



Ressort: Politik

Strengthening European identity

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In view of the upcoming challenges, it is more and more crucial to strengthen European identity through education and culture. This is why it is so important to recognize the pivotal role of education, culture and sport in promoting active citizenship, common values and a sense of solidarity amongst the youngest generations. Strengthening European identity and promoting the active participation of individuals

and civil society in the democratic processes is decisive for the future of Europe and its democratic societies. Going abroad to study, learn, train and work or to participate in youth and sport activities is a factor that strengthens this European identity in all its diversity and the sense of being part of a cultural community as well as to fostering such active citizenship and social cohesion among people of all ages. Those taking part in mobility activities should get involved in their local communities as well as absorbed in their host country local communities to share their experience. Investing in learning mobility for all, no matter social or cultural background and irrespective of means, as well as in cooperation

and innovative policy development in the fields of education, training, youth and sport is key to building inclusive, democratic, cohesive and resilient societies and sustaining the competitiveness of the Union, while contributing to strengthening European identity, principles and values and to a more democratic Union.

The European Pillar of Social Rights also makes clear the significance of good quality early childhood education and of ensuring equal opportunities for all.

On 16 September 2016 in Bratislava, leaders of twenty-seven Member States stressed their determination to provide better opportunities for youth.

In the Rome Declaration signed on 25 March 2017, leaders of twenty-seven Member States and of the European Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission promised to work towards a Union where young people achieve the best education and training and can study and find jobs across the continent. A Union which preserves its cultural heritage and promotes cultural diversity; a Union which prevents unemployment, discrimination, social exclusion and poverty.

The integrated nature of the 2014-2020 European Union program covering learning in all contexts - formal, nonformal and informal, and at all stages of life - should be reinforced in order to ensure a lifelong learning approach and to boost flexible learning

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paths allowing people to acquire and improve the knowledge, skills and competences that are necessary to develop as individuals and to face the challenges and make the most of the opportunities of the twenty-first century.

Such an approach should also recognize the value of non-formal and informal education activities and the links between them. The Programme should contribute to strengthening the Union's innovation capacity notably by supporting mobility and cooperation activities that foster the development of skills and competences in forward-looking study fields or disciplines, such as science, technology, arts, engineering and mathematics (STEAM), climate change, environmental protection, sustainable development, clean energy,

artificial intelligence, robotics, data analysis, design and architecture, and digital and media literacy, to help people develop knowledge, skills and competences needed for the future. It is important to recognize that low levels of participation among people with fewer opportunities could stem from different causes and depend on different national contexts. Therefore, within a Union-wide framework, national agencies should develop inclusion strategies with measures to improve outreach, simplify procedures, offer training and support and monitor effectiveness. Other mechanisms for enhancing inclusion should be used including by providing more flexible learning mobility formats in line with the needs of people with fewer opportunities.

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