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Attended events : May – October 2009

1 European Associations Coordinators' Meeting

Brussels, 22 June 2009

Roos Herpelinck and Carine De Smet attended the event.

Mr Ralf RAHDERS welcomes the participants: 10 organisations working under a three year partnership agreement and 5 organisations working under an annual operating grant (Jean Monnet programme, key activity 3).

Mrs Ilona POKORNA, programme manager, presents an overview of the selection results for 2009 and the assessment of the final reports 2008.

Mr Guido DI FIORE, financial officer, gives information about the administrative and financial management, monitoring and reporting.

Mr Youri DE VUYST, DG Education and Culture, highlights three points for the European Associations as part of the Jean Monnet programme:

The present organisations are attached to the Jean Monnet programme mainly because of the expertise the agency already has in managing large operating grants; but: they remain different, not integrated in the general call for proposals.

Priorities addressed by the organisations should match with the priorities of the ET 2010 programme (quality and effectiveness; facilitating equal access; opening up to the wider world). The networking of the organisation should reach out beyond the members of the organisation.

Partnerships should be enhanced between the world of Education and Training and the world of business. Reference to the Communication from the European Commission (2 April 2009) 'A new partnership for the modernisation of universities: the EU Forum for University Business Dialogue'.

Mr Michael TEUTSCH, DG Education and Culture, presents the Updated strategic framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training, insisting on the Open Method of Coordination, the long and short term priorities.

In the afternoon all the participating organisation had the possibility to present themselves.

2 Info session: Priorities for Education and Training of the Swedish Presidency of the European Union

Brussels, 23 June 2009 (organised by 'Departement Onderwijs & Vorming van de Vlaamse Overheid, Afdeling Internationale Relaties Onderwijs)

Carine De Smet attended the event.

Mrs Karin Henriksson was introduced by Marie-Anne Persoons.

Karin Henriksson has been active in the European Education Committee since 1994; she was president of the Education Committee under the Swedish Presidency of 2001. She is member of the High Level Group on Education and Training from the European Commission; in the past, she worked at the universities of Stockholm and Linköping and was member of the National Swedish Board of Education.

The Swedish Presidency coincides with an unfavourable period: there is a shift in the European Parliament and the Commission. There is no formal proposal from the Commission to work on.

Thanks to the ET 2010 and the new ET 2020 programmes, there is more continuity between the different presidencies. Karine Hendriksson hopes that the questions the Swedish presidency will highlight will be relevant; they are among the priorities the Council of the EU agreed on in May 2009.

Three priorities (of equal weight):

The knowledge triangle : Education, research and innovation.

During the meeting in July, the Education Committee will prepare conclusions to agree on for the Ministers of Education on 26 November. This issue will also be discussed in the Competitiveness Council.

Integration of migrants

The starting point is the Commissions' Green Paper, part of the package of the renewed social agenda. It's the first time that the education council deals with specific questions concerning migrants in education.

The conclusions will be based on the Green Paper and on the outcomes of the consultation (will be published by the Commission July 2009 or early September 2009).

The ambition remains humble: The Swedish Presidency wants to insure that this question will stay on the agenda after that period.

Professional development of teachers and the role of the school leaders in fostering this development

There will be an informal ministerial meeting in September; conclusions will be prepared for the Council of Ministers in November.

Several issues are related: induction, professional development, support for teachers' mobility...

Policy debates in the Council:

On migrants

On the knowledge triangle, more specifically the widening up of the modernisation agenda for universities; maybe the question of ranking?

The work of the Swedish Presidency has to be seen against the background of the strategy for European cooperation in education and training: we are at the end of the first decade of the Lisbon Strategy; there will be a proposal from the Commission for the renewed strategy.

Other events:

Conference on the knowledge triangle, early September 2009 Göteborg

Conference on gender differences in education attainment (integrating the migrant question)

Conference on VET and particularly the challenges for adults (this item links to the recent reforms of the Swedish system)

3 The teaching profession

Cardiff, 24-26 June 2009

Mr Manuel Miguéns (CNE) and Ms Egle Pranckuniene (Lithuanian Education Council) attended the conference, organized by the General Teaching Council of Wales, a EUNEC associate member. They are preparing a report which will be included in the next 'attended events'.

4 Education of Second Generation Migrants in Europe: Policy does matter.

Brussels, 9 July 2009

EUNEC was invited to this workshop to discuss the findings of the Integration of European Second Generation (TIES) research project looking into the education of the second generation migrants in Europe, which was held at the offices of the European Policy Centre. The workshop identified a number of key issues and ideas – such as how to change the current discourse from the deficiency to the potential – which can feed into EU policy.

EUNEC could not attend the workshop but was sent the report:

The meeting began with an overview of the TIES project given by **Dr Maurice Crul**, researcher and coordinator of the study at the University of Amsterdam. TIES is an international, collaborative and comparative research project, which looks at the descendants of immigrants from Turkey, the former Yugoslavia, Morocco and Greece in eight EU member states (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland). In terms of the methodology, the report is based on ten thousand face to face interviews, which comprehensively reconstructed the entire school career of each subject.

He concluded by highlighting the benefits of early start, mixed schools, late selection and alternative routes to higher education for second generation migrant children. To address

early school leaving, good coaching and preparation for the transition from lower secondary school to the apprenticeship system seemed to be effective.

How can these findings feed into policy-making? Dr Crul suggested a shift in policy focus from the current emphasis on the drop-outs to the success stories: the emerging 'new elite' of minorities who can influence the next generation of migrant children. He underlined that it is extremely important to learn from those who are successful by dissecting their personal story to success and replicate it.

Professor Crul recommended the creation of a multi-stakeholder platform, bringing together policy makers, practitioners, emigrant groups and others.

Jana Huttova of the Open Society Institute highlighted the need to focus on migration and integration. In her view, migrants deserve a special attention when compared with the other groups which also experience problems such as discrimination or socio-economic inequality. These groups might suffer due to a single disadvantage, while migrants often represent a multiplication of these problems which makes their position all the more precarious in society.

Ms Huttova called for a change of thinking with respect to the education of migrants. She noted that while there are big expectations that education can accommodate migrants, there is a stark discrepancy between expectations and reality. The traditional curriculum, which lacks a more inclusive approach that includes intercultural or anti-bias components, is still prevalent.

Finally, she highlighted the PISA study from OECD: while children of migrant origin were often more motivated than their counterparts, the expectations of teachers were much lower which had a collateral effect on student results. Inter-cultural training for teachers is essential. The discourse on migrant education needs to shift from one of reducing deficit to one of maximising potential.

Adem Kumçu of the Cosmicus Foundation in the Netherlands shared his personal experiences, growing up as a Turkish emigrant in Europe and talked about how his education and career led him to establish the foundation, a national organisation that aims to advance the education, development and careers of students.

Opening up the discussion, participants widely shared the belief that parents' engagement in the education of their children is critical. Because of their own experience and background parents can add a lot of insight into the debate, which can directly feed into the decision making process.

It was noted that the TIES study brings great deal of interesting insight about the education systems in the EU countries, not least the wealth of the best practices that can be drawn from it. Sceptics might say that different contexts make such practices incomparable, yet there are still some clear lessons from the success stories. It was underlined that, in the EU context, we too often overlook the success groups thereby wasting the huge resource of successfully educated migrant children.

The debate brought about a wide support for the need to also look away from the negative portrayal and prejudice of the black schools. The success of the Cosmicus schools suggests that the concentration of ethnic minorities doesn't necessarily lead to a poor quality school. The key to success seems to be an open and inclusive education system that allows for the diversity of management, teachers and curriculum.

Some participants shared their concerns about the poor preparedness and availability of teachers to take on a diverse group of migrant children. It was noticed that in Europe there are very few teachers of ethnic minority background. This leads to a severe under-representation of ethnic minority teachers when compared to the composition of European societies. While the causes behind it are complex, it was noted that there is little mobility of teachers in the EU. This is part of a bigger EU problem that is linked to

the recognition of qualifications. Some professions face huge barriers in the recognition of their credentials, and teaching is one of them. In order to remedy this, developing minimum standards of education might allow teachers' qualifications to be verified on an equal basis.

It was noted that there is a new thinking in the Commission's DG Education and Culture about how to approach the issue of migrant education, with the intention to feeding into the 2020 curriculum programme. This includes an idea of setting of targets and quality standards; however, it was noted that more work is yet needed in order to advance it into a workable policy making mechanism. The development of standards should take into account developments in immigration policy including the introduction of language testing.

There is a need to become more proactive and flexible with regard to utilising the diversity which already exists in Europe. Nowadays employers, especially multinationals, are often looking for soft skills rather than hard qualifications. Migrants represent these qualities and could well fill the gap. They possess invaluable skills of adaptability and flexibility as well as languages. There is a huge untapped potential of migrants and it begs to be acted upon before it gets wasted.

5 The New Millenium Learners

Brussels, 21-23 September 2009

The OECD's Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) launched the New Millennium Learners (NML) project in 2007. It has the global aim of investigating the effects of digital technologies on school-age learners and providing recommendations on the most appropriate institutional and policy responses from the education sector. The project comprises two phases: the first phase explores the demand side, i.e., the changes, if any, experienced by learners. This phase is now coming to an end. In the second phase, current and emerging educational responses will be reviewed. The first NML conference aims at showcasing the results of the first phase and linking them to the next.

Ms Roos Herpelinck (Vlor) attended the conference. A report of the conference will be added at the document 'Attended events' of December 2009.

6 Forthcoming event: assessment of key competences.

Brussels, 15 October 2009

As part of the follow-up of the Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning (2006), the Commission organises a seminar for the Education and Training 2010 Peer Learning Clusters on curriculum reform, teacher education, Maths, Science and Technology and qualifications frameworks.

The seminar looks into the ways in which the various forms of assessment impact upon the acquisition of key competences, and examines examples of policy reforms that target both curriculum and assessment.

EUNEC will attend this seminar. A report will be included in the next 'attended events' document.

