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ANNEX

**ANNEX**

**to the Proposal for a Council Recommendation**

**on reversing the decline in basic skills**

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**Examples of measures addressing the specific challenges in each basic skill domain.**

**Literacy**: (i) secure early language and reading development by providing rich oral-language exposure, shared reading, vocabulary-building and phonological awareness; (ii) consolidate fluency and comprehension throughout primary education; (iii) continue explicit teaching of reading comprehension, writing and subject-specific vocabulary throughout secondary education and initial VET; (iv) teach learners to work with conflicting sources and evaluate the reliability of information, and provide opportunities and time for reading for pleasure, with particular attention to boys' reading motivation, including through well-resourced school and public libraries; (v) target support at the learners with the greatest gaps, including children from disadvantaged backgrounds, learners requiring additional support in the language of instruction, and learners with disabilities or special educational needs, providing intensive support in the language of instruction for newly arrived learners; (vi) extend provision for parents and guardians with low literacy; and (vii) draw on the European Literacy Coalition.

**Mathematics**: (i) in the early years, prioritise playful, language-rich routines with concrete materials that build number sense, connecting mathematics to children's everyday experience; (ii) from primary education onwards, strengthen numeracy and conceptual understanding, including financial literacy, through explicit teaching, purposeful practice and formative assessment; (iii) progressively develop mathematical reasoning, estimation, modelling and problem solving in meaningful real-world contexts, including through STEM learning and age-appropriate financial literacy activities (such as budgeting, saving and understanding interest); (iv) provide targeted support where learning gaps persist and challenge potential high achievers; and (v) promote approaches that reduce mathematics anxiety, strengthen confidence and a sense of belonging in mathematics, and challenge stereotypes about who can succeed in the subject, particularly for girls.

**Science**: (i) in the early years, promote hands-on exploration of the natural and human-made world through observation, talk, prediction and simple investigation, combining explicit teaching with play and inquiry; (ii) from primary education onwards, combine core scientific knowledge with inquiry, modelling, evidence-based reasoning and problem-solving, including integrated STEM learning addressing real-world and societal challenges; (iii) nurture curiosity, confidence and positive science identities from an early age, challenge stereotypes about who can participate and succeed in science, and widen participation by creating inclusive learning opportunities and providing targeted support where needed, particularly for girls and disadvantaged learners; (iv) introduce outdoor and experiential learning, including activities in natural environments; and (v) at later stages, strengthen links with universities, research institutions, science centres, museums and employers, including through the pilot STEM education centres.

**Digital**: (i) in the early years, provide limited, age-appropriate experiences that promote safe and responsible online behaviour in line with national and European approaches to screen use; (ii) from primary education onwards, integrate core digital competences with computational thinking, digital and AI literacy, drawing on DigComp 3.0 and the EU–OECD AI Literacy Framework; (iii) strengthen learners' ability to critically evaluate online information and sources, recognise manipulation techniques, and identify and respond to disinformation, deepfakes, targeted advertising and cyberbullying, as outlined by the Special Panel on child online safety; (iv) ensure that educational and support measures are inclusive and, where necessary, targeted to vulnerable learners, particularly those facing socioeconomic disadvantages, special education needs, adverse childhood experiences, discrimination, or mental health difficulties, in order to reduce inequalities in digital participation, online safety,

and well-being (v) expand assessment of digital skills, aligned with competence frameworks, to identify gaps and target support; (vi) foster cooperation between schools and families to promote healthy online habits; and (vii) support learners in applying technologies for problem-solving and innovation through workplace exposure, mentoring, and partnerships with EdTech and industry.

**Citizenship**: (i) promote open classroom climates and strengthen critical thinking; (ii) foster empathy, care, respect and cooperation from the early years; (iii) strengthen political literacy by developing learners' knowledge and understanding of democratic principles, institutions (including those of the European Union) and political processes (including the rule of law, fundamental rights and checks and balances); (iv) strengthen learners' agency and civic engagement through volunteering, service-learning and community projects; (v) use simulations, role-play and games (e.g. mock elections); (vi) strengthen democratic decision-making in schools (e.g. student councils); (vii) promote schools' engagement with participatory structures, such as the EU Children's Participation Platform; (viii) ensure safe learning environments; (ix) strengthen media literacy and learners' capacity to identify and address disinformation; and (x) challenge stereotypes while promoting human rights, equality and inclusion.