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CONTEXT

Education and training are seen as key actors in the development of a knowledge society. Therefore, both the EU and the member states put forward daring targets to energize the sectors of education and training making them more performing.

A SHORT HISTORY OF EUNEC

In order to give these innovation policies a broad societal support, governments mobilize the educational and social-economic stakeholders such as representatives of school boards, teacher trade unions, parent and student organizations and social partners to participate actively in the conception and the implementation of policies and activities in education and training.

Therefore most of the member states have set up national or regional formal institutions of consideration and consultation, bringing together all these stakeholders or part of them, in some cases together with experts, to formulate their recommendations.

Education councils have diverse statutes, but they all function as an advisory body towards governments on future education policies.

In 1999, some councils decided to work together on European educational subjects, and, to encourage a closer and more intense cooperation, the education councils created in 2000 EUNEC, a **European network of national and regional education councils**, with the support and the help of the European Commission.

From 2008 until 2013, EUNEC was recognized and granted as European organisation acting at European level in the field of education and training under the Jean Monnet programme (DG EAC N° 28/07). Within this programme, EUNEC obtained two consecutive three year Framework Partnership agreements.

In 2014, EUNEC was granted under the new Erasmus+ programme, Key Action 3, for civil society cooperation in the field of education and training. This grant allowed the network to continue its efforts to enhance cooperation on education and training in Europe and to aim for more sustainable results.

In 2015 and 2016, EUNEC was no longer granted under Erasmus+, because of changes in the eligibility criteria. EUNEC tried to continue its works and pursue its objectives, supported by members' contributions.

MISSION

EUNEC is convinced that all those involved in education (the European Commission, the governments of the Member States, the education councils, the stakeholders and all European citizens) can benefit from this European network where major evolutions and reforms in educational systems can be discussed thoroughly and prepared for a successful implementation.

EUNEC aims to discuss the findings and recommendations of European policy documents in the field of education and training, to determine points of view and to formulate statements on these issues. EUNEC wants to disseminate these statements pro-

actively towards the European Commission, relevant DGs and other actors at European level, and to promote action by EUNEC members and participants at national level. EUNEC has the objective that the councils should put the main international policy lines high on the national agenda.

EUNEC wants to work in two directions:

EUNEC wants to disseminate and discuss – at the national and at the European level - documents, texts, studies... that are launched by the European Commission within the framework of the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Bologna process, the Copenhagen process, Education and Training 2020.

With sound and coherent statements, the members of EUNEC want to influence the discussions and the decisions on the major European issues in education and training both on the European and on the national level.

TARGET GROUPS

Through the members, education councils, EUNEC reaches stakeholders, experts and policy makers in the field of education and training in Europe.

EUNEC members are education councils. An education council must meet the following criteria (Statutes, Chapter II, Art. 6.1):

- The council operates as a permanent body;
- The council acts independently from any single interest through the presence of a range of members from different social groups, political affiliations and/or academic perspectives;

- The council has as principal goal to provide advice on educational and training policy;
- The advisory role is embedded in the policy making process at the level where the main competences on education and/or training policy are attributed.

If a council is competent for two or more education levels in the system or is operating at a national level, it will be given priority to become a member when candidates of the same EU member state also apply for membership.

Corresponding members can be accepted at the decision of the general assembly at the proposal of the executive committee (Statutes, Chapter II, Art. 6.2).

Corresponding members are permanent institutions with an advisory role in the policy making process on education and training.

The composition of the education councils guarantees the involvement of all the principal stakeholders in education in a region/country. This way, EUNEC wants to reach all stakeholders (policy makers, social partners, parents, students, teachers, providers...) in education throughout the European Union and beyond.

EUNEC MEMBERS IN 2016

Members are national councils, or regional councils, such as in Belgium where education and initial training are exclusively regional matters.

Members of the Executive Committee and of the General Assembly

Those members are entitled to take part in all the activities of the network. They have a full responsibility in the network as described in part III and IV of the Statutes (competences of the general assembly and the executive committee).

- FLEMISH COMMUNITY (BELGIUM): Vlaamse Onderwijsraad (VLOR)
- FRENCH COMMUNITY (BELGIUM): Conseil de l'Education et de la Formation (CEF)
- THE NETHERLANDS: Onderwijsraad
- PORTUGAL: Conselho Nacional de Educação (CNE)
- LITHUANIA: Lietuvos švietimo taryba (LST), the Lithuanian Education Council
- CYPRUS : Symvoulío Paideias, the Cyprus Education Council

Members of the General Assembly

Those members are entitled to take part in the general assembly, in the seminars and conferences and other initiatives they are invited to by the executive committee. They receive information produced by EUNEC on European, international and national policy lines.

- ESTONIA: Estonian Education Forum (EEF)
- IRELAND: General Teaching Council
- HUNGARY : National Council for Public Education

- GREECE: Ethninko Symvoulío Pedas (ESYP) - National Council of Education
- CZECH REPUBLIC: Union of School Associations
- QUEBEC: Conseil Supérieur de l'Éducation
- SPAIN: Consejo Escolar del Estado (CEE)
- ROMANIA: Institute of Educational Sciences (IES)
- MALTA: Curriculum Management Department

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ABOUT THE EDUCATION POLICY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

The objective is

- To enhance the cooperation on these issues between the EUNEC members;
- To disseminate European proposals and tools on national/regional level; EUNEC disseminates European documents and initiatives to the members of its councils and tries to clarify them by summaries, comments or translations.

A REVIEW OF THE MAIN POLICY LINES IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

In 2016, the EUNEC secretariat prepared three **overviews of the main policy lines in education and training**. These documents present an overview of the documents that education councils need to be able to integrate the European common policy lines and frameworks in their recommendations towards national Ministers of Education and governments.

These synthesis documents describe in a very concise and accessible way the new policy documents. They summarize the main lines of the documents and offer links to the full texts. They take into account all documents linked to education and training and transversal domains (youth, culture, welfare, employment..) by all relevant decision making organizations (Parliament, Council, Presidency, Commission). The main policy lines are also paying attention to other international organisations working in the field of education and training, such as OECD and UNESCO.

In 2016, the following themes were given major attention:

The EU institutional context

- Recent developments in the economic governance of the EU have a major impact on education and training policies. In the framework of the European Semester, attention is given to the Annual Growth Survey, the Alert Mechanism Reports, the Country-specific Recommendations, the Integrated guidelines for economic and employment policies, the Eurostat report with an overview of trends in the Europe 2020 headline indicators, the joint report on employment
- European Commission Work Programme 2016: 'No time for business as usual'
- Information about the programmes and the outcomes of the Luxembourg, Dutch and Slovak Presidency of the EU.

Education and Training 2020

- The EU Councils for Education, Youth, Culture and Sport (November 2015, February 2016, May 2016, November 2016) and the related conclusions, recommendations and communications.
- The New Skills Agenda for Europe, and the developments related to the ten actions under this Agenda
- The follow-up of the Paris Declaration on tackling intolerance, discrimination and radicalisation.
- Eurydice publications
- Erasmus+: mid term evaluation

Developments in other policy domains

- Follow-up of developments related to both the Youth Guarantee and the Alliance; the EU Youth Report;
- The Commission Youth Initiative, with focus on the Solidarity Corps
- Employment and Social Developments in Europe

UNESCO publications and policy documents

- The Sustainable Development Goals.

Council of Europe

- Securing democracy through education. The development of a Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture

OECD publications and policy documents

- Education at a glance 2016.
- Governing education in a complex world
- Education Policy Outlook.
- Trends shaping education 2016
- Innovative Learning Environments
- Results of the international summit on the teaching profession.
- Skills summit 2016: Skills strategies for innovation, productivity and inclusion

All these documents have been presented and discussed at meetings of the executive committee and/or general assembly. These discussions are important, as an instrument for in-service training of the presidents, secretary generals and members of

national and regional education councils. They pull the attention to new developments, to possible links between EU and international frameworks and national policies, to new approaches for ongoing and future advisory work. They offer a basis for common work and collaboration on new recommendations.

These documents are also important for determining emerging themes and fixing the themes EUNEC will work on in the following years.

Education councils offer platforms to local, regional and national stakeholders such as education providers, school boards, school heads, teacher trade unions, student organizations, parents' organizations. **Through the channel of the council a lot of stakeholders get an insight in the European education policy.** The states of affairs play an important role in raising the awareness and the understanding of advisers of Ministers and local, regional and national education stakeholders of the common European reference frameworks. By taking them into account in preparing national recommendations, the education councils contribute highly to the national implementation strategies of these frameworks.

These documents are also available for a broader audience: they are published on the website (www.eunec.eu) and in the newsletter reaching individual citizens as well as organizations.

EUNEC PARTICIPATES IN THE DEBATE ON THE EUROPEAN LEVEL

EUNEC insists on the importance of (more) stakeholder involvement in European policies. For that reason, EUNEC uses every occasion to express its viewpoints on relevant matters in education and training on the European level.

Cooperation in European studies and working groups

From 2015, a new generation of working groups has been launched. EUNEC is no longer represented in a working group (the eligibility criterion for application is to have members in at least 16 member countries). Nevertheless, the network will further follow-up the results of the working groups, make it available for the members and for discussion at general assembly meetings.

EUNEC was represented at the **expert meeting on key competences**, organised by the European Commission, 9 November 2016.



Key competence review: information by the Commission

First step in the review process: take a look at the definitions, the text of the existing framework, identify what works and what does not, identify gaps.

Definition 2006: 'Each competence is a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes. All individuals need these key competences for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment. There are basic skills (language, literacy, numeracy and science: foundation for all learning), and transversal skills.

What do we know about the implementation of the recommendation 2006? Implementation has been uneven on several levels:

- Across countries;
- Across sectors (in schools and youth, less in VET and adult education)
- Across competences (easier implementation for competences related to a subject);

Aims of the review:

- Continue the paradigm shift from static conception of curricular content to dynamic competences acquisition;
- Clarify and update concepts;
- Strengthen commonly shared understanding of key competences;
- Include skills and attitudes that are not highlighted enough in the 2006 framework.

Timeline:

- Autumn/Winter 2016: prepare process of consultation (ETY Forum, this expert seminar, ET 2020 meetings, drafting consultation paper and questions);

- Spring/Summer 2017: public consultation;
- March 2017: networks conference KeyCoNet, Sirius, ...
- Other expert meetings spring/summer 2017;
- Key competences conference in June 2017.
- Proposal for revised key competences framework Autumn/Winter 2017.

Post-it session: after short discussion face-to-face with other participants, all participants are asked to write down 'Today, it is important to ...'.

Some conclusions:

- Strong emphasis on the 'human' element, personal development;
- Need for update and revision, no big changes need to be proposed;
- Importance of transversal skills;
- Opportunity to share approaches about what has happened in order to move forward.

Discussion in small groups (8 persons): participants are asked to talk about direct and indirect experiences in implementation, to identify challenges and suggest tools and processes. There is agreement on the fact that the key competences framework is a good instrument: everything is in it, but implementation is the question (need for reform of curricula, of teacher training, ...). The framework is ten years old, but far from being implemented in all member countries.

In the afternoon: working session one focuses on basic competences, working session two focuses on transversal competences.

Contributions of EUNEC representatives at EU conferences and the stakeholders' forum

European events organized by the institutions

EUNEC participated at the **launch of the new skills agenda for Europe**, on 20 June 2016, Brussels, Charlemagne Building.

It is the first time a European Commissioner is responsible for skills. In her key note speech, Commissioner Thyssen takes up the engagement to take this responsibility. An interactive panel, opened by Tibo Navracsics, commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, discussed the need for change in education: Mr Bartolo, minister for Education and Employment in Malta; Mr Michel Servoz, DG for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission; Ms Jazlowiecka, Vice-Chair of Employment and Social Affairs Committee, European Parliament; Ms Martine Recherts, DG EAC, European Commission; Mr Andreas Schleicher, Director Education and Skills OECD, Ms Lowri Evan, DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SME's, European Commission.

EUNEC participated at the **stakeholders' forum of the European Commission**.



As part of its consultation efforts in the field of education and training, the European Commission has hosted an annual event since 2008. The Forums gather a broad group of European-level stakeholders and social partners to discuss transversal issues in education and training.

Each event produces a general report with a set of key messages.

This edition of the Forum, organized by the European Commission, took place in Brussels, on 20-21 October 2016, hosted by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture.

The Education, Training and Youth Forum brings together key stakeholders for discussions on implementing the new priorities for European cooperation under Education and Training 2020 and the EU Youth Strategy, including ideas on how education, training and youth work can contribute to the follow-up to the Paris Declaration.

This year's Forum focused on how to best deliver on the New Skills Agenda for Europe adopted by the Commission on 10 June 2016. New EUNEC president Manuel Miguéns participated at the Forum.

The Forum opened with a panel with representatives from the Commission, the European Parliament and the Council, who outlined the main aims and actions of the New Skills Agenda. The second panel was an interactive discussion among stakeholders on the Ten Actions covered by the New Skills Agenda and included a system of online voting to allow participants to map their expectations and pose questions on specific initiatives. The Forum program included interactive and innovative workshops where participants had the opportunity to contribute to upcoming initiatives and discuss implementation of announced actions. The closing panel looked ahead on how to take forward the conclusions of the Forum for delivery of the New Skills Agenda.

A representative of EUNEC participated at the **Erasmus+ information meeting for high level public authorities on**

European policy experimentations, Brussels, 27 January 2016. The objectives of the call were explained by Ms Fiorella Perotto, DG Education and Culture of the European Commission. For each set of priority themes, a panel discussion was held with participation of projects' representatives.

Other international or European events

When EUNEC is invited to an international event or to an event organised by one of the members (conference, debate, workshop, seminar, survey), the secretariat forwards the invitation to the members by e-mail.

In accordance to the members' expertise and interest, a EUNEC member or the secretariat represent the network at these events. Positions taken during these conferences are based on the common understanding laid down in the statements. At conferences and workshops, EUNEC representatives are the voice of the network.



The EUNEC representative spreads the information throughout the network. The executive committee insists on the multiplying effect of participation in conferences on behalf of EUNEC.

Every representative is expected to make a report and send it to the secretariat. The secretariat makes a compilation of these reports in a document 'attended events' that is presented and commented on executive committee meetings and published on the website www.eunec.eu.

Events attended in 2016:

- Creative mind-sets. Entrepreneurial futures, Brussels, 1 March 2016. Seminar on entrepreneurship education. The results of the Eurydice study on entrepreneurship education at school in Europe were presented.
- Cross-border Work-Based Learning, Brussels, 22 April 2016. This seminar was co-organized by the Erasmus+ national agencies from Flanders and the Netherlands and by the Vlor, Flemish Education Council. The seminar is part of the activities of NETWBL, 'Network Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeships', a network of 29 Erasmus+ national agencies, supporting the European Alliance for Apprenticeships. Sigve Bjorstad, European Commission, DG EMPL gave an overview of the current situation in the EU.
- Language, a key element to support newly arrived pupils, organized by Vleva (Flemish European Liaison Agency, 3 May 2016 with key note by Kristina Cunningham, European Commission, DG Education and Culture.
- Peer review on global education, Brussels, 18-20 May 2016, organized by GENE. GENE – Global Education Network Europe – is the network of Ministries and Agencies with national responsibility for Global Education in European countries.
- Why a skills guarantee? Paul Holdsworth, team leader skills for adults, DG EMPL, European Commission, on 8 November 2016.
- Education Priorities of the Slovak EU Presidency and state of affairs of the Skills Guarantee, by Ivan Hromada, Head of unit Education, Youth, Sport, Research at the Permanent Representation of the Slovak Republic to the EU, 8 November 2016.

- Overview of the results of the Dutch Presidency, by Jelle Reynaert, attaché Education at the Flemish Representation of the Permanent Representation of Belgium to the EU, 8 November 2016.
- EPALE: the added value for you, by Karine Nicolay, EPALE coordinator, 8 November 2016.
- Inclusive and equitable education for all – implementing a universal agenda, Educaid.be annual conference 2016, Brussels, 17 November 2016. Presentation of the Global Education Monitoring Report 2016: ‘Education for people and planet: creating sustainable futures for all’, by Katarzyna Kubacka.

THEME IN THE PICTURE IN 2016

GOVERNANCE IN EDUCATION

The thematic seminar of EUNEC dealt with the theme of 'Governance in education'. The event was hosted by the Dutch Education.

On 30-31 May, EUNEC representatives from 11 countries gathered in Amsterdam to reflect on 'Governance in Education'. There is an evolution going on from a government model towards a governance model. This is a fundamental change in the way of thinking about shaping political and decision-making processes in society. The role of the government is no longer to steer directly policy processes, but rather to coordinate and facilitate policy processes. The governance model refers to the growing mixing and interdependence of public and private actors, to decentralized and horizontal relationships between actors at different administrative levels, depending on each other for the making and implementation of policy.

The first day of the seminar, Tracey Burns, leader of the OECD project 'Governing Complex Education Systems' ,explained about the paradigm shift from government to governance in education. Participants visited the Hyperion Lyceum, and had the opportunity to discuss, in small groups, governance issues with different stakeholders: pupils, staff, school board, municipality, parents, ...

The second day of the seminar, participants discussed based on the input of an expert panel: Alvaro Almeida dos Santos (President of the General Assembly of the National Public Headmaster Association and member of the Portuguese Education Council) talked about 'School autonomy in Portugal and the

pressure for compliance with centralised decisions'; Serban Iosifescu (President of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-university Education) reflected on 'School governance: fine tuning improvement and accountability by using data and indicators'; Edith Hooge (Professor Boards and Governance in Education and Vice Dean at TIAS School for Business and Society, Tilburg University) explained about 'Trends in accountability processes and mechanisms and the role of the government in a multilevel governance system in Education.

EUNEC members adopted final statements , and a full report of the event was published.

MANAGEMENT OF THE NETWORK

Organization of the network

All the members of the organization are allowed to be represented in the **General Assembly**. The responsibilities of the General Assembly include the right to:

- amend the statutes;
- elect the President of the network;
- nominate and discharge the members of the Executive Committee
- determine the status of members and acceptance and exclusion of a member
- approve the budget and the annual account
- discuss and decide on matters concerning the operation, activities and working programme of the network;
- discuss and decide matters concerning the existence of the network;
- approve or amend the internal rules of procedure
- dissolve the organisation.

In 2016, the General Assembly met on 11 March (virtual meeting) and on 29 May in Amsterdam. The minutes of these meetings are published at www.eunec.eu (management section).

The **Executive Committee** is the board of the network. The executive committee has to prepare the proposals that are submitted to the General Assembly.

The Executive Committee must:

- implement the decisions of the General Assembly;
- announce the meetings of the General Assembly and the other network activities;
- approve new members
- appoint the auditor
- prepare the accounts after receiving the auditor's report
- decide on the budget
- take decisions in accordance with the statutes of the network, in accordance with the interests of the network or with the policy of the General Assembly;
- report to the General Assembly on its activities and its financial management
- nominate the general secretary
- decide on the annual fees

The executive committee is at the same time also the place of real exchanges and networking about the national and European priorities in the field of education, the place to discuss new European policy documents.

Composition of the Executive Committee in 2016: Adrie van der Rest (president), Mia Douterlungne (general secretary), David Justino, Roos Herpelinck, Jean-Pierre Malarme, Juozas Augutis, Egly Pantelakis.

In 2016, the Executive Committee met on 25 February (virtual meeting), and on 29 May in Amsterdam. The minutes of these meetings are published at www.eunec.eu (management section).

The **EUNEC secretariat** is composed by the President, the General Secretary, two experts and the secretary.

They coordinate the project and assume the daily management of

the network; they keep the contact with the European institutions and the executive agency. They also represent the network in a lot of European events organized in Brussels, where the secretariat is based.

In 2016, the presidency was taken up by the Dutch Education Council; the General Secretariat and the secretariat are assumed by the Vlaamse Onderwijsraad (Belgium, Flemish Community).

At the general assembly meeting of 29 May 2016, Mr Manuel Miguéns from the CNE (Portuguese Education Council) is appointed as EUNEC president for the period June 2016 until June 2018 after unanimous agreement by the general assembly, at the proposal of the executive committee.

Strategy for monitoring impact and networking

Following the recommendations after a field monitoring visit by EACEA, the EUNEC executive committee of December 2013 decided to implement, as from 2014, a strategy for monitoring impact and networking. The EUNEC strategy on enhanced networking and on follow up of impact is being monitored through a set of 10 indicators.

- 1 The feedback of participants at conferences and seminars (measured through feedback questionnaires)
- 2 The satisfaction of the member organizations about EUNEC as a network
- 3 The cooperation between EUNEC members on a specific topic

- 4 The number of main policy lines issued per year; and the number of policy documents related to education summarized in these documents.
- 5 The number of visitors at the website (number, geographical coverage, duration of visit, ...)
- 6 The number of readers of the newsletter (number, geographical coverage, number of clicks, ...)
- 7 The number of contacts with other EU organizations
- 8 The number of times that statements of EUNEC are used as input for working groups/consultations/studies at EU level
- 9 The number of times that statements/work of EUNEC has influenced recommendations of the member organizations
- 10 The number of times a EUNEC theme/document is at the agenda of member councils

Indicators 1-4-5-6-7-8 are being monitored centrally at the level of the secretariat thanks to the input by the members. Indicators 2-3-9-10 are being monitored by the members; the results will be discussed at the occasion of the general assembly meeting in Amsterdam on 29 May 2016.

Indicators 1 and 2 inform on the extent to which EUNEC is **appreciated** by the members. Indicators 5, 6 and 7 inform on the **dissemination** of EUNEC results. The overview of main policy lines in education and training is an **output** of the network that is very much appreciated by the members. Indicators 3, 9 and 10 inform on the **outcomes** of EUNEC. Finally, indicator 10 shows that EUNEC plays an agenda-setting role.

Results towards these ten indicators have been presented and discussed at the general assembly meeting of 29 May 201

EUNEC annual account 2016

EUNEC 1 January 2016 - 31 December 2016

earnings		22 000,00
	Membership fees	22 000,00
expenditure		9081,19
	Hosting and support website	141,50
	Seminar Amsterdam May 2016	6 403,77
	Participation Education and Training Forum	135,70
	Seminar Dublin September 2015	988,54
	Auditor	1 411,68
balance		12918,81

bank account balance 31/12/2015	16196,11
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bank account balance 31/12/2016	29114,92
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ANNEX: STATEMENTS ON GOVERNANCE IN EDUCATION

The [statements](#) are published at the EUNEC website.