Member States committed to peer learning and the exchange of good practice, including the dissemination of outcomes when they adopted the new Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training (ET 2020) in 2009. This newsletter, which appears three times a year, aims to give a succinct overview of these outcomes.

For more information, see
On 26 and 27 November, the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council (EYCS) gathered the Education Ministers from all 28 Member States. A policy debate was held on the creation of a European Education Area by 2025. The debate reflected strong willingness to create a European Education Area that supports and promotes mobility, mutual recognition and trust, as well as cooperation and exchange of best practices in education and training. Moreover, the Council unanimously adopted the Commission proposal for a Council Recommendation on promoting automatic mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary education diplomas and the outcomes of learning periods abroad. Member States have made a political commitment to facilitate learning mobility by agreeing to take steps by 2025 to ensure that a qualification or the outcome of a learning period abroad from one Member State is automatically recognised in another Member State for the purpose of further learning. At the EYCS Council, the Education Ministers also reached a partial general approach 1 on a Commission proposal for a Regulation on Erasmus that aims at making the new Erasmus programme more inclusive, in particular for young people with fewer opportunities and grass root organisations, more international and more future-oriented.

On 16 October the 7th edition of the EU’s flagship publication in education and training, the Education and Training Monitor, was published. It contains international comparisons and country analyses of education and training in the 28 Member States. In this way, the monitor provides rich and valuable information into education and reform debates at national and European level. Among its main findings, the 2018 Monitor showed that educational achievement correlates also to active participation in society, and that teaching practices can influence the degree of active participation in democratic life later in life. The 2018 Monitor recorded important progress on participation in education, including enrolments in early childhood education and care; reduction of early school leaving; and tertiary educational attainment. On top of this, young graduates employment rates are on the rise, and can be expected to meet the desired target by 2020. Progress is on the other hand slower on the rate of adult learning. A major challenge that Europe faces on the other hand is underachievement in basic skills, a proxy of educational poverty.

From 5 to 9 November, the 3rd edition of European Vocational Skills Week took place in Vienna, continuing the theme from previously of “Discover your talent”. The aim of the week was to show that vocational education and training

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1 From a general partial approach budgetary matters are excluded. Regards the Erasmus programme, these are currently being discussed as part of the negotiations of the EU’s new multi-annual financial framework.
(VET) is a great learning route for worthwhile careers, equal to any other learning routes. Besides highlighting the attractiveness of VET, the week in addition focused on the future of VET. More specifically on: digitalisation, empowering individuals for lifelong career management and skills development, validation of non-formal and informal learning, addressing the importance of 21st Century skills, addressing the role of VET leaders/teachers/trainers and recognising the internationalisation of VET. More than 2.5 million people were reached through a total of 1,800 Week-associated events/activities. The Week itself included a two-day meeting between government representatives on VET, a Cedefop conference on the future of VET, a foresight workshop with the OECD, an awards Nominees Celebration and various meetings with international partners and young people.

On 17 January 2019, the European Commission released a report on "Integrating Students from Migrant Backgrounds into Schools in Europe: National Policies and Measures". The report presents a comparative mapping of national policies in the areas of governance; access to education; learning, language and psycho-social support; and school leadership in 42 education systems. The report also offers a deeper analysis of some of the measures that can enable schools to welcome students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds and to consider students’ social and emotional well-being in order to encourage their learning and development. The report focuses on top-level regulations and recommendations covering primary, general lower and upper secondary education as well as school-based initial vocational education and training.

On 24 January 2019, the Forum on the Future of Learning was held at the Hotel Crowne Plaza in Brussels on the initiative of Tibor Navracsics, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth, and Sport. The Forum, which is part of the preparations for the post-ET 2020 cooperation framework, gathered over 360 stakeholders in education, training and youth from all over Europe to discuss the future of education and training in relation to six main challenges, namely demographics; inclusion and citizenship; technological change and the future of work; digitalisation of society; environmental concerns; and investments, reforms and governance. The Forum built on the work of the European Education and Training Expert Panel (Expert Panel). The Expert Panel consists of 18 members who were selected via an open call and reflected over the past months on the main challenges described above. Their work culminated in six public corresponding 'issue papers' which served as input for the Forum discussions held during the morning and early afternoon. In the late afternoon, the Forum highlighted various initiatives driving forward the future of education and training at both EU and Member State level, including presentations on European Universities and VET Centres of Excellence from a Commission and stakeholder perspective. After the Forum, a final report will be drafted covering the issue papers and Forum discussions. This final report will then be used by the Commission in the further preparations of the new strategic cooperation framework as it provides valuable input from the stakeholder community and Expert Panel.
Following September’s inaugural meeting under the new mandate, two key events – the second full meeting of the Working Group on Schools and a first thematic seminar – took place in the final quarter of 2018, both at the Brussels offices of the European Commission.

**Second Working Group Meeting covers career paths and staff evaluation**

The second meeting of the Working Group took place on 8-9 November and sessions covered both aspects of the Group’s brief (teachers and school leaders, and quality assurance). Early discussion addressed the career paths of teachers and school leaders, referencing diverse models that have been developed internationally. Working in groups, participants discussed and created new conceptual representations of pathways, including ladders, spirals and webs. The specific circumstances of school leaders were also considered - how they reached their new position; what support might be available; and how this fits into a broad and flexible career path in the teaching profession.

Debate continued with consideration about how staff evaluation may support attractive and sustainable career paths. Quality assurance was also covered, with a focus on stakeholder engagement, which will be the theme of the Working Group’s first Peer Learning Activity in early 2019.

The meeting concluded with an opportunity for participants to reflect on methodology in light of an independent study on the Working Group undertaken by Natalie Papanastasiou.

**Working Group holds its first Thematic Seminar**

Guided by a steering group drawn from the Working Group, a thematic seminar took place on 3-4 December. The key question posed was ‘How can staff evaluation (appraisal, assessment and feedback) contribute to attractive and sustainable careers for teachers and school leaders?’ The format was innovative and offered a variety of perspectives by involving stakeholder representatives (social partners, school leaders, students, inspectors, OECD representatives, etc.) and researchers alongside members of the steering group.

The seminar considered the aims and purposes of staff evaluation, the criteria used, how evaluation should be carried out and who should be involved. Two external specialists introduced each session with short presentations expanding on their viewpoint, and the ensuing debates were lively. There was considerable consensus, particularly on the importance of stakeholder engagement and on the fact that tensions arise when evaluations have ‘high stakes’ implications for career progression and remuneration.
The end of 2018 was a busy time for the Working Group on Higher Education (HE). Two Peer Learning Activities (PLA) were organised in Zagreb and Brussels, which focused on HE funding and creating the European Education Area conditions by 2025. The latter meeting also discussed the post-ET2020 work programme.

**Funding as a tool for steering the performance of higher education institutions**

A PLA on 'The power of funding in steering the performance of higher education institutions (HEIs)' was organised on 7-8 November in Croatia. The event explored how HE authorities can develop effective, performance-based funding allocation mechanisms for HEIs, by learning from the experiences of other EU countries.

The event attracted 32 participants, including representatives from ministries and HEIs in 9 EU countries. Other speakers were from the European Students' Union, European University Association, World Bank and institutes for HE research. The Croatian Minister and the state secretary also attended.

The PLA focused on four thematic blocks:
- Selection and design of indicators to achieve policy goals;
- Approaches to performance monitoring and reporting;
- Diversification of funding sources and;
- Preconditions for successful performance-based funding models.

The topic of the PLA and its outcomes will be taken up by the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the EU during the meeting of the Directors General for HE in June 2019.

**Funding as a tool for steering the performance of higher education institutions**

The Working Group met on 10-11 December in Brussels to discuss the European Education Area 2025 and the future Working Group programme.

The meeting highlighted the rapid progress that has been made on three key initiatives relating to the European Education Area. The call for the pilot European Universities is live, the European Student Card is underway, and the recommendation on promoting mutual automatic recognition of qualifications and the outcomes of learning periods has been adopted by the Council of the EU.

Half a day was dedicated to peer learning on efficiency, quality, learning outcomes and academic integrity that enhance trust and accountability in HE systems, and pave the way to the European Education Area. The members also discussed the future orientation of the Working Group, which confirmed overall levels of satisfaction with the ET2020 tools and offered ideas for future development.
The Working Group on Vocational Education and Training (VET) held its first meeting on 4-5 October, where it aimed to fine-tune its mandate, discuss the stocktaking study and discuss the Centres of Vocational Excellence mapping exercise. At a second meeting by webinar on 5 December, the Group calibrated its roadmap.

Setting priorities for the Working Group
At its first meeting, the Working Group explored the key issues in members’ countries related to the eight topics in the mandate. The most common issues identified included the need:

- to distinguish clearly between (a) the relationship between VET and innovation and digitalisation in the wider economy, and (b) innovation and digitalisation within VET;
- to distinguish between issues at European, national and sub-national levels;
- to recognise the importance of partnerships (school-firm, and new forms with higher education, business and research bodies).

The Group then ranked the eight topics as follows: (1) new pedagogical approaches and adapting curricula to labour market needs; (2) new learning environments; (3) using modern learning technologies; (4) flexible learning systems; (5) quality and excellence; (6) governance and financing; (7) support for VET mobility. A final agreement is due to be reached in January 2019. Concepts like research-based learning, higher VET and continuing VET will also need to be addressed.

Mapping Centres of Vocational Excellence for a new EU initiative
An exercise to map Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) is being conducted to provide a foundation stone for the Working Group and supporting information for a new EU initiative. CoVEs are networks and partnerships involving VET providers that support innovation and regional development strategies by focusing on the provision of skills and qualifications relevant for the labour market. The EU initiative will introduce a ‘European’ dimension to vocational excellence by building European platforms that can support CoVEs addressing similar themes. The mapping exercise involves identifying existing CoVEs across Europe and developing a typology for the different models. It aims to showcase cutting-edge VET and deepen understanding about what CoVEs do and how they operate. The first findings from the mapping are due to be shared and discussed at the next Working Group meeting in January 2019.
The first meeting of the Working Group on Adult Learning for the 2018-2020 period took place on 17-18 September in Brussels. Besides discussing policy updates and focal points for the Group going forward, the meeting launched a stocktaking exercise on developments since 2011 related to the European Agenda for Adult Learning (EAAL) priorities.

**Stocktaking exercise on developments in adult learning**

The stocktaking exercise aims to reflect on the policy developments relating to the priorities of the EAAL that occurred between 2011 and 2018. An outline was developed during the first Working Group meeting and documentary sources were identified that could be used to obtain a clear idea of key developments.

A first draft of the stocktaking report was presented during the second Working Group meeting in December 2018. During this meeting, members were asked to contribute by providing additional input on policy developments relating to the EAAL in their countries, and identifying emerging priorities for the post-2020 period.

These contributions will be further developed in the coming months and integrated into the stocktaking report. The next Working Group meeting, scheduled for March 2019, will continue the discussion, to arrive at a jointly owned report from the working group.
The Working Group on Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) was launched in Brussels on 20 November. The launch was followed by the first Working Group meeting on 20-21 November.

**Working Group launch welcomes range of attendees**

The half-day of discussions brought together members of the ECEC Working Group, representatives from European organisations, education attachés from Permanent Representations and colleagues from DG Justice and Consumers; DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion; and DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture. The launch event included discussions on the Working Group’s mandate and work programme, and presentations on ECEC policy and results from three Erasmus+ projects that focused on ECEC. The Working Group’s work was organised within the context of the 2018 Commission Proposal for a Council Recommendation on high quality ECEC systems. The proposal is scheduled for discussion in the EYCS Council under the Romanian Presidency in spring 2019.

**Working Group defines focus areas**

At its first meeting, the ECEC Working Group agreed to focus on two main areas.

1. **Staff professionalisation**, which includes discussions on:
   - The professionalisation of ECEC staff as part of the process of creating an attractive, sustainable and competent profession; standards/core competences for staff (including professional leadership);
   - career pathways, including initial training, continuing professional development (CPD) and the attractiveness of the profession;
   - the need for a more clearly defined professional identity for ECEC staff;
   - working conditions (non-contact time, ratios, etc.) and how they affect the CPD of staff.

2. **The multiple dimensions of inclusion** and the link to other children’s services. Within this context, the Group will discuss issues related to affordability, the ability of ECEC settings to include all children, support for children with special needs, working with parents, staffing policies and training.

The second meeting of the Working Group is due to take place in Brussels on 12-13 March 2019.
The Working Group on Digital Education: Learning, Teaching and Assessment launched its roadmap of activities in December 2018. This includes seven plenary sessions and five Peer Learning Activities (PLAs) between September 2018 and September 2020. The Group will also focus on six thematic areas and develop ‘key messages’ relating to these topics.

Digital Game-Based Learning PLA
The Working Group’s first PLA took place in Luxembourg on 7-9 January. The purpose of the PLA was to discuss and exchange experiences and opinions on Digital Game-Based Learning (DGBL). DGBL refers to the potential of digital games to serve an educational purpose. DGBL balances learning and gaming elements, and involves entertainment and educational components. When addressing DGBL, engagement and improved learning outcomes are both seen as relevant ways to assess the effectiveness of the intervention. DGBL is underpinned by innovative pedagogies and requires educational settings that move away from a focus on content transmission. The two day programme was designed to explore two main issues:

• How can we foster changes in pedagogies through DGBL? How can we make these changes sustainable?
• What are the ‘transferable’ elements of this approach? How can it be applied to different sectors (from a lifelong learning perspective) and in different countries?

Commission launches SELFIE tool to support digital teaching and learning in schools
On 25 October, the European Commission launched the Self-reflection on Effective Learning by Fostering the use of Innovative Educational Technologies (SELFIE) tool to help schools assess how they use digital technology for teaching and learning. In the EU, SELFIE will be offered to 76.7 million students and teachers in 250,000 schools on a voluntary basis. It has been launched in 24 EU languages with more language versions to follow. The Commission’s goal is to reach 1 million students, teachers and school leaders by the end of 2019.

SELFIE was launched in Warsaw, Poland, by Tibor Navracsics, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport. The tool is already being used by 110,000 students and teachers, and schools interested in joining them can sign up on the SELFIE platform today.
Since September 2018, the Working Group on Promoting Common Values and Inclusive Education has held its first meeting under the new mandate, begun to plan the work programme for the next two years, and started preparing the first Peer Learning Activity (PLA), which will take place in Zagreb in April 2019.

**First Working Group meeting under the new mandate**

The first Working Group meeting under the new mandate took place in Brussels on 26-27 November 2018 and involved experts from 20 Member States and 6 candidate/EEA/EFTA countries, as well as representatives from European agencies, stakeholder associations, social partner organisations and international organisations. The meeting focused on different ways to implement the Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on:

- promoting common values, inclusive education and the European dimension of teaching;
- ensuring the integration of European common values in education policy and practice;
- ensuring the effective integration of students with a migrant background into schools in Europe.

The meeting included a presentation of three innovative Erasmus+ projects on social inclusion (VINCE, HE4u2 and SOIL), a keynote speech on addressing common values, a presentation of relevant findings from the Education and Training Monitor 2018, updates on PLAs that took place in 2018 and interactive workshops to discuss key topics.

**Implementing European common values in the classroom: a bottom-up approach**

Cemil Yilmaz, a Dutch social entrepreneur and social and cross-cultural psychologist, gave the keynote presentation at the first Working Group meeting. His talk focused on how to develop and support common values in the EU, and transform conversations about values in school and classroom settings into a bottom-up rather than top-down discussion.

He emphasised that bottom-up approaches allow more voices to be heard and can generate a more inclusive process when developing common values. He also mentioned that it is critical to engage stakeholders at all levels and gave the example of an initiative built on citizen engagement that his organisation is starting, together with other organisations in the Netherlands. The ‘National Respect Tour’ will launch with events across all Dutch provinces from October 2019, with the aim of bringing different groups together to develop a common respect manifesto that will be presented on Dutch Liberation Day in May 2020.
For more information on any of the ET 2020 Working Groups or for subscribing to the Newsletter, contact EAC-ET-2020-WORKING-GROUPS@ec.europa.eu