

Procedure file

| Basic information | | |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| INI - Own-initiative procedure | 2008/2328(INI) | Procedure completed |
| Educating the children of migrants | | |
| Subject | | |
| 4.40.01 European area for education, training and lifelong learning | | |
| 4.40.03 Primary and secondary school, European Schools, early childhood | | |
| 4.40.08 Language learning, regional and local languages | | |
| 7.10 Free movement and integration of third-country nationals | | |

| Key players | | | |
|---------------------|---|---|------------|
| European Parliament | Committee responsible | Rapporteur | Appointed |
| | CULT Culture and Education | | 15/12/2008 |
| | | ALDE TAKKULA Hannu | |
| | Committee for opinion | Rapporteur for opinion | Appointed |
| | EMPL Employment and Social Affairs | The committee decided not to give an opinion. | |
| | LIBE Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs | The committee decided not to give an opinion. | |
| European Commission | Commission DG | Commissioner | |
| | Education, Youth, Sport and Culture | FIGEL' Ján | |

| Key events | | | |
|------------|--|---|---------|
| 03/07/2008 | Non-legislative basic document published | COM(2008)0423 | Summary |
| 18/12/2008 | Committee referral announced in Parliament | | |
| 05/03/2009 | Vote in committee | | Summary |
| 09/03/2009 | Committee report tabled for plenary | A6-0125/2009 | |
| 01/04/2009 | Debate in Parliament |  | |
| 02/04/2009 | Results of vote in Parliament |  | |
| 02/04/2009 | Decision by Parliament | T6-0202/2009 | Summary |
| 02/04/2009 | End of procedure in Parliament | | |

| Technical information | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
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| Procedure subtype | Initiative |
| Legal basis | Rules of Procedure EP 54 |
| Stage reached in procedure | Procedure completed |

Documentation gateway

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|---|--------------------------------|------------|----|---------|
| Non-legislative basic document | COM(2008)0423 | 03/07/2008 | EC | Summary |
| Document attached to the procedure | SEC(2008)2173 | 03/07/2008 | EC | |
| Committee draft report | PE419.851 | 28/01/2009 | EP | |
| Amendments tabled in committee | PE420.182 | 18/02/2009 | EP | |
| Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading | A6-0125/2009 | 09/03/2009 | EP | |
| Text adopted by Parliament, single reading | T6-0202/2009 | 02/04/2009 | EP | Summary |
| Follow-up document | SEC(2009)1115 | 05/08/2009 | EC | Summary |
| Commission response to text adopted in plenary | SP(2009)3508/3 | 13/10/2009 | EC | |

Educating the children of migrants

PURPOSE: Green Paper on Migration & mobility: challenges and opportunities for EU education systems

CONTENT: this Green Paper opens the debate on how education policies may better address the challenges posed by the presence in schools of large numbers of children from a migrant background who are in a weak socio-economic position. The Commission notes that the term "children from a migrant background", is used for the specific purpose of this Paper to refer to the children of all persons living in an EU country where they were not born, irrespective of whether they are third-country nationals, citizens of another EU Member State or subsequently became nationals of the host Member State. This is a broad concept of "migration" which differs from certain EU-level texts dealing with immigration policy. Despite important legal and practical differences with the situation concerning third-countries citizens, EU citizens residing in another Member State have been included in this Paper on the basis that the specific educational issues addressed in the text are likely to apply also to a significant number of them.

Migration influences the education of children even where their families have a high socioeconomic and educational status. Such pupils may be adversely affected at least in the short run by interrupted schooling or by having to face linguistic and cultural difference. However, longer-term prospects for their education success look good and their exposure to new cultures and languages is likely to enhance their human capital. Clearly many children of migrants, including many in the wave of recent arrivals, will fall into this group. However, the focus of this Green Paper is on the combination of linguistic and cultural difference with socio-economic disadvantage, its tendency to be concentrated in certain areas and particular schools. This is a substantial educational challenge and whether systems succeed or fail has important social consequences.

There is clear and consistent evidence that many children of migrants have lower levels of educational attainment than their peers. A survey cited in the Paper standard academic skills of 15-year-olds confirms that migrant pupils in this age group tend to systematically perform less well than host countries pupils across each of the tested subject areas, science, and mathematics and, most strikingly, reading. The study also highlights a particularly stark point for education policy makers ?attainment gaps in certain countries within each of the three study domains actually worsen from the first generation of migrant pupils to the second. This means that education is in these situations failing to act as a force to include migrants, indeed that the increased gaps in educational attainment are likely to cement and intensify their social exclusion.

Research has identified several causes contributing to the current educational disadvantage of many migrants. Some key factors relate to the individual background of migrant pupils ? low socio-economic background, language, family and community expectations. However, data also show the importance of education systems and that some countries succeed better than others in reducing the gap between migrant and native pupils, thus demonstrating that policies may significantly influence school performance. Segregation, for instance, is a downward spiral that affects children?s motivation and performance. Ability grouping and tracking may have similar effects. Teachers' expectations, and their preparedness to deal with diversity, may further condition results. The Green Paper undertakes a brief review of policies and approaches that may foster educational success for migrant pupils. It indicates that those systems which strongly prioritise equity in education are also the most effective in integrating migrant pupils. Among the policy measures which seem particularly useful to address the issue are pre-school education, language learning, additional educational support such as mentoring and tutoring, intercultural education as well as partnerships with families and communities. Preventing segregation and desegregating ?ghetto? schools seems a precondition to guarantee real equal opportunities to migrant pupils. To do that, ensuring high quality standards in all schools, especially in relation to teaching and leadership, is essential.

Strategies need to be defined and implemented at the national or regional levels, but peer learning at the European level may prove valuable. The Green Paper aims to foster an exchange of views on how to address these challenges at all levels, and also to inquire how the EU might in future support Member States in formulating their education policies in this area. In addition, it explores the future of Directive 77/486/EEC on the education of children of workers from other Member States, whose implementation has been patchy.

The Commission feels that it would be valuable to undertake a consultation with interested parties about education policy for children from a migrant background. Interested parties are invited to make their views known about:

- the policy challenge;
- good policy responses to this challenge;
- the possible role of the European Union in supporting Member States to address these challenges; and

- their views on the future of Directive 77/486/EEC.

Respondents are invited to use the broad questions listed in the Green Paper as a guide when framing their contributions.

Educating the children of migrants

The Committee on Culture and Education unanimously adopted the own-initiative report drawn up by Hannu TAKKULA (ALDE, FI) on educating the children of migrants, approving the Commission Green Paper entitled 'Migration and mobility: challenges and opportunities for EU education systems?.'

Given that all Member States are facing the same type of challenges in this area, MEPs call for efforts to be made, including at European level, to improve the education of children of migrants, above all because there will be more and more of these children in schools in the EU in the future. In addition, workers within the Union may be more willing to work abroad if there is not a risk that their children will suffer educationally. MEPs therefore encourage the development of a model of partnership between schools and communities enabling children whose parents are working abroad to benefit from programmes of assistance, support and counselling from the community.

Learn the languages of the host country: MEPs reiterate that migrant children and adults must have and be willing to take the opportunity to learn the languages of the host country if they are to integrate fully in it. They therefore call on the Member States to ensure education for the children of legal migrants, including the teaching of the official languages of the host country and the promotion of their native languages and cultures. MEPs suggest, in particular, that additional financial and administrative support for language courses should be provided to legal migrants, by trained staff who also understand the mother tongue of the migrants. Moreover, MEPs believe that the parents, and especially the mothers, of migrant children should be involved in the programmes for teaching the official languages of the host country. According to MEPs, multilingualism should be encouraged from pre-school age. They also recommend that children accompanying parents who move to another Member State for employment should not be faced with difficulties in registering in school at a level corresponding to that at which they had been studying in their Member State of origin.

Improving measures for integration: MEPs stress the need to integrate migrants and social categories (such as Roma people) in society. Integration must be based on the principles of equal opportunities in education, ensuring equal access to quality education. Any solutions - whether temporary or permanent - that are based on segregation must be rejected. MEPs also consider that, in order to improve the integration into society of children of migrants, it is necessary to involve them in a wide range of extracurricular activities (e.g. sport).

Avoid creating ghetto-type schools: MEPs recommend that the Member States avoid creating ghetto-type schools or special classes for migrant children. Instead they should promote an inclusive educational policy under which children are allocated to classes on the basis of educational level and individual needs. Moreover, MEPs consider that in schools attended by migrant children the curriculum should pay much more attention to their needs, and that the teachers should be trained in intercultural skills to enable them to deal as effectively as possible with diversity in the school. MEPs are concerned about the high level of early school leaving of the migrant children and therefore believe that efforts should be made to ensure the completion of the courses by the migrant children, bearing in mind that the earlier and the more successfully migrant children are integrated into schools the better they will do at school and in the labour market.

Improving teacher training: MEPs stress the need for quality training for teachers, including special training for teachers that explicitly addresses the special situation of the children of migrants. They encourage, for example, mobility schemes under which teachers are recruited from the country of origin so as to facilitate migrant children's contact with the culture and civilisation of their country of origin. Teachers should also have the opportunity to spend one or two semesters at host universities abroad. MEPs also believe that schools need immigrant teachers as they offer an important experience to their colleagues.

Counselling services and support for non-formal education: MEPs highlight other needs related to immigration. They emphasise the need for counselling services to help migrant children deal with culture shock and adapt to the host society. To help them integrate better, MEPs propose that individual Member States develop educational programmes aimed at improving awareness of human rights issues and personal freedom. All migrants and non-migrants should have the same equal treatment and cooperate more intensively with providers of non-formal education such as youth organisations.

Rejecting all forms of discrimination: MEPs call for discrimination on any grounds, including nationality and residence status to be outlawed in the field of education. Coming round to the Commission's position on this point, MEPs recognise that the current provisions of Directive 77/486/EEC do not correspond to the new social reality of the Union. They therefore support the consultation process launched by the Commission and call for the directive to be amended in order to cover the education of children who are nationals of non-Member States or children whose parents are non-nationals of Member States.

Lastly, MEPs call for:

- schools with a high proportion of immigrant children to receive the necessary staff and facilities to cope with the challenge of diverse classes;
- large towns and cities to better coordinate policy designed to promote the integration of migrant children with policies and strategies regarding housing, (child)care, the employment market, health and welfare.

Educating the children of migrants

The European Parliament adopted by 431 votes to 55, with 94 abstentions a resolution on educating the children of migrants, responding to the Commission Green Paper entitled 'Migration and mobility: challenges and opportunities for EU education systems?.'

Given that all Member States are facing the same type of challenges in this area, the Parliament calls for efforts to be made, including at European level, to improve the education of children of migrants, above all because there will be more and more of these children in schools in the EU in the future. In addition, workers within the Union may be more willing to work abroad if there is not a risk that their children will suffer educationally. Parliament therefore encourage the development of a model of partnership between schools and communities enabling children whose parents are working abroad to benefit from programmes of assistance, support and counselling from the community.

Learn the languages of the host country ? encourage multilingualism: Parliament reiterates that migrant children and adults must have and be willing to take the opportunity to learn the languages of the host country if they are to integrate fully in it. It therefore calls on the Member States to ensure education for the children of legal migrants, including the teaching of the official languages of the host country and the promotion of their native languages and cultures. According to the Parliament, preserving and promoting multilingualism should be part of the curriculum of all schools. Language learning should thus be encouraged from pre-school age to help the integration of migrants. However, the Parliament considers that the place given to teaching in the mother tongue within the curriculum and the organisation thereof must specifically be left to the Member States.

Parliament also suggests that additional financial and administrative support for language courses should be provided to legal migrants, by trained staff who also understand the mother tongue of the migrants. It also recommends that children accompanying parents who move to another Member State for employment should not be faced with difficulties in registering in school at a level corresponding to that at which they had been studying in their Member State of origin.

Improving measures for integration: the Parliament stresses the need to integrate migrants and social categories (such as Roma people) in society. Integration must be based on the principles of equal opportunities in education, ensuring equal access to quality education. Any solutions - whether temporary or permanent - that are based on segregation must be rejected. Parliament also considers that, in order to improve the integration into society of children of migrants, it is necessary to involve them in a wide range of extracurricular activities (e.g. sport).

Avoid creating ghetto-type schools: Parliament recommends that the Member States avoid creating ghetto-type schools or special classes for migrant children. Instead, they should promote an inclusive educational policy under which children are allocated to classes on the basis of educational level and individual needs. Moreover, Parliament considers that in schools attended by migrant children the curriculum should pay much more attention to their needs, and that the teachers should be trained in intercultural skills to enable them to deal as effectively as possible with diversity in the school. The Parliament is concerned about the high level of early school leaving of the migrant children and therefore believes that efforts should be made to ensure the completion of the courses by the migrant children, bearing in mind that the earlier and the more successfully migrant children are integrated into schools, the better they will do at school and in the labour market.

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Counselling services and support for non-formal education: Parliament emphasises the need for counselling services to help migrant children deal with culture shock and adapt to the host society. To help them integrate better, it proposes that individual Member States develop educational programmes aimed at improving awareness of human rights issues and personal freedom. All migrants and non-migrants should have the same equal treatment and cooperate more intensively with providers of non-formal education such as youth organisations.

Rejecting all forms of discrimination: Parliament calls for discrimination on any grounds, including nationality and residence status to be outlawed in the field of education. Coming round to the Commission's position on this point, it recognises that the current provisions of Directive 77/486/EEC do not correspond to the new social reality of the Union. It therefore supports the consultation process launched by the Commission and calls for the directive to be amended in order to cover the education of children who are nationals of non-Member States or children whose parents are non-nationals of Member States.

Lastly, the Parliament calls for:

- schools with a high proportion of immigrant children to receive the necessary staff and facilities to cope with the challenge of diverse classes;
- large towns and cities to better coordinate policy designed to promote the integration of migrant children with policies and strategies regarding housing, (child)care, the employment market, health and welfare;
- the Commission to report regularly on the progress made in the integration of migrant children in the school system of the Member States.

Educating the children of migrants

On 3 July 2008 the European Commission published a Green Paper on "Migration and Mobility: Challenges and Opportunities for EU Education Systems", part of a package of measures accompanying the [Renewed Social Agenda](#). The aim of the Green Paper was to launch a broad public consultation on the best ways of supporting the education of children from a migrant background in the education systems of the EU Member States.

The Green Paper consultation closed on 31 December 2008. The 101 contributions received cover a wide range of stakeholders, including Member States authorities, the European Parliament and the EU advisory bodies, regional and local authorities, European and national associations, religious organisations, social partners, academics and individuals. This report summarises the written contributions received during the consultation.

The great majority of contributions received welcome the Green Paper as a timely addition to the national policy debates. Contributors underline the common challenges faced by national education systems, including the need to increase policy coordination between educational and social policies at all levels, an increased focus on equity and equal opportunities in education and the prevention of school segregation and early school leaving. The policy responses focus on language acquisition and on intercultural education in schools and on strengthening and adapting teacher education.

There is also broad support in the contributions for further initiatives at EU level in the area, through programme funding, peer learning and support for research. There was more divergence of opinions on the appropriateness of developing benchmarks or further indicators in the area, as well as a lack of consensus on the future of Directive 77/486/EEC on the education of the children of migrant workers (the great majority of contributors recognised its inadequacy in the current European social context).

Building on the support received in the consultation process, the Commission will organise a stakeholder conference to encourage debate on

the policies needed to support the education of the children of migrants. The Commission has already announced its intention to continue working on this topic, proposing the education of the children of migrants as a priority theme for future work within the Education and Training 2010 programme.