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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
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Subject: Education and migration: Strategies for integrating recently arrived
migrants and people with a migrant background
- *Policy debate*
[Public debate pursuant to Article 8(2) CRP [proposed by the Presidency]]

Following consultation of the Education Committee, the Presidency has drawn up the attached discussion paper as the basis for the policy debate at the EYCS Council meeting on 23-24 November 2015.

**Education and migration:
Strategies for integrating recently arrived migrants and
people with a migrant background**

Presidency discussion paper

In recent months the news headlines have naturally been dominated by the refugee crisis. The current inflow of migrants is on a scale unprecedented since the Second World War, with thousands of people - including many children - risking their lives to escape from military conflict, political oppression but also from poverty.

Although an inflow of this magnitude clearly poses major challenges - indeed, it may be one of the most testing issues facing the European Union since its foundation - we should not forget that for generations migration has made a considerable contribution to European socio-economic development. Indeed, in today's context of increasing globalisation and demographic change, the successful integration of migrants into society remains a precondition for Europe's economic competitiveness as well as for social cohesion.

While they are not the only sectors involved, education and training clearly have an essential contribution to make towards ensuring such integration. Starting with early childhood education and basic schooling, which have a particularly crucial role to play, but continuing throughout the education system, targeted measures and greater flexibility are needed to cater for learners with a migrant background, whatever their age, and to provide them with the support and opportunities they need to develop their full potential and to become active and successful citizens. This is important not only for the individuals concerned, but also for society at large - we need societies which are equitable, inclusive and respectful of diversity, whose citizens uphold common European values such as freedom, democracy, tolerance, mutual respect and equality.

This of course represents a significant challenge, not least because there is much research evidence to show that - while there are exceptions - pupils with a migrant background tend to lag behind in academic achievement. Indeed, pupils born outside the EU are twice as likely to leave school early.

Important issues thus need to be addressed, including ensuring effective acquisition of the language(s) of instruction, promoting common European values, assessing and validating prior learning, avoiding geographical concentration and ensuring that teachers and trainers - but also learners and parents - are better prepared to deal with more multicultural diversity in the learning environment.

Against this background, and using the following questions as a starting point, education ministers are invited to exchange views and to share experiences on the main issues raised and challenges encountered, including - as appropriate - one or two brief examples of good practice:

- 1. *In the context of Europe's increasingly multicultural societies, and particularly in the light of the current refugee crisis, how can education and training contribute to the successful integration of recently arrived migrants and people with a migrant background?***
- 2. *What specific challenges does your country face in this regard and how are these being met?***
- 3. *How might action at EU level provide added value?***

In order to give all Ministers an opportunity to contribute, as well as to foster a more interactive discussion, interventions should be as concise as possible. In this way, Ministers may have the option of intervening more than once.

The Presidency's aim is that Ministers leave the discussion with some practical ideas which they can take back to their capitals for consideration.