

Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2017/2224(INI)	Procedure completed
Modernisation of education in the EU		
Subject 4.40.01 European area for education, training and lifelong learning		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	 Culture and Education	 ŁYBACKA Krystyna	04/07/2017
		Shadow rapporteur	
		 BOCSKOR Andrea	
		 SERNAGIOTTO Remo	
		 GIMÉNEZ BARBAT María Teresa	
		 EVANS Jill	
		 ADINOLFI Isabella	
		 BILDE Dominique	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	 Employment and Social Affairs (Associated committee)		25/10/2017
		 KOZŁOWSKA Agnieszka	
	 Women's Rights and Gender Equality		27/10/2017
		 ŠOJDROVÁ Michaela	
European Commission	Commission DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture	Commissioner NAVRACSICS Tibor	

Key events			

30/05/2017	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2017)0247	Summary
26/10/2017	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
26/10/2017	Referral to associated committees announced in Parliament		
25/04/2018	Vote in committee		
17/05/2018	Committee report tabled for plenary	A8-0173/2018	Summary
11/06/2018	Debate in Parliament		
12/06/2018	Results of vote in Parliament		
12/06/2018	Decision by Parliament	T8-0247/2018	Summary
12/06/2018	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2017/2224(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 159
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CULT/8/11289

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document		COM(2017)0247	30/05/2017	EC	Summary
Committee draft report		PE616.625	30/01/2018	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE619.099	02/03/2018	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE619.100	02/03/2018	EP	
Committee opinion	FEMM	PE616.684	04/04/2018	EP	
Committee opinion	EMPL	PE618.003	11/04/2018	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A8-0173/2018	17/05/2018	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T8-0247/2018	12/06/2018	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2018)567	13/11/2018	EC	

Modernisation of education in the EU

PURPOSE: to outline the new EU strategy for higher education.

BACKGROUND: the success of the European project depends on the EU's capacity to build a better future for European citizens. It is also at the heart of the initiative '[Investing in Europe's Youth](#)' and the '[New Skills Agenda for Europe](#)'. These made clear that effective education and training systems are a foundation of fair, open and democratic societies and of sustained growth and employment.

The EU's '[pillar of social rights](#)' and recent '[reflection paper on harnessing globalisation](#)' identify education and skills as a priority for European

cooperation.

The role of the Union: the EU has a successful record of supporting higher education through policy cooperation and funding programmes. The European Semester is a key driver of reform, namely through education-related country specific recommendations.

As part of the Europe 2020 strategy and the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), the Council agreed that 40% of young people should have a tertiary education qualification or equivalent by 2020.

Supporting this target, since 2011, the [Modernisation Agenda for Higher Education](#) has provided strategic direction for EU and Member State activities to:

- build evidence about what works in higher education (in education, research, innovation and the design of systems) through studies, expert groups and analysis and monitoring of benchmarks and indicators;
- support cooperation, mutual learning and targeted policy advice between governments and authorities responsible for higher education;
- strengthen the capacity and outputs of higher education institutions by funding innovative cooperation projects between institutions and their partners (Erasmus+, Horizon 2020) and, through European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), investment in infrastructure, facilities, skills and innovation projects;
- support international mobility of students, staff and researchers as a way for them to develop their experience and skills (Erasmus+ and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions);
- strengthen collaboration between higher education, research and business.

Adapting to the changing world: the Commission notes that European higher education systems still face a number of challenges, including:

- a mismatch between the skills Europe needs and those available to it: in the period up to 2025, half of all jobs are projected to require high-level qualifications. Many parts of the EU are experiencing shortages in certain high-skill professions, both in terms of qualifications and the quality of the associated skills. At the same time, too many students graduate with poor basic skills and without the range of transversal skills they need for resilience in a changing world;
- persistent and growing social divisions: people from disadvantaged socio-economic and with a migrant background remain far less likely to enter and complete higher education; academics and graduates are too often perceived as detached from the rest of society; gender segregation by field of study, etc.;
- an innovation gap, the performance of higher education in innovation varies strongly between EU regions;
- the different components of higher education systems do not always work together seamlessly: cooperation with schools, vocational providers and adult learning is often limited.

Without higher education institutions (HEIs) and systems that are effective in education, research and innovation and are connected to their societies, Europe cannot respond to these challenges. Reform of higher education is the responsibility of Member States and part of their efforts to develop world-class education and training. The EU can help Member States with their educational reform efforts.

CONTENT: this Communication sets out the Commission's view of how higher education, while building on existing achievements, should refocus efforts on current and evolving perspectives and challenges.

The new strategy identifies four main priority areas for action and proposes specific measures at EU level to complement the work done by higher education institutions and Member State authorities:

1. Tackling future skills mismatches and promoting excellence in skills development;
2. Building inclusive and connected higher education systems;
3. Ensuring higher education institutions contribute to innovation;
4. Supporting effective and efficient higher education systems.

Within each of the four main priority areas, the Commission defines the specific measures it will take to help achieve the general objectives, for example:

- start a European initiative to track graduates to improve knowledge at national and EU level on how they progress in their careers or further education;
- launch an up-scaled EU STE(A)M coalition bringing together different education sectors, business and public sector employers to promote the uptake of relevant STE(A)M subjects and modernise STE(A)M and other curricula, including through more multidisciplinary programmes and cooperation between relevant faculties and HEIs;
- encourage the integration of work placements into higher education programmes, and support Erasmus+ student work placements with a particular focus on digital skills;
- develop and roll out a digital readiness model to help HEIs, their staff and students implement digital learning strategies;
- step up strategic support for higher education teachers, doctoral candidates and postdoctoral graduates through Erasmus+ to help them develop pedagogical and curriculum design skills through targeted opportunities for staff mobility for pedagogical training;
- help HEIs in developing and implementing integrated institutional strategies for inclusion, gender equality and study success from admission to graduation, including through cooperation with schools and VET providers;
- promote development and testing of flexible and modular course design;
- support recognition of qualifications held by refugees to facilitate their access to higher education;
- support further development and testing of teaching methods for creativity and innovation in higher education;
- step up EU support for university-business cooperation, making the biannual University Business Forum a focal point for exchange on HEIs and regional development at European level and promoting the establishment of regional and national university-business fora across the EU.
- support cooperation and mutual learning among governments, for example through the proposal to review funding and incentive structures for higher education systems and peer counselling on funding;
- optimise synergies between EU evidence tools by creating a Knowledge Hub on higher education.

As the Commission prepares for the next multiannual EU budget, it will explore with Member States the future of shared EU targets in the fields of education, research and innovation and seek to strengthen cooperation in these fields as a basis for achieving the objectives set out

in this Communication.

Modernisation of education in the EU

The Committee on Culture and Education adopted the report by Krystyna ŹYBACKA (S&D, PL) on the modernisation of education in the European Union.

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, exercising its prerogatives as an associated committee in accordance with [Article 54 of the Rules of Procedure](#), also gave its opinion on the report.

The report stressed the crucial role of education in shaping the future of Europe both economically and socially, while providing for the needs of European citizens and building a community of diverse citizens united by their common core values.

Members believe that an all-encompassing approach to education policy, with 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 actors, including parents.

The report highlighted the potential of new information and communication technologies (ICT) and innovation, as instruments for offering new opportunities in education and stressed the opportunities that digitalisation and the establishment of common educational platforms offer for modern education. The objective of this being to develop reasoning, reflection, and scientific curiosity capable of building on the foundations of an artistic, scientific, and technical humanistic culture.

Members called on Member States to support the creation of a European education area which should focus on achieving common objectives, including ensuring quality education for all, and to strengthen cooperation in the development and implementation of its objectives.

They made several recommendations for the effective development and implementation of the education reform process:

Early childhood education and care (ECEC): the report called on Member States to ensure free and fair access to high-quality ECEC and encouraged them to take the necessary measures to ensure that the material and financial conditions are met to enable every child to have access to ECEC without discrimination, as well as to provide more nursery and kindergarten places.

Members called on the Commission to consider establishing a common European framework for ECEC and support the establishment of a European benchmark for quality ECEC.

School education: Members encouraged the implementation of a Whole School Approach in order to increase social inclusion, accessibility, democratic governance, quality and diversity in education. They highlighted that the large number of NEETs – almost 6.3 million young people aged 15-24 are neither in employment nor in education and training – could be reduced by preventing early school leaving, and by making schools more practical and connected to their local environment, by developing links with local companies.

The report stresses, inter alia, the need to:

- strengthen opportunities and structures for internal and external collaboration at school level;
- make school education more flexible in order to improve response to the actual living circumstances of students;
- encourage more STEAM initiatives (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) at school level,
- support language skills by developing innovative multilingual pedagogies;
- create more inclusive learning environments by promoting the rights of the most vulnerable groups;
- promote the importance of health and relationships education, which must include teaching children and young people about relationships based on equality, consent, respect and reciprocity, as well as teaching about women's and girls' rights;
- adopt measures for the recognition of study periods abroad that do not lead to a diploma or qualification;
- develop prevention programmes and awareness raising campaigns on the issues of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, addiction and violence by developing, at school level and in cooperation with the direct beneficiaries and all stakeholders.

Higher education: Members called for the creation of a European education area and encouraged Member States to invest at least 2 % of their respective GDPs in higher education. National or regional resources and the allocation of European Structural and Investment Funds should give priority to educational programmes and the foster of cooperation between higher education, the world of work, industry, research communities and society as a whole.

The report recommended, inter alia:

- fostering more inclusive and accessible mobility of students, trainees, apprentice teachers, researchers and administrative staff;
- increasing funding for the mobility of teachers and researchers;
- ensuring mutual cross-border recognition and compatibility of academic qualifications and degrees;
- developing comprehensive strategies and tools to determine the quality of new modes of teaching and learning, e.g. e-learning, open online courses;
- including work placements, recognised through ECTS credits, in higher education programmes, as well as to take account of local issues and needs by integrating them into teaching curricula and research projects.

The teacher as a guarantor of quality teaching: Members called on the Member States to introduce incentives to attract and motivate young people and qualified teachers to enter and work in the education system. They emphasised the need to recognise the professional status of early childhood education and care employees and support for teachers delivering multilingual courses.

The Commission and the Member States are encouraged to support teachers in incorporating innovation and technology into teaching through the strengthening of their digital skills. Members expressed support for the creation of an Academy of Teaching and Learning, as a complementary facility enabling teachers to train and exchange best practices at European level.

Lastly, Members called for a substantial increase of funding for Erasmus+ in the multi-financial framework (MFF) for 2021-2027, in order to make it more accessible and inclusive and enable it to reach out to more students and teachers.

Modernisation of education in the EU

The European Parliament adopted by 552 votes to 75, with 71 abstentions, a resolution on the modernisation of education in the European Union.

Knowledge as a key economic resource and a source of citizens well-being: the resolution stressed the crucial role of education in shaping the future of Europe both economically and socially, while providing for the needs of Europe's citizens and building a community of diverse citizens united by their common core values.

Parliament believes that an all-encompassing approach to education policy, with 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 actors, including parents.

It urged Member States to begin implementing the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights that offer means of reducing inequalities in Europe through education, training and lifelong learning. Furthermore, education systems at all levels should maintain a gender perspective that takes into account the needs of people suffering multiple forms of discrimination.

New challenges: the resolution highlighted the potential of new information and communication technologies (ICT) and innovation, as instruments for offering new opportunities in education and stressed the opportunities that digitalisation and the establishment of common educational platforms offer for modern education. The objective of this being to develop reasoning, reflection, and scientific curiosity capable of building on the foundations of an artistic, scientific, and technical humanistic culture.

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