## Commissioner Navracsics - Meeting with President of Microsoft International
## Brussels, 24 March 2015

---

## Background note

---

### Microsoft initiatives as regards education

Generally, Microsoft activities seem to be focused on promoting the teaching and use of their own products. In the document provided by Microsoft on **Microsoft YouthSpark** (see annex) there is a good overview of Microsoft activities in the educational field. All or most of the activities mentioned seem to specifically be focused on teaching the use of Microsoft software.

In the document provided by Microsoft on Microsoft support for the teaching of **'coding'** (~programming), most of the mentioned activities focus on the use of Microsoft software, but some are general coding/programming education initiatives; in those, Microsoft is usually one of several partners.

Microsoft also published a Manifesto in October 2014 (see in annex), pledging vaguely to support innovative education across the EU and highlighting examples of how Microsoft technology is used in classrooms.

In February 2015 the online version of the Microsoft Office suite, "**Office 365**", was announced to be available for free to all teachers and students. The scheme was announced with much media attention, but seems to actually only apply to students studying at schools which have bought Office 365 licenses for all their students (i.e. if the school has bought a license for the student to use the online tool in class the student can use it "for free" at home). Microsoft tries to promote its "**Microsoft Surface**" tablets for use in schools; some councils and regions have taken up this offer.

Microsoft has a range of initiatives to teach teachers their software, such as the "**OneNote for Teachers**" initiative launched in January 2015, aiming to educate teachers in using Microsoft's note taking software OneNote. This fits with many other initiatives in the education field, such as:

- **Microsoft Educator Network** – information and free software for teachers;
- **Bing in the Classroom** – an ad-free version of Microsoft's "Bing" search engine for use in schools;
- Microsoft supports the **Kodu Kup**, a coding competition for youth;
- Microsoft supports **Code.org**, a coding teaching platform so far mainly focused on U.S. students but recently launched in a European version.

Additionally the **Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation** runs several programmes in the educational field, mostly in the U.S. They mainly focus on helping to prepare U.S. K12 students for college; including e.g. teacher training. The foundation is not

significantly associated with Microsoft at this point but is a strong player in promoting digital education.

**Recent EAC cooperation/interaction with Microsoft:**

- 23 Mar 2015: Xavier Prats Monné **will** meet ⬛⬛⬛⬛⬛⬛⬛ Vice President Corporate Affairs for Europe, the Middle East and Africa [courtesy meeting – no concrete agenda].

- 10 Mar 2015: EAC speaker at the Microsoft-hosted "Cloudscapes VII" conference on technology in education.

- 11 Dec 2014: Microsoft was one of the exhibitors of the "Future Classroom Lab" replica at the **European High Level Conference "Education in the Digital Era"**.

- 28 Oct 2014: **Xavier Prats Monné** held an opening speech at the **"Microsoft Education Leaders Briefing",** Brussels.
  - o EVENT: Brought together stakeholders to discuss the key drivers of change in "curriculum reform, content and assessment".
  - o At the event Microsoft launched a "**Manifesto for Empowered Education in Europe**" [see Annex C].
  - o Prats Monné noted the *Opening up Education* initiative and Commission support for innovation of education systems and importance of technology.
  - o He stressed that the Commission favours openness in resources and considers interoperability important.
  - o He stressed importance of teacher training and actual uptake of digital technologies in education.

- 18 Jun 2014: Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou provided a Video Message for a **Microsoft & EU Presidency event on youth and unemployment** in Greece.
  - o The Commissioner stressed the need for digital competences among the population and noted the important role of *Opening up Education.*

- 13 May 2014: ⬛⬛⬛⬛⬛⬛, Previous Chairman Europe of Microsoft, and **Xavier Prats Monné** spoke at the Commission-supported **TECY 4 conference on Big Data in Education**

- 11 Mar 2014: **Xavier Prats Monné** held the opening speech at the **"Microsoft in Education Global Forum",** Barcelona.
  - o EVENT: Awards prizes for 'expert educators', to "showcase and celebrate amazing educators and schools".
  - o Emphasised the need for innovation in education.
  - o Spoke about Opening up Education, Rethinking Education, Erasmus+ and in general about innovation in education.

- Microsoft pledge in the **Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs:**

- *"Increase the number of high quality apprenticeships and internships by 50% over 3 years, from the current 9000, thus providing an early career lever to help European youth into digital jobs."* => so far there have been 3000 internships per year, Microsoft intends to double the number to 6000 per year.