

European
Association
of Regional
and Local
Authorities
for Lifelong
Learning

**European Commission
DG Education and Culture
Unit A2
Consultation on Education and Migration
B-1049 Bruxelles**

Brussels, 07 /01 /2009

SUBJECT: answer to Green Paper on "Migration & mobility: challenges and opportunities for EU education systems"


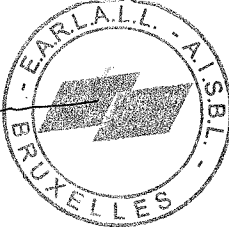
Dear Sir / Madam,

As the President of EARLALL, the European Association of Regional and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning, I am very pleased to be invited to share our views regarding the Green Paper on "Migration & mobility: challenges and opportunities for EU education systems".

EARLALL represents over 60 million people across Europe in the field of Lifelong Learning. Our aim is to share information, knowledge and best practice, channelling our shared experience to a European level and thereby contributing to and influencing the European debate on lifelong learning.

Please find below our views regarding the Green Paper on "Migration & mobility: challenges and opportunities for EU education systems".

Yours sincerely,

**Kent JOHANSSON
President
European Association of Regional and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning**

Earlall – European Association of Regional and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning

Reply to consultation on the EU Commission GREEN PAPER:

“Migration and mobility: the challenges and opportunities for education systems in Europe”

A: The policy challenge

European societies have to acknowledge that they have become immigration countries and that a significant proportion of their young people are and increasingly will be, migrants or of migration background. Due to major demographic processes this trend will not be reversible in the foreseeable future. All major institutions, and particularly educational institutions, have to adapt to this situation and develop new kinds of services.

Regardless of origin and membership, it is the duty of the institutions of the Union to construct the conditions so that everyone can work together for the **growth in values of responsibility and solidarity and in the principles of liberty and equality between sexes, ethnic groups, religion and social conditions**, principles which we want to characterise our society and which are the conditions for its growth. Everyone living in our territories must be able to contribute to the growth and affirmation of these values. We need dialogue between all the components of our society at regional, national and European level because **dialogue** between different people constitutes the condition that enables everyone to be in a position to collaborate **in order to make our regions the best place to work, study, live and invest**.

Europe needs to increase the number of citizens and **resources which contribute to the growth of our economies**. The European Council of 14 December 2007 clearly affirmed that there is a close connection between the management of migratory flows and the accomplishment of the **Lisbon Strategy** in as much as migration can encourage growth, competitiveness, fairness of the employment market, productivity and public finance.

In order to face up to these challenges, with regard to education and employment policies, we must pursue **four fundamental objectives for inclusion, that is: learning an operational language of the host country appropriate to the place of residence; access to decent jobs; development of a health and safety culture in the workplace to reduce the risks of accident and illness; and equality in access and learning for children and young people** (early access to childcare, insertion in the school system of reunited minors and non-accompanied minors, the insertion of minor children of immigrants, increase in schooling for the foreign population).

In all European education systems there is an increasing proportion of students with a migratory background. This is a stable structural feature, not a transitory phenomenon. Pre-school educators are dealing with a new population of children, students and parents about whom they have usually little relevant information in their time of training. Teacher-training becomes crucial, especially that regarding theories and practices of inclusion.

School and curriculum policies, however, could be planned to partly integrate cultural items from countries of emigration for major groups of students into school life and learning processes. The absence or distorted presentation of minorities in school materials may harm the self-image and self-esteem of minority group children and negatively affect their chances of success in school and may make it difficult to develop positive role models from a minority group background.

B. The policy response

The “**right for everyone to express themselves**” is an objective on which efforts must be concentrated in order to ensure the opportunity and duty to learn the language of the host country during the first six months of arrival, regardless of age. Without language there can be no dialogue. Linguistic integration cannot be postponed to the second or third generation of immigrants. Language is also a very important part of a young person’s identity. Real benefits can emerge from recognising, valuing and building on the linguistic heritage of children from minority language communities. Research on bilingualism shows that growing up in a supportive bilingual environment can give children an advantage in their educational career, and have a positive effect on attainment. Encouraging bilingual development can, therefore, create the opportunity for children to develop fully their abilities and achieve excellence.

The recognition and valuing of linguistic diversity can also contribute to the building of a language-friendly environment which benefits all children by creating the conditions which encourage greater language awareness and openness to different cultures and which, in turn, facilitates language learning for all. This is particularly important where migration takes place into bilingual regions with strong heritage languages in daily use.

For those who emigrate, entry to the world **employment market** must be matched by conditions of legality and security, as well as the appreciation of individuals and their skills, as both are necessary for the host country. With regard to the policies for training and employment, this means:

- Activating reception policies which respect the rights of all workers
- Work placement opportunities
- Encourage the emersion of the condition of clandestinity

Basic political decisions are necessary on the degree of selectivity versus support in **education systems**. It is obvious that most migrant learners will profit from systems that are more support oriented.

Strong support is represented by a well developed system of pre-school education that implies that societies are ready to invest in this phase, that there are programmes for disadvantaged children and parents from birth, for general development as well as for language learning, and that good quality public institutions for child care and preschool education are available for all groups of the population. Language teaching to migrant (and non-migrant) children has to be understood and practised as a new task of preschool institutions and their educators. A well developed system of preschool education and socialization is important for integration on the local level, but the major goals have to be set on the national or federal state level.

As for education policies, Member States must, in particular, take on concrete initiatives which guarantee that:

1. In every school, pupils, teachers, auxiliaries and managers will dedicate time to drawing up a Diversity Management Plan. This must identify the critical states and objectives of inter-cultural development relative to the school and the social context in which it operates; define the methodologies, actions and systems to be established for active management of the inter-cultural wealth. The Diversity Management Plan must contain an evaluation of the effectiveness of measures adopted in the previous period, with reference to any particular situations experienced in the school.
2. Schools must guarantee information and orientation services for future choices of study and work which take into account the cultural and linguistic roots of the children, young people and their families and, in general, the conditions of access to information of those concerned. The use of interpreters and cultural mediators is appropriate in every situation in which communication between the school and the family takes place and also encourages early access by children to the education system, making inclusion into the school easier.
3. Schools must accept applications from young people resident in their catchment area. Students from other countries must be inserted in the training pathway at the same level of training already attained by the student, at the same time avoiding age differences in class of, as a rule, more than one year. For this reason, the school must simplify procedures for recognising qualifications and levels of training, regardless of the country, already achieved by young people. Besides allowing young people access to training pathways which are better suited to individual cultural and educational conditions, this must ensure that the time necessary to obtain the qualification and chosen level of instruction is reduced. All young people accessing the school, and in particular those with a different cultural background from the majority of the other students, must be able to take advantage of an orientation and consultancy service which evaluates previous learning in the various cultural and curricular areas, the development needs of languages already studied, and the level of ability in the teaching language.
4. The acquisition of appropriate skills to enable personal, economic and social growth of all pupils is one objective to be reached. Young people from different socio-cultural situations might need support in particular areas of the curriculum. Measures which enable the use of personalised and individualised forms of teaching must be strengthened.
5. The school must also avail itself of specialist professionals aimed at building a school of inclusion. Specialist staff must be capable of applying the measures aimed at inclusion and preventing the assertion of culture and behaviour which turn young people away from the school. In particular, the school must be able to call on staff to support the overcoming of language barriers, reading, writing and mathematics.
6. The intercultural dimension of the teaching methods must be confirmed by the skills, knowledge and values which it promotes by means of the various components of the curriculum. A specific space must be dedicated to learning about:
 1. cultural diversity, in order to supply elements of knowledge and methodology which encourage respect and tolerance between pupils and prevent xenophobia and racism from arising, also by means of activities of education of emotions;
 2. the study of international relations, migration, religion which enable the understanding of the historic and economic roots of diversity.

7. The organisation of extra-curricular activities must include initiatives which regard inter-cultural relations. International mobility of young people for the purposes of study or work experience abroad constitutes a measure which encourages the understanding of diversity and the overcoming of the difficulty of inclusion. Special attention must be paid to relations between the school and cultural communities and associations which express the values and heritage of diversities in order to be able to turn to these in order to encourage awareness of their existence by pupils and their families.

C. The role of the European Union

The European Council has undertaken to formulate a **common European policy** aimed at managing the challenges posed by emigration in the new era of globalisation and those posed by the demographic prospects of an increasing average age of people living in Europe, which without greater mobility risks not having the human capital necessary for its development.

As for the European Community, the first document of legal value was the Council Regulation (CEE) n°1612/1968 on freedom of movement by workers (and in particular article 19/2 regarding “Community preference”), followed by Directive 77/486/CEE of the Council of 25 July 1977, dictating policies concerning the schooling of children of migrant workers and committing Member States to taking on appropriate measures in order to offer reception training at no cost, including teaching of the official language/s of the host State and committing Member States to undertake measures for initial and on-going training of teachers employed in these activities

It was only by means of the Amsterdam Treaty of 1 May 1999 that immigration policies become an area in which the European Union could exercise full sharing of responsibility with Member States. From this time onwards, the Union has been fully legitimised in formulating policies for the integration of immigrants, to ensure conditions of equality and prevent ethnic and racial discrimination. The Union Council, from the sitting in Tampere of 15-16 October 1999, began approving Conclusions aimed at determining common policies for the recognition of the rights of immigrants (from the legalisation of resident immigrants to the right to education). From these Conclusions, many Directives and Conclusions of the European Council regarding various aspects of the problem have followed. For example, in the field of youth education, these Directives dictate regulations regarding the rights of children of citizens from other countries with resident status, or of citizens requesting exile or of those unlawfully resident (Eurydice, 2004). Nevertheless, these regard other fields such as the right to family reunification (Council Directive 2003/86/EC of 22 September 2003), resident status (Council Directive 2003/109/EC of 25 November 2003); the principle of equal treatment regardless of ethnic and racial origin (Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000); the definition of a general framework for equal treatment in employment (Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000).

The legal and regulating framework of Member Countries must be developed and liberated of discriminatory principles, in particular regarding the human rights of men and women and their employment conditions.

The development of indicators in this area could be usefully explored. However, we would not support the creation of new data collections, but recommend consideration of existing instruments such as PISA.

Processes of integration must be actively sustained by local, regional and national governments, see the participation of all the social partners and of civil society and be based on the commitment to non-discrimination and on the equality of gender.

Governance of international migration must be strengthened by means of the development of cooperation between Member States and between Regions and by means of greater dialogue between these institutions and international bodies. These efforts must be extended to relationships between migration policies and other policies, such as international trade, aid, security and human rights.