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Education

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¹ • Where declarations, conclusions or resolutions have been formally adopted by the Council, this is indicated in the heading for the item concerned and the text is placed between quotation marks.
 • Documents for which references are given in the text are available on the Council's internet site (<http://www.consilium.europa.eu>).
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ITEMS DEBATED

EDUCATION

Resolution on education and training in the European Semester

Education ministers adopted a [Resolution on education and training in the European Semester: ensuring informed debates on reforms and investments](#).

Several delegations took the floor to emphasise the importance of increasing the financing for education and training and to highlight that the EU needed to reinforce cohesion through education, research and innovation.

Against the background of an increased importance of education and training in the European Semester process, the resolution reflects member states' commitment to further improving the quality and relevance of education and training with the aim to boost growth and jobs. It also ensures that education ministers are appropriately involved in the process.

The current European Semester for economic policy coordination started in December 2019 with the adoption of the Annual Growth Survey by the European Commission. In spring the Commission will propose Country-Specific Recommendations (CSRs) which will then be endorsed by the European Council in June 2020. All Council configurations contribute to the preparation of the European Council debates on the semester. The Resolution on education and training in the European Semester is the contribution from the EYCS (Education) Council to the process.

Brain circulation – a driving force for the European Education Area¹ (policy debate)

In a public session, ministers discussed ways of achieving a balanced brain circulation² in the EU. Based on a steering note prepared by the presidency ([Discussion paper](#)), they were invited to share their views in relation to the following questions:

- What mix of policies is necessary to ensure balanced brain circulation in the European Education Area and how can relevant players at local, regional and national level be mobilised to achieve this aim?
- What can be done at national and European levels to further support the European Universities initiative's strong potential to contribute towards balanced brain circulation in the European Education Area?
- How can European funds, programmes and funding instruments be used to develop and implement policies that would, consequently, enhance balanced brain circulation? Do you have any national examples of measures that you implement?

¹ [Commission Communication on Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture](#)

² Brain circulation is the possibility for developing countries to draw on the skills, know-how and other forms of experience gained by their migrants - whether they have returned to their country of origin or not - and members of their diaspora. Source: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/glossary_search/brain-circulation_en

Ministers highlighted that freedom of movement was a fundamental principle of the EU and that the benefits of learning mobility were clear. They agreed that Europe as a whole needed to become more attractive in order to retain or attract talented and skillful people. Ministers also stressed that the issue of brain circulation could not be addressed successfully by the education sector only and that demography and the particularities of the labour market had also to be taken into account. Delegations identified several possible measures and actions to counter brain drain¹ and brain waste and to support a balanced brain circulation:

- automatic mutual recognition of diplomas and qualifications
- equal pay for researchers, in particular within the framework of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions
- national plans for the reintegration of young researchers
- targeted use of EU funds and programmes, such as Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, etc.

Ministers also highlighted the importance of supporting the European Universities initiative and further developing the European Education Area.

Green education and training for a sustainable Europe (informal discussion)

During a ministerial lunch, ministers reflected on the European Green Deal and possible education and training policies at national and EU level. They also discussed synergies with other relevant policy areas, in order to contribute to sustainable development.

Any other business

The presidency informed ministers on the state of play of the post-2020 strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ([5533/20](#)). Ministers highlighted the value of the current ET2020 framework for member states. They also called for a holistic approach, involving all education and training sectors and levels, as well as all contexts of learning, to the further development of the cooperation framework and the preparation of the proposal for the European Education Area.

¹ Brain drain is the loss suffered by a country as a result of the emigration of a (highly) qualified person. Source: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/glossary_search/brain-drain_en

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

ENERGY

Joint declaration of the Southern Gas Corridor Advisory Council - Authorisation to sign

The Council adopted a decision to authorise the signature, on behalf of the European Union, of the joint declaration of the sixth ministerial meeting of the Southern Gas Corridor Advisory Council ([5794/20 + COR1](#)).

The joint declaration reaffirms the Council's determination to continue deepening the long term strategic partnership with stakeholder countries of the Southern Gas Corridor, to secure reliable and sustainable supply and transportation of gas.

The joint declaration is expected to be signed on 28 February 2020 in Baku (Azerbaijan).

FISHERIES

Council Regulation on the allocation of the fishing opportunities under the Protocol on the implementation of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Seychelles (2020-2026)

The Council adopted a Regulation on the allocation of the fishing opportunities under the Protocol on the implementation of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Seychelles (2020-2026).

The most recent protocol implementing the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Seychelles¹ expired on 17 January 2020. The new protocol will apply on a provisional basis as from the signature thereof in order to allow for the continuation of fishing activities of Union vessels. The regulation will apply from the same date

([5245/20](#))

¹ Protocol setting out the fishing opportunities and the financial contribution provided for by the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Seychelles (OJ L 4, 9.1.2014, p. 3).

Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Seychelles (decision on the signing)

The Council adopted a Decision on the signing, on behalf of the Union, and the provisional application of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Seychelles. The agreement will apply for six years from the date of the commencement of its provisional application.

([5246/20](#), [5242/20](#))

Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Seychelles (decision on conclusion)

The Council adopted a Decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Seychelles and its implementing protocol (2020-2026). In view of its final adoption, the Council decided to send the decision and the texts of the agreement and the protocol to the European Parliament for its consent.

([5246/20](#), [5243/20](#))

RESEARCH

Conclusion of the Euratom-India Agreement

The Council approved the conclusion by the Commission of the Agreement between the European Atomic Energy Community and the Government of the Republic of India for research and development cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

([5647/20](#), [5648/20](#))

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

Schengen evaluation

The Council adopted an implementing decision setting out a recommendation on addressing the deficiencies identified in the 2019 evaluation of **France** on the application of the Schengen acquis in the field of management of the **external air borders** (Border Crossing Points Orly Airport Paris and Nice Airport) ([6194/20](#)).

The Council adopted an implementing decision setting out a recommendation on addressing the deficiencies identified in the 2019 evaluation of the **Czech Republic** on the application of the Schengen acquis in the field of **police cooperation** ([6195/20](#)).

The Council adopted an implementing decision setting out a recommendation on addressing the deficiencies identified in the 2019 evaluation of the **Czech Republic** on the application of the Schengen acquis in the field of the **Schengen Information System** ([6196/20](#)).

TRANSPORT

Mobility package I

The Council confirmed the political agreement on two draft regulations and one draft directive which form part of the mobility package I ([5424/20](#) + [ADD1](#) + [ADD2](#) + [ADD3](#); statements: [ADD4](#)). They relate to the access to the occupation of road transport operator and to the road haulage market; drivers' rest periods and tachograph rules; as well as enforcement provisions for social legislation and posting of drivers.

These proposals aim to further harmonise and simplify the rules for the European road transport sector. This will result in more consistent enforcement across all member states, support social fairness and fair competition, and make businesses more efficient.

A provisional agreement on these files between the Council presidency and the European Parliament was reached on 11 December 2019 and confirmed by Coreper on 20 December 2019 (see [press release](#)).

The political agreement confirmed today means that the full set of texts resulting from the negotiations with the European Parliament have been endorsed at political level. They now undergo legal-linguistic revision before formal adoption by the Council at first reading. This is followed by final approval by the European Parliament at second reading.

EU POSITIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS

Exchange of information in the EU-Morocco Association Committee: Council adopts decision on EU position

The Council adopted a decision on the position to be adopted by the EU in the Association Committee set up by the EU-Morocco Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement, with regard to the exchange of information for the purpose of evaluating the agreement in the form of an exchange of letters on the amendment of the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement [\(5588/20\)](#).

The Council also requested the publication of the Council decision and of the decision of the EU-Morocco Association Committee in the Official Journal of the EU.
