

Procedure file

Basic information	
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2021/2209(INI)
Towards an EU strategy to promote education for children in the world: mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic	
Subject 4.40 Education, vocational training and youth	
Legislative priorities The EU's response to the Covid-19 pandemic	
Procedure completed	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	 Foreign Affairs	 LEGA David	04/03/2021
		Shadow rapporteur	
		 VOLLATH Bettina	
		 AUŠTREVČIUS Petras	
		 SATOURI Mounir	
		 MATIAS Marisa	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	 Development (Associated committee)		29/10/2021
		 HÖLVÉNYI György	
	 Culture and Education (Associated committee)		13/07/2021
		 VERHEYEN Sabine	
European Commission	Commission DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture	Commissioner GABRIEL Mariya	

Key events			
25/11/2021	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
25/11/2021	Referral to associated committees		

	announced in Parliament		
15/03/2022	Vote in committee		
22/03/2022	Committee report tabled for plenary	A9-0058/2022	Summary
02/05/2022	Debate in Parliament		
03/05/2022	Decision by Parliament	T9-0138/2022	Summary

Technical information

Procedure reference	2021/2209(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 57; Rules of Procedure EP 54
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 159
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFET/9/07047

Documentation gateway

Committee draft report		PE698.973	28/10/2021	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE702.918	16/12/2021	EP	
Committee opinion	CULT	PE699.300	08/02/2022	EP	
Committee opinion	DEVE	PE700.642	04/03/2022	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A9-0058/2022	22/03/2022	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T9-0138/2022	03/05/2022	EP	Summary

Towards an EU strategy to promote education for children in the world: mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted an own-initiative report by David LEGA (EPP, SE) on Towards an EU strategy to promote education for children in the world: mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to Unicef, more than 168 million children have lost a full year of education because of school closures due to the COVID-19 lockdowns. Education has been significantly disrupted for 800 million students worldwide, who have lost an average of two-thirds of a school year. Since March 2020, some 194 countries have been forced to close schools across their territory due to the COVID-19 pandemic, affecting more than 1.8 billion learners worldwide and depriving them of access to education and other benefits offered by school.

Members urged the Commission, the European External Action Service (EEAS) and Member States to promote a child rights-based approach in global efforts to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children's access to education, and on the principles of non-discrimination, best interests of the child and child participation.

Recognising that education is a cross-cutting issue that affects all aspects of sustainable development, the report stressed the importance of ensuring children's right to education and giving every child the chance to return to school. In particular, it called on the Commission, the EEAS and the Member States to:

- support the authorities of third countries in prioritising school reopening in their recovery plans;
- support third-country authorities in ensuring that all children can enjoy their right to primary education and to take action to ensure that secondary education is available and accessible;
- support third-country authorities in developing and implementing digital teaching and learning methods and to facilitate internet access for all;
- support the authorities of third countries in financing and implementing safe school operations, including providing hygiene supplies and sharing information on handwashing and other hygiene measures, as well as on maintaining the continuity of nutrition services for school-age children and adolescents;

- support the authorities of third countries in establishing education risk mitigation and management plans through resilience planning;
- support the authorities of third countries in proactively issuing guidance on best practices in remote learning, and in ensuring that appropriate and safe tools, curricula and technology are used and are made accessible to children from low-income families, rural, indigenous and migrant children, marginalised children and children with disabilities or learning difficulties;
- maintain robust funding for education through all EU financial instruments available;
- support the governments of third countries in building and further developing stronger gender-responsive and inclusive education systems accompanied by the eradication of all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls;
- preserve and further strengthen the achievements of the past 20 years in education for women and girls in Afghanistan;
- develop specific programmes to manage and mitigate the mental health and psychosocial impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on children, teachers and their communities;
- support the authorities of partner countries in addressing the challenges in their education systems with the aim of making them capable of withstanding future crises, and making systems more resilient and inclusive.

The report urged countries around the world to consider education as an investment rather than an expense. Members believe that adequate and effective financial assistance for education is a prerequisite to eliminate poverty and enhance well-being. They called on the Commission and Member States to substantially increase funding for education in their international development and assistance strategies.

Members stressed the role of non-formal and informal education, citizenship education and volunteering. They called for environmental education to become an essential component of the school curriculum. The report also urged the importance of accompanying investment in training and education with support for job creation to provide a better outlook for the next generation of young people in Africa and other developing regions.

Towards an EU strategy to promote education for children in the world: mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

The European Parliament adopted by 568 votes to 21, with 43 abstentions, a resolution on Towards an EU strategy to promote education for children in the world: mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to Unicef, more than 168 million children have lost a full year of education because of school closures due to the COVID-19 lockdowns. Education has been significantly disrupted for 800 million students worldwide, who have lost an average of two-thirds of a school year. Since March 2020, some 194 countries have been forced to close schools across their territory due to the COVID-19 pandemic, affecting more than 1.8 billion learners worldwide and depriving them of access to education and other benefits offered by school.

While praising the work of teachers, educators and support staff who have adapted quickly to the COVID-19 pandemic, Members urged the Commission, the European External Action Service (EEAS) and Member States to promote a child rights-based approach in global efforts to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children's access to education, and on the principles of non-discrimination, best interests of the child and child participation.

Recognising that education is a cross-cutting issue that affects all aspects of sustainable development, Parliament insisted that the EU should lead the way as an educational power and urged the Commission to define a strategy with a clear description and objectives in this respect.

The resolution stressed the importance of ensuring children's right to education and giving every child the chance to return to school. In particular, it called on the Commission, the EEAS and the Member States to:

- support the authorities of third countries in prioritising school reopening in their recovery plans;
- support third-country authorities in ensuring that all children can enjoy their right to primary education and to take action to ensure that secondary education is available and accessible;
- support third-country authorities in developing and implementing digital teaching and learning methods and to facilitate internet access for all;
- work with their transatlantic allies and international partners to boost the global supply of COVID-19 vaccine, ensuring equitable distribution to the countries and populations that need it most, and enable children to rapid return to school;
- support the authorities of third countries in financing and implementing safe school operations, including providing hygiene supplies and sharing information on handwashing and other hygiene measures, as well as on maintaining the continuity of nutrition services for school-age children and adolescents;
- support the authorities of third countries in establishing education risk mitigation and management plans through resilience planning;
- support the authorities of third countries in proactively issuing guidance on best practices in remote learning, and in ensuring that appropriate and safe tools, curricula and technology are used and are made accessible to children from low-income families, rural, indigenous and migrant children, marginalised children and children with disabilities or learning difficulties;
- maintain robust funding for education through all EU financial instruments available;
- assist authorities in third countries to ensure appropriate care for children, including by putting in place a contingency plan for the care of children who are orphaned or who are no longer adequately cared for due to severe cases of COVID-19;
- support the governments of third countries in building and further developing stronger gender-responsive and inclusive education systems accompanied by the eradication of all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls;
- allocate the necessary funds within the framework of the EU humanitarian aid to Afghanistan to enable international and local organisations to facilitate the reopening of educational institutions for girls and women;

- develop specific programmes to manage and mitigate the mental health and psychosocial impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on children, teachers and their communities;

- support the authorities of partner countries in addressing the challenges in their education systems with the aim of making them capable of withstanding future crises, and making systems more resilient and inclusive.

Parliament urged countries around the world to consider education as an investment rather than an expense. Members believe that adequate and effective financial assistance for education is a prerequisite to eliminate poverty and enhance well-being. They called on the Commission and Member States to substantially increase funding for education in their international development and assistance strategies.

Members stressed the role of non-formal and informal education, citizenship education and volunteering. They stressed the importance of continuing professional development and increased financial support for teachers. They called for environmental education to become an essential component of the school curriculum.

Lastly, Parliament called for an acceleration of global knowledge exchange and increased mobility at all levels of education.

Transparency				
LEGA David	Rapporteur	AFET	19/10/2021	Save the Children Europe World Vision Brussels & EU Representation ivzw/aisbl SOS VILLAGES INTERNATIONAL
LEGA David	Rapporteur	AFET	11/10/2021	Global Campus on Human RIGHTS
LEGA David	Rapporteur	AFET	07/10/2021	European Commission
LEGA David	Rapporteur	AFET	07/09/2021	UNICEF