



Conference on the **Future** of **Europe**

DRAFT PROPOSALS – EDUCATION, CULTURE, YOUTH AND SPORT

Proposal I: Education

Objective: The EU and its Member states should seek to establish by 2025 an inclusive European Education Area within which all citizens have equal access to quality education and life-long learning, including those in remote areas, in particular by:

Measures:

1. Coordinate the level of all different education programmes in the European Union with acceptance of the national content, and create closer links between the education systems, including via organising equivalence of diplomas.¹ A certified minimum standard of education in core subjects should be adopted commencing in primary school.² Professional degrees and training should be validated and mutually recognised in all EU Member States.³ The European Union should also champion the recognition of non-formal and informal learning⁴ and the youth organisations that provide it, as well as of learning periods abroad.
2. Develop future-proof education and life-long learning in Europe -in accordance with the right to training in the workplace for all- focusing on the following subjects:
 - Civic education about democratic processes as well as EU values and history of Europe.⁵ Economic literacy should also be improved as an aspect of better understanding the European integration process.⁶
 - Digital skills.⁷
 - STEM⁸ and entrepreneurship;
 - Improving critical thinking. Media literacy should be enhanced in order to ensure online safety, and empower citizens in every Member State to independently evaluate whether a piece of information is trustworthy or not, and identify fake news, but at the same time to benefit from the opportunities that the Internet offers. This should be implemented in basic education as a specific class and also be offered in other public spaces for citizens of all ages under the guidance of an EU-established dedicated

¹ French NCP Change 6.

² ECP 1 recommendation no 37.

³ ECP recommendations no 3. French NCP Change 6.

⁴ ECP 1 recommendation no 41.

⁵ Covered in more detail by WG on European democracy. See ECP 2 recommendation no 24, Belgian NCP recommendation no 1.1, 1.2 and 2.12 and Italian NCP recommendation on “inclusion policies”.

⁶ Italian NCP recommendation-on “inclusion policies”.

⁷ Covered in more detail by WG on Digital Transformation. See ECP 1 recommendations no 8 and 34.

⁸ Italian NCP recommendation on “Encouraging young people to study science subjects”.

- organisation, drawing on best practices across the Member States. The EU should ensure that the dedicated funding is used by the Member States for the intended purposes.⁹
- Integrating soft skills in all the courses in the curricula in schools. By soft skills one means: listening to each other, encouraging dialogue, resilience, understanding, respect and appreciation for others, critical thinking, self-study, remaining curious, result-oriented.¹⁰
 - Enabling everyone to learn about our environment and its connection to health. Biodiversity should be made as a mandatory subject at school. This education should start at school with specific subjects addressing all ecological issues, and include field trips to show relevant real life examples, that should be supported by a funding programme.¹¹
 - Combating bullying and racism.
3. Support the training of teachers¹², to learn from best practices and use up to date innovative and creative teaching techniques, including practical activities, building also on the lessons to be drawn from the COVID-19 pandemic.¹³
 4. In order to meet the educational needs of all children and families, prioritise access to hardware and efficient broadband with good connectivity.¹⁴
 5. Set up an information platform for an EU-wide exchange of knowledge and experiences, pooling information on transnational education and training courses in the EU, showcasing best practice examples and offering citizens the opportunity to present new ideas for cross-border exchange. It should offer teaching material about climate change, sustainability, environmental issues and digitisation and provide information on existing specialised forums on key topics.¹⁵ It could be made available together with a funding program to support the usage of, and implementation, of the information on the platform.

⁹ ECP 1 recommendations no 33 and 48. Covered also by WG on Digital Transformation. See ECP 1 recommendation no 47 on healthy use of internet.

¹⁰ ECP 1 recommendation no 5.

¹¹ ECP 1 recommendation no 15 and 18.

¹² Italian NCP recommendation on “Europe in the world”

¹³ ECP 1 recommendations no 18 and 41 and Italian NCP recommendation on 'Investing in the training of trainers'.

¹⁴ ECP 1 recommendation no 17, allocated as a whole to the WG on digital.

¹⁵ ECP 1 recommendation no 15. German NCP recommendation on 'Information platform for an EU-wide exchange of knowledge and experiences'.

Proposal II: European youth issues

Objective: The EU and its Member States have to focus on the specific needs of young people across all relevant policies, including the European Union's regional policy in order to offer them the best possible conditions for study and work and starting an independent life, while engaging them in the democratic life and decision making processes, including at European level. To achieve this objective, we propose to:

Measures:

1. Offer young people more possibilities and champion existing programmes for participation and representation in the democratic and decision making processes at all levels, including by organising citizens' panels also with children (e.g. 10 to 16 years old) in schools. European representatives could meet schoolchildren in their schools in order to strengthen citizens' closeness to and understanding of Europe from an early age. An EU 'Youth Test' should be developed - an impact assessment tool that would include a consultation with young people and ensure that all policy making at EU level is seen through a youth lens. Voting at European Parliament elections from the age of 16 should be discussed and considered, in parallel to an enhancement of citizenship education and education about the EU. National political parties should ensure that younger candidates are also put on their lists for the elections to the European Parliament.¹⁶
2. To better prepare young people for entering working life, give high school students (from 12 years old on) the opportunity to have high quality observatory visits in profit and non-profit organisations, in close cooperation between schools, local governments and the organisations and companies concerned, possibly offering them subsidies to accept observing students.¹⁷ These visits should be seen as part of a broader career guidance process in formal education to allow young people to have a first contact with a professional work environment so they can obtain a professional orientation.
3. More significant EU financing under NextGenerationEU should also be devoted to the implementation of the reinforced European Youth Guarantee, including more commitment, better outreach, improvements in the quality of the offer, funding and action by all Member States. Given youth organisations expertise in the needs of young people, national governments should collaborate in close dialogue with these organisations to ensure the most effective delivery of the Guarantee.
4. Ensure that young people's internships and jobs adhere to quality standards, including on remuneration, putting an end to youth minimum wages and any other discriminatory labour law provisions specific to young people, as well as banning through a legal instrument unpaid internships on the open labour market.¹⁸
5. Ensure equal access to social protection for young people, on par with older age groups, as well as facilitating their access to affordable housing, including through EU funding.¹⁹
6. Special efforts are needed to avoid a brain drain from some regions and countries within the EU due to insufficient opportunities being available for young people, while making Europe more

¹⁶ Belgian NCP, recommendations 6.1 and 7.2. French NCP, Change 7.

¹⁷ ECP 1 recommendation no 4.

¹⁸ Suggestion to complement ECP 1 recommendations no 1 and 30 covered by the WG on Stronger Economy, Social Justice and Jobs.

¹⁹ Suggestion to complement ECP 1 recommendation no 25 covered by the WG on Stronger Economy, Social Justice and Jobs.

attractive to prevent the drain of European talents and workforce to third countries to prevent the hampering of territorial cohesion.²⁰

7. In case of a serious crisis (e.g. health crisis, war) well prepared plans with detailed scenarios should be ready to deploy in a flexible way to minimise the impact on young people in their studies, vocational training, transition to the labour market and mental wellbeing.²¹

²⁰ ECP 4 recommendation no 28. Dutch NCP ('Our vision of culture, youth and sport'), recommendation no 1. French NCP, Change 6.

²¹ ECP 1 recommendation no 6.

Proposal III: Culture and exchanges

Objective: In order to promote a culture of exchange and foster European identity and European diversity across different areas, the Member States, with the support of the European Union, should: ²²

Measures:

1. Promote European exchanges in different fields, both physically and digitally, including educational exchanges, twinning, travel and professional mobility (including for teachers). Such exchanges should be made accessible across Member States for all, regardless of their age, level of education, background and financial means.²³ With this overall aim, the EU should inter alia strengthen existing EU level exchange and mobility programmes, such as the European Solidarity Corps, Erasmus+ and DiscoverEU, and ensure more widespread and diverse participation in these programmes and consider adding also new elements, such as an additional objective of civic service fostered through volunteering (for the European Solidarity Corps) and 'cultural passes' (for DiscoverEU). The local and regional authorities, under the auspices of the Committee of the Regions have a key role to play in this matter.
2. Promote multilingualism as a bridge to other cultures from an early age. Minority and regional languages require additional protection, taking note of the Council of Europe Convention on Minority Languages. The EU should consider setting up an institution promoting language diversity at the European level. From elementary school onwards, it should be mandatory that children reach competence in an active EU language other than their own to the highest possible level. Languages of neighbouring regions and English should be taught, to a certifiable standard, as a core subject across all EU Member States in order to facilitate and strengthen the ability of European citizens to communicate with wider groups of their fellow Europeans.²⁴
3. Create opportunities to share European cultures, bring people together and move them towards a common European identity, for instance through events and gatherings involving all target groups and taking place in various locations. Some specific examples include holding World Art days²⁵ a European Expo including educational events, or making Europe Day (9 May) a European public holiday for all EU citizens.²⁶
4. Protect European cultural heritage²⁷, including through recognising local and regional cultural and production peculiarities²⁸, new initiatives to safeguard and celebrate it, and the promotion of existing measures such as Creative Europe, the New European Bauhaus and European Capitals of Culture in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

²² Dutch NCP ('Our vision of culture, youth and sport'), recommendation no 2.

²³ ECP 1 recommendation no 36. French NCP, Change 6. Belgian NCP, recommendations no 2.10 and 2.11. German NCP, 'Creating more exchange opportunities for students in Europe'. Dutch NCP ('Our vision of culture, youth and sport'), recommendations no 1 and 3. Italian NCP, recommendation on 'Acting as a confluence between East and West, promoting cultural exchanges and joint cultural initiatives'

²⁴ ECP 1 recommendations no 32 and 38. Dutch NCP ('Our vision of culture, youth and sport'), recommendation no 3.

²⁵ Italian NCP recommendation on "Europe in the World"

²⁶ French NCP, Change 7. Belgian NCP, recommendations no 2.5, 6.1 and 8.7. Italian NCP, recommendation on 'Enhancement of European values, cultural traits as well as regional specificities'.

²⁷ Dutch NCP ('Our vision of culture, youth and sport'), recommendation no 2.

²⁸ Italian NCP recommendation on "overcoming the 20th century production model"

5. Take steps to ensure that cultural professionals are sufficiently protected at EU level, particularly in any future crises, by adopting a legal statute at European level.

Proposal IV: Sport

Objective: Sport is at a crossroads of many issues that will shape the future of European societies: defending our values, healthy life and ageing, promoting a culture of exchanges and also celebrating the diversity of European heritage. For this reason, the Member States, with the support of the European Union, should aim to:

Measures:

1. Put emphasis on values, especially gender equality, fairness and inclusiveness that can be concretely reflected through sport practice throughout education.
2. Raise awareness about health benefits of sport and physical activity.²⁹
3. Include sport activities among EU level exchange and mobility programmes.³⁰
4. Improve attention given not just to “elite sports” but also to local and traditional sport, as an aspect of European Cultural Diversity.
5. At the same time, encourage the showcasing of European identity by organising more inter-EU sports events, creating EU sports teams, or displaying EU flags at European sporting events.
6. Invest more in communication efforts such as the European Week of Sports.

²⁹ ECP 1 recommendation no 29.

³⁰ ECP 1 recommendation no 36.