

**Final EFEE Statement on Priorities for the next
EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027**

7 March 2018

With this statement, the European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE) wishes to provide further input to the public consultation on the priorities for the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for the years 2021-2027. EFEE is a dynamic organisation established in 2009 to represent the interests of employers in the strategic and highly diverse European education sector. We represent 37 education employer organisations from 19 European countries in all levels of education, from pre-school to higher education and research. This includes different national organisations, such as education councils and ministries of education, associations of VET colleges and universities and local and regional authority employers' organisations.

EFEE very much agrees with the observations in the Commission Communication on "A new, modern Multiannual Financial Framework for a European Union that delivers efficiently on its priorities post 2020" that the next MFF "should better align available financing with our political priorities. It should build on what works well today while also anticipating the challenges of tomorrow." In particular, EFEE welcomes the strong reference to the outcomes of the Gothenburg Social Summit setting out the political priorities for "strengthening the social dimension of the EU, through the full implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, and supporting young people and the mobility of European citizens."¹

In order to make a social Europe a reality, adequate investments in social infrastructures and human capital are a necessity. As also underlined by the High-Level Taskforce on Social Infrastructure in Europe, in which EFEE participated, social infrastructure is a crucial instrument for creating inclusive growth and for strengthening the social bases of Europe. It contributes to accelerating the creation of jobs and improving the wellbeing, health and skills of people. The final objective is to make Europe more competitive and productive while improving the lives of all, across generations.²

Moreover as we emphasised in our joint report with CEEP, ETUC and ETUCE on 'Investment in Education and Training'³, due to how it increases the level of human capital, public investment in education and training is seen as a main source of long-term economic

¹ COM(2018) 98 final

² High-Level Taskforce on Social Infrastructure in Europe chaired by Romano Prodi and Christian Sautter, *Report "Boosting investments in social infrastructure in Europe"*, 1 December 2017

³ ETUC, CEEP, EFEE and ETUCE final study report, *Investment in education and training – trends and challenges; the role of EU policies and financing from the perspective of European and national social partners*, November 2017

growth. As research shows, public investment in education has a positive effect on productivity and growth. Education is an investment into the knowledge and skills of people. It equips people with the skills that make them more productive in performing their work tasks and it conveys the knowledge and competencies that enable people to generate and adopt the new ideas that spur innovation and technological progress. Investment in education also supports economic growth by facilitating social improvements and developments, or reducing inequalities. Investment in education is therefore investment in the future.

In the framework of the next MFF we take note that the Commission is reflecting on a single investment scheme, in that context we strongly recommend creating a specific policy window for social investments with a strong focus on education, training and research in order to meet current and future challenges related to sustainable employability, skills development, digitalization, demographic change and social cohesion.

In line with this, we would like to stress the need to enlarge the capacity of EU instruments focusing on the areas of education, training and research. With regard to Erasmus+, we are glad to read in the Commission Communication that “there is a strong consensus for the need to step up mobility and exchanges, including through a substantially strengthened, inclusive and extended Erasmus+ programme”⁴. EFEE also reaffirmed this position in our statement on the review of the Erasmus+ programme. In order to equip such extended Erasmus+ programme with adequate funding and also to meet the budget of the last year a budget raise of at least 40% would be necessary. EFEE furthermore welcomes the tendency to put more emphasis on innovation, cooperation and reform in Erasmus+. Cross-sectoral cooperation and policy reform are in our view essential for improving quality education, providing students with 21st century skills and competences, and promoting employability. Herewith we would like to underline however again the important role social partners play in linking the policy fields of education, training, employment and social affairs, and making reforms happen. Therefore we would like to plead for a stronger recognition of social partners as target group of the Erasmus+ programme.

Regarding the EU funds in the area of cohesion, EFEE would like to point at the progress made with the help of the European Social Fund to enhance education and training opportunities, reduce school drop-outs, promote lifelong learning, supporting partnerships between the world of work and the world of education across Europe. In order to meet the mentioned current and future challenges and to deliver on the European Pillar of Social Rights it is of utmost importance to continue to focus on quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning for all to make sure that people are equipped with the adequate skills to effectively adapt to the fast-changing needs of our 21st century society.

With our reply to the consultation questionnaire on EU funds in the area of cohesion and this paper, we hope to have made a valuable contribution to the current debate on priorities for the EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027.

⁴ COM(2018) 98 final



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