Attended events

(May 2017 - October 2017)

# Key Competences Conference

Brussels, HUSA President Park Hotel, 14 June 2017

Patricia Chighini, EUNEC executive committee member, participated at this event.

The purpose of this meeting was to bring together stakeholders across different education, training and youth sectors, to inform about and discuss the results of the public consultation that has taken place on the review of the Key Competences Framework, including results from various other expert meetings. Attendance was by invitation only.

[Agenda and documents](https://www.keycompetences2017.com)

# The Estonian Presidency of the EU and the 30 May 2017 package of the European Commission

Brussels, Vleva (Flemish-European Liaison Agency)

Carine De Smet, EUNEC secretariat, attended this event.

## Priorities of the Estonian Presidency of the EU

Ulle Kurvits, education counsellor at the Permanent representation of Estonia to the EU

### Introduction

Ulle Kurvits insists on the very well performing education system in Estonia, according a.o. to PISA results. There is a strong focus on English skills and other foreign languages. PISA also shows good results in terms of equity: equal access to education, and comprehensive school system are stressed. Education is and has always been highly valued in Estonia.

Thanks to state funding system supporting distance learning, ICT-support, there is also a high participation in lifelong learning.

### The trio programme

Estonia, Bulgaria, Austria (change in the schedule due to Brexit)

A new trio programme was officially adopted in June 2017, with five main topics:

* Union for jobs, growth and competitiveness;
* Union that empowers and protects all its citizens;
* Towards an energy union with a forward-looking climate policy
* A Union of freedom, security and justice
* The Union as a strong global actor

[The trio programme](https://www.eu2017.ee/sites/default/files/2017-06/Trio%20programme.pdf)

### The Estonian programme ‘Unity through balance’

[www.eu2017.eu](http://www.eu2017.eu)

Four key areas:

* Open an innovative European economy;
* Safe and secure Europe;
* Digital Europe and the free movement of data;
* Inclusive and sustainable Europe.

Priorities in education:

Taking forward the EU skills agenda and subsequent initiatives on education and youth:

* **Modernisation of higher education and schools** (= Communication 30 May 2017 related to contemporary approaches on teaching and learning and the need for education and training to adapt to changes); related to this topic, there will be a conference on a new appraoch to teaching and learing.
* **Recommendation on graduate tracking.** The aim is to achieve the agreement by the Council in November 2017. A lot of information is available on what graduates do after leaving school, but there is lack of comparable data at EU-level. Some member states have good tracking systems (Estonia does), but not all. This initiative is related to the striving for evidence based policy.
* **Revision of the Europass framework.** This topic is taken over from the Maltese Presidency. The aim is to update Europass and make it more userfriendly, a.o. thanks to an online platform (one stop shop). Negotiations have been very difficult, and took longer than expected. One of the main remaining big issues is the overall governance (which and how many expert groups). If progress is smooth, we continue the negotations with the Parliament (trialogue).
* (poss) **Recommendation on a Quality Framework on apprenticeships**. Probably in September the Commission will issue a proposal (not clear when and which proposal). VET systems are very diverse; in some member states, there is no apprentice system, they don’t see the need to put it in place.

[The presentation](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxkCJm1xEOc_V013ZTlfbnprUWM/view)

## The Youth Initiative of the European Commission

Filip Van depoele, European Commission, DG EAC

Introductory remark: VET is within DG EMPL

### The context of the Youth Initiative

Education is high on Eu agenda. This is reflected in recent policy documents:

* Rome declaration (25 March 2017): ‘a Union where young people receive the best education and training and can study and find jobs across the continent’;
* The European Pillar of Social Rights (26 April 2017): set of 20 principles, the first one is the right to a quailty and inclusive eduation training and lifelong learning system;
* Commission reflection papers on the social demension of Europe (April 2017) and on harnessing globalisation (10 May 2017) : education as a factor determining our societies’ and economies’ wellbeing;
* UN Sustainable Development Goal 4, link with the global level.

### The Youth Initiative

In this context, the Commission took the Youth Initiative, with an important message on the dual role of education: focus on the need of the individual (active citizenship, personal development, …) and the need of the labour market (skills and qualifications).

Note: It is remarkable that the initiatives below (modernisation school education, modernisation higher education, graduate tracking) are presented under the heading of ‘youth initative’.

Four initiatives under this Youth Initiative:

Legal proposal on European Solidarity Corps.

This is high on the Commission priority list, as Juncker himself called in the State of the Union for more opportunities for young people. So came this strong new initiative to boost participation of young people in voluntary activities. It is a proposal for a new legal base, a new legal instrument, with a budget of 341million from 2018-2020, with 80 % on volunteering and 20 % on traineeships and jobs. More than 20.000 young people registered, about 4500 companies are accredited in a matching tool. This is a clear sign that the Commission realises the need to connect with young people by offering concrete tools. The legal proposal has been adopted on 30 May 2017, and will be negotiated under the Estonian Presidency, hoping to conclude the negotiations end 2017, so that the Corps is up and running in 2018.

Policy Communication on Higher Education: ‘**A renewed Eu agenda for HE’**.

The questions raised are: What are the issues facing Higher Education in the EU? What needs to change and wat can the EU do to help in order to foster improvements? Four main issues to focus on in a nutshell:

* Skills mismatch: graduates + jobs
* Social division (underrepresented groups in HE): university + society
* Innovation gap: HE + innovation
* Disjointed systems: coherence + efficiency (better link with VET and adult education; issue of coherence so that funding fosters better teaching and learning).

The communication also proposes a set of concrete actions (f.i. STEM coalition)

Proposal for a Council recommendation no Graduate Tracking.

No coherence across member states, need for better availability and use of qualitative and quantitative data on graduate outcomes. Applications: guidance for study and career choice/input for programme design/input for policy making).

Policy Communication on **school education.**

Two further proposals are expected in the second half of 2017, one on the key competences review and one on a council recommendation on inclusion and teaching of fundamental values. Member states face similar challenges: how can school education answer to these common challenges? PISA results 2015 were a shock:

* weaknesses in competence development;
* equity concerns;
* need to take account of tachnolgical and digital change.

This has lead to three policy priorities:

* Develop better and more inclusive schools (ECEC!, digital tools, cooperation with local partners);
* Support teachers and headmasters for excellent teaching and learning (more support in terms of initial teaching training and CPD, making the profession more attractive, and more autonomy of teachers);
* Improve governance of school ecucation systems: becoming more efficient, equitable and effictive within budget limits.

[The presentation](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxkCJm1xEOc_aXZhZVY5ZkVtSEU/view)

*Questions and answers*

Timeline?

The two policy communications (HE and school education) are being discussed in the education committee, and will be followed up by Council Conclusions November 2017.

For graduate tracking, the proposal for council recommendation will be adopted by the Council in November 2017.

What’s the difference between a Council Conclusion and a Council Recommendation?

We are in an area of subsidiarity, we don’t have strong legal instruments (no directives, as there are for trade, agriculture…). Directives need to be implemented in national legislation. In the field of edcuation, there is the need to be more creative, in the context of the open method of coordination.

Council Conclusions: ministers deliberate and adopt conclusions that express the view of ministers, based on an impulse by a Commission Communication. It is a non legally binding declaration.

A Council Recommendation is the strongest non-binding ‘legal’ instrument. After a proposal by the Commission, recommendations express a political commitment. This ‘soft law’ can put pressure: the European Commission can hold the member states accountable for their engagements.

<https://www.vleva.eu/event/Estsvoorzitterschap>

# Estonian presidency conference ‘Contemporary Approaches to Learning and Teaching

Tallinn, 19-20 September 2017

Manuel Miguéns, EUNEC president, attended this event.

[Programme, background and presentations](https://www.hm.ee/en/estonian-eu-council-presidency-conference-contemporary-approaches-learning-and-teaching)

# Summer University CNESCO: ‘Quelles politiques scolaires pour former notre jeunesse?’

Paris, 28-29 August 2017

Manuel Miguéns, EUNEC president, attended this event.

The event was very important in France involving about 400 participants from all French regions.

The most important topics under discussion were, among others,

* Assessment of public policies
* Pedagogic approaches to overcome learning difficulties
* In-service teacher training
* Differences between territories and the search for justice and equity
* Governance and partnerships towards justice in education.

[Programme and background information](https://www.cnesco.fr/fr/quelles-politiques-scolaires-dans-les-prochaines-annees-universite-dete-du-cnesco/)

# Quality education for all

Brussels, European Parliament, 7 September 2017

Organised by the CULT committee of the European Parliament (GUE/NGL)

In his introduction, Curzio Maltese (MEP) highlighted the impact of austerity policy on public education, and pleads for investment in education and exploring new perspectives. He goes into the role of education in society, as discussed by philosophers, economists, .. It is clear that, through education, the economic and social model is shaped, future is shaped. Education is now evolving towards a ‘tradable’ good; this is clear in the terminology used in education, such as entrepreneurship, assessment, .. and less about broad intellectual and emotional Bildung.

This introduction is followed by presentations by teachers/students who have experienced this first hand.

* Vasia Chioti, teacher of English in primary school testifies about the degradation of free education under the framework of the crisis, with, in Greece, three key words for education ‘austerity’, ‘flexibility’, ‘privatisation’. This has desastrous impact on education in general, and in particular on the job of the teacher, on technical and vocational education, on the education for children with special needs,…
* Georgios Tsiakalos, professor at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, talks about access to education for migrant students, and about early dropout especially for this group. He demonstrates the importance of keeping migrant students on board (results of research in the EU and US point out that this would enhance the GDP considerably).
* Pat Buckley is Sinn Fein spokesperson for mental health, focuses on assistance for students that have special needs.

In a next session, some local experiences and best practices are presented on the theme of ‘Imagining together a different school’.

# Summer School TOŠ (Permanent School Renewal)

Uherské Hradiště, Czech Republic 20-23 august 2017

This event is co-organized by Miloslav Hons, member of [CZESHA (Union of Schools' Associations of the Czech Republic)](http://www.eunec.eu/member/czesha-union-schools-associations-czech-republic), member of the EUNEC general assembly. Professor David Justino, president of CNE (Portuguese Education Council), member of the EUNEC executive committee, attended this even.

TOŠ - Permanent School Renewal is an informal group of Czech schools that are trying to use modern trends in teaching and educating their pupils.

The main themes of this Summer School were BORDERS (in different forms).

* Boundaries between people, groups, opinions...
* Boundaries as limits and obstacles...
* Borders between childhood and adulthood...
* Borders in and around us...
* Inclusion as a border
* Beyond the Borders (Real and Thought)

David Justino lead a very interesting workshop that showed changes in Portuguese education over the last few years. The Czech teachers were most interested in the progress in pupils' achievements and the way they were achieved.

