

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2759/07  
by Maria Carlshamre (ALDE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Status of Swedish schools of the arts as educational facilities and possibilities of obtaining European Union funding for educational projects as part of lifelong learning

There is an educational institution in Sweden called 'kulturskolan' (school of the arts). This type of school exists, primarily, alongside municipal schools and is to be found in all but 8 of the 290 municipalities in Sweden. Activities are both practical and theoretical within the areas of instrument tuition and music theory, art and design, dance and the theatre. Much of the compulsory tuition in the arts in the state school system takes place at schools of the arts, and pupils also choose to study there in their free time.

Pupils at all educational levels - pre-school, primary, secondary and special school - are taught at the schools of the arts. In some municipalities, the school of the arts also supervises student teachers at university level (municipality of Luleå, for example). Some 380 000 Swedish pupils are currently studying at schools of the arts.

The national curriculum does not require the municipalities to have a school of the arts but, in practice, they are to be found almost everywhere, including on local curricula. In most cases, the activity is the responsibility of the municipal education committees, which have a clear mandate to step up the level of integration of arts subjects in school tuition.

The reference document for the EU programme on lifelong learning makes it clear that activities within the Comenius Programme are designed for all stakeholders in the education system. The Swedish office responsible for the programme, however, interprets the programme as not including schools of the arts and they are therefore not entitled to apply for funding for cooperative projects between Member States. The Swedish schools of the arts are unique in Europe but should definitely be seen as educational facilities and specialised education in the European sense. What are the Commission's views on the fact that the Swedish schools of the arts are at present not allowed to apply for funding for educational projects?