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(Information)

COUNCIL

CONCLUSIONS OF THE COUNCIL AND THE MINISTERS OF EDUCATION MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL

of 14 May 1987

Concerning a programme of European collaboration on the integration of handicapped children into ordinary schools

(87/C 211/01)

THE COUNCIL AND THE MINISTERS OF EDUCATION MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL,

note, on the basis of a report by the Education Committee, the progress made on the integration of handicapped children into ordinary schools since the adoption of their conclusions on this subject on 4 June 1984;

reaffirm the importance of achieving the maximum possible integration of handicapped children into ordinary schools, as well as the main measures mentioned in those conclusions concerning elimination of physical obstacles, training of teachers, development of school curricula and gaining understanding among families and the local community;

emphasize the need to continue working on the conclusions in the context of the Community programme for the general social integration of handicapped people (1);

agree that future work at the levels of the Member States and the European Community should also take into account the considerations set out in Annex I to these conclusions;

approve in principle the four-year programme of European collaboration and exchange in support of Member State action, appearing in Annex II to the conclusions. A list of research themes appears in Annex III. This programme will be carried out by the Commission within the limits of its financial means, and with all necessary assistance from Member States;

agree to the Commission proposal to renew the mandate of the working party on the integration of handicapped children into ordinary schools, so that it can finalize the abovementioned programme and supervise its operation;

invite the Commission to ensure, during the implementation of the programme:

— close coordination with the action programme in favour of the social and economic integration and independent living of handicapped people;

— particular attention to problems of transition from school to adult and working life in all the principal elements of the programme;

invite the Commission to submit at the end of the period concerned a report on progress in the Member States and on the programme of collaboration and exchange at Community level.

(1) OJ No C 347 of 31. 12. 1981.

ANNEX I

Considerations concerning future work on the integration of handicapped children into ordinary schools

(a) Integration of handicapped children into ordinary schools should be seen as an important part of the drive for social integration of handicapped people. It can lead to a more satisfactory adult and working life for handicapped children. At the same time, normal children benefit from growing up together with handicapped children and integration can lead to generally desirable teaching reforms.

Educational objectives for schools, including the need to provide children with skills for adult and working life, should enable all children to fulfil their potential. Their abilities and acquired skills should be stressed rather than their incapacities, and systems and teaching methods should be flexible enough to respond to individual needs, including those of handicapped children and of children having learning difficulties of any kind.

(b) The policy of integration is bringing about changes in school systems, and the systems should develop further so as to enable all children to reach their individual potential. Integration is an evolutionary process, respecting differences of style and pace among the school systems. It sets goals for individual children, and in this context institutional limits of integration linked with the nature and degree of handicap would not be appropriate.

(c) Integrated situations and specialized ed establishments should be considered as complementary in a long-term perspective. There should be as much integration into ordinary schools as possible, and as much use of specialized establishments as necessary. The two systems should cooperate actively — through joint organisation of educational and specialized services and in other ways — on the basis of coherent and well-defined guidelines both at national and local level.

(d) Within the context of the general programme for social integration of handicapped people, cooperation should be developed amongst all the bodies caring for handicapped children, in teaching, vocational training, services dealing with the transition between school and adult and working life, health (including psychological and paramedical facilities) and social services. Overall responsibility for the education of handicapped children should as far as possible rest with authorities responsible for education in general.

(e) The various educational possibilities afforded by new information technologies in this area should be fully explored.

(f) Means should be developed at national level for assembling information about progress in school integration and for publicizing it.

ANNEX II

Four-year programme of European collaboration and exchange, to be carried out by the Commission in support of Member State action

A. Examination of the following themes common to all school levels and to all disabilities:

1. Special systems and integrated situations;

2. Teachers and parents;

3. The classroom;

4. A full school life.

Details of the four themes are included in Annex III.

B. Selection by the Commission, on the basis of proposals by Member States, of 20 existing local experiences/situations illustrating significant integration and having features of particular relevance to one of more of the four themes. These themes could then be analyzed more realistically in the light of material gathered, and solutions having wide applicability could be identified.

The following networking services would be offered to collaborating schools:

— study visit programme (about 80 of the 100 additional places for special education provided for in the 1988 budget),

— annual seminar for 'project' leaders,

— participation for two or more 'project' team members in annual theme-based conference,

— documentation, information and advisory services of the Commission's consultants, as well as regular newsletter.

C. Appropriate use of EURYDICE and the already existing HANDYNET data base for the handicapped for specific points concerning the education of handicapped children.

D. Continuing attention to optimizing the contribution of new technology to the education of children with disabilities, especially in the context of integration.

ANNEX III

List of research themes

1. **Special systems and integrated situations**

(a) Analysis of systems for coordinating decisions and developments within integrating policies;

(b) Analysis of available data on cost effectiveness in connection with different forms of provision;

(c) Case studies illustrating positive modifications of the rôle of specialized teachers/establishments in integrating situations;

(d) Practical models of positive collaboration between educational and other local services (health, social services, etc.) in support of integration.

2. **Teachers and parents**

(a) Comparison of working models, and of evaluation data where available concerning:
  (i) insertion of a component in initial training courses, aimed to prepare 'general' teachers for integrated situations;
  (ii) in-service training of general teachers for 'basic' rôles in integrated situations;
  (iii) in-service training of general or special teachers for leading rôles in integrated situations.

(b) Case studies of positive experience aimed at involving parents of handicapped and non-handicapped children (and other family members) positively in the integration process, whether by means of information, training, discussion with professionals or participation in decision-making.

3. **The classroom**

Case studies of effective curriculum development, with particular reference to the needs of children with different disabilities, involving any or all of:

(a) modifications of syllabus objectives and content;

(b) modifications of teaching methods and organization; notably those aimed to encourage individualization;

(c) contributions of new technologies as aids to communication and learning.

4. **A full school life**

(a) Physical aspects:

(i) case studies, including financial data, of successful construction or adaptation and equipment of school buildings to enable full access to school facilities for physically or sensorily disabled children;

(ii) the same, for establishments of higher education;

(iii) similar studies concerning adapted transport from home to school, covering all levels of education and different environments (urban/rural).

(b) Social aspects:

Analysis of studies (and preparation of new studies if necessary) of the social experience of disabled children in mainstream situations, based to a significant extent on the testimony of such children themselves and of their peers.