



Plenary sitting

A8-0173/2018

17.5.2018

REPORT

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

Committee on Culture and Education

Rapporteur: Krystyna Łybacka

Rapporteur for opinion (*):
Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Committee on Employment and Social
Affairs

(*) Associated committee – Rule 54 of the Rules of Procedure

CONTENTS

	Page
MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION	3
EXPLANATORY STATEMENT	29
OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS	33
OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY	44
INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE	52
FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE	53

MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

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

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission 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 right to education as defined in Article 14 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 20 May 2014 on effective teacher education,
- having regard to Article 2 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 20 May 2014 on quality assurance supporting education and training¹,
- having regard to the Council recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning²,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 27 May 2015 on the role of early childhood education and primary education in fostering creativity, innovation and digital competence³,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 10 June 2016 entitled ‘A New Skills Agenda for Europe’ (COM(2016)0381) and to the resolution of Parliament of 14 September 2017 on ‘A New Skills Agenda for Europe’⁴,
- having regard to Article 2 of the Protocol to the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, concerning the right to education,
- having regard to the European Convention on Human Rights, Protocol 1, Article 2,
- having regard to Council of Europe Resolution 1904 (2012) on the right to freedom of choice in education,
- 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

¹ OJ C 183, 14.6.2014, p. 30.

² OJ C 398, 22.12.2012, p. 1.

³ OJ C 172, 27.5.2015, p. 17.

⁴ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0360.

- cooperation on education and training'¹,
- 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'²,
 - having regard to the Paris Declaration of 17 March 2015 on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education;
 - having regard to its resolution of 28 April 2015 on the follow-up of the implementation of the Bologna process³,
 - having regard to the Commission 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 its resolution of 2 February 2017 on the implementation of Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and of 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/EC⁴,
 - having regard to the Council recommendation of 19 December 2016 entitled 'Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults'⁵,
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 7 December 2016 entitled 'Improving and modernising education' (COM(2016)0941),
 - having regard to the Commission 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 communication of 30 May 2017 entitled 'A renewed EU agenda for higher education' (COM(2017)0247),
 - having regard to the Commission proposal for a Council recommendation of 30 May 2017 on tracking graduates (COM(2017)0249),
 - having regard to the Commission 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 opinion of the Committee of the Regions of 30 November 2017 on 'Modernising school and higher education',

¹ OJ C 417, 15.12.2015, p. 25.

² OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 50.

³ OJ C 346, 21.9.2016, p. 2.

⁴ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0018.

⁵ OJ C 484, 24.12.2016, p. 1.

- having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee of 19 October 2017 entitled ‘New EU education strategy’,
- having regard to the Commission 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),
- having regard to the Council recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning¹,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 17 January 2018 on the Digital Education Action Plan (COM(2018)0022),
- having regard to the concluding report of the Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth, held in Gothenburg, Sweden, on 17 November 2017²,
- 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’, adopted at the 3090th Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council meeting held on 19 and 20 May 2011³,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 March 1984 on freedom of education in the European Community⁴,
- having regard to the right to education as defined in Article 14 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 11 May 2010 on the internationalisation of higher education⁵,
- having regard to the Commission’s Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council of 8 June 2016 entitled ‘Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations’ (JOIN(2016)29), and to the European Parliament resolution thereon of 5 July 2017⁶,
- having regard to Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR);
- having regard to the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, adopted in the framework of Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7,

¹ OJ C 398, 22.12.2012, p. 1.

² <http://www.socialsummit17.se/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Concluding-report-Gothenburg-summit.pdf>

³ https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/122123.pdf

⁴ OJ C 104, 16.4.1984, p. 69.

⁵ OJ C 135, 26.5.2010, p. 12.

⁶ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0303.

- having regard to Article 10 of the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,
 - having regard to Strategic Objective B of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995),
 - having regard to Articles 28 and 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child,
 - having regard to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in September 2015 and which entered into force on 1 January 2016, and in particular to Sustainable Development Goals 4 and 5,
 - 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 (A8-0173/2018),
- A. whereas according to Article 6 e) of the TFEU competence in the field of education and training lies with the Member States, but the European Union has a vital supportive role to play in terms of setting challenges and goal and promoting and exchanging best practices;
 - B. whereas the right to education is a fundamental human right and education in all its forms and at all levels must exhibit the following interrelated and essential features: a) availability; b) accessibility; c) acceptability; and d) adaptability;
 - C. whereas the European Pillar of Social Rights has as its leading priority the provision of quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning;
 - D. whereas achieving equal opportunities is an important function of education, and access to education must therefore be made non-discriminatory; whereas to this end, more efforts are needed to ensure that everyone, with particular regard to the most vulnerable, people with disabilities and special needs as well as disadvantaged groups, enjoys the same chances of accessing and completing education and training and of acquiring skills at all levels;
 - E. whereas European education systems represent an immense wealth of cultural, social and linguistic diversity, while at the same time Member States share similar educational goals and challenges, including ensuring equal access to education for all, which can be addressed at the European level;
 - F. whereas the ability of education systems to meet societal, economic and personal needs depends on their quality, accessibility, diversity, efficiency and equity, as well as on the availability of adequate human, financial and material resources;
 - G. whereas, it is important to recall that education, including teacher education, has been affected by the economic and financial crisis and that public funding for education plays a fundamental role in EU education systems; whereas, therefore, continuous and increased public financial support for education, including for teachers and their

working conditions, as well as for research, is crucial for ensuring free, inclusive and accessible public education;

- H. whereas education and training should contribute to the personal development and growth of young people in order to make them proactive and responsible citizens who are ready to live and work in a technologically advanced and globalised world and provide them with the key set of competences for lifelong learning, defined as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship and employment;
- I. whereas teaching quality is an important determinant of pupil and student outcomes, and therefore strong support for excellence as regards teaching and educators is one of the priorities for cooperation at EU level in education and training;
- J. whereas the right to education includes the freedom to set up educational establishments, on a basis of due respect for democratic principles and for the right of parents to ensure that their children are educated and taught according to their religious, philosophical and pedagogical convictions;
- K. whereas the open method of coordination as applied to education allows Member States to create and implement a common strategy for education and training, also including the on-line platform ET 2020 (Education and Training 2020); whereas the benchmarks of this strategy are analysed and evaluated every year in the publication 'Education and Training Monitor', both for Member States and for the EU as a whole;
- L. whereas in the latest 'Education and Training Monitor', published in 2017, the Commission recognises that, despite continuous progress in reducing the number of early leavers from education and training, their number remains very high across the EU;
- M. whereas, according to the results of the latest PISA tests, 20.6 % of European pupils face problems in the acquisition of basic skills in the areas of reading, mathematics and science, and a significant number of European citizens lack literacy skills; whereas this is cause for serious concern in terms of further learning, personal development, and adequate participation in public life and in the labour market;
- N. whereas ensuring access to quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) services for all children is key to enabling them to enjoy a positive start in life and on educational paths;
- O. whereas quality of staff is a fundamental factor for ECEC services;
- P. whereas promoting student and staff mobility is an important part of European higher education systems, contributes to young people's development and can stimulate economic and social progress; whereas there is a need for qualitative improvement and increased financial support with a view to expanding student and staff mobility under Erasmus+;
- Q. whereas methodological and digital innovations are a potential instrument for expanding access to content and knowledge, but cannot substitute personal contact and

exchange among students and between students and teachers, nor should they be turned into the priority of educational systems;

- R. whereas gender equality is a core principle of the European Union enshrined in the Treaties and should be reflected in all EU policies, not least in the sphere of education and culture;
- S. whereas education is a powerful instrument for overcoming gender inequality and discrimination, but it may also often reproduce or exacerbate existing discrimination; whereas gender inequality in education hinders both personal development and employment and affects numerous socio-cultural fields;
- T. whereas despite the fact that women account for three fifths (57.6 %) of all graduates in higher education, the gender employment gap stood at 11.6 percentage points in 2015;¹

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

1. Affirms that universal quality education is an essential component of personal, cultural, social and professional development in a knowledge-based society;
2. Considers that safeguarding European common values and the attainment of the EU's economic and social objectives as well of competitiveness and sustainable growth are linked to quality education through the promotion of democratic values, human rights, social cohesion, integration and individual success;
3. Underlines the crucial role of education in shaping the future of Europe both economically and socially, while providing for the needs of Europe's citizens and building a community of diverse citizens united by their common core values;
4. Underlines that quality education and training systems promote active citizenship and common values, and as such help shape an open, inclusive, pluralist, democratic and tolerant society;
5. Stresses the role of education in helping learners to develop ethical and civic values and become active, responsible, open-minded members of society who are able to exercise and defend their democratic rights and responsibilities in society, value diversity, play an active role in democratic life, and take responsibility for themselves and for their communities; stresses, in this context, the importance of citizenship, civic, ethical and environmental education;
6. Emphasises that in order for young people to confront challenges, become active European citizens and be successful in life and the labour market while also shaping the world's future, quality and inclusive education must provide them with the necessary knowledge, skills, media literacy and critical and autonomous thinking, as well as with democratic attitudes;
7. Underlines that ensuring equal access to quality inclusive education is the key to

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Gender_statistics

achieving continued social cohesion by combating poverty, the social exclusion of people with disadvantaged and vulnerable backgrounds, and gender stereotypes, and is therefore still the greatest aid to social mobility;

8. Notes that quality education can foster innovation and research relevant for and benefiting society;
9. Recognises the importance of education in developing cultural competences and encouraging cultural development; encourages closer synergies between the educational and cultural sectors, to be achieved by supporting an active role for culture and the arts in formal, informal and non-formal educational contexts;
10. Notes the role that education plays in developing lifelong learning attitudes which help people to adapt to the changing demands of the modern world;
11. Recalls that schools and educational institutions play a key role in creating and nourishing a positive attitude towards learning, also on a lifelong basis;

The changing educational reality and related challenges

12. Believes that an all-encompassing approach to education policy, with strong political and public support, is vital to the educational reform process, and that in order to achieve these objectives it is essential to involve both society as a whole and all relevant and interested actors, including parents;
13. Considers that effective governance and adequate funding for all educational settings, modern quality educational resources and teaching, motivated and competent teachers, and lifelong learning are crucial for achieving equity, diversity and excellence in education;
14. Highlights the potential of new information and communication technologies (ICT) and innovation, as instruments for offering new opportunities in education, meeting individual learners' needs more effectively (including special educational needs), and increasing flexibility in learning and teaching, personalisation and responsibility, as well fostering interactive forms of cooperation and communication;
15. Stresses the opportunities that digitalisation and the establishment of common educational platforms offer for modern education, especially in terms of distance learning, distance education, and blended learning, which should allow more flexibility in education by tailoring it more closely to learners' individual living situations and thereby benefiting lifelong learning, education quality, accessibility and the development of future skills; highlights the need for age-appropriate ICT and media curricula that respect child development and wellbeing and emphasise the importance of both responsible use and critical thinking;
16. Notes that effective learning and teaching through digital technologies requires equal access, a competent level of digital skills, high-quality learning resources, training in adapting technology for pedagogical purposes, and promotion of the attitudes and motivation needed for meaningful digital participation; believes that digital and media literacy skills should be an essential part of education policies and include, among

- others, civic competencies and critical thinking; stresses the importance of critically assessing sources and their reliability, and of media literacy projects in this respect;
17. Recognises that in an increasingly globalised and digitalised world innovative and relevant methods of learning, teaching and assessment are necessary, as well as an adequate educational infrastructure which enables group work and team teaching, and stimulates creative thinking and problem-solving together with other progressive educational methods; recalls the importance of involving students, teachers and other school staff in assessing whether and how learning objectives have been met;
 18. Notes that efforts are needed to adapt the educational paradigm so that it balances both a teacher- and content-centred approach, individually and specifically attuned to learners and their living circumstances, with an understanding-centred approach, combining learning methods adapted to both traditional and online learning models, thus strengthening the personalisation of the educational process and thereby increasing retention and completion rates;
 19. Highlights that educational systems should promote and develop interdisciplinary, cooperative and creative approaches and teamwork aimed at equipping pupils and students with knowledge and skills, including transversal and soft skills as well as with professional, transversal, social and civic competences;
 20. Recalls that delivering quality teaching and learning is a continuous process encompassing dialogue, a sense of sharing and questioning, and should be given priority when modernising education;
 21. Emphasises that the facilitation of equal access to quality inclusive education is essential for the independence and integration in society of learners with disabilities; calls on the Member States to facilitate access to mainstream inclusive quality education taking into account the needs of all students with all types of disabilities, which means, for instance, providing bilingual inclusive education for deaf children with regard to their special linguistic needs; calls on schools to provide both formal and informal differentiated services, and extra support, also using the potential of new technologies so that the individual needs of all learners are met; calls on the Commission to monitor schools on their non-rejection policy, and to set disability-specific indicators within the Europe 2020 strategy;
 22. Maintains that European education must seek above all to develop reasoning, reflection, and scientific curiosity; that it has to be capable of building on the foundations of an artistic, scientific, and technical humanistic culture; and that, proceeding from the practical reality of local, regional, national, and European life, it must impart the training necessary to resolve national and European problems and raise awareness of problems within the international community;
 23. Acknowledges the reality of individual differences in cognitive abilities and personality traits that interact with social and environmental factors, influencing educational outcomes; highlights, in this context, that education is more efficient, equalitarian and fair when these differences are taken into account;
 24. Acknowledges that in a competitive world it is crucial to identify and promote European

talent as early as possible;

25. Stresses that enhancing educational outcomes on average is compatible with the stimulation of excellence among talented students; notes, in this context, the importance of designing appropriate intervention programmes for enhancing psychological traits relevant for maximising people's potential;
26. Highlights the need to give importance to visual literacy as a new life-skill, acknowledging that in this day and age, people are communicating far more through images than through traditional means;
27. Notes the proposal for the creation of a European Education Area, as presented at the Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth held in Gothenburg in 2017; recalls that this initiative should foster cooperation, mutual recognition of diplomas and qualifications, and increased mobility and growth;
28. Supports the Council conclusions of 14 December 2017 calling for enhanced student mobility and participation in education and cultural activities, including through a 'European Student Card', which should facilitate recognition of university credits obtained in other Member States;
29. Believes that Erasmus+ is the EU's flagship programme in the field of education, and that its impact and popularity have been fully proven over the years; calls, therefore, for a substantial increase of funding for this programme in the multi-financial framework (MFF) for 2021-2027, in order to make it more accessible and inclusive and enable it to reach out to more students and teachers;
30. Underlines that youth unemployment is a Union-wide phenomenon which is reported to stand at a rate around twice the average overall unemployment rate; expresses its concern with regard to the alarmingly high rates in Mediterranean Member States, with peaks in Spain (44.4 %), Italy (37.8 %), and Greece (47.3 % for youth unemployment and 30.5 % for young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)), according to Eurostat;
31. Points out that in spite of the 2 million job vacancies existing in the EU, more than 30 % of qualified young people with diplomas are in jobs that do not match their skills or aspirations, while 40 % of European employers have trouble finding people with the skills they require¹;
32. Affirms the need for education systems at all levels to maintain a gender perspective that takes into account the needs of people suffering multiple forms of discrimination, including people with disabilities, people identifying themselves as LGBTI and people from marginalised communities;

Early childhood education and care (ECEC)

33. Stresses that quality and accessible ECEC creates a foundation for more equitable and

¹ <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/3072>,
https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_publication/field_ef_document/ef1502en_0.pdf

effective education systems, as well as ensuring individual personal development, wellbeing and the effectiveness of further learning;

34. Highlights the great benefits for all children, especially those from disadvantaged groups, of attending ECEC, and stresses in this context the importance of guaranteeing that every child can access ECEC; notes with concern, in this regard, that in several Member States the demand for ECEC places exceeds the supply, especially for younger children;
35. Underlines the importance of monitoring the quality of ECEC so as to allow children to develop their cognitive skills and determine whether the best interests of children are being met;

School education

36. Sees all schools as autonomous centres for fostering critical and creative thinking and promoting democratic values and active citizenship; considers that schools should focus on helping young people to acquire the skills necessary for understanding and using available information, as well as for developing their learning autonomy and language proficiency;
37. Points out that the specific needs of all students should be at the centre of effective school functioning, which requires the establishment of joint objectives and a clear agenda for their implementation, as well as the close collaboration of the entire school community and stakeholders, where appropriate;
38. Considers that modern curricula should be competence-driven, should enhance personal skills and health-conscious, future-oriented life management competence, and should focus on formative assessment and physical and emotional wellbeing; believes that every student should have the possibility to fulfil his or her own intellectual potential; stresses that developing and strengthening skills is a continuous process, which operates through all levels of education and into the labour market, and that skills and competences should be taken into account both in the education process and in the recognition of educational qualifications;
39. Underlines that mastering basic literacy and numeracy skills is fundamental to pupils' further learning, personal development and acquisition of digital competence; stresses that the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET2020) and the Commission's New Skills Agenda should complement national actions and support Member States in this regard; calls on the Member States and educational institutions to reinforce basic skills through project- and problem-based learning, among other solutions;
40. Considers that Member States should guarantee that nobody graduates from school without basic skills, including basic digital skills; underlines the fact that most jobs now require greater literacy, numeracy, digital literacy and other crucial skills and that modern education systems should therefore combine all eight key competences outlined in the Commission's proposal for a Council recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, which also include knowledge and attitudes; welcomes the fact that this proposal also defines digital skills as basic skills;

41. Considers that, notwithstanding the impact of new technologies on education, the school should still remain a fundamental learning environment where potentialities are developed, and where each individual can find space and time for personal and social growth;
42. Draws attention to the fact that granting schools more autonomy regarding curricula, assessment and finance has been shown to result in increased pupil performance, provided there is effective school governance and school-based accountability for pupils' learning;
43. Emphasises the positive impact of cultural diversity and multilingualism in schools on pupils' linguistic and cognitive development, as well as on the promotion of intercultural awareness, respect and pluralism;
44. Stresses the need to enhance the learning of languages with a view to speaking two languages in addition to one's mother tongue, and to promote at secondary school level the teaching of at least two subjects through a non-native language;
45. Points out that secondary school exchanges do much both to encourage pupils to acquire the abilities, skills, attitudes, and values intrinsic to dynamic European citizenship and to develop constructive critical thinking;
46. Stresses the need to make schools more open in order to enable recognition of non-formal and informal learning and smoother transitions between different educational paths (e.g. technical and academic);
47. Underlines that learners should be encouraged to use self-assessment techniques to measure their learning progress; encourages educational institutions to ensure that feedback tools provide reliable information by using a mix of several instruments, such as student questionnaires, focus groups and suggestions boxes;
48. Emphasises the importance of leading an active life through sport; stresses, in this context, the need to promote and give an expanded role to physical activity and physical education in educational curricula at all levels, with enhanced possibilities for developing cooperation between educational establishments and local sports organisations; also encourages educational initiatives and extracurricular activities with a view to supporting the fulfilment of students' individual needs and interests while also building bridges with local communities;
49. Underlines the importance of quality education, vocational training and community and voluntary activities in contributing to raising the status of work-based vocations;
50. Notes that a considerable number of new jobs are being created in industries relating to renewable energy, and that green sectors and occupations should be addressed in school curricula accordingly;
51. Emphasises that information management skills, critical thinking and the ability to apply acquired knowledge are key goals of academic education;
52. Acknowledges the need to strengthen the knowledge triangle and to improve links

between research and teaching by allocating adequate resources to relevant programmes and by ensuring that students involved in research programmes are granted the financial means to carry out their research;

53. Believes that higher education systems should be more flexible and open, and that dual training paths should be promoted in universities and further education institutions, in particular by encouraging apprenticeships, enabling the recognition of informal and non-formal learning, and ensuring smoother transitions between different levels of education, including that between vocational education and training (VET) and higher education, as well as various forms of programme delivery; stresses that the above should be based on a better understanding of the performance of graduates;

Higher education

54. Emphasises, within the context of creating a European Education Area, the importance of supporting cooperation and building on the potential of all European higher education institutions and of students in order to stimulate networking, international cooperation and competition;
55. Is of the opinion that an all-encompassing approach to internationalisation, including increased mobility for staff and students (also through traineeships and apprenticeships), and an international dimension for the curriculum and for teaching, research, cooperation and additional activities, should be an important element of European higher education institutions;
56. Advocates an increased focus on interdisciplinary study programmes, and encourages the promotion, in tandem, of Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics (STEAM) disciplines and of human and social sciences; highlights the need to encourage the participation of women and other under-represented groups in STEAM subjects and the relevant professions;
57. Advocates that higher education must engage with society at large in order to promote innovative growth and social welfare; believes that cooperation between higher education institutions (HEIs) and external stakeholders is desirable, as the latter can contribute knowledge and expertise in the design and delivery of higher education programmes; stresses, however, that the responsibility for decision-making must always lie with students and pedagogical experts;
58. Recognises the pivotal role played by academics and students in disseminating knowledge, empirical findings and facts to the wider public; encourages, in this respect, economically and politically independent research that is relevant to and benefits society;
59. Highlights the role of research-based education and pedagogical research as a means of stimulating active learning, enhancing skills development, and improving teaching methodology;
60. Underlines that learners should be encouraged to use self-assessment techniques to measure their learning progress;

The teacher as a guarantor of quality teaching

61. Considers that teachers and their skills, commitment and effectiveness are the basis of education systems;
62. Stresses the need to attract greater numbers of motivated candidates with sound academic or professional backgrounds and pedagogical competencies to the teaching profession; calls for fit-for-purpose selection procedures and for specific measures and initiatives to improve teacher status, training, professional opportunities, working conditions, including remuneration, that avoid unstable forms of employment, social rights, safety and protection, as well as to provide teachers with support comprising mentoring programmes, peer-to-peer learning and the sharing of best practices; calls on the Commission to encourage greater gender equality in the teaching profession;
63. Underlines the importance of reshaping and investing in teacher education from the initial phase and throughout teachers' professional development, in order to equip them with solid, updated knowledge, skills and competences essential for a high standard of teaching, which includes diverse teaching methods, such as distance education, enabled by digital learning technologies; stresses the importance of the continuous professional development of teachers, including the provision of lifelong learning programmes and refresher courses and of reskilling and upskilling possibilities throughout their careers, which offer practical solutions for the challenges teachers encounter in their work at classroom level, and opportunities to participate in international teacher exchanges so that an institutional learning culture is fostered;
64. Agrees that the high-quality pedagogical, psychological and methodological training of school and tertiary education teachers and lecturers is a key condition for the successful education of future generations; emphasises, in this regard, the importance of sharing best practices and developing skills and competences through international cooperation, mobility programmes such as Erasmus+ and paid internships in other Member States;
65. Emphasises the teacher's key role in providing an inclusive learning environment that requires embracing a range of methods and approaches to meet diverse needs, thus enabling all pupils to be involved in the design, realisation and assessment of their learning outcomes; acknowledges the crucial function of teachers as proactive guides and mentors who teach how to evaluate information, adopt a supporting role in the face of challenges, and prepare learners for life;
66. Considers that the involvement of teachers and school leaders in modernising education systems is vital for effective reforming processes and for motivating educational staff to further improvements in school policy;
67. Is of the opinion that an across-the-board school policy must guarantee effective support for teachers in order to ensure the attainment of educational goals, an enabling school environment, efficient school functioning and development and collaborative governance;
68. Acknowledges the important role of educators as well as of cooperation between parents, teachers and school authorities within formal, non-formal or informal education in supporting current and future generations; encourages, in this regard, enhanced

collaboration among all relevant actors in formal, non-formal and informal learning;

69. Is of the opinion that enhanced cooperation between schoolteachers, researchers and academics is beneficial for all related parties and results in the improvement and updating of teaching content, learning practices, and pedagogy as well as fostering innovation, creativity and new skills;

Recommendations

70. Considers that the European Education Area should focus on achieving common goals including ensuring quality education for all, and must be created on a basis of alignment and critical assessment of existing policies and educational trends and figures both inside and outside the EU in order to ensure coherence, consistency and achievable results, while also giving new impetus to their development and respecting the principles of conferral, subsidiarity, freedom, proportionality, and institutional and educational autonomy;
71. Believes that the European Education Area should not jeopardise or substitute the Bologna Process, and that the latter should, rather, be developed and strengthened; stresses the importance of mutual links and complementarity between the European Education Area and the European Higher Education Area;
72. Calls on the Member States to support the creation of a European Education Area and to strengthen cooperation in developing and implementing its objectives; calls, in this regard, on the Commission to ensure the sharing of ideas and good practices with a view to achieving those goals;
73. Supports, as a basis for increased cooperation embracing higher education institutions both inside and outside the EU, the creation of a European network of universities, based on a bottom-up approach and initiatives of the universities themselves, which should contribute, among others, to the European Education Area becoming a more innovative, vital, and appealing space for learning and research;
74. Calls on the Member States to recognise education as investment in human capital, and to provide greater public funding of a transparent character for realising initiatives aimed at improving quality, inclusivity and equity in teaching and learning;
75. Stresses that increased investment in education and training systems, as well as their modernisation and adjustment, constitute a crucial condition for social and economic progress; stresses, therefore, the importance of ensuring that social investment, especially in education and training for all, is prioritised in the forthcoming programming period of the MFF for 2020-2026;
76. Encourages, with regard to increasing inclusiveness and ensuring freedom of educational choice, the provision of adequate financial support for schools of all categories and levels, both state schools and not-for-profit private schools, provided the curriculum offered is based on the principles enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and complies with the legal systems and rules and regulations regarding the quality of education and the use of such funds in force in the

Member State concerned;

77. Considers that it is high time for the necessary investment to be made in educational infrastructure in less developed regions, always taking care to adapt coordinated investment to the specific features of the region concerned; stresses that, in this connection, it is particularly important to enable greater support from the European Investment Bank and the European funds for regional initiatives aimed at developing education;
78. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to exchange experiences and best practices on public funding mechanisms and methods, including performance-based funding and competitive research funding, with a view to achieving a sustainable and transparent diversification of funding;
79. Calls for enhanced cooperation among Member States in modernising education; urges Member States to begin implementing the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights that offer means of reducing inequalities in Europe through education, training and lifelong learning;
80. Stresses the role of the European Semester in promoting national reforms, namely by defining the education-related country-specific recommendations;
81. Expects the Digital Education Action Plan to support the Member States and educational institutions in the increased, more effective and age- and development-appropriate use of state-of-the-art technology, in learning, teaching and assessment, which meets quality assurance standards; believes that any digital education plan should establish and regularly assess the connection between digital means of education and qualification frameworks based on learning outcomes;
82. Recommends that Member States and educational institutions promote learner-centred, individualised learning methods, including tailor-made courses that are based on and combine the academic and professional experience of the learner as well as innovative methods and interaction between teachers and students, in order to support continuing education and the achievement of intended learning outcomes where students are active participants in their own learning process;
83. Calls on the Member States to adopt a holistic approach to education and to provide learners with specific, flexible learning opportunities that can equip them with the necessary core competences for successful entry into the labour market;
84. 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 teamwork; recommends that education systems work to strengthen transversal, soft and life skills;
85. Reiterates that the right to education must be guaranteed to every person with disabilities, from kindergarten to university, and stresses the importance of having appropriate teaching and technical equipment, appraisal measures and qualified personnel to ensure that persons with disabilities are genuinely able to enjoy this right;

86. Supports and encourages the implementation of actions concerning the development of media literacy and critical thinking through education and training; recalls the existing commitment in this field, as outlined in the Council conclusions of 30 May 2016; calls, in this context, on the Commission to coordinate policy developments at EU level in the area of media literacy with a view to disseminating updated knowledge and best practices in this field; calls on the Commission and the Member States to develop specific measures to promote and support media and digital literacy projects, such as the pilot project on Media Literacy for All, and to develop a comprehensive media and digital literacy policy, with a particular focus on school education;
87. Encourages the Member States to ensure opportunities to develop key competences in order to maintain and acquire skills paying special attention to basic skills, STEAM disciplines, language competencies, entrepreneurship skills, digital competences, creativity, critical thinking and teamwork; encourages the Commission and the Member States to facilitate the use of the EU Key Competences Framework in all educational settings and to enable its application to formal, non-formal, and informal learning, thus maximising its potential as a crucial tool for lifelong learning;
88. Encourages the Member States to raise public awareness of lifelong learning and to integrate a gender perspective in developing relevant policies and programmes, with a particular focus on women with lower levels of education, in both urban and rural areas, in order to provide them with upskilling opportunities;
89. Supports the increased EU benchmark for participation in lifelong learning; calls, in this regard, on the Commission to propose best practices recommendations with a view to achieving this ambitious goal; encourages stronger emphasis on lifelong learning at all levels of education; stresses, in this context, the role of HEIs in the realisation of a lifelong learning strategy, the education of professionally active people, the development of competences and the formation of a learning culture for people of all ages and different backgrounds;
90. Encourages the Commission to support the Member States in developing, promoting and reinforcing training and educational programmes facilitating adult learning, and their active inclusion in the education system; recalls that adult learning and education should provide a variety of learning pathways and flexible learning opportunities, including support for people in managing their lifelong learning pathways, second chance programmes for people who have never been to school, early school leavers and school dropouts; calls on the Commission to implement commitments such as the Skills Guarantee stipulated in the EU New Skills Agenda, and to act to improve the employment opportunities of low-skilled adults in the EU;
91. Calls on the Member States to develop intergenerational projects to facilitate understanding of the challenges elderly people face as well as providing opportunities for them to share their skills, knowledge and experience;
92. Encourages the development of synergies and collaborations between formal, non-formal and informal education; welcomes the progress made in the last few years towards the implementation of the Council recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning by 2018; calls, however, on the Member States to continue

beyond 2018 with their efforts to further enhance the implementation of those recommendations, and to establish relevant legal frameworks and create comprehensive validation strategies in order to enable validation; highlights that the recognition of informal and non-formal learning, including through free online courses, is central to the idea of opening up education to the more disadvantaged;

93. Emphasises the key role of parents as part of the education triangle in supporting children's learning; highlights the benefits of parental involvement in child education for increased pupil achievement, pupils' wellbeing and school development;
94. Calls on the Commission to support cross-border initiatives in open learning online;
95. Emphasises that the quality of education should be measured in terms of the degree to which a learner has acquired not only knowledge and competences, but also the ability to pursue and develop lifelong learning and creative endeavours;
96. Supports the Commission in the creation of a scoreboard to support the development of key competences as well as competency-based education, learning and training;
97. Calls on the Member States to fight gender stereotypes in education in order to ensure that women have the same opportunities and freedom of choice in terms of the career they wish to pursue; is concerned, in this context, at the stereotypes that persist in learning materials in some Member States and teachers' differing behavioural expectations as between girls and boys; points out the need to incorporate the principle of gender equality into both initial and continuing teacher training, as well as in teaching practices, in order to remove any obstacles preventing students from realising their full potential irrespective of their gender; calls on the Member States, when implementing gender equality in the curricula and syllabuses of regional education systems, to pay special attention to the outermost regions, bearing in mind the high rates of violence against women recorded there; stresses that education systems at all levels need to include a gender perspective and take into account the needs of people suffering from discrimination;
98. Urges the Member States to promote the principles of equality and non-discrimination in educational institutions, be it through formal or informal learning;
99. Recommends that the Commission and/or the Member States establish and promote a European/national award centring on the issue of gender equality in educational institutions, with a view to encouraging best practice;
100. Stresses that education is a key tool for social inclusion and for the improvement of skills levels and qualifications among migrants and refugees, both minors and adults; encourages, in the context, exchanging best practices on integration through education and imparting common values, improving and facilitating recognition of diplomas and qualifications, providing scholarships and establishing partnerships with universities in the countries of origin, as well as building on the valuable experience of the Education Corridors;
101. Stresses that greater efforts should be made to ensure access to education and training at all levels for pupils from autochthonous minorities and to support educational

institutions that provide services in the mother tongue of autochthonous ethnic or linguistic minorities; calls on the Commission to strengthen the promotion of programmes focused on the exchange of experiences and best practices concerning education in regional and minority languages in Europe; encourages the Member States to facilitate the development of teaching in the mother tongue of pupils and students;

102. Encourages the Member States to increase levels of language competence by making use of good practices, such as official certification of foreign language skills acquired under a certain age;
103. Invites the Member States and the Commission to establish a system of innovative and flexible grants for nurturing talent and artistic and sporting ability in the field of education and training; supports those Member States that are seeking to introduce scholarship schemes for students with proven educational, sporting and artistic ability;
104. Welcomes, in this regard, the Commission communication on a new skills agenda for Europe¹, which proposes solutions to skills mismatch and shortages and means of finding the right system of skills recognition; encourages the Member States, in this context, to establish quality dual systems of education (having the utmost value in terms of holistic personal growth and developing skills for lifelong learning) and vocational training in coordination with local and regional actors, and in line with the specific nature of each education system; notes the advantages and growing attractiveness of the hybrid VET system, which combines in equal measure strong school-based and work-based paths;
105. Recommends that educational guidance should be reinforced as a vital tool for encompassing different educational systems in a flexible manner while enriching and updating knowledge and skills;
106. Supports and encourages educational and vocational guidance as a vital educational task for the individual and social development of the young generations;
107. Takes the view that entrepreneurship is a driver of growth and job creation and also a way to make economies more competitive and innovative, which helps to empower women;
108. Highlights that social entrepreneurship is a growing field that can boost the economy while simultaneously alleviating deprivation, social exclusion and other societal problems; considers, therefore, that entrepreneurship education should include a social dimension and should address such subjects as fair trade, social enterprises, social responsibility of enterprises, and alternative business models such as cooperatives, in order to strive towards a more social, inclusive and sustainable economy;
109. Calls on the Member States to focus on entrepreneurial and financial education, volunteering and foreign language proficiency in education, and also to prioritise these

¹ Commission communication of 10 June 2016 entitled ‘A new skills agenda for Europe: working together to strengthen human capital, employability and competitiveness’ (COM(2016)0381).

skills in VET programmes;

110. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote the concrete employment opportunities associated with VET education and its relevance in the labour market;
111. Calls on the Member States to develop career guidance that would facilitate the identification of pupils' and students' abilities and predispositions and strengthen the process of personalised teaching;
112. Stresses the special educational situation of children and adolescents whose parents travel professionally in Europe, and calls on the Commission to conduct a study to highlight the specific situation of these children and adolescents with regard to the challenges facing them in terms of pre-school and school education;
113. Recommends that the Commission should, acting under Article 349 TFEU, provide greater support to Member States which have outermost regions, with a view to improving their education systems at all levels;
114. Encourages the Member States and regional authorities to regularly assess and monitor the relevance of educational policies, strategies and programmes, also taking into account feedback from teachers and learners, so as to ensure that education systems continue to address the changing needs and evolving socio-economic situation of the country concerned; recommends enhancing links between education policy and other policies so as to foster and assess the efficiency and performance of educational reforms;
115. Reiterates the importance of monitoring the performance and impact assessments of the EU programmes targeting youth employment; stresses the importance of effective and sustainable investment;
116. Appreciates the Commission's activities in the field of modernisation of education systems, and in this context, calls on the Member States to be more involved in and committed to the implementation of proposed improvements;
117. Encourages the Member States, in collaboration with the Commission, to support educational institutions in modernising reform processes by assigning specialised contact points at national and/or regional level to provide relevant information, guidance and assistance;
118. Reiterates the need to create rights-based and gender-sensitive learning environments enabling students to learn about and stand up for human rights, including women's and children's rights, fundamental values and civic participation, the rights and responsibilities of citizens, democracy and the rule of law, being confident in their identity, knowing their voice is heard and feeling valued by their communities;

Early childhood education and care (ECEC)

119. Calls on the Member States to ensure free and fair access to high-quality ECEC, and encourages them to take the necessary measures to ensure that the material and financial conditions are met to enable every child to access early childhood education without

- discrimination, and to provide more nursery and kindergarten places for children;
120. Calls on the Commission to consider establishing a common European framework for ECEC, building on the principles proposed in the Quality Framework; supports setting a European benchmark for the quality of ECEC, to be designed in cooperation with teachers and professionals in the sector and in line with national or regional quality indicators;
 121. Believes that Member States should make greater efforts to encourage the governing bodies of ECEC institutions to investigate the possibility of pursuing Europe-wide projects; points out that professionals would, in that way, be able to keep track of teaching innovations and thus make pre-school education more meaningful;
 122. Maintains that early childhood institutions should not be excluded from the European Education Area; considers that these institutions should likewise promote the exchange of knowledge among Member States, especially for purposes of sharing information when implementing innovative projects;
 123. Recommends that cooperation between ECEC staff and pre-primary school teachers be increased to improve the quality of education and links between educational levels, prepare pre-schoolers for the transition to primary school, and focus on children's development; highlights the importance of relations between ECEC providers and children's parents and guardians, between school staff and children, and among children themselves;
 124. Encourages the Member States to increase funding for ECEC, as well as economic support and initiatives (such as tax reductions, subsidies, or waiving of fees) for parents and guardians, especially those from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, in order to enable and encourage their use of ECEC services;
 125. Calls on the Member States to further invest in staff in order to attract more people to follow the relevant career path and thus ensure availability of highly qualified staff for ECEC;
 126. Calls on the Member States to reform and improve their systems with a view to achieving the Barcelona objective of having at least 33 % of children under three participating in ECEC programmes;

School education

127. Encourages the implementation of a 'Whole School Approach' in order to increase social inclusion, accessibility, democratic governance, quality and diversity in education, as well as to address early school leaving and the issue of NEETs, while also aiming to put learning outcomes, learners' needs, wellbeing and involvement in school life at the core of all activity; advocates promoting and supporting democratic school students' representative structures;
128. Highlights that the large number of NEETs – almost 6.3 million young people aged between 15 and 24 – could be reduced by action to prevent early school leaving and by making schools more practical and connected to their local environment, as well as by

- developing links with local companies, local authorities, social institutions and NGOs; is of the opinion that early school leaving, which is one of the reasons for young people subsequently becoming NEETs, could be combated by tackling poverty and social exclusion; believes that it is also important to support students in finding their own learning methods, including online courses and blended learning; welcomes the implementation of relevant and engaging curricula and of strong and well-developed guidance systems, with high-quality counselling and guidance services for all students;
129. Stresses the need to strengthen opportunities and structures for internal and external collaboration at school level, including interdisciplinary cooperation, team teaching, school clusters and interactions with actors involved in the design and implementation of learning paths, including parents; notes the importance of international exchanges and school partnerships, through programmes such as Erasmus+ and e-Twinning;
 130. Stresses that school education should also be made more flexible in order to improve response to the actual living circumstances of students, e.g. by greater use of online services, so that, for example, blended learning opportunities can also be improved;
 131. Believes that the earlier people acquire STEAM skills, the better their chances of future educational and professional success will be; therefore, encourages more STEAM initiatives at school level, and in tandem, the promotion of human and social sciences, through enhanced and differentiated cooperation with higher education and scientific research institutions, among other means;
 132. Encourages the Commission to support the development among young Europeans of language skills in formal and non-formal educational settings, by developing innovative multilingual pedagogies, sharing best multilingual pedagogical practices, and enhancing teachers' language competences;
 133. Encourages the Member States and the Commission to support existing initiatives and develop and implement all-encompassing policies on inclusive education and strategies aimed at targeting specific needs, promoting the rights of the most vulnerable groups, creating more inclusive learning environments and furthering openness and engagement; calls on the Commission to develop, together with the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, innovative methods and educational tools in order to foster inclusion and meet individual pupils' needs;
 134. Recommends that the Member States integrate learning about the EU into their secondary school curricula, in order to familiarise students with the functioning of the Union, its history and the values of European citizenship;
 135. Stresses the importance of including and promoting, in school curricula and educational content, knowledge about the history of women's emancipation, and in particular women's suffrage, including on the occasion of symbolic anniversaries (e.g. 2018 as 100 years since women won the right to vote in Poland and Germany), in order to raise awareness with a view to promoting women's rights within an educational framework;
 136. Emphasises the importance of health and relationships education, which must include teaching children and young people about relationships based on equality, consent, respect and reciprocity, as well as teaching about women's and girls' rights, including

reproductive and sexual health and rights, as a tool to fight stereotypes, prevent gender-based violence and promote well-being;

137. Encourages Red Cross training in schools for students, teachers and non-teaching staff, as an aid to learning essential first aid skills and being able to act in an emergency;
138. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to develop a pilot scheme to support exchanges of secondary students under which they would spend at least half an academic year in another Member State;
139. Calls on the Member States to limit to the necessary minimum the use of standardised tests as instruments to assess the level of acquired knowledge and skills;
140. Encourages the Member States to consider adopting measures to ensure the recognition of study periods abroad that do not lead to a diploma or qualification; invites the Commission, in this regard, to propose guidelines for the recognition of study periods abroad, taking into consideration the existing best practices of Member States, the principle of mutual appreciation between educational systems, and the key competences-based approach, as well as the specificities of national educational systems and cultures;
141. Calls on the Commission, Member States and regional authorities to address the issues of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, addiction and violence by developing, at school level and in cooperation with the direct beneficiaries and all stakeholders (in particular teachers, parents' associations and specialist NGOs), prevention programmes and awareness-raising campaigns embracing inclusion;
142. Recommends that Member States, their educational institutions and the Commission engage more actively in promoting the practice of sports among pupils;

Higher education

143. Calls for the creation of the European Education Area to be based on the potential of existing frameworks, e.g. the European Research Area, the Innovation Union and the European Higher Education Area, in such a way that they can strengthen and complement each other;
144. Encourages the Member States to invest at least 2 % of their respective GDPs in higher education and to comply with the EU benchmark of investing 3 % of Union GDP in R&D by 2020;
145. Suggests that Member States and regional authorities, when using national and regional resources and allocating European structural and investment funds, give priority to educational programmes and to fostering cooperation between higher education, the world of work, industry, research communities and society as a whole;
146. Calls on the Member States to foster more inclusive and accessible mobility of students, trainees, apprentice teachers, researchers and administrative staff, since this contributes both to their personal and professional development as well as to a higher quality of learning, teaching, research and administration; advocates facilitating mobility for all

through, among other measures, smooth recognition of credits and academic and professional qualifications obtained abroad, adequate funding and personal assistance, social rights guarantees, and, where appropriate, the incorporation of educational mobility as part of education programmes; notes, in this regard, the new initiatives on the part of the Commission, including the eCard to facilitate student mobility across borders;

147. Takes the view that funding for the mobility of teaching staff and researchers needs to be increased by providing for study/research grants in addition to reimbursement of expenses, extending the duration of stays abroad, simplifying authorisation procedures, and promoting forms of teacher/researcher co-tutoring;
148. Calls on the Commission to encourage Member States to boost mobility in adult education, as already provided for in the Erasmus+ programme;
149. Stresses the importance of guaranteeing the mutual cross-border recognition and compatibility of qualifications and academic degrees, thus strengthening the system of quality assurance at EU level and in all countries that have joined the European Higher Education Area;
150. Stresses the need to develop comprehensive strategies and appropriate tools for determining the quality of new modes of teaching and learning, e.g. e-learning, Massive Open On-line Courses (MOOCs) and open access resources; recognises, in this context, the role of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and other relevant European networks in contributing to the establishment of quality assurance;
151. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote the renewed EU agenda for higher education among HEIs, regional and local authorities and employers, with a view to addressing HEIs' and students' needs and the challenges facing them, creating links with local and regional actors, reaching out to local communities, fostering local and regional development and innovation, building inclusive and connected higher education systems, strengthening collaboration with the world of work, and addressing regional skills needs; also encourages HEIs to become more involved in local and regional development by participating in cooperative community projects, among other actions;
152. Calls for fulfilment of the commitments of the New Skills Agenda, including supporting Member States in efforts to make more information available on how graduates progress in the labour market; welcomes, in this context, the proposal to set up a European graduate tracking system by 2020; considers that graduate tracking information and the collection of accurate and relevant data (not only at national but also at EU level) are essential for quality assurance and the development of quality education;
153. Encourages the Commission to increase its efforts to narrow the research and innovation gap among Member States and regions by proposing new initiatives in the framework of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA), and to support the combination of research and teaching activities for MSCA beneficiaries who are preparing for an academic career;

154. Suggests that the EU STE(A)M coalition should encompass a wide range of disciplines in order to prepare students for life and work in a context of dynamically changing reality;
155. Supports the awarding of credits under the European Credit Transfer Scheme (ECTS) to students for community volunteer work, as a means of contributing to students' professional and personal development;
156. Emphasises that international cooperation programmes, cultural diplomacy and policy dialogues with third countries in the field of higher education not only enable knowledge to flow more freely, but also contribute to the enhancement of the quality and international standing of European higher education, while boosting research and innovation, fostering mobility and intercultural dialogue, and promoting international development in accordance with the EU's external action objectives;
157. Is of the opinion that future-proofed education systems should include learning for sustainability and peace-building and should be part of a broader reflection on occupational literacy in the context of the increasing digitisation and robotisation of European societies, focusing not only on economic growth but also on the personal development and improved health and wellbeing of learners;
158. Calls on the Member States to promote cooperation between educational institutions and the world of work in order to better prepare learners to enter the labour market, as well as to take action on the need to address skills mismatches and skills shortages; encourages, in this regard, the inclusion of high-quality relevant work placements, recognised through ECTS credits, in higher education programmes and VET schemes, cooperation between higher education establishments, the world of work, the research sector and local and regional economic actors in the creation of quality dual education and vocational training systems, career guidance, apprenticeships, internships, and also reality-based training, which should be a part of vocational and higher education curricula; further calls on the Member States to secure the right of every young person in the EU to be offered a job, an apprenticeship, additional training or combined work and training;
159. Considers that in order to ensure the provision of quality apprenticeship or traineeship placements, it is fundamental that contracts are in place delineating the roles and responsibilities of all parties and specifying the length, learning objectives and tasks corresponding to clearly identified skills to be developed, employment status, adequate compensation/remuneration, including for overtime, social protection and security schemes under the applicable national law, applicable collective agreements, or both;
160. Underlines the need to offer proper learning and training content and decent working conditions for traineeships and apprenticeships so as to ensure their crucial role in the transition from education to professional life; stresses that traineeships and apprenticeships should never be used as a substitute for jobs, nor should trainees or apprentices be treated as cheap or even unpaid labour;
161. Suggests that universities and training centres provide basic and further training for vocational education teachers, with contributions from experts in the work areas corresponding to the specialist fields covered by vocational courses;

The teacher as a guarantor of quality teaching

162. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to support teachers in incorporating innovation and technology into teaching through the strengthening of their digital skills, as well as providing them with relevant resources and support, e.g. by increasing the provision of refresher training and by developing online communities and open educational resources and courses;
163. Supports the creation of an Academy of Teaching and Learning, as a complementary facility enabling teachers to train and exchange best practices at European level, by providing a centre for online exchange, sharing experiences and mutual learning, as well as being a place for regular meetings in the form of workshops, seminars, and conferences to promote teachers' collaboration, enhance the quality of teaching, and foster teachers' professional development; calls on the Commission to propose a project for the creation of such an academy, based also on the know-how of the European Schoolnet Academy;
164. Recalls the importance of pedagogical training for teaching staff in HEIs and of considering pedagogical competences as being at least of equal importance to research competences in the recruitment process; highlights the role of research-based education and pedagogical research in terms of stimulating a student-centred approach to learning and teaching, encouraging active learning, enhancing skills development, and improving teaching methodology;
165. Calls on the Member States to introduce incentives to attract and motivate young people and qualified teachers to enter and work in the education system;
166. Emphasises the need to recognise the professional status of ECEC employees;
167. Calls for support for teachers delivering multilingual courses, since these are an important factor in the internationalisation of education;
168. Highlights the role of intercultural learning as part of teacher education with a view to enhancing teachers' intercultural competences, in order to promote European culture and common values as well as a European dimension of teaching; notes that intercultural competences are essential for working in increasingly diverse societies, as well as fostering internationalisation at school level;
169. Is aware of the need to create synergies between the knowledge of teachers and the technological potential of pupils, in order to maximise learning outcomes;
170. Advocates the incorporation of teacher training placements guided by trained mentors, at all stages of teacher education;
171. Encourages teachers and school leaders to promote and take a leading role in implementing innovation in the school environment and fostering its development;
172. Encourages HEIs to prioritise, support and reward the improvement and updating of the pedagogical knowledge of higher education teachers and researchers, including educational possibilities offered by modern technology, as a means of enhancing

student achievement and teaching efficacy;

173. Supports the development of new, innovative and ambitious teaching techniques and educational standards in order to better respond to the needs of students and HEIs, as well as to the challenges of a rapidly changing world;
174. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

'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.¹

¹ 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.

11.4.2018

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

for the Committee on Culture and Education

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

Rapporteur for opinion (*): Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz

(*) Associated committee – Rule 54 of the Rules of Procedure

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs calls on the Committee on Culture and Education, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Notes that EU Member States bear the responsibility for their education and training systems and the EU helps them to set joint goals and share good practices;
2. Recalls that education, which should deepen critical, analytical and independent thinking and be focused on cultural and societal aspects, as well as on the needs of the labour market, is essential for responsible citizenship based on a culture of mutual respect and fundamental values, and is a fundamental human right;
3. Recalls, in addition, the first principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights, that everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning in order to acquire and develop skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labour market;
4. Notes, moreover, in the context of growing socio-economic divisions in the Union over the past decade, that quality education at all levels helps to minimise inequalities, including intergenerational socio-economic inequalities, and gender stereotypes and inequalities, and plays an important role in enhancing upward social mobility and convergence;
5. Highlights that the quality of teachers and their freedom to conform to education programmes and choose education methods is a prerequisite for quality education,

which provides the best foundation for pupils to go on and succeed in the labour market;

6. Particularly emphasises, against this background, that access to quality education should be provided to all children and students in the EU, including those with disabilities, and irrespective of their parents' socio-economic, geographical or cultural status; calls on the Member States, therefore, to invest in quality education and training systems;
7. Believes that the completion of secondary education should be free and obligatory, and calls on the Member States to increase their efforts to give people who have dropped out of primary or secondary school a chance to re-enrol and complete their studies;
8. Stresses the need to maintain schools and educational facilities locally in all regions of the EU as an essential foundation for good education and equality of opportunity in the harmonisation of living and working conditions in Europe;
9. Points out that in the post-industrial era, changes to the advanced character of the EU economy, as well as the digitalisation, automation and robotisation of the EU labour market, has increased demand for high-level qualifications and skills (the rapid changes in ICT related-sectors, for instance, will result in 756 000 unfilled vacancies for ICT professionals in the whole EU economy by 2020), while demand for low-level qualifications and skills has fallen¹; calls on the Commission to undertake a thorough assessment of the impact that digitalisation, automation and robotisation is having and will have on the number and types of jobs;
10. Notes that the qualifications of the workforce often do not match the needs of the labour market, and, with this in mind, that despite strong demand in the labour market for high-level skills and the response of the education system in the form of the significant development of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)², approximately 20% of Europeans, including 1 % of university graduates, lack basic skills such as literacy and numeracy^{2, 3}; recalls, moreover, that 44% of Europeans lack basic digital skills^{2, 3}, which creates serious barriers to entry into the technologically advanced labour market, as well as to civic and active participation in society;
11. Notes that Member States should guarantee that nobody graduates from school without basic skills, including basic digital skills; underlines the fact that most jobs now require greater literacy, numeracy, digital literacy and other crucial skills and that modern education systems should therefore combine all eight key competences outlined in the Commission's proposal for a Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, which also include knowledge and attitudes; welcomes the fact that the proposal also defines digital skills as basic skills;
12. Stresses, against this background, the importance of making the maximum possible use of digitalisation in all forms of education; calls on the Member States and regions, therefore, to promote digital and digitalised education in all types of schools;

¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=7711>

² Source: Education and Training Monitor 2017; OECD Survey of Adult Skills 2016.

³ http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/587312/IPOL_STU%282016%29587312_EN.pdf, https://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/Skills_Matter_Further_Results_from_the_Survey_of_Adult_Skills.pdf [Annex A, table A3.3(L), A 3.3(N)].

13. Calls on the Member States, in particular, to improve the digital literacy of citizens through adequate education from an early stage which develops language, logical and mathematical skills, as well as symbolic thought, based on coding, programming and related activities that are important for jobs in high-tech sectors and, more generally, in the digitalised labour market; observes that these skills are universal in nature and may be useful in many other sectors as well as in everyday life; welcomes, in this regard, such Commission initiatives as the Coding Week and the Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition, and calls on the Member States to develop comprehensive national digital skills strategies, which might help and support teachers and learners alike to acquire e-skills;
14. Calls on the Member States to ensure that the mastery of basic skills should be a prerequisite for graduation from every school from primary to university level, including adult educational centres, and calls on the Member States to prioritise the upskilling of adults with low skill levels; welcomes, in this regard, the Upskilling Pathways initiative – an important programme in the New **Skills Agenda** for Europe;
15. Considers it critical that teacher training involves digital literacy and skills, both at university level and for professional training throughout teachers' careers;
16. Highlights that basic digital skills and digital literacy developed through education systems should include teaching on a reasonable use of electronic equipment, in order to prevent the overuse of computers, the internet or mobile phones, and to save children from behavioural addictions to e-games and social media;
17. Stresses the importance of lifelong careers guidance in order to ensure participation in suitable, flexible and high-quality training and career paths; highlights the need to promote apprenticeship and training possibilities through awareness-raising initiatives for students, their parents, adult learners, education and training providers, employers and public employment services;
18. Recalls the importance of lifelong learning, through upskilling and reskilling, in opening up new possibilities for active inclusion and in developing skills and qualifications, particularly for the low skilled, the long-term unemployed, people with special needs, older generations and migrants; stresses the need to strive for an individual approach to career development and lifelong education and training; encourages the Commission to support the Member States in developing training and educational programmes facilitating active inclusion and the reintegration of adults returning to the labour market;
19. Calls on the Member States to actively promote, and disseminate information about, the opportunities available for low-qualified adults to improve their skills, including access to guidance and careers advice services; stresses that this information must be available in accessible and user-friendly formats;
20. Points out that in spite of the 2 million job vacancies in the EU, more than 30 % of qualified young people with diplomas are in jobs that do not match their skills or aspirations, while 40 % of European employers have trouble finding people with the

required skills¹;

21. Observes that skills mismatch can be attributed not only to inadequate qualifications, but also under- and over-qualification;
22. Stresses that skills mismatch and shortages in the labour market are significant factors in both unemployment and unfilled job vacancies²; considers that these worrying phenomena should be tackled by, inter alia:
 - making education systems cooperate more closely with business and social partners, such as employers' associations and trade unions, for example by inviting professionals and practitioners to play a role in the creation of apprenticeships and internships of real educational value;
 - improving mobility between cross-border regions, including the exchange of expertise at the highest political level; and
 - focusing on a holistic development of students, not only their employability, but also social and civic skills; encourages Member States, in this regard, to focus more on transversal and soft skills, intercultural skills, critical and creative thinking, and problem solving and entrepreneurship, all skills which are required in the labour market;
23. Observes that different jobs may require the same skills and consist of the same tasks; is of the opinion, therefore, that education systems should be skill- and task-oriented to enable swift transitions between jobs; highlights that, in the context of societal and labour market evolution, education systems should focus on equipping students with the right set of skills, competences and knowledge to help them become active European citizens and be successful in the labour market; stresses that developing and strengthening skills is a continuous process which cuts across all levels of education and into the labour market; considers that skills and competences should be used in both the education process and in the recognition of education and qualifications through the system of micro-credentials – short, certified courses;
24. Welcomes, in this regard, the Commission communication on a New Skills Agenda for Europe³, which proposes solutions to skills mismatch and shortages and for finding the right system of skills recognition; recalls the importance of the 10 actions launched as part of this agenda, which provide the right training and support the acquisition of skills for people in the EU; takes the view that understanding the trends and patterns of demand for skills and jobs enables people to make better career choices, find quality jobs and improve their life chances; calls, therefore, for further skills forecasting;
25. Notes, furthermore, that the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) forecasts a parallel rise in skills from both the demand and supply side until 2025, and that demand for high-level skills in the labour market is outgrowing

¹ <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/3072>,

https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_publication/field_ef_document/ef1502en_0.pdf

² <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/assisting-eu-countries-skills-matching>

³ Commission communication of 10 June 2016 entitled 'A new skills agenda for Europe: working together to strengthen human capital, employability and competitiveness' (COM(2016)0381).

supply from the education system; recalls, in particular, that a shortage of employees in STEM-based sectors in the EU is predicted to reach over 200 000 by 2020; calls for improved cooperation with social partners, in order to take account of labour market needs, and for further skills forecasting for the development of the labour market; welcomes the fact that users of the future Europass platform will be provided with skills intelligence to guide them in their learning and career choices;

26. Notes that a considerable number of new jobs are being created in industries relating to renewable energy, and that green sectors and occupations should be addressed in school curricula accordingly;
27. Highlights that the large number of NEETs – almost 6.3 million young people aged 15–24 are neither in employment nor in education and training – could be reduced by preventing early school leaving, and by making schools more practical and connected to their local environment, by developing links with local companies, local authorities, social institutions and NGOs; is of the opinion that early school leaving, which is one of the reasons for young people subsequently becoming NEETs, could be combated by tackling poverty and social exclusion; believes that it is also important to support students in finding their own learning methods, including online courses and blended learning; welcomes the implementation of relevant and engaging curricula and of strong and well-developed guidance systems, with high-quality counselling and guidance services for all students;
28. Points out the need to improve skills levels and qualifications among migrants and refugees; highlights that action, both at EU and national level, is required to support effective integration into the labour market, as well as labour market reforms, in order to benefit existing skills, knowledge and qualifications; recalls the need to improve systems for the recognition and validation of skills and qualifications, including those obtained outside the EU;
29. Greatly welcomes the fact, that as part of efforts to modernise school education in the EU, the Commission makes particular reference to the importance of promoting inclusive education by exchanging best practices on the integration of migrant pupils and by imparting common values;
30. Stresses, in addition, that retraining and other practical education and training measures for refugees and migrants should be further encouraged;
31. Stresses the special educational circumstances of children and adolescents whose parents travel professionally in Europe, and calls on the Commission to conduct a study to highlight their specific situation with regard to the challenges that they face in terms of pre-school and school education;
32. Considers that schools should be supportive and provide inclusive education to all learners, especially those with disabilities; emphasises the need to include children/pupils with disabilities in education, so they can lead independent lives and be fully integrated into society as active participants and real contributors; is of the opinion that thanks to current technological developments, pupils with disabilities are offered easier access to education courtesy of formal and non-formal learning methods; calls on the Member States to facilitate access to mainstream inclusive quality education, taking

into account the needs of all students with all types of disabilities, which means, for instance, providing bilingual inclusive education for deaf children with regard to their special linguistic needs; calls on the Member States to monitor schools on their non-rejection policy;

33. Points out that the pace of change in the labour market, the diversity of educational systems, workers' increasing mobility, and rising levels of migration are requiring employers and education providers to recognise the qualifications, skills and competences acquired, including in non-formal and informal learning¹, in line with a comparable assessment system and drawing on the best practices of Member States that have already introduced tools of this kind; highlights, in this context, the importance of policy response aimed at excluded and vulnerable groups in the labour market;
34. Recalls that the Council Recommendation from 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning² called on the Member States to have in place, no later than 2018, arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning;
35. Recalls the importance of improving or introducing procedures for the recognition of informal and non-formal education³, drawing on the best practices of Member States which have already introduced tools of this kind;
36. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to continue their efforts to enable the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning, and calls on the Member States to recognise the importance and usefulness of micro-credentials; welcomes the development of massive open online courses (MOOCs), which could broaden access to education for underprivileged groups or those whose circumstances prevent them from attending on-site classes and therefore increase their opportunities for a better job and life, thereby making it possible to combat unemployment, particularly among young people;
37. Calls on the Member States to internationalise education systems and expand student mobility programmes to better prepare students for the EU labour market, in which a lack of skills in foreign languages and cultures is the first barrier to mobility; stresses that student mobility programmes have contributed to European integration and have a positive impact on the employment of young people; calls, in this context, for special attention to be given to the cross-border aspect of education, for example by promoting the learning and teaching of neighbouring languages and, in particular, to include new academic priorities in this area, in both the academic and vocational pathways; deems it important to ensure that these actions will address all types of schools and all levels of education, so as to make the EU labour market available to graduates from not only universities but also the vocational education and training (VET) system;
38. Calls on the Commission to come up with a proposal to ensure that mobility programmes, such as Erasmus+, are mutually recognised by the Member States, and to ensure sustained increased investments in Erasmus +, as well as financial and individual

¹ See European Parliament resolution of 14 September 2017 on a new skills agenda for Europe. Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0360.

² OJ C 398, 22.12.2012, p. 1.

³ European Parliament resolution of 14 September 2017 on a new skills agenda for Europe.

support; acknowledges the fact that in 2016, Erasmus+ supported 725 000 Europeans with mobility grants to help them study, train, teach, work or volunteer abroad, and is on track to meet its target of supporting 3.7 % of young people in the EU between 2014 and 2020;

39. Proposes that the Commission maintains entrepreneurship education and training as one of the priorities for a future Erasmus+ programme in the next financial period (post-2020) in all its actions, including mobility;
40. Regrets, in the context of growing demand for high-level competences and skills, the fact that, over time, the significant development of higher education is resulting in the inflation of diplomas, with a simultaneous growing shortage of vocational skills and qualifications, leading to imbalances in the labour market;
41. Calls, in this connection, for the creation of more skills geared towards the job market and a massive increase in the proportion of practice-oriented training; calls on the Member States in particular to develop more tertiary vocational education and training, to enable students to acquire high-level qualifications relating to practical skills and training; highlights, in this context, the importance of permeability between different education systems;
42. Observes that, regardless of growing student numbers, the share of graduates with high-level skills is differentiated between the Member States, and that the proportion of graduates with very low-level skills ranges from between 10 % and over 50 %; insists that evaluation criteria in higher education policies should also include qualitative criteria, for example the benchmark for Member States to increase student numbers¹ should not only focus on the number of diplomas but also on the actual level of skills;
43. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote the renewed EU agenda for higher education among HEIs, regional and local authorities, and employers, with a view to addressing the needs of and challenges faced by both HEIs and students, by creating links with local and regional actors, reaching out to local communities, fostering local and regional development and innovation, building inclusive and connected higher education systems, strengthening collaboration with the world of work and addressing regional skills needs;
44. Underlines, moreover, the shortage of inclusive and high-quality vocational guidance in the Member States and considers that only attractive, sought after vocational education and training programmes designed with the input and cooperation of social partners can promote this choice among students;
45. Stresses, therefore, the need to improve the quality of vocational guidance in schools, and that the provision of bespoke educational guidance and support at all levels of education and training may improve access to the labour market;
46. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote the concrete employment opportunities associated with VET education and the relevance of VET education in the

¹ Education and Training Monitor 2017.

labour market;

47. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to make vocational and educational training more visible, by promoting platforms such as EURES, to ensure that it is accessible to all, gender balanced and non-discriminatory, and to guarantee that it has sufficient financing and to enhance its quality and attractiveness, and to promote dual education, work-based learning and reality-based learning in all forms at every level and form of education, including higher education, in order to ensure stronger ties between the education and labour markets and to provide permeability between different types of education; stresses, in this connection, the need for modern, technical equipment at educational venues, with the appropriate digital infrastructure; calls for the promotion of apprenticeship and entrepreneurship policies for young people to be developed and strengthened, in order to streamline young people's entry into the labour market;
48. Considers that in order to ensure the provision of quality apprenticeship or traineeship placements, it is fundamental that contracts are in place delineating the roles and responsibilities of all parties and specifying the length, learning objectives and tasks corresponding to clearly identified skills to be developed, employment status, adequate compensation/remuneration, including for overtime, social protection and security schemes under the applicable national law, applicable collective agreements, or both;
49. Underlines the need to offer proper learning and training content and decent working conditions for traineeships and apprenticeships so as to ensure their crucial role in the transition from education to professional life; stresses that traineeships and apprenticeships should never be used as a substitute for jobs, nor should trainees or apprentices be considered for use as a cheap or even unpaid labour force;
50. Recalls that, today, excellence in education and training requires genuine integration between school and work, and highlights that this integration boosts both the quality of the numeracy and literacy learnt by children, and the professional skills they need to acquire; welcomes, in this respect, dual education systems and reality-based education – an innovative approach in which schools run real companies offering real products or services, and participate in the labour market;
51. Considers that graduate tracking information and the collection of accurate and relevant data (not only at national but also at EU level) is essential for quality assurance and the development of quality education that is content-based and corresponds to the needs of the labour market, and for reforming education systems to make them more flexible and inclusive;
52. Ensures that the career tracking system which monitors graduate employment rates and other career indicators should also be used for the evaluation of school curricula and teaching organisation, not only to boost the chances of graduates in the labour market, but also to strengthen their position and influence on building the economy and creating new jobs;
53. Calls for the collection of sex-disaggregated data on the graduate outcomes from tertiary education and VET, in order to improve the potential use of this data in the context of graduate employment and to assess the quality of education from a gender-based perspective;

54. Stresses that increased investments in education and training systems, as well as their modernisation and adjustment, are a crucial condition for social and economic progress; therefore stresses the importance of ensuring that social investment, especially in education and training for all, is prioritised in the new programming period of the multiannual financial framework for 2020-2026;
55. Calls on the Commission to strengthen its efforts, through the ESF and the European Semester, to support comprehensive public policies in the Member States focused on providing smoother transitions from education and (long-term) unemployment into work and specifically for the full implementation of the measures at national level outlined in the Council recommendation on the labour market integration of the long-term unemployed;
56. Reiterates the importance of monitoring the performance and impact assessments of the EU programmes targeting youth employment; notes the importance of effective and sustainable investments.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	27.3.2018						
Result of final vote	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 100px;">+:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">26</td> </tr> <tr> <td>-:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">22</td> </tr> <tr> <td>0:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> </tr> </table>	+:	26	-:	22	0:	0
+:	26						
-:	22						
0:	0						
Members present for the final vote	Guillaume Balas, Tiziana Beghin, Brando Benifei, Mara Bizzotto, Enrique Calvet Chambon, David Casa, Michael Detjen, Lampros Fountoulis, Elena Gentile, Arne Gericke, Marian Harkin, Czesław Hoc, Agnes Jongerius, Adam Kósa, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Patrick Le Hyaric, Jeroen Lenaers, Thomas Mann, Dominique Martin, Miroslavs Mitrofanovs, Emilian Pavel, João Pimenta Lopes, Georgi Pirinski, Marek Plura, Sofia Ribeiro, Robert Rochefort, Claude Rolin, Siôn Simon, Romana Tomc, Ulrike Trebesius, Marita Ulvskog, Renate Weber						
Substitutes present for the final vote	Georges Bach, Amjad Bashir, Heinz K. Becker, Karima Delli, Tania González Peñas, Ivari Padar, Anne Sander, Sven Schulze, Jasenko Selimovic, Csaba Sógor, Neoklis Sylikiotis, Ivo Vajgl						
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Jude Kirton-Darling, Ana Miranda, James Nicholson, Massimo Paolucci						

4.4.2018

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

for the Committee on Culture and Education

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

Rapporteur: Michaela Šojdrová

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality calls on the Committee on Culture and Education, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

- A. whereas, even though the decision to improve the quality of education lies with the Member States, the EU has a key supporting role in setting joint goals and promoting the sharing of good practices based on Articles 165 and 167 of the TFEU;
- B. whereas gender equality is a core principle of the European Union enshrined in the Treaties and should be reflected in all EU policies, not least in the sphere of education and culture;
- C. whereas education offers a unique opportunity to empower girls and women and to address all forms of discrimination and stereotypes, but this potential has not been fully realised within the European Union; whereas, according to 2014 Eurostat data, more women than men (42.3 % versus 33.6 % respectively) go on to higher education, but whereas women opt in greater numbers for the humanities than for scientific fields; whereas among third-level education students only 9.6 % of women students study ICT-related degrees, compared with 30.6 % of men; whereas the impact of gender stereotypes on education and training can determine life choices, which have implications for the labour market, where women face both horizontal and vertical segregation; whereas women often face violence, which can be eradicated through education; whereas women remain largely underrepresented in initiatives aimed at further fostering e-education and e-skills such as EU Code Week, ICT for Better Education, the Startup Europe Leaders Club and the Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs;
- D. whereas access to high-quality education is fundamental for personal empowerment, responsible citizenship, helping to develop understanding of and respect for human

rights and common fundamental values, ensuring social cohesion, and countering socio-economic and gender inequalities, gender stereotypes and violence; whereas education is a powerful instrument to overcome deeply rooted gender-based stereotypes and discrimination; whereas education systems should not only be focused on the labour market but also on human, societal and cultural needs; whereas all children should have access to high-quality education, without discrimination; whereas the socio-economic divide has widened in Europe over the past few decades, and whereas inequality is strongly interlinked with employment opportunities and types; whereas it is essential that education, access to which is a fundamental human right, receive adequate funding on a continuous basis; whereas teachers play a key role in shaping the personal, civic and social education of their pupils, including where gender issues and social inequalities are concerned;

- E. whereas austerity measures and severe cutbacks in public spending have generally reduced the budget for public education, which has had a negatively effect on young people and students, in particular women and girls;
- F. whereas entrepreneurship is often associated with skills relating to proactive project management, negotiation and pro-activeness; whereas these skills should be encouraged and fostered;
- G. whereas digitalisation has revolutionised and fundamentally changed the way people access and provide information, which has a great potential in the field of education, including in terms of educational opportunities for women and girls; whereas there is a significant gender gap in access to professional and educational opportunities in relation to information and communication technologies (ICT) and computer skills;
- H. whereas women constitute only 20 % of science professionals and account for just 27 % of engineering graduates¹; whereas only 29 women per 1 000 female graduates, compared with 95 per 1000 of their male counterparts, hold an undergraduate degree in ICT, with only 3 % of all female graduates having a degree in this discipline (compared with almost 10 % of male graduates), and whereas only 4 in 1 000 women will go on to work in the ICT sector; whereas increasing the number of women in ICT, which is one of the highest paying sectors, mainly through their inclusion in ICT and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education and university degrees, could contribute to their financial empowerment and independence, thus reducing the total gender pay gap; whereas 60 % of school students in the EU never use digital equipment in their classrooms; whereas few women are in decision-making positions in the science and technology sectors; whereas more female role models are needed in traditionally male-dominated fields;
- I. whereas lifelong learning plays an important role in increasing women's competitiveness and employability in the workplace; whereas only 15 %² of women with lower levels of education continue to participate in lifelong education and training; whereas this number needs to increase if women are to overcome the difficulties they

¹ European Commission: The Education and Training Monitor 2017, available at https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/monitor2017_en.pdf

² EIGE, Gender Equality Index 2017.

encounter in updating their skills to match the needs of the changing labour market;

- J. whereas disproportionate overrepresentation of women in certain professions, such as teaching, can potentially have the effect of reducing the status of the profession and lowering wages;
 - K. whereas national authorities must encourage gender equality in educational institutions by every means in their power, and whereas gender equality education should cut across school curricula and syllabuses; whereas European and national authorities must ensure that teaching materials contain no discriminatory content;
 - L. whereas a significant number of girls and boys from poor socio-economic backgrounds do not have access to equal education owing to low living standards;
 - M. whereas parents play an important role in the education of their children, and should therefore be actively involved in all efforts and policies aimed at modernising education;
 - N. whereas there is a need to maintain schools and training facilities in the local community in all regions of the EU as an essential foundation for good education and equal opportunities for girls;
1. Encourages the Member States to ensure equal opportunities within their education systems for all students, especially for those from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and to monitor their equal access to high-quality education; takes the view that access to school, sometimes physical and geographical, is one of the ways of addressing gender inequalities in education; insists that wider social factors should be taken in to account to improve the situation of marginalised girls in the EU; recalls that a large population of pupils from marginalised populations leave school before completing their studies and/or are educated in segregated schools; takes the view that education is the only way out of poverty and exclusion for marginalised children; points out that poverty and economic hardship have a deep impact on gender equality in education, which also affects girls' access to school and university; therefore encourages initiatives by Member States aimed at reducing direct and indirect education costs for families in need; warmly welcomes the promotion of inclusive education through the exchange of best practices on integration of migrant pupils and information sharing aimed at identifying common values;
 2. Points out that low participation of women and girls in ICT-related education, and later in employment, is a result of a complex interplay of gender stereotyping that starts in the early stages of life and education and continues into the workplace; encourages the Commission and the Member States to combat gender stereotypes and foster gender equality in all levels and types of education, including in relation to gendered subject choices and careers in line with the priorities set out in the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020');
 3. Encourages the Commission and the Member States to openly cooperate within the framework of ET 2020 on finding solutions and sharing best practices on early digital education which are inclusive for girls, including e-skills and coding, as well as in later stages on programmes aimed at increasing the share of women deciding to pursue and

graduating with STEM degrees;

4. Underlines the importance of ensuring digital literacy and the participation of women and girls in ICT education and training; calls on the Commission and the Member States to place greater emphasis on providing education and training opportunities for girls in STEM and ICT fields, as well as on addressing the digital gender gap by developing their digital skills through the inclusion of coding, new media and technologies in education curricula at all levels, including for teaching staff, in order to reduce and remove digital skills gaps; encourages the Member States to introduce age-appropriate ICT education in the early stages of school, with a particular focus on inspiring girls to develop an interest and talent in the digital field, given that girls move away from STEM subjects earlier in their educational path due to the gender stereotypes surrounding these subjects, a lack of role models and a segregation of activities and toys; urges all Member States to invest consistently in information, awareness-raising and education campaigns and to improve the careers advice given to girls and boys by addressing stereotyped perceptions of gender roles as well as gender stereotypes in vocational guidance, not least where science, engineering and new technologies are concerned; points out that this would help to reduce gender segregation in the labour market and strengthen the position of women, while also making it possible to benefit in full from the human capital to be found in girls and women in the EU;
5. Calls on the Member States to fight gender stereotypes in education in order to ensure that women have the same opportunities and freedom of choice in terms of the career they want to pursue; is concerned, in this context, about the stereotypes that persist in learning materials in some Member States and teachers' differing behavioural expectations between girls and boys; points out the need to incorporate the principle of gender equality into both initial and continuing teacher training, as well as in teaching practices, in order to remove any obstacles preventing students from realising their full potential irrespective of their gender; calls on the Member States, when implementing gender equality in the curricula and syllabuses of regional education systems, to pay special attention to the outermost regions, bearing in mind the high rates of violence against women recorded there; stresses that education systems at all levels need to include a gender perspective and take into account the needs of people suffering from discrimination;
6. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that the commitment to gender equality goes beyond statements of principle and political intentions and translates into substantial increases in the efforts and resources invested, bearing in mind the importance of education in bringing about cultural change; calls on the Commission and the Member States to combat all forms of discrimination and harassment in educational settings; calls on the Member States to support the inclusion of objective information on LGBTI issues in school curricula;
7. Recommends that Member States and educational establishments take preventive action on gender-based violence; points to the importance of preventive measures, especially in higher education institutions, to deal with cases of sexual harassment;
8. Stresses the positive effect that sexual and relationship education has on the health and well-being of young people, as well as on the achievement of gender equality and the

empowerment of girls; calls on the Member States to include as part of the school curricula comprehensive sexual education that deals with, among other aspects, sexism, gender roles and the concepts of consent, respect and reciprocity;

9. Stresses the importance of high-quality preschool education and care and recalls that they should be universally accessible, with a view to improving work-life balance, particularly for women and mothers; recalls that preschool education and care play an essential role in properly preparing children for primary school;
10. Stresses the importance of age-relevant, child-friendly education and opposes any kind of undue, premature sexualisation in children's day-care centres, kindergartens or primary schools;
11. Points out that the role and achievements of women in history, science and other fields are not always sufficiently reflected and represented in educational curricula and programmes; highlights the need for the Member States, in cooperation with the Commission in relevant areas, to take steps to present and include women in educational content in a more visible and balanced way; in the same vein, invites the Member States and the Commission to organise actions, including campaigns, to spread knowledge about women in history, science and other fields, with the additional aim of promoting female role models to girls and women at all levels of education;
12. Points out the importance of including and promoting within school curricula and educational content knowledge about the history of women's emancipation, and in particular women's suffrage, including on the occasion of symbolic anniversaries (e.g. 100 years since women won the right to vote in Poland and Germany in 2018) in order to raise awareness with a view to promoting women's rights within an educational framework;
13. Takes the view that entrepreneurship is a driver of growth and job creation and also a way to make economies more competitive and innovative, which helps to empower women;
14. Recalls that, in the framework of modernising higher education in the EU, closer cooperation between higher education institutions, businesses and other stakeholders should be developed, especially in the field of regional innovation, to improve gender equality in entrepreneurial careers;
15. Encourages the Member States to raise public awareness of lifelong learning and to integrate a gender perspective in developing relevant policies and programmes, with a particular focus on women with lower levels of education, both in urban and rural areas, in order to provide them with upskilling opportunities;
16. Calls on the Member States to focus on entrepreneurial and financial education, volunteering and foreign language proficiency in education and to also prioritise these skills in vocational education and training (VET) programmes;
17. Encourages the Member States and educational institutions to ensure increased representation of women on the boards of schools, universities and research institutes, where they are largely underrepresented, and in the governing bodies of school and

student associations, as well as on any task forces working on implementing reforms to educational systems;

18. Urges the Member States to support educational establishments in ridding all documents and communication channels of gender-stereotyped language that might exacerbate gender inequality;
19. Calls on the Member States to develop or tighten up national legislation intended to counteract the harmful influence of stereotyped gender roles arising from values conveyed through the media and advertising, which too often undermine the work done in schools in these fields;
20. Recommends that the Commission and/or the Member States establish and promote a European/national award centring on the issue of gender equality in educational institutions, with a view to encouraging best practice.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	27.3.2018
Result of final vote	+: 24 -: 2 0: 3
Members present for the final vote	Daniela Aiuto, Heinz K. Becker, Malin Björk, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, Iratxe García Pérez, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Florent Marcellesi, Angelika Mlinar, Angelika Niebler, Margot Parker, Marijana Petir, Terry Reintke, Liliana Rodrigues, Michaela Šojdrová, Ernest Urtasun, Jadwiga Wiśniewska, Anna Záborská, Maria Gabriela Zoaňá
Substitutes present for the final vote	Stefan Eck, Urszula Krupa, Branislav Škripek, Dubravka Šuica, Mylène Troszczynski, Julie Ward, Josef Weidenholzer
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	John Howarth, Arne Lietz, Francis Zammit Dimech

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

24	+
ALDE	Angelika Mlinar
ECR	Urszula Krupa, Branislav Škripek, Jadwiga Wiśniewska
EFDD	Daniela Aiuto
GUE/NGL	Malin Björk, Stefan Eck
PPE	Heinz K. Becker, Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Angelika Niebler, Dubravka Šuica, Francis Zammit Dimech
S&D	Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Iratxe García Pérez, John Howarth, Arne Lietz, Liliana Rodrigues, Julie Ward, Josef Weidenholzer, Maria Gabriela Zoană
VERTS/ALE	Florent Marcellesi, Terry Reintke, Ernest Urtasun

2	-
EFDD	Margot Parker
ENF	Mylène Troszczynski

3	0
PPE	Marijana Petir, Michaela Šojdrová, Anna Záborská

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

Date adopted	25.4.2018
Result of final vote	+: 27 -: 1 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Isabella Adinolfi, Dominique Bilde, Andrea Bocskor, Angel Dzhambazki, Jill Evans, María Teresa Giménez Barbat, Petra Kammerevert, Svetoslav Hristov Malinov, Curzio Maltese, Stefano Maullu, Momchil Nekov, Yana Toom, Sabine Verheyen, Julie Ward, Bogdan Brunon Wenta, Theodoros Zagorakis, Bogdan Andrzej Zdrojewski, Milan Zver, Krystyna Lybacka
Substitutes present for the final vote	Eider Gardiazabal Rubial, Elena Gentile, Sylvie Guillaume, Emma McClarkin, Martina Michels, Michel Reimon, Liliana Rodrigues, Remo Sernagiotto, Francis Zammit Dimech

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

27	+
ALDE	María Teresa Giménez Barbat, Yana Toom
ECR	Angel Dzhambazki, Emma McClarkin, Remo Sernagiotto
EFDD	Isabella Adinolfi
GUE/NGL	Curzio Maltese, Martina Michels
PPE	Andrea Bocskor, Svetoslav Hristov Malinov, Stefano Maullu, Sabine Verheyen, Bogdan Brunon Wenta, Theodoros Zagorakis, Francis Zammit Dimech, Bogdan Andrzej Zdrojewski, Milan Zver
S&D	Eider Gardiazabal Rubial, Elena Gentile, Sylvie Guillaume, Petra Kammerevert, Krystyna Łybacka, Momchil Nekov, Liliana Rodrigues, Julie Ward
Verts/ALE	Jill Evans, Michel Reimon
1	-
ENF	Dominique Bilde
0	0

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention