

# Building a stronger Europe: new initiatives to further boost role of youth, education and culture policies

The new initiatives aim to enhance learning mobility and educational opportunities in the EU, empower young people, in particular by encouraging them to participate in civic and democratic life, and harness the potential of culture for social progress and economic growth in Europe.

Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, Jyrki **Katainen**, said: *“Today we are taking further steps to reinforce youth policies, culture and education in the EU. Following last year’s Leaders’ meeting on education and culture at the [Gothenburg Social Summit](#) and the [December European Council](#), we swiftly presented a first set of initiatives addressing key competences for lifelong learning, digital skills as well as fostering common values and inclusive education. The second set of initiatives we are presenting today go a step further, focusing on learning mobility, youth, early childhood education, and learning of foreign languages and culture – all important building blocks for the future of Europe.”*

Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, said: *“Education, culture and youth policy have a central role in building a resilient, competitive and cohesive Europe for the future. Along with the first package adopted in January, the proposals we are putting forward today show that the Commission is working hard to achieve a set of ambitious goals together with Member States. These actions will help to pave the way towards the European Education Area while strengthening a European identity and empowering people, especially young people.”*

More attention needs to be devoted to education, training, youth and culture at the EU level to enable young people to reach their full potential. Investing in skills, competences and knowledge drives innovation, competitiveness and resilience. The initiatives presented today will help give young people of all backgrounds more promising prospects and help them take a more active role in society.

The Commission is today presenting a package including:

- an overarching **Communication** on ‘Building a Stronger Europe: the role of youth, education and culture policies’ which outlines how the Commission is taking forward the [Gothenburg agenda](#) and the European Council’s mandate;
- a **Youth Strategy** for the period 2019–2027 to empower Europe’s youth and give them a stronger voice in EU policymaking, reflecting the importance the Commission attaches to investing in young people and their future;
- proposals for Council Recommendations on **High Quality Early Childhood Education and Care Systems** to lay the foundations for later success in life; on the **Automatic Mutual Recognition of Diplomas and Learning**

**Periods Abroad** to facilitate learning mobility in Europe; and on improving the **Teaching and Learning of Languages** to ensure that more young people become proficient in foreign languages;

- a **New Agenda for Culture** to raise awareness of Europe's shared, diverse heritage. It aims to use the full potential of culture in building a more inclusive and fairer Union, supporting innovation, creativity, sustainable jobs and growth and in reinforcing the external relations of the EU.

As part of the initiatives announced today, work continues on other aspects of developing the European Education Area by 2025. The overarching Communication on 'Building a Stronger Europe' outlines plans for a **European Student Card** which is designed to boost learning mobility by reducing administrative burdens and costs for students and education and training institutions. The Commission plans to implement it by 2021 as a visible symbol of European student identity.

The Communication also highlights the work being carried out with Member States and the education sector to develop **European Universities**. These European Universities consisting of bottom-up networks of existing universities will boost cross-border cooperation through long-term institutional strategies. They will promote innovation and excellence, increase mobility for students and teachers and facilitate language learning. This should also help to make European higher education more competitive. The Commission aims to launch pilots in 2019 and 2020 under the Erasmus+ programme before the full roll-out of the initiative in 2021.

Other actions to support a lifelong learning and innovation-driven approach to education and training will also be developed. The Commission will for instance propose to support the establishment of **Vocational Education and Training Centres of Excellence** which would promote an active role for vocational education and training in local and regional economic development.

Initial results of a [Eurobarometer survey](#) revealing Europeans' views on key initiatives designed to build a European Education Area are also published today. It shows that more than nine in ten respondents in all countries think it would be useful to give students the chance to work with people from other countries on innovative projects, within networks of European Universities. It also shows that 84% of the young people surveyed would like to improve their command of a language they have already learned, and that 77% would like to learn a new language.

## Background

In 2016 the EU leaders endorsed the [need for action](#) in support of youth. In the Bratislava [roadmap](#), they committed to creating better opportunities for young people, such as the [Youth initiative](#) including the European Solidarity Corps. The Commission is now proposing to renew the Youth Strategy to ensure young people can play their part in building the future of Europe.

Heads of State and Government discussed education, training and culture at the Gothenburg Social Summit in November 2017 guided by the Commission's

Communication '[Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture](#),' setting out the vision of a European Education Area and announcing a New Agenda for Culture. This resulted in the [European Council conclusions](#) of 14 December 2017 calling on Member States, the Council and the Commission to take forward the agenda discussed in Gothenburg. The European Council also highlighted the [2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage](#) as an opportunity to increase awareness of the social and economic importance of culture and heritage.

For More Information

[Questions and Answers](#)

[Education \(including factsheet\)](#)

[Culture \(including factsheet\)](#)

[Youth \(including factsheet\)](#)

[Eurobarometer on the European Education Area](#)