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To:	Mr Jeppe TRANHOLM-MIKKELSEN, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union
No. Cion doc.:	COM(2022) 11 final
Subject:	Proposal for a COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION on learning for environmental sustainability

Delegations will find attached document COM(2022) 11 final.

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EUROPEAN
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2022/0004 (NLE)

Proposal for a

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION

on learning for environmental sustainability

(Text with EEA relevance)

{SWD(2022) 3 final}

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1.   **CONTEXT OF THE PROPOSAL**

Becoming the world's first climate-neutral continent is the greatest challenge and opportunity of our times. It involves taking decisive action now.

Ursula von der Leyen, Political Guidelines

We are at a critical point in time: human action has brought us close to causing irreparable damage to our planet, the very source of our existence and well-being. To ensure a future where we can thrive, collective and individual actions are urgently needed to place our society and economy on a sustainable path. Young people have been especially vocal and active, demanding change and calling on public authorities to act urgently to protect the climate and environment for current and future generations. Many consider that school is failing to give them an adequate understanding of climate change, the environment and how to live and act more sustainably[1].

Under the leadership of President von der Leyen, the Commission has, with the European Green Deal, presented an ambitious strategy to deliver on sustainability and the transformational changes needed across our economy and society. Sustainable development is a core principle of the European Union and delivering on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals is a priority objective for the Union's internal and external policies. By aligning action across a range of policy areas, including energy, environment, mobility and agriculture, the EU aims for a green transition that is just and inclusive. **Like all sectors, education and training must take also action to respond to the climate emergency and planetary crisis – in terms of its own operations and, crucially, how it prepares learners for the future.**

The European Education Area Communication[2], the European Green Deal[3] and other key initiatives[4] recognise the crucial role of education and training for the green transition. Learners of all ages need to be able to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to live more sustainably, change patterns of consumption and production, embrace healthier lifestyles and contribute – both individually and collectively – to the transformation of our societies.

Achieving this requires a lifelong learning approach to learning for environmental sustainability with hands-on, engaging and action-based ways of learning which foster (i) knowledge, understanding and critical thinking (cognitive learning); (ii) practical skills development (applied learning); and (iii) empathy, solidarity and caring for nature (socio-emotional learning). Interdisciplinary approaches are needed to help learners understand the inter-connectedness of economic, social and natural systems.

Challenges regarding learning for environmental sustainability

A growing number of initiatives and actions on climate change, biodiversity and sustainability are taking place across Europe in early years education, schools, vocational education and training, higher education and community organisations. In many countries, policies and

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strategies are in place related to environmental and sustainability education and equally viable concepts, such as education for sustainable development and global competence. Yet despite decades of effort and initiatives, **learning for environmental sustainability is not yet a systemic feature of policy and practice in the EU.**

Few countries have made lifelong learning a guiding principle for sustainability in education and training. To develop its full potential, learning and teaching for environmental sustainability needs to happen not only in schools and higher education but in all parts of the system (formal, non-formal, informal) and at all levels (from early childhood to adulthood into older age).

Countries often face difficulties in implementing and monitoring policies related to education and training for environmental sustainability. Specific targets, actions, indicators and a clear vision are often lacking. The interdisciplinary nature of learning for environmental sustainability; the need for learner-centred pedagogies; new approaches to assessment; organisational change; and community partnerships can run counter to established cultures and norms in education and training.

Coverage of environmental sustainability, including biodiversity, in curricula is currently patchy and cannot be considered comprehensive in most Member States. Few countries make specific references to sustainability competences, related learning objectives and how these should be assessed. Environmental and sustainability issues are often included in science and geography, whereas all subjects, and combinations of subjects, can also contribute to learners' understanding of these issues.

Many educators across Europe are already actively teaching, or aspire to teach, for environmental sustainability. At the same time, many say they lack expertise and training, in particular, regarding interdisciplinary approaches, active pedagogies and the challenging subject matter.

Whole-institution approaches where sustainability is embedded in all processes and operations are not yet widespread across educational institutions also due to insufficient funding and support. Institutions are often lacking data and tools on how to monitor the effectiveness of sustainability initiatives and efforts.

Moving to deep and transformative change

An increasing number of projects and programmes related to environmental sustainability issues show a growing interest and engagement in these issues. However, many initiatives remain limited in time and scope. Given the urgency of the climate and biodiversity crises, it is time for a step change and to move beyond isolated initiatives to deep and systemic change in education and training.

Embedding environmental sustainability in all education and training policies, programmes and processes is vital to build the skills and competences needed for the green transition. Action is needed vertically, individual to institution to systems level, and also horizontally, meaning all stakeholders in education and training need to work together in synergy to ensure that **sustainability is anchored firmly in the entire student learning experience.**

Short-term measures need to be developed and continued to support institutions and educators and to help learners develop the skills and mindset needed for the green transition.

In the **medium and longer term,** all reform efforts in education and training should support and align with the changes needed for a greener and more sustainable future.

Consultations and research evidence to prepare this proposal have highlighted that to fully embed environmental sustainability into education and training, action is needed on a number of fronts.

Effective learning for environmental sustainability:

– Starts from early childhood education and care

– Takes a lifelong learning approach

– Creates supportive learning environments where the institution as a whole is active on sustainability

– Is learner-centred, engaging, positive and based on real-life experiences

– Supports educators, including leadership teams, to teach and act for sustainability

– Fosters collaboration and partnerships in local and wider communities

– Involves young people in meaningful ways

– Builds sustainability competences

– Is founded on strong policies

Learning and teaching for environmental sustainability can fully support other education agendas of inclusion, quality, innovation, internationalisation and student-centred learning. **It has rich potential and is an excellent opportunity to make learning more relevant; to motivate learners and educators; and to develop competences increasingly needed for life and work.**

(1)   The objectives of the proposed Recommendation

The Commission proposal aims to:

– articulate a vision and shared understanding at EU level on the deep and transformative changes needed in education and training for the green transition;

– develop a coherent approach to the competences, skills and attitudes that people need to act, live and work in a sustainable manner, strengthen the importance of lifelong learning to ensure that everybody from a young age through to adulthood can acquire those competences and skills;

– facilitate the sharing of policy maker, researcher and educator expertise and best practices at system and institution level;

– support initiatives at EU level to foster learning for environmental sustainability; and

– encourage investment in the above areas.

(2)   International dimension

Whilst fully focused on the EU's ambitions and priorities to deliver on the European Green Deal, the proposal **complements and builds on the work at international level**. It will mobilise Member States and stakeholders for more concerted action to contribute to the UNESCO agenda, notably the **ESD 2030 Roadmap**, and it will support the **EU's commitment to the UN 2030 Agenda,** the world's blueprint for global sustainable development.

(3)   Complementarity and synergies with other EU education and training initiatives

–   Communication on achieving the European Education Area by 2025[5],

–   Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030)[6],

–   Communication on a new European Research Area for Research and Innovation[7],

–   Council Recommendation on a Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe[8],

–   European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience[9],

–   Council Recommendation on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness, and resilience[10],

–   Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027)[11],

–   Council Recommendation on the key competences for lifelong learning[12],

–   Council Conclusions on the European Universities[13],

–   The future Erasmus+ Teacher Academies[14],

–   EU quality framework for early childhood education and care[15],

–   The Education for Climate Coalition[16]

–   The proposal for a Council Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability[17],

–   The upcoming European Strategy for Universities,

[5]   COM(2020) 625 final
[6]   Council Resolution 2021/C 66/01
[7]   https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0628&from=GA
[8]   https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/1a0df8ff-5313-11ec-91ac-01aa75ed71a1
[9]   COM/2020/274 final
[10]   https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32020H1202(01)&from=EN
[11]   COM(2020) 624 final
[12]   Council Recommendation 2018/C 189/01
[13]   Council conclusions 2021/C 221/03
[14]   https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-b/key-action-2/teacher-academies
[15]   Council Recommendation 2019/C 189/4
[16]   Education for Climate Coalition : https://education-for-climate.ec.europa.eu/_en
[17]   https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/european-education-area/a-european-approach-to-micro-credentials_en

–   The upcoming proposal for a Council Recommendation on Building bridges for effective European higher education cooperation.

(4)   Consistency with other policies

–   Green Deal Communication[18],

–   Biodiversity Strategy 2030[19],

–   NextGenerationEU recovery plan[20],

–   European Climate Pact[21],

–   New Circular Economy Action Plan[22],

–   European Pillar of Social Rights[23],

–   Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030[24],

–   European Bauhaus Communication[25],

–   European Child Guarantee[26].

–   Communication on a new European Research Area[27],

–   Council Conclusions on the Future Governance of the European Research Area[28],

–   New Consumer Agenda[29].

2.   LEGAL BASIS, SUBSIDIARITY AND PROPORTIONALITY

• **Legal basis**

The proposed Council Recommendation is in conformity with Articles 165(4) and 166(4) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. The initiative does not propose any extension of EU regulatory power or binding commitments on Member States. Member States will decide, according to their national circumstances, how they implement this Council Recommendation.

• **Subsidiarity (for non-exclusive competence)**

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[18]   COM(2019) 640 final
[19]   COM(2020) 380 final
[20]   https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/recovery-plan-europe_en
[21]   COM(2020) 788 final
[22]   COM(2020) 98 final
[23]   COM(2017) 250
[24]   COM(2021) 101 final
[25]   https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_21_4627
[26]   Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/1004
[27]   COM(2020) 628 final
[28]   Council conclusions 13567/20
[29]   COM(2020) 696 final

The proposal is in conformity with the principle of subsidiarity as provided for in Article 5(3) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU).

Member States have their own culture and legislation for the design and organisation of learning. They are fully responsible for the content of teaching and the organisation of their education and training systems. At the same time, evidence shows that they face a number of common issues relating to the preparedness of their education and training systems, including for the green and digital transitions.

In line with the principle of subsidiarity, the proposal outlines a way forward for education and training for environmental sustainability and makes recommendations to this end.

- **Proportionality**

The present proposal is in conformity with the principle of proportionality as provided for in Article 5(4) of the TEU.

Neither the content nor the form of this proposed Council Recommendation exceeds what is necessary to achieve its objectives. The commitments Member States will make are of a voluntary nature and each Member State remains free to decide on which approach to take.

- **Choice of the instrument**

To contribute to the achievement of the objectives referred to in Articles 165 and 166 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, this Treaty provides for the adoption by the Council of Recommendations, on a proposal from the Commission.

A Council Recommendation is an appropriate instrument within the field of education and training, where the EU has a supporting responsibility, and is an instrument that has been frequently used for European action in these areas. As a legal instrument, it signals the commitment of Member States to the measures presented and provides a stronger political basis for cooperation in this area, while fully respecting Member-State authority in the field of education and training.

3. **RESULTS OF EX-POST EVALUATIONS, STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS AND IMPACT ASSESSMENTS**

- **Ex-post evaluations/fitness checks of existing legislation**

Not applicable.

- **Stakeholder consultations**

Input for the proposal was gathered during the public consultation on learning for environmental sustainability, which ran from 18 June to 24 September 2021 (1352 responses and 96 position papers received) as well as targeted consultations with Member States, non-governmental organisations, teachers, trainers and other educators, students and youth representatives and other European stakeholders and experts in the field.

- **Collection and use of expertise**

To gather input for the proposal three studies were commissioned: (i) mapping of curricula, policies and other measures in the Member States, including a literature review, national and policy research mapping, a review of school curricula, teacher survey, cases studies and focus groups; (ii) mapping of Erasmus+ projects related to learning for environmental sustainability; and (iii) a study on education and training for sustainable development in the context of COVID-19 and the green and digital transitions.

- **Impact assessment**

Given the complementary approach of the activities to Member-State initiatives, the voluntary nature of the proposed activities and the scope of the impacts expected, an impact assessment was not carried out. The development of the proposal was informed by studies, consultation of Member States and stakeholders and a public consultation. It fully supports the EU's commitment to deliver on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

- **Regulatory fitness and simplification**

Not applicable.

- **Fundamental rights**

This proposed Council Recommendation respects the fundamental rights and observes the principles recognised by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, notably the right to the protection of personal data, laid down in Article 8, and the right of education, laid down in Article 14.

The measures will be carried out in accordance with EU law on the protection of personal data, in particular Regulation (EU) 2016/679[30] of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data (General Data Protection Regulation).

4. BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS

This initiative will not require additional resources from the EU budget.

5. OTHER ELEMENTS

- **Implementation plans and monitoring, evaluation and reporting arrangements**

To support implementation, the Commission proposes to develop, in cooperation with Member States, research, guidance material and other deliverables, based on evidence, peer learning activities and identification of good practice.

The Commission intends to report on the use of the Council Recommendation in the context of the strategic framework for European cooperation in the area of education and training.

- **Explanatory documents (for directives)**

Not applicable.

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[30]   Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council

- **Outline of the Recommendation and staff working document**

The draft Council Recommendation proposes guidance and action that can be pursued by Member States in order to further embed environmental sustainability in education and training and develop the sustainability competences of all learners. It sets out the European Commission's commitment to complement and support action in this area. The accompanying staff working document describes recent research evidence, stakeholder opinions and provides detail on the new European sustainability competence framework.

2022/0004 (NLE)

Proposal for a

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION

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(Text with EEA relevance)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Articles 165(4) and 166(4) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Whereas:

(1)   The European Green Deal[31] and the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030[32] highlight the key role of schools, higher education and other training institutions to engage with learners, parents, educators[33] and the wider community on the changes needed for a successful green transition.

(2)   The Sustainable Development Goals of the UN, notably Target 4.7, call for all learners to acquire by 2030 the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

(3)   The Communication on the European Education Area[34], European Pillar of Social Rights[35] and the Communication on a new ERA for Research and Innovation[36] call for education and training policies and investments to be geared towards inclusive green and digital transitions for future resilience and prosperity.

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[31]   COM(2019) 640 final

[32]   COM(2020) 380 final

[33]   For the purposes of this Recommendation, educators includes teachers (acknowledged as having the status of a teacher or equivalent according to national legislation and practice) and trainers (anyone who fulfils one or more activities linked to the theoretical or practical training function, either in an institution for education or training or at the workplace). This encompasses teachers in general education and higher education, teachers and trainers in initial and continuing VET, as well as early childhood education and care professionals and adult educators.

[34]   COM(2020)625 final

[35]   European Pillar of Social Rights | European Commission (europa.eu)

[36]   COM(2020)628 final

(4)   The key competences, as defined in the European Reference Framework on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning[37], aim to support people across Europe in gaining the skills and competences needed for personal fulfilment, health, employability and social inclusion in a time of rapid and profound change.

(5)   The European Skills Agenda[38] announced support for the development of a core, green skills set for the labour market with a view to creating a generation of environment-conscious professionals and green economic operators, integrating environmental and climate considerations into school, higher education, vocational education and training as well as research. Europe needs highly competent professionals to support the green transition and to be a world leader in sustainable technologies.

(6)   The Council Recommendation on vocational education and training for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness, and resilience[39] recognises the VET sector as key for the digital and green transitions.

(7)   The European Climate Pact invites individuals, communities and organisations to participate in climate action and building a greener Europe by offering opportunities to learn about climate change, develop and implement solutions, and connect with others to multiply the impact of those solutions.

(8)   The Digital Education Action Plan[40] provides a vision for high-quality, inclusive and accessible European digital education and underscores the importance of digital technologies as powerful enablers for the green transition whilst, at the same time, facilitating a move towards sustainable behaviour in both the development and use of digital products.

(9)   The New European Bauhaus brings a cultural and creative dimension to the European Green Deal, aiming to demonstrate how sustainable innovation offers tangible, positive changes in our daily life, including in school buildings and other learning environments.

(10)   UNESCO, through its Education for Sustainable Development programme, has been working to make education a more central and visible part of the international response to the climate crisis and to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals, notably Target 4.7 on education for sustainable development. Under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, Parties commit to promoting and cooperating on climate change education, training, public awareness, public participation and public access to information.

(11)   OECD data[41] from 2018 demonstrate a high awareness among 15-year olds of climate change and the environmental crisis and the need to address it. However, the same data shows that far fewer students feel a sense of agency to make a real difference. Learning about the environment and global crisis can lead to pupils and students feeling overwhelmed and disempowered, which is exacerbated by inaccurate information and disinformation.

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[37]   OJ C 189, 4.6.2018, p. 1–13, Annex
[38]   COM(2020)274 final
[39]   https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32020H1202(01)&from=EN
[40]   COM(2020)624 final
[41]   OECD (2020), Are Students Ready to Thrive in an Interconnected World? PISA 2018, Volume VI.

(12) Education and training systems and institutions have a duty to respond to the growing youth voice on the climate and biodiversity crises and involve young people in designing solutions related to learning for environmental sustainability.

(13) The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted our close links with nature and put renewed focus on education and training systems. Lessons have been learned about new possibilities for education and training, including learning in different settings (including online), engagement and autonomy of learners and the links between formal learning and the wider community. The pandemic also increased a long-standing concern for the physical, mental and emotional well-being of children and young people.

(14) Individual early childhood and care centres, schools, higher education institutions, research organisations, VET providers and local communities are becoming increasingly active in relation to the climate and biodiversity crises. However, sustainability is not yet a systemic feature of education and training across the EU.

(15) Many educators lack support, expertise, and training opportunities to incorporate environmental sustainability in their teaching practices. They often feel insufficiently equipped to deal with eco-anxiety and eco-pessimism and help learners engage with climate and environmental issues in a positive way.

(16) Whole-institution approaches to sustainability incorporating all areas of activity are not yet widespread. Such approaches can include teaching and learning; research and innovation; facilities and operations, and should engage students, staff, parents, and local and wider communities.

(17) The potential and opportunity to complement and strengthen other education agendas needs to be further explored. Teaching and learning for environmental sustainability can fully support policies and programmes for well-being and inclusion, global solidarity, student-centred learning, research and innovation and digital transformation.

(18) The education and training dimension is not systematically included in other policies related to the green transition and sustainability. Integrating education into these policies can support their implementation, connect different sectors of society and the economy and embed sustainability effectively in education.

(19) This Recommendation fully respects the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.

HEREBY RECOMMENDS THAT MEMBER STATES

(1) Urgently step up efforts to support education and training systems to take action for the green transition so that learners of all ages and from all backgrounds can access high-quality and inclusive education and training on climate change, biodiversity and sustainability.

(2) Establish learning for environmental sustainability as a priority area in education and training policies and programmes in order to support and enable the sector to contribute to the green transition. Develop a comprehensive and collaborative approach to learning for environmental sustainability involving all bodies, organisations and players in the education and training system.

(3)   Provide a range of learning opportunities in different settings from early childhood to adult learning, so that all individuals can prepare for and actively contribute to the green transition and take action for an environmentally sustainable, circular and climate-neutral economy and a just society.

(4)   Consider the following measures at the level of the system:

(a)   Fully align strategies and plans in education and training with environmental sustainability, including those related to curricula and assessment, pedagogies and educator professional development. Support implementation of national and other strategies and policies, including on related concepts such as education for sustainable development, through action plans and mechanisms for follow-up and monitoring.

(b)   Invest in green and sustainable equipment, resources and infrastructure (buildings, grounds and technology) for learning, socialising and recreation to ensure healthy and resilient learning environments.

(c)   Raise awareness of the benefits and opportunities of learning for environmental sustainability, and support education and training institutions to make climate change, biodiversity and sustainability issues relevant to the daily lives of their learners.

(d)   Involve pupils, students and all learners in meaningful and coordinated ways, to propose and design approaches on what, how and where they learn about and for environmental sustainability. Encourage a gender-balanced participation of learners from all backgrounds.

(e)   Develop comprehensive curricula frameworks, allowing the time and space for in-depth learning for environmental sustainability so learners can develop sustainability competences from an early age. Intergenerational learning and local examples, problems and responses can make curricula more relevant to learners demonstrating that climate change, biodiversity and sustainability are local and actionable.

(f)   Support cooperation and networking on sustainability and biodiversity, involving for example local authorities, youth representatives, centres of environmental education, forests, parks, farms, museums, libraries, non-governmental organisations, research, consumer organisations and business.

(g)   Support scaling up of good practices and invest in pedagogical research on learning for environmental sustainability at all levels of education and training.

(5)   Support learners by considering the following measures:

(a)   Provide learners, already from pre-school, with opportunities to understand, engage with and value the natural world and its biodiversity, create a sense of curiosity and wonder and learn to act for sustainability, individually and collectively.

(b)   Strengthen, including through financial support, high-quality lifelong learning for environmental sustainability, including traineeships, apprenticeships,

volunteering, extra-curricular activities and other forms of non-formal and informal learning. Recognise and reward civic engagement in environmental sustainability.

(c) Facilitate learning methods and approaches that are collaborative, experiential and relevant to local contexts and traditions. This includes giving students hands-on opportunities to observe and care for nature, save resources, repair, reuse and recycle, thereby helping them understand the importance of sustainable lifestyles and the circular economy.

(d) Provide accurate and accessible information on the climate and biodiversity crisis, and its drivers, develop problem-solving and collaboration skills, foster critical thinking and media literacy skills and support positive action, including volunteering, to confront and reduce the fear and disempowerment that learners might experience in the face of the planetary crises.

(6) Support educators to facilitate learning for environmental sustainability by considering the following measures:

(a) Recognise that all educators, whatever their discipline or sector of education are sustainability educators who need to support their learners in preparing for the green transition. Include, consult and engage educators on curricula development and other educational reforms related to environmental sustainability and on the design of appropriate professional development.

(b) Embed environmental sustainability in all initial teacher education programmes; continued professional development programmes and teacher professional standards and frameworks in order to support educators' competence development with regard to sustainability.

(c) Create opportunities and incentives for educators to take part in professional development programmes related to sustainability, for example by linking them to career progression and development and creating roles for educators such as sustainability coordinator.

(d) Support educators, including by providing the necessary time and space, to adopt pedagogies that enhance environmental sustainability learning and to approach sustainability education in interdisciplinary ways and develop the socio-emotional aspects of learning for environmental sustainability, so that all learners can become agents of change and learn to act, both individually and collectively, for a more sustainable world.

(e) Encourage and enable transformative and interdisciplinary teaching and learning using both traditional and innovative learning approaches, including hands-on learning, the STEAM approach[42], hackathons and gamification.

(f) Develop and disseminate resources to support educators, including regarding assessment. Support educators to use traditional and new tools and materials to teach for environmental sustainability in a range of indoor and outdoor, and

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[42] STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics) approach embraces the creative potential of connecting STEM education with the arts, the humanities, and the social sciences

digital and non-digital, settings. Provide access to centres of expertise, including centres for environmental education.

(g) Encourage the research and innovation community to engage with formal, non-formal and informal education providers to support educators in environmental sustainability. Support educational staff to participate in exploratory projects and research related to the climate emergency, environmental crisis and sustainability.

(7) Support education and training institutions to effectively integrate environmental sustainability across all their activities and operations by considering the following measures:

(a) Encourage and facilitate effective whole-institution approaches to sustainability which encompass teaching and learning, vision, planning and governance, active learner and staff participation, management of buildings and resources, partnerships with local and wider communities, and research and innovation. Support education leaders in managing organisational change with dedicated professional development and guidance for their roles.

(b) Support education and training institutions to design, monitor and evaluate their sustainability strategies and/or embed sustainability in existing processes and measures (e.g. school development plans, higher education mission statements and strategies). Recognise that this is a long-term process requiring small measurable steps which are monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis, including through self-evaluation by the institution.

(c) Encourage and support schools, higher education institutions, VET providers and other education providers to take part in eco-certification programmes which can bring environmental, educational and economic benefits. Provide support structures for such schemes, e.g. agencies or bodies to support whole-institution approaches, mentoring and networking, templates and guidance, financial support.

(d) Focus part of the internal and/or external review and quality assurance mechanisms of education and training organisations on sustainability. Reward higher education institutions through performance based funding frameworks for effective engagement with sustainability.

(e) Further embed environmental sustainability into programmes, syllabuses and modules, across a range of disciplines, such as business studies, social sciences, architecture and engineering, land use planning and management. Make use of resources and materials developed by environmental and educational non-governmental organisations and other relevant bodies.

(f) Support higher education and VET institutions in the development of small and tailored learning courses on environmental sustainability, leading to micro-credentials, in order to deepen, broaden and update professional competences.

(g) Support partnerships with business, arts, farms, cultural heritage, sport, research institutes, the educational resources industry (including technology, publishing and other curriculum equipment) and educational research. Develop

extra-curricular, summer and other programmes while providing support for internships in, for example, laboratories, businesses, research institutions, non-governmental organisations.

(8) Mobilise national and EU funds for investment in infrastructure, training, tools and resources to increase resilience and preparedness of education and training for the green transition, in particular Erasmus+, the Recovery and Resilience Facility, European Solidarity Corps, European Social Fund Plus, European Regional Development Fund, the Technical Support Instrument, Digital Europe Programme, Horizon Europe and InvestEU.

(9) Invest in monitoring, research and evaluation of the policy challenges and of the impact of these initiatives in order to build on lessons learnt and inform policy making, including by supporting the development of common indicators and targets on environmental sustainability in education.

HEREBY INVITES THE COMMISSION TO:

1. Facilitate cooperation and peer learning among Member States and stakeholders on learning for environmental sustainability through:

1.1. The Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030)[43] where education for the green transition is a key priority area.

1.2. Disseminating and encouraging the use of, opportunities to promote, support and enable education and training for environmental sustainability within EU funding programmes, such as Erasmus+, the European Solidarity Corps, LIFE, European Social Fund, Horizon Europe, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions and the Technical Support Instrument.

1.3. Sharing good practice from Erasmus+ staff exchanges, projects and networks, including through the Erasmus+ European Universities, the eTwinning online community, as well as the Centres of Vocational Excellence, the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions and the European Institute of Innovation and Technology.

1.4. Identifying, recording and sharing good practice examples, including through existing online platforms[44] and support the networking of national and other organisations active in education and environmental sustainability in formal and non-formal education and training.

1.5. Involving youth in the implementation of the Recommendation, in particular through the European Year of Youth 2022 and the EU Youth Dialogue, to ensure that opinions, views and needs of young people and youth organisations are fully taken into account.

1.6. Creating synergies with the Education for Climate Coalition and New European Bauhaus.

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[43] Council Resolution 2021/C 66/01
[44] This could include the forthcoming European School Education Platform, Learning Corner, Science is Wonderful! Platform, the European Youth Portal, EPALE, Scientix, the European Alliance for Apprenticeships, the Pact for Skills.

2.   Develop and share resources, materials and research on learning for environmental sustainability, in cooperation with Member States, including on a new European sustainability competence framework.

3.   Support educators to teach for environmental sustainability by:

3.1.   Providing resources and support materials on the future European School Education Platform, EPALE and the European Youth Portal.

3.2.   Recognising outstanding efforts in teaching and learning for environmental sustainability through EU award schemes, including the European Innovative Teaching Award, eTwinning Prize and the European Vocational Skills Awards.

4.   Monitor the development of green skills by higher education, VET graduates and early career researchers, for example by including these in the European graduate tracking initiative.

5.   Monitor progress on education for environmental sustainability within the framework of reports on the European Education Area and the European Green Deal.

6.   Strengthen cooperation with existing international organisations, notably UNESCO and other UN bodies, to foster an approach to education and training for environmental sustainability with policy makers, practitioners and stakeholders in Member States, which incorporates equity, inclusion and justice, in line with the European Green Deal and the Sustainable Development Goals.

7.   Continue to reinforce the green dimension of the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes, both through green mobility, green practices in projects and strong focus on environmental sustainability in cooperation between various education, training and youth stakeholders.

Done at Brussels,

For the Council
The President