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DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Culture and Education

for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

on the European Semester for economic policy coordination: Employment and Social Aspects in the Annual Growth Survey 2020
(2019/2212(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion: Sabine Verheyen

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SUGGESTIONS

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

1. Calls for a genuine revision of the EU's and the Member States' education, training and skills policies to deliver education and lifelong learning, addressing, in particular, the digital skills gap and the need for adaptation to the realities of the digitalised economy, and of preparing for the future impact of artificial intelligence on the labour market; stresses that these policies should promote personal and societal development while respecting the goals of the energy transition towards the low-carbon economy;
2. Points out that socio-economic disadvantage is frequently a predictor of poor educational outcomes and vice versa; insists that a properly funded, quality education and lifelong learning system can help break this vicious circle and promote social inclusion and equal opportunities; supports the plans to make the European Education Area a reality in the foreseeable future with the aim of allowing everyone access to a quality education; calls on the Commission to assist the Member States in reforming and modernising their education systems, including digital learning;
3. Asserts that quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) has a positive impact on all children, boys and girls, and even more so on children belonging to less privileged socio-economic backgrounds, thereby contributing to reducing social inequalities; stresses that ECEC has an impact on children's development, learning and well-being in the short-term, and creates the building blocks for improving later long-term life outcomes;
4. Believes that investing in human capital, with a particular focus on young people and people with fewer opportunities, is key to boosting knowledge-intensive, sustainable and inclusive growth, in a context of increasing skills shortages and mismatches in a rapidly changing world of work, particularly in the era of digitalisation; underlines the importance of entrepreneurship education in order to motivate young people to opt to set up in business;
5. Is of the opinion that the European Structural and Investment Funds can provide options for better access to information and the active inclusion of young people, especially those living in rural and remote areas;
6. Points out that in 2018, in the EU, 16.5 % of 20-34-year-olds – one in six young people – were neither in employment nor in education and training (NEETs)¹, and that the share of early school leavers was 10.6 %²; recognises that these figures are as low as they were in the first quarter of 2008, and the lowest since this data began to be compiled in the first quarter of 2006; calls, nevertheless, on the Commission and the Member States to step up their efforts to reduce early school leaving and the percentage of NEETs, and to improve educational outcomes, taking into account regional

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/DDN-20190627-1>

² <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3217494/10164469/KS-EI-19-001-EN-N.pdf/33ab6c0c-a0c6-5294-3948-b1fb9973d096>

disparities, as well as to implement comprehensive preventive strategies and to engage early school leavers in education and training;

7. Urges the Member States to foster cooperation between education and businesses with a view to addressing skills mismatches, including by fostering technical and digital skills, as well as vocational training and dual studies, and to put in place effective and comprehensive methodologies for the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning;
8. Calls for an increase in the quality and efficiency of education and training systems, the strengthening of comprehensive lifelong learning and the upgrading of skills, notably of disadvantaged groups, including people with a migrant background; reiterates its support to citizenship education in schools as a key pillar of developing European democracy;
9. Believes that an all-encompassing approach to education policy enjoying 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 stakeholders, including parents;
10. 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; stresses, in this context, the need to attract greater numbers of motivated candidates with sound academic or professional backgrounds and pedagogical skills into the teaching profession.