

Tackling early school leaving

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The Council adopted a recommendation on policies to reduce early school leaving which seeks to promote progress towards the Europe 2020 headline target of reducing school dropout rates to less than 10% by 2020 (as compared with 14.4% in 2009). Reducing early school leaving addresses the Europe 2020 aims of both 'smart growth' - by improving education and training levels - and 'inclusive growth' - by tackling one of the major risk factors for unemployment, poverty and social exclusion.

The Council **recommends that Member States:**

- identify the main factors leading to early school leaving and monitor the characteristics of the phenomenon at national, regional and local level as the foundation for targeted and effective evidence-based policies;
- ensure that **comprehensive strategies on early school leaving are in place by the end of 2012**, and that they are implemented in line with national priorities and the Europe 2020 objectives. Comprehensive strategies are taken to include **prevention measures, intervention measures and compensation measures**, the latter being aimed at re-engaging people who have dropped out of education;
- ensure that those strategies include appropriate measures for **groups at increased risk** of early school leaving in the Member State, such as children with a socio-economically disadvantaged, migrant or Roma background, or with special educational needs;
- ensure that those strategies address in a coherent manner both general education and vocational education and training, and the challenges specific to each;
- integrate measures which support the reduction of early school leaving rates in relevant policies targeted at children and young people, and coordinate activities among different policy sectors;
- whilst acknowledging the key role played by teachers, school leaders and other educational staff, ensure the involvement in those measures and activities of all relevant stakeholders to help people who are at risk of early school leaving, including those who have dropped out already.

It invites the **Commission:**

- to contribute to the efforts made by Member States by monitoring developments at different education levels across Member States in order to identify trends;
- to **support Member States' strategies through the exchange of experience and good practice**, and to facilitate effective peer-learning, networking and experimentation with innovative approaches among the Member States on measures aimed at reducing early school leaving and improving the educational outcomes of children from groups at risk of early school leaving;
- to integrate measures which support the reduction of early school leaving rates in **all relevant Union actions targeted at children and young adults**;
- to support the development of effective policies against early school leaving by launching comparative studies and research, and to encourage cooperation between the Member States in this area;
- to ensure, in cooperation with the Member States, and without prejudice to the negotiations on the future financial framework, that the Union programmes in the fields of lifelong learning, youth and research, as well as the European Structural Funds, support and contribute to the implementation of Member States' strategies on early school leaving;
- to report periodically on the progress towards the Europe 2020 target and on the implementation of Member States' strategies on early school leaving.