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REPORT

on EU development cooperation to enhance access to education and training in
developing countries
(2023/2067(INI))

Committee on Development

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on EU development cooperation to enhance access to education and training in developing countries (2023/2067(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Article 24 thereof, of 12 December 2006,
- having regard to the UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of 28 July 1951,
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 18 December 1979,
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of 20 November 1989,
- having regard to UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on Quality Education,
- having regard to the UN Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022,
- having regard to the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Primary Education Report 2022,
- having regard to the UN Education Cannot Wait Fund,
- having regard to the UN Transforming Education Summit, held in New York in September 2022,
- having regard to the UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty, published on 11 July 2019,
- having regard to the joint publication of the ACT Alliance EU, Caritas Europa, EU-CORD and Islamic Relief Worldwide entitled ‘Engaging with local faith actors and communities’,
- having regard to the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention against Discrimination in Education, adopted on 14 December 1960,
- having regard to the UNICEF, UNESCO and World Bank joint initiative entitled ‘Mission: Recovering Education in 2021’,
- having regard to the background paper prepared for the Global Education Monitoring Report 2021 entitled ‘Faith-based schools, education pluralism, and the right to education’,

- having regard to the Global Partnership for Education programme,
- having regard to its resolution of 3 May 2022 towards an EU strategy to promote education for children in the world: mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic¹,
- having regard to the hearing organised by its Committee on Development on 26 October 2022 on education in emergencies and protracted crises: providing access to education and training for young people,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 24 March 2021 entitled ‘EU strategy on the rights of the child’ (COM(2021)0142),
- having regard to the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI – Global Europe),
- having regard to the Global Gateway Africa – Europe Investment Package,
- having regard to the Abidjan Principles on the human rights obligations of States to provide public education and to regulate private involvement in education, as agreed and adopted in Côte d’Ivoire on 13 February 2019,
- having regard to the Erasmus+ programme,
- having regard to the EU Education in Emergencies programme,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 18 May 2018 on Education in Emergencies and Protracted Crises (COM(2018)0304),
- having regard to the Commission’s guidance note of 29 March 2023 entitled ‘Promoting Equitable Partnerships with Local Responders in Humanitarian Settings’,
- having regard to the statement by Commissioner Lenarčič of 9 September 2022 on the International Day to Protect Education from Attack,
- having regard to the joint statement by the Council and the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission of 7 June 2017 entitled ‘New European Consensus on Development – Our World, Our Dignity, Our Future’,
- having regard to the Safe Schools Declaration, issued by the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, and the 2022-2030 Comprehensive School Safety Framework, published in June 2022, which takes an ‘all-hazards, all-risks’ approach, including natural and climate change-induced hazards, technological hazards, biological and health hazards, conflict and violence as well as everyday dangers and threats,
- having regard to the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict, issued by the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, and the 2023-2025 strategy of the Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector,

¹ [OJ C 465, 6.12.2022, p. 44.](#)

- having regard to the 2016-2025 Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25)² and the Continental Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training to Foster Youth Employment,
- having regard to the Educo position paper of 1 March 2023 entitled ‘Education in Emergencies: an urgent right’,
- having regard to the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report 2021/22,
- having regard to the report by the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 entitled ‘Closing the gap: ensuring there are enough qualified and supported teachers in sub-Saharan Africa’,
- having regard to the report of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Regional Education in Emergencies Working Group of October 2021 entitled ‘Education under attack in West and Central Africa’,
- having regard to the report of the International Monetary Fund’s Fiscal Affairs Department entitled ‘How to Control the Fiscal Costs of Public-Private Partnerships’³ and special report No 09/2018 of the European Court of Auditors entitled ‘Public Private Partnerships in the EU: Widespread shortcomings and limited benefits’⁴,
- having regard to the report by the Independent Evaluation Group of the World Bank Group of 8 June 2022 entitled ‘An Evaluation of International Finance Corporation (IFC) Investments in K-12 Private Schools’⁵ and the IFC Management Response,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 November 2018 on EU development assistance in the field of education⁶,
- having regard to the 2021-2030 EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,
- having regard to the Youth Action Plan in EU external action for 2022-2027,
- having regard to the EU Gender Action Plan III,
- having regard to the UN Population Fund report entitled ‘State of World Population 2022: Seeing the Unseen’⁷,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 March 2023 on Policy Coherence for Development⁸,

² African Union, ‘[Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025 \(CESA 16-25\)](#)’, 2016.

³ International Monetary Fund, ‘[How to Control the Fiscal Costs of Public-Private Partnerships](#)’, 16 October 2018.

⁴ The European Court of Auditors, ‘[Special report 09/2018: Public Private Partnerships in the EU: Widespread shortcomings and limited benefits](#)’, 20 March 2018.

⁵ Independent Evaluation Group of the World Bank Group, ‘[International Finance Corporation Management Response](#)’.

⁶ OJ C 363, 28.10.2020, p. 2 .

⁷ UN Population Fund, ‘[State of World Population 2022: Seeing the Unseen](#)’, 2022.

⁸ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2023)0071.

- having regard to the EU guidelines on children and armed conflict,
 - having regard to the Buenos Aires Commitment adopted at the fifteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, in November 2022, on the fair social organisation of care,
 - having regard to Articles 17 and 208 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
 - having regard to Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union,
 - having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Development (A9-0338/2023),
- A. whereas the EU should support its partner countries in achieving free universal access to education and help shape a learning ecosystem based on acquiring the new skills required in the context of the increasing role of digitalisation, building resilience to cope with climate change-induced challenges and addressing existing shortcomings in educational policies and practices in order to enable their populations to develop their full potential, foster the sustainable development of their home countries and reduce inequalities;
- B. whereas the recent unforeseen major challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences, the Russian aggression against Ukraine, the global food crisis, climate change and its consequences, the biodiversity crises, the increasing number of humanitarian crises and debt-constrained budgets, together with the growing number of protracted crises and conflicts, which should not be forgotten, all serve to exacerbate the existing global learning crisis; whereas according to UNESCO, natural disasters, pandemics and conflicts, and the resulting internal and cross-border displacement, can affect the mental health of entire generations, leaving them uneducated and unprepared to contribute to the social and economic recovery of their country or region;
- C. whereas the global food crisis is impacting children's education worldwide, with girls being the most affected;
- D. whereas households in low- and lower-middle-income countries bear 39 % of the total cost of education compared to just 16 % in high-income countries, according to the UNESCO 2022 Global Education Monitoring Report;
- E. whereas, according to UNESCO, about 244 million children and youth are out of school in 2023⁹ and Afghanistan is the only country in the world where women and girls are denied access to education beyond primary school; whereas currently 80 % of school-aged girls and young women in Afghanistan have been deprived of their fundamental right to education by the Taliban regime;

⁹ Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, an estimated 258 million children were out of school globally, with 132 million boys and 127 million girls being out of school.

- F. whereas the number of crisis-impacted school-aged children requiring educational support is 224 million and about 72 million are out of school completely; whereas, of these 72 million, 53 % are girls, 17 % have functional difficulties and 21 % (about 15 million) have been forcibly displaced;
- G. whereas global humanitarian support for education covered only 22 % of the funds requested in 2021, which is less than for other sectors; whereas, in 2021, only 2.9 % of global humanitarian support was allocated to education, despite the UN target of 4 %;
- H. whereas, in many developing countries, girls continue to face the greatest challenges to accessing primary education and completing the full cycle of initial education, including full secondary and higher education, and participating in training programmes; whereas, in low-income countries, less than two thirds of girls complete their primary education and only 1 in 3 completes lower secondary school; whereas these challenges are particularly worrying in the sub-Saharan region as a result of the different shortcomings and obstacles including poverty and gender-specific inequalities; whereas children with disabilities have insufficient access to education; whereas, for instance, women with disabilities are three times more likely to be illiterate than men without disabilities;
- I. whereas girls remain disproportionately more likely than boys to drop out of the education system early due to the lack of sanitary facilities in schools, the absence of safe facilities and targeted healthcare support, early child marriage and pregnancy, in particular, in the sub-Saharan region; whereas girls are facing significant rates of conflict-related physical and sexual violence, financial and socio-economic factors and the uneven distribution of domestic and parental tasks between men and women, whether they are enrolled in school or not, and, consequently, their job opportunities and social security are being diminished; whereas these restrictions on access to education become even more severe when other discrimination factors intersect with gender, disability, migratory background, geographical location and belonging to minorities;
- J. whereas, in order to meet SDG 4 (access to quality education for all), low- and middle-income countries are lacking 21 % of the necessary funding, amounting to a funding gap of USD 97 billion for education;
- K. whereas challenges are not only posed by the high number of out-of-school children, but also by low completion rates; whereas the completion rate for primary education on a global level is 87 %, compared to only 63 % in the sub-Saharan region;
- L. whereas access to universal education and training is a human right and a cornerstone of sustainable development; whereas it is key to reducing social inequalities and achieving other fundamental rights, making people employable and thereby allowing them to gain access to decent work that they choose to do, empowering youth and, especially, girls and women to gain autonomy and escape poverty and become actors of change in their communities and countries; whereas, to this end, training curricula and market requirements should be consistent;
- M. whereas the quality of education also remains a major challenge in many countries and regions of the Global South, in particular, in the sub-Saharan region, where 9 out of 10 children are not able to read by the age of 10, even though most of them are in school;

whereas the region is also characterised by low learning levels and a high pupil to trained teacher ratio of 58 pupils per trained teacher at primary level and 43 pupils per trained teacher at secondary level; whereas, according to UNESCO estimations, the sub-Saharan region is not only the region with the highest number of out-of-school children, but also the only region where this number is growing and reached 98 million in 2021; whereas vocational education offers a chance to gain skills or competencies for practical jobs related to a specific trade or occupation; whereas, according to the World Bank, the region with the biggest increase in learning poverty rates between 2019 and 2022 was Latin America and the Caribbean, reaching the same level as South Asia;

- N. whereas poverty, conflict, natural disasters, violence and exclusion, child labour and other hardships experienced during developmentally sensitive childhood and adolescence affect young people's ability to learn; whereas the trauma they suffer harms their resilience and coping skills, which can lead to developmental delays for which the education system does not effectively compensate;
- O. whereas, by 2030, an additional 68.8 million teachers will need to be recruited for primary and secondary education in order to expand access and replace those leaving the workforce, according to UNESCO; whereas the proportion of qualified teachers in the sub-Saharan region has steadily declined since 2000 at both primary and secondary level and, in order to reach SDG 4, there is a need to recruit 15 million new teachers by 2030;
- P. whereas the UNESCO Institute for Statistics model on teacher projections to achieve SDG 4 sets a benchmark of 40 students per teacher (40:1) at primary level, 35:1 at lower secondary level and 30:1 at upper secondary level;
- Q. whereas, in many regions of the world, the physical infrastructure for education and learning environments also remain insufficient and underfunded, especially for children with disabilities and with learning difficulties, notably in the sub-Saharan region, where only 47 % of schools have electricity and more than 50 % do not have drinking water or adequate sanitation and menstrual hygiene management facilities for girls and young women;
- R. whereas attacks against schools not only target physical infrastructure, but also threaten the life of teachers and students;
- S. whereas public social services provided by the state, such as education and healthcare, are still not universally available in developing countries; whereas schools and other educational institutions operated by non-state actors, including faith-based organisations and civil society organisations, being inclusive and complementary to national education systems and providing quality universal education, are important to mitigate the gaps where the state falls short in securing access to quality education;
- T. whereas, in addition to the lack of adequate education infrastructure security and funding, the high rates of violence and conflict, gender inequality, the impact of climate change and shortcomings in national regulations, including deficiencies in benchmarking literacy skills and curricula planning, the absence of accessible reading materials and other learning resources and the lack of quality teacher training, pose additional challenges to achieving SDG 4 in developing countries;

- U. whereas the Human Capital Index of sub-Saharan African countries remains low, at 0.4 compared to the global average of 0.57, suggesting that the sub-Saharan region captures only 55 % of its human capital potential; whereas Africa's young population has huge potential to boost sustainable development on the continent, if empowered, thanks to adequate opportunities for education, training, work and decision-making; whereas it is estimated that 70 000 skilled professionals leave Africa each year; whereas the labour market in sub-Saharan Africa is characterised by a rising skills mismatch, low productivity, low paid jobs, high youth unemployment and underemployment against a rising youth population set to reach more than 1 billion by 2050; whereas, according to African Development Bank Group estimations, only 3 million formal jobs are created annually on the continent, while 10 to 12 million youth are entering the labour market every year; whereas the NEET rates (proportion of youth not in employment, education or training) have increased by 3.8 % and 1.5 % respectively in Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia and the Pacific in just one year, and the gender gap is extremely significant in both regions, according to the International Labour Organization;
- V. whereas school feeding is a critical safety net for vulnerable children and households, particularly at a time when 345 million people face crisis levels of hunger, including 153 million children and young people; whereas 418 million children now benefit from school meals worldwide, 53 million of whom live in the sub-Saharan region;
- W. whereas school meal programmes can increase school enrolment by an average of 9 %;
- X. whereas the African Union and several countries in the sub-Saharan region are gradually engaging in school meal programmes and also taking part in the financing of such initiatives;
- Y. whereas the number and duration of humanitarian crises have increased in the past decade, with an average humanitarian crisis now lasting more than nine years; whereas the average duration of contemporary displacement is increasing; whereas the share of the EU's humanitarian budget spent on education in emergencies has increased from 1 % in 2015 to 10 % in 2019 and has been maintained at this level ever since; whereas the total value of this spending reached EUR 970 million between 2015 and 2022; whereas this budget is still insufficient and the funding gap for education in emergencies continues to grow;
- Z. whereas the Commission has committed to dedicate at least 10 % of investments from the EU's budget for development cooperation, in particular under the NDICI – Global Europe instrument, to ensuring quality, equality and equity in education, and to matching skills and jobs in developing countries;
- AA. whereas the Global Gateway initiative includes education and research as one of its key investment priorities, including digital education, with a life-long learning perspective, in line with the SDGs with the aim of facilitating the mobility of students, staff, teachers and trainees, and strengthening networks and peer learning across higher education institutions;
- 1. Reaffirms that everyone has the right to education and that education, notably basic education, must be free, quality, inclusive, accessible without any form of

discrimination and compulsory in order to meet the SDGs by 2030, while technical and professional education, as well as higher education, must be equally accessible;

2. Notes that, since the entering into force of the NDICI – Global Europe Regulation¹⁰ on 14 June 2021, 49 non-neighbourhood partner countries have had commitments approved under the instrument, as well as an additional three regional indicative programmes (Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean), with an overall amount of EUR 1.4 billion committed until 2022, among them Nigeria (EUR 95 million), Mozambique (EUR 58.5 million), Nepal (EUR 51.5 million) and Rwanda (EUR 51.3 million) with the highest shares in terms of nominal amounts;
3. Takes note that 60 % of commitments related to education were made for project-type interventions, 25 % for general and, primarily, sector budget support, 7 % for contributions to specific-purpose programmes and funds managed by implementing partners, such as the Global Partnership for Education, and 8 % for scholarships/training in donor countries;
4. Emphasises that the rapidly growing young population combined with rich natural resources and biodiversity represent a huge development potential for the sub-Saharan region if the right opportunities are provided to foster human development;
5. Recognises that universal education has the unique potential to improve living conditions, reduce inequalities, combat poverty, fight child exploitation and trafficking, foster democratisation and the foundation of inclusive societies and facilitate social mobility to ensure that all children and adults, including refugees, displaced people and other vulnerable groups, are able to realise their full potential; underlines that quality education has a positive impact on fostering citizenship, promoting shared social values, civic and democratic engagement and establishing a responsible and peaceful society; notes, furthermore, that quality education is a tool to prevent and combat radicalisation among youth;
6. Condemns any use of schools and educational institutions to spread hate speech; is concerned, in particular, by the activities of religious extremist groups misusing education, taking advantage of the shortcomings of state systems and spreading biased world views, notably among young people;
7. Stresses the key role of education as a vehicle for sharing values, raising awareness and reducing the risk of conflict; calls for the EU to support cooperation programmes that contribute to educating and raising awareness among young people on the fight against hate speech, xenophobia, violence against women, violence based on sexual orientation or disability and all forms of discrimination in developing countries; encourages the transmission of knowledge on the land-sea link and the crucial need to preserve and protect the ocean – the common good of humanity;
8. Recognises that access to education represents a greater opportunity for the sustainable, balanced and peaceful development of countries and societies; stresses that education is

¹⁰ Regulation (EU) 2021/947 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 June 2021 establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe, OJ L 209, 14.6.2021, p. 1.

fundamentally important in that it affects people's prospects of finding decent work, the exercise of their rights as citizens, their opportunities to participate in society and their health;

9. Acknowledges that access to quality, universal education, notably basic education, enables developing partner countries to unlock the human capital potential of their young populations and to boost not only the human development, but also the economic growth and sustainable social development of their countries as part of an approach that aligns with and supports free and equitable public education systems; encourages cooperation on agricultural education between European higher education institutions and partner countries such as those participating in the Great Green Wall, an innovative project aimed at enabling local communities to adapt to climate change, which promotes integrated ecosystem management and offers a solution to food insecurity across the Sahel belt by focusing on the fight against land degradation and desertification, which, among other benefits, also helps to tackle the root causes of forced migration;
10. Underlines the need to recognise the transformative power of education and training at all levels as well as of culture and heritage for human capital development and job creation; underlines further that more focus is needed on work ethic and the role of women and youth, and that there is a need to recognise the role of different local actors as agents of development to accelerate access to education and training; stresses the importance of promoting education and training in order to foster sustainable livelihoods, and as a prerequisite to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially for girls and women to recognise their role as actors of change in their communities and countries;
11. Stresses, in this regard, the great potential of sharing knowledge, skills and know-how in areas such as climate change adaptation, biodiversity conservation and agro-ecological transitions; notes, therefore, the role that European overseas territories can play in building cooperation and mobility and exchange programmes with developing countries in their regional basins, in particular with the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS); supports and calls for the further expansion of the Erasmus+ programme to African countries and encourages the development of mobility projects and partnerships aimed at strengthening the attractiveness of both education in EU countries and the training systems of partner countries;
12. Notes that developing countries face different challenges, particularly in the field of education, as a result of their different cultural, social and economic backgrounds and that, therefore, the EU's efforts need to be adapted to local environments and conditions;
13. Notes that social and economic development in EU partner countries is hindered by the lack of trained professionals locally available; emphasises further that investments in tertiary education, and particularly in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) skills, are critical for new youth employment opportunities and for quality job creation or job switching; calls for the EU to guide young people towards the jobs of the future by supporting the development of training and skills linked to the green and digital transitions and technological innovation in developing countries; stresses the importance of promoting the education and training of girls and women in STEM;

14. Calls for electrification in developing countries to be a top priority, as the lack of electricity or insufficient access to electricity in many of these countries' territories seriously undermine the essential needs of people's daily lives, particularly in terms of health, food security, medical and hospital care, and education; notes that electrification must enable poverty reduction through the creation of productive economic activities, access to new key digital learning resources and remote learning to effectively improve access to education and training;
15. Underlines that access to quality, universal education as a human right for all must be ensured regardless of socio-economic status, cultural background, religion or beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, disability, geographical situation or the rural-urban divide, including in fragile and conflict-affected countries; underlines the need to engage with partner countries, in particular with countries in the sub-Saharan region, by understanding the local sensitivities and to strive to find a common understanding of these challenges;
16. Calls on the Commission to develop methodologies and guidelines that enhance the ability of its aid projects to reach all learners, in particular those who may be unable to access education; emphasises, in this context, the particular challenges for forcibly displaced people and the importance of reducing disruption and ensuring the continuity of education;
17. Stresses the need to support the efforts of developing countries to provide equal educational opportunities and good quality education that addresses contemporary challenges and meets modern standards for all;
18. Reiterates its call on the Commission to take appropriate legislative measures in the field of international trade and cooperation to avoid exacerbating child labour, as every child has a fundamental right to enrol in quality education; encourages countries around the world to implement legal frameworks for public school enrolment and to set a minimum school-leaving age;
19. Deplores the fact that girls and women in developing countries are particularly vulnerable to early childbirth and unintended pregnancy, child marriage, trafficking, prostitution, genital mutilation, transmission of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, and gender-based violence, especially in poor, isolated and remote areas as well as in humanitarian crisis situations; recalls, in this context, the particular importance of having access to sexual and reproductive health and rights in line with SDG 5, as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences;
20. Calls, further, for the EU to support programmes that facilitate young people's access to water, sanitation and hygiene services in education and training establishments, particularly for girls and young women, taking into consideration the EU's gender action plans;
21. Highlights, in this regard, the need to work with partner countries to encourage a comprehensive, evidence-based, age-appropriate sexuality education that provides age-appropriate information about puberty, the menstrual cycle, pregnancy and childbirth;

notes that this may equip young people with age-appropriate knowledge, with the purpose of raising awareness on gender-based violence and reproductive health, outlining the importance of preventing sexual abuse, as well as preventing early pregnancy and marriage, closing gender disparities in all aspects and at all levels of education, promoting female leadership, changing harmful gender norms, attitudes and practices and promoting a more equal sharing of unpaid care between women and men in line with the concept of care society;

22. Underlines the need to ensure that all school environments are safe and promote the health and well-being of all young people, as well as the importance of confronting violence against girls both in school and the community and the need to ensure equal rights and opportunities for girls and boys, and women and men in all aspects and levels of education and empowerment;
23. Underlines the importance of quality infrastructure, equipment and learning materials as prerequisites for providing quality education; calls for measures that ensure school accessibility and transport, especially for children with disabilities; urges the Commission to set up programmes that offer the necessary disability-related support to overcome barriers such as inaccessible environments for education and training; calls on the Commission to increasingly promote the use of assistive technologies and digitalisation for educational purposes that make learning more accessible to persons with disabilities and enable the teaching of Braille or sign language for visually impaired children and for those with a hearing or speech impairment;
24. Notes, with concern, the rising number of crisis-affected children; calls on the Commission and the Member States, together with the international community in this context, to implement innovative solutions to provide educational opportunities for boys and girls affected by conflicts, humanitarian crises and national policies that prohibit education, in particular for girls and women under totalitarian regimes; notes, further, that securing access to education for children and young people in humanitarian crises requires adequate financing as well as improved cooperation between humanitarian and development actors, through coordinated and systematic engagement with local stakeholders, including representatives of civil society, education and governance; urges, furthermore, the international community to apply the humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach to address protracted crises; underlines that the education sector should prioritise specific preparedness actions and policy measures to anticipate risk and respond to the educational needs of children and adults in crisis situations, including displaced populations; notes that, to this end, crisis-sensitive planning should focus on the risks to education posed by conflicts and natural hazards, including climate risks, to limit the negative impact of crises on individual learners, teachers and the education administration;
25. Underlines the need to design climate-resilient and shock-responsive education systems and infrastructures that enable children to continue learning in a fragile environment and amid the impacts of the climate crisis;
26. Notes that humanitarian appeals for education in emergencies severely lack the needed financial resources; welcomes, in this context, the efforts of the UN Education Cannot Wait fund to accelerate progress on this issue;

27. Highlights the opportunities offered by the EU engaging with civil society, local grassroots, non-partisan, not-for-profit organisations, local faith-based organisations, as well as organisations representing youth, women and girls, and persons with disabilities, which contribute to the national public education system; highlights also the important role of international non-governmental organisations providing education in emergencies; notes, further, that these organisations have the potential to facilitate humanitarian access and, therefore, to increase the efficiency of the EU's actions and enable EU assistance to directly reach vulnerable groups including young people in emergency settings and communities in remote areas;
28. Calls on the Commission and the European External Action Service to enhance their cooperation and partnerships with local organisations, including faith-based organisations and democratic local governments, civil society organisations and organisations representing persons with disabilities, youth and women as well as international organisations providing educational opportunities to vulnerable and isolated groups, including those facing mental health problems or social difficulties, in line with the Abidjan Principles on the human rights obligations of States to provide public education and to regulate private sector participation in education; notes that EU delegations in partner countries have a particularly important role in involving these actors in the implementation of EU funding for access to quality and inclusive education, as the primary contact point for local partners;
29. Underlines that brain drain from developing countries entails the loss of young workers, talent and vitality and has an impact on economic and sustainable development in these countries, particularly in the healthcare sector; emphasises that African countries have lost an estimated USD 2 billion through brain drain in the healthcare sector alone between 2002 and 2015, and that quality education that meets market demands creates jobs, which leads to decreased brain drain;
30. Stresses that free school meals are not only vital for student health and learning, combating hunger and malnutrition, and increasing school enrolment, but also have a positive economic impact; insists that local food production based on agro-ecology and sustainable fisheries can significantly help fight poverty and hunger, while making populations less dependent on food supplies from external markets; calls for the EU to support cooperation programmes that facilitate young people's access to free school meals;
31. Stresses the particular role of EU delegations in engaging in dialogue with democratic local governments, civil society organisations, human rights organisations, women's organisations, parents' associations, teachers' associations, education and training institutions and providers, and local faith-based stakeholders, among others, as stipulated in Article 17 TFEU, with the aim of increasing efficiency and ensuring that EU support reaches remote, hard-to-reach and vulnerable communities;
32. Stresses the importance of data on educational needs and disaggregated data by gender, age, disability status, etc., as well as establishing a comprehensive framework for the systematic collection and analysis of disaggregated data on EU-funded initiatives in inclusive education in order to track funding for inclusion and report against equity indicators;

33. Stresses the importance of enhancing cost and impact assessments during the selection and monitoring of educational initiatives, including the necessity to ensure that projects are of sufficient duration to effectively address children's educational needs, and to avoid excessive administrative burdens for implementing partners and address long-term sustainability for education programmes;
34. Urges the Commission and the Member States to exercise greater vigilance against fraud so that EU funds reach their final recipients in order to serve development objectives;
35. Calls for strict evaluation and controls on the allocation of EU funding to education projects in order to ensure that assistance is effectively provided to structures and non-governmental organisations that accord with European values;
36. Calls on the Commission to provide technical assistance to EU partner countries, in cooperation with the Member States and relevant actors such as the UN and civil society organisations, in improving the quality of national regulations, quality standards and plans on education as well as data collection and monitoring, with a view to facilitating appropriate governance and long-term planning to strengthen education systems, notably public education systems; recalls the need for a multi-sectoral approach regarding education;
37. Notes the possible development impact of a digital education policy that creates the opportunity for e-learning, through tailored solutions for the application of digital technologies in teaching and learning to fit regional and local contexts, provided there are adequate conditions in place;
38. Underlines the potential of digital technologies and e-learning to facilitate people's access to education and training, in particular for vulnerable groups and people with disabilities or living in remote or isolated areas; calls for the EU to support the development of connectivity infrastructure and digital capabilities in developing countries in order to bring the most remote populations closer to education and to develop their digital skills;
39. Calls on the Commission to support initiatives that enable professionals and educators from EU countries to transfer their knowledge and experience to colleagues in developing countries through cultural and professional exchange programmes similar to the Erasmus+ programme;
40. Recognises that prioritising funding for pre-primary and primary education would ensure more equitable learning outcomes, as it would reach the poorest parts of society; highlights that investments in quality education and training are needed to achieve integral human development; considers, further, that extracurricular activities in schools greatly contribute to the social development of young people;
41. Calls on the Commission to provide support to EU partner countries, in cooperation with the Member States, in improving national regulations and budget plans on education; notes the importance of multi-annual indicative programmes in strengthening quality public education systems and their long-term stability;

42. Underlines the importance of national budgeting in prioritising education and training in partner countries and of dedicating a fixed share of GDP to prioritising education and improving the inclusion of women and girls in the education system, as well as envisaging a financial architecture for the implementation of regional and local skills strategies; welcomes, in this context, the pledge made by the signatories of the Declaration on Education Financing on 6 July 2021 that Global Partnership for Education (GPE) partner countries that had spent more than 20 % of their annual public expenditure on education before the COVID-19 pandemic would continue to protect this level of investment by maintaining education budgets above this level, and that GPE partner countries that had previously spent less than 20 % of their annual public expenditure on education would endeavour to progressively increase their domestic education expenditure towards the 20 % global benchmark until 2025;
43. Highlights the crucial importance of increasing the spending capacity of partner countries for education, by providing assistance in broadening their tax bases, combating tax evasion and addressing illicit financial flows; recognises that domestic financing for education is also determined by wider economic factors: recalls the need to work on debt relief measures, including through engaging in a strategic dialogue with the International Monetary Fund, that enable debt-distressed partner countries to allocate a larger portion of their budget to education;
44. Recognises that public funding serves as the principal and fundamental financial tool, however, it is insufficient to cover the education funding gap on its own; recognises also the role of enhanced public-private partnerships (PPP), particularly in the field of technical and vocational training, in order to systematically adapt to changes in the vocational landscape through upskilling and reskilling, with a special focus on creating accessible digital environments that enable the development or improvement of digital competences; stresses, further, that the inclusion of the private sector needs to be done in a carefully monitored way in order to avoid the commoditisation and privatisation of educational services and the exacerbation of existing inequalities, while also ensuring that any investment in the education system always respects fundamental human rights, including the right to universal access to education, and humanitarian principles in humanitarian actions; insists that PPPs must be designed in ways that do not place increased burdens or risks on the public purse and do not promote a market-driven approach that views education as a commodity rather than a fundamental human right; recalls that the private sector cannot replace, but rather complement public investments in critical services, such as education, that provide crucial long-term prospects for graduating out of poverty;
45. Emphasises that carefully designed and scrutinised PPPs can help provide access to universal quality education and technical and vocational training for all; stresses the importance of building adequately equipped learning environments that address acute problems such as teacher shortages, and adopt the necessary steps towards achieving better teaching methods in order to ensure the success and sustainability of EU investments, notably under the Global Gateway initiative, which should be accompanied by follow-up and monitoring mechanisms to measure the impact;
46. Calls on the Commission to consider the need for locally available trained professionals throughout the planning and implementation of investments under the NDICI – Global

Europe instrument, as well as under the Global Gateway initiative, in particular in the field of education; calls on the Commission to support technical and vocational education and other training programmes in order to enable EU investments to become more sustainable and beneficial for partner countries in the long term as well;

47. Welcomes the Commission's current political commitment to dedicate at least 10 % of the budget for development cooperation under the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework to support access to quality education in developing countries;
48. Urges the Commission to define a clear external action implementation strategy for its at least 10 % spending target on education without delay, and to use that funding in a more results-oriented manner, with clear, transparent indicators based on disaggregated data, accompanied by guidelines that align with the recommendations of the UN Transforming Education Summit; notes, further, that results-based budgeting and management were referenced by numerous countries as a means of ensuring greater efficiency at the Transforming Education Summit in 2022; urges the Commission, in the mid-term review process of the NDICI – Global Europe instrument, to closely examine the amounts and projects associated with access to education and training in partner countries and to assess the effectiveness of the supported measures, taking into account the political commitment made by the Commission;
49. Calls on the Commission to commit to dedicating a fixed share, at least 10 %, of the current and future EU development policy budget, moving towards 15 % as called for by the Transforming Education Summit, to supporting access to quality universal education and technical and vocational training in partner countries, thus ensuring the predictability of aid; welcomes the attention given to Heading 6 in the Commission's proposal for the revision of the multiannual financial framework for the 2024-2027 period, with an increase of at least EUR 10.5 billion to address the various challenges in partner countries; stresses, in this regard, the importance of increasing funding for geographic and thematic programmes in the area of education and training under the NDICI – Global Europe instrument;
50. Calls on the Member States and development partners to fulfil their commitment to spend 0.7 % of their gross national income (GNI) on official development assistance (ODA); notes that the Member States that joined the EU after 2002 committed to striving to increase their ODA/GNI to 0.33 %; welcomes the efforts that these and other Member States have made so far to gradually scale up their ODA spending; encourages these Member States to continue on this track;
51. Welcomes the EU's leadership in funding for education in emergencies, reaching 10 % of its humanitarian budget; urges the Member States to strengthen their efforts to scale up their contribution to education in emergencies and to also join this leadership by strengthening their legal frameworks to achieve this target by 2030; recognises the need to finance local organisations providing access to quality education, to apply the triple nexus approach and to support teachers in order to ensure quality education and investment in school materials, especially for long-term displaced children;
52. Confirms the particular importance of continuing to closely monitor the implementation of the Commission's commitments to support access to quality education;

53. Recognises the crucial role of qualified teachers in quality education, especially female teachers that can serve as role models for girls; calls for increased efforts to improve the status of teachers and their working conditions in order to make the teaching profession more attractive through robust social dialogue and teacher participation in educational decision-making processes and by improving financing for teachers through integrated national reform strategies, including effective governance and dedicated financial strategies and budgeting;
54. Welcomes the announcement of the launch of the Regional Teachers' Initiative for Africa as a flagship initiative under the EU-Africa: Global Gateway Investment Package;
55. Notes that the programming of EU financial support for development, in particular in the field of access to quality education and technical and vocational training, must be consistent with the political and budgetary commitments and priorities of developing partner countries; underlines that the commitment of partner countries and domestic ownership is an inevitable prerequisite to ensure the sustainability of projects implemented with EU funding;
56. Is alarmed by the attacks carried out by extremist groups targeting schools; strongly condemns any attacks on schools, teachers and students, and calls for the EU and its Member States to use all available tools to prevent schools from being targets of armed groups; calls on the Commission and the European External Action Service to advocate in international forums to keep schools open, accessible and safe from attacks, and to condemn the use of schools and universities by armed groups for military purposes;
57. Calls on the Commission and the European External Action Service to use all the tools available to ensure that EU investments in education and training serve to support the sustainable development of partner countries, in line with the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and SDGs 4 and 5; calls for the mobilisation of the EU Member States to implement partnerships with developing countries in terms of university education and professional training and for young people in developing partner countries to study abroad, guaranteeing the positive impact in their communities of origin;
58. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The globe is facing a huge challenge in the context of access to quality education. Trained teachers, proper infrastructure as well as adequate learning materials are lacking. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 90 % of the world's children have had their education interrupted. While following the pandemic, slowly schools reopened, the armed conflicts, forced displacement, health disasters, and other crises have had a significant impact on access to quality education and these have brought education systems to the limits of their capacities. The funding gap to meet SDG4 (access to quality education) has increased, reaching 97 billion USD, meaning that at least 21 % of the funding required to provide accessible, inclusive quality education is unaccounted. The crisis affects disproportionately the developing countries, notably in the Sub-Saharan region, which is the only region where the number of out-of-school children is still growing. These crises particularly affect girls and children with disabilities, as well as many minority groups such as indigenous communities, ethnic and religious minorities. In 2022 alone, forced displacement reached a record high of 100 million people, over half of whom are children and youth in need of access to relevant quality education. In addition, between January 2020 and December 2021 there were 5,000 incidents of attacks on education and cases of military use of schools, with 9,000 students and educators abducted, arrested, injured, or killed across 85 countries. This comes in addition to the schools closed due to armed conflict and political instability, while the education of girls, refugees and other population groups is at risk. These crises dramatically impact the investment required to transform education systems and ensure their resilience to future disruption. These challenges are threatening the chance of young people in developing countries to have access to knowledge and skills necessary for their future.

To address this worrying situation, the EU has made education in emergencies a part of its humanitarian response and linked it closely with development cooperation. The EU has spent over EUR 970 million on education in emergencies between 2015 and 2022, and EU remains at the forefront of the international mobilisation for education in emergencies. The share of education in emergencies in our humanitarian budget has substantially increased in the last years (starting from 1 % in 2015, reaching about 10 % currently).

In response to the global learning crisis, the Commission committed to dedicate at least 10 % of its development budget also to accelerate access to education. This step is a forward-looking initiative where the European Parliament strongly supports the Commission and advocates for strong EU engagement on the global level to boost access to quality education and training. The rapporteur strongly believes that education is a cross cutting tool which affects every dimension of the sustainable development and has a transformative power, enabling young people to reach their full potential, support their communities and break the circle of poverty.

Considering the huge needs, challenges of efficiency and the deeply rooted and well-known shortcomings of the implementation of EU development funding, it is needed to assess how the EU can make the best use of the scarce financial resources and increase the fire power of the EU's financial dedication for education.

The recommendations and requests formulated in this report are based on extensive

consultations with a wide range of stakeholders from various countries and regions. The rapporteur, as Standing Rapporteur for Education, summaries here not only the accounts related to the drafting procedure of this report but also includes statements and positions resulting from previous hearings, exchanges and debates related to the field of education and training.

The World Bank recognised the distinct strategic value of faith-based actors in the development cooperation given their reach-out on the ground and their advocacy activities. FBOs are uniquely positioned to make positive contributions since they have good community and grassroots reach. These actors have the possibility to fill the gap where, notably in the Sub-Saharan region, state actors cannot operate and basic social services are lacking. The rapporteur wishes to call the attention to the controversial situation that despite faith-based organisations are providing an average of 40 % of education in the Sub-Saharan region, the EU still do not recognise their potential to facilitate sustainable development. Considering these the rapporteur suggest stronger EU engagement with FBOs and calls for their systematic inclusion into EU development cooperation.

The rapporteur also recognises that efficiency of EU funded education related initiatives needs to be significantly increased to meet targets of Agenda 2030. In this regard, domestic ownership should be enhanced. The rapporteur recommends to concentrate EU efforts, in particular in the field of education, where partner countries are also engaging themselves. This serves the long-term sustainability of EU investments and enable us to maximise the impact of EU funding to facilitate sustainable development. In this spirit, by the implementation of EU funding, it is necessary to secure that partner countries are committed to take over responsibility for maintaining projects.

Last but not least, the rapporteur reaffirms its position that EU development funding should never encourage young people to leave their home countries. On the contrary, it should provide them the conditions to contribute to the social and economic development of their communities. In the field of education, the EU needs to ensure that efforts do not lead to brain drain from Africa but secures job opportunities and access to decent work in developing partner countries. In this regard, skills matching and transfer of knowledge and skills relevant to the requirements of the modern economies as well as to the local environment, is an imperative. This is an important tool to address lack of access to education and decent work as root causes of migration.

The rapporteur emphasises that if the right conditions are given, young people in Africa will have the potential to boost development of their continent. A strong, safe and prosperous Africa depends on the empowering of the next generation on the continent. Access to education and training is the tool to enable them to strengthen governance and institutions and implement the necessary reforms to make Africa the winner of the 21st century.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

Date adopted	24.10.2023
Result of final vote	+: 15 -: 0 0: 3
Members present for the final vote	Barry Andrews, Dominique Bilde, Catherine Chabaud, Christophe Clergeau, Antoni Comín i Oliveres, Mónica Silvana González, Pierrette Herzberger-Fofana, György Hölvényi, Rasa Juknevičienė, Beata Kempa, Karsten Lucke, Eleni Stavrou, Tomas Tobé, Miguel Urbán Crespo
Substitutes present for the final vote	Ilan De Basso, Marlene Mortler, Carlos Zorrinho
Substitutes under Rule 209(7) present for the final vote	Karolin Braunsberger-Reinhold

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

15	+
NI	Antoni Comín i Oliveres
PPE	Karolin Braunsberger-Reinhold, György Hölvényi, Rasa Juknevičienė, Marlene Mortler, Eleni Stavrou, Tomas Tobé
Renew	Barry Andrews, Catherine Chabaud
S&D	Christophe Clergeau, Ilan De Basso, Mónica Silvana González, Karsten Lucke, Carlos Zorrinho
Verts/ALE	Pierrette Herzberger-Fofana

0	-

3	0
ECR	Beata Kempa
ID	Dominique Bilde
The Left	Miguel Urbán Crespo

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention