CONSEJO ESCOLAR DEL ESTADO
Green Paper consultation process
Migration and mobility: challenges and opportunities for EU education systems

A. The policy challenge

1.   Globalization and localization.

We are witnessing a phenomenon of globalization in our today's societies. But at the same time we can see a reverse movement of location aiming to avoid the same overflow and in some cases it becomes a process of "retribalización". For that reason, it is necessary to maintain proper limits in the local identity.

2. Education and the future.

We are seeing important changes in the composition of our education in recent years. These changes imply learning to live together and to educate students with differences of origin, language and culture. Education is an essential element in relation to positions and trends of students in their adult life.

3. Intercultural projects.

Ethnocentric view of history and culture has to be changed. Intercultural education should gain ground little by little. Contributions of different cultures can serve as elements of personal and social enrichment. Difference should be a social constructing factor.

4. Intercultural mutual enrichment.

Coexistence of students with different cultures at schools is a challenge with some risks, but also a challenge of better training and living together in solidarity and democratic values. That will result in an intercultural mutual enrichment. This requires the participation of teachers, parents and students in this new inter-ethnic coexistence.

5. The challenge of immigration.

At present, it is desirable to pay special attention to the role immigration plays in the field of education. And it should be considered that it represents a challenge for everybody in the educational community: parents and teachers, but especially for students, both for immigrant students entering for the first time the education system, as for domestic students.

B. The policy response

1. Respect for the dignity, human rights and legality in force.

From a legal perspective all can be done about the problems surrounding immigration and education must be solidly based on the dignity of human beings, and it does not matter their ethnic or cultural backgrounds, as well as respect for human rights and law in host countries. The strict observance of these extremes should have the direct effect of increasing social cohesion and an approach to peace and effective coexistence. In this task, education has a role of special significance that all of us should pay attention carefully.

2. Education as a factor of social cohesion.

Education stands at one of the pillars that underpin the integration of the various immigrant groups in the societies they have accessed. Education affects both immigrants and their children and other family members who accompany them, being one of the means of greater weight to unable real equality of opportunity. But also constitutes one of the main vehicles to get rejection of discrimination and attitudes that incorporate the difference as a worthy value to be protected. We have to take into account the potential for cultural enrichment that education involves, for immigrant groups themselves and for national people of the host countries. The previous position must be inevitably linked to the utmost respect for the law governing in the host countries as well as the rules and regulations that underlie its social organization.

3. Right to education and election of school.

The concentration of the immigrant population in some cities, specific areas or in certain types of networks involves at short, medium and long term problems that play against a real integration and social cohesion of our society. Compensatory education policies should avoid these situations, implementing a real and effective right to education and choice of school for all students entering the system. The living area in the cities should not be the key factor to get a post at schools.

4. Banning of segregated education policies.

All those practices that enable groups of students belonging to ethnic, cultural or national in certain schools or specific classrooms should be rejected, since that would necessarily lead to the isolation of these groups and increases difficulties to carry out integration and multiculturalism policies. The educational and social problems that it involves (declining quality of education provided at schools and fostering of social marginality) must be strongly avoided. We have to take into account that the constitutional right to education is not always coincident with the mere Schooling.

5. Enhancing economic and personal measures.

It is necessary to have the enough economic and personal means both in public and in subsidies schools so that the problems arising in the field of education, caused by the new phenomenon of immigration, can be undertaken with a minimum guarantee. The system need additional financial means to face the immigrants´ education needs.

6. *Preservation of personal identity and family.*

From the approach offered by the various immigrant groups, there is a need to undertake their full integration into Spanish society preserving their self-esteem and personal and cultural identity. Most of these groups claim for the development of education policies that do not only have a single culture vision but enough points of view to appreciate their sources and roots.

7. *Diversity of problems.*

The problems of different groups of immigrants in the education system are extremely diverse. There are a wide range of problems, from language problems and cultural needs up to students with diverse backgrounds and academic disadvantages. On the other hand, we appreciate frequently that the family difficulties have a direct effect on the result and performance of students.

8. *Teacher training.*

Teacher training is extremely important to face immigrant student problems in order to be able to offer the response required by students accessing the education system. Teacher training is one of the key pillars in this aspect to tackle successfully the problems that arose with the phenomenon of immigration. Social integration of immigrant students will depend on teacher's learning approach.

9. *Concentration of immigrant student population.*

There is often a high concentration of immigrant population in certain areas of cities, which leads to a concentration of student population in some schools. This concentration can cause an isolation of those students with regard to the national students. That point increases the difficulty of intercultural integration in the host school and country. It would be desirable to undertake educational policies aimed to a balanced distribution of students in different school.

10. *Cross-curricular approaches.*

The policies of multicultural integration at schools cannot be confused with assimilation policies for immigrant students. It is necessary to introduce intercultural integration curricula approaches, where every student can feel identified, without giving up their respective view and backgrounds. This new policy should be implemented to both domestic students and those entering the education system from other cultural approaches. The flexible and open

approaches in these areas, which make compatible the feelings of belonging to various communities, represents a pillar to get greater social cohesion and peace among the citizens.

C. The role of the European Union

1.Historical perspective of the subject.

From a historical point of view, the policy of the European Union in relation to education and immigration try to achieve social justice and equal opportunity for all those who live and work in their territory.

The social policies of the Member States are very diverse. This point has to be considered together with the fact that policies in education are competence of the states and that creates difficulties in carrying out a common policy in this area.

2. Europe as a plural society.

Today more than ever we must be aware that it is hoped that Europe, and this means all European countries, will become a multicultural and pluralistic society in the next or future generations.

This may lead to a rise of racism and social exclusion, or into new and humanistic forms of "interculturalism" involving an adaptation of the School to the new multicultural reality.

3. A critical reflection on interculturalism.

The contemporary intercultural education can no longer be limited to reflect the ethnic or cultural differences that exist in or around the school. It is necessary critical thinking and a redefinition of objectives and concepts that change the perception of teachers, who tend to associate intercultural education exclusively to the presence of ethnic or cultural minorities in the classroom.

An adequate intercultural training for teachers is one of the greatest education challenges to face in the European Union.

4. Respect and tolerance.

Both concepts are essential in the field of education and immigration. Tolerance, which has direct effect on non-discrimination of the other. And respect that goes beyond tolerance, and pushes us not only to live with diversity or to live with it, but to find a positive value in living together with people with other conditions.

5. Changing in the "difference" concept.

Intercultural education has traditionally generated the idea of a "fundamental difference" between a homogenous "we" and a homogenous "other". The result has been the consideration of existing cultures as static and closed to each other entities and not as constantly changing processes where there are internal differences.

As a result, intercultural education has not fought racism effectively, but it has reinforced existing racial stereotypes and xenophobic tendencies in society and in some way at schools.

D. The future of Directive 77/486/EEC

Directive 77/486/EEC should be adapted to the new situation of immigrants. Taking into account the open method of coordination, the new Directive should include the principles and aims put forwards on this document in order to get the social inclusion of immigrants through education.