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From: General Secretariat of the Council

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To: Delegations

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Subject: The transformative role of education for sustainable development and global citizenship as an instrumental tool for the achievement of the sustainable development goals (SDGs)
- Council conclusions (21 June 2022)

Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on the transformative role of education for sustainable development and global citizenship as an instrumental tool for the achievement of the sustainable development goals (SDGs), as approved by the Council at its 3885th meeting held on 21 June 2022.

Council conclusions on the transformative role of education for sustainable development and global citizenship as an instrumental tool for the achievement of the sustainable development goals (SDGs)

The Council of the European Union

1. Reaffirms that the European Union (EU) and its Member States remain firmly committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and other major multilateral agreements and instruments, including the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Convention on Biological Diversity, which continue to guide their actions, both internally and externally. They are at the core of the implementation of the European green Deal and the European Consensus on Development.
2. Recalls its June 2017 conclusions “A sustainable European future: The EU response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, its April 2019 conclusions “Towards an ever more sustainable Union by 2030”, its December 2019 conclusions “Building a sustainable Europe by 2030 – Progress thus far and next steps”, its June 2021 conclusions “A comprehensive approach to accelerate the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for sustainable development – Building back better from the COVID-19 crisis” the European Council conclusions of October 2018 as well as the Strategic Framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030) and reaffirms the commitments therein.

3. Moreover, underlines the priority to pursue collectively SDG4 and the importance of universal, equitable and inclusive access to quality education and training and to safe learning environments, including in emergency and crisis situations, for all children and youth, including girls and women as well as the most vulnerable and marginalized due to poverty, displacement or illness, as contributing to provide a stronger foundation for sustainable development, reducing inequalities, including gender inequalities, and the digital gap ; In this regard, expresses its concern regarding the disruption caused to education due to the pandemic and stresses the importance of building resilient educational systems providing adequate infrastructure and resources.
4. Underlines that raising broader support and engagement among EU citizens is instrumental for the achievement of the SDGs and the realisation of the 2030 Agenda by the EU and its Member States; as such, stresses the importance of ensuring that individuals are adequately equipped with competences, (comprising knowledge, skills, attitudes and values) needed to reflect on their roles, make conscious choices and become actors of change, both individually and collectively, for developing sustainable, inclusive and prosperous societies.
5. Considers that education for sustainable development and global citizenship has considerable transformative potential on our societies, wellbeing, economies and consumption patterns and is therefore indispensable to achieving a more sustainable EU and world. As such, stresses its pivotal role for the realisation of the 2030 Agenda as a whole, being an integral part of SDG4 and a key enabler of all other SDGs as well as a driver for innovation, recovery, resilience and transformative action.
6. Expresses its full commitment to the realisation of Target 4.7 and recognises the importance of the work carried out by UNESCO under the Education 2030 Framework for action, and the Berlin Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development including the Education for Sustainable Development roadmap, UNECE through its Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development and its updated framework for action, as well as the Council of Europe, including the North-South Centre, through tools such as the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC); recalls the objectives of the Maastricht Global Education Declaration and the December 2010 Council conclusions on education for sustainable development, which form the basis for the elaboration of these conclusions.

7. Acknowledges the ongoing positive momentum on education for sustainable development and global citizenship in Europe, stressing in particular the Council conclusions of 5 April 2022 on Fostering engagement among young people as facilitators of change in order to protect the environment and the Recommendation of 16 June 2022 on Learning for the green transition and sustainable development, which cover key areas of Education for Sustainable Development and stress the need to equip learners with the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to address complex challenges such as climate change and become agents of change as responsible global citizens; also welcomes in this regard the ongoing process towards a new European Declaration on Global Education to 2050 under the aegis of the Global Education Network Europe (GENE) due for finalisation in November 2022.
8. Considers that the concepts Learning for Environmental Sustainability, Learning for the green transition, Development Education and Awareness Raising, Global (Citizenship) Education, Education for Citizenship and International Solidarity are all an integral part of Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship : these foster sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls, while also promoting environmental and biodiversity protection and a culture of solidarity, peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development. Acknowledges as such their contribution the achievement of Target 4. 7, as well as Targets 12.8 and 13.3, of the 2030 Agenda, while also recognizing the diversity of education models at the national, regional and local levels.
9. Considers that education for sustainable development and global citizenship should address the three fundamental pillars of sustainable development - economic, social and environmental - in a balanced and integrated manner, with a particular emphasis on interconnections and synergies between SDGs, and emphasises that cross-cutting issues of the 2030 Agenda, in particular good governance, the rule of law, democracy, and effective and accountable institutions, as well as gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, should be reflected as such in education for sustainable development and global citizenship. This comprehensive nature of education for sustainable development and global citizenship contributes to developing transversal key competences among learners.

10. Considers also that education for sustainable development and global citizenship should be incorporated, where appropriate, as a set of underlying principles and values, transversally relevant at all levels of formal, non-formal and informal education and in all educational subjects, with a key objective of emphasising awareness raising, critical thinking, innovation, ability to cope with future changes and the long-term perspective of responsibility towards future generations as set out in GreenComp, the new European Sustainability Competence Framework.
11. Emphasises that education for sustainable development and global citizenship is an integral part of a lifelong learning process, and stresses as such the contribution that non-formal and informal learning can make in education for sustainable development and global citizenship, and that cultural institutions, including media, museums and libraries, as well as local authorities and communities, civil society and employers are all key players in this respect.
12. Stresses that developing competences related to sustainability issues among civil servants is a key step in order to reinforce public administrations' capacity to implement the 2030 Agenda and ensure further integration of the SDGs in public policies and policy coherence.
13. Acknowledges the need to harness and fully utilise the potential of digital technologies including artificial intelligence to advance education for sustainable development and global citizenship, for instance through open education resources, open science and e-learning tools and infrastructures, while recognizing the need to reduce the environmental impacts of digital technologies, to fully respect and protect human rights and to foster digital well-being and reducing the digital divide.
14. Emphasises that efforts to develop education for sustainable development and global citizenship should aim at reaching out to all publics, particularly to young people, and people in the most vulnerable and marginalized situations, people living in remote and rural areas, ensuring gender equality and non-discrimination and closing gaps between and within countries and generations.

15. Stresses the importance of placing awareness and education on sustainable development issues in a global perspective, emphasizing the interconnectedness of major contemporary challenges, thus fostering active global citizenship that promotes global justice by addressing global inequalities.
16. Welcomes the significant progress achieved in the EU in favour of education for sustainable development and global citizenship, including enhanced provision of education for sustainable development and global citizenship at all levels by Member States, deepened cooperation between ministries and national agencies, the design of appropriate vehicles and tools to facilitate the development of education for sustainable development and global citizenship, and enhanced coordination at regional, national and European level.
17. Invites the Member States, where appropriate and according to national circumstances:
 - a) to step up and strengthen the development of coherent, inclusive and coordinated national strategic approaches and other initiatives for education for sustainable development, global citizenship and related agendas, in line with SDG Target 4.7. Update existing policies, with special regard to latest science, magnify support to the variety of stakeholders involved in education for sustainable development, global citizenship and related agendas and support and develop synergies and cooperation between formal and non-formal education institutions;
 - b) to facilitate inter-ministerial, inter-agency and multi-stakeholder initiatives, in line with a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach;
 - c) to deepen cooperation between Member states in the field of education for sustainable development and global citizenship, facilitating further sharing and capitalising of good practices, including through the Global Education Network Europe (GENE);
 - d) to invite young people engaged in sustainability issues as permanent and important stakeholders to take an active part as co-creators in the elaboration of educational policies and curricula.

18. Calls on the European Commission to continue supporting education for sustainable development, global citizenship and related agendas, including learning for environmental sustainability, in particular through the Erasmus+ programme, Team Europe initiatives, the Life Programme and the Development Education and Awareness Raising Programme (DEAR). In that regard, invites the Commission to continue its reflection towards a wider access to DEAR funding as a way to enhance the impact of the programme.
19. Invites the Commission and the Member States, in a Team Europe approach, as part of their effort to support a sustainable recovery aligned with the SDGs, to enhance cooperation in the field of education for sustainable development, global citizenship and related agendas, including learning for environmental sustainability, with third countries and international organisations and bodies such as the Council of Europe, UNESCO and UNECE, to promote education for sustainable development and global citizenship in multilateral fora and events, in particular the HLPF and the G20, in line with the critical role assigned to Education for Sustainable Development in the G20 Rome Leader's Declaration, and to support the strengthening of links between UNESCO and ECOSOC, and the cross-cutting integration of education for sustainable development and global citizenship in the activities of the United Nations system. In this regard the Transforming Education Summit, convened by the United Nations Secretary-General in September 2022 as a key initiative of our Common Agenda, represents a major opportunity to step up global commitment in favour of education for sustainable development and global citizenship, and should highlight the central role of education for the 2030 Agenda as a whole.
20. Welcomes the integration of learning for sustainability and the need for the education and training sector to respond to the overarching goals of the green and digital transition in key transformative EU policies and Commission communications, such as the New European Bauhaus, Erasmus+, the European Skills Agenda, the European Strategy for Universities and the European Education Area, and invites the Commission to continue mainstreaming education for sustainable development, global citizenship and related agendas in all relevant areas of action.

21. Invites the Commission and Member States, in a Team Europe approach, to monitor EU progress on education for sustainable development, global citizenship and related agendas, in order to ensure that implementation is continuously improved with no-one left behind, to put in place assessment systems, using existing monitoring tools, when appropriate, while avoiding duplication of efforts and reporting obligations, and to enhance research on evaluation. Also invites the Commission to continue its coherent and systematic promotion of education for sustainable development, global citizenship and related agendas, in line with SDG Target 4.7, *inter alia* by supporting the implementation of the Council Recommendation on learning for the green transition and sustainable development, and to explore possibilities for including indicators for Target 4.7 into the EU's SDG and education indicator sets.
 22. Lends its full support to the emerging process towards a new European Declaration on Global Education in Europe to 2050, which will build on the progress made and contribute to bolstering education for sustainable development and global citizenship in the EU.
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