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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Council
Subject:	Draft Council Recommendation on a European quality assurance and recognition system in higher education *- Adoption* *- Statement by Hungary*

Delegations will find attached a statement by Hungary in relation to the above-mentioned subject.

ANNEX

STATEMENT BY HUNGARY ON

Council Resolution on a joint European degree label and the next steps towards a possible joint European degree: boosting Europe's competitiveness and the attractiveness of European higher education

Council Recommendation on a European quality assurance and recognition system in higher education

Hungary considers that the internationalisation of higher education systems is vital for Europe's competitiveness. Cooperation in higher education should be facilitated in a truly inclusive manner, by providing equal opportunities to all higher education institutions in Europe, including the opportunity of the joint European degree label. In this context, Hungary regrets that participation in the Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe programme, is currently impeded for a significant number of Hungarian universities, as a result of a measure imposed by *Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/2506 of 15 December 2022 on measures for the protection of the Union budget against breaches of the principles of the rule of law in Hungary*. This restriction is an immense obstacle to European cooperation, and will cause irreversible damage not only to the Hungarian citizens and foreign students in Hungary who have been left out of the programmes, but also to the entire European community.

Therefore, Hungary welcomes that the Council Resolution underlines the need to ensure equitable access to resources, including available Union funding, for all higher education institutions as well as with an inclusive approach to enable them to benefit from European and international cooperation, ensuring that no institution is left behind in the pursuit of excellence and specifically commits to the full use of the opportunities offered by the Erasmus+ programme in all Member States. We are pleased to note, in particular, that the Council emphasizes the need to guarantee these opportunities to all higher education institutions, regardless of their form of operation, thus including also universities maintained by public interest trusts and concerned by the measure imposed by Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/2506. This is all the more important, given that Hungary cannot contribute fully to achieving the objectives set out in the Council Resolution and Recommendation until the universities concerned are assured of participation in the Erasmus+ programme again. Notwithstanding the above, Hungary remains committed to the internationalisation of higher education. For this purpose, the Pannonia Programme was launched last year to ensure that all Hungarian students have the opportunity to gain international experience.

Hungary notes the Policy Lab will be composed of Member States representatives who are members of the Working Group on Higher Education of the European Education Area strategic framework (or any successor group established under this framework) and other experts delegated by the Member States. Therefore, it is possible to delegate university representatives and representatives of accreditation committees/authorities to the Policy Lab.

Hungary also welcomes the reference in the Council Resolution clarifying that the actions set out therein are to be pursued while taking into account the education and training systems in the different national legal frameworks and the criteria for the joint European degree label set out in Annex II of the Council Recommendation are to be drawn up in full respect of the principle of subsidiarity and the Member States' competences in the area of education and training. Hungary notes that its education system is deeply rooted in its national identity, constitutional traditions and legal order including the Fundamental Law of Hungary, which thus should be fully respected while setting those criteria.