

International Conference on Education: Diverse Talents for the Future of Europe, Strengthening Europe through civil grassroots initiatives in education, 5-6 March 2012

The first day of the conference took place in the European Parliament. Welcome speeches were given by Mr. **Mevlüt Akgüngör**, Fedactio, and Member of the Organising Committee, Prof. **Ides Nicaise**, KULeuven. Prof. Nicaise presented the outline of the two-day conference and after that a video entitled "Diverse Talents for the Future of Europe" was shown to the participants.

In his opening remarks Dr. **Adem Kumcu** from UNITEE (European-Turkish Business Confederation) elaborated the concept of "New Europeans" and underscored the role they play in the European economy, especially in the time of the current economic crisis. Dr. Kumcu said that the Europe 2020 goals are ambitious but at the same time crucial, and the key to achieving them is education. Cultural and ethnic diversity presents a challenge in the education but in addition to speaking about challenges, we need to speak about concrete solutions. Enterprises need skilled workforce, and interaction with other cultures is not only a fact of life but a necessity for an entrepreneur.

Keynote speaker Mr. **Pierre Mairesse**, DG EAC, European Commission, started by pointing out the important role education and training play in generating growth and jobs. This is also noted in the Europe 2020 Strategy where education is one of the main focuses. The headline targets in the field of education and training are early school-leaving and higher education. Mr. Mairesse reminded that education is not only about developing competencies for the labour market but also for personal development. The labour market is changing rapidly and skills of creativity and learning to learn are needed. He also underlined the need to review the education and training systems and to adjust them to the present reality. Four aspects are important when reforming these systems: early childhood education and care; focusing on the right target groups; developing learning outcomes; and assuring a smooth transition between the education system and the labour market. Concerning learning outcomes labour supply has to be better matched with demand and labour mobility has to be facilitated. The Commission has suggested the use of structural funds to certain European countries suffering from high rate of youth unemployment. Mr. Mairesse also stressed the social dimension of the Europe 2020 strategy saying that education cannot solve all the problems but cross-sectoral policy is needed. He finished by mentioning concrete actions that the Commission and the Council have taken in the area of education and training: the Commission has proposed a strategy on early childhood education and care and the Council has adopted a strategy to reduce early school leaving.

Panel I "Diversity in Education Policy, International Perspectives and EU 2020 Targets" was chaired by Prof. **Maurice Crul**, VU and Erasmus University, the Netherlands. In his opening words he said that diversity is a fact in the present world and that diversity in education should be coupled with excellence.

Mr. **Thomas Huddleston** from Migration Policy Group presented the third edition of MIPEX, the Migrant Integration Policy Index research. He said that MIPEX is not only a research but also a policy

tool. It measures integration policies and their implementation, and asks whether all residents have equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities to become equal members of society and citizens. MIPEX has shown that political will counts over cultural traditions. This is evident from the fact that Scandinavian countries but also countries like Spain and Portugal are favourable for integration. MIPEX has also shown that policies are more diversified when there is no binding EU law. This applies especially to education, political participation and access to nationality.

Education is one of the seven policy areas that MIPEX analyses. It is measured with four indicators: access to education, targeting needs, developing new opportunities, and supporting intercultural education. In general countries rarely see and address the needs and opportunities of new diverse generation in the field of education. Only in approximately half of the countries surveyed there is equal access to all levels of education and there are only few targeted measures in this regard. There are also few systems to diversify schools and teachers, and uneven support for intercultural education. Hardly any formal systems exist to recognise children's previous skills. In targeting specific needs there are few legal entitlements and standards, and little support in languages of instruction but the Nordic countries make an exception in this regard. This, however, has not to do so much with the general stance to immigration but rather to education. Most education systems are missing out on opportunities the migrant pupils bring to classroom. There is some guidance on immigrant languages but less on cultures and segregation. One finding of MIPEX is that countries like Canada and Australia, and the USA in some regards, have far more favourable integration policies in the field of education than the EU27 countries.

Dr. **Maciej Jakubowski** from OECD presented the evidence from the OECD's PISA 2009 study on the performance of students with an immigrant background. PISA study covers 74 countries and 87 % of the world economy. Over half a million students took a 2-hour test assessing not only what they know but also how to creatively apply their knowledge in different situations. The study seeks to support governments to prepare students for the rapidly changing labour market and to provide a basis for policy dialogue and global collaboration in defining and implementing educational goals, policies and practices. It was noted that in most countries, immigrant students lag behind native students in performance but there is also country-specific variation in the performance of first generation and second generation students in relation to native students. In most of the countries native students perform better than immigrant students, even after socio-economic background and the language spoken at home are taken into account. The exceptions for this rule are countries like Qatar and Israel where immigrant students outperform natives. A clear trend of concentration can be seen when reviewing the number of immigrant students in schools: immigrant students attend schools with higher levels of concentration of immigrant students than native students.

As regards educational policy, learning climate (discipline, teacher behaviour, parental pressure and teacher-student relationships) positively associated with performance. On the other hand, dealing with heterogeneity (grade repetition, prevalence of tracking, expulsions and ability grouping) negatively associated both with performance and equity. Finally managing resources positively associated with performance and equity.

The gap can be explained by different student level and school level factors. At student level the explaining factors are socio-economic background and speaking a different language at home,

availability of educational resources at home, reading at home at a young age, and preschool education. Positively affecting factors at school level are more hours per week used for language learning and higher school average socio-economic composition. Higher concentration of immigrant students at school on the other hand has negative effects on performance. In order to narrow the performance gap, suggested school-level policies include effective language support, teachers for diverse students, school leadership for diverse schools and parental and community engagement. Suggested system-level policies include managing variations in educational support, funding effectively, building capacity for monitoring and evaluation, and managing school composition and concentration in some schools.

The conference continued with two field visits: École des Étoiles primary school and Foyer integration centre. École des Étoiles was presented by the Chair of Governors of the school, Mr. Abdurrahman Demir. The school is free and non-denominational and has two branches, one in Haren, Brussels and one in Charleroi. The Brussels school was established in 2005 and the one in Charleroi in 2006. The secondary school will start in September 2012. Over 50 % of the pupils are of Turkish origin, about 30 % of Moroccan origin and the remaining 17 % from Belgian and other origins. About 20 % of the teaching staff is Turkish and 80 % of other origins. As for financial sources, the school receives about 60 % in subsidies from the French Community of Belgium and the remaining 40 % is private financing. Mr. Demir told that they consider the school as a global education system that focuses on pupils' intellectual, personal and social development. The school emphasises the importance of collaboration between parents, teachers and pupils, and therefore maintains strong ties with parents in the form of different activities.

The second field visit was to Foyer integration centre situated in Molenbeek, Brussels. Foyer is a non-profit organisation focusing on the global integration problems of ethnic minorities and working on education, multilingualism and interculturalism. It was founded in 1969 and is subsidised by the Flemish community. Foyer seeks to develop new approaches in close touch with the different communities and also develop innovating projects and integrate them in existing structures. They also pay attention to basic needs, for example ensuring necessary health care. Foyer has several on-going projects and during the visit two of them were presented: the Language awareness project and the Centre for Part-time Training.

Language awareness means learning about languages and is intended to create a positive attitude toward languages and cultures. It also facilitates language learning and communication and enhances language competences through other languages. Language awareness was originally created in England in the 1970s to develop the language skills of English children. Its methodology is based on cooperative and discover-learning and it is used both in homogeneous and heterogeneous language groups.

The Centre for Part-time Training offers Personal Development Pathways (POT) for young people aged 15-18 who are registered in part-time vocational secondary schools and are not yet able to work in a labour-oriented fashion. They are socially vulnerable due to often multiple and complex social and personal problems. POT can be preceded by a preparatory pathway or a bridging project. A POT is considered to be successful when the youngster moves on to alternance learning system, to

(full-time) employment or to (full-time) education/training and also has a good command of other aspects of life.

On the 6th of March 2012 the second day of the International Conference on Education took place at the Flemish Ministry of Education and Training.

In the opening remarks **Prof. Ides Nicaise** reminded that it is not a typical academic conference, but rather a stakeholder conference, bringing together policy makers, educators, NGOs, OECD and others. He also expressed some concerns about the future of the Europe. As he said: Europe runs out of natural resources, so now more has to depend on brain resources.

After the opening remarks the audience could enjoy again the film entitled *Diverse Talents for the Future of Europe*, which was the introduction for the speeches. The film was followed by the short greeting-video, in which unfortunately absent Flemish Minister of Education, Youth, Equal Opportunities and Brussels Affairs, **Pascal Smet**, could welcome everybody at the venue place.

The first speech was given by a keynote speaker Prof. **Anja Heikkinen** from University of Tampere, Finland. She discussed the 2020 targets from the perspective of orders of knowledge. Important questions are how higher education and research are feeding into the EU strategies and what has been the educational contribution of “international”, “multicultural” or “cross-cultural” study and research programmes. She also asked what the consequences of the expansion of “globally recognised and competitive” studies and research are. Lastly she presented a trans-national research and development project “Re-enter, Re-integration” which created an evaluation tool for re-integrative pedagogy.

After the first keynote speech of the day, the second panel of the conference proceeded with the issue of Implementing Diversity from Education to the Labour Market. The chair of this panel, Dr **Adem Kumcu**, reminded us of the inefficiency of the current education system in terms of preparation for the labour market and for diversity. He raised the question of how to prepare young talents for Europe 2020.

The first speaker of the panel, Prof. **Sandra Groeneveld** from the Erasmus University Rotterdam, tried to answer the question of what is the impact of increasing ethnic-cultural diversity on performance in education using empirical evidence from the Netherlands. She noticed that there is some inconsistency of the effect of diversity: on the one hand there is a positive effect on information (from the decision making perspective), but the negative effect can be seen in terms of social categorization perspective.

In order to analyse and clarify the effects of diversity of student working group on students' performance in higher education an experiment was conducted at a Dutch university using the CEM model (Categorization-Elaboration Model). Nine groups of around 20 students, where the percentage of minority students differed between 9% and 77%, were asked to do 1 hour assignment in collaboration, after which they had to discuss the results and retake the task. The survey of the background was also provided. The results of this experiment showed that there is a negative diversity effect on elaboration and affective reactions, which is even bigger when identity threat

occurs. That means that students in diverse working groups evaluated the working group climate as less safe and less stimulating compared to students in homogeneous groups.

Prof. Groeneveld concluded that in order to avoid this negative effect educational policies should focus on fostering elaboration and make investment in working group climate.

In the second part of her speech prof. Groeneveld made an attempt to answer the question if the diversity and diversity policies in education are effective. She stressed the fact that ethnic minorities are underrepresented in the education workforce, which means that students are not reflected in the teachers (for 60% of students with minority background, there is only 5% of teachers). She recommended fostering working climate through diversity management policies.

The chair, Dr. Adem Kumcu, commented that in case of diversity policies the invisible hand takes too much time to work, so these policies need to be introduced sooner, but only the one that are effective. He also reminded that in case of New Europeans equal qualifications do not mean equal opportunities.

The next speaker, Prof. **Carla Dahl-Jorgensen** from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Trondheim, spoke about the language policy, language education in the context of integration of migrants into the labour market. She stressed that skills in the majority language are crucial for participation and integration of migrants into the labour market and for their future success (promotions, increase in earnings etc.). As an example she took the situation in Norway after the EU expansion in 2004 and languages policies that were created at the same time.

After opening of borders to transnational labour migrants from Central and Eastern Europe countries in 2004, high level of migration between Poland and Norway was noticed. But not all of the Polish immigrants had the same rights and obligations in terms of language. Three different groups were created:

- the group with free of charge language courses
- the group that was obliged to take language courses
- and finally the group that had neither right nor obligation in terms of languages courses

So that, for example, the lack of highly skilled physicians in health sector was filled by import of Polish labour force, but before their arrival they were obliged to take up intensive language course (around 6 hours, 5 days a week for 4 to 6 months). The needed workforce for construction fields was also recruited in Poland, but on the other hand they were usually hired as temporary workers with no access to language classes.

In addition, after the accession, the languages policies changed: in order to obtain permanent residency, immigrants had to follow 300 hours of Norwegian language course. This policy created high barrier to permanent residency and it was sign of migrants' discrimination.

This created problem of social dumping, in particular after the 2008 crisis occurred. The stagnation in construction left many Poles unemployed and even if they qualified for the unemployment benefits, without necessary language skills and information they were not able to obtain it anyway. The lack of the language skills was also an additional barrier for finding a new job, since all the new offers required knowledge of Norwegian language.

The Polish society in Norway tried to fight with this situation: special language school for unemployed migrants was created by Polish immigrant, who came to Norway in the 80's. But without the support of government or private sector the school was able to provide only the course of 2 hours a week with unqualified, volunteers teachers, for which participants had to pay.

In conclusion prof. Dahl-Jorgensen said that new languages policies in Norway shift from multiculturalism to sending immigrant back to their home countries and that marginalizing migrants for less favourable employment created the problem of social dumping.

In his comments, Dr. Kumcu stressed the importance of learning the language of the host country for the cohesion (being a part of society) and for the entry on the labour market, but he also reminded that one should be careful with the language policies since they can be a tool of discrimination.

Afterwards the audience listened to energetic speech of Dr. **Altay Manço** from University of Liège, in which he stayed away from the statistical data, but in return he gave some practical and basic information about integration in schools. He reminded that in order to improve school system, we need everybody and we need improvement at all the levels (system, class and actors). Parents have to be explained that they should not be afraid of a cultural absorption of their children by the culture of the host country. They should be helped to overcome that fear and because of that we need intergeneration communication. He also talked about a need to accompany families and youngsters towards entrepreneurial spirit, which could help them on the labour market in the future. The curriculum should be opened to diversity and it should focus and work on potential, not problems. The need of the best practices exchange was also underscored. All the actors, parents, teachers, should play an active role in the education and they should be helped with developing inter cultural and linguistic abilities in order to fully understands their students, their children. He provided also an interesting example of France, where the Ecole Normale Supérieure, can be find. They emphasised the importance of 'Normale' as if teachers have to normalize students, whereas teachers and schools should highlight the diversity.

The chair, Dr Kumcu, agreed that not only students, but also parents should be educated, especially when cultural gap between parents and children is growing. He stressed the importance of knowing yourself in the first place.

The last, but not least remarks were made by Ms. **Brenda King** from the European Economic and Social Committee. She talked about the children of immigrants, the 2nd or 3rd generation, called by UNITEE – the New Europeans. She was wondering why they still show poor performance even though they have no language problems and they are immerse in the culture of the country. The explanation seems to lie in the specificity of their families, where nobody went to higher (or even sometimes secondary) education, and the specificity of the area where they are living. Their parents are unemployed or so-called working poor, so that the children see no link between education and work life. Other problem lies in the teachers that do not live nowhere near their students, hence they do not fully understand them and their problems. Another issue is the large segregation in schools, which creates schools with high percentage of migrant concentration.

The employers assure that they want to hire the best people, but at the same time they blame the schools for not equipping students with the necessary skills.

The education system should help the children to make the link between education and work outcome and should show them what skills are actually needed on the labour market.

The teachers must feel comfortable with the diversity in their schools and must consider it as their professional challenge rather than a problem that need to be dealt with.

And at the end, Ms. King reminded that it needs to be insured that the burden is not entirely on schools, but also on local authorities, parents, community groups.

In the questions part that followed some doubts were raised. One of them was: when we talk about diversity and equal opportunities, why we are constantly measure the students and want them to reach the same level? As Ms. Brenda King answered: the diversity has its reflect in the different ways in which children are learning, but it is not incorrect to measure their performance using the same criteria, since there is some standardized goals that they all need to achieve.

The third panel was dealing with the issue of Civil Society and Education, Grassroots Initiatives.

The keynote speaker for this part was Prof. **Jagdish Gundara** from the University of London. His speech tackled the problem of Intercultural education and Civil Society in a Multicultural Europe. At the beginning he reminded us all that, especially in times of crisis in which Europe found itself in, the issue of diversity is not important only to migrants, but to the whole Europe. As the world found itself in an era of global dictatorship of financial markets and the human labour is being fast replaced with machines, the cultural nationalism is not the answer.

He talked about giving the power back to the citizens, instead of governments and stock exchanges. The civil society initiatives should make a role of a social glue in order to empower people and their communities. In his opinion the first step to rebuilding trust is to make dialogues that can lay foundation for cooperation. He also reminded that in order to make these dialogues we need time, effort and skills.

He also warned us that in the time of threat, like the time of global crisis, there might be a temptation to retreat to the safe and mythical mono-cultural past. Nothing further from the truth, he said. In these times what we actually need is to move beyond nationalism into secular, cosmopolitan, multicultural and more economically equal policies.

The next important issue that according to Prof. Gundara needs to be discussed is the 'belongingness' – diverse groups need to feel that they belong to society and its institutions in order to cooperate and collaborate. This feeling needs to be strengthen in all the education groups (from the preschools to adult learning), and also across communities.

He also stressed the importance of secular schooling and protecting the rights of all citizens. But as he explained, by the term secular he does not mean the separation of church and state, but rather the right to believe or not to believe in the sacred. The role of secular school is not be in conflict with the religious, but rather its role is to provide protection to those with no beliefs as well as those of different beliefs. Furthermore, he reminded that the adults should also be active in a school life and they should also be educated themselves.

One of the greatest challenges for intercultural education in opinion of Prof. Gundara is the difficulty of living together for groups who are viewed as being very different, like nomadic groups: Roma and Traveller communities in Europe. Very often the settled communities think that nomadic groups have not the same rights, which creates the huge tensions.

The other very important responsibility of education is teaching people how to be well informed and critical citizens, and allow them to remain apolitical. In Prof. Gundara's opinion, young people are not being taught history properly and hence the absence of understanding who "we" are and who the "others" are exist. What young people need in order to understand the complexity of contemporary societies is a critical reading and understanding of the past.

To conclude he mentioned the phenomenon of multiple identities. He gave an example of Das from the Asian Dub Foundation who describes himself as Hindi British Asian, English, Bengali European. And once again he reminded how important it is to young people to belong to the communities, no matter how complex they are.

The last panel, chaired by Prof. **Martha Montero-Sieburth** from the University of Amsterdam, was discussing the role of Civil Society and Education, Grassroots Initiatives. In her introduction Prof. Montero-Sieburth raised the issue of citizenship: if there is talk about active citizenship, does the passive one exist? Who is the real citizenship? According to Prof. Montero-Sieburth we should look for the answer in civil society at the grassroots level. She gave an example of parents: as could be seen some of them do not even enter the school, but on the other hand there are those who are very active and come to school even on weekends. She said that there is a need of four different engagements:

- social
- cultural
- academic
- political

She also stressed the importance of the private sector and their role in encouraging meaningful jobs that can lead to future growth.

The first speaker of the panel was Prof. **Ides Nicaise** from the Catholic University of Leuven, presenting the project of Lucerna schools that start its existence in 2003. These schools were created by successful Belgian-Turkish university graduates with an aim of closing the performance gap between immigrant and native students in the Flemish education.

The challenges in front of them were diverse:

- the significant gap in performance between Turkish and Flemish children
- the knowledge of Dutch language among Turkish pupils was poor
- and they were under represented in higher educational

Other challenge was also generated by the specificity of Flemish education system, where:

- extreme competition exist (but some parents do not have access to the same information)
- early tracking exist – the future of a child is determined at the age of 12, which sentence immigrant children with poor Dutch knowledge for vocational schools

- there is strong assimilationist climate (Dutch first), which is not effective for all groups

He also spoke about the vicious circle that could be spotted in Flemish region concerning social capital. Even though all the schools are subsidised by the state (the amount of financial support depends on the number of pupils and also there is priority funding for disadvantage pupils), not all the schools are equal. The inequality could be seen in terms of:

- private infrastructure (in the wealthy areas there is wealthy infrastructure)
- resources (parents do not have the same social nor cultural resources)
- teachers (equal teacher-hours does not mean the same quality of teaching)

Lucerna's response for these challenges is to build the school based on the ethnic capital of the Turkish-Belgium community. This creates commitment, which generates motivation, which reinforces the performance. What are the characteristics of Lucerna's school?

Their leaders comes from the successful second generation of immigrants

- They receive financial support from Turkish entrepreneurs
- There is high commitment of the teachers – they are more demanding towards their teachers, who have to work hard and do extra curriculum activities, like: home visits, individual tutoring.
- The parents are also committed to the partnership – they do voluntary work and they are sponsors
- The peers are mentors for youngsters

The school has also an extended strategy that goes beyond just cognitive development. They have summer language courses, they invest in sports, arts. They even have an Ipad classes. They make link between the curriculum and extra activities, in other words, they connect formal and informal learning together.

Their aim is also to create a culture-sensitive schools, which give to their students free choice of religion or moral education and they teach them values and attitudes of immigrant communities, like: generosity, nurturing excellence and gender sensitivity. They create the win-win situation for parents and schools in order to help each other give the best for the students.

Since the project is quite young it is too early to measure all the effects of it, said Prof. Nicaise, but some achievements can be already noticed:

- the majority of their students remains in general, and not vocational, education
- performance of their students is better than Turkish students elsewhere, but the gap between the natives still exist
- parents involvement is significantly raised
- transition into and success rate in higher education are gradually improving

Prof. Nicaise concluded that civil society should work as a bridge between:

- family and education
- communities
- government and citizenship

The next speaker was Dr. **Jana Huttova** from the Open Society Institute presenting the project IDEE (Integration and Diversity in Education in Europe), which aims to bring local voices to policy making. The project was realised in partnership with local non-governmental organizations from 5 countries (Austria, Germany, United Kingdom, Romania and Slovakia) with rich experiences in working with disenfranchised groups. Participants (from 10 to 26 years old) of the project came from diverse and often marginalised groups, like ethnic minorities (Roma, migrant communities with diverse religion background). The project was bringing their input from local to European level. The communities were listened to and they had voice that later was heard by the high level authorities.

The main goals of the project were:

- To create community level frameworks to combat inequality and foster equal educational opportunity
- To develop innovative methods to enhance youth participation in civil society;
- To promote and develop “the school” as a key connecting point for activity around learning and social cohesion
- To look at disenfranchised youth as resources in their communities for both personal and professional development

It was also important to break the traditional power structure that occurs during dialogue with the authorities, where there is unequal division of power. Their aim is to empower the marginalised communities.

The key messages that they obtain from the citizen panel (CP) were:

- The youth have strong and vibrant desire to get out of the marginalised position through participation.
- All students and young people involved in the CPs want to get rid of their victim status.
- They are eager to participate in building an inclusive education.

And the key policy recommendations were:

- Promotion of the inclusive education (nobody wants to be separated in different schools)
- Combat school segregation (teachers with the knowledge of the mothertongue of the pupils, scholarships, mentoring, tutoring)
- Language support (not only for children, but the parents as well)
- Intercultural compensates of the teachers (anti-bias training)

The main conclusion of the project was the quotation: *Don't talk about us, talk with us, let us talk.*

More about mentoring and empowerment we could hear from Mr. **Mitsuo Kanemaki** from verikom e.V. He showed how student-mentors can be role models for young students and for the society at large illustrated by the example of project Junge Vorbilder. This project begun in Germany in 2004 and since then trained more than 150 mentors with different cultural background. The situation of immigrant children in Germany is difficult as anywhere else in Europe:

- Immigrant students have to accomplish higher social and cultural adaptation levels
- Their parents show less participation in everyday school life
- They receive less qualitative homework support from family

- Teachers give up and underestimate students, when they show weak performance
- They are confronted with prejudices

The performance gap according to Mr. Kanemaki is also created by students' demotivation, the fact that they are less self-confident and their feeling of being misunderstood.

The program Junge Vorbilder was built to focus on social-emotional companionship, without any pressure on performance, on subject-specific tutoring and also on future prospects of career or study that were realistic to achieve. They wanted to achieve the independence of mentees (who has to take responsibility of the future success) and empowerment of mentees and mentors as well. For the program success the choice of the right mentors was crucial. All of them:

- have a immigration background
- successfully graduated from the German higher secondary education system
- are "experienced experts"
- are close in age to the mentees
- are bridge-builders between parents, teachers and mentees

It was important that the mentors became an active part of society, to give them the possibility to develop and get promotions. They were paid for their job. At the end the program gave some significant results. Mentees get better grades at school, the learning climate in class improved and their parents became more involved in every day school life. But the mentors also obtain some gain: they got qualified, skilled and prepared for later career.

Since the beginning of the program more than 150 mentors with different cultural background were trained and now there are around 40 active mentors including group mentoring at schools

Due to personal recommendation within families, neighborhoods, schools etc. and recognition by society they did not need any PR and even the interest in cooperation from schools, foundations, administrative bodies increased.

With the final world Mr. Kanemaki confess that they still have some problems, mainly financial, but as they advice to their mentees, they never give up.

The last speaker of the panel, Mr. **Murat Alici**, presented NPOINT foundation, which is an educational platform created by a local initiative for young Turkish-Dutch students. Their objectives are:

- achievement of excellence in education and language development,
- creation and exchange of innovative ideas
- encouraging volunteers

Their target group were students between 10 and 18 years old. Their program covers almost all the Netherlands. As Mr Alici reminded they are not a school, but they want a good quality education for their students. During the weekend classes they do Dutch and mathematics in max. 7 pupils groups. They repeat the curriculum from the school and recived help in doing their homework.

In 2006, after some time of functioning, they realized that, even if working on good performance at school is very important, it is also important to develop talents of the children. That is how other project, Development of the talents, came to life. There the pupil have participated in different

interest clubs, like for instance: Robotica Club, where children built their own robots, which later on were fighting in competitions. Later on, in 2007, they set other program of educational events, like talent and science festivals (they have even obtain A Guinness World Record).

In his closing remarks Prof. **Dirk Jacobs** referred to the Europe 2020 strategy and the PISA study that were discussed on the first day of the conference. He said that the PISA study shows also positive results but we have to face the fact that not everything is going well. He pointed out the fact that a child of a highly educated mother is seven times more likely to have higher education than a child of a non-educated mother, but also reminded that that not everybody has to go to university. Certain minimum standards are, however, needed and every school should be a good school. He said that there is an unnecessary negative stigma on vocational training. Everybody should follow their heart in choosing their education. Prof. Jacobs also spoke about socio-economic segregation in schools. The problem is that the best teachers are not going where their skills are most needed, i.e. the lower performing schools. And while we should not only talk about challenges but also about success stories, he mentioned two potential dangers associated with segregated schools. The first is “cream skimming” with which he referred to elite schools for immigrant children. The second is not to use such schools as an excuse not make necessary structural changes in the education system.

At the end, the chair, Prof. Martha Montero-Sieburth, pointed out the best practice, that are needed:

1. language support resources
2. parental engagement (following the meetings with teachers etc.)
3. extra curriculum activities
4. peer learning and mentorship
5. community relationship (school in community and community in school)
6. self-empowerment of students (advocacy – teachers should help the students to see themselves as they are)
7. opportunities to experiment with new ideas
8. use of homework and follow up
9. the start of school at early age
10. non segregated schools
11. discussions (especially interfaith discussions)
12. improve study skills (students need to feel good about what they are learning)
13. after school programs
14. sport activities