

## Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture

The Commission's Contribution to the Leaders' Working Lunch  
Gothenburg, 17 November 2017

**#FutureOfEurope #EURoad2Sibiu**

## EDUCATION: CONTRIBUTING TO SKILLS AND JOBS

### EDUCATION, TRAINING AND LIFELONG LEARNING

Everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labour market.

Paragraph 1, European Pillar of Social Rights

### WHAT EXISTS TODAY

- ▶ **Initiated in 2010, the European Semester** supports Member States in pursuing structural reforms in the areas of skills, education and training.
- ▶ Many **country-specific recommendations** address education and training. At the end of the 2017 European Semester, a total of 16 country-specific recommendations<sup>1</sup> were issued in this area (the highest number in a specific policy area).
- ▶ Since 2000, Member States have been cooperating to improve and modernise their education and training systems. **The framework for European cooperation in education and training** is appreciated by the Member States as a results-driven 'soft policy' tool available at EU level for designing their education policies.

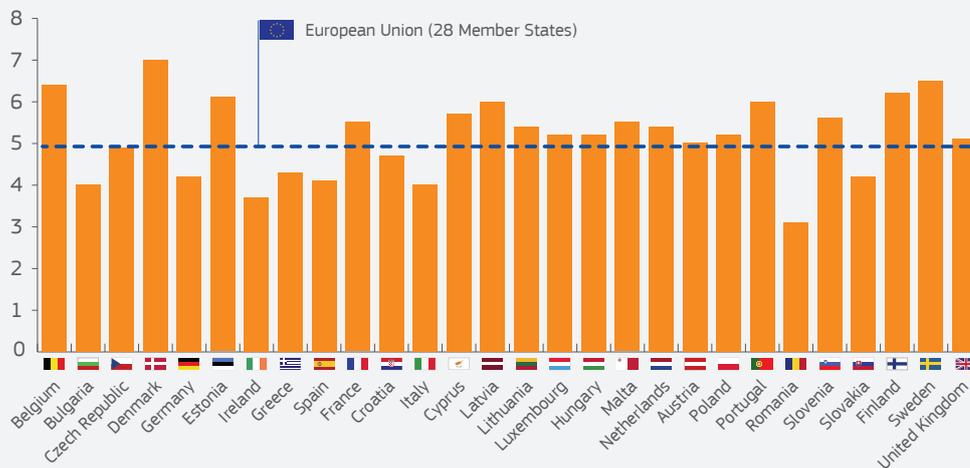
### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR

- ▶ In 2010, the EU set itself **two targets in the area of education** to be reached by 2020<sup>2</sup>. The EU is on track to reach both goals by this date:
  - ▶ to bring down the share of **early school-leavers** to below 10% ;
  - ▶ to increase the share of people with a **tertiary degree** to at least 40%.

<sup>1</sup> Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, Ireland, Spain, France, Croatia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Austria, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, the United Kingdom

<sup>2</sup> Targets set in the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

**The average investment in education in the EU is about 5% of GDP**



Source: Eurostat, 2015



According to the 2015 figures of the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), educational underperformance in the EU is largely passed on from one generation to the next. On average in the EU, low achievers with a lower social background account for 34% of the student population; low achievers with a higher social background account for 8% of the student population.

## WHAT CAN BE DONE IN THE NEXT TWO YEARS?

- ▶ **Adjusting the European Semester**, including the Employment Guidelines, to the European Pillar of Social Rights, whose first principle is about skills and education.
- ▶ **The Commission and the Economic Policy Committee<sup>3</sup> to provide a joint analysis on public expenditure for education** that could help Member States make their education systems more efficient and effective.

## POSSIBLE INITIATIVES WITH A 2025 PERSPECTIVE

- ▶ **Improve the cooperation between EU institutions and Member States** by relaunching and updating the framework for European cooperation in education and training.
- ▶ **Strengthen the link between the interventions of the European Structural and Investment Funds and country-specific recommendations.**
- ▶ **Establish a strong education window in EU funding and EU investment instruments.**
- ▶ **Set a minimum level for education investment: at least 5% of GDP** for all Member States, while encouraging diversified funding sources.



<sup>3</sup> The Economic Policy Committee (EPC) was set up by a Council Decision in 1974 to provide advice and to contribute to the work of the Ecofin Council and the Commission. The EPC comprises two delegates from each Member State, the Commission and the European Central Bank.

*The political ambition would need to be aligned with the means to act and reflected in the future discussions on EU finances.*