

Final Communiqué

Young European Council



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We, the Delegates of the 2014 Young European Council,

*Convened in Brussels on 20-23 October 2014 to discuss*

*Education to Employment, Digital Revolution and Technologies and Sustainable Development in Cities,*

*Welcomed the support of European Parliament, Council of the European Union, European Commission and Young European Leadership for enhancing youth engagement in European policy-making,*

*Adopted the policy recommendations contained in this communiqué by consensus.*

*We therefore propose that European leaders:*

## Education to Employment

*How can we meet and exceed the Europe 2020 benchmarks, focusing on the skills mismatch?*

### **Encourage Member States to continuously develop high quality education by:**

- Encouraging schools to adapt to the ever-changing needs of society and the labour market, including providing digital skills, soft skills, entrepreneurial skills and intercultural skills;
- Ensuring that educational institutions have more flexibility in designing the content of their courses in order to simplify and accelerate the alignment between the skills provided and the skills needed by future professionals;
- Motivating educational institutions to teach students how to learn and access information while fostering their independence and self-confidence;
- Providing further support to education professionals at all levels to develop their skills and knowledge in order to cater for the needs of today and tomorrow.

### **Give young people in secondary and higher education the opportunities to gain practical experience before entering the job market by:**

- Integrating practical training into the curricula and encouraging educational institutions to expand and make effective use of their networks and partnerships with private and public entities;
- Raising awareness of and implementing the Europe 2020 Quality Framework for Traineeships to standardize the quality of practices across Member States;
- Facilitating the implementation of dual apprenticeship programmes to enable the combination of theoretical and practical education and allowing young people to connect with the labour market;
- Simplifying procedures to launch startups, fostering the growth of existing startups and SMEs while promoting initiatives to encourage entrepreneurship.

### **Recommend that the European Union continues to raise awareness and enhance existing structures and programmes that address the skills mismatch by:**

- Enabling young people to easily access and benefit from opportunities by establishing ambassadors to promote European initiatives;
- Continuing to encourage student and labour mobility by supporting and expanding programmes which seek to promote cross-cultural exchange and language development such as Erasmus+;
- Strengthening the operational capacity of employment agencies so that they can provide more targeted career guidance to NEETs;
- Advancing the recognition of skills acquired through informal education by urging businesses to appraise these skills in the recruitment process.

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## Digital Revolution and Technologies

**Recognise that over the past decade the distinction between physical life and digital life has begun to disappear and, as such, measures should be taken to protect citizens in this new environment by:**

- Recommending that European Union (EU) Member States incorporate mandatory digital classes – which would include personal security, online rights of the individual and online ethics – into their national school curriculums;
- Collecting qualitative data and increasing citizen participation by developing a campaign that reaches out to EU inhabitants and asks for their experiences when using online solutions – data gathered through a Social Media Campaign can provide the insights required to develop meaningful EU responses for trust and security, such as establishing a Digital Justice Committee;
- Developing a standard to allow citizens to send metadata, such as location and basic personal details, from their hand-held devices to emergency services across the EU.

**Acknowledge that recent events, from elections to demonstrations, have shown a lack of trust in the EU. In the spirit of increasing transparency and citizen confidence, we call on the EU to adopt easily understandable Open Data access on a single online platform by:**

- Making more information available, such as each MEP's attendance, voting record, expenses and official schedule;
- Clarifying EU budget allocation, including updated timelines on the progression of each EU-supported project;
- Improving 'simple find' functionality and enabling all official EU documents to be categorised, and therefore searched, by key themes;
- Guiding citizens through legal texts with comprehensive and simply written summaries.

**Emphasise that, in this digital revolution era, national governments and the EU need to improve e-government systems so as to ensure fast, easy, cost-effective and environmentally friendly methods of communication with their citizens and businesses by:**

- Creating a unified e-government portal which follows a common template developed by the EU and allows interaction with governments' existing and future e-services;
- Allowing citizens and businesses to choose their preferred method of communication with their government, for example through a dedicated government email account or traditional post;
- Recommending that more government services, such as revenue and customs, should be digitalized, and that best practice examples and key lessons learnt from within EU should be shared with other Member States;
- Installing a system of creating and signing online petitions that will be considered by national or European parliaments once a threshold level of acceptance is reached;
- Ensuring the safety and security of personal data, by developing a harmonised e-identification system such as a unique code / fingerprint / retina scanner or webcam face recognition.

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## Sustainable Development in Cities

### **Address the issues regarding the poor air quality in European cities caused by inefficient and polluting transportation systems by:**

- Encouraging citizens to use cleaner and alternative ways for their everyday transportation, by decreasing the prices of public means of transportation;
- Supporting the reduction of emissions, through the implementation of more environmentally-friendly public means of transportation in urban areas;
- Creating an integrated approach of financial incentives for companies that are developing green means of transportation and public transport companies to provide better services.

### **Acknowledge the major role of cities in driving forward EU's energy and climate change objectives and take immediate action for greater energy efficiency by:**

- Ensuring the full implementation of green public procurement rules at a local level;
- Encouraging the shift in consumer behaviour from ownership to access by promoting and enabling the utilisation of cleaner alternatives (e.g. car-pooling, public bikes, etc);
- Calling upon the local authorities to raise awareness outlining the socio-economic and environmental benefits of energy-efficiency improvements in public and private buildings.

### **Recognise that feeding a modern city requires a tremendous coordination of resources and generates substantial food, water and energy waste, which places cities in a unique position to promote sustainable agriculture and living, by:**

- Enabling the use of public spaces within and around cities for peri-urban agriculture in order to reduce food transport and storage pollution;
- Emphasising the socio-economic and environmental benefits attached to local food production, such as strengthening urban social cohesion through shared community agriculture experiences;
- Promoting the circular use of food and water resources by supporting educational programmes and encouraging public-private initiatives to reduce food waste through redistribution to programs with wider social objectives (e.g. those related to vulnerable social groups).

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Signees to the Final Communiqué



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Ms. Nadia Tjahja  
Chair Panel *Education to Employment*



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Mr. Pierre Manenti  
Chair Panel *Sustainable Development in Cities*



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Ms. Stephanie Antonian  
Chair Panel *Digital Revolution and Technologies*

## Young European Council

The Young European Council (YEC) is an annual event, conceptualized and implemented by Young European Leadership. Over 4 days, the YEC will convene aspiring leaders from the entire European Union and the accession countries. The YEC aimed at fostering the exchange between future leaders and top policy makers and to provide innovative yet realistic input to inform European policy making. The topics of the negotiations – *Education to Employment, Digital Revolution and Technologies and Sustainable Development in Cities* – are relevant for young people as well as for Europe and society at large. The outcomes of the negotiations are directly communicated to relevant European and international decision makers.

Aside the negotiations with international peers the participants are provided with opportunities to directly engage with top policy makers. For example, the *Eat & Meet* is one of the programs of the YEC that is designed to bring aspiring leaders and experienced decision makers together over dinner. This informal setting will provide a unique opportunity to foster the exchange between future leaders and top policy makers. In addition participants visit the Council of the European Union, the European Commission and the European Parliament.

### Speakers and Guests to the YEC 2014

- Mr. Michel Lebrun, *President, European Union Committee of the Regions*
- Ms. Connie Hedegaard, *European Commissioner for Climate Action*
- Ms. Theo Thomas, *Lead Economist, World Bank*
- Mr. John Higgins, *Director General, DIGITALEUROPE*
- Ms. Colette Maloney, *Head of Unit Smart Cities and Sustainability, European Commission*
- Ms. Magdalena Kopczynska, *Head of Maritime Transport and Logistics Unit, European Commission*
- Ms. Cheryl Miller, *Founder and Executive Director, Digital Leadership Institute*
- Mr. John McNamee, *Executive Director, European Digital Rights*
- Mr. Matt Dann, *Secretary General, Bruegel*
- Mr. Ilias Iakovidis, *Deputy Head of the ICT for Health Unit, European Commission*
- Ms. Valerie Kinoo, *Board of Directors, Digital Leadership Institute International*
- Ms. Alicia Gómez Campos, *Projects / Membership Outreach, Housing Europe*
- Mr. Miroslav Stoyanov, *Council of the European Union*
- Mr. Jo Vandercappellen, *Directorate General Communication, European Commission*
- Ms. Edith Hofer, *Assistant to the Director General for Energy, European Commission*
- Ms. Mara Krikou, *Unit Growth and Jobs, European Commission*

*Young European Leadership (YEL) is an international nonprofit and nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering young leaders and future decision makers from Europe and beyond. YEL aims to inspire these leaders from all backgrounds to shape the future of Europe, fostering innovative solutions to local and global challenges. To realize its mission YEL organizes engaging events and makes international conferences accessible to its members. Thereby YEL provides direct opportunities for young people to connect with senior decision makers and experts to raise their concerns and present innovative solutions.*