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INFORMATION NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Council

Subject: DiscoverEU

- Information from the Commission on the state of play

Delegations will find attached an information note from the Commission on the above subject, which has been placed under 'Any other business' on the agenda for the next Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council meeting on 22 and 23 May 2019.

**NOTE FROM THE COMMISSION REQUESTING
AN AOB POINT FOR THE EYCS COUNCIL 22-23 MAY 2019**

DiscoverEU

The objective

The European Commission would like to report on the first results of the ‘DiscoverEU’ initiative and look ahead to the next rounds of this European Parliament Preparatory Action in 2019 as well as the proposed integration of DiscoverEU into the new Erasmus programme as of 2021.

The context

DiscoverEU allows 18 year-olds to apply for a free travel pass to explore Europe, preferably by train, giving them a chance to learn about its cultural heritage and the values that underpin the European Union. The European Parliament granted EUR12 million in 2018 and EUR 16 million in 2019 for the initiative to be implemented as a Preparatory Action. DiscoverEU is also part of the Commission’s proposal for the future Erasmus programme 2021-2027; it earmarked a budget of EUR 700 million for this initiative inside the programme.

The Commission would like to inform Ministers about the outcome and lessons learned so far. It will explain how it is developing the initiative further based on its first experiences and on which topics it would like to focus in the future, following a strong link with the European Year of Cultural Heritage in 2018. In fact, the Commission will enhance the learning experience of young travellers and be more inclusive in its outreach and has therefore set “Learning about Europe” as the overarching theme for DiscoverEU in 2019. Finally, the Commission will also report on how young travellers have already started to create a DiscoverEU community.

Some information upfront:

In 2018, almost 30,000 18 year-olds received travel passes in two rounds - out of a total of around 180,000 people who applied. Feedback surveys run by the Commission showed that 85% of the young travellers declared that their trip fully or highly met their expectations. 70% of them stated that they would not have been able to finance their travel passes themselves. Young people reported to have gained self-confidence, learned about diversity, European cultures and European history and enhanced their language skills during their trips. As 2018 was [the European Year of Cultural Heritage](#), travellers were encouraged to visit cultural heritage sites and had the chance to participate in the many events that were taking place all over Europe.

Furthermore, young people have shown to be eager to connect with each other and build a DiscoverEU community. 37% of participants said that they had met other DiscoverEU travellers during their trips. The DiscoverEU Facebook Group now has almost 16,000 members. This community building is fully in line with the objectives of the Commission which encourages participants to become DiscoverEU ambassadors and share their experiences through social media and their personal networks.

In 2019, the Commission will distribute 40,000 travel passes: 20,000 during an application round running from 2 to 16 May and another 20,000 during a second round planned for autumn. The Commission will inform the young travellers about opportunities available to them, such as participation in learning activities or welcoming events by local people. The Commission also strongly encourages young people with special needs to apply. Additional support will be available to them.