



Press release

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Karliczek: Making vocational education and training in Europe attractive and fit for the future

EU education ministers set ambitious goals for initial and continuing vocational training at their informal meeting in Osnabrück

During their two-day informal meeting in Osnabrück, the European ministers for education discussed the effects of COVID-19 on education and training in Europe and talked about their experiences of the pandemic so far. The agenda of the meeting prioritised support for vocational education and training in the EU. The member states are keen to support the initiative of the German Council Presidency to further strengthen cooperation in the field of European vocational education and training. Federal Education Minister Anja Karliczek explained:

“I am delighted that, over the last two days, we have been able to host the first meeting of EU education ministers under the German Council Presidency here in Osnabrück. Our meeting shows that our mutual exchange of ideas and experiences and our intensive cooperation in the EU are able to continue even during these unprecedented times. During the past two days we have taken a major step forward together for the EU in terms of the important topics of education and training.

“All of the participants expressed the wish to strengthen vocational education and training in Europe over the coming years.

“Excellent education across all sectors plays a hugely important role, especially when it comes to tackling the challenges posed by digitalisation, climate change and demographic change. Vocational education and training offers attractive prospects for young people throughout Europe. I believe that the recently published European Skills Agenda from the European Commission sets the right tone for the future. The European Skills Agenda aims to increase the employability of both young people and adults across the EU through continuing vocational education. We wholeheartedly support the Commission in this initiative. On behalf of the German Council Presidency, I am therefore committed to ensuring that, together with my European colleagues, we will also adopt Council recommendations on the future of vocational education and training at the Education Council meeting in November.

“It is important to me that the member states continue to push this subject even further. This is why I presented my colleagues with a draft proposal for an “Osnabrück Declaration” during our meeting. In this document, we, the

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member states, set out four ambitious goals for creating a powerful, future-proof vocational education and training system. We want to increase economic resilience, work together to establish a culture of lifelong learning, embed the principles of sustainability within vocational education and training, and strengthen the international dimension through cross-border mobility. The process for further developing vocational education and training in Europe has been put into motion here in Osnabrück. We will now continue to discuss the declaration. My aim is for all the education ministers to sign the Osnabrück Declaration together at the Education Council meeting in November.”

Dr Stefanie Hubig, President of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* in the Federal Republic of Germany and Education Minister of Rhineland-Palatinate, also emphasised the important role of vocational education and training in Europe. She explained: “The coronavirus pandemic has posed great new challenges for schools across Europe. The virus does not stop at borders and still it has made national borders within Europe clearly visible again. In this pandemic and beyond, we need to stand together; we need a sense of community instead of division. We need European answers. And we have found these answers with the Osnabrück Declaration that will give important impetus for vocational education and training in Europe.”

Background:

Trio Presidency

On 1 July 2020, Germany took over the rotating six-month Presidency of the Council of the European Union. In this role, the German delegation will chair the negotiations on EU legislative proposals and other initiatives. It is also able to set its own priority topics. The programme of the German Council Presidency is part of the expansive programme of the Trio Presidency of Germany, Portugal and Slovenia over the next 15 months.

In addition to numerous expert conferences, Germany’s programme features informal meetings of relevant ministers, including meetings of the ministers of research and of education. The Informal Meeting of Research Ministers was held on 21 July 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this event was held as a video conference with new interactive elements. The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) will also host a Ministerial Conference on the Future of the European Research Area on 20 October 2020.

Further information:

<https://www.bmbf.de/en/germany-s-presidency-of-the-council-of-the-european-union-2020-11935.html>



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https://www.bmbf.de/upload_filestore/pub/Programme_of_Germanys_Presidency_of_the_Council_of_the_European_Union_in_the_Fields_of_Education_Research_and_Innovation.pdf

<https://www.eu2020.de/eu2020-en>