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PRESS RELEASE

The EUROSOLE project - sparking creativity and discovery through Big Questions across Europe

EUROSOLE offers a targeted response to the strategic objectives of national education systems in the UK and European level cooperation in the area of reducing and tackling early school leaving. Our overall aim is to support the school education field and specifically, lower secondary school education, in tackling early school leaving. The project is designed to do this through the development of new forms of self-organised learning spaces as preventative and intervention measures at local, national and European levels.

Our project looks at how new forms of learning, in which young people rather than educators take a leading role, can foster engagement in one's own learning with the ultimate aim of facilitating transition pathways beyond lower secondary school education. It is built around the shared objective to create four sustainable and alternative self-organised learning spaces - EUROSOLEs. These spaces focus specifically on the learning of basic and transversal skills as identified by the European Union.

The EUROSOLE Big Question Data Bank (myeurosole.eu) is a portal of Big Questions which can be used as stimulus for self-organised learning based on the application of Basic (Science, Maths, and Reading) and Transversal skills (social and civic skills, entrepreneurship, foreign languages, digital skills). We are also mapping big questions on to 21st century skills: Critical thinking, Collaboration and communication skills, Self-direction skills, Creativity and innovation skills, Global and local connections, Technological fluency. Educators across Europe can use, comment, share and author their own Big Questions using the portal.

The project is funded by Erasmus+, the European Union's (EU) programme for education, training, youth and sport, with the EU committing £12 billion to the programme between 2014

and 2020. In the UK, the programme is managed by the Erasmus+ UK National Agency, a partnership between the British Council and Ecorys UK. EUROSOLE is funded under Key Action 2 of the programme. Erasmus+ enables schools to organise teaching or training abroad for teachers and other support staff, to exchange the best in modern European schools practice, and improve teaching or staff practices

By 2020 it is expected that over 800,000 education and training staff and youth workers will teach or train abroad across Europe with Erasmus+. Projects like EUROSOLE provide opportunities for learners and staff to improve their skills, enhance their employability and gain cultural awareness. Erasmus+ aims to offer long lasting benefits to both the participants and the organisations involved.

Project co-ordinator in the UK, Dr Anne Preston said: “We are delighted to be able to share this Big Question resource with educators and students across Europe. Using this online EUROSOLE community, over the next two years, we hope to bring together a large network of EUROSOLE practitioners who are passionate about putting young people in charge of their own learning to encourage them to stay in education longer.

In June 2016, EUROSOLE partners from 4 countries met at Bridge 21, at Trinity College Dublin for to share their work and make plans for a year-long EUROSOLE-ATHON where the project activities will involve trialling our EUROSOLE spaces designed for educators and young people to explore Big Questions.

Website: www.myeurosole.eu

Twitter: euro_sole

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NOTES TO EDITORS

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You can learn more about EUROSOLE at George Stephenson High School by following us on Twitter @gshslearning

About Erasmus+

Erasmus+ is the European Union programme for education, training, youth and sport for 2014-2020. It significantly increases EU funding (+40%) with an overall budget of €14.7 billion (£12 billion) for the development of knowledge and skills and aims to increase the quality and relevance of qualifications and skills. Two-thirds of its funding will provide grants for more than 4 million people to study, train, gain work experience or volunteer abroad in 2014-2020 (compared with 2.7 million in 2007-2013). The period abroad can range from a few days up to a year. In the UK, it is expected that nearly 250,000 people will undertake activities abroad with the programme. Erasmus+ aims to modernise education, training and youth work across Europe. It is open to education, training, youth and sport organisations across all sectors of Lifelong Learning, including schools education, further and higher education, adult education and the youth sector. Erasmus+ provides funding for organisations to offer opportunities to students, teachers, apprentices, volunteers, youth leaders and people working in grassroots' sport. It will also provide funding for partnerships between organisations such as educational institutions, youth organisations, enterprises, local and regional authorities and NGOs, as well as support for reforms in Member States to modernise education and training and to promote innovation, entrepreneurship and employability.

The programme is managed in the UK by the Erasmus+ UK National Agency, which is a partnership between the British Council and Ecorys UK.

For more information about funding opportunities visit www.erasmusplus.org.uk, or use the hashtag #epluspeople to see what other projects are doing across EUROPE.

Further information from www.erasmusplus.org.uk

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