

# Newsletter

## Education and training in a period of economic crisis

“In times of economic hardship, financial sustainability can be obtained by promoting long term growth. Education and Research are the two pillars to build on.”

*Professor E. Keravnou,  
Cyprus University of  
Technology*

On Monday 31 May and on Tuesday 1 June 2010, education councils from all over Europe gathered in Limassol (Cyprus) to discuss the impact of the crisis on education and training, and the role education and training can play in recovery strategies. Participants at the conference, kindly hosted by the Cyprus Education Council, were welcomed by EUNEC president Simone Barthel, and by Ms Olympia Stylianou, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Education and Culture of Cyprus. On behalf of the Minister, Mr Andrea Demetrioriou, she congratulated EUNEC with the selection of this topic.

Professor Elpida Keravnou, President of the Governing Board of the Cyprus University of Technology, presented the case of Cyprus.

Professor Henriette Maassen van den Brink, Professor of Education and Labour Economics, highlighted the economic and social benefits of investment in education and training.

Anders Hingel, coordinator of the European Commission report ‘Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training’, insisted on the need for a more evidence based policy with efficient use of benchmarks and indicators.

Mireille de Koning, professional assistant at Education International, gave an overview of the results of a EI survey on the impact of the global economic crisis on education.

Manuel Miguéns, Secretary General of the Conselho Nacional de Educação from Portugal, presented the impact of the crisis on education in his country.

These experts offered interesting input for workshops and debates amongst representatives of education councils in Europe, leading to EUNEC statements on the subject.

## EUNEC statements on education and training in a period of economic crisis

The crisis certainly has negative effects on education, but offers at the same time opportunities to reflect on priorities and funding of education systems. EUNEC thinks that education has to be considered as an investment, rather than as a cost.

Education councils are well placed to argue and to disseminate evidence of the returns of investments in education in the economic and social field.

EUNEC welcomes benchmarks as a means of monitoring progress and identify-

ing challenges. However, benchmarks cannot be considered as a value in se, and cannot replace critical analysis. They should reflect the complex reality of education.

Read the full text of the statements on [www.eunec.eu](http://www.eunec.eu).



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- Please send your comments and questions to [eunec@vlor.be](mailto:eunec@vlor.be)



## The Belgian Presidency of the EU: EUNEC takes part

From the 1st of July until the 31 of December 2010 it is Belgium's turn to take up the Presidency of the Council of the EU. This is a real challenge.

In the programme of the Belgian Presidency we read that, in the field of education and training, the Council will adopt conclusions on education in the field of sustainable development, within the framework of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the need for a green, sustainable and skills-based economy.

The Presidency will continue the work embarked upon by previous Presidencies concerning the strengthening of European cooperation in the domain of school education, with

particular attention to the problems associated with the failure to complete schooling, and to core skills, as well as to the role of education and training in social inclusion.

The Council will adopt guidelines with a view to setting up a new work programme on the education and training of professionals until 2020. At the Informal Meeting of Ministers in Bruges, the candidate countries and countries of the EEA will be invited to join this work programme. Draft conclusions will be submitted to the Council.

The Belgian Presidency will also work towards modernising higher education in Europe and on the interaction between higher education, research and innovation.

**Members of the Executive Committee of EUNEC are invited to participate actively at the conference on social inclusion 'Breaking the cycle of disadvantage', that will be organised in Ghent on 28 and 29 September 2010.**

Read all about the Belgian Presidency of the EU on [www.eutrio.be](http://www.eutrio.be).

"The EU 2020 Strategy for employment and growth aspires to establish an intelligent, sustainable and inclusive economy. This assumes a greater mobilisation in support of innovation and education."

*Programme of the Belgian Presidency of the EU Council*



## Focus on the Cyprus Education Council



*Mr Kyriacos Pillas, representative of the Cyprus Council at the Executive Committee*

In an effort to respond to the numerous socio-economic, political and cultural changes that have affected the Cyprus education system, the Government of the Republic of Cyprus has initiated an ambitious Educational Reform Programme, inviting dialogue among all stakeholders. The ambition is to turn into reality the vision of modernizing the educational system. The main objective is to create a democratic and student-focused educational system, which includes all students irrespective of social, racial or ethnic background, gender, physical or mental ability and offers high quality education to each student.

The Cyprus Education Council was set up as part of this process for the reform of the education system. The Council is chaired by the Minister of Education and Culture, and includes the Ministry's Permanent Secretary, the President of the Education Committee of the Parliament and representatives of the major political parties. Its role is advisory and its major priority is the enhancement of the implementation of the education reform at all levels and in every aspect of the education system.

The Education Council coordinates and monitors the dialogue among all the major stakeholders involved in education.

Furthermore, it is responsible for setting the priorities for the dialogue, establishing technical committees or appointing experts for the preparation of reports and studies on various issues within the framework of the educational reform and the work of two sub-councils that have also been established: the Primary and Secondary Education Council and the Higher Education Council.

The Council submits recommendations to the Council of Ministers, for the formulation of educational policy, in the light of the outcomes of the work done by the technical committees and the two sub-councils.

## The study on education councils in the EU: the Spanish case study

The study on education councils, commissioned by EUNEC and executed by the Public Management Institute (Catholic University of Louvain) under the supervision of Professor Marleen Brans, is reaching its final stage.

The research team has established factsheets describing education councils throughout Europe. Apart from those fact sheets, the researchers are completing six in-depth

case studies: the Flemish, Greek, Portuguese, Dutch, Estonian and Spanish Education Councils.

The research team is now finalising the description of the CEE, the Consejo Escolar del Estado, the Spanish National Education Council. In order to collect valid data for the description, professor Marleen Brans travelled to Madrid to do in-depth interviews with representatives of the Council.

Mr Antonio Frias del Val, representative of the CEE at the EUNEC executive committee, kindly took up the organization of the interviews.

**The final report will be published within few months and will be presented at the EUNEC anniversary conference on 1, 2 and 3 December in Brussels.**

For more information about this event, please contact [eunec@vlor.be](mailto:eunec@vlor.be).



## EUNEC participates at international events

A lot of events and conferences have been organized this year on the theme of a greater Cooperation between education and training, economy and employment. The 'new skills for new jobs' could have a real influence on our educational systems in Europe.

On 17-18 March, EUNEC participated at the ESCO stakeholders conference (**European Skills, Competencies and Occupations Taxonomy**). This conference was co-organized by DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and DG Education and Culture. Relevance of ESCO for employment policies and for education and training was discussed, insisting on the involvement of stakeholders.

EUNEC participated at the **Thematic Forum School-Business Cooperation**, in Brussels on 24-25 March 2010. This conference underlined the many advantages that collaboration can offer to schools and business.

Jan-Eric Sundgren, Senior Vice-President of AB Volvo presented the perspective of ERT, the European Round Table of Industrialists. Frank Vandembroucke, former Flemish Minister of Work, Education and Training, presented the school education perspective, insisting on the overall objective of equal opportunities.

Simone Barthel, President of EUNEC, represented the network at the **Annual conference of the Lifelong Learning Programme** in Barcelona, on 19 May 2010. This conference was a first consultation of stakeholders about the next European programme beyond 2013.

On 14 June 2010, the European Commission invited organisations and institutions interested in school policy to discuss future actions in the field, in particular on the issue of early school leaving (**Meeting school education. Stakeholder platform**).

EUNEC assisted the seminar **'Breaking the cycle of disadvantage. Strategies for equality and inclusion in and through education and training'**, organised by the European Commission, with a presentation by Professor Ides Nicaise. This seminar is a preparation for the conference on social inclusion that will be organized under the Belgian Presidency in Ghent on 28-29 September 2010.

Finally, EUNEC participated at the conference on **'Youth on the move' and VET**, in Brussels, on 22 June 2010. The conference was organized in cooperation with several European regions, and informed about European initiatives in the field of skill development and mobility. Two of the Flagship Initiatives of the Europe 2020 Strategy were discussed: 'Youth on the move' and 'New skills for new jobs'.

**Reports and useful links can be found on [www.eunec.eu](http://www.eunec.eu).**

"The way we invest today, in education and in connection with the labour market, will be decisive for the growth of enterprises and employment after the crisis."

*Frank Vandembroucke, former Flemish Minister of Work, Education and Training*

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## Overview of main policy lines in education and training

At the Executive Committee meeting of 1 June in Limassol, Cyprus, the EUNEC secretariat presented a new overview of recent developments in policy lines in education and training in Europe.

This document contains summaries and links to European policy lines. News from the Spanish Presidency of the EU, information about the European Commission Work Programme 2010 'Time to Act'. Lots of information about the evaluation of the Lisbon Strategy and the new Europe 2020 Strategy: results of the public consultation, in which EUNEC participated; information about the Council Conclusions on the strategy for jobs and

growth, insisting on the headline targets.

Furthermore, the document provides information on new policy lines in specific fields within education and training: new skills for new jobs, the social dimension of education and training, the Bologna Process, European Qualifications Framework. The document also gives an overview of recent international studies and reports on a variety of subjects: skills needs, creativity, key competences, ICT indicators, validation of non-formal and informal learning.

Relevant developments in other policy domains (culture, youth) are followed up.

News about interesting OECD studies and reports, a.o. 'The high cost of low educational manance', relevant in the context of the economic downturn; presentation of the first data from TALIS, the Teaching and Learning International Survey; a report presenting new findings on the New Millennium Learners; a publication with comparative data on immigrant students.

Finally, the document refers to recent UNESCO work, with an emphasis on the ICCS study (International Civic and Citizenship Education Study).

Read the full document with interesting links on [www.eunec.eu](http://www.eunec.eu).

### The mission of EUNEC

is to enhance the participation of stakeholders within national and European policy making. EUNEC has the overall objective to exchange information and share experiences of good practice of interactivity between policy makers and stakeholders on the main educational policy matters, relevant for national and European policy making.

EUNEC wants to be **a learning network for education councils.**

For any further information please contact the EUNEC secretariat (Carine De Smet, [eunec@vlor.be](mailto:eunec@vlor.be)).



*EUNEC members admiring mosaics in Kourion at the invitation of the Cyprus Education Council*