



Council of the  
European Union

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**NOTE**

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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Permanent Representatives Committee/Council

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Subject: European Council (14 December 2017)  
– Draft conclusions

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*In accordance with Article 2(3)(a) of the Council's Rules of Procedure, delegations will find attached the draft conclusions prepared by the President of the European Council, in close cooperation with the member of the European Council representing the Member State holding the six-monthly Presidency of the Council and with the President of the Commission.*

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## **I. SECURITY AND DEFENCE**

Further to its December 2016 and June 2017 conclusions, the European Council reviewed progress in the field of security and defence, and:

- welcomes the establishment of permanent structured cooperation and stresses the importance of quickly implementing the first batch of fifteen projects; it calls on participating Member States to deliver on their national implementation plans;
- calls for further work on the European Defence Fund, and in particular the swift adoption in 2018 of the European Defence Industrial Development Programme, in time to finance the first capability projects in 2019;
- expects the Council to achieve the comprehensive revision of the Athena mechanism for financing common costs of EU military missions and operations; [*to be adjusted in light of ongoing work*]
- requests the Council to adopt a recommendation by June 2018 on a new instrument covering all requirements for Capacity Building in Security and Development after 2020;
- asks for work to proceed on the implementation of the full set of proposals on EU-NATO cooperation, including the additional ones agreed in December, notably in the areas of counter-terrorism, military mobility and cyber defence. The European Council will return to the matter of EU-NATO relations in June 2018;
- invites the High Representative to report in June 2018 on the work undertaken to strengthen civilian CSDP.

## **II. SOCIAL DIMENSION, EDUCATION AND CULTURE**

*Leaders highlighted the importance of the social, educational and cultural dimension of our policies in bringing Europeans together and building our common future. Under the Treaties, Member States remain primarily responsible for these areas, but much can be achieved by working together, in full respect of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.*

## **SOCIAL DIMENSION**

The Social Summit in Gothenburg recalled the need to put people first through joint efforts at all levels, and to further develop the social dimension of the Union based on a shared commitment and established competences. As a first step the following should be taken forward:

- implementing at Union and Member State level, within their respective competences, the European Pillar of Social Rights;
- facilitating a well-functioning social dialogue at all levels, including the ‘new start for social dialogue’ at EU level;
- progressing swiftly on pending social files at EU level, as well as being ready to examine future initiatives announced by the Commission in its Work Programme for 2018;
- following up on the priorities of the EU Action Plan 2018-2019 to tackle the gender pay gap;
- delivering further on the new European Skills Agenda, with a particular focus in 2018 on implementing the Council Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways, intended for people with the most skills needs.

## **EDUCATION AND CULTURE**

Education and culture are key to building inclusive and cohesive societies, and to sustaining our competitiveness. In Gothenburg we expressed a willingness to do more in these areas, where the EU plays an important supplementing, supporting and coordinating role. As a result the European Council calls on Member States, the Council and the Commission in line with their respective competences to take work forward with a view to:

- stepping up mobility and exchanges, including through a substantially strengthened, inclusive and extended Erasmus+ programme;

- strengthening strategic partnerships across the EU between higher education institutions and encouraging the bottom-up creation of a network of European universities, with a view to the emergence by 2024 of some twenty European Universities, allowing students to take a degree by combining studies in several EU countries and contributing to the international competitiveness of European universities;
- enhancing the learning of languages, with the objective of more young people speaking at least two European languages in addition to their mother tongue;
- promoting mobility and participation of students in educational and cultural activities through a "European Student Card";
- promoting mutual recognition of higher education and school leaving diplomas at secondary education level in the appropriate framework;
- taking the opportunity of the European Year of Cultural Heritage to increase awareness of the social and economic importance of culture and cultural heritage.

The Commission is invited to present, where relevant, proposals for Council recommendations in spring 2018 with a view to adoption by the Council as soon as possible.

The European Council also asks the Commission, the Council and the Member States to examine possible measures addressing:

- the skills challenges linked to digitalisation and artificial intelligence;
- the need for an inclusive, life-long learning and innovation-driven approach to education and training;
- the legal and financial framework conditions for the development of cultural and creative industries and the mobility of professionals of the cultural sector.

The issue of budgetary resources for the above activities will be addressed in the context of the next Multiannual Financial Framework.

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