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(Information)

COUNCIL

CONCLUSIONS

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

on the second European Community action programme (1982 to 1987) concerning the transition of young people from education to adult and working life

of 24 May 1988

(88/C 177/01)

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

Referring to their resolutions

— of 9 February 1976 comprising an action programme in the field of education (1),

— of 12 July 1982 and 5 December 1985 concerning measures to be taken to improve the preparation of young people for work and to facilitate their transition from education to working life (2) (3);

Referring to the conclusions of the joint session of the Council (Labour and Social Affairs)/Council and the Ministers of Education meeting within the Council of 3 June 1983 on the transition of young people from education to adult and working life;

Referring to the resolution of the Council of 11 July 1983 concerning vocational training policies in the Community in the 1980s (4);

Referring to the resolution of the Council and of the Ministers of Education meeting within the Council of 19 September 1983 on measures relating to the introduction of new information technology in education (5);

Referring to the resolution of the Council and of the Ministers of Education of 3 June 1985 on an action programme on equal opportunities for girls and boys in education (6);

Referring to the conclusions of the Council and of the Ministers of Education meeting within the Council of 4 June 1984, in particular Section V thereof concerning measures to combat illiteracy;

Referring to the decision of the Council (Social Affairs) of 1 December 1987 concerning an action programme on the vocational training of young people and their preparation for adult and working life (7) and the need for the school systems to complement and support the measures already agreed by the Council;

Recalling that at their meeting on 14 May 1987

— they drew attention to the special importance of in-service training for teachers in view of current social, technological, economic and demographic changes,

— they adopted a work programme to combat the lack of basic skills, especially illiteracy,

— they noted their common concern at the failure of a significant number of young people at school and called on the Commission to submit a communication on this problem;

Observing

— the continuing high levels of youth unemployment in many parts of the European Community, and the need to reduce regional and sectoral disparities in the Community which contribute to it,

(1) OJ No C 38, 19. 2. 1976.
(2) OJ No C 193, 28. 7. 1982.
(3) OJ No C 328, 18. 12. 1985.
(4) OJ No C 193, 20. 7. 1983.
(5) OJ No C 256, 24. 9. 1983.
(6) OJ No C 166, 5. 7. 1985.
(7) OJ No L 346, 10. 12. 1987.

— that structural changes in the labour market, the wider and further use of new technologies and new forms of employment and career patterns, continue to make new demands on the competences and skills of young people,

— that new policy initiatives in secondary education, some of them large-scale, have been taken or are being prepared in a number of Member States, to face the challenges of the 1990s,

— the importance of a full and effective contribution by education systems to the achievement and exploitation of the internal market, as well as to the strengthening of the economic and social cohesion of the Community,

— the need to strengthen the capacity of education systems to manage and monitor innovation and change, so that these may be in a better position to respond to regional and local economic developments, as well as wider economic and social change, and to individual needs;

Welcome the final report of the Commission on the second Community action programme (1982 to 1987) on the transition of young people from education to adult and working life;

Endorse the main conclusions of the Commission's final report of the second transition programme and the emphasis placed by it on the need for continuing innovation in the school systems, particularly secondary schools, and for partnership and cooperation with the world of the economy;

Welcome the contribution made by the programme to making European cooperation and partnership in education a stronger reality at national, regional and local levels;

Invite Member States, in accordance with their distinctive structures, to promote and develop further policies which take into account the main conclusions in the report, and in particular:

1. *in the area of schools and the world of work:*

— to create dynamic partnerships between economic and work organizations, including the social partners, and education authorities and institutions at all levels, and especially between schools and firms in local areas,

— to develop effective work experience opportunities for all pupils, and schemes based on the concept of education for enterprise,

— to promote more active cooperation between schools and Community-based organizations, including the voluntary sector, on projects both inside and outside the school which will widen pupils' experience of adult life,

— to encourage education authorities at local and/or regional level to consider the need for cooperation structures to develop and maintain such links,

— to promote a more active role by education systems, notably at upper secondary level, in local and regional economic development, particularly in disadvantaged areas;

2. *in the field of guidance:*

— to encourage all secondary schools to review their role in providing guidance and counselling for all their pupils, and to develop approaches to meeting pupils' needs which promote cooperation with others concerned in the guidance process,

— to review and extend their provision of appropriate training for teachers and specialists with guidance responsibilities,

— to promote continuing guidance for school-leavers, especially those facing difficulty in entering employment or training, over a stated period (e.g. two years) and encourage schools to play a more active role in this field,

— to help young people to appreciate the potential of continuing education and training throughout adult life, so as to encourage them to make effective use of the opportunities available to them;

3. *in regard to school failure and early drop-out:*

— to encourage and assist schools to review their teaching provisions for their weakest pupils, with special reference to their content, style and methods of assessment, so that these pupils can develop the full range of their abilities,

— to use the possibilities offered by learning modules, learning through practical experience, personal guidance, and the provision of facilities outside the school with a remedial/training character, to sustain, restore or enhance motivation in such pupils, and enable more of them to obtain a recognized qualification,

— to review whether existing certification systems need to be adapted or extended so as to come nearer to the goal of giving recognition to the achievement of all pupils;

4. *in the field of in-service training and school development:*

— to promote policies which encourage schools to consider, on a regular basis, their needs for staff training, and which enable regional or national teacher training provision to respond to the need for school-based in-service training programmes,

— to enable as many teachers as possible to take part in regular in-service training,

— to relate the future development of the content of such training more closely to the school's needs in the area of contact and cooperation with the outside world; so that teachers can gain more experience outside the education system, and widen their knowledge of the guidance process, of new forms of assessment; to assist teachers in involving parents more actively in the life of their children's school,

— to enable teachers and schools, through appropriately designed in-service training programmes, to draw more widely on cross-curricular approaches and interdisciplinary project work,

— to promote task-based working contacts between teaching staff from different types of schools in a local area, especially those in general education and vocational education and training so as to strengthen curriculum continuity, and increase awareness of vocational training opportunities on the part of secondary schools, and to develop opportunities for combining the further training of teachers of compulsory and general education with that of teachers and trainers responsible for vocational training in schools and firms;

5. *in the field of gender equality:*

— to encourage action on the part of all schools to raise awareness among teachers, pupils and parents of the issue of gender equality and to formulate and carry out action to change teaching/learning practices, and guidance processes for pupils and their parents accordingly,

— to promote joint action and exchange of experience between schools at the local level on this issue, and cooperation between schools and their partners in training and employment, so as to concert action and policies so as to make optimum use of staff and resources, thereby providing greater opportunities for girls to study non-traditional subjects, including the disciplines involving new information technology,

— to provide for the monitoring and evaluation of measures taken to ensure equality of opportunity, with a view to the further development of policy and the dissemination of positive experience;

6. *in regard to parents' involvement:*

— to encourage active partnership between schools and parents, the fuller involvement of parents in the guidance process, and the schools' use of parents as a resource to support learning activities, especially those linking the school and the economic world;

Invite Member States and the Commission, to this end, to arrange for the final report of the Commission, and supporting documentation, to be made available to policy-makers, teacher-trainers and practitioners, so as to disseminate the European experience and conclusions as widely as possible;

Consider that the following themes, which are of central importance for the transition from education to adult and working life, require further examination at European Community level:

— the possibility of closer links and new forms of cooperation between school systems and the world of the economy,

— the need for school systems to develop more effective educational counselling and advice for pupils, as a complement to and coordinated with vocational guidance, and to exploit the potential of the new technologies in this regard,

— the motivation and training of the teaching force to work towards greater cooperation and partnership with agencies outside schools with a view to encourage the entrepreneurial spirit of young people and their understanding of the world of work,

— the need to reduce the number of those entering the work-force without qualifications,

— the need to intensify and extend action aimed at ensuring equality of opportunity for girls and young women in education, so as to encourage them to consider the full range of choices for training and employment,

— the importance of involving parents more actively as partners with schools in support of their children's education;

INVITE THE COMMISSION

— to bring forward as soon as possible proposals for specific activities, over the period 1989 to 1992, designed to support developments in the Member States in these areas and with the aim of enhancing the role of education systems in the economic and social life of the Member States. In this context the European network of contacts in this field, established during the second action programme, should be further exploited,

— to clarify, when making its proposals, to what extent the abovementioned themes can be treated in the framework of the Council Decision of 1 December 1987 on the training and the preparation of young people for working life.