



European  
Commission

# PROMOTING SOCIAL INCLUSION AND SHARED VALUES THROUGH FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL LEARNING

*Public Consultation  
Strategy*

*Education and  
Training*

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**PUBLIC CONSULTATION  
STRATEGY FOR PROMOTING  
SOCIAL INCLUSION AND  
SHARED VALUES THROUGH  
FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL  
LEARNING**

## Table of Contents

Table of Contents .....	4
I. CONSULTATION PROCESS .....	5
1. Objectives .....	5
2. Consultation activities.....	5
3. Mapping of stakeholders .....	6
ANNEX TO THE CONSULTATION STRATEGY.....	8
I. CONTEXT .....	8
II. OBJECTIVE OF THE RECOMMENDATION .....	9

This strategy provides an overview of the consultation process gathering evidence and informing the Commission's proposal for a Council Recommendation on Promoting social inclusion and shared values through formal and non-formal learning. The initiative was announced in the *Communication on Supporting the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism*, and confirmed in the *Communication on Improving and Modernising Education*. It is planned for adoption by the Commission in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2017.

## I. Consultation Process

### 1. Objectives

The objective of the public consultation process is to gather input from a wide range of stakeholders on the scope of the Commission's proposal for a Council Recommendation on Promoting social inclusion and shared values through formal and non-formal learning. In particular, the consultation aims to gather input on the following questions:

- 1) How successful are education and training in helping young people acquire shared values and promoting social inclusion? What are the key challenges and the objectives to be pursued in this context?
- 2) Which are the most effective policy approaches, tools and methods in formal and non-formal learning?
- 3) How can EU level cooperation in the field of education and training add value and support Member States in the most effective way in promoting social inclusion and shared values through formal and non-formal learning?

### 2. Consultation activities

Consulting a wide range of stakeholders requires varied consultation actions. A brief description of A) *Consultation Actions Conducted (2015-2016)* and B) *Future Consultation Actions (2017)* is included below.

- a) Consultation Actions Conducted (2015-2016):
  - The ET 2020 Working Group on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education launched in February 2016 is specifically following this issue. The group is developing a detailed policy framework and an online compendium of good practices, which will underpin and feed into the Recommendation. The group held already four meetings focussing on the four pillars of the Paris Declaration. In addition four dedicated peer learning seminars already took place on:
    - Critical thinking and media literacy, the Hague, May 2016
    - Global citizenship, Vienna, October 2016
    - Teacher training, Paris, March 2017
    - Inclusive education, Malta, May 2017.
  - A high level reporting on the implementation of the Paris Declaration and policy debates took place at the Council meetings in February 2016, May 2016 and February 2017.
  - Large-scale events, where input from stakeholders have been gathered include:
    - Jean Monnet conference – 15 November, 2015
    - Colloquium hosted by Vice President Timmermans on "Tolerance and respect: preventing and combating anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim hatred in Europe" -1-2 October, 2015
    - Colloquium hosted by Commissioner Navracsics on Promoting Inclusion and Fundamental Values through Education - 26 May, 2016
    - European Education Training and Youth Forum (ETY) and dedicated meeting with Civil Society 19-21 October, 2016

- Civil society organisations were also consulted in a dedicated participatory seminar in December, 2015 and social partners and youth organisation in January, 2016
- DG Higher Education meeting: 13-14 March (Malta)
- DG Schools meeting, 10-11 April (Malta).

b) Future Consultation Actions:

- A specific and formal public consultation is launched in May 2017 and will include an on-line questionnaire to be published on the *Public Consultations* webpage on ec.europa.eu. The launch of stakeholder consultations related to this initiative will be announced in the consultation planning that can be found at [http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/consultations/docs/planned-consultations\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/consultations/docs/planned-consultations_en.pdf).
- High-Level Group meeting: 15-16 June 2017 (Estonia).
- A dedicated meeting with civil society spring/summer 2017, Brussels;

The evidence gathered through the consultation will be used to help support Member States in implementing policy reforms aimed at promoting inclusion and shared EU values.

### 3. Mapping of stakeholders

As social inclusion and shared values are relevant to large cross-sections of society, the consultation process will allow for the participation of a wide range of stakeholders. The following stakeholders are identified:

Stakeholders include:

- Citizens/general public;
- Learners and young people;
- National, regional and local authorities, particularly those governing education and training;
- Education and training institutions from pre-school through to higher education;
- Teachers and their representative bodies at all levels of formal education;
- Researchers and academics in education, training, youth and culture;
- Civil-society organisations, including at local level that provide or support education, including parents' associations;
- Youth organisations;
- Cultural and creative sectors, especially those cooperating with the education and training institutions to enhance intercultural dialogue;
- Sports clubs providing extra-curricular activities;
- Religious organisations.

The mapping of the stakeholder groups according to type of consultation activities is as follows:

Stakeholder group	Open Public Consultation	Conference / Event	Expert Group / Working Group <sup>1</sup>	Focus Group <sup>2</sup>	High-Level Meetings <sup>3</sup>
Citizens/general public	✓	✓			
National, regional	✓	✓	✓		✓

<sup>1</sup> Expert Group and Working Group meetings refer to ET 2020 Working Group and related Peer Learning Seminars.

<sup>2</sup> Focus Group meetings refer to targeted meetings with a specific stakeholder group, such as civil society.

<sup>3</sup> High-Level Meetings refer to Education Council, DG School and High-Level Group meetings.

and local authorities, particularly those governing education and training;					
Education and training institutions from pre-school through to higher education	✓	✓	✓		
Teachers and their representative bodies at all levels of formal education	✓	✓	✓		
Researchers and academics in education, training, youth and culture	✓	✓			
Civil-society organisations, including at local level that provide or support education, including parents' associations	✓	✓		✓	
Youth organisations;	✓	✓			
Cultural and creative sectors, especially those cooperating with the education institutions to enhance intercultural dialogue	✓	✓			
Sports clubs providing extra-curricular activities	✓	✓			
Religious organisations	✓	✓			

Further details on the context, objectives and timing of the Recommendation are included in the Annex below.

## Annex to the Consultation Strategy

### I. Context

70 years of lasting peace in Europe is a testament to our shared values and mutual understanding. As described in the European Commission's *White Paper on the Future of Europe*, "Human dignity, freedom and democracy were hard-earned and can never be relinquished. Even if the attachment to peace is not one that all of today's Europeans can relate to in the same way as their parents or grandparents, these core values continue to bind us together."<sup>4</sup>

Europe is built identities with national and regional dimensions and connotations in the various Member States with their own distinct set of characteristics and values. However, there are values, which are shared by all. Democracy based on the rule of law, pluralism and justice; the importance of human dignity, freedom and respect for human rights; and equality as it extends to respect for the rights of persons belonging to minorities, between men and women, non-discrimination and tolerance create the fabric of our European societies and are fundamental to their functioning.

At EU-level, these values are enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union<sup>[1]</sup>. This set of common values are key to building cohesive societies. Although they have been taken for granted for many years, they are now being challenged in an unprecedented way.

Since 2015, terrorist attacks have been carried out in seven Member States. These were not only attacks on innocent lives, but on basic freedoms that people enjoy in Europe. Freedom of thought and expression, religion, public socialisation were also targeted by these acts of extreme violence.

European societies are characterised by a growing cultural diversity, which provides opportunities, but also entails significant challenges. Societal issues such as youth unemployment, rising inequality and increasing poverty, coupled more recently with increased migratory flows and the rise of violent extremism require cooperation and action across Europe. Everyone - irrespective of their background - must have a chance to succeed and feel that they are valuable members of our societies.

Education systems have historically been, and still remain, the most important institution for strengthening social cohesion. They consolidate the standard form of national languages, forge national identities and cultures and, in doing so, help integrate new arrivals into society. As European societies are growing more diverse, the role of education in promoting social cohesion and transmitting shared values is more important than ever.

By its universal character, reaching out to each and every young person regardless of their background, education can help young people acquire such values and lay sound foundations for open, equitable and democratic societies. For this to happen, there is a need to better understand to what extent and how values can or should be successfully conveyed in formal and non-formal educational settings.

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<sup>4</sup> European Commission, [White Paper on the Future of Europe](#). 1 March, 2017

<sup>[1]</sup> The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail.

## II. Objective of the Recommendation

Against this background, a Commission proposal for a Council Recommendation on promoting social inclusion and shared values through formal and non-formal learning was announced in the *Communication on Supporting the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism*, and confirmed in the *Communication on Improving and Modernising Education*. The initiative is planned for 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2017.

The proposed Recommendation follows upon the objectives agreed in the Paris *Declaration on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education*<sup>5</sup> adopted at the informal ministerial meeting held in Paris on 17 March 2015 which includes a series of objectives at national, regional and local level as well as the four main areas of cooperation at EU-level:

- (i) Ensuring that children and young people acquire social, civic and intercultural competences, by promoting democratic values and fundamental rights, social inclusion and non-discrimination, as well as active citizenship;
- (ii) Enhancing critical thinking and media literacy, particularly in the use of the Internet and social media, so as to develop resistance to all forms of discrimination and indoctrination;
- (iii) Fostering the education of disadvantaged children and young people, by ensuring that our education and training systems address their needs;
- (iv) Promoting intercultural dialogue through all forms of learning in cooperation with other relevant policies and stakeholders.

The Recommendation will aim to establish a policy framework to support Member States in promoting inclusive education that fosters **ownership of shared values**, while also contributing to preventing radicalisation leading to violent extremism. The framework will cover all levels and sectors of education (early childhood, primary, secondary, higher education, vocational education and training and adult learning) in a transversal way as well as links with non-formal learning by addressing the following areas:

- **Refocussing learning objectives and content** (in various types and levels of education and learning settings) to place a greater emphasis on the acquisition of social and civic competences, common EU values, critical thinking, as well as social and emotional learning, notably to help young people approach the diversity and complexity of modern societies and to help them discover the pitfalls of simplistic, authoritarian and violent narratives;
- **Empowering teachers, educators, trainers and leaders of educational institutions** (at school, vocational and higher levels) to deal with diversity, discuss controversial issues and use pedagogical approaches that are adapted to the diverse needs of learners;
- **Fostering an inclusive and democratic learning environment** to allow learners to experience democracy, inclusion and mutual respect;
- **Enhancing cooperation** with local communities, parents, social services, civil society, social partners and the non-formal sector (youth workers, sport organisations...) to foster intercultural understanding and engagement with young people.
- **Addressing structural problems leading to educational equalities** (e.g. governance mechanisms, funding, support systems to disadvantaged learners etc.).

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<sup>5</sup> Paris Declaration:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education\\_culture/repository/education/news/2015/documents/citizenship-education-declaration\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/news/2015/documents/citizenship-education-declaration_en.pdf)

