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REPORT

on integrating immigrants in Europe through schools and multilingual education
(2004/2267(INI))

Committee on Culture and Education

Rapporteur: Miguel Portas

CONTENTS

	Page
MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION	3
EXPLANATORY STATEMENT	7
PROCEDURE	10

MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on integrating immigrants in Europe through schools and multilingual education (2004/2267(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Council Directive 77/486/EEC of 25 July 1977 on the education of the children of migrant workers¹,
 - having regard to the resolution adopted on 16 December 1997 by the Union Ministers of Education, which calls on the Member States to encourage the early teaching of languages and Europe-wide cooperation among schools offering teaching of this type²,
 - having regard to the Council resolution of 25 November 2003 on ‘making school an open learning environment to prevent and combat early school leaving and disaffection among young people and to encourage their social inclusion’³,
 - having regard to the call by the Barcelona European Council (March 2002) for at least two foreign languages to be taught from the earliest possible age,
 - having regard to the communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on immigration, integration and employment (COM(2003)0336),
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 24 July 2003 entitled ‘Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity: An Action Plan 2004 – 2006’ (COM(2003)0449),
 - having regard to the conclusions in which the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia recommends that greater public support be provided in order to reduce the disadvantages suffered by pupils from migrant or minority communities,
 - having regard to the conclusions of the symposium on ‘The changing European classroom – the potential of plurilingual education’, held on 10 and 11 March 2005 under the auspices of the Luxembourg EU Presidency,
 - having regard to the conclusions issued following the Education Council of 25 May 2005,
 - having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Culture and Education (A6-0243/2005),
- A. whereas migration has increased significantly since 1977, the year of adoption of the directive establishing the right of immigrants from within the Community to be taught the language of their host country and the language and culture of their country of origin,

¹ OJ L 199, 6.8.1977, p. 32.

² OJ C 1, 3.1.1998, p. 2.

³ OJ C 295, 5.12.2003, p. 3.

- B. whereas migration has created new challenges in terms of identity and made integration policies one of the priorities for the EU, the Member States, and regional and local authorities,
- C. whereas Europe has, at different times, seen periods in which minorities have been persecuted and whereas this chapter of European history, which, it is to be hoped, has been closed for good, highlights the importance of policies to combat discrimination in the Union area,
- D. whereas the body of decisions taken by the European institutions seeks to establish equal rights as regards education for children and teenagers living in the EU, no matter where they were born, where their parents and grandparents came from, or what particular laws might apply to them,
- E. whereas the European Council decisions of 23-24 March 2000 (whereby the number of 18- to 24-year-olds educated only up to lower secondary level is to be halved by 2010) imply that education needs to be made generally accessible to the sons and daughters of immigrants and schools have to be ready to promote their integration without any form of discrimination,
- F. whereas as well as finding it difficult to learn when their families communicate in a language other than the one used at school, the pupils concerned are often affected by material, social, and psychological circumstances that militate against normal school achievement,
- G. whereas the linguistic separation of the family and school environments aggravates the tendency for pupils to drop out of school and for families to become isolated from the community, and linguistic integration therefore needs to start early, at preschool age; whereas the measures to be promoted to that end should enable immigrant children on the one hand to continue to develop their mother-tongue language skills – since this is crucial for their future progress at school – and secondly to learn the languages of their respective host countries,
- H. whereas multilingual education is helping to foster understanding of differences from a cross-cultural perspective at a time when more and more young second- and third-generation immigrants are experiencing difficulties in coping with the many and varied dimensions that determine the make-up of their identity,
- I. whereas the widespread use of a lingua franca in education systems sometimes dispenses pupils from the obligation of learning their mother tongue and studying their native culture once they have started compulsory schooling,
- J. whereas the European institutions are seeking to capitalise on the experiments in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)¹,
- K. whereas one means of translating education objectives for immigrant communities into practice might be bilateral agreements, which, however, are generally subject to severe constraints of a budgetary nature, if not related to actual political will,

¹ These experiments are known in English as CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), CLIC (Content and Language Integrated Classrooms), and BILD (Bilingual Integration of Languages and Disciplines); and in French as EMILE (Enseignement d'une Matière par l'Intégration d'une Langue Étrangère).

- L. whereas EU action has been brought to bear mainly in the areas of teacher training, youth exchanges, and the organisation of seminars and studies; whereas this is nowhere near the sum total of measures that could serve to develop good practice and enable it to be applied across the board,

Rights of children in the school system and duties of the Member States

1. Believes that the school-age children of immigrants have a right to state education, irrespective of the legal status of their families, and that their entitlement extends to learning of the language of their host country, without prejudice to their right to learn their mother tongue;
2. Believes that even when the children and/or descendants of immigrants (second and third generations) are proficient in the language of their host country, they should be given the opportunity to familiarise themselves with their mother tongue and the culture of their country of origin, without ruling out public funding for that purpose;
3. Maintains that primary and secondary schools must provide educational support to immigrant children, especially when they are not proficient in the language of their host country, so as to enable them to adapt more easily and prevent them being placed at a disadvantage compared with other children;
4. Maintains that the integration of immigrants at school must not adversely affect promotion of the lingua franca used in the education system, especially if that language is itself a minority language;
5. Urges the Member States to encourage education institutions at the different levels to take measures making for linguistic diversity whereby the choice of alternatives to the official language would not be limited to the most widely spoken European languages;
6. Urges the Member States to remove the teaching, administrative, and legal obstacles which, as a result of language barriers, make the above aims more difficult to achieve;
7. Considers that the abovementioned measures must be taken in such a way as to ensure that immigrant children will not have an inordinately full timetable compared with other pupils and hence will be less likely to respond with hostility to the additional study periods;

Role of the Union in promoting good practice

8. Supports the Commission's advocacy of education systems enabling pupils to learn two languages in addition to their mother tongue at an early age;
9. Takes note of the need to make use of different methods of promoting integration through multilingualism, such as the CLIL method ("Content and Language Integrated Learning"), which is proven to be quite efficient both for learning the language and for the intercultural integration of children of different origins;
10. Calls on the Commission to increase its support for specific training to enable teachers, including natives of immigrants' countries of origin, to specialise in different methods of promoting integration through multilingualism (e.g. CLIL or multilingual or mother-tongue

literacy skills teaching), and, under the Leonardo da Vinci, Youth, and Socrates programmes (Comenius and Grundtvig projects), to widen the range of target languages to cover immigrants' mother tongues, bringing particular attention to bear on activities involving the sons and daughters of immigrants and the trainers and instructors who work with immigrant communities;

11. Maintains that support should be channelled towards educational projects which, over and above curriculum requirements, teach the languages and cultures of host countries to immigrants not of school age and towards bridge-building projects to foster dialogue between the culture and history of host regions and the culture and history of immigrant communities; maintains also that consideration should be given especially to projects seeking to include parents or guardians as well and mothers in particular;
12. Maintains that if the above policy is to be translated into reality, the Union must, for example, provide support with a view to setting up a European network of schools employing different methods to promote integration through multilingualism; believes that schools could apply to join the network, in agreement with the authorities of the Member States, if they wished to implement educational and community projects to meet the learning, socialisation, and cultural needs referred to above;
13. Recommends to the Commission that, under the horizontal lifelong learning programme, the 2007-2013 budget allocations be used to further the above initiatives;
14. Maintains that the dissemination, originating not least from the education systems of host countries, of cultural works from immigrants' countries of origin must be a focus of special Union attention, whether to further foreign policy aims and the neighbourhood strategy or under Community programmes in the spheres of culture, education, youth, or the media;
15. Calls on local authorities in the Member States to bear the above approach in mind in their twinning decisions;

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16. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, and the Member States.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

1. The European institutions and the Member States, especially those where immigration occurs on a substantial scale, are rightly concerned about the situation of immigrants in the Union. When considering the problem, two aspects are generally mentioned: firstly, there are the integration difficulties affecting some communities, which, for a whole variety of reasons, have tended to form ghettos and hence close themselves off to society around them, except when carrying on a profession in the narrow sense; secondly, there are cases in which the price of integration is abandonment of cultural roots and even the ability to understand the language of the country of origin, especially when the people concerned are second- and third-generation immigrants born in the host country.
2. Contrary to some expectations, immigration is not a passing phenomenon in which the movement of labour from one region to another is dictated by differences in economic and population trends and which, depending on the employment situation of the moment in host countries, is considered either desirable or inappropriate, or else is assumed to be reversible once conditions in countries of origin have begun to improve. In most cases things do not happen that way, and they never have. European history and culture have been shaped by the many overlapping and intertwined cultures embodied in the numerous peoples who, down through the centuries, have crossed territories and, for the most varied reasons, settled in particular spots, leaving traces of their languages, traditions, religions, arts, and forms of socialisation. This historical process has in reality never ceased. Migration in the present day should consequently be viewed as a fresh opportunity for what we today call 'European culture' and as a challenge to the resources of our civilisation.
3. It is in this context that multilingualism carries its full weight, which far exceeds the practical function of facilitating communication between people of different backgrounds and cultures. What is in fact involved is promoting understanding from a cross-cultural perspective, this being a building-block of a European identity. Immigrants must not be integrated by erasing differences or obliging them to abandon their native languages and cultures. On the contrary, what enriches us is the incorporation and 'mixing' of different roots in a cosmopolitan common heritage. That is why Commissioner Ján Figel was right to say that if there is genuine integration, it will be multilingual. And hence cross-cultural, since the result of interaction amounts to much more than the interacting elements added together or lined up side by side.
4. Every step taken, therefore, must be designed to ensure that all citizens will be able to communicate in at least two languages in addition to their mother tongue and that they will start learning to do so in the early days of their schooling. Therein lies the aim of this report and of the individual proposals put forward in it with a view to removing barriers and obstacles, proceeding further with the moves already being made in that direction, and creating a focal point for subsidiary Union action in an area falling primarily under the responsibility of the Member States. Schools must take the lead in promoting linguistic and cultural diversity and, as regards the range of alternatives to the official language available to students, should offer not simply the most widely spoken European languages, but also, at the very least, the languages of sizeable minority and immigrant communities living in their

catchment areas.

5. Regarding the possibility of capitalising on the experiments termed ELCO (enseignement des langues et cultures d'origine – teaching and study of native languages and cultures), which have been doing a great deal to preserve cultural reference points enabling immigrant children to define their identity, the experiments have been beset by huge difficulties either because the necessary backing has not been forthcoming or the bilateral agreements governing them do not always operate as they should or else because the teaching is provided over and above the standard school curriculum (which in itself is very often too much for the youngest pupils), namely at the end of the day or on Saturdays, thus reducing free time and in some cases causing resentment among the pupils, who view these extra lessons as another burden to be shouldered because they are 'different' from their schoolmates and consequently prefer to be 'the same' and hence ignore the native language and culture of their parents or grandparents.
6. Another source of experience to be turned to account lies in those schools which include immigrants' native languages among the modern languages to be studied as optional subjects. However, if a student and his or her parents were asked to choose between the native language and a lingua franca in widespread international use, and the choice of the native language ruled out the possibility of studying a language considered absolutely necessary for the student's future career, many parents in that situation – having an eye to their children's future – would decide to forgo the option of learning the native language at school and attempt later on to fill the resulting gap with private tuition in societies or other unofficial institutes.
7. In the light of these considerations, we would draw particular attention to the teaching experiments employing the method known as CLIL – Content and Language Integrated Learning – in which all the pupils in a class learn one or more subjects in a language different from the one in which the other subjects are taught. Experiments of this kind, which have already been carried out and produced proven results, could usefully be widened to encompass primary and secondary education in the Member States: the native languages of the immigrant communities which had settled in the particular region concerned could be regarded as alternative teaching languages for certain subjects, to be used in mixed classes consisting of pupils from immigrant families and families from the host country.
8. This method could do a great deal to assist the integration of immigrant children and their families as well. If they were to study the languages, culture, and history of the countries of origin of their immigrant schoolmates, pupils born in host countries would slot more easily into cross-cultural coexistence, help more effectively to integrate their schoolmates into the community, and be less likely to be influenced by racist and xenophobic ideologies.
9. If children, be they offspring of immigrants or of host country citizens, were taught the languages, culture, and history of sizeable immigrant communities living in the cities and regions of the Member States, a further effect would be to foster the self-esteem of immigrant families as a whole and bolster their sense of being integrated, as well as helping them to establish good relations with their children's schools and the wider community, as well as with their children themselves; only through understanding of the cultural richness of immigrant communities can relations between host communities and immigrants be truly transformed in such a way as not only to prevent xenophobia, but also to progress beyond

mere tolerance to attain respect and consideration for others.

10. Support should be provided with a view to setting up a network (EUROCLIL?) to link all the schools working to promote integration and to help organise and process applications concerning projects to be carried out by interested parties. Activities in this area would be voluntary, both as regards membership of the network – one or more classes in a school could apply to join – and as regards the participation of pupils (immigrants or otherwise) in the CLIL classes.
11. Furthermore, state schools should be equipped with the resources to accommodate and teach the languages and culture of host countries to members of immigrant families not of school age and, moreover, to foster cross-cultural integration along the lines described above by disseminating the languages, culture, and history of immigrant communities to interested native residents of host cities or regions past school age.

PROCEDURE

Title	Integrating immigrants in Europe through schools and multilingual education	
Procedure number	2004/2267-(INI)	
Basis in Rules of Procedure	Rule 45	
Committee responsible Date authorisation announced in plenary	CULT 13.1.2005	
Committee(s) asked for opinion(s) Date announced in plenary		
Not delivering opinion(s) Date of decision		
Enhanced cooperation Date announced in plenary		
Motion(s) for resolution(s) included in report		
Rapporteur(s) Date appointed	Miguel Portas 18.1.2005	
Previous rapporteur(s)		
Discussed in committee	15.6.2005	
Date adopted	12.7.2005	
Result of final vote	for: 30 against: 2 abstentions: 0	
Members present for the final vote	María Badía i Cutchet, Christopher Beazley, Guy Bono, Marie-Hélène Descamps, Věra Flasarová, Milan Gaľa, Claire Gibault, Vasco Graça Moura, Lissy Gröner, Erna Hennicot-Schoepges, Ruth Hieronymi, Bernat Joan i Marí, Manolis Mavrommatis, Marianne Mikko, Ljudmila Novak, Doris Pack, Rolandas Pavilionis, Zdzisław Zbigniew Podkański, Miguel Portas, Christa Prets, Karin Resetarits, Matteo Salvini, Pál Schmitt, Nikolaos Sifunakis, Hannu Takkula, Helga Trüpel, Thomas Wise	
Substitutes present for the final vote	Adamos Adamou, Ivo Belet, Giulietto Chiesa, Ignasi Guardans Cambó, Nina Škottová, Åsa Westlund	
Substitutes under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote		
Date tabled – A6	7.9.2005	A6-0243/2005