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<Titre>on EU development assistance in the field of education</Titre>

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<Commission>{DEVE}Committee on Development</Commission>

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PR\_INI

CONTENTS

Page

MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION 3

MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on EU development assistance in the field of education

(2018/2081(INI))

*The European Parliament*,

– having regard to Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which stipulates that ‘[e]veryone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages’,

– having regard to the document entitled ‘Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 25 September 2015,

– having regard to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), in particular Goal 4: ‘Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning’,

– having regard to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 27 July 2015,

– having regard to Human Rights Council resolution 35/L2 of 22 June 2017, entitled ‘The right to education: follow-up to Human Rights Council resolution 8/4’,

– having regard to the 2002 Commission Communication entitled ‘Education and training in the context of poverty reduction in developing countries’ (COM(2002)0116),

– having regard to the 2010 Commission working document entitled ‘More and Better Education in Developing Countries’ (SEC(2010)0121),

– having regard to the 2018 Commission communication entitled ‘Education in Emergencies and Protracted Crises’ (COM(2018)0304),

– having regard to the European Consensus on Development and the EU Code of Conduct on Division of Labour in Development Policy (COM(2007)0072),

– having regard to its resolution of 17 April 2018 on enhancing developing countries’ debt sustainability[[1]](#footnote-1),

– having regard to the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report published in 2017, entitled ‘Accountability in education:  
 Meeting our commitments’,

– having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,

– having regard to the report of the Committee on Development (A8-0000/2018),

A. whereas education is a fundamental human right and is central to the attainment of all the SDGs;

B. whereas the Commission’s latest communication on education in developing countries dates back to 2002 and was updated only in 2010 by a working document;

C. whereas education aid accounted for 8.3% of total development aid in 2009; whereas this share had fallen to 6.2% by 2015; whereas for the Union and its Member States this share had fallen from 11 to 7.6% over the same period;

D. whereas the aid allocated to basic education by the Union and its Member States decreased by 33.9% between 2009 and 2015, i.e. more than aid for education in general (15.2%);

E. whereas in 2015, 264 million children and young people of primary or secondary school age were not enrolled in school;

F. whereas the efforts made since 2016, welcome though they are, have not been sufficient to clear the backlog and must therefore be continued over time and increased;

G. whereas, according to UNESCO, support for education in low-income countries and lower middle-income countries should be increased sixfold in order to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4 by 2030; whereas, according to the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity, education assistance must reach USD 89 billion by 2030, as against 12 billion today;

Placing education at the centre of development

1. Is convinced that aid to education must be a priority, because education is a fundamental right but also because it is essential for the other SDGs: for economic development and reducing inequalities, and for health, democracy and the rule of law, women’s empowerment and conflict prevention;

2. Deplores, therefore, the fact that aid to education is not a priority for international donors; urges that education be placed at the centre of the development policies of the European Union and its Member States;

3. Acknowledges that the attainment of SDG 4 requires massive investment in education systems; takes the view that this investment will first have to be made by developing countries, but that international aid will continue to be indispensable to bridge the gap in funding;

4. Calls on the Commission to update its communication on education and training in the context of poverty reduction in developing countries, which dates back to 2002, and its working document of 2010; considers that the new communication will need to plan how to attain SDG 4 by 2030;

5. Calls on the Union and its Member States to devote 10% of their official development assistance to education by 2024, and 15% by 2030;

6. Observes that the efforts of developing countries and increases in ODA will not be sufficient to bridge the funding gap; calls therefore for the creation of innovative funding instruments to bolster national education systems;

7. Is following with interest the proposal made by the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity to set up an International Education Facility, provided that it genuinely complements and does not replace current efforts; considers that this initiative should be pursued in synergy with the action of the Global Partnership for Education; considers that particular attention should be paid to the creditworthiness of eligible countries prior to any funding;

8. Notes that the 20% EU aid target for basic social services is imprecise and does not allow adequate monitoring of expenditure;

Tackling the priorities

9. Recalls that basic learning is a prerequisite for skills development and induction into working life, girls’ education is a key lever for achieving the SDGs, for health and well-being and for the establishment of peaceful societies, and that the least developed countries are suffering most from a lack of funding despite the fact that they are the countries where investment generates the greatest human, economic and health benefits;

10. Considers therefore that the European Union’s education aid must first cater for two priorities: it must prioritise high-quality, inclusive basic education and provide enhanced support to the Least Developed Countries (LDCs);

11. Particularly stresses SDG 4.1, whose aim is a full 12-year primary and secondary education cycle, provided free of charge for all; considers that the condition of being ‘free of charge’ should apply not only to schooling itself but also to what would otherwise be ancillary costs; believes that States should consider scholarship schemes to provide schooling for the most disadvantaged children; instructs the European Union and the Member States, in accordance with SDG 4.1 and Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, not to support private, commercial educational establishments financially;

12. Calls on the Union and its Member States to devote half of their education aid to basic education by 2030;

13. Calls also for 40% of education aid from the EU and Member States to be directed to LDCs;

14. Calls, lastly, for particular attention to be paid to equality between girls and boys in school; recalls the objective that 85% of new European Union programmes should have a gender dimension by 2020;

15. Welcomes the Commission’s adoption of its communication on education in emergencies and protracted crises and the objective of devoting 10% of the Union’s humanitarian aid to education from 2019;

16. Stresses the need for a more integrated, systematic and effective response to needs for education in emergencies, in line with the principle of linking emergency aid, rehabilitation and development;

17. Recalls the importance of secondary education and vocational training; considers that the latter must be geared to the needs of businesses, in coordination with them and, as far as possible, financed by them; notes that the Union’s External Investment Plan could be mobilised for this purpose;

18. Is concerned about the phenomenon of the ‘brain drain’; calls on those Member States that devote too much of their aid to scholarships and the expenses of students from developing countries to reduce it; considers that multiple entry visas would enable these students to update their knowledge and promote circular mobility;

19. Notes also the efforts to be made with regard to the recruitment, remuneration, working conditions and initial and in-service training of teachers, as well as the massive investment needed in school infrastructure, in particular to ensure equal access for girls;

20. Stresses the importance of new technologies as a way of improving access to education and improving its quality, particularly for the dissemination of knowledge, teacher training and the management of establishments; draws attention to the fact that these new technologies must support educational efforts rather than replacing them and lowering standards of teaching;

21. Reiterates that only an enabling environment makes quality education possible, including nutritional aspects, health and safety, and access to electricity and water, in order to enable pupils to genuinely benefit from school and to increase completion rates, especially in primary education;

Improving the quality of aid

22. Considers that assessments of education systems are a prerequisite for any improvement in the effectiveness of aid; calls on the Commission and Member States to finance research, aggregation of data and reliable and independent assessment tools;

23. Considers it vital to improve coordination of donors in local groups for education; calls on Member States to make more systematic use of joint programming and delegation; recalls that development aid must not be subordinated to a strategy designed to wield influence;

24. Underlines the obligation of governments to ensure that their people enjoy the right to education; stresses therefore the need for a national education plan based on significant consultation of key stakeholders, including civil society, with specific objectives and monitoring mechanisms, continuous assessments and inspections, a clear and transparent demarcation of responsibilities, and allocation of resources subject to independent monitoring; encourages the adoption of national regulatory frameworks for the establishment and operation of education services;

25. Emphasises the predictability of aid and its ownership by the partner States; indicates in this respect that budget support and aid from multilateral organisations are the most effective resources by means of which to meet these requirements;

26. Calls on the Commission and Member States to assign priority to budget support where possible, with strict criteria, including transparency, and extensive checks, in particular to avoid corruption;

27. Encourages the Commission and Member States to promote the role of local authorities in the preparation and implementation of education support programmes, including in the framework of budget support;

28. Notes that only one third of aid to education is channelled through multilateral bodies, as against two thirds in the field of health; calls, therefore, on the Commission and Member States to increase their funding of the Global Partnership for Education and the Education Cannot Wait Fund; takes the view that the Global Partnership should be put in a position to extend its programming period by 3-6 years to facilitate more stable and predictable funding, which is particularly necessary in order to improve national education systems;

29. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.

1. Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2018)0104. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)