

## **College meeting: Future of Europe: Towards a European Education Area by 2025**

With the debate on the future of Europe in full swing, the European Commission is today setting out its vision for how we can create a [European Education Area](#) by 2025. The ideas formulated are intended as a contribution to the EU Leaders' meeting on 17 November 2017 in Gothenburg, where they will discuss the future of education and culture. Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, Jyrki **Katainen** said: *"A collective effort would enable Europe as a whole to shape its future, deal better with the challenges it is facing and to become more resilient. One of Europe's greatest achievements was to build bridges across our continent with the creation of an area of free movement for workers and citizens. But there are still obstacles to mobility in the area of education. By 2025 we should live in a Europe in which learning, studying and doing research is not hampered by borders but where spending time in another Member State to study, learn or work is the norm."* Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, added: *"As we look to Europe's future education is key, because it is education that equips us with the skills we need to become active members of our increasingly complex societies. It is education that helps us adapt to a rapidly changing world, to develop a European identity, to understand other cultures and to gain the new skills one needs in a society that is mobile, multicultural and increasingly digital."* The full [press release](#) and [factsheets](#) with detailed information on the European Education Area are available online. (For more information: *Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: +32 229 56184*)

## **College meeting: Future of Europe: President Juncker creates Task Force on 'doing less more efficiently'**

Today, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker has officially established the 'Task Force on Subsidiarity, Proportionality and "Doing Less More Efficiently"'. The Task Force will report to the President by 15 July 2018, making recommendations on how to better apply the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, identifying policy areas where work could be re-delegated or definitely returned to Member States, as well as ways to better involve regional and local authorities in EU policy making and delivery. President **Juncker** announced the creation of the Task Force in his State of the Union address, on 13 September, saying: *"This Commission has sought to be big on big issues and small on the small ones and has done so. To finish the work we started, I am setting up a Subsidiarity and Proportionality Task Force to take a very critical look at all policy areas to make sure we are only acting where the EU adds value."* The Task Force will start its work on 1 January 2018, and it will be chaired by Frans **Timmermans**, Commission First Vice-President in charge of Better Regulation, Interinstitutional Relations, the Rule of Law and the Charter of Fundamental

Rights. It will be composed of 9 additional members, with 3 members from national Parliaments, 3 from the European Parliament and 3 from the Committee of the Regions. In letters sent out today, President **Juncker** has invited the Presidents of the European Parliament, of the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC) and of the Committee of the Regions to nominate Members from their institutions for the Task Force. More information is available in this [press release](#). *(For more information: Mina Andreeva – Tel.: +32 229 91382; Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tim McPhie – Tel.: +32 229 58602)*

### **College meeting: European Fiscal Board presents first Annual Report**

During today's College meeting, Niels Thygesen, Chairman of the [European Fiscal Board](#), presented the board's first annual report, before officially publishing it on Wednesday. The European Fiscal Board is an independent advisory body to the Commission, set up following the [Five Presidents' Report on Completing Europe's Economic and Monetary Union](#), to advise it on fiscal matters. As part of its [mandate](#), the board publishes an annual report of its findings. The report will be published [online](#) tomorrow, Wednesday 15 November, at 13:00 CET. For more information on the European Fiscal Board, please see the factsheet [here](#). *(For more information: Annika Breidhardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Enda McNamara– Tel.: +32 229 64976)*

### **College meeting: European Commission appoints new Head of Representation in Slovakia, extends mandates of Heads of Representations in Belgium, UK**

The European Commission has today decided to appoint Mr Ladislav Miko as the Head of the Commission's Representation in Bratislava, as of 1 January 2018. He brings to his new role excellent knowledge of the EU institutions gained over his ten years at the European Commission in high-level positions; nearly 20 years of experience in the Slovak and Czech public administration and academia, much of it in management jobs, as well as a wide network of contacts with stakeholders in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Mr Miko is currently a Deputy Director-General in the Commission's health directorate, dealing with the food chain. A press release with details is available here (also in [FR](#), [DE](#) and [SK](#)). The Commission has also decided to extend the mandates of Mr Joseph Jamar, Head of its Representation in Belgium, and of Ms Christine Dalby, Deputy Head of Representation in the United Kingdom. They will remain on their positions until 28 February 2019 and 29 March 2019, respectively. Mr Jamar has been heading the Commission's Belgian office since 2012, while Ms Dalby took over the management of the Commission's office in London in March 2017. The Heads of the European Commission's representations in the Member States report directly to President Juncker. *(For more information: Mina Andreeva – Tel.: +32 22991382)*

**College meeting: European Environment Agency's Executive Director – European Commission proposes an extension of the term of office [added on 14/11/17 at 15:23]**

The European Commission has today decided to propose to the Administrative Board of the European Environment Agency (EEA) to extend the term of office of its current Executive Director, Mr Hans Bruyninckx, for a period of five years as of 1 June 2018. The final decision rests entirely with the Administrative Board. Mr Bruyninckx, a Belgian national, joined EEA as Executive Director in 2013. He brought to the role some 25 years of research, teaching and management experience in the academic sector in Belgium, the Netherlands and the United States. Before joining the EEA, he was head of the HIVA Research Institute in Leuven, Belgium, a policy-oriented research institute associated with Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, where he headed the Political Science department between 2007 and 2010. Over the years, he has conducted and managed policy-oriented research in the areas of environmental politics, climate change, and sustainable development. (For more information: Alexander Winterstein – Tel.: +32 229 93265; Andreana Stankova – Tel.: +32 229 57857)

### **Réunion du Collège: Bruant Ortolan: la Commission se désiste de la procédure d'infraction car la FRANCE se conforme à la législation de l'UE sur la protection des oiseaux sauvages**

Aujourd'hui, la Commission a décidé de se désister de la procédure d'infraction contre la France, car les autorités françaises ont correctement appliqué la directive Oiseaux ([Directive 2009/147 / CE](#)) sur le terrain en ce qui concerne le bruant ortolan (*Emberiza hortulana*). Le bruant ortolan est une espèce d'oiseau migrateur affectée par un déclin très sérieux au cours des 30 dernières années. Le statut de cette espèce d'oiseau dans l'UE est considéré comme 'défavorable' dans [les données officielles](#) soumises par les États membres (en vertu de l'article 12 de la directive «Oiseaux»). En [décembre 2016](#), la Commission a décidé de traduire la France devant la Cour de justice de l'UE pour avoir toléré la violation continue des règles de l'UE sur la conservation du bruant ortolan. À la suite de l'action de la Commission, les autorités françaises ont pris les mesures nécessaires pour remédier aux problèmes de conformité. En août 2017, les autorités nationales et locales ont donné des instructions spécifiques et strictes aux procureurs, à la police et aux autorités de chasse, mettant ainsi fin à la politique de clémence observée auparavant. Ce message a également été communiqué efficacement au public. En outre, en 2016 et 2017, les inspections et les contrôles ont été intensifiés, appliqués à toutes les municipalités concernées et suivis de sanctions appropriées. La Commission a donc décidé de clôturer le cas. (Pour plus d'informations: Enrico Brivio – Tél.: +32 229 56172; Iris Petsa – Tél.: +32 229 93321)

### **EU and Chile to start negotiations for a modernised Association Agreement**

A first round of negotiations between the EU and Chile for a modernised Association Agreement will take place on 16 November, in Brussels. This follows the decision taken yesterday, 13 November 2017, by EU Member States to approve the mandate for the European Union to conduct these negotiations. The aim is to update the 14-year-old EU-Chile Association Agreement to bring its political and cooperation ambitions and trade

provisions into line with the EU's modern agreements. A second round will take place in early 2018. High Representative/Vice-President, Federica **Mogherini** stated: *"A modernised agreement with Chile will further strengthen our already excellent relations and open new areas of cooperation. It will provide us with a state of the art framework to continue championing global peace and security, free and open economies, inclusive societies and the promotion of global common goods."* Commissioner for Trade, Cecilia **Malmström** said: *"The talks that we are now launching aim to put in place a modern trade agreement of the highest calibre, covering all issues – including those that reflect shared values such as sustainable development, helping small and medium-sized companies, and efforts against corruption. And for the first time, a trade deal of ours will include common goals on the key role of women in trade"*. Since the conclusion of the Association agreement with Chile the EU has developed a closer relationship on many areas, including a 170% increase in EU exports (see [exporter stories](#)). [Press release](#) is available online. More information on EU-Chile [trade](#) and [political](#) relations. (For more information: Catherine Ray – Tel.: + 32 229 69921; Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185; Christina Wunder – Tel.: +32 229 92256; Kinga Malinowska – Tel: +32 229 51383)

### **Aid for Trade: Helping developing countries to achieve prosperity through trade and investment**

Yesterday the Commission has set out a renewed vision on how to help developing countries fight poverty and create more and better jobs through trade and investment. The updated "Aid for Trade" Strategy 2017 builds on 10 years of EU Aid for Trade assistance and aims to strengthen and modernise EU support to partner countries. The [new Communication](#) adopted today sets out ways the Commission can improve and better target its aid for trade. It puts a strong focus on Least Developed Countries, and countries in situations of fragility. Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development Neven Mimica said: *"Together the European Union and its Member States are already the biggest supporters of aid for trade worldwide. We are setting out a new strategy to better respond to the complex challenges of today and increase the impact of our actions – to reduce poverty, boost sustainable economic growth and most importantly to ensure that it leaves no one behind."* Globally, the EU and its Member States are the biggest provider of Aid for Trade. In 2015 alone, EU commitments amounted to a record €13.16 billion per year. You can find more information in the press release [here](#). (for more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Christina Wunder – Tel.: +32 229 92256)

### **Investment Plan backs regional sustainability projects in the Netherlands**

The European Investment Bank (EIB) has signed a €30 million loan with [Limburgs Energie Fonds](#) (LEF), a fund established by the Province of Limburg in the Netherlands which invests in small to medium sized projects in the areas of reduction of CO2 emissions, removal of asbestos in buildings and

circular economy initiatives. European Commission Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: *“Investments in energy-efficiency projects and the circular economy are at the core of the Investment Plan for Europe’s objectives. In EFSI 2.0, 40% of investments should go to projects that are helping to reach the COP 21 climate goals. The fund set up by the Province of Limburg will lead to a greater number of sustainable investments and jobs in the region. With COP 23 still underway, this project is showing the way for climate-friendly growth.”* (For more information see the [Investment Plan website](#) or contact Annika Breidhardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Siobhán Millbright – Tel.: +32 229 57361)

### **Improving cooperation between national consumer authorities to improve consumer protection across the EU**

Today the European Parliament approved the [new framework ensuring Consumer Protection Cooperation](#). Proposed by the Commission in May 2016, the Regulation aims at improving the EU-wide cooperation mechanism for consumer protection. This legislation is part of the Commission’s [efforts](#) to update consumer rules. The Commission will present its [New deal for Consumers](#) next spring. Věra **Jourová**, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, said: *“Recent affairs that have damaged consumer trust, such as ‘Dieselgate’ or discussions about the dual quality of food, have revealed the need for better consumer law enforcement. With this new cooperation framework, when there is a widespread breach of consumer law, the Commission and national authorities will be able to swiftly respond in order to protect consumers across the EU.”* Once in force, the new framework will give public authorities stronger powers to investigate and stop illegal practices. These new rules will introduce a quick and more efficient cross-border cooperation mechanism between national enforcers. When the Commission becomes aware of an issue affecting at least two thirds of Member States and two thirds of the EU population, it will be able to call on national authorities to investigate the case. If the conclusion of such an investigation reveals that EU laws are being breached, the Commission will coordinate the cross-border follow-up actions the authorities should take. The rules also address the need to better enforce EU consumer law, especially online. Once the new Regulation is published in the Official Journal, Member States will have up to 24 months to make sure their consumer authorities are ready to meet the new standards. Further details are available in the [factsheet](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)

### **Le PIB en hausse de 0,6% tant dans la zone euro que dans l’UE28**

Au cours du troisième trimestre 2017, le PIB corrigé des variations saisonnières a augmenté de 0,6% dans la zone euro (ZE19) ainsi que dans l’UE28 par rapport au trimestre précédent, selon l’estimation rapide publiée par Eurostat, l’office statistique de l’Union européenne. Au cours du deuxième trimestre 2017, le PIB avait crû de 0,7% dans les deux zones. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d’informations: Annika Breidhardt – Tél.: +32 229 56153; Juliana Dahl – Tél.: +32 229 59914)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **President Juncker at Citizens' Dialogue on the future of Europe with Oliver Paasch, Karl-Heinz Lambertz and Pascal Arimont in St. Vith**

On Wednesday, 15 November at 17:00 CET, on the occasion of the Day of the German-speaking Community, European Commission President Jean-Claude **Juncker** together with Oliver Paasch, Minister-President of the German-speaking Community of Belgium, Karl-Heinz Lambertz, President of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) and Pascal Arimont, Member of the European Parliament, will take part in a Citizens' Dialogue in the Eastern Belgian town of St. Vith. Citizens will get the chance to make their voice heard and discuss about the European Union. The Citizens' Dialogues, which are a regular feature of the daily work of the Juncker Commission, have been central to the 'Future of Europe debates'. Members of the Commission, including the President regularly travel to regions and cities across Europe to engage in dialogue with citizens and listen to their views and expectations concerning the future of the Union. The Citizens' Dialogue in St Vith is the 400th Citizens' Dialogue since January 2015. It is the 19th Dialogue in Belgium since the beginning of the Juncker Commission. This event is organised by the European Commission, the government of the German-speaking Community in Belgium (Ostbelgien). Simultaneous interpretation available in FR, NL, DE and EN. #EUdialogues #FutureOfEurope. For more practical information and registration [here](#). (For more information: Alexander Winterstein – Tel.: +32 229 93265)

### **Commissioner Hahn visits Ukraine**

Johannes **Hahn**, Commissioner for the European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, will visit [Ukraine](#) on 15 November ahead of the [Eastern Partnership Summit](#) that will take place on 24 November in Brussels.

Commissioner **Hahn** will meet with President Petro Poroshenko, Prime Minister Volodymyr Groysman, Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin, and the Chair of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine Andriy Parubiy to discuss EU – Ukraine relations and the reform agenda. Commissioner **Hahn** will also meet with media actors of the country to discuss about the EU support to independent media and public broadcasters. Images of the visit will be available on [EbS](#). (For more information: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Alceo Smerilli – Tel.: +32 229 64887)

### **Defence Union and Single Market top agenda of Commissioner Bieńkowska's visit to Poland**

Today and tomorrow, Commissioner Elżbieta **Bieńkowska** is in Poland for a visit dedicated to discussions with the public. One day after 23 Member States notified High Representative Federica **Mogherini** of their wish to join a [Permanent Structured Cooperation \(PESCO\) on defence](#), Commissioner **Bieńkowska** participated this morning together with Member of Polish Parliament Włodzimierz Karpiński in a [Citizens' Dialogue](#) titled "Safer Poland, Safer Europe, Safer Citizens" at Marie Skłodowska-Curie University in Lublin. The

dialogue focused on [Common Security and Defence Policy](#) (CSDP) and on the [European Defence Fund](#) launched in June 2017, which will boost collaborative projects in the area of defence research, prototype development and joint acquisition of capabilities. Tomorrow, Commissioner **Bieńkowska** delivers a keynote speech on jobs creation and the future of the EU Single Market at the [Opening Eyes Economy Summit](#) in Kraków. Further to the [Single Market Strategy](#) of October 2015, the Commission is taking a number of actions to improve the overall functioning of the market so that consumers as well as businesses, in particular SMEs, can take full advantage of its opportunities. *(For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040; Maud Noyon – Tel. +32 229-80379)*

[Upcoming events](#) of the European Commission (ex-Top News)

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## [European Commission appoints new Head of Representation in Slovakia](#)

Mr Miko, a Czech national, will take up office on 1 January 2018. He brings to his new role excellent knowledge of the EU institutions gained over his ten years at the European Commission in high-level positions; nearly 20 years of experience in the Slovak and Czech public administration and academia, much of it in management jobs, as well as a wide network of contacts with stakeholders in Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

Mr Miko joined the Commission in 2005 to serve as a Director in the Directorate General for Environment. In 2011, he was promoted to the position of a Deputy Director-General in the Commission's health directorate, dealing with safety in the food chain.

Mr Miko joined the Commission from the Czech civil service, where he had served as a Vice-Minister in the Ministry of Environment. In 2009, he briefly returned to the Czech public administration to serve as the Minister of Environment. Between 1992 and 2001, he held a variety of positions in the Czech Environmental Inspectorate, including Deputy Head of the Inspectorate. He began his career in 1984 in the Slovak Academy of Sciences, where he held several jobs, including Head of the Soil Zoology Department and Deputy Director of the Scientific Committee of the Institute.

Mr Miko obtained his PhD in Zoology and Ecology in 1996 from Charles University in Prague, got a habilitation from the University of Life Sciences in Prague in 2009 and has been a guest professor at the University of Antwerp since 2010.

### **Background**

The European Commission has Representations in all 28 EU Member States as well as Regional Offices in Barcelona, Belfast, Bonn, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Marseille, Milan, Munich and Wroclaw. The Representations are the Commission's eyes, ears and voice on the ground in all EU Member States. They interact with national authorities and stakeholders and inform the media and the public about EU policies. The Representations report to the Commission's headquarters on significant developments in the Member States. Since the beginning of the Juncker Commission, Heads of Representations are appointed by the President and are his political representatives in the Member State to which they are posted.

For More Information:

[https://ec.europa.eu/slovakia/home\\_sk](https://ec.europa.eu/slovakia/home_sk)

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## [Aid for Trade: Helping developing countries to achieve prosperity through trade and investment](#)

The updated "Aid for Trade" Strategy 2017 builds on 10 years of EU Aid for Trade assistance and aims to strengthen and modernise EU support to partner countries. The new Communication adopted today sets out ways the Commission can improve and better target its aid for trade. It puts a strong focus on Least Developed Countries, and countries in situations of fragility.

Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development Neven **Mimica** said: *"Together the European Union and its Member States are already the biggest supporters of aid for trade worldwide. We are setting out a new strategy to better respond to the complex challenges of today and increase the impact of our actions – to reduce poverty, boost sustainable economic growth and most importantly to ensure that it leaves no one behind."*

Globally the EU and its Member States are the biggest provider of Aid for Trade. In 2015 alone, EU commitments amounted to a record €13.16 billion per year.

### **What's new in the Aid for Trade Strategy 2017?**

The Communication proposes to:

- Better combine and coordinate tools for development finance of aid for trade, both at European and national level.
- Improve synergies with other instruments, such as EU trade agreements, trade schemes or the EU's innovative [External Investment Plan](#), which will support investments for sustainable development. One of the aims is



to support local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in benefitting more.

- Strengthen social and environmental sustainability, together with inclusive economic growth. This will be done for example through increased stakeholder-engagement such as structured dialogue with the private sector, civil society and local authorities.
- Better target least developed and fragile countries, as well as tailoring approaches to individual countries' specificities.

## **Background**

Today's new Aid for Trade Communication builds on the 2007 EU Strategy on Aid for Trade. It sets out ways in which the EU can improve the effectiveness of the [2007 Joint EU Strategy on Aid for Trade](#), which was a joint European response to the efforts led by the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

## **For More Information**

[Commission Communication updating the 2007 Joint EU Strategy on Aid for Trade](#)  
[Information on Aid for Trade on the DG DEVC0 website](#)

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# **Future of Europe: President Juncker creates Task Force on 'doing less more efficiently'**

The Task Force will report to the President by 15 July 2018, making recommendations on how to better apply the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, identifying policy areas where work could be re-delegated or definitely returned to Member States, as well as ways to better involve regional and local authorities in EU policy making and delivery.

President **Juncker** announced the creation of the Task Force in his State of the Union address, on 13 September, saying: *"This Commission has sought to be big on big issues and small on the small ones and has done so. To finish the work we started, I am setting up a Subsidiarity and Proportionality Task Force to take a very critical look at all policy areas to make sure we are only acting where the EU adds value."*

The Task Force will start its work on 1 January 2018, and it will be chaired by Frans **Timmermans**, Commission First Vice-President in charge of Better Regulation, Interinstitutional Relations, the Rule of Law and the Charter of Fundamental Rights. It will be composed of 9 additional members, with 3 members from national Parliaments, 3 from the European Parliament and 3 from the Committee of the Regions. In letters sent out today, President **Juncker**

has invited the Presidents of the European Parliament, of the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC) and of the Committee of the Regions to nominate Members from their institutions for the Task Force.

In his State of the Union Address on 13 September 2017, President Juncker presented his vision for the future of Europe, based on the debate launched by the White Paper on the Future of Europe by 2025. One of the Scenarios presented – Scenario 4 – was “Doing less more efficiently” under which the European Union should step up its work in certain fields while stopping to act or doing less in domains where it is perceived as having more limited added value, or as being unable to deliver on its promises. The work of the Task Force will contribute to the further evolution of the European Union in the context of the Commission’s Roadmap for a more united, stronger and more democratic Union. The Roadmap will be completed in time before the European Parliament elections at a Leaders’ meeting in Sibiu (Romania) on 9 May 2019.

## **Background**

The Political Guidelines of President Juncker, presented on 15 July 2014, have bound the Commission to focus on 10 priority policy areas, shaping the work of the Institution for the past 3 years and ensuring that as much work as possible is left in the hands of Member States. The Commission further developed this concept in its White Paper on the Future of Europe on 1 March 2017, which presented 5 scenarios, including one entitled ‘Doing Less More Efficiently’.

The **principles of subsidiarity and proportionality** are laid down in Article 5 of the Treaty on European Union. The subsidiarity principle aims to ensure that decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen and that the EU does not take action unless it is more effective than action taken at national, regional or local level. The proportionality principle limits the exercise of the EU’s powers to what is necessary to achieve the objectives of the Treaties. As an example of the application of these principles under this Commission, state aid control has already been largely re-delegated to national authorities, and 90% of all state aid measures are now in the hands of national, regional and local authorities.

## **For more information**

[Decision on the establishment of a Task Force on Subsidiarity, Proportionality and “Doing Less More Efficiently”](#)

[State of the Union Address 2017](#)

[White Paper on the Future of Europe](#)

[Political Guidelines of President Juncker](#)

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# Future of Europe: Towards a European Education Area by 2025

The ideas formulated are intended as a contribution to the EU Leaders' meeting on 17 November 2017 in Gothenburg, where they will discuss the future of education and culture. The Commission believes that it is in the shared interest of all Member States to harness the full potential of education and culture as drivers for job creation, economic growth and social fairness as well as a means to experience European identity in all its diversity.

Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, Jyrki **Katainen** said: *"A collective effort would enable Europe as a whole to shape its future, deal better with the challenges it is facing and to become more resilient. One of Europe's greatest achievements was to build bridges across our continent with the creation of an area of free movement for workers and citizens. But there are still obstacles to mobility in the area of education. By 2025 we should live in a Europe in which learning, studying and doing research is not hampered by borders but where spending time in another Member State to study, learn or work is the norm."*

Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, said: *"As we look to Europe's future, we need to equip ourselves with an ambitious, shared agenda for how we can use culture and learning as a driver for unity. Education is key, because it is education that equips us with the skills we need to become active members of our increasingly complex societies. It is education that helps us adapt to a rapidly changing world, to develop a European identity, to understand other cultures and to gain the new skills one needs in a society that is mobile, multicultural and increasingly digital."*

Meeting in Rome in March 2017, [Europe's leaders committed](#) to creating a *"Union where young people receive the best education and training and can study and find jobs across the continent."* The Commission believes that education and culture can be an important part of the solution in tackling the challenges of an ageing workforce, continued digitalisation, future needs for skills, the need to promote critical thinking and media literacy in an era where "alternative facts" and disinformation can proliferate online, as well as the need to foster a greater sense of belonging in face of populism and xenophobia.

A European Area of Education should include:

- [Making mobility a reality for all](#): by building on the positive experiences of the Erasmus+ programme and the European Solidarity Corps and expanding participation in them as well as by creating an **EU Student Card** to offer a new user-friendly way to store information on a person's academic records;

- [The mutual recognition of diplomas](#): by initiating a new ‘**Sorbonne process**’, building on the “Bologna process”, to prepare the ground for the mutual recognition of higher education and school leaving diplomas;
- [Greater cooperation on curricula development](#): by making recommendations to ensure education systems impart all the knowledge, skills and competences that are deemed essential in today’s world;
- [Improving language learning](#): by setting a **new benchmark** for all young Europeans finishing upper secondary education to have a good knowledge of two languages in addition to their mother tongue(s) by 2025;
- [Promoting lifelong learning](#): by seeking convergence and increasing the share of people engaging in learning throughout their lives with the aim of reaching **25%** by 2025;
- [Mainstreaming innovation and digital skills in education](#): by promoting innovative and digital training and preparing a new **Digital Education Action Plan**;
- [Supporting teachers](#): by multiplying the number of teachers participating in the Erasmus+ programme and eTwinning network and offering policy guidance on the professional development of teachers and school leaders;
- [Creating a network of European universities](#) so that world-class European universities can work seamlessly together across borders, as well supporting the establishment of a [School of European and Transnational Governance](#);
- [Investing in education](#): by using the European Semester to support structural reforms to improve education policy, using EU funding and [EU investment instruments](#) to fund education and setting a benchmark for Member States to **invest 5% of GDP in education**.
- [Preserving cultural heritage and fostering a sense of a European identity and culture](#): by developing – using the momentum of the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage – a **European Agenda for Culture** and preparing a **Council Recommendation on common values, inclusive education and the European dimension of teaching**.
- Strengthening the European dimension of **Euronews**, which was created in 1993 by a number of European public broadcasters, with the ambition of having a European channel offering access to independent, high quality information with a pan-European perspective.

## Background

The primary responsibility for education and culture policies lies with the Member States, at national, regional and local levels. However, the European Union has played an important complementary role over the years. This is particularly true when it comes to cross-border activities. For instance, after 30 years in operation, the Erasmus programme (Erasmus+ since 2014) has enabled 9 million people to study, train, teach, or volunteer in another country.

Over the past decade, the European Union has also developed a series of ‘soft policy’ tools to help Member States in the design of national education policies. Since 2000, Member States have been cooperating under the ‘Framework for European cooperation in education and training’ which set common objectives and benchmarks.

In 2010, the EU set itself two education targets under the Europe 2020 Strategy where real progress has already been attained. Early school leaving has been reduced from 13.9% in 2010 to 10.7% in 2016, with the target to reach 10% by 2020. And tertiary educational attainment is up to 39.1% in 2016 from 34% in 2010, with the target of 40% by 2020.

The Commission believes it is now time to build on these foundations and greatly step up our ambition.

To steer this reform and to stimulate discussion as Europe looks to its future, President Juncker proposed in his State of the Union Address of 13 September 2017 a [Roadmap for a More United, Stronger and More Democratic Union](#). The meeting in Gothenburg on 17 November 2017 will be the opportunity for leaders to discuss the strengthening of European identity through education and culture.

For More Information

[Communication: A European Education area by 2025: fostering a European Identity through Education and Culture](#)

[A series of Factsheets on strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture](#)

[Strategic note by the European Political Strategy Centre \(EPSC\) on the 10 trends transforming education as we know it](#)

[Commission's Education and Training Monitor 2017: key figures on where the education and training stand in the EU](#)

[#FutureOfEurope #EURoad2Sibiu](#)