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# **DRAFT REPORT**

on modernisation of education in the EU  
(2017/2224(INI))

Committee on Culture and Education

Rapporteur: Krystyna Łybacka

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## MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

### on modernisation of education in the EU (2017/2224(INI))

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Commission’s communication of 20 September 2011 entitled ‘Supporting growth and jobs – An agenda for the modernisation of Europe’s higher education systems’ (COM (2011)0567),
- having regard to the Commission’s Communication of 10 June 2016 entitled ‘A New Skills Agenda for Europe’ (COM(2016)0381),
- having regard to the 2015 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020) entitled ‘New priorities of the strategic framework for European cooperation on education and training’<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing ‘Erasmus+’: the Union Programme for education training, youth and sport and repealing Decisions No 1719/2006/EC, No 1720/2006/EC and No 1298/2008/EC Text with EEA relevance’<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission’s communication of 10 June 2016 entitled ‘A new skills agenda for Europe – Working together to strengthen human capital, employability and competitiveness’ (SDW(2016)0195),
- having regard to the Commission’s communication of 7 December 2016 entitled ‘Improving and modernising education’ (COM(2016)0941),
- having regard to the Commission’s communication of 30 May 2017 entitled ‘School development and excellent teaching for a great start in life’ (COM(2017)0248),
- having regard to the Commission’s communication of 30 May 2017 entitled ‘A renewed EU agenda for higher education’ (COM(2017)0247),
- having regard to the Commission’s proposal for a Council recommendation of 30 May 2017 on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships (SDW(2017)0322),
- having regard to the Commission’s proposal for a Council recommendation of 17 January 2018 on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching (COM(2018)0023),
- having regard to the Commission’s proposal for a Council recommendation of 17 January 2018 on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (COM(2018)0024),

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 417, 15.12.2015, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p.50.

- having regard to Commission’ communication of 17 January 2018 on the Digital Education Action Plan (COM(2018)0022),
  - having regard to Concluding report of the Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth, held in Gothenburg, Sweden, on 17 November 2017<sup>1</sup>,
  - having regard to the Council conclusions on early childhood education and care: providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow – 3090<sup>th</sup> Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council meeting<sup>2</sup>,
  - having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Culture and Education and the opinions of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality (A8-0000/2018),
- A. whereas, while the main responsibility for education and training lies within Member States, the European Union has a vital supportive role;
  - B. whereas the ability of education systems to meet societal, economic and personal needs depends on their quality, efficiency and equity, as well as on the availability of adequate human, financial and material resources;
  - C. whereas it is essential that education, as a fundamental human right and a public good, is focused not only on the labour market, but also on human, societal and cultural needs;

***Knowledge as a key economic resource and a source of citizens’ well-being***

1. Declares that universal quality education is a crucial component of personal, professional and societal development in a knowledge-based society;
2. Considers that the attainment of the European Union’s economic and societal objectives depend on quality education;
3. Underlines that quality education and training systems form the basis of an open, inclusive, prosperous, democratic and tolerant society, while promoting active citizenship and common values;

***The changing educational reality and related challenges***

4. Believes that an all-encompassing approach to education policy, with strong political support, is central to the educational reform process and requires the cooperation of all relevant stakeholders;
5. Considers that effective governance and adequate funding, modern quality educational resources and teaching, motivated and competent teachers, and lifelong learning are crucial for achieving equity and excellence in education;

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.socialsummit17.se/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Concluding-report-Gothenburg-summit.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/122123.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/122123.pdf)

6. Highlights the potential of new technologies to improve the quality of education by meeting learners' needs, increasing flexibility in learning and teaching, and creating new forms of cooperation;
7. Notes that increased efforts are needed to shift the educational paradigm to be more learner- and understanding-centred, thus strengthening the personalisation of the educational process and increasing retention rates;
8. Highlights that educational systems should promote interdisciplinary approaches and team work aimed at equipping pupils and students with knowledge and skills, as well as with professional, transversal, social and civic competences;
9. Acknowledges with interest the proposal to create a European Education Area based on enhanced cooperation, mutual recognition and increased mobility and growth;

#### *Early childhood education and care (ECEC)*

10. Stresses that quality ECEC creates a foundation for more equitable and effective education systems as well as ensures the individuals' personal development, lifelong learning and well-being;
11. Considers that preschools should promote children's development more holistically with a view to facilitating the transition to compulsory schooling;
12. Underlines the importance of monitoring the quality of ECEC in order to determine whether the best interests of children are being met;

#### *School education*

13. Sees schools as centres of critical and creative thinking;
14. Underlines that mastering basic skills is fundamental for pupils to ensure their further learning and personal development;
15. Notes that modern curricula should be competence driven, should enhance personal skills and should focus on formative assessment and on the pupils' well-being;
16. Takes note of the positive impact of school multilingualism on pupils' linguistic and cognitive development, as well as on the promotion of culture awareness, understanding and diversity;

#### *Higher education*

17. Emphasises, within the context of creating a European Educational Area, the importance of supporting, and building on, the potential of all European universities;
18. Acknowledges the necessity to strengthen the knowledge triangle and to improve links between research and teaching;
19. Believes that higher education systems should be more flexible and open, allowing for the recognition of informal and non-formal learning, smoother transitions between

different levels of education, and various forms of programme delivery;

20. Is of the opinion that an all-encompassing approach to internationalisation, including increased mobility for staff and students, and an international dimension to the curriculum, and to teaching, research, cooperation and additional activities, should be an important part of European higher education institutions;

### ***The teacher as a guarantor of quality teaching***

21. Considers that teachers and their skills, commitment and effectiveness are the basis of education systems;
22. Stresses the need to attract motivated candidates with sound academic backgrounds and a predisposition to teaching to the teaching profession; calls for enhanced selection procedures and for improvements in teacher status, training, working conditions, remuneration, career prospects and support;
23. Underlines the importance of reshaping and investing in teacher education, encouraging teachers' continuing professional development, and providing them with opportunities to participate in international teacher exchanges;

### ***Recommendations***

24. Considers that the European Education Area should focus on achieving common goals and must be formed in alignment with existing policies and educational trends in the EU, while giving also new impetus to their development and respecting the principles of subsidiarity and institutional and educational autonomy;
25. Calls on the Member States to increase funding for improving the quality of education;
26. Calls for enhanced cooperation among Member States in modernising education, as encouraged and facilitated by the Commission, with a view to promoting best practices and mutual learning;
27. Encourages the Member States and the Commission to support efforts by educational institutions to make greater use of state-of-the-art technology in learning, teaching and assessment, while bearing in mind the need to ensure quality assurance;
28. Recommends that Member States and educational institutions promote learner-centred and individualised learning methods;
29. Calls for increased incorporation of inquiring, active, project- and problem-based learning into educational programmes at all levels, with a view to promoting cooperation and team work;

### ***Early childhood education and care***

30. Calls on the Member States to ensure greater access to high-quality ECEC;
31. Calls on the Commission to consider establishing a common European framework for ECEC;

32. Recommends that cooperation between ECEC staff and pre-primary school teachers be increased to improve the quality of education, prepare pre-schoolers for the transition to primary school and focus on children's development;

#### *School education*

33. Recommends the implementation of a 'whole school approach' to increase social inclusion, accessibility and quality in education, as well as to address early school leaving;
34. Stresses the need to strengthen school internal and external collaboration, including interdisciplinary cooperation, team teaching, school clusters and interactions with external stakeholders; notes the importance of international exchange and school partnership through programmes such as Erasmus+ and e-Twinning;
35. Encourages more STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics) initiatives at school level through enhanced cooperation with higher education and scientific research institutions;
36. Calls on the Commission to address school bullying, cyberbullying and violence by developing school prevention programmes and awareness-raising campaigns;
37. Encourages the Member States and the Commission to develop strategies to support initiatives by schools and teachers to create a more inclusive learning environment;

#### *Higher education*

38. Calls for the creation of the European Education Area using the potential of existing frameworks, e.g. the European Research Area, the Innovation Union, the European Higher Education Area, in order that they strengthen and complement each other;
39. Urges the Member States to invest at least 2 % of their respective GDPs in higher education, to be deducted from the national deficit calculation, and to comply with the EU benchmark of investing 3 % of the EU GDP in R&D by 2020;
40. Suggests that Member States and regional authorities, in allocating European structural and investment funds, give priority to educational programmes as well as foster cooperation between the higher education, business and research communities and society as a whole;
41. Advocates facilitating student and staff mobility through: increased support via the Erasmus+ programme; smooth recognition of credits and qualifications obtained abroad; additional economic and personal assistance; and, where appropriate, the incorporation of educational mobility as part of education programmes;

#### *The teacher as a guarantor of quality teaching*

42. Calls on the Commission to increase its efforts to improve teachers' digital skills and to provide them with ongoing support through developing online communities, open educational resources and courses for school professionals;

43. Emphasises the need to recognise the professional status of ECEC employees;
44. Calls for support to teachers delivering multilingual courses which are an important factor in the internationalisation of education;
45. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

## JUSTIFICATION

*'If we teach today's students as we taught yesterday's, we rob them of tomorrow.'*

John Devery

We live in a rapidly changing world.

Technological developments and globalisation bring new challenges, including for our education systems.

In the information society, the task of education systems is not only to transfer knowledge and the skills required to use it, but also to teach people how to create knowledge, which is a source of competitiveness and prosperity for the public and a crucial economic resource.

The value of modern human capital derives from intellectual potential, the ability to adapt to changes in the environment, a pro-innovation attitude and an openness to risk. The rapporteur, in her work on the modernisation of education systems, has been guided by three main axiological assumptions:

1. The traditional place of learning, i. e. the school, is now complemented by the many other sources of information available. Modern technologies have liberated education, created opportunities for multidimensional educational activities, and established an **EDUCATIONAL SPACE**. A major challenge is to ensure that schools are the most interesting place in this space.
2. The role of education systems is to mould a well-rounded **PERSON** who is capable of self-realisation in his or her professional, social, cultural and civic life in a diverse, global environment.
3. Human development requires not only security, for which states are willing to spend money and create defence pacts. A prerequisite for successful development is a **CIVILISATION PACT** based on inclusive, high-quality and adequately funded education systems.

The rapporteur has adopted the following report.

Firstly, the rapporteur stressed **the importance of education as a key aspect of economic potential and a crucial factor for development in the information society**. She then investigated the **changing reality of education and indicated the challenges that this poses for particular stages of education**. Next, the rapporteur addressed the topic of **teachers** as the main guarantor of the successful modernisation of education systems. Finally, the rapporteur made a number of **recommendations** for the effective development and implementation of the educational reform process.

Europe's demographic and social challenges, the requirements of the labour market, new technologies, personal preferences and educational needs are determining the directions of changes in education. It is important that education systems take these factors into account in order not only to offer high-quality knowledge, but also to ensure appropriate competences, including the key competence of the 21st century: the ability to successfully learn throughout one's life.

### **Pre-primary and early childhood education**

The rapporteur stresses the importance of pre-school and early childhood education for a child's overall development, for moulding a pro-education attitude and for developing learning skills. In this context, the rapporteur pays particular attention to facilitating access to high-quality pre-school and early childhood education for all, and to the need to provide support, both in terms of infrastructure and funding for disadvantaged families. The professionalism and competence of people working with children, as well as the regulation of their professional status, are also crucial. The rapporteur also calls for the development of a European framework for pre-school and early childhood education that would guarantee the holistic development of the child, as well as for monitoring the quality of pre-school and early childhood education. The final stage of pre-school and early childhood education should consist of cooperation between the people working with the child and their future teachers, in order to be able to design a personalised educational process that facilitates the child's comprehensive personal development, taking into account his or her abilities and preferences. The individualisation of the teaching process, in conjunction with clearly defined learning outcomes and a motivating learning environment, is, in the rapporteur's view, a key challenge and the objective of a modernised school system.

### **Schools**

A school in which a teacher serves as the sole repository of knowledge that students need to master is a thing of the past. The rapporteur sees modern schools as centres of critical and creative thinking. This requires a paradigm shift in teaching. Learning by rote must be replaced by thinking, understanding and discussion. This requires high-quality curricula and special attention to mastery of basic skills. The globalised world also requires language skills

Modern technologies and the opportunities that they create can make interaction between teacher and student easier, mitigate educational deficits resulting from students' environmental conditions, and make the teaching process effective and interesting.

In addition to their educational function, schools should also have a multi-faceted social function, fostering inclusion, equal educational opportunities, teamwork skills, project delivery and civic engagement. Schools must also be a safe place for students and teachers. For this reason, the rapporteur calls for the development of strategies to combat peer violence, electronic bullying, discrimination and all forms of harassment.

This is not possible without competent management, support for teachers and school hierarchies, and a school-wide approach in which the school as a whole, together with external stakeholders and the local community, collaborates in order to ensure the quality of the school and the efficiency of all its functions.

Ensuring that schools are strongly rooted in their local areas leads to decentralisation and greater autonomy. This is beneficial, provided that schools have the ability to effectively plan and manage their development and are accountable to parents, local communities and educational authorities for their work.

### **Higher education**

Higher education plays a crucial role in developing the potential and competitiveness of the European economy. The level of education, social entrepreneurship and pro-innovation attitudes are the guarantors of the success of the European project.

In this context, the rapporteur stresses the need to strengthen the ‘knowledge triangle’ and to improve the links between research and education. The rapporteur also stresses that higher education systems must be much more flexible and open, facilitating the transition to different levels of education, providing for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, and using different forms of curriculum implementation, including through the use of new technologies which make it possible to focus on students and to carry out interdisciplinary programmes.

In order to develop transversal, social and civic competences, it is important to include internships, in the form of ECTS credits towards higher education programmes, and dual education, as well as to take account of local issues and needs by integrating them into teaching curricula and research projects, thereby strengthening the development of smart specialisations.

The rapporteur considers that the exchange of best practices and comprehensive cooperation through increased student and staff mobility, improving the recognition of diplomas, and the international dimension of curricula and research programmes should be important aspects of European higher education institutions.

### **Teachers as guarantors of teaching quality**

Teachers, their skills and their commitment are a key element of any change in education systems.

The rapporteur stresses the need to recruit highly motivated candidates with a predisposition for teaching. In the rapporteur’s view, it is necessary to change both the curricula and the teaching methods in teacher education. Good academic knowledge is a prerequisite for a teacher’s work, but the ability to work with children and young people is also vital.

In this context, the rapporteur stresses the huge significance of including an extensive internship module in teacher training curricula, as well as the need to equip teachers with advanced digital competences in order to achieve the desired synergies between teachers’ knowledge and competences and those of the student.

The rapporteur also stresses the need to improve the status of teachers, their working conditions, career prospects and pay, the need to invest in teachers’ ongoing professional development and to increase their participation in international exchanges.

In light of the above considerations, the rapporteur supports the Commission's idea of creating a European Education Area. The rapporteur stresses, however, that it must be consistent with what has been achieved so far by the European Higher Education Area and the European Research and Innovation Area. She also considers that the European Education Area should receive strong political support from the Member States, whose collective efforts will give new impetus to educational development while respecting the principles of subsidiarity, educational freedom and institutional autonomy.

The rapporteur encourages Member States and regional authorities to increase investment in education, using the European Structural and Investment Funds, and to support teachers and managers, both in the area of modern technologies and in the development of learner-centred teaching methods, ensuring at the same time high-quality education, measured by the wealth of knowledge and skills passed on, as well as creativity and a capacity for lifelong learning.

During the preparation of the report, the rapporteur contacted a wide range of stakeholders representing EU institutions, the various levels of education and associations involved in education. The rapporteur also organised a seminar on the modernisation of education with the participation of, among others, Commissioner Tibor Navracsics, Chair of the Committee on Culture and Education, Petra Kammerevert, Members of the European Parliament, and representatives of the Commission, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions, as well as representatives from academia and numerous organisations and associations.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Seminar panellists: Dr. Jan Peeters, Centre for Innovation in the Early Years; Larissa Nanning, Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions; Dr. Thomas Ekman Jørgensen, European University Association; Sarika Vij, The Guild of European Research-Intensive Universities; Asa Morberg, Association for Teacher Education in Europe; Eduardo Nadal, European Trade Union Committee for Education; Brikena Xhomaqi, Lifelong Learning Platform; Horst Dreimann, European Association of Institutes for Vocational Training. Participating organisations (non-exhaustive list): Democracy and Human Rights Education in Europe, AEGEE / European Students' Forum, International Organization for the Development of Freedom of Education, Erasmus Student Network, European University Foundation, World Scout Bureau - European Regional Office, European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities, European Youth Forum, European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, ThinkYoung, European Association of Regions and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning, European Association of Institutions in Higher Education, The European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education Georg Jürgens, European Council of National Associations of Independent Schools, Youth for Exchange and Understanding, German Academic Exchange Service, European Educational Exchanges - Youth for Understanding, European Federation for Intercultural Learning, Association for Teacher Education in Europe, ADS Insight Sprl. Position papers received: European Parents' Association, European Students' Union, International Certificate Conference Languages.