

## ROADMAP

Roadmaps aim to inform citizens and stakeholders about the Commission's work in order to allow them to provide feedback and to participate effectively in future consultation activities. Citizens and stakeholders are in particular invited to provide views on the Commission's understanding of the problem and possible solutions and to make available any relevant information that they may have.

<b>TITLE OF THE INITIATIVE</b>	Proposal for a Council Recommendation on education for environmental sustainability
<b>LEAD DG – RESPONSIBLE UNIT</b>	EAC B2/B1
<b>LIKELY TYPE OF INITIATIVE</b>	Proposal for a Council Recommendation
<b>INDICATIVE PLANNING</b>	Q4 2021
<b>ADDITIONAL INFORMATION</b>	-

This Roadmap is provided for information purposes only and its content might change. It does not prejudice the final decision of the Commission on whether this initiative will be pursued or on its final content. All elements of the initiative described by the Roadmap, including its timing, are subject to change.

### A. Context, Problem definition and Subsidiarity Check

#### **Context**

The [European Green Deal](#) highlights the key role of education and training in engaging with learners, educators, parents and the wider community on the environmental challenges facing the planet. In this context, the [EU's Biodiversity Strategy](#) announced that the Commission would propose in 2021 a Council Recommendation on education for environmental sustainability. The Recommendation aims to help Member States strengthen policy development, learning and teaching and cooperation in this field. The [Communication on the European Education Area](#) also refers to the proposal and highlights the importance of education and training in supporting the move towards a more sustainable and resource-efficient society and economy.

#### **Problem the initiative aims to tackle**

Despite international efforts, there is still a lack of common understanding of education for sustainable development and, stemming from this, difficulties in bringing environmental sustainability into the mainstream activities of education institutions. The [2020 Europe Sustainable Development Report: Meeting the Sustainable Development Goals in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic](#) points to slow progress towards the specific challenges on Climate Action (SDG 13), Life on Land (SDG 15), Life below water (SDG 14) Affordable and Clean Energy (SDG 7), Responsible consumption and production (SDG 12) and No Hunger that includes unsustainable agricultural and farming practices (SDG 2). The report highlights the importance of a robust outreach, education and engagement strategy for a successful Green Deal and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Research indicates that protection of the environment is important to citizens personally and most expect EU action on this issue. Hence, general awareness is widespread among citizens. However, experts point to a gap between concern for the environment and taking action. UNESCO's work and research show that this gap can be attributed to low levels of understanding of environmental issues at stake, as well as lack of attention to social, emotional or behavioural learning. Furthermore, there is evidence of a lack of green skills required for the green transition.

Available evidence from Member States indicate that policies mainstreaming sustainable development education and training remain scattered and uneven. Integrating environmental sustainability into curricula, educational practice and pre- and in-service educator professional development and applying it to learning environments is not systematic and is dealt with differently across the EU.

Environmental sustainability cannot be addressed as a separate subject or topic but needs to be integrated across the entire curriculum. For learners to develop the necessary competences for sustainability, interdisciplinary and participatory learning and teaching, collaboration and cooperation are key. Such multidisciplinary and participatory approaches are, however, not widespread and often difficult to put into practice. There is also a lack of commonly accepted principles and a shared language on the sustainability competence that could guide implementation at national level and support cooperation and exchange of ideas and best practice.

#### **Basis for EU intervention (legal basis and subsidiarity check)**

The legal basis for the initiative is Article 165 of the TFEU, which states that the Union shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content and organisation of their education systems.

The proposal for a Council Recommendation is an initiative of the [EU's Biodiversity Strategy](#) and the [Communication on the European Education Area](#) and will support Member States in developing and implementing policies and mechanisms that stimulate and support environmental sustainability at all levels of education and training. The initiative does not propose any extension of EU regulatory power or binding commitments on Member States.

European added-value lies in the ability of the EU to mobilise political engagement and backing at national level in order to support education and training systems while fully respecting subsidiarity.

#### **B. What does the initiative aim to achieve and how [max 25 lines]**

The Council Recommendation aims to boost policy cooperation and exchange on how education and training can support the move towards a more sustainable and resource-efficient society and economy. It will help Member States and education and training institutions to:

- integrate environmental issues in national education systems, including at the level of curricula, teacher education, pedagogies and learning environments;
- support learners to move from awareness of environmental issues to an understanding of these issues, empowering them to act on a personal and community level;
- implement multidisciplinary and participatory approaches in education adapted to understanding and acting on environmental challenges;
- promote a whole-institution approach where sustainability is embedded in all activities, including buildings and facility management, governance, partnerships and community relations;
- set out common principles and a shared language on sustainability that could guide implementation at national level and support cooperation and exchange of ideas and best practice at EU level;
- strengthen efforts and improve progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

The proposal will take a lifelong learning approach, recognising the importance of embedding environmental sustainability into all phases and stages of education: early childhood; school and higher education; Vocational Education and Training; adult learning as well as in formal and non-formal learning. No implementation measures will be established as there is no requirement on Member States to transpose legislation.

#### **C. Better regulation**

##### **Consultation of citizens and stakeholders**

Consultations with citizens and stakeholders will take place in the second quarter of 2021. The main

stakeholders identified are: Member States; education and training institutions and organisations (formal and non-formal); students and student organisations; researchers, social partners; public authorities; civil society, including environmental NGOs and representatives of international organisations. A public consultation will be launched in the second quarter of 2021 to identify key issues and priority areas to be covered in the proposed Council Recommendation. The consultation will run for twelve weeks and submissions will be available on the Commission's central public consultations page.

The Commission is also planning a series of targeted consultation events for stakeholders and experts. The Commission will promote the consultations through its Education and Training, Research and Innovation, and environment-related webpages and social media channels, as well as through its stakeholder networks. The Commission will prepare a synopsis report, summarising the findings of all consultation activities.

#### **Evidence base and data collection**

The proposal for a Council Recommendation will build on evidence from:

- the open public consultation;
- targeted stakeholder consultations and events;
- a forthcoming study from the Commission on national policies and approaches to education for environmental sustainability;
- the extensive work by UNESCO on Education for Sustainable Development;
- An ongoing analysis of projects funded by the Erasmus+ programme with a direct focus on environment, climate action and green education.

An impact assessment is not required as no legislative measures will be proposed. The initiative aims to support Member States, organisations and learners on the basis of voluntary participation and in the context of existing legislative and funding mechanisms. The initiative has a limited direct effect on Member State policies. However, potential impacts will be assessed as part of the Staff Working Document accompanying the proposal for a Council Recommendation.