

Joint statement by Commissioners Mimica, Thyssen, Navracsics, and Gabriel on the occasion of International Youth Day 2019

The European Commission joins the celebration of this year's International Youth Day, the theme of which is "Transforming Education", highlighting efforts to make education more inclusive and accessible for all youth. Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven **Mimica**, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne **Thyssen**, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, and Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, Mariya **Gabriel** said:

"Today we are celebrating International Youth Day. This is an important occasion to reflect upon the fact that too many young people live in war zones, are out of school and are affected by poverty, social exclusion, poor health care, gender inequality and the impacts of climate change.

Providing effective solutions to these challenges, achieving sustainable peace and building cohesive and resilient societies in which young people can thrive, are priorities for the European Union. For this purpose, the EU is committed to implementing the United Nations 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals across its policies.

Working with Member States and many other stakeholders, the EU is empowering millions of young people, within and outside the EU. Erasmus+ has been bringing young people together, enabling them to learn and engage in society, as well as fostering excellence and innovation in education institutions. Two new initiatives launched by this Commission have opened up fresh opportunities: DiscoverEU enables young people to travel and explore Europe's rich cultural heritage, while the European Solidarity Corps gives them the chance to volunteer and work in projects that support communities and people around Europe. The European Education Area that we are building will further boost excellence and inclusion, benefiting young Europeans from all backgrounds, and strengthening a sense of a shared European identity.

Likewise, young people are at the heart of EU policies, such as the Digital Single Market. Many initiatives, for example the Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition, have helped increase training in digital skills, modernising education at the same time. Through our Strategy for a Better Internet for Children we are making children's online wellbeing a top priority, striving to eliminate online risks, such as cyberbullying, grooming, privacy concerns, disinformation, and violent or disturbing content. These objectives are also at the centre of the Digital Education Action Plan, which offers a set of concrete measures and initiatives to help EU Member States to meet the challenges of education in the digital age.

Moreover, youth is at the heart of our policies, both within and outside our borders. In our development programmes, the EU focuses on addressing the needs of young people in areas such as education, skills development and job creation, while aiming at engaging youth in wider aspects of society. For example, initiatives like the Young Leaders Programme and the EU-AU Youth Plug-in Initiative provide them with their rightful seat at the decision-making table. We will also continue supporting young people as champions of peace-building and countering violent extremism in their communities, including through the 'One Young World Peace Ambassadors' initiative.

Investing in the potential of young people is an investment in our society. What gives us hope is that we are not alone in addressing their challenges; we must continue and widen our efforts."

Background

12 August was first designated [International Youth Day](#) by the United Nations General Assembly in 1999, and serves as an annual celebration of the role of young people as essential partners in change, and an opportunity to raise awareness of challenges and problems facing the world's youth. This year's theme "Transforming Education" highlights efforts to make education more inclusive and accessible for all youth, including efforts by young people themselves.

The EU supports Member States' cooperation in the field of education, making it easier for young people to benefit from mobility and for teachers to gain experience and share knowledge by working across Europe. In 2017 the EU invested a record €2.8 billion in the [Erasmus+](#) programme, in which more than 3.7 million people have participated since 2014. The Commission proposes a stronger youth focus in the EU's next long-term budget 2021-2027 with its plan to double the Erasmus+ budget to €30 billion.

Erasmus+ is open to many individuals and organisations, although eligibility varies from one action to another and from one country to another. Countries (EU Member States and non-Member States) that can take part are divided into programme countries (can fully participate in all the actions of the Erasmus+ programme) and partner countries (can participate in certain actions of the programme, subject to specific criteria or conditions). A [list of all countries](#) and the [Erasmus+ Programme Guide](#), which contains more detailed information on eligible countries, are available online.

For More Information

[Erasmus +](#)

[DiscoverEU](#)

[European Solidarity Corps](#)

[EU Youth Strategy](#)

[European Education Area](#)

[Digital Single Market](#)

[Africa – Europe Alliance](#)

[EU-AU Youth Plug-in Initiative](#)

[One Young World Peace Ambassadors](#)

[Young Leaders Programme](#)