

# ETUCE circular

## ON EDUCATION & TRAINING POLICY

1/2015

- *Improving the role of the social partners in the European Semester: Education and training priorities in the Annual Growth Survey 2015*
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### Improving the role of the social partners in the European Semester:

### Education and training priorities in the Annual Growth Survey 2015

The European Semester has become an important tool for recommendations to Member States on education and training. Yearly, these recommendations contribute to education and training reforms at national level.

The [Annual Growth Survey 2015](#) is a communication from the European Commission to the Member States which kicks off the [European Semester](#) 2015 (the annual cycle of economic governance). This Annual Growth Survey, together with its accompanying documents such as the Draft [Joint Employment Report](#), sets out the [Jobs, Growth and Investments Package](#) announced as a first priority in the Political Guidelines<sup>1</sup> of the new European Commission.

The European Commission considers the implementation of country-specific recommendations still unsatisfactory. According to the Annual Growth Survey 2015, the European Semester needs to be more effective and there is a need to increase political ownership, accountability and acceptance of the process among stakeholders. To help to improve the implementation for country-specific recommendations, the European Commission has streamlined the European Semester<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Political Guidelines for the new Commission of 15 July 2014: [http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/docs/pg\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/docs/pg_en.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> system with a **review of the 'six pack' and the 'two pack' legislation**<sup>2</sup>, which accompanies the Annual Growth Survey 2015.

The Annual Growth Survey 2015 foresees that:

- **Social partners** both at European and national level should be more involved in the implementation policies of country-specific recommendations;
- The European Commission will make sure that European **social partners** are better 'associated' to the European Semester process;
- **Social partners** should actively contribute to national reform agenda.

### **How teachers' unions could be more involved at national and European level?**

The Annual Growth Survey 2015 suggests a greater involvement of national social partners in:

- The formulation of National Reform Programmes;
- An earlier presentation of the country-specific analysis by the European Commission which will allow for more time to examine and discuss the priorities on education and training;
- A closer involvement of the European Parliament in the European Semester which will allow for more political debates around the European Semester.

For example, the Annual Growth Survey 2015 suggest that the European Commission could engage in debates with the European Parliament and the social partners at European level before the Annual Growth Survey is published a continue to debate after its adoption. Based on the country-specific analysis (Alert Mechanism Report, In-depth reviews, etc.), the Commission could engage with the European Parliament and social partners to receive feedback on relevant country-specific issues.

The Annual Growth Survey for 2015 outlines the main priorities of the new European Commission jobs and growth agenda.

The European Commission acknowledges that the recovery of the European economy still lags behind, and the small progresses foreseen for 2014 and 2015 soon vanished in the second half of 2014. As a way out of the crisis, the 2015 Annual Growth Survey of the European Commission proposes to follow an integrated approach to economic and social policy for 2015 built on three main pillars: boost investments, accelerate structural reforms and pursue fiscal stability.

**Boost investments**, especially in key areas such as education and innovation systems. In this regards, the [Investment Plan for Europe](#) is expected to raise additional investments infrastructures, notably energy and broadband networks; as well as transport infrastructure; education, research and innovation; renewable energy and energy efficiency. Please see [ETUCE position on the Investment Plan for Europe](#).

### Accelerate structural reforms at Member States' level

In order to tackle the high level of unemployment, the Annual Growth Survey 2015 stresses **the importance of:**

- VET and dual education systems,
- Lifelong learning through the mobilisation of both public and private actors, with broader access at all ages,
- A better assessment of the skills needs at regional and sectoral levels is necessary.

With regards to the modernisation of social protection systems, better targeted social policies should be complemented by:

- **Affordable childcare and education,**
- Prevention of **early school leaving,**
- **Training and job assistance.**

The identified priorities will be included in the next country-specific recommendations.



## **Education and training priorities of the Latvian Presidency**

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On 1 January 2015, Latvia took over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The programme of the Presidency: <https://eu2015.lv/the-presidency-and-eu/priorities-of-the-latvian-presidency> . Provisional agendas for Council meetings, during the second semester of 2014 are available at: [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/fc/140297.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/fc/140297.pdf)  
Twitter: [@eu2015lv](https://twitter.com/eu2015lv)

### Main strategic objectives

The main strategic objectives of the Latvian Presidency are the following:

- **Competitive Europe:** To work on the Investment Plan for Europe; continue the work on strengthening the Single Market; launch discussions and start working on the Energy Union; promote industrial competitiveness.
- **Digital Europe:** To advance data protection; work on the Telecommunications market package; start discussions on the Digital Single Market strategy.

- **Engaged Europe:** To facilitate the review of the Neighbourhood Policy; move forward with the transatlantic partnership; focus on post-2015 development goals.

In line with the 18-month programme of the trio-presidency (Italy-Latvia-Luxemburg), the Latvian Presidency will focus on the on-going **midterm review of the EU2020 Strategy** with an emphasis on the implementation of structural reforms embedded in the country-specific recommendations (CSR).

The Presidency will also put a particular emphasis on:

- Strengthening the **Eastern Partnership**, by ensuring closer political ties also in the field of better education;
- Reviewing the **EU-Central Asia Strategy**, by enhancing the EU engagement also through discussions on educational exchange.

### **Main priorities in Education and Youth**

The Latvian Presidency aims to strengthen the educational agenda by developing a closer link between EU2020 Strategy and ET2020strategic Framework.

**The Presidency will focus on:**

- Discussions to assess the overall progress and establish priority areas in the **Joint Report 2015 on the implementation of ET2020**;
- **Vocational education and training**;
- **Internationalisations of higher education**, by strengthening cooperation between European and Asian countries;
- **Evaluation of the Bologna process** in the field of higher education;
- Role of **early childhood and primary education** in fostering creativity, innovation and digital skills;
- **Accessibility of education and effectiveness of investments**;
- Transparency and recognition of **skills and qualifications**;
- **Education to health** for children and adolescences – eg. school meals;
- **Research and innovation:** enhancement of ERA (European Research Area) and the optimal use of public investments in research.

### **Key legislative actions**

**The Education, Youth, Culture and Sports Council will meet on 18 May, 2015. The following topics will be discussed:**

- Adoption of the 2015 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the strategic framework for **European cooperation in education and training (ET2020)**, including priorities for 2015-2017.
- Adoption of Draft Council conclusions of the role of **early childhood education and primary education** in fostering creativity, innovation and digital skills
- Public debate on transparency and recognition of **skills and qualifications** for mobility and employability.

**The Economic and Financial affairs Council meeting on 10 March will discuss the following issues:**

- General approach on the **Investment Plan for Europe**: [http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/jobs-growth-investment/plan/docs/an-investment-plan-for-europe\\_com\\_2014\\_903\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/jobs-growth-investment/plan/docs/an-investment-plan-for-europe_com_2014_903_en.pdf)
- Political agreement on the Proposal for a Council directive on the **Financial Transaction Tax**
- Presentation by the Commission of the **Europe 2020 Strategy review**
- Presentation by the Commission and exchange of views on the **European Semester** – Implementation of key structural reforms.

**The Competitiveness (Internal market, Industry, Research and Space) Council meeting on 28/29 May, 2015 will focus on:**

- Adoption of Draft Council conclusions on the **European Research Area: Roadmap** – a way towards reinforced ERA and on better governance for the European Research Area.
- Adoption of Draft Council conclusions Towards **open and data intensive research**.

We underline the importance of the meeting of the **General Affairs Council** meeting on **23 June, 2015**, as it will approve the **Country-specific Recommendations of the European Semester**, including recommendations on **Education and Training**.



## Guidelines on Entrepreneurship education

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ETUCE is member of the Thematic Working Group of the European Commission on Entrepreneurship Education. The representatives of governments experts, social partners and the European Commission finalised its work and published their Final Report on Entrepreneurship Education in November 2014:  
<http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetailDoc&id=17016&no=1>

The report provides guidance to Member States to enhance their actions on improving entrepreneurship education, which may help in the long-run to reduce the high number of unemployment rate among young people in Europe.

**The guidelines deals with:**

- Entrepreneurship as a **key competence** into European education and training;
- **Stakeholder engagement**;
- Entrepreneurial **curriculum and teaching methods**;
- Entrepreneurial **learning outcomes and assessment**;
- **Supporting educators and leaders**;
- Pathways for **aspiring entrepreneurs**;

Finally, it **provides practical ideas and frameworks for implementation.**