- Meeting with

Brussels, 23 March 2015

Steering note

Description of the context, the agenda and the issues to be discussed

This is a courtesy meeting with the new head of Microsoft's EU office, ▮▮▮▮▮ ▮▮▮▮ who took over from ▮▮▮▮▮ . On the day after this meeting, Commissioner Navracsics will be meeting ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮, President of Microsoft International B.V., a Dutch subsidiary of Microsoft Corporation responsible for all sales, marketing and services activities for the regions outside of North America.

Participants

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Our objective

- To learn about new projects/initiatives by Microsoft.
- To stress that we are interested in cooperation wherever beneficial.

The organiser's objective

No agenda/clear objectives have been specified. However, it can be expected that Microsoft will want to (a) foster good cooperation with DG EAC, (b) present their newest projects/products and (c) hear about the Commission/EAC agenda.

Line to take

- Stress that we appreciate Microsoft's work in the educational field.
- Express our desire to continue working together where it is beneficial for European teachers and learners (for example, this might be on projects promoting general digital competences (including coding) or on providing classroom technologies/developing pedagogies).
- Stress that we are obliged/committed to be technologically neutral and do not intend to endorse individual existing products or services. In particular, we believe that 'free and open source software' (FOSS), as well as open educational resources, can be complementary if not more beneficial than software/resources provided for-profit, such as by Microsoft.

Difficulties to expect

No difficulties, but please note the documents provided by Microsoft (annexes B and C) for the meeting between ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ **and Commissioner Navrascics on 24 March.**

Background note

Recent announcements and activities by Microsoft:

- See Annex B on Microsoft YouthSpark for an overview of Microsoft's activities.

- In February 2015 the online version of the Microsoft Office suite, "**Office 365**", has been announced to be available for free to all teachers and students.

  o The scheme was announced with much media attention, but seems to actually only apply to students studying <u>at schools which have bought Office 365 licenses for all their students</u> (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).

  o This actually is nothing new compared to the *Microsoft Home Use Programme* which already existed for years and has used the same approach for the installation of the *Microsoft Office* Suite. It was mostly used by companies whose employees then could use office for free at home.

- Microsoft is working to place its "**Microsoft Surface**" tablets to be used in schools.

- Microsoft is beginning to be active in the field of learning analytics.

- Microsoft has a range of initiatives to teach teachers their programmes, such as the "**OneNote for Teachers**" 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

  o **Microsoft Educator Network** – information and free software for teachers;

  o **Bing in the Classroom** – an ad-free version of Microsoft's "Bing" search engine for use in schools;

  o Microsoft supports the **Kodu Kup**, a coding competition for youth.

Additionally the **Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation** runs several programmes in the educational field, mostly in the U.S. Mostly it focuses 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.

Recent EAC cooperation/interaction with Microsoft:

- 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: **XPM** held an opening speech at the **"Microsoft Education Leaders Briefing",** Brussels.
  - EVENT: Brought together stakeholders to discuss the key drivers of change in "curriculum reform, content and assessment".
  - At the event Microsoft launched a "**Manifesto for Empowered Education in Europe**" [see annex 1], for which **XPM provided an introductory quote**
  - In his speech XPM:
    - Stressed the importance of technology in education.
    - Noted Opening up Education and Commission support for innovation of education systems.
    - Stressed that the Commission favours openness in resources and considers interoperability important.
    - Stressed importance of teacher training and actual uptake of digital technologies in education.

- 09 Sep 2014: ████████████████████████████████, ████████████ ████████████████ at Microsoft Brussels.

- 18 Jun 2014: ██████████████ provided a Video Message for a **Microsoft & EU Presidency event on youth and unemployment** in Greece where she
  - Stressed the need for digital competences among the population;
  - Mentioned the role of Opening up Education.

- 13 May 2014: Both ███████ ████████████████ Microsoft and ████ ████ at the Commission-supported **TECY 4 conference on Big Data in Education**.

- 11 Mar 2014: **XPM** held the opening speech at the **"Microsoft in Education Global Forum",** Barcelona, where he
  - Emphasised the need for innovation in education;
  - 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 3000 internships per year to be doubled to 6000 per year.