee, under the “Youth Employment Package”⁶.
3. The Council Conclusions on “Investing in education and training- a response to *Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes* and the 2013 Annual Growth Survey”⁷.
4. The Council Recommendation on Policies to reduce early school leaving, which emphasises the need for comprehensive cross-sectorial policies to strengthen links between education and training systems and employment.⁸
5. The Council Recommendation on the validation of non formal and informal learning⁹.
6. The Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing 'Erasmus+': the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport.¹⁰

⁵ OJ C 30, 1.2.2014, pp.5

⁶ OJ C 120, 26.4.2013, pp.1

⁷ OJ C 64, 5.3.2013, pp.5

⁸ OJ C 191, 1.7.2011, pp.1

⁹ OJ C 398, 22.12.2012, pp.1

¹⁰ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013