


Procedure file

Basic information	
COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic) 2002/2177(COS)	Procedure completed
Developing countries, education and training: objectives and priorities in reducing poverty	
Subject 4.40 Education, vocational training and youth 6.30 Development cooperation	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	DEVE Development and Cooperation		20/06/2002
		PSE VAN DEN BERG Margrietus	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	CULT Culture, Youth, Education, Media and Sport		11/07/2002
		V/ALE WYN Eurig	
	FEMM Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities		10/07/2002
		V/ALE SÖRENSEN Patsy	
Council of the European Union	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	Development	2429	30/05/2002
European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner	
	Development		

Key events			
06/03/2002	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2002)0116	Summary
30/05/2002	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		
02/09/2002	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
23/04/2003	Vote in committee		Summary
23/04/2003	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0126/2003	
14/05/2003	Debate in Parliament		
15/05/2003	Decision by Parliament	T5-0220/2003	Summary
15/05/2003	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2002/2177(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 142
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	DEVE/5/16496

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document	COM(2002)0116	06/03/2002	EC	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading	A5-0126/2003	23/04/2003	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading	T5-0220/2003 OJ C 067 17.03.2004, p. 0209-0285 E	15/05/2003	EP	Summary

Developing countries, education and training: objectives and priorities in reducing poverty

PURPOSE : to propose a new strategy on education and training in the context of poverty reduction in developing countries. **CONTENT :** the purpose of this Communication is to stress the vital importance of education in reducing poverty and in development and to present an overall framework for the objectives, priorities and methods of the Community in education and training in developing countries. The Communication refocuses sectoral support on reducing poverty in line with recent international undertakings, in coordination with developing countries' policies and on the basis of complementarity with other donors. Its purpose is to focus all of its methods on support for education and training and to set out guidelines for the Community. The Communication recognises the vital role of the countries and identifies three priorities for Community support: 1) basic education, in particular primary education and teacher training; 2) work-related training; 3) higher education, especially at regional level. The strategy to be pursued will involve support for basic education as first priority (at both qualitative and quantitative level) and ensuring that girls as well as boys have attained an acceptable level of schooling, before support of work-related training. Higher education will be supported at regional level in particular. The principles to be followed in the political dialogue on education and training strategies are as follows: - Total resources for education and training must be increased, in particular for the poorest countries and population groups; - The recurrent expenditure of "education" budgets can be covered by the Community subject to certain conditions; - Developing countries will have to improve the efficiency and quality of their education systems; - They will have to improve access to primary education by working towards making it compulsory and free; - Equality between the sexes is essential; - The links between AIDS and education should be taken into account in education programmes; - Account should be taken of education issues in conflict prevention and in conflict and post-conflict periods in order to protect children, in particular girls. As regards political and strategic dialogue, the Commission will use its programming framework (the Country Strategy Papers) and, for the countries eligible for the HIPC initiative, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers prepared by the partner countries. Lastly, the Community's strategic approach in developing countries will be based on the following guidelines: - the sector-wide approach; consideration of the macroeconomic and budgetary framework; consideration of the needs and participation of the poor; participation by education actors and civil society in the broad sense; support for institutional development and capacity-building; monitoring and results (indicators); increased coordination and complementarity between all the partners. Sectoral support for education will as far as possible be provided through macroeconomic support on the basis of sectoral programmes founded on dialogue with all the partners.?

Developing countries, education and training: objectives and priorities in reducing poverty

The committee adopted the report by Margrietus van den BERG (PES, NL) on the Commission communication. While approving the priorities set out by the Commission, it emphasised once again that the budget for education needed to be doubled to at least 8% of the Commission budget for development. Moreover, the Council was urged to agree a timetable for Member States to increase their aid to basic education with a view to meeting the commitments they made at the 2000 Dakar Conference. MEPs also suggested that the Commission establish a scoreboard to help track Community and EU bilateral aid to education. In a further point the committee, while welcoming the World Bank's Fast Track Initiative and the Commission's support in principle for this initiative, expressed disappointment that the Commission had not agreed to finance the first group of countries. The committee stressed that promoting high-quality primary education - and especially girls' access thereto - should be the top priority of the EU's and the Member States' development strategy for education. There was a general emphasis throughout the report on promoting education and training for girls and women, as MEPs felt that the communication had not come up with enough proposals in this area. The committee urged that preferential support be given to countries committed to educational strategies encompassing free universal primary provision and gender equality. It called on the Commission, at the forthcoming WTO negotiations, not to allow schooling to be included in the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS) as a 'service' that must be subject to free-market rules and productivity criteria, as this could seriously restrict public education which might be deemed in breach of the rules on free competition. It

insisted that education must remain the primary responsibility of the State and that it must be considered a public service even though it may be provided by the private sector. The report also called for reform of IMF and World Bank Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers so as to ensure that they support, rather than undermine, free, public, high-quality education. Lastly, MEPs stressed the importance of adapting education to local culture and mentality, for example by providing Pan-African editions of textbooks and by building schools out of local, cheap material.?

Developing countries, education and training: objectives and priorities in reducing poverty

The European Parliament adopted a resolution drafted by Margrietus VAN DEN BERG (PES, NL) on poverty reduction in developing countries. (Please see the summary dated 23/04/03.) Parliament emphasised that universal, compulsory, free, public and high-quality primary education, which provides children with at least six years of primary education, is the foundation for an education strategy which encompasses secondary, tertiary, vocational and adult education. Parliament called on the Commission to set a budgetary target for education, as the budgetary authority did in 2001. It is imperative to attain the 35% target for social sector spending, including education, which was agreed in 2001; there should be clear time indicators within the current framework between now and 2015. Parliament went on to call for reform of IMF and World Bank Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers so as to ensure that they support, rather than undermine, free, public, high-quality education and take account of the specific nature of each situation and region while subordinating technical considerations to the overall objectives of sustainable development and the fight against poverty. It agreed that responsibility for the quality of education should lie with the developing countries themselves. Standards should be agreed with those countries for acceptable girls' enrolment and completion rates for each year, with a view to closing the gender gap in primary and secondary education. If this fails, the Commission will need to consider whether budget support is the most appropriate mechanism for achieving the gender equality Millennium Development Goal in that country. If countries do not comply, mechanisms should exist to induce them to do so, including the possibility of budget support being suspended. Parliament also agreed that there are many different ways in which education may be organised, including use of the private sector, but stressed that the State must guarantee the right of education for all. Education must be considered a public service even though it may be provided by the private sector. Furthermore, universal full-time education required an effective ban on child labour. All education programmes financed by the Community must have far-reaching strategies which include social mobilisation and bridging courses for older children.?