Attended events

(March - May 2017)

# Report of the meeting of the EU school policy networks on the review of the key competences framework

Brussels, Thon hotel, 4-5 April 2017

Carine De Smet, EUNEC secretariat, participated at this event.

Speakers from the European Commission, DG EAC (DG EMPL is however very present).

**Michael Teutsch** insists on the EU-added value of the Key Competences Framework. It is a good framework, but there is need for updating. It fits well in the intention of the Commission to focus on a limited number of important initiatives.

The main aim of the Commission is to further promote competence-based teaching and learning across Europe.

Four policy networks are invited.

* KeyCoNet (Key Competences Network)
* Sirius, focus on migration
* School Leadership Network
* EBSN (European Basic Skills Network)

**Tapio Saavala** is the key person in the Commission, active in the development of the Key Competences Framework since the time before 2006. Janet Looney is the key person in the KeyCoNet, working on the implementation of the framework.

**Janet Looney** informs that KeyCoNet (2012-2014) focused on mapping policies and came with recommendations. The main concern is that implementation across countries is uneven. Main recommendation: need for a mindshift for teachers, to focus more on learning than on content. So the main challenge is capacity-building for teachers and school leaders, and thus resources.

**Saavala** goes back to the work related to competences by UNESCO and OECD, and then within the Lisbon Process of the EU. The Memorandum on Lifelong Learning was the first document important in this field. The approach was rather abstract; now discussions are being more pragmatic. It is important to find the right balance and to be pragmatic enough for the target group.

## Workshops

On day 1, parallel workshop focus on each of the 8 actual key competences. Discussions are based on the background paper, and summarized by Suzanne Conze on day 2.

On day 2, parallel workshops focused on the role of school organization and partnerships; the role of school curricula and assessment tools at system level; the challenge to face diversity. Results are summarized by Suzanne Conze in the final plenary session. A fourth workshop was foreseen, on the role of teachers and school leaders. This workshop has been cancelled due to a capacity problem at the level of the European Commission (the Unit is preparing a Communication on School Education).

## Conclusions

Key competences are needed by all for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment. All 8 are equally important and interdependent. They are developed in a lifelong learning perspective in formal, non formal and informal settings.

**Overview for each competence**

In the framework of 2006, for each competence, the definition is presented, together with the essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to this competence.

Discussions focused on two questions:

* Is the definition still relevant? Improvements? (on Tuesday)
* Focus on implementation through tools, curricula assessment etc (on Wedensday)

Communication in the mother tongue

The term ‘mother tongue’ has become more complex. Mother tongue does not coincide necessarily with ‘schooling language’ or ‘official language’. The distinction between ‘mother tongue’ and ‘foreign language’ is not clear.

Suggestion (supported by Sirius) to replace this competence by ‘Literacy’, where literacy is understood in its wider meaning of language acquistion and use, and learning other languages.

Communication in foreign languages

Suggestion not to focus on a specific number of foreign languages to be acquired, but rather to see which language competences correspond best to each learner’s needs.

Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology

Discussion related to recent developments related to STEM. The E of engineering is not in the key competences framework.. STM are.

The definitions are still relevant, focus will have to be on the implementation (PISA results!).

Proposal to integrate the attention for environmental sustainability in science and technology.

Digital competence

It is clear that, in this field, changes have been enormous.

Discussion about terminoloy: ICT, IST, or, better: ‘digital technologies’.

Given the rapid changes, there is need for a definition that is flexible, and that still is relevant with upcoming technologies. Need also to include the safety aspect.

Learning to learn

This is a broad competence, allowing to include ‘new’ transversal skills, such as resilience, ability to deal with uncertainty, interrelations with others, social competences.

All competences are equally important, but it is clear that, for this competence, first it is needed to have acquired basic skills in literacy, maths, ..

Social and civic competences

Tendency to include the social competences in ‘learning to learn’, and to have ‘civic competences’ as a separate competence.

Demand to represent attention for ‘European values’ in the framework (link with the Paris Declaration).

Proposal to integrate the attention for environmental sustainability (as in 3.2.3).

Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship

The term ‘entrepreneurship’ is too narrow (link with business). Better ways of defining are proposed in the EntreComp framework. ‘Sense of initiative’ can be left out of the title, as it is included in ‘entrepreneurship’.

Cultural awareness and expression

In the 2006 framework, the focus is too much on expression, too little on awareness. Link with identity-building.

# The European Solidarity Corps – Stakeholder Forum

Brussels, 12 April 2017

Patricia Chighini, CEF, attended this event

On 12 April the European Commission organised a Stakeholder Forum for the European Solidarity Corps (ESC) in Brussels. It gathered 700 participants from all Europe.

The European Solidarity Corps is the new European Union initiative which creates opportunities for young people to volunteer or work in projects in their own country or abroad that benefit communities and people around Europe. The ESC aims to provide accessible opportunities for young people to express their solidarity through volunteering, a traineeship or a job responding to concrete societal challenges, to build a more inclusive society supporting vulnerable people. It offers an inspiring and empowering experience for young people who want to help, learn and develop. Many young people are keen to express their solidarity, but not all have this opportunity because the demands exceed the current possibilities on offers and enhanced opportunities could be provided.

The ESC was launched in December 2016, it is taking shape. The Commission arranged a public consultation and targeted consultations with stakeholders to gather views and suggestions on features of the upcoming legislative proposal. The feedback from young people, organisations, civil society and national authorities received a largely positive welcoming that the ESC will provide more opportunities for young people. The need for a flexible and inclusive approach was underscored as well as the wish to complement and enhance existing schemes.

The upcoming legislative proposal for the ESC will consolidate the current first phase that builds on existing financing programmes. It will include a dedicated budget and lay the basis for a robust roll-out in order to allow 100.000 young people to take part by the end of 2020. A positive signal for the success of the initiative is that 27000 young people have already registered!

## Plenary session

The opening adresses were held in the plenary session by **Günther ÖTTINGER**, European Commissioner for Budget and Human Resources; **Tibor NAVRACSICS**, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport; **Markkun MARKKULA**, President of the European Committee of the Regions; **Petra KAMMEREVERT**, President of the European Parliament Committee for Culture and Education; **Evarist BARTOLO**, Minister for Education and Employment of Malta; **Luis Alvarado MARTINEZ,** President of the European Youth Forum.

All of them stressed in their respective qualities and responsibilities that solidarity of young people to young people is an added value, because Europe means neighbourhood, friendship, partnership. ESC is meant to develop a peace and solidarity spirit through projects based on life competences. The role of education was underlined: ESC should enable young people to know about themselves and others, to do things together, to be better persons, to live together. Tangible and practical steps are needed to create a higher level of solidarity and for that fresh money will be there. More connection will be created between solidarity corps and local actors and of course collaboration with Parliament will be a key element to the success of this initiative.

## The Workshops

Following themes were discussed in the three working groups:

* **Making the European Solidarity Corps an attractive initiative for young people and organisations**

Key elements for young people : quality placements, training, financial support and insurance, recognition, community building activities

Key elements for participating organisations (access to ESC database, accreditation, training for participants, exchange of experiences between organisations, other support)

Synergies between EU and national/regional schemes and funding opportunities, including via European structural and investment funds)

Conclusions

* Make the added value of ESC to EVS clear : broader activities, traineeships, occupations, high standard accreditation, young people can propose their own activities  … ;
* COMMUNICATE the philosophy of the project: a methodology of thinking is being learnt, far beyond charity ... (evaluation of the needs, long term impact, training aspect);
* Work on the inclusive aspect;
* ESC should aim at recognition and certification;
* Quality : is a key element!
* **A lean and effective set up and governance for the initiative**

**Key themes**

Content and frequency of calls for proposals

Access to the ESC pool of young people

Governance structures at EU and national level

Monitoring of funded projects

Conclusions

* Not only national agencies
* Build on what is existing
* Courage to experiment
* React quickly
* **Supporting young people's employability and reaching the disadvantaged**

**Key themes**

Ensuring solidarity placements for all profiles and backgrounds ;

Building skills that foster employability ;

Certification of placements ;

Ensuring quality for occupational placements.

Conclusions

* The need of a constant dialogue between local partners and disadvantaged groups was stressed, with a special attention for the disadvantaged to have access to the registration system, even with a special treatment ;
* The social right of the future : your skills, your competences are recognised and validated ;
* Creating an inclusive project will send a positive message that contributes to the European project.

**The concluding session**

In their final speech both President of the European Commission, **Jean-Claude JUNCKER** and President of the European Parliament, **Antonio TAJANI** stressed that Europe is more than a currency and a free market: it is a space of freedom and solidarity is one of its fundamental values. It is in our responsibility to offer the youth the opportunity of dreaming. Europe is our identity. After the Erasmus generation we will create the ESC generation. We have to explain Europe other than by war and peace. Europe has to learn to share and the Europe of tomorrow has to be at the service of the world of tomorrow. **Georges DASSIS**, President of the European Economic and Social Committee pointed out the need to stress that measures and programmes with social orientations occur under the European label in order to counteract populist ideas that Europe is just a bureaucratic machine. If there is an added value in terms of experience and training in terms of citizenship and work, if it is properly validated, it will contribute to peace, stability, economical and social progress and there will be a new generation that will feel European!

The last word was given to **Cyril DION**, writer, film director and producer of the film « Demain », a speech full of hope in which he stressed the need to reconcile the call to be happy with the call to be useful. It’s a gift for young people to engage in something that makes sense. Talent and passion are necessary to change the world, to set energy and enthusiasm free!

Links:

**The programme** <https://ec.europa.eu/youth/events/2017/european-solidarity-corps-stakeholder-forum_fr>

**The European Solidarity Corps** on the European Youth portal <https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity_en>