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Attended events : October-December 2009

1 The teaching profession

Cardiff, 24-26 June 2009

Manuel Miguéns (CNE) and Egle Pranckuniene (Lithuanian Education Council) attended the conference, organized by the General Teaching Council of Wales, a EUNEC member.

Teaching Council is a self-regulating body of teaching professionals existing in countries of the Commonwealth of Nations¹. Teaching councils play an important role in promoting high standards and shared values of the teaching profession, recognizing teacher education programmes and qualifications, ensuring career-long professional training and development. The conference was hosted by the General Teaching Council of Wales. It is the statutory self-regulating professional body for teaching profession in Wales which aims to contribute improving standards of teaching and the quality of learning and to maintain and improve standards of professional conduct amongst teachers. It is an independent self-funding organization playing regulatory, advisory and operational roles (www.gtcw.org.uk).

The conference was devoted to discuss five main themes:

- Teacher Effectiveness and Professionalism;
- New Directions for Teacher Professionalism;
- Regulating the Public Interest;
- International Teacher Mobility;
- Growing Self-Regulation

Keynote addresses were given by Prof. Andrew Pollard, Director of UK Teaching and Learning Research Programme and Prof. John Furlong, Director of Department of Education at Oxford University. The other presenters were representatives of different national Teaching Councils.

The discussions at the conference were around the questions: how do teachers see themselves as professionals? What are the main values teachers pursue? To whom teachers feel accountable? What is the balance between teachers' accountability and professional freedom? It was admitted that teachers' quality and teachers' education emerge as a key international policy issue. Many discussions were around the

¹ The [Commonwealth of Nations](#) is a [voluntary association](#) of 53 independent [sovereign states](#), most of them are former [British colonies](#), or dependencies of these colonies (wikipedia.org).

statements of McKinsey report ² which states that three main things related to teachers matter most for the students' achievements:

1. Getting the right people to become teachers;
2. Developing them into effective instructors;
3. Ensuring that the system is able to deliver the best possible instruction for every child.

There were also a lot of discussions related to operational issues of Teaching Councils: recognition of teachers' qualification, registration of teachers at international level, etc. The conference was very well organized, we were surrounded by warm hospitality of Welsh colleagues.

What could be considered by EUNEC?

Teaching Council is quite a unique body which represents the teaching profession differently than Teachers Unions. Teaching Councils are the real advocates of teaching quality, they promote professional prestige and pride of being a teacher. In many countries the teaching profession is not considered to be prestigious and demanding therefore it is difficult to attract capable young people to schools. In many EU countries there are no organizations which would be responsible for self-regulation of teachers and teachers as professionals are not represented in forming policies of education. EUNEC could discuss how to encourage self-regulation of the teaching profession in those countries which do not have organizations representing teachers at professional level. The other important question would be how to raise the prestige of the teaching profession and attract young gifted graduates to study education and enter the teaching profession as well as how to retain good teachers and managers in the profession.

2 The New Millennium Learners

Brussels, 21-23 September 2009

Roos Herpelinck (Vlor) attended the conference.

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.

Key messages and presentations on www.nml-conference.be

3 Seminar on the Assessment of Key Competences

Brussels, 15 October 2009

Geertrui De Ruytter (Vlor) attended the event.

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

² http://www.mckinsey.com/App_Media/Reports/SSO/Worlds_School_Systems_Final.pdf

The seminar looked 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.

The seminar was opened by Ms H el ene Clark, Director of the programme and chaired by Mr Adam Pokorny, Head of Unit. A variety of inputs discussed why addressing assessment is vital for the process of implementing the EU key competences for school education: communication in the mother tongue; communication in foreign languages; mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology; digital competence; learning to learn; social and civic competences; sense of initiative and entrepreneurship and cultural awareness and expression. Plus the underpinning transversal competencies critical thinking, creativity, problem solving, initiative, risk assessment, decision-taking and management of one's own feelings. Experts seem to agree that such assessment should be based on required learning outcomes. Teodora Parveva, of Eurydice gave a wide overview of examination practices in Europe with her talk "National Testing of Pupils in Europe". However the presentation also made the audience how difficult it is to compare systems in Europe. Many in the audience recognised the national systems they stemmed from, but felt that the research results often simplified the structures.

4 Policy debate: Cultural diversity: spicing up creativity?

Brussels, 15 October 2009

Carine De Smet (Vlor) participated at this debate.

Cultural diversity broadens our vision and makes us appreciate the different ways of seeing and doing things in other cultures. This openness allows us to select and absorb elements of other cultures, helping to produce new ways of thinking, seeing, imagining and creating. How can this link be better fostered in today's European mosaic of cultures, traditions, languages and beliefs?

A panel of experts debated these issues, followed by an open discussion.

The keynote speech was delivered by Maro  Še čovi , European Commissioner for Education, training, culture and youth. In the panel: Phil Wood, author of "*Intercultural City, planning the diversity advantage*"; Bola Olabisi, Managing Director, Global Women Inventors & Innovators Network (GWIIN); Sabine Frank, Secretary General of the Platform for Intercultural Europe; Daniel de Torres, Commissioner for Integration and Intercultural Dialogue in Barcelona.

5 Migration and Mobility: Challenges and opportunities for EU Education Systems

Brussels, 20 October 2009

Patrice Caremans (Vlor) participated at the conference.

The conference formally closed the consultation process initiated in July 2008 through a Commission Green Paper focusing on the question how education policies may better address the challenges posed by immigration and internal EU mobility flows.

During the conference the positive contribution of migrant children to European education

systems was underlined, as well as the need to ensure that these systems offer them possibilities to develop to their full potential. It was also stressed that the improvement of the achievement levels of children with a migrant background is a collective endeavour which requires a strong commitment not only from schools, teachers, pupils and parents, but also from a variety of other actors at local, regional and national level, as well as from other policy areas in addition to education.

Three conference workshops focused on the topics of "Measures for newly-arrived migrant pupils", "The role of intercultural education" and "The role of languages". Participants confirmed the importance of the three topics, outlining the need for flexible arrangements adapted to individual needs, especially for newly-arrived children. They also said that intercultural education could benefit all children, and not just the migrant ones, and that integration and multiculturalism can go hand in hand in schools in the EU. In addition, there was consensus on the fundamental importance of developing strategies to ensure that migrant children achieve full command of the language(s) of instruction. Participants also discussed the role of the mother tongues of migrant children in their education process and ways of support to offer them in this respect.

Presentations and conclusions of the workshops at http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/doc1877_en.htm

6 Launching Conference of ECVET and EQARF

Brussels, 17-18 November 2009

Simone Barthel (CEF) and Koen Stassen (Vlor) attended the event.

The aim of the launching conference is to bring together all stakeholders, explain what is at stake, show what has been achieved so far, and invite them to help shape the process with their own actions and ideas.

The conference focused on examining the most efficient ways – both for learners and for the European economy – to closely involve all stakeholders in implementing these new tools and to ensure all measures in this field operate in tandem.

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/News/default.asp?idnews=4794>

7 Gender Differences in Educational Achievement

Uppsala, Sweden, 17-18 November 2009

Carine De Smet (Vlor) participated at the conference

The conference was opened by Dr **Tobias Krantz**, Minister for Higher Education and Research and by Mr **Adam Pokorny**, European Commission, DG EAC. Odile Quintin, Director General for Education, Training, Culture and Youth was excused. Mr Pokorny insists on the fact that the aim of the European Commission is, at one hand, to have excellence in education, and at the other hand, to have access for all to education. In this perspective, the gender issue is important.

The first keynote speech is on 'Gender differences in educational achievement – disaster, cul-de-sac of a new road towards the future?' by **Agneta Stark**, Professor and Rector, University of Dalarna, Sweden. Her speech presents inequalities, reflects earlier inequalities and highlights gendered norms. It shows how current and past explanations of gendered education patterns may be used to understand the many mechanisms upholding societal gendered work norms inside and outside the labour market. Two important quotes of Professor Stark: 'Education is no longer a competitive advantage in a

global perspective; it is simply an entry ticket to global markets'. Education is as important as clear water for each individual. And: 'If boys don't succeed, there must be something wrong with schools, they will have to adapt. If girls don't succeed, there must be something wrong with those girls, they will have to adapt..'

The second keynote speech is from **Eurydice (Bernadette Fortshuber and Akvile Motiejunaite)**, presenting the report on gender differences in educational outcomes.

The report is still a working document, and will be published in January 2010. The study was requested by the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union especially for this conference. The presentation highlights the main policy measures taken to tackle gender inequalities in 31 educational systems in Europe. Specific examples are employed to illustrate the extent to which European countries have been implementing concrete policy measures that target gender inequalities in education. Gender patterns in international and national assessment survey are also briefly discussed.

Dr **Stéphan Vincent-Lancrin**, Senior Education Analyst at **OECD**, makes a contribution with the title 'Are boys getting smarter at the expense of girls?' The speech looks at the tertiary education level and presents some statistics showing that gender inequality in participation and achievement in higher education has reversed in almost all countries in the OECD area, and looks at what the factors for this reversal could be. Dr Vincent-Lancrin argues that this will likely not lead to a reversal of the gender wage gap but that this new trend might have social implications that we are still unaware of and that gender mainstreaming policies in education should put a higher emphasis on boys where they are exclusively focused on girls.

Professor Dr **Gaby Weiner**, Centre of Educational Sociology, Edinburg University, UK presents an overview of Gender and Education in Europe. The presentation draws on debates and research arising from the gender and education field and also studies of the extent and causes of gender difference in education across Europe. Shifts in ideas are considered as well as those in policy and practice. There has been a shift from gender and education as a field concerned with righting the wrongs against girls and women, to a policy field influenced by cross-cultural studies of examination performance and boys' so-called educational underachievement. It shows that most countries in Europe have engaged with feminism to some extent, with a variety of implications for educational policy and practice; and also the influence on gender policy-making of the EU, in particular on countries which have recently joined or wish in the future to achieve membership.

The report made by Professor Dr Gaby Weiner is included in the Eurydice report.

After lunch, Professor **Ann Phoenix**, Thomas Coram Research Unit Institute of Education, University of London, UK, presents 'Masculinity and schooling': theories and research concerning boys and girls schooling in London. It reflects upon education in non-academic context, young masculinities, understanding boys in contemporary society and different gender strategies in how to handle schools increased individuality and self directed learning.

EUNEC participated at Workshop 4 on 'Gender and educational achievement – comparative perspectives', moderated by Ms **Inga Wernersson**, Professor at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. There were critical remarks from the audience on the use of PISA results. It is not always clear where the results come from, how the measurement is done; maybe the impact of the PISA results is too strong? Other critical remarks had to do with the fact that, indeed, young women have a higher degree of education than young man, but, are more stressed, more depressed. Research should be done in this area.

Wednesday 18 November 2009

Anna Ekström, Chair of the Committee for Gender Equality in School, makes a presentation on 'Equality in school – importance for growth, employment and social inclusion'. She puts that gender equality is one of the fundamental democratic values which, in Sweden, are part of the national goals for schools. Nevertheless, girls achieve better than boys; furthermore, the choice of subjects is very gender stereotyped. This is

not only negative for the individual student, but also for Sweden as a nation, since it affects other areas, among them the labour market.

The last keynote speech is by **Pamela Sammons**, professor at Department of Education at the University of Oxford, UK. Her presentation outlines recent findings from research on school and teacher effectiveness and studies of successful school leadership on what factors help promote better outcomes for students: 'Enhancing equity and raising standards: messages from school and teacher effectiveness research for educational policy reform'.

EUNEC participated at Workshop 7 on 'Gender perspectives in teacher education', moderated by Fredrik Bondestam, PhD researcher on gender, teaching and critical and feminist pedagogy at the Centre for Gender Research at Uppsala University. Participants reflected on the current state of gender knowledge of teachers as they begin their careers, in the context of current research about strategies which have the potential to raise boys' and girls' achievements. A very important issue as teachers are a critical factor, being the agents of change.

All presentations will be available at the website www.se2009.eu. The final report is expected to be published at the beginning of December 2009.

8 Benchmarks and indicators.

Journée de rentrée de la Chambre de l'Enseignement (CEF)

Brussels, 20 November 2009

Roos Herpelinck (Vlor) attended the event.

The objectif of the day is to understand the mechanism of European benchmarks and the influence they have on education systems and to see how and why indicators are used in the monitoring of education and training.

Presentations at the website of the CEF-

www.cef.cfwb.be

9 South-North Mediterranean Dialogue Congress of Alicante on 'Education and Migration'

Alicante, 19-21 November

Maria Emilia Brederode Santos (CNE) participated at this Congress.

A report of the event will be included in the next 'attended events' document.

1 0 National Qualifications Frameworks in an international perspective

Brussels, 30 November 2009

Simone Barthel (CEF), Jean-Pierre Malarne (CEF) and Carine De Smet (Vlor) attended the event.

This international seminar was organised at the occasion of the launch of the Flemish Qualifications Framework. Micheline Scheys, Project Manager Strategic Education and Training Policy explained the objectives of the day, insisting on the importance of the consultation of stakeholders in the realisation of national qualifications frameworks.

From the wider world perspective, Arjen Deij gave information about world wide qualifications framework developments and VET reforms; Prof. Jack Keating from the university of Melbourne linked the Australian Qualifications Framework and EQF.

From the European perspective, Sjur Bergan (Council of Europe) stated that qualifications are a long standing concern in the European Higher Education Area and insisted on the challenges of qualifications frameworks. Carlo Scatoli (DG Education and Culture) talked about the connection between the EQF and national frameworks.

After lunch break, the Spanish VET Qualifications Framework and the Irish National Framework of Qualifications were presented. Finally, Rita Dunon (Project Strategic Education and Training) gave information about the development process and objectives of the Flemish Qualifications Framework.

At a round table with participants from different sectors, the future applications of the Flemish Qualifications Framework in different contexts were discussed.

The seminar ended with a reflection on the Flemish Qualifications Framework from an international perspective by Jens Bjornavold (Cedefop) and a closing address by Pascal Smet, Flemish Minister of Education, Youth, Equal Opportunities and Brussels.

Presentations at <http://www.evcvlaanderen.be/nieuws/verslagen>

1 1 Research into European Integration

EUNEC contributed to an ongoing research executed by the Network for European Studies (NES) of the University of Helsinki.