PARTICIPATION

AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

IN EDUCATION POLICY MAKING

Report of the conference of the European Network of Education Councils,

Brussels, 1-3 December 2010

with the support of the European Commission

DG Education and Culture

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EUNEC secretariat, Kunstlaan 6, bus 6, 1210 Brussels   + 32.2.227 13 70

www.eunec.eu

INTRODUCTION

EUNEC is the **European Network of Education Councils**. Its members advise the governments of their countries on education and training. EUNEC aims to discuss the findings and recommendations of all European projects in education and training, to determine standpoints and to formulate statements on these issues. EUNEC wants to disseminate these statements pro-actively towards the European Commission, relevant DGs and other actors at European level, and to promote action by EUNEC's members and participants at national level. EUNEC also has the objective that the councils should put internationalization and mobility high on the national agenda, that they should recommend and support a European policy in education and training towards all relevant stakeholders: ministry of education (and employment), sectoral and branch organizations, providers and other actors.

From 2008 EUNEC has been **subsidized** as **European Association acting at European level in the field of education** (Jean Monnet programme). This conference is organized with the support of this grant.

PROGRAMME

Wednesday 1 December 2010

Mia Douterlungne – *general secretary EUNEC, chair of the day*

EDUCATION COUNCILS IN THE EU: BALANCING EXPERTISE, SOCIETAL INPUT AND POLITICAL CONTROL IN THE PRODUCTION OF POLICY ADVICE

09.30 – 10.00 h   **Opening session**

Mia Douterlungne, general secretary of the Vlor (Flemish Education Council)

Ann Demeulemeester, president of the Vlor (Flemish Education Council)

10.00 – 11.30 h   **Presentation of the results of the study on education councils and advisory bodies in the EU**

Professor Dr Marleen Brans, Professor Public Policy – Public Management Institute, Louvain

Drs Jan Van Damme, Researcher, Public Management Institute, Louvain

11.30 – 12.00 h   **Questions from the audience**

12.00 – 12.30 h   **Pascal Smet,** Flemish Minister for Education, Youth, Equal Opportunities and Brussels; President of the European Council for Education, Youth and Culture.

12.30 – 14.00 h   **Lunch**

14.00 – 14.30 h   **Introduction to the workshops: How to optimize your education council?**

14.30 – 16.00 h   **Parallel workshops on meso and micro recommendations**

16.00 – 16.30 h   **Short presentation of the conclusions of the workshops**

17.15 – 18.15 h   **Visit to the Brussels city hall and reception**

18.30 – 20.00 h   **Museum Magritte Nocturne**

Thursday 2 December 2010

Simone Barthel *– President EUNEC, chair of the day*

TRENDS IN PARTICIPATIVE DECISION MAKING ON NATIONAL AND EU LEVEL

09.15 – 10.00 h   Welcome by Marc Thommès, president of the CEF (Conseil de l'Education et de la Formation, French Community Belgium)

10.00 – 11.15 h   Global educational reform movement and national educational change

Pasi Sahlberg, Adj Professor at the University of Helsinki and at the University of Oulo, and DG of CIMO (National Centre for International Mobility and Cooperation).

11.15 – 12.45 h   Participation of education stakeholders on EU level

José Pessanha, European Commission, DG Education and Culture, A1: Lifelong Learning: 2020 Strategy, Policy Cordinator – Relations with Presidencies, Education Committee and stakeholders.

Gina Ebner, president of EUCIS-LLL

12.45 – 14.15 h   Lunch

14.15 – 16.00 h   Stakeholder involvement in national/regional education policy making.

Round table with representatives of different education councils, chaired by **Mia Douterlungne**, EUNEC general secretary

- **Krista Loogma**, chairwoman Estonian Education Forum
- **Šarūnas Bagdonas**, Lithuanian Education Council
- **Elena Hadjikakou**, Cyprus Education Council
- **Ana Bettencourt,** president Conselho Nacional de Educaçao, Portugal
- **Marc Thommès**, president Conseil de l'Education et de la Formation, Belgium, French Community

16.00 – 16.30 h   The added value of education councils

Conclusions by Professor **Marleen Brans**

20.00 h   Conference dinner

Friday 3 December 2010

Simone Barthel *– President EUNEC, chair of the day*

TEN YEARS OF EUNEC: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

10.00 – 10.30 h   The image of EUNEC

10.30 – 11.30 h   Interview with past and present presidents of EUNEC and Domenico Lenarduzzi, honorary director general of the European Commission and co-founder of EUNEC.

Wednesday 1 December 2010

VLOR | vlaamse onderwijsraad

Opening Session

WELCOME

Mia Douterlungne

Mia Douterlungne is secretary general of EUNEC and secretary general of the Vlor, the Flemish Education Council

It is my pleasure to welcome you in the premises of the Vlor, the Flemish Education Council, for this conference on participation and stakeholder involvement in education policy making.

As you can read in the conference programme, the second part of this conference will take place at the CEF, the Conseil de l'Education et de la Formation of the French Community of Belgium. I'm glad we can show to our European colleagues, that, although Belgium still does not have a government, education councils from 'both sides' manage to work together and to understand each other easily.

Several participants already asked about the origins of the nice works of art that are exposed all over our meeting rooms: they are in fact part of a Vlor project: KUS, Kunst uit Scholen, or 'art from schools'. Every six months another school has the opportunity to present its work here. At this moment, pieces of art made by students out of special education are exhibited. So let me invite you to take a look around during the breaks and to admire their work.

The conference on 'participation and stakeholder involvement in education policy making' is built upon the results of the study on education councils ordered by EUNEC. We will have the opportunity to learn from each other about our role as advisory bodies, about the essence of our existence; I hope

we will hear a lot about the strengths and also about the limits of education councils at national and international level. There will be plenty of time to hear the results of the research, to listen to examples from good practices from our member councils, to experts highlighting trends in participative decision making. Finally, on the third day of the conference, all past and present presidents of EUNEC will get together to look back, and to look forward.

We must not forget that 2010 is the tenth anniversary of our network, this has to be celebrated: at the end of the day participants at this conference will be welcomed at the Brussels city hall for a guided tour and a reception, and invited for a nocturne visit at the Museum of Magritte, one of our most famous painters.

Ann Demeulemeester

Ann Demeulemeester is president of the Vlor, the Flemish Education Council

Dear members of EUNEC
Dear friends of EUNEC

I am honoured to welcome you in the surroundings of the Vlor, the Flemish Education Council, here in Brussels. For me, this conference is of great value, as I am the president of an education council, and thus very concerned about participation of stakeholders in the making of education policy.

Participation of stakeholders, and consultation of citizens, is nowadays a key element in policy decision making. It is generally recognized as a main indicator of good governance. Active involvement in the decision making process was in our region never a privilege of a closed circle, an "elite" of civil servants and professional politicians. We have in Flanders a long tradition of consultation and of concertation with schools and with teacher organizations, but also with social partners, socio-economic organizations of employers and employees, and more recently with student and pupil organizations. Stakeholders and citizens no longer accept to be the subject of policy without a certain degree of involvement and consultation. They want to make their voice heard. Policy makers will have to listen.

But, in our point of view, there is more, because participation makes better policy, in two ways. First, in a technical sense, because the real know how, the real expertise is on the field, and not in Brussels. So please, get in touch, and stay in touch with the floor, we always say to our government. And, secondly, participation during the decision making process creates a platform for the choice of policy and thus for the implementation of the policy. So it is very important that we have chosen participation and stakeholder involvement in education policy making as our central theme today.

Stakeholders want to have their say. Policy makers want to take their opinion into account. But, how to organize participation in an effective way? Several European countries – and their number is growing - structure the participation of education stakeholders using education councils. What is an education council? Education councils are national or regional bodies that provide their ministers and governments but also parliaments with policy advice on innovation in education policies. This advice is shaped in the context of changing demands from society, of new challenges. Education councils are platforms for consultation. Throughout Europe, education councils are also diverse bodies with their own characteristics. Some countries and governments prefer to work with stakeholder and interest groups separately; they implement different models of engagement. However, there is a growing interest, both by governments and stakeholder organizations, to examine the benefits of a council, where stakeholders, policy makers and experts come together; where they meet in the context of a formal advisory body. This way, consultation processes become more transparent, and more efficient. Education councils play a major role as an interface between regional, national and international policies. From that perspective, they can strengthen the creation of a European Education Area and can give a boost to the development of the talents of every citizen, in the spirit of the new EU programmes Europe 2020 and Education and Training 2020.

EUNEC - the European Network of Education Councils - was created in 2000. It has, since the beginning, been a platform for cooperation between several European education councils to strengthen participative processes at both national and European level. The Flemish Education Council is proud to be one of the founding members. Within EUNEC, the member councils learn from each other. They exchange good practice at European and national level.

At the time of the creation of the network, in 2000, there was no cooperation at all between national councils in Europe. The international dimension was rarely present in the national or regional agendas, neither in the recommendations formulated towards national and regional Ministers. For some years now, mutual exchanges help councils in their reflection on the future of education and training.

Today, ten years after its creation, EUNEC is a well organized network, active and proactive in the field of the European education policy. The support and encouragement of M. Domenico Lenarduzzi, head of the education division of the European Commission between 1981 and 2001, was an appreciated stimulus for the creation of EUNEC. As he will certainly point out in his contribution in the interview on Friday, he was convinced of the need to strengthen cooperation and dialogue between all educational stakeholders and the European institutions. Therefore we are very honored he accepted to participate at this anniversary event.

About three years ago, EUNEC decided to undertake a study on participation in education policy making. We wanted to know more about the general concept of participation, expertise, legitimacy and involvement of stakeholders and experts in policy making, in particular in education policy processes. The study should identify and describe the various existing models for consulting educational stakeholders in EU countries. A second aim of the study was to enhance the quality of the work done in already existing education councils, active members of EUNEC. This exercise clarifies the critical conditions and the various types of consultation.

The funding by the European Agency, under the Jean Monnet programme, offered an exceptional opportunity for EUNEC to question and discuss on a scientific basis ideas and concepts on participation. We honestly want to express our gratitude to the European Commission for this opportunity. We are also very honored by the encouraging words of M José Manuel Barroso, president of the European Commission. In his preface to our publication, he underlines the crucial role of EUNEC as a vital channel in European-wide cooperation in education and training. He expresses the hope that EUNEC will continue to contribute to the work of the European Union over the next decade, as a valuable partner and link with the national implementation of Europe 2020 and ET 2020, the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training. You can read the text, signed by M Barosso, in your conference files.

A word of gratitude is also needed for the K.U.Leuven research team of the 'Public Management Institute', under the supervision of Prof. Dr. M. Marleen Brans and Jan Van Damme. I must say I am looking forward about what they will tell us today about the results of their work..

This study can be seen as a new starting point, a basis for looking to the future and for further improvement of the network and of education councils. EUNEC is convinced that all those involved in education (the European Commission, the governments of the Member States, the education councils, the stakeholders and every unique citizen) can benefit from a European platform where major reforms in educational systems can be discussed thoroughly and prepared for a successful implementation. It is important to build in the years to come common platforms where education stakeholders such as EUNEC and European institutions can meet for discussion, consultation and commonly shared insights.

We hope that this conference will help to underpin thinking on transparent and efficient structures for consultation. This is an invitation to all councils, members of EUNEC, to other education councils, to the national governments and the European Commission to intensify the dialogue on building strong structures for participation. We hope that the outcomes of this conference will help governments and parliaments to be more aware of the importance and the added value of an education council in opening up policy development towards all stakeholders.

Education Councils in the EU
Balancing expertise, societal input and political control in the production of policy advice

PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY ON EDUCATION COUNCILS AND ADVISORY BODIES IN THE EU

Marleen Brans

Marleen Brans is Professor Public Policy at the Public Management Institute, Louvain

Jan Van Damme

Jan Van Damme is Researcher at the Public Management Institute, Louvain

Definition of an education council

A definition needs to be distinctive enough so as to identify core elements, but inclusive enough to incorporate different structures.

Education councils

- Are made up of a collection of members sourced from at least the expert and/or civil society communities

- Contain no obvious domination in membership form one social or political grouping
- Are recognized by the government as an advisory body, either legal, financial or through the employment of the body by the government
- Provide, as its primary and chief function, the provision of advice of an instrumental, conceptual or agenda setting nature
- Are formed with an open ended remit as opposed to one which is time limited.

Research questions

These questions guided the research:

1. What are the different types of education councils in international comparative perspective? (descriptive).

Sub questions:

- How are education councils organized and institutionalized (membership, internal organisation, legal base, status, level of autonomy, funding, institutionalization..) and what accounts for different modes of institutionalisation?
- What types of education councils can be identified?
- How is the process of advising organized with respect to the policy making process?
- What is the impact of education councils on the policy making process?
- What is the impact of current societal developments on the organization, institutionalization and policy impact of education councils?

2. What is the influence of different aspects of the institutional arrangement on the outcome? (exploratory/explanatory)

Sub questions:

- What is the impact of the institutional embedding of the outcome?
- What is the impact of the width and depth of participation on the outcome?
- What is the impact of process design and management on the outcome?

Theoretical framework

In this section, the theoretical foundations for the conceptual model are laid. The policy cycle is analyzed, and the role advisory councils play as specific mechanisms of consultation in the policy making process. Policy making faces different challenges, such as professionalization, interactivity and the

discourse on political primacy: there is an increasing need for the legitimacy of policy.

Finally, the perspective is developed of the education council as possible 'boundary organisation', bridging the worlds of policy making, science and society. The independence of boundary work lies in its dependence on multiple communities, multiple masters.

Conceptual model

In the conceptual model, the aim is to bring together key components and insights of the theoretical section in a model that can be readily used for analyzing education councils and advisory processes.

The key concept is legitimacy. Next to the normative perspective of legitimacy which posits the norms of legality, democracy and performance, there is also an evaluative perspective. The advisory process as a system of consultation needs to contribute to the different elements of and perspectives on policy legitimacy.

The empirical model looks at variables that can be situated in the input, throughput and output phase of the advisory process. These variables are useful for the descriptive stage on the process, but are also useful for the exploratory stage of the research.

Methodology

The research resulted in 15 fact sheets of education councils, and 6 in depth case studies of education councils.

The basic fact sheets look at the constitution, the membership, the secretariat, the role and the production of education councils.

The in-depth case studies look at the founding, the membership, the structure, the administration, the legal and social status, the relationship with the ministry, the analysis of advisory processes.

The strategy used for the case selection is the least similar selection method, regarding geographical situation, political situation, types of expertise, advisory style, country size, membership and community linkages. Councils have been studied in the following countries:

- Portugal
- Netherlands
- Belgium, Flemish Community
- Estonia

- Greece
- Spain

Data for this second stage of the project were built upon detailed interviews from as many perspectives as possible within the council. These interviews are themselves focused around, where available, two pieces of advice, both selected by the appropriate council, one a self defined 'success' and on a self defined 'failure'. Eleven pieces of policy advice have been analyzed.

Comparative findings

The main findings of the research are presented in a comparative table. Answers to research questions are presented, divided in two sections. The first, descriptive questions called for a documentation of general information on the common features of education councils. The second question, more explorative, focused upon developing insights and hypotheses on the relevant variables for the success of individual councils.

Recommendations

Finally, the research team drew recommendations from the empirical results of the study as well as from the theoretical frameworks that guided the investigation.

The meso recommendations pertain to institutional and political decisions and contexts. They appeal to those policy actors who are responsible for organizing and employing advisory organisations, should they seek to raise the legitimacy of the input, throughput and output of their advisory councils, and ultimately also of their policy decisions.

The micro recommendations are useful for the education councils themselves as organizations, and outline possible routes and mechanisms for increasing their input as well as throughput and output legitimacy.

There are no macro recommendations: they deal with variables that are connected to the political and administrative context we work in, and therefore we cannot manipulate them.
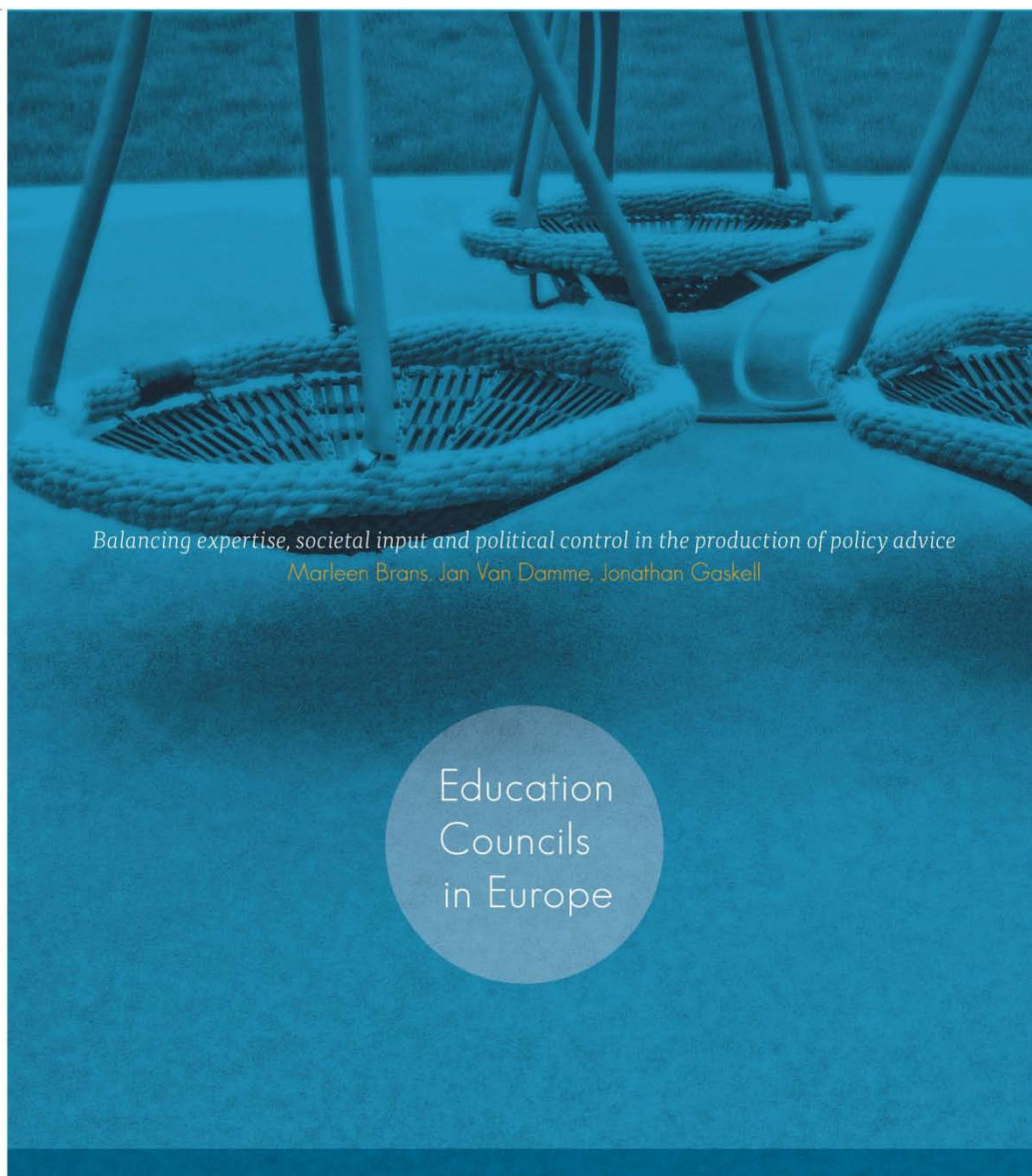
Balancing expertise, societal input and political control in the production of policy advice
Marleen Brans, Jan Van Damme, Jonathan Gaskell

Education Councils in Europe

Reflections on challenges for education

Pascal Smet

Pascal Smet is Flemish Minister for Education, Youth, Equal Opportunities and Brussels; during the Belgian Presidency of the EU he is President of the European Council for Education, Youth and Culture.

Minister Smet thanks EUNEC for the opportunity to reflect together on some important challenges education in Europe is facing today, including the involvement of stakeholders.

Challenges for education

First: times are changing, as they always do, but today these changes are coming to us at a much faster rhythm than before:

- Changes on the technological level
- Changes on the intercultural level
- Changes on the economic level

The rhythm of these changes is so fast that for many people in society, for instance the elder generation, it is difficult to adapt, to follow, to understand. When our grandgrandgrandchildren will be in school – and I do hope schools still will exist – and when they will learn history – I hope they will still teach history – our time articulation will be remembered as a time of rapid change, without the people in it being aware of those changes.

Secondly, what we are living today is probably the shift to Asia. If we don't take care, if we don't get our act together, this might be the beginning of the end of 'white men', not in terms of existence of course, but in terms of the economic and cultural predominance. On 7 December 2010, PISA results will be presented, and they will show this shift towards Asia, also on the educational level. This means that, if we want to continue to have some influence on the world, we urgently have to undertake action, to work on it on a European level. There is the sense of urgency.

Thirdly, things are getting more and more complicated in our societies. Migration is putting our educational system under pressure, especially in the major European cities. Solidarity is not evident; living together often

becoming difficult. We witness, for instance in Brussels, the capital of Europe, a duality between the rich and the poor, becoming very rich, or very poor.

Another challenge is the way we educate our kids. In fact, if we look at the classroom today, it is still more or less the same as it was in the 19th century: the teacher is in front of the classroom, explaining things. But all the kids in the classroom are growing up in an image built society. As soon as they are home, or even in the street, they see all kinds of impulses. It is a real challenge to use those impulses, those images, in an innovative way, in education. One example: thanks to a game on the invasion in Normandy, all kids knew after a very short time the names of the generals, the strategies of the war.. Education has to look for ways to integrate tools from the children's world in education.

However, I'm not pessimistic. I believe in societal engineering, I believe in the feasibility of societal changes. Education has to play a crucial role in these processes. Education will have to deal, for instance, with the issue of social inclusion. Big cities such as Brussels face problems that have to do with social inclusion. In short time, seven out of ten children in schools in Brussels will have foreign born parents. Often they belong to disadvantaged social groups, coming from rural areas, speaking a foreign language, living in unemployment. Moreover, we are almost sure that their children will face the same problems, will not succeed either.   PISA 2006 results show, indeed, that Flanders has top results, but there is a big distance between the weakest and the strongest. Education has to take up its role in tackling the vicious cycle of disadvantage. The societal scandal of early school leaving, to name just one major problem, has to stop.

The slowness of changes in the educational system is a problem. Every education minister knows that he will never see the results of the decisions he is making.   Of course, I'm not pleading for revolutions in education, one cannot experiment with kids. But, on the other hand, we cannot go to slow either. The challenge is how to find the balance between going faster in restructuring the system and implementing change without going to revolutions. An example: 20% of all young people should have an international experience during their study time. This might seem an ambitious target, but, after all, even if we achieve it, this still means that four out of five youngsters will never have that experience. We are not that ambitious after all. On the other hand, if we want to implement changes in order to reach the 20% target, this implicates that we will have to talk about money, at European level. Who is going to pay?

European cooperation

So we have to work together, not only as individuals, as cities, as regions, as countries, but also on EU level. The EU has to make more progress. This is

not easy: some believe the EU should be more a confederation of States; I believe the EU has to be a real federation of States, a kind of supranational principle.

And, if we really want to succeed in working together, we need a common language. The EU principle that every child has to speak his mother tongue and has to learn two foreign languages, is a beautiful principle. But we have to be realistic: this objective is difficult to realize, for part of the population it is already difficult to learn one language. Conclusion: One of the two 'foreign' languages has to be the same all over Europe. Only then we will be able to understand each other, to built together a common future. And for many reasons, this common language should be English. It is the international language of diplomacy, it is the political language, and, very important, it is the language that Chinese have decided to learn to their children. This means that, within few years, millions of Chinese young people will communicate in English. For all these reasons, we better learn it in Europe too.

Stakeholder participation

Finally, the issue of stakeholder involvement. First of all, I insist on the fact that it should be the politicians who take the decisions. They are elected for that, they are paid for that. Of course, politicians have to work in a certain environment. I am convinced that it is very important, even more in the field of education, to work together with all stakeholders: trade unions, schools, school directors, parents, teachers, kids. But, I am not sure that education councils are the most perfect way to do so. In fact, we have to do work at a double level:

- The level of the strategic issues on the long term

- The level of day to day issues in education policy making.

We have to avoid to do double work. Ministers, who work together with strategic councils, also talk with, for instance, trade unions separately. Perhaps strategic councils are working to much towards a compromise between all different actors and stakeholders? This way, they risk to become less relevant than they could bee. Shouldn't strategic advisory bodies not concentrate more on the bases and the foundations of the educational system, instead of working on day to day business, which is exactly what other people are already doing?

However, let me be clear, education policy making needs stakeholder implication, but we have to reflect on the most effective way of organizing and structuring it. And I'm convinced that the results of the study will be a valuable contribution to that reflection.

How to optimise your education council?

WORKSHOPS ON THE MESO AND MICRO RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY ON EDUCATION COUNCILS IN THE EU

The workshops are facilitated by Marleen Brans and Jan Van Damme, the research team, and by Emilija Sakadolskis, vice-president of the Lithuanian Education Council.

Participants were asked to exchange views and to comment on the relevance and importance of the recommendations from the study.

The results of these workshops were presented in plenum and used as major input for the statements of EUNEC on participation and stakeholder involvement in education policy making.

Thursday 2 December 2010

Trends in participative decision making on national and EU level

Welcome session

Marc Thommès

Marc Thommès *is president of the CEF (Conseil de l'Education et de la Formation, French Community Belgium)*

Marc Thommès welcomes the participants at the conference in the building of the CEF, the education and training council of the French speaking community of Belgium. He is glad to be able to show that education councils from both sides of the linguistic border are working together very well. He thanks the teams of both Vlor and CEF for their work, and thanks Simone Barthel, president of EUNEC and colleague at the CEF, for the tremendous job she has been doing for EUNEC during the last ten years.

Marc Thommès is making two major comments.

The first comment is linked to what has been discussed during the first day of the conference. The role of education councils is becoming more and more relevant; therefore they have to reinforce their legitimacy. Behind the discussions in the workshops, on that legitimacy, lays an old debate: how to reconcile the participatory democracy and the representative democracy?

In participatory democracy, 'other actors' are around the table. Often, when we talk about stakeholders, about those 'other actors', we use the word 'civil society'. Civil society, however, remains a very vague concept. Is 'civil society' really representing society as a whole? It is extremely important that 'civil society' is closely in touch with the field. Two other actors have to be explicitly taken on board: trade unions and representatives of enterprises. In order to increase their legitimacy, councils have to invite those social partners, employers and employees organizations; they have to be included, especially today, when we witness a clear lack of balance between the interests of those two parties, at least in Europe.

The second concern has to do with the current economic and financial crisis. How can we be pleased when we look at the negative effects of the international financial crisis, with severe impact on the sector of education and training? Education councils should not focus only on their own functioning during this conference, but also dwell on the consequences of the crisis. In Limassol, in June 2010, EUNEC adopted statements on education and training in a period of economic crisis. Those statements cannot remain empty words, given the fact that the situation even became worse since June 2010. We can in fact talk about political schizophrenia: On the one hand, the 'beautiful' and promising European conclusions, recommendations, communications; on the other hand, the reality that, in the Member States, the sector of education and training is suffering from budgetary restrictions. Because of this schizophrenia, citizens might be disappointed, which can lead to extreme left or right thoughts. So the proposal is to adopt a text, a communication of about one page, a press release, adopted by EUNEC and to send it to the European officials and to the Member States. It is important to stand up! In the Magritte museum we could read on the wall 'La révolte est un reflet de l'homme vivant'. We do not plead in favour of revolution, but in favour of awareness raising. Let EUNEC be a living organization!

Stakeholder involvement in national/regional education policy making

*Round table with representatives of different education councils, chaired by **Mia Douterlungne**, EUNEC general secretary*

Each education council has a specific way of involving stakeholders. We can learn from each other. Questions raised, and answered, during this round table will have to do with

- How to involve stakeholders?
- Which stakeholders?
- How to be successful and powerful?

Representatives of five education councils, members of EUNEC, give an overview of the way stakeholders are involved in the following councils.

Krista Loogma

*Krista Loogma is chairwoman of the **Estonian Education Forum***

The Estonian Education Forum (EEF) is the network of citizens and NGO's joining the interest groups and stakeholders in education.

History

EEF has been established in 1995, in the margins of a conference. It was a time of radical changes in social and economic environment, that have made coherent educational reforms inevitable. Many interest groups have perceived the need for extensive social agreement concerning:

- Educational policy principles
- Strategic goals
- General direction of change.

There was a clear need for a forum to discuss the future perspectives of education.

Mission

The mission of EEF is to support democratic processes of participation, partnership and social agreement in Estonian education strategy and policy. EEF is not a formalized structure; it is in fact more a cooperation network of more than 40 interest groups (students, parents, teachers, employers, even politicians..) and organizations (educational institutions, professional and trade unions, political parties…) in the field of education. The main goal is to provide room for discussion.

Legal structure

EEF has a quite complex structure. EEF currently has two bodies, the one purely administrative, the other working on the content.

EEF is a fully independent NGO, with people working at voluntary basis. Initially EEF functioned without any legal body. In 1996, the EEF Foundation has been established as a support structure. The NGO EEF has been established in 2000 as a legal entity.

Membership comprises of legal entities (institutionalized interest groups) and individuals. The governing body comprises 5-7 members. There is a single paid administrator. EEF has a yearly renewing working party, with about 30 members, being elected in the annual Education Forum. This allows EEF to be as open as possible. The government provides funds for one single meeting a year and for the administrator.

Activities

Every year, EEF is having an education forum and pre-forums on topical issues in education policy. There is a well working permanent e-forum with more than 1000 participants, followed with much attention by policy makers. EEF presents annual proceedings: research papers and papers presented during different forums. We have a database of best practices.

EEF has been working on education strategy and policy development. It has developed, discussed and drafted an education strategy called 'Learning Estonia' (1995-2002). The strategy has been approved by the government, but after elections a new government came in place, which did not approve the strategy. However, the strategy had a lot of influence in universities, among teachers etc. It is one of the few documents offering long term perspectives for education. It contains scenario's that have been continuously discussed. This is a good example of the issue, already raised during the first

day of the conference, of 'success' or 'failure': even if a recommendation is not officially approved, this does not mean it is useless.

More recently, EEF is working on a new strategy, a lifelong learning strategy, in partnership with the Estonian Cooperation Assembly, also a NGO, and with the MoER, the Ministry of Education and Research (since 2009). The strategy will be finalized in summer 2011.

Next to these strategic issues, EEF is also discussing more specific education policy issues, sometimes at the demand of the Minister, asking for advice.

EEF is also serving as a support structure for the Education for All national programme (since 2003).

The open working method

As the mission of EEF is to offer room for democratic discussions, we also have the very important role of awareness raising, already referred to by Marc Thommès. In order to live up to that role, EEF is trying to work systematically in the forum with experts and with civil servants. On the other hand, the forum is connected to regional education forums, where people are working at the grass root level.

The researchers from the Public Management Institute concluded that the EEF is to be situated in the lay part of the scheme; but we want to stress the fact that we do have access to knowledge and that we do the best we can to get the knowledge into the council.

Conclusions

- EEF has established a well functioning network of interest groups and organizations in Estonia
- EEF has created a platform for wide public debate in educational policy issues in Estonia.
- Activities of EEF have significantly influenced the development of ideas in educational policy and the establishment of civil society principles and methods in Estonia.
- EEF is a good example of a working structures and methods for civil society development.

Šarūnas Bagdonas

*Šarūnas Bagdonas is member of the **Lithuanian Education Council***

Today a variety of different practices is presented. Some lead to failure, some lead to success, but all are interesting. The objective is not to come to a unified practice, this is not possible all over Europe.

I refer to my last statement during the EUNEC conference on the teaching profession, in Vilnius in 2008: there is a huge waste of energy in education. Two years later, this obvious lack of efficiency still persists, in spite of all the efforts. So the challenge we face is how to make the democratic tools of consultation work, so that the amount of money that is spent on education is not wasted.

If changes have to be accepted – there is always a lot of resistance to change – those changes have to be well prepared. Within an education council, it is important to discuss on who is going to decide which direction is ok and which is not. The situation can be compared to the situation in the Quest of the Holy Grail: the discussion 'who elected who' is leading to absurd conclusions if this discussion is not well conducted.

In the Lithuanian national council, a variety of stakeholders are represented:

- Representatives of associations from Kindergarten to universities and professional schools
- Experts
- Students from secondary schools and from universities
- Leading officials
- Parents

There is a representation of 33 members.

The challenge is how to harmonize the viewpoints and approaches of all those representatives, experts, and on the other hand civil society representatives in a lot of cases elected to defend their own 'forces'. The education council is working on the edge of all those forces.

This is a difficult task. The national council started already in 1991. Actually, the council should be quite mature to be able to produce valuable input to educational progress. And indeed, an important outcome of the council is that we have good opportunities to meet different stakeholders and to share opinions. Another outcome is that we are used by the government to comment on their plans. But: it is just about giving comments, nothing more.

When it comes to real advice, the challenge is much bigger. This has to do with the way we work: we have 4 or 5 meeting sessions during the year. The question is what happens in between. It is difficult to come to mature advice because the council is built on involvement basis and not on a supported basis. This means that the people in the discussions express opinions,

nothing more. So when it comes to harmonizing the opinions and to build mature advice, this often fails. The council is quite big and not much supported by the government and suffers from a lack of resources, a lack of data.

So the most important question has to do with communication and intelligence. How should these stakeholders interoperate? Communication tools and strategies have to be reconsidered, redeveloped. Gathering 4 times a year is simply not enough.

Elena Hadjikakou

Elena Hadjikakou is member of the **Cyprus Education Council**

The presentation has been prepared by Dr Elena Hadjikakou and by Dr Elena Theodosiadou.

Brief historical account

The Cyprus Educational system, in its present form, is the outcome of the developments that established the Republic of Cyprus. In 2010, the Cyprus Educational System celebrates its 50 years.

The Education Council was established in 2005. The aim of the legal framework, the structure, the curriculum, the staffing and the practices is to raise the quality of education.

Some important dates and realizations:

- 1960: establishment of the Republic of Cyprus and the Educational System
- 1960: Free primary education
- 1972: Free secondary education
- 1992: University of Cyprus
- 1997: UNESCO Evaluation Report
- 2004: Accession to the EU
- 2004: Report of the Committee for the Educational Reform
- 2005: Start of the Education Reform Programme
- 2005: Set up of the Education Council
- 2007: Establishment of private universities
- 2010: Finalization of the new National Curriculum – in service training

Organization and structure of the Educational System

The educational administration is very much centralized. The highest authority of the Ministry of Education and Culture is the Minister, followed by the Permanent Secretary. Other departments and services help the overall functioning of the system, such as the 'Educational Service Commission' which is responsible for the

- Appointments
- Promotions
- Transfers
- Disciplinary matters of teaching personnel.

Responsibilities of the Ministry of Education and Culture

- Administration of education
- Enforcement of educational laws
- Preparation of educational bills
- Public education is mainly financed by the Government
- Prescription of syllabi, curricula and textbooks
- Regulation and supervision of educational institutions
- Construction of school buildings
- Maintenance and equipment: shared responsibility with local school boards.

The Educational Reform Programme

In an environment where 'the only factor that remains stable is change' (Greek philosopher Heraclitus), the Government of the Republic of Cyprus has launched in 2005 an ambitious Educational Reform Programme. The aim is to turn into reality the vision of a better educational system that would meet pupils' future needs and society's challenges of the 21ste century. Great emphasis is put on a democratic school.

This Educational Reform was seen as a 'public initiative' and not as a matter of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Within the framework of the reform the Government has invited all stakeholders for dialogue:

- Political parties
- Teacher unions, parents associations, federation of students
- Governmental departments
- Academics

- All Cypriots

Apart from the official councils, stakeholders and other interested parties could participate in the formulation of the reform by joining the meetings, lectures, seminars organized by the Ministry, sending letters, participating in the electronic dialogue set up on the Ministry's webpage.

Establishment of Advisory Councils

This is an innovative feature set up as part of the process for the reform of the education system. It is based on the Council of Minister's Decision (N° 61.602 from 16 February 2005) "Establishment of framework and mechanisms for dialogue with regard to the Education Reform".

Three councils were set up:

- The Cyprus Education Council
- The Primary and Secondary Education Council
- The Higher Education Council

The 'Scientific Council' with the participation of academics, educationalists as well as technical committees formed by the Ministry of Education and Culture contributed to the formation of education policy making.

The policy making process

At national level, the policy making process is set up in the Primary and Secondary Education Council and the Higher Education Council, with stakeholder participation. A discussion follows within the Education Council. The Ministry of Education and Culture is finalizing a final formulation of proposals, which is to be approved by the Council of Ministers and, if necessary, approved by the Parliament and turned into legislation.

Education Council: aims, members and role

The aims of the education councils are

- To ensure the stakeholders involvement in structured dialogue
- To build up consensus to the highest possible degree
- To achieve continuity of educational policy, through extensive discussion of main issues.

The members:

- The chairman is the Minister of Education and Culture
- The Ministry's Permanent Secretary
- The President of the Education Committee of the Parliament
- Representatives of the major political parties
- The Permanent Secretary of the Planning Bureau

The role of education councils is advisory. The major priority is the enhancement of the implementation of the education reform at all levels and in every aspect of the education system. The education council is responsible for setting the priorities for dialogue. It coordinates and monitors the dialogue among all the major stakeholders involved in education.

It is responsible for establishing technical committees or appointing experts for the preparation of reports and studies.

It contributes to the formulation of educational policy, based on the work done by the technical committees and the two other councils.

The Council of Primary and Secondary Education

Stakeholder participation, with a large representation

- Minister of Education (Chairman) or representative
- Representatives of other Ministries of the Government
- Representatives of the major political parties
- Representatives of the Primary and Secondary Teachers' Unions
- Representatives of the Primary and Secondary Education Parents Associations
- Representatives of the Primary School and Secondary School Inspectors' Association
- Representatives of the Pancyprian Federation of Students of Secondary Education
- Other stakeholders and educationalists appointed by the Minister

Discussion of issues related to the content of education such as:

- Restructuring of the National Curriculum from pre-primary to upper secondary education, general, technical and vocational education.
- Reforming of school-timetable.
- Unification of the whole educational system.
- Promotion of All-Day Schools in Primary Education.

Discussion of issues related to the administration and the appointment system of the Educational System such as:

- Restructuring of the MOEC (e.g. the establishment of the Centre of Educational Research and Evaluation)
- Teachers training (e.g. Pre-service teacher training programme, Induction programme for newly appointed teachers)
- Redesign of the Teachers' Assessment System

The Council of Higher Education

Stakeholder participation:

- Minister of Education (Chairman)
- Permanent Secretary of the MOEC
- Permanent Secretary of the Planning Bureau
- Representatives of the major political parties
- Dean of the University of Cyprus
- President of the Governing Board of Cyprus Open University
- President of the Governing Board of Cyprus University of Technology
- Representatives of the Pancyprian Federation of Students of Higher Education
- Representatives of the Cyprus Scientific and Technical Chamber
- Representatives of the Union of Local Authorities
- 3 Members appointed by the Council of Ministers
- Other stakeholders and educationalists

Discussion of issues related to Higher Education and the formulation of proposals for policy making, such as:

- Restructuring of Final examinations of Lyceums and Public University Entrance Examinations
- Unified exams
- Promotion of Life Long Learning through open and distance learning
- Establishment of Cyprus Open University
- Setting up of more public universities (3 in total)
- Establishment of private universities (4 in total)
- Establishment of the Cyprus Quality Assurance Agency

To be kept in mind...

As a conclusion, Elena asks the participants to carefully keep the following sentence in mind:

If you plan for one year, plant rice.

If you plan for ten years, plant trees.

If you plan for centuries, educate people.

Ana Bettencourt

Ana Bettencourt is president of the Conselho Nacional de Educação, Portugal

The Conselho Nacional de Educação (CNE), the Portuguese Education Council, has 68 members: stakeholders covering the whole educational world. The President is elected by the Parliament: there is a very strong connection with the Parliament. Parliament and education council are actually setting up projects together: the council is now, for instance, discussing curricula together with the education committee.

CNE has 7 members representing the government and is linked to two ministries, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education. Those seven members are co-opted by the council. Within the council, there are also representatives from parents associations, teachers trade unions, employers, cultural associations, scientific associations, pupils, students, municipalities. CNE also has a coordination committee working with the chairman on the main issues that should be discussed in plenary session.

It is important to underline that the education council has a mission of dialogue. The situation in Portugal is quite specific: the Republic celebrated its 100th anniversary. But Portugal has lived decades of dictatorship. So Portugal was way behind compared to other European countries in the field of education. During the last few years, Portugal had to construct democracy and to reconstruct the whole educational system. That is one of the reasons why the council was set up, as a body for dialogue, a participatory body part of democracy.

What is role of stakeholders in the council? The agenda of the council is approved in specialized committees, for higher education and for different sectors of education. When CNE has to produce an advice, consultations and hearings are organized. An example: for an advice in the field of higher education, people from universities, academics, but also bankers and intellectuals are represented. These stakeholders are listened to, they express their viewpoints on the future of higher education.

Stakeholders are very important because they enable the council to have authority. In education in Portugal, we see the phenomenon that, because almost everybody has been to school, almost everybody knows a lot about schools, and wants to intervene. The authority of an education council comes from the fact that it is able to connect different points of view, thanks to the consultation of different stakeholders.

I insist on the fact that this dialogue, this consultation exercise is the core of our activity.

The Portuguese Education Council produces advice for the Minister; he can follow this advice, or not. It also produces advice for the Parliament. And has the right to produce advice on its own initiative.

This year CNE decided to draft a document, the so called 'state of the education in Portugal' in order to take stock of the education in our country. This was a major challenge. CNE used statistic figures, reliable and validated. The focus was on the educational pathways, because this is at the moment the most important issue in Portugal. CNE has been working a lot with the Spanish council, since they are working on a similar project. Collaboration learned us a lot, mutually. After this discussion with the Spanish council we had a meeting on indicators with the different stakeholders; the next phase was a specialized committee meeting, followed by another plenary meeting. We are talking here of real in depth work. We decided to contact researchers and we came to the conclusions that the situation is not fantastic: we made progress, but still need examples of good practice. We asked researchers to study five cases, five schools where these pathways are successful because we have in Portugal a problem with pupils repeating their year. This was not easy: we had the research, we had the discussion within the council, still we had to reconcile both. The result is in this document on the 'state of the education in Portugal'. Reaching a compromise has been an essential part of the working process: research comes with facts and figures, but it is also very important to be able to work with stakeholders. At the end, we managed to reach a compromise: a compromise between the research (the theory) and the stakeholders (the field). And that's where we get our authority.

This document has really been successful and welcomed by the press. We have invited journalists for two or three hours, we have been working a lot with journalists, they had three days even to work around this issue. We wanted to tackle the challenge that most people talking about education think it is easy to solve the problems.

To conclude I would like to add that it was very interesting that the study highlighted the issue of grade repetition, because around this phenomenon of grade or year repetition there are many prejudices. Sometimes people associate this grade repetition with the notion of injustice: some children are working all year and not succeeding, some children come from disadvantaged backgrounds and don't succeed. This is unfair… Research is very important. Without wanting to be paternalistic, I want to stress that, sometimes, an education council needs to train stakeholders, make them think differently, and stop having social prejudices.

Marc Thommès

Marc Thommès is president of the Conseil de l'Education et de la Formation, Belgium, French Community

The CEF, the Conseil de l'Education et de la Formation, was set up more or less 20 years ago within the French speaking community of Belgium.

When we look at the map of Belgium, we see that, in our country, things might seem difficult. In fact, they are not that difficult: there are many federal countries in Europe. In Belgium, one has to know that there is a major difference between regions and communities.

- Regions have to deal with employment, the economical sector.
- Communities deal with other topics: we are talking there about policies aiming at the individuals: culture, education, care.

We have three regions: Brussels Capital, the French speaking area, the Dutch speaking area.

We have three communities: the French speaking community, the Dutch speaking community and the German speaking community.

The Vlor works within the Dutch speaking community. The CEF works in the French speaking community.

The CEF produces advice on education, so this has of course an impact on the language, on the individuals. We also express ourselves, but not that directly, on the links between education on the one hand and vocational training on the other hand. The council is really in between education and training.

Our council was set up by a decree, about 2O years ago. This means that there has been a vote in the parliament of the French speaking community.

During those 2O years we produced more than 100 pieces of advice.

We have three major groups of stakeholders involved.

- The educational networks. The network of the French speaking community (which offers in fact the framework), the network of the catholic education, the so called independent network and a fourth network: education in local communities (provinces and communities). Each network has a certain level of autonomy: they train their teachers, they receive subsidies by the French speaking community.
- The vocational training stakeholders
- The civil society: students, universities, the associations of pupils, parents, trade unions and employers.

All together, 29 stakeholders are gathered around the table in our councils, with each their own logics.

The link between compulsory education, vocational education and training, higher education is an issue that has been at the centre of our debates the last years. Sometimes there is a gap, we had to reinforce the continuum and to build bridges. We decided to launch the debate around the possibility of adjusting the supply of training to the needs. This adjustment process is ok for VET for adults, but not yet for pupils in education. We should give it more consistency.

The mission of the CEF is to promote education and training and to work on all issues related to the future of education and training establishing links between both sectors. That's why the CEF has two chambers. But the choice of the subjects, the adoption of advice and recommendations is within the council, most of the time with consensus of all members present.

The two Chambers:

- The Chamber of Education. Members represent all partners in education, amongst them the organizing networks and the social partners. Discussed issues deal with all levels of education.

- The Chamber of Training. Members represent all partners in professional training (lots of them are involved in regional policies as operators and inter professional social partners). Issues are often transversal and linked to political and economic strategies.

They meet separately but the topics discussed are common and defined within the council. Once defined the Chamber discusses it separately and comes back with conclusions. It is the council with all the stakeholders that produces an advice. There is a close contact between both worlds. We are talking about Lifelong Learning here, so it is good that both Chambers work together.

An advice might be produced at the request of a minister or at our own initiative. Recently, we have been talking about the topics

- Kindergarten

- Competences; review of qualification levels (difficult exercise, some did not understand the importance)

- Guidance and orientation

- Quality in education

We are working on the training of teachers; we focus on mobility; we focus on transitions with security, safety for the learners.

A permanent concern is the fight again social exclusion.

Innovation is a time consuming exercise. Stakeholders have to understand the changes and become owners of the changes. The French sociologist Michel Crozier said in his book *'La société bloquée'*, that you cannot change the society through legal acts. I agree with him, one cannot change education with only legal acts, without supporting structures and supporting measures for teachers and for networks that is not possible.

Debate

> **One recommendation of the study is to raise input legitimacy of the council and therefore allow for the inclusion of different communities. How do you manage, in your council, the cooperation and the involvement of all those different stakeholders?**

Šarūnas Bagdonas *(Lithuanian Education Council)*

Why does collaboration, often, not work?

- It is hard to manage collaboration between stakeholders coming from inside the world of education and those coming from outside, for instance culture. This is a huge challenge: it is important that the voice of the stakeholders from outside is heard, for instance in order to avoid to address only job related issues.
- Communication needs to be more facilitated.
- Decisions have to be mature. We should take out from the agenda issues that are not well prepared. We should just solve the issues that are ready to be resolved, and prioritize them taking into account the feasibility.

Ana Bettencourt *(Portuguese Education Council)*

If we want recommendations to be strategic, which means to have a long term vision, they have to be well prepared during a long process.

First, in the phase of the report, it is important to have a group of several rapporteurs, coming from different stakeholder groups. This way, at the level of the report, different viewpoints are taken into account.

Next, these reports are discussed in specialized committees and debated.

Afterwards, there are hearings: all kinds of stakeholders are invited to the council for one day, or for half a day, for discussion. Moreover, we visit the field: last year, for instance, we visited several municipalities in charge of education and we discussed with school directors, parents, teachers, pupils.

In the ultimate phase, when the advice goes to the plenary, it is easier to reach consensus, even in the case of a theme that, at first, seems difficult (for instance year repetition).

So, in order to reach consensus it is very important that

- There is enough time to prepare the advice
- Independence is guaranteed
- Viewpoints are documented in a scientific way (statistics, research..).

Marc Thommès (Conseil de l'Education et de la Formation)

It is important to choose subjects in a strategic way. Some subjects, mostly those linked too closely to the political actuality, have to be avoided: stakeholders often prefer a unique and direct concertation with government.

Stakeholders have to be prepared for a subject: this takes time. When we decide about subjects, we often go back to the year(s) before, to subjects for which there is a certain degree of consensus. It is also important to contact the field directly, for instance by organizing a colloquium: this gives the opportunity to sensitize hundreds of representatives from the field in one day.

Even if we try to prepare stakeholders, and to choose subjects strategically, this is no guarantee for consensus. This strategy of involvement of stakeholders allows to have subjects that are corresponding to the demand of all parties, and that are often mid term.

Partially, our agenda is also influenced by the European agenda. At first, we noticed some reluctance for European themes, but the council managed to prepare stakeholders to those subjects, to inform them, to form them even. Awareness raising takes time though.

Elena Hadjikakou (Cyprus Education Council)

In the Cyprus council, collaboration between stakeholders is not really an issue: dialogue is possible, and well facilitated.

However, the biggest challenge is the time issue: reaching conclusions takes time, often more time than we have.

What kind of methods do you use to combine, to valorise the input of different stakeholders? What decision-making rules do you have to come to an advice? (throughput legitimacy)

Carmel Borg (Malta)

Consensus seems to be the key word in this discussion. However, we should continue asking ourselves: Consensus for whom? Consensus for what? When compromises have to be reached, it is always at the expense of the most vulnerable, the people at risk. It is important that we try to come to a democratic consensus.

Ana Bettencourt

Consensus is never a goal in itself. Debate is more important. After the preparatory process, a text is distributed to all stakeholders; they have time to react, and, according to the remarks, it is possible to make small changes to the text, without making important changes to the content, but allowing different stakeholders to see their viewpoint better translated in the final advice.

Marc Thommès

I don't always absolutely want consensus, but I have to recognize that there is a certain culture of consensus.

I insist on clarifying and recognize the positions of all parties, and accept a conflict participation. One has to know each other hidden agendas. In the working process in the CEF, we attach a lot of importance to documentation, consultation of experts and of privileged witnesses: gathering information is important. On this basis we draft a framework note. In a following phase, a document is prepared listing the different orientations of the subject. And this document is the basis for a debate preparing the advice. I prefer an advice to be short, two or three pages, given the fact that there is a reference document presenting the viewpoints without taking positions. Very few times, I have seen a minority recommendations. Minorities have to have the opportunity to express themselves, it is important that the government knows the viewpoints of all.

Simone Barthel

We often introduce our advice with an explanatory vocabulary: it is important that the reader knows exactly what the advice is talking about. It is a way of gaining time in the discussions afterwards.

Šarūnas Bagdonas

A very important question has to do with budgets: how many human hours are you, as a facilitating council, investing a year in this preparatory work, to moderate the discussion between the stakeholders?

Marc Thommès

This has never been exactly calculated. Most of these facilitating discussions take place in the meetings of the two Chambers and of the Council, and each

of those bodies gather about 7 or 8 times a year. So we have to count about 60-70 hours per year for every participant at the meetings.

Marleen Brans

Professor Brans points out that, as far as the throughput legitimacy is concerned, the self evaluation tool for education councils, developed by the research team, contains questions about the transparency of processes and the equal involvement of different stakeholders.

> **How do you encourage your stakeholders to put energy in the council? What are their rewards? Or in other words: how do you define a council's success? How do you measure it? How do you increase it? (output legitimacy)**

Elena Hadjikakou – Elena Theodosiadou

Given the centralized structured of the system in Cyprus, and the fact that the link with the Ministry is really close, our recommendations are quite easily approved and then applied.

The success of our work lies mostly in the fact that stakeholders have the opportunity to express themselves, to discuss and give input at every stage, to explore other stakeholders' viewpoints.

In fact, in Cyprus, stakeholders don't have to be motivated: there is a clear demand from the stakeholders to participate at the debate, the council does not have to encourage them. They are motivated, and they believe in the council. They want to share ideas about, for instance, the reform of the national curriculum, which is a major change in Cyprus.

Of course, there is the issue of independency: the Minister is the chairman of the Council. But, at the moment that the topic is discussed in the education council, it has already thoroughly been discussed in one of the two sub-councils and in technical committees (bottom up approach).

Ana Bettencourt

Motivation of stakeholders is not really an issue in Portugal: counsellors are well listened to. There might be a problem of motivation if one specific topic is directly linked, for instance, to higher education, and thus less relevant for some stakeholders.

Recently, we tried to enhance the stakeholders' involvement by making them participate in our online e-news; when renewing our website, we involved our younger stakeholders.

As for our understanding of success: we consider a recommendation as successful if it is followed, of course, but also if it sets the issue on the agenda. This has been the case for school failure, for instance: one year after the recommendation the subject has been taken up by the government and, again, by the council.

But most important: a recommendation is successful if it contributes to the ideas in society on education, and if it helps to make social prejudices disappear.

Šarūnas Bagdonas

A recommendation is successful if it puts an issue on the agenda.

A recommendation is also successful if it gives stakeholders the opportunity to express their opinion towards officials. Sometimes this has to do with resistance, with refusing non prepared reforms. We consider this as a success, even if it is often rather destructive than constructive.

Finally, advisory work is successful because it makes stakeholders stronger: it makes them be aware of the fact that often their points of view are supported by other stakeholders, they share the same way of thinking.

Marc Thommès

Success can be collective, and rather official; or individual, rather informal.

As for the collective recognition of the councils' work, it can be measured in the number of times governmental plans and recommendations (for instance the Marshall plan) refer to it (not always in a way we wanted..). It can also be measured in the number of parliamentary questions with a reference to our recommendations. Ministers are in a somewhat ambiguous position here.

Individual and informal recognition lies in the fact that the staff of the education council is often solicited by the ministerial cabinet to share their expertise on a specific dossier. Moreover, the council sees its work valued in the way stakeholders organizations use our recommendations (sometimes without referring to them).

One of the most pleasant outcomes of the work of an education council is to see how stakeholders gain expertise on specific subjects: one of the roles of an education council is the professional training of the stakeholders. We learn from them, they learn from us.

Participation of education stakeholders on EU level

José Pessanha – Lucie Davoine

José Pessanha, European Commission, DG Education and Culture, A1: Lifelong Learning: 2020 Strategy, Policy Cordinator – Relations with Presidencies, Education Committee and stakeholders. Mr Pessanha delegated Ms Lucie Davoine, European Commission, DG Education and Culture

EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND YOUTH ARE KEY TO THE EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY

DG EAC Cooperation with stakeholders: past and present

In the past, DG EAC involved stakeholders in different ways:

- Calls for proposals under the Lifelong Learning Programme, with support for European cooperation in Education and Training and support to European associations in the Jean Monnet programme.
- Participation of stakeholders in DG EAC public consultations.
- Development and implementation of transparency tools.
- The organization of an annual Stakeholders Forum on EU cooperation in Education and Training
- Support to the civil society platform EUCIS

Support for European cooperation in Education and Training

The aim is to support the establishment and implementation of coherent and comprehensive lifelong learning strategies and policies at national, regional and local level, covering and inter-linking all types and levels of learning, with a yearly commitment of 2.8 Mio euro.

A first part has to do with raising national awareness of lifelong learning strategies and of European cooperation in education and training; a second part focuses on support for transnational cooperation in the development and implementation of national and regional lifelong learning strategies.

Support for European associations in the Jean Monnet programme

The aim is to support European associations active at European level in the field of education and training and/or active in European integration, with a yearly commitment of 1.7 Mio euro for 11 Framework partnership agreements (2008-2010) and around 10 annual operating grants

Beneficiaries represent a wide range of stakeholders from all sectors of education.

Stakeholders' Forum on EU cooperation in Education and Training

These yearly meetings have been organized in 2008, 2009 and 2010 in cooperation with the civil society platform EUCIS. The 2010 Stakeholders Forum was part of the consultation process regarding the future generation of EAC programmes and associating stakeholders in Youth and international cooperation in higher education.

The new generation of EAC programmes and the evaluation of the existing LLP

The programmes Lifelong Learning, Youth in Action and Erasmus Mundus come to an end in December 2013. In the preparation of the future generation of programmes (2014 onwards), the European Commission obtained stakeholders' opinions on their development and contribution to the Europe 2020 strategy.

There has been an interim evaluation of the Lifelong Learning Programme. The results of this evaluation conclude that LLP has realized a successful contribution to EU policy in Education and Training increasing the competences of the stakeholders and facilitating consensus. There is a clear European added value, in the field of the policy cooperation and interchange between countries and the European dimension in Education and Training. As for the beneficiaries, a broad audience has been successfully targeted, large scale mobility has been realized, notably within Erasmus and Leonardo, and there is very high satisfaction with respect to better competences and career benefits.

However, the quantitative targets for mobility are not likely achieved. There is too limited mobility of teachers, trainers and staff, because of budgetary, language and mobility barriers. There is low awareness of equal opportunities in projects. Because of the complex management of the programmes there is need for better coordination, more simplification and more streamlining.

EUROPE 2020 and Education and Training 2020

The Europe 2020 strategy has three interlinked priorities:

- <u>Smart growth</u>: developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation
- <u>Sustainable growth</u>: promoting a more efficient, greener and more competitive economy
- <u>Inclusive growth:</u> fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion.

One headline target from the Europe 2020 strategy, and two flagship initiatives are linking directly to ET 2020 (Education and Training 2020).

- Target: The share of early school leavers should be under 10% and at least 40% of the younger generation should have a tertiary degree or equivalent. This target is to be translated into national objectives.
- Flagship initiatives: 'Youth on the Move' and 'An agenda for new skills and jobs'.

Education and Training contribute to Europe 2020 through

- Action at EU and Member States' level
- The Open Method of Coordination: Member States share common objectives, learn from each other, European instruments are being developed.
- The support through the present and future LLL Programme, Youth in Action Programme and European Social Fund.

The strategic framework ET 2020 (Education and Training 2020) has four strategic objectives to contribute to the implementation of Europe 2020:
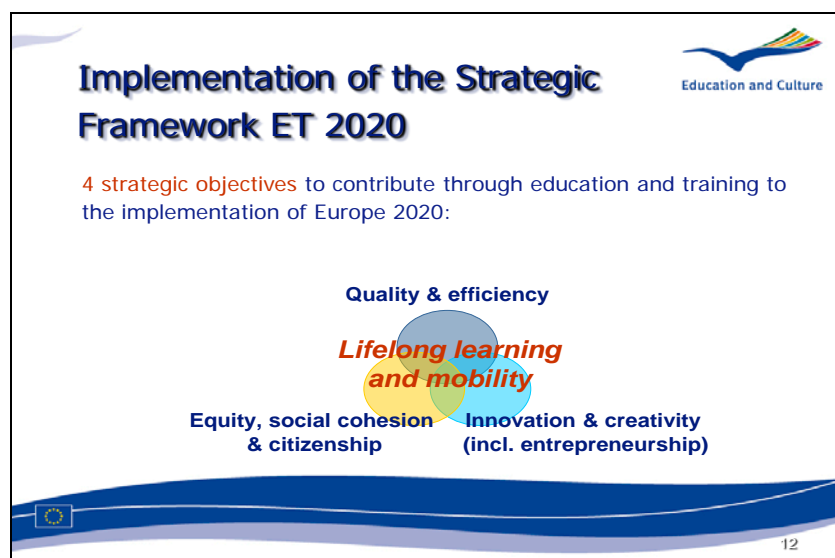
The four strategic objectives are translated into short term priorities for the period 2009-2011 (ESL stands for Early School Leaving; SNE stands for Special Needs Education):

Agenda for new skills and jobs

Several actions under this agenda are linked to education and training.

The overall objectives of the agenda for new skills and jobs are

- The modernization of labour markets to raise employment levels
- The acquisition of new skills to enable workforce to adapt to new conditions and career shifts, reduce unemployment and raise labour productivity.

The focus is on

- The implementation of ET 2020: LLL principles, flexible learning pathways and attractiveness of Vocational Education and Training
- The acquisition of competences and the recognition of competences throughout all levels and forms of learning
- The improvement of skills needs forecasting
- Partnerships and common language between the worlds of business, employment, education and training.

The Youth on the Move initiative

This initiative, adopted in September 2010, is an EU 'flagship' initiative to respond to the challenges young people face and to help them succeed in the knowledge economy. It is an integrated strategy for young people, embracing both education/training and employment. The initiative, next to the agenda for new skills for jobs, is one of the seven flagships in the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

The initiative is built up along four actions lines:

- Modern education and training systems: ET 2020 and EU Youth Strategy: actions to improve schools, VET, recognition of non-formal and informal learning etc.
- Higher education – ET 2020: specific actions to make higher education more attractive and more effective.
- Learning and employment mobility: ET 2020 and EU Youth Strategy: actions to promote training and work abroad as a way to gain skills and experience.
- Youth Employment Framework – EU Youth Strategy: active labour market policies and reform of labour market rules.

DG EAC Cooperation with stakeholders: what next?

Calls for proposals will be launched for networks on the promotion of lifelong learning strategies, including pathways between the different education and training sectors, through

- National qualifications frameworks and systems for valuing learning
- Schemes for the validation of prior and experiential learning
- Accessible services providing good quality lifelong guidance and counselling
- Other measures to make learning attractive and support the motivation of learners (for example through financial incentives and support)

There are calls for proposals for European associations to support high quality European associations in contributing to

- increasing knowledge and awareness on the European integration process through education and training,
- the implementation of at least one of the strategic objectives of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training.

Those organizations have a member-based structure and are non-profit organizations active in education and training.

Action is being undertaken to widen participation and to increase the equality of educational attainment by addressing the specific needs of socio-economic disadvantaged groups and non-traditional learners.

Stakeholders are involved through partnerships between the formal and non-formal education and training sectors, business, voluntary and community actors at the regional and local levels linked to employment and social inclusion initiatives.

There will be further cooperation between regions on the development and implementation of lifelong learning strategies.

Gina Ebner

Gina Ebner is president of EUCIS- LLL

WORKING WITH CIVIL SOCIETY IN LIFELONG LEARNING

History and mission

EUCIS-LLL , the European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning, was officially created in 2005. Today, EUCIS-LLL has 20 members and one partner: a unique representation for civil society in LLL.

The mission of EUCIS-LLL is

- to promote LLL
- to create bridges
- to make civil society's voice heard
- to develop a EU dialogue.

Activities

EUCIS-LLL organizes public hearings, working groups, conferences and seminars. They co-organize the European Stakeholders' Forum, together with the European Commission. EUCIS-LLL is monitoring EU policies, encouraging transsectoral projects, dialoguing with the EU. Positions are taken and spread to the public through campaigns.

In 2010, EUCIS-LLL focused on

- the social dimension of Education and Training
- EU tools and competences
- the sustainability of Lifelong Learning.

In the vision of EUCIS-LLL, the social dimension is at the core of its vision on LLL, within a holistic and humanist approach. In all EUCIS-LLL position papers, the role of LLL for social cohesion is stressed, for instance in the

Position paper on New Skills for New Jobs from June 2010. More specifically, EUCIS-LLL had a conference on the social dimension of education and training, on 15 April 2010. Papers have been published on 'Access to LLL for disabled persons' (1 July 2010) and on 'Access, equity and diversity in LLL: how to successfully integrate populations of migration background in Europe?' (18 December 2010).

Members' consultations

EUCIS-LLL developed an information strategy.

Decisions are taken by the board, taking into account our members contributions. Our members question their own members; specific topics are discussed in working groups. There is a lot of online communication.

Cooperation with other stakeholders

EUCIS-LLL works together with other stakeholders in the field of education and training

- At the Stakeholders' Forum
- During EUCIS-LLL conferences
- Through thematic cooperation, for instance on the Lifelong Learning Programme with the European Youth Forum; on the association statute with the European Civic Forum
- Through membership in civil society platforms, such as a liaison group in the EESC (European Economic and Social Committee) and the Civil Society Contact Group.

Global educational reform movement and national educational change

Pasi Sahlberg

Pasi Sahlberg is Adjunct Professor at the University of Helsinki and at the University of Oulo, and DG of CIMO (National Centre for International Mobility and Cooperation).

He has global expertise in educational policies and reforms, training teachers, coaching schools and advising policy-makers. He has worked as teacher, teacher-educator, senior advisor, policy-maker and director in various national and international positions. He also served the World Bank (in Washington) and the European Commission (in Torino, Italy) as education specialist. His forthcoming book is titled "Finnish Lessons: What can the world learn about educational change in Finland". He has PhD from the University of Jyväskylä.

The Lisbon Strategy 2010

In year 2000 the world was very different. Hope that globalization with its new technologies and steady economic growth could be extended to benefit most of the world's population stimulated a future vision of better living conditions for all. After the economic and political turmoil of the early 1990s, financial markets were seen as a growth factor at the turn of the new millennium. North America and the European Union with its then-15 member states held the throne of world economic order. Climate change was not the priority and the role of emerging economies in Asia was still too immature to be given priority. This was the global economic and political landscape on which European leaders in the dawn of the new millennium created the idea of Europe as the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, as it was later formally phrased. This commonly accepted goal was the core of the Lisbon Strategy for Education and Training in Europe by 2010. Although education has been an important vehicle in

fulfilling this European dream, it was not seen the key priority. Only later on, in March 2002, the European Council stated that

> *"however effective the policies in other areas, making the European Union the leading knowledge-based economy in the world will only be possible with the crucial contribution from education and training as factors of economic growth, innovation, sustainable employability and social cohesion".*

The importance of education and training has been increasingly acknowledged since 2000 but only recently has education been recognized as a key priority in the overall Lisbon strategy.

The value of the Lisbon Strategy and its vision named 'Education and Training 2010' has been the adoption of a single comprehensive strategy for education and training in Europe. The Lisbon Strategy has been implemented through a common Work Programme and its 3 generic goals and 13 specific objectives of education and training systems. The comprehensive approach has been based on so-called 'open method of coordination', that has enhanced consistency and sharing of good practices in the EU Member States. The guiding principle of this integrated approach has been lifelong learning in a worldwide perspective. The Lisbon Strategy has been an influential strategic framework in the Member States in shaping their education and research policies. But its rhetorical impact in the new EU Member States and the accession countries has been even more significant.

The main means of achieving the Lisbon goal have been to improve quality, access and openness of education to the wider world. Much of the concrete work has been based on two principal areas. First, education systems in Europe have been adjusted to enable more mobility of students and teachers between different education systems and institutions. Harmonization of qualification frameworks as a consequence of the Bologna Declaration, creating a transferable credit system and having new incentives for students and teachers to study and teach in other countries have been important aspects of education reforms throughout Europe. Second, common exchange programmes that increase collaboration between individuals and institutions have been installed to facilitate learning and development towards common goals. Interestingly, however, the initial Lisbon Strategy and its Work Programme for education and training are silent about the role of creativity and innovation in ensuring steady economic growth compatible with ecological sustainability. They were based on an assumption that increased numbers of mathematics and science graduates consequently affects research and innovation.

At the time of launching the Lisbon Strategy, improving quality of and increasing access to education were perceived as the best drivers of reforms aimed at promoting national economic competitiveness in Europe. The Lisbon Strategy included few completely new ideas that education systems and their schools should adopt. It rather suggested that national education policies

should focus on decreasing early school leaving in upper secondary level and on expanding tertiary education. A strong accent was placed on increasing the number of students studying mathematics, sciences and technology in tertiary education. Indicators that were selected to monitor the progress of the Lisbon Strategy were based on quantitative data available from national education systems. The OECD PISA student achievement database became an important source of evidence, and thus increased the political value of this international student assessment in the Member States. Indeed, in many European countries mathematics, reading and science, or 'core subjects' as they are sometimes mistakenly called, have become priority areas of improvement in national education reforms. It is now obvious that the goals set of the Education and Training 2010 will not be reached. In particular, the proportion of low achievers in reading and the number of early school leavers in Europe in comparison to other parts of the world are becoming chronic problems.

The Lisbon Strategy was designed using a discourse of development based on improving quality, access and efficiency. The conception of innovation, for example, is primarily driven by the view that innovation is a part of the knowledge triangle (education, innovation and research) and, as such, more of an issue of higher education and research. Indeed, the Lisbon Strategy was not specific in its call for education and training to contribute to innovation in a knowledge-based society. Moreover, it remained silent of the role of creativity and innovation in teaching and learning. The most concrete reference to increasing innovation in schools is made by the statement in the Education and Training 2010 that

> *"there is a need to support decision makers, at all levels, with a view to addressing current education policy issues (such as the integration of non-traditional learners, curricular and didactic innovation, European and international collaboration) and providing them with means to implement 'ICT-induced' changes in education and training programmes."*

Typically at that time, innovative pedagogy was seen as integrating information and communication technologies into teaching and learning processes. This is an important aspect of education development but not sufficient in order to enhance creativity and innovation in education. It is therefore necessary that the Europe 2020 and its education policy signals move beyond rhetoric of creativity and innovation and contains policies that will gradually build trust, enhance collaboration and thereby cultivate cultures of learning that make creativity and innovation possible.

Europe 2020

A new Lisbon Process that has led to the extended strategy for Europe until 2020, as Gros and Roth demand, has been designed with a new background.

First, the European Union with its current 27 members and possible new members in the near future differs from the EU-15 in 2000. There is much more cultural, political and economic diversity in Europe now. This is simultaneously a risk and an opportunity for Europe as a region. Second, financial markets that used to be seen as an element of growth have now turned into a risk factor. According to many, the structure of European financial markets is no longer compatible with the more dynamic global economy and thus needs to be renewed. The main assumptions for the next decade are:

- demographic change that will increase the proportion of older people in the population by 2020;
- climate change that will require radical new policies and action to limit carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions; and
- global challenge from the emerging economies that will shift the focus gradually from the US and Europe to Asia.

The emerging question is: On what basis could Europe maintain and strengthen a competitive position vis-à-vis emerging BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) economies, and simultaneously consolidate its leading role in sustainable development?

Europe has one comparative advantage over its rivals: well educated people. The Lisbon Strategy has made good progress in many of its key areas, for example access and mobility, that provides a positive point of departure for next phase of change. It is clear that strengthening basic knowledge and key competences throughout education has to remain an important policy. But 'more of the same' will not be a sustainable solution. Mathematics and sciences are important but so are social sciences, arts and music. Technology needs to be part of the curriculum but so do drama, entrepreneurship, environmental awareness and ethics. With the next decade in mind, European education shares two common problems that need to be clearly stated upfront and then addressed by the Europe 2020 strategy, both relevant to this presentation.

First, most education systems in Europe are based on a structural logic that derives from the industrial world. Schools are organized according to similar principles of work: 45 minute lessons, a subject-based curriculum, studying with age-groups and a common timetable for all. In many education systems teaching and learning are also organized in modular units and success is determined by mastering these units. The industrial world required organization and order like that but it is not needed now. The second problem, a natural consequence of the first, is that only a very few education systems in Europe pay adequate attention to developing the individual natural talent of students. In other words, schools are still first and foremost designed for masses, standards and averages. Therefore many people leave the education system without fully realizing their talents. Instead, too many young people learn to dislike studying and avoid situations that require 'going

back to school'. A declining will to study and a lack of interest in school is one of the most serious deficits of modern education systems. The Lisbon Strategy included an objective to make learning more attractive. In most countries very little has been done to achieve this.

In this paper I argue that re-conceptualization of creativity and making it a key priority in education reforms in Europe is critical in making Europe a more advanced knowledge economy and ecologically more sustainable by 2020. Creativity means, following Sir Ken Robinson, the inventiveness to come up with new ideas, processes and products that have value. It is important to understand that all students are creative but they may not be aware of it themselves. School education can have a key part in helping students in finding their talents. Moreover, creativity is not only promoted through arts, music and drama curricula. It should be part of the entire culture of the school and lifelong learning. The challenge for schools therefore is to maintain the creative talent of individuals and to provide an environment for its further development. However, many education reforms are doing quite the opposite. In the quest for higher standards and better performance in international rankings, education systems are becoming more standardized and focused on 'core subjects', harmonized frameworks and key competences. Standardization, many claim, is the worst enemy of creativity and innovation because it narrows down the curriculum and steers teachers to teach for predetermined results and tests.

Learning basic knowledge and skills should remain an important task of schooling. Similarly, developing a broad range of key competences should be the guiding principle of lifelong learning. The new European Union Europe 2020 strategy should, however, go beyond these present assumptions if human capital is to provide the necessary impetus to economic competitiveness and ecological sustainability in Europe. Indeed, being able to come up with new ideas, processes and products that have value should be raised to the same level of importance that literacy has enjoyed until now. This requires wider and more frequent use of adequate methods of teaching and working that promote collaboration, creativity and focus on students' individual talents. Furthermore, students need to be taught about the power of human imagination in all areas of education. This includes a need to be prepared to make mistakes and to be wrong – and learn from such risk-taking.

Economic competitiveness and global sustainability

Competitiveness and sustainability have become buzz words in the discourse on global prosperity and development strategies. One of the popular indicators used in ranking the performance of nations is their ability to compete in global markets. Position in the international rankings of national economic competitiveness has indeed become a pretext for economic and

labour market reforms in many countries. National education policies therefore aim at, among other things, helping their economies to become more competitive.

Competitiveness as one aspect of the twin challenge of nations is, however, not a clear concept for either policy-makers or education practitioners. Sometimes it refers to competitiveness in education which often means the overall effectiveness and efficiency of national education system vis-à-vis other education systems. In other cases, education for competitiveness implies a certain kind of education that will increase the employability and productivity of individuals in national or global markets. This is in fact closely linked to the 'competitiveness of education' interpretation because better education improves employment opportunities due to its positive impact on knowledge and skills development and thus productivity. In this article we are looking at education as one of the main drivers of human capital development and thereby national economic competitiveness. Again, it means better quality of, broader access to and more mobility within education. But it also requires considering what type of education is needed to cultivate those qualities in young people that are necessary in a sustainable knowledge society.

All democratic nations desire sustainable economic development and prosperity for the well-being of their people. According to Porter and colleagues prosperity is driven by the productivity of an economy which, in turn, depends on the value of goods and services produced per unit of national human capital and national resources including those derived from 'natural capital'. Both the value of a nation's products and services and the efficiency with which they are produced determine productivity. Competitiveness is thus measured by productivity.

Contemporary economic theories and empirical evidence suggest that many things matter for competitiveness. The New Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) framework designed by the World Economic Forum (WEF) that covers more than 130 economic systems incorporates a complex set of these factors in order to help policymakers to explain the strengths and weaknesses of productivity in their countries and to craft policies accordingly. The quality of public institutions, for example, is a national condition that creates opportunities for higher productivity across the economy. Available human capital, especially the average skill level of the labour force, directly affects productivity. According to WEF,

> "differences in the mechanism of influence often coincide with the policy process that governs them: general conditions affecting productivity tend to be under the control of national governments, while many direct productivity drivers are often the result of involvement by many parts of government, the private sector, academia, and other institutions."

The New GCI aims to reveal the underlying causes of productivity. There are three domains that affect national economic competitiveness in this framework: endowments, macro-economic competitiveness, and micro-economic competitiveness. Endowments affect productivity directly through geographic location, natural resources, or size of the domestic market. Micro-economic factors operate directly on firms and hence drive productivity. It is the macro-economic domain that, through its indirect influence on productivity of firms in an economy, becomes relevant for education policies. As defined by the New GCI, macro-economic competitiveness consists of two distinct areas: macro-economic policy, and social infrastructure and political institutions. The latter, as described in contemporary literature, includes basic human capital, i.e. well-educated and skilled people, quality of political institutions, and the rule of law. Empirical research on economic growth has found social infrastructure and political institutions to be the most important factors that matter for long-term differences in prosperity. The New GCI as a measure includes enrolment rates in primary, secondary and tertiary education, quality of the education system in general and mathematics and science education in particular. These all aspects of human capital fall into the province of national policies. However, economic competitiveness, as determined by the New GCI and other global indexes, does not suggest any directions for pedagogies in the schools of competitive knowledge societies.

Another side of the twin challenge facing nations is the global ecological threat. After three decades of mounting concern and activity about global environmental problems, the United Nations in 2005 proclaimed a Decade of Education for Sustainable Development to highlight the fact that *"education and learning lie at the heart of approaches to sustainable development, a powerful concept that could ignite the interests of people around the world to shape a more sustainable future".* Five years into the Lisbon Strategy, economic competitiveness became closely tied to the challenge of preparing the next generation of students to deal with global threats to the future sustainability of our economic, political and social systems and the ecological systems upon which they depend. These threats arise at root from the demographic and technological overload of the planet. The priority being given to increasing national economic competitiveness is seen by many as contributing to rather than ameliorating the problem of ensuring a sustainable global environment.

The large-scale, complex and interacting global threats that seem increasingly out of control have finally moved significantly onto the media agenda, although the UN and other supra-national organizations have been addressing them for years. The environmental community has been campaigning since the 1950s for a more global and long-term commitment to sustainable balance – the fundamental principle of the planet's ecological systems of which humans are a part. Population and competitive economic growth and their associated impacts on the environment will provide a very different context for the Europe 2020 following the new wave of concern based on growing scientific evidence that the 'Limits to Growth' predicted by the models

of the Club of Rome at the beginning of the 1970s have now been reached or even surpassed. The Brundtland Report defined sustainable development as

> "*development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs… The changes in human attitudes that we call for depend on a vast campaign of education, debate, and public participation.*"

This 'vast campaign' referred to seems to have started in the last decade. It is generating a new discourse and vocabulary that includes 'global social-ecological system', 'tipping points', 'population overshoot', 'climate destabilisation', 'global warming', 'rising sea levels', 'fossil fuel over-dependence', 'peak oil', 'carbon footprints', 'resource conflicts' and is now penetrating the media as never before. However, schools are notoriously slow to incorporate new scientific, social and environmental problems into mainstream curriculum and pedagogy. The inter-disciplinary study of the interaction between complex social and ecological global systems has made rapid progress in research communities but there is still what Doppelt calls widespread 'systems blindness' among economists, politicians, businesses and education communities that has to be addressed urgently. The resilience of the global financial system has recently been profoundly challenged by the unexpected impact of excessive credit mismanaged by reputable banks, and by fraudulent traders. But coverage of the disturbance in the financial system is not generally linked to the long-term systemic pathologies that arise from the interaction of human and ecological systems. Steffen and colleagues refer to the 'Great Acceleration' of the human impact on the global environment that followed exponentially growing population and economies post-WWII.20 Alongside the emphasis on social and human capital as drivers of economic competitiveness, natural capital has now to enter the equation. Natural capital has generally been left off balance sheets by economists, governments, and corporations. Natural capital includes non-renewable resources, like fossil fuels and mineral deposits; renewable resources, such as fish or timber; ecosystem services such as the fertile soils, species diversity, pollination, or purification of air and water; and the capacity to absorb the waste from human economic activities. The urgency of the global situation is summed up by Steffen and colleagues as follows:

"Enormous, immediate challenges confront humanity over the next few decades as it attempts to pass through a bottleneck of continued population growth, excessive resource use and environmental deterioration. … There is also evidence for radically different directions built around innovative, knowledge-based solutions."

Global education reform movement

Globalization is a cultural paradox: it simultaneously unifies and diversifies people and cultures. It unifies national education policies by integrating them with the broader global trends. Because problems and challenges are similar from one education system to another, solutions and education reform agendas also are becoming similar. Due to international benchmarking of education systems by using common indicators and the international comparisons of student achievement, the distinguishing features of different education systems are becoming more visible. For example, the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) has mobilized scores of education experts to visit other countries in order to learn how to redefine their own education policies.

Globalization has also accelerated international collaboration, exchange of ideas and transfer of education policies between the education systems. Analyzing global policy developments and education reforms has become a common practice in many ministries of education, development agencies and regional administrations. Therefore, the world's education systems inevitably share some core values, functions and structures. The question arises whether increased global interaction among policy-makers and educators, especially benchmarking of education systems through agreed indicators and borrowing and lending educational policies, has promoted common approaches to education reform throughout the world.

Although improvement of education systems is a global phenomenon, there is no reliable, recent comparative analysis about how education reforms in different countries have been designed and implemented. However, the professional literature indicates that the focus on educational development has shifted from structural reforms to improving the quality and relevance of education. As a result, curriculum development, student assessment, teacher evaluation, integration of information and communication technologies into teaching and learning, proficiency in basic competencies (i.e., reading and writing) and mathematical and scientific literacy have become common priorities in education reforms around the world. I call this the Global Educational Reform Movement, or simply, GERM.

GERM has emerged since the 1980s and increasingly has become adopted as an official agenda or accepted as educational orthodoxy within many education reforms throughout the world, including reforms in the USA, the UK, Germany and in many countries in the developing world. Tellingly, GERM is often promoted through education strategies and interests of international development agencies as well as by some bilateral donors through their interventions in national education and political settings.

The inspiration for the emergence of GERM comes from three primary sources. The first is the new paradigm of learning that became dominant in the 1980s. The breakthrough of cognitive and constructivist approaches to

learning gradually shifted the focus of education reforms from teaching to learning. According to this paradigm, intended outcomes of schooling emphasize greater conceptual understanding, problem-solving, emotional and multiple intelligences and interpersonal skills, rather than the memorization of facts or the mastery of irrelevant skills. At the same time, however, the need for proficiency in literacy and numeracy has also become a prime target of education reforms. The second inspiration is the public demand for guaranteed, effective learning for all pupils. Inclusive education arrangements and the introduction of common learning standards for all have been offered as means to promote the ideal of education for all. The third inspiration is the accountability movement in education that has accompanied the global wave of decentralization of public services. Making schools and teachers accountable for their work has led to the introduction of education standards, indicators and benchmarks for teaching and learning, aligned assessments and testing and prescribed curricula. As James Popham has noted, various forms of test-based accountability have emerged where school performance and raising the quality of education are closely tied to the processes of accreditation, promotion, sanctions and financing.

Since the 1980s, at least five globally common features of education policies and reform principles have been employed to try to improve the quality of education, especially in terms of raising student achievement. First is standardization in education. Outcomes-based education reform became popular in the 1980s, followed by standards-based education policies in the 1990s, initially within Anglo-Saxon countries. These reforms, quite correctly, shifted the focus of attention to educational outcomes, i.e. student learning and school performance. Consequently, a widely accepted – and generally unquestioned – belief among policy-makers and education reformers is that setting clear and sufficiently high performance standards for schools, teachers, and students will necessarily improve the quality of desired outcomes. Enforcement of external testing and evaluation systems to assess how well these standards have been attained emerged originally from standards-oriented education policies. Since the late 1980s centrally prescribed curricula, with detailed and often ambitious performance targets, frequent testing of students and teachers, and high-stakes accountability have characterized a homogenization of education policies worldwide, promising standardized solutions at increasingly lower cost for those desiring to improve school quality and effectiveness.

A second common feature of the global education reform movement is increased focus on core subjects in curriculum, in other words, on literacy and numeracy. Basic student knowledge and skills in reading, writing, mathematics, and natural sciences are elevated as prime targets and indices of education reforms. Due to the acceptance of international student assessment surveys, such as PISA and IEA, as criteria of good educational performance, reading, mathematical and scientific literacy have now become the main determinants of perceived success or failure of pupils, teachers, schools, and entire education systems.

The third characteristic that is easily identifiable in global education reforms is to teach for pre-determined results, in other words, to search for safe and low-risk ways to reach learning goals. This minimizes experimentation, reduces use of alternative pedagogical approaches, and limits school risk-taking. Research on education systems that have adopted policies emphasizing achievement of predetermined standards and prioritized core subjects, suggests that teaching and learning are narrower and teachers focus on 'guaranteed content' to best prepare their students for the test. The higher the test-result stakes, the lower the degree of freedom in experimentation and risk-taking in classroom learning.

The fourth globally observable trend in educational reform is the transfer of educational innovation from business world as a main source of change. This process, where educational policies and ideas are lent and rented, is often facilitated by international development organizations and motivated by national hegemony and economic profit, rather than by moral goals of human development. Faith in educational change that depends on innovations brought and sold from outside the system undermines two important elements of successful change. First, it often limits the role of national policy development and the enhancement of an education system's own capabilities to maintain renewal. Perhaps more important, it also paralyzes teachers' and schools' attempts to learn from the past and also to learn from each other. Or, it prevents lateral professional development in the system.

The fifth global trend is adoption of high-stakes accountability policies for schools. School performance – especially raising student achievement – is closely tied to processes of accrediting, promoting, inspecting, and, ultimately, rewarding or punishing schools and teachers. Merit-based pay is one popular approach to holding teachers accountable for their students' learning. Success or failure of schools and teachers is often determined by standardized tests and external evaluations that devote attention to limited aspects of schooling, such as student achievement in mathematical and reading literacy, exit examination results, or intended teacher classroom behavior.

None of these elements of GERM have been adopted in Finland in the ways that they have within education policies of many other nations, for instance, in the United States, England, Japan or some Canadian provinces and Australian states. This, of course, does not imply that education standards, focus on basic knowledge and skills, or emphasis on accountability should be avoided in seeking better learning or educational performance. Nor does it suggest that these ideas were completely absent in education development in Finland. But, perhaps, it does imply that a good education system can be created using alternative policies orthogonal to those commonly found and promoted in global education policy markets. Table 1 presents a summary of the distinction between the 'global education reform movement' and alternative policies to educational change that are compatible with the needs of knowledge-based sustainable societies.

Table 1. Global trends in educational development to improve student learning and alternative policies respectively since the early 1980s.

Education Policies and Reform Principles	
Global Education Reform Movement (GERM)	*Alternative national policies*
Standardization Setting clear, high, centrally prescribed performance standards for all schools, teachers and students to improve the quality and equity of outcomes.	**Personalization** Setting a clear but flexible national framework for school-based curriculum planning. Encouraging local and individual solutions to national goals in order to find best ways to create optimal learning opportunities for all.
Focus on Literacy and Numeracy Basic knowledge and skills in reading, writing, mathematics and the natural sciences serve as prime targets of education reform.	**Focus on Broad and Creative Learning** Teaching and learning focus on deep, broad learning, giving equal value to all aspects of the growth of an individual's personality, moral character, creativity, knowledge and skills.
Teaching for Pre-determined Results Reaching higher standards as criterion for success and good performance; minimizes educational risk-taking; narrows teaching to content and use of methods beneficial to attaining preset results.	**Encouraging Risk-taking and Creativity** School-based and teacher-owned curricula facilitate finding novel approaches to teaching and learning; it encourages risk-taking and uncertainty in leadership, teaching and learning.
Renting Market-oriented Reform Ideas Sources of educational change are external innovations brought to schools and teachers from business world through legislation or national programs. These often replace existing school improvement strategies.	**Learning from the Past and Owning Innovations** Teaching honours traditional pedagogical values, such as teacher's professional role and relationship with students. Main sources of school improvement are proven good educational practices from the past.
Test-based Accountability School performance and raising student achievement are closely tied to processes of promotion, inspection and ultimately rewarding schools and teachers. Winners normally gain fiscal rewards whereas struggling schools and individuals are punished.	**Shared responsibility and Trust** Gradual building of a culture of responsibility and trust within the education system that values teacher and principal professionalism in judging what is best for students and in reporting their learning progress. Targeting resources and support to schools and students who are at risk to fail or to be left behind.

GERM has had significant consequences for teachers' work and students' learning in schools wherever it has been a dominant driver of change. The most significant consequence of this global educational reform orthodoxy is standardization of educational and pedagogical processes. Performance standards set by the educational authorities and consultants have been brought to the lives of teachers and students. Assessments and testing that have been aligned to these standards have often been disappointments and brought new problems to schools. Because this agenda promises significant gains in efficiency and quality of education, it has been widely accepted as a basic ideology of change, both politically and professionally. GERM has gained global popularity because it emphasizes some fundamental new orientations to learning and educational administration. It suggests strong guidelines to improve quality, equity and the effectiveness of education such as putting priority on learning, seeking high achievement for all students and making assessment an integral part of the teaching and learning process. However, it

also strengthens market-like logic and procedures in education. First and most importantly, GERM assumes that external performance standards, describing what teachers should teach and what students should do and learn, lead to better learning for all. By concentrating on the basics and defining explicit learning targets for students and teachers, such standards place strong emphases on mastering the core skills of reading, writing and mathematical and scientific literacy. Second, GERM assumes that the most effective way to improve education systems is to bring well-developed innovations to schools and classrooms. Systematic training of teachers and staff is an essential element of this approach. Third, GERM relies on an assumption that competition between schools, teachers and students is the most productive way to raise the quality of education. This requires that parents choose schools for their children, that schools have enough autonomy, and that schools and teachers are held accountable for their students' learning.

Economic competitiveness and education

Education for the knowledge-based economy has become a buzz phrase in education policy discourse throughout the developed world and the transition economies but also increasingly in developing countries. However, it has rarely been transformed into operational strategies or reform programs for education systems or educators. Typically, education reform that is targeted on serving knowledge-based economies emphasizes mathematics and science, information and communication technologies, basic knowledge and skills in literacy and development of interpersonal skills. Moreover, a successful knowledge economy also requires advanced secondary and tertiary education provision able to boost labor productivity, research and innovation. Many of the education reforms aimed at promoting economic competitiveness in the knowledge economies take the form of centrally steered structural and programmatic directives. Only rarely are these changes directly related to what teachers and students are doing in schools and classrooms.

Successful economies compete on the basis of high value, not only low cost. High value is best guaranteed by well-trained and educated personnel and flexible lifelong learning opportunities for all citizens. The most frequently presented general idea for increasing economic competitiveness is to equip people with the skills and attitudes for economic and civic success in an increasingly knowledge-based economy. This is rhetoric typically written into the strategies or policies that address the relation between economic competitiveness and development of education. In the midst of global education reforms it is difficult to answer the question that many teachers ask: "What should we do differently in schools in order to contribute effectively to economic competitiveness and growth?" Before exploring this question further, we need to examine what economic competitiveness means in order to understand better what schools should do differently.

Competitiveness is based on the determinants of the complex process of economic growth and development. When the competitiveness of economies is compared, a set of institutions, policies and structures is constructed using sub-indices that try to grasp the heterogeneity of different countries. The Economic Growth Competitiveness Index28 is built on three central ideas:

- Economic growth can be analyzed within the macro-economic environment, the quality of public institutions and technology.
- Technological advance is the ultimate source of growth but its origins may be different across countries.
- The importance of the determinants of economic competitiveness varies for core and non-core innovators.

Based on these commonly used determinants of economic competitiveness and various indicators of knowledge economy, three core domains have been utilized to explain economic growth:

- education and training (human capital),
- use of information and communication technologies,
- innovations and technological adaptation.

Education reforms have been classified in various ways. Using the three pillars above and combining them with the structural, qualitative and financing dimensions of education reforms to convert them to more concrete principles and actions for schools and teachers. Table 2 describes how the assumed three dimensions of education reforms have addressed the three determinants of economic competitiveness.

Table 2. Dimensions of education reform that focus on the determinants of economic competitiveness			
Determinants of economic competitiveness and their implications to education			
Dimension of education reform	*Human capital (education and training)*	*Use of information and communication technologies*	*Innovations and technological adaptation*
Restructuring and adjustment	- Enrolment ratios and participation rates - Access and mobility - Length of schooling	- Student/computer ratio - ICT in curriculum - Flexibility and choice	- School-business partnerships - Investments in tertiary education
Quality	- Academic knowledge - literacy - mathematics - science - Meta-cognitive and interpersonal skills	- Teacher readiness to use ICT in teaching - Schools' ICT infrastructure - Assessment and evaluation policies	- Use of varied teaching methods - Focus on both individual and team learning - Creativity and risk-taking
Financing, infrastructure and management	- Education spending - Lifelong learning - Decentralization and distributed accountability	- Information management system - Investing in infrastructure	- Increasing higher education expenditures - Increasing financing of research and development

Governments have an essential role to play by offering and guaranteeing good education that adequately emphasizes the core determinants of economic competitiveness. However, it has been difficult to translate this central role of education into concrete actions and programs that lead to improved human capital and therefore contribute to the social and economic progress. According to Table 2 there are several aspects of economic competitiveness that have a direct relation to teaching and learning in schools. I have identified four key conditions that make teaching compatible with the needs of the knowledge economy. They are: rethinking innovation, revisiting the conception of knowledge, focusing on interpersonal skills and enhancing the will and skill to learn.

New conception of knowledge. Formal education, especially at pre-tertiary levels, has been long criticized for static conceptions of knowledge and learning. Traditionally the foundation of knowledge has been based on positivist scientific method. Therefore knowledge has been viewed as objective and knowledge-formation as a linear, cumulative process free from subjective values and interpretations. Knowledge is now understood in another way in economics, mathematics, natural sciences, neuroscience, cognitive sciences and information technologies. It is seen as relativistic and diverse in terms of its interpretations. Furthermore, it is created through multiple processes, including hermeneutic and subjective 'scientific' methods alongside the systems analytical advances in understanding non-linear dynamics of complex life, human and ecological systems.

This shift in the paradigm of knowledge has created a challenge for education. Teaching and learning in schools should focus not only on mastering the basics and achieving predetermined learning standards but also coming up with alternative perspectives, new ways of constructing knowledge and creating ideas that have value. However, many countries seem to be moving in the opposite direction: what is valued is conventional knowledge in some core subjects that can be easily measured and then turned into criteria of success and failure. The OECD's highly influential PISA study, for example, is seen by critics as reinforcing this narrowing of purpose as Grek suggests:

> *"The focus on 'real-life' circumstances and on students' capacity to enter the labour market with core skills, such as literacy and numeracy, has taken PISA's focus of interest away from less explicit educational aims that resist measurement (e.g. democratic participation, artistic talents, understanding of politics, history, etc.), towards a more pragmatic view of education's worth…PISA results now receive a very high profile within national media and are present in the consciousness of senior policy-makers. Media coverage of PISA results is very substantial and perhaps represents another manifestation of the 'mediatisation' of education policy processes."*

Better understanding of innovation. Innovation involves the extraction of economic and social value from knowledge. It puts ideas, knowledge and

technology to work in a manner that brings about a significant improvement in performance. It requires not just an idea but rather an idea that has been made to work. This means that innovation and entrepreneurship are closely interdependent. Therefore, living in and working for a world of innovations requires fundamentally different attitudes, knowledge and skills from the citizens. Technological adaptation and innovation have been the main drivers of economic growth in developed countries since the World War II and are proving to be important factors also in many developing countries. Innovative models of wealth creation, referred to as 'natural capitalism', are emerging in the business world. They illustrate how environmental responsibility can be highly profitable. In order to be able to contribute successfully to the development of innovation in the sustainable knowledge economy, education systems too need policies that encourage working with and learning from innovations.

Focus on social capital. Success in the world of work and living in a world of global risks requires different knowledge and skills from all of us. Coping with increasing amounts of knowledge has changed the ways we think about education and schools. Individual performance and inventions created by one person only have given way to collective intelligence, shared knowledge and team-based problem-solving. Interestingly, successful economies and highly creative communities are based on the idea of strategic alliances rather than raw competition for markets and clients. Indeed, sustainable development and economic competitiveness require a stronger focus on the development of interpersonal skills and social capital throughout the cycle of education. More specifically, social capital that is necessary in productive group processes, whether in or out of school, is becoming more important in the schools of those countries that are genuinely concerned about their economic competitiveness and sustainable development.

Implications for national policy making

Teaching in schools is influenced by two change forces that often are more contradictory than complementary. The first force is the Global Education Reform Movement that is explained above. It is shifting the focus of improving education towards basic knowledge and skills in some core subjects, common standards for teaching and learning, measurable knowledge and stronger accountability for results, especially at school level. The other force is the increasing external expectation that schools should do more to help the countries' economies to develop and become more competitive. Caught in the middle of these change forces are the teachers and students who often find it difficult and meaningless to react to these contradictory external pressures.

An analysis of the concrete consequences that each of these changes have fostered can clarify the contradiction. For the sake of simplicity, we can take one example from each level of education: the system level, school level and

classroom level. I have argued above that economic competitiveness requires, among other things, flexibility, creativity and risk-taking. Flexibility is important at the education system level. This not only means providing flexible education and training opportunities for all in the society, young and old. It also refers to flexibility in the curriculum, in the organization of work in schools, in using various teaching and learning arrangements and in reporting on progress and achievements. Creativity becomes an important principle at the school level. Teachers who are catalysts of learning in the knowledge society must therefore be provided with incentives and encouraged to make their work place and classrooms creative learning organizations where openness to new ideas and approaches flourish. Finally, risk-taking needs to be encouraged in daily life and learning in schools. There is no creativity in schools without flexibility in the education system and no creativity without risk – the risk of trying a new idea, experimenting with an unfamiliar practice, being prepared to fail or look silly when trying something new, not taking setbacks to heart, being responsive rather than overly sensitive to critical feedback and so on.

The Global Education Reform Movement is also fostering standardization in education, stronger accountability for results in schools and teaching for measurable results. Standardization has become a common change strategy at the education system level. Standards for learning, teaching, curriculum and assessment have been introduced in many education systems as a means of securing unified 'delivery' of education services to all citizens. The prevalence of standardized tests and other forms of assessment has gradually made schools and teachers more accountable than before for their students' learning. At the classroom level teachers are increasingly teaching for predetermined results and targets that are often described in centralized curriculum and national education standards documents.

Steering education systems towards producing intended outcomes requires congruence between teaching for the knowledge economy and what education reforms are expecting from teachers and students. In some cases, however, what schools are explicitly or implicitly assumed to do to improve their performance within ongoing education reforms contradicts what is needed from schools to support economic competitiveness. Comparison of these two change forces at the level of education systems, schools and classroom indicates some difficult incompatibilities and controversies. At the macro level, economic competitiveness demands an education system flexible enough to be able to react to weak signals and to produce a coordinated and collaborative response. Such a reaction and response is made possible by sustainable leadership. An education system's flexibility is promoted by freedom of choice, decentralized management and a culture of trust in professional communities, i.e. teachers and educational leaders. At the same time education reforms are equipping education systems with standards and regulations that set the criteria and targets for success and measurement. These education standards aim at raising the expectations of teaching and learning by specifying what every student should know and be able to do. At

school level economic competitiveness needs the organization of work to enable alternative scheduling, integration of subjects and increased teacher collaboration. Creativity is promoted by using a wide spectrum of teaching methods, such as co-operative learning, and building bridges between the school and the community. Due to global education reforms, however, work in schools is influenced by prescribed curricula that are often used to determine the performance level and even, mistakenly, the quality of schools. Teachers tend to rely on traditional teaching arrangements and methods in order to minimize the risk of failure. Finally, teaching and learning for more competitive economies requires teachers and students to work together in safe and stimulating learning environments that focus on broad learning objectives, encourage everyone to participate and use alternative approaches to achieve goals. Risk-taking in teaching and learning is promoted by co-operative cultures, mutual trust and feedback that recognize students' efforts as well as attainment.

Figure 1. Certain factors of economic competitiveness and education reform
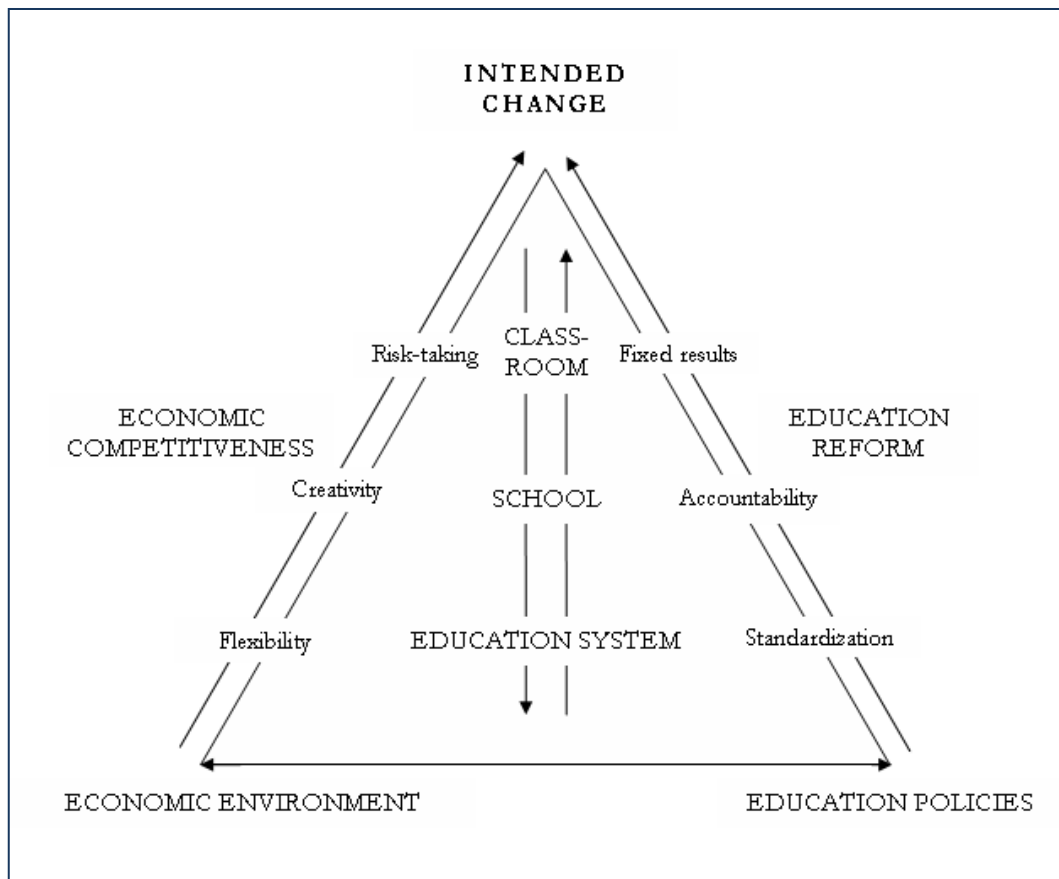
As a result of typical education reforms, however, teaching and learning are often characterized by stress and fear as the focus is on being successful in achieving the predetermined learning outcomes. Therefore students primarily learn alone rather than co-operatively in small groups in order to minimize

personal risks. Open and alternative teaching methods and task designs are not favored. Figure 1 summarizes the comparison of competitiveness and education policy factors mentioned above.

Standards-based curriculum reforms have become increasingly common in many parts of the world recently (England, Germany, many Central and Eastern Europe countries and most states in the United States and the Canadian provinces, for example). In practice, as Hargreaves and his colleagues claim *"the common, standards-based curriculum is often […] a clinical and conventional curriculum in which literacy, numeracy and science are accorded supreme importance"*. In the 1988 national curriculum reform in England and Wales the so-called core subjects were mathematics, science and English. Similarly these same subjects have increased their status in many other countries due to the strengthened political significance of the international student learning comparisons and benchmarking. As a consequence, curriculum standards in many countries place too strong an emphasis on structural knowledge, technical skills and cognition. Instead, successful and competitive knowledge economies draw upon beliefs, values, morality, meaning and social experiences. Both are important and both must be in balance for schools to be able to produce expected outcomes. Changing societies and complex knowledge economies require that students are educated equally for the artistic, social and critical world as much as for the rational world of numeracy, literacy, scientific and technological competences. However, the situation in many countries is opposite: the importance of aesthetic and moral education and social sciences in school curricula, for example, has been reduced due to the need to strengthen the teaching of what some call fundamental or core subjects, i.e. mother tongue, mathematics and natural sciences. Although there is no evidence globally of any significant quantitative shifts within curricula, international comparisons of student achievement and national high-stakes external evaluations are increasing the imbalance between what is necessary and what students are taught in school. These comparisons and evaluations usually judge the quality of individual schools and education systems using test scores gained only in the core subjects. At best this represents a rationalistic, partial and extremely reductionist judgment of the subtle and complex process of education for the knowledge economy and democratic society.

Conclusions

There has been a great temptation in many countries to imitate the education reform efforts designed and implemented in other countries. Part of the problem is that the actual results of education reforms are rarely analyzed simply because the most important outcomes are only visible in the longer-term, later than most administrators or politicians can wait. Another part of the problem is that it is common to complete a strategic development plan and then allocate mechanisms of accountability and support to implement the

plan. What is often missing is the ability to modify change strategies by continuously shaping and reshaping intentions, ideas and actions.

The emergence of the network society and knowledge-based economies appears to be a powerful justification for education reforms in developed countries. Schools and teachers are being asked to do more than they have done before but also in a different way. At the same time, globalization has generated education reform that also requires teachers to do more and differently. The key argument of this paper is that the changes in teaching and learning in schools required by big change forces are often contradictory and are rarely capable of being implemented. In order to utilize the potential of education to foster economic and social development we need an agenda based on existing educational change knowledge that is practical enough to help schools and teachers to take a lead in implementing the agenda.

Education reforms currently planned or implemented throughout the world need to include deeper and more comprehensive analysis of what and how schools and teachers should do in order to contribute to the development of economic competitiveness of their countries. This requires at least three actions. First, education reforms at the outset should provide a stronger pool of educational change knowledge to those who are involved in planning and implementing the education reforms. Michael Fullan sees change knowledge as understanding and insight about the process of change and the key factors that lead to success in practice. The possession of educational change knowledge does not necessarily lead to success, but its absence ensures failure. Second, analytical work on the knowledge economy and learning society should focus on moral purpose and on the processes of teaching and learning, not only on the structure and the content of education. Third, the sustainability and spread of educational change can only be understood by analyzing change efforts in a wider range of settings over a longer period of time. Most education reform literature, however, focuses on specific aspects of early implementation rather than the long term persistence of change.

Education reforms – if they are to make any significant impact on economic competitiveness and sustainable development – should address more clearly the aspects of teaching and learning that have been found in recent research to be related to productive educational change. In general, co-operation rather than competition or isolation is the key principle of improvement. Economic competitiveness and sustainable development can therefore be promoted and enhanced by fostering creativity, co-operation and interaction at three levels in education: schools, teachers and students.

Three other conclusions can be drawn from available knowledge base on educational change. First, supporting networking of schools has to be given a high priority in education reforms. Almost in any education system necessary innovations and ideas for improvement already exist in the system. The challenge is to share them between schools. Therefore, developing the education system in a way that encourages and enables schools to create

partnerships and information exchange networks is likely to spread existing good practices. Second, helping teachers to work as professional communities should be emphasized in combating the isolation that is common to many teaching cultures. Learning to teach in new way is not easy. A safe and supportive professional climate in schools is a necessary condition for professional improvement of teachers. Designing education reforms in a way that will provide teachers with opportunities and incentives to collaborate more will increase the likelihood of sustainable implementation of intended changes. Third, making learning interesting and meaningful for students is the imperative for sustainable development and change in schools. Economic competitiveness is above all about learning. When individuals or societies have severe learning difficulties the economic forecasts will not look good. If students do not learn in their schools and universities to love learning, they will not find learning and change attractive afterwards. Therefore, education reforms should first and foremost try to make learning in schools interesting for all students and help them to discover their own personal talent without sacrificing the other important goals of education.

In this paper I am offering a profound paradox: to prepare themselves for more competitive knowledge societies, our schools and students must compete less. Schools should therefore increase internal collaboration against the external competition. Improving economic competitiveness requires well educated and trained people, technological and network readiness and knowledge and skills to work in an innovation-rich world. Co-operation and networking rather than competition and disconnectedness should therefore lead the education policies and development of education systems. Schools and other educational institutions should cultivate attitudes, cultures and skills that are necessary in creative and collaborative learning environments. Creativity will not flourish and be sustained in schools unless people feel secure to take risks and explore the unknown. Moreover, working with and understanding innovations require creative and risk-intensive contexts. In brief, economic competitiveness can be best promoted by developing fear-free learning and professional development environments in our schools. The fear-free school is a place where students are not afraid to try new ideas and ways of thinking. Equally importantly, in the fear-free school teachers and principals will step beyond their conventional territories of thinking and doing that are often conditions for making a difference in students' learning and schools' performance.

The added value of education councils

Marleen Brans

Marleen Brans is Professor Public Policy at the Public Management Institute, Louvain

The added value of education councils can be approached from two perspectives:

- The added value for democracy
- The added value for policy making.

The added value for democracy

In the slide below we see a representation of different models of democracy, and, within those models, of the ways of engaging citizens and groups of citizens.

The scheme is organized along two axes, two dimensions:

- Whether democracy is direct or indirect, which means that it works with representatives. Most of our national systems work with this logic of indirect democracy.
- Whether institutions have influence on the basis of debates and deliberations (talk) or rather on the basis of count.
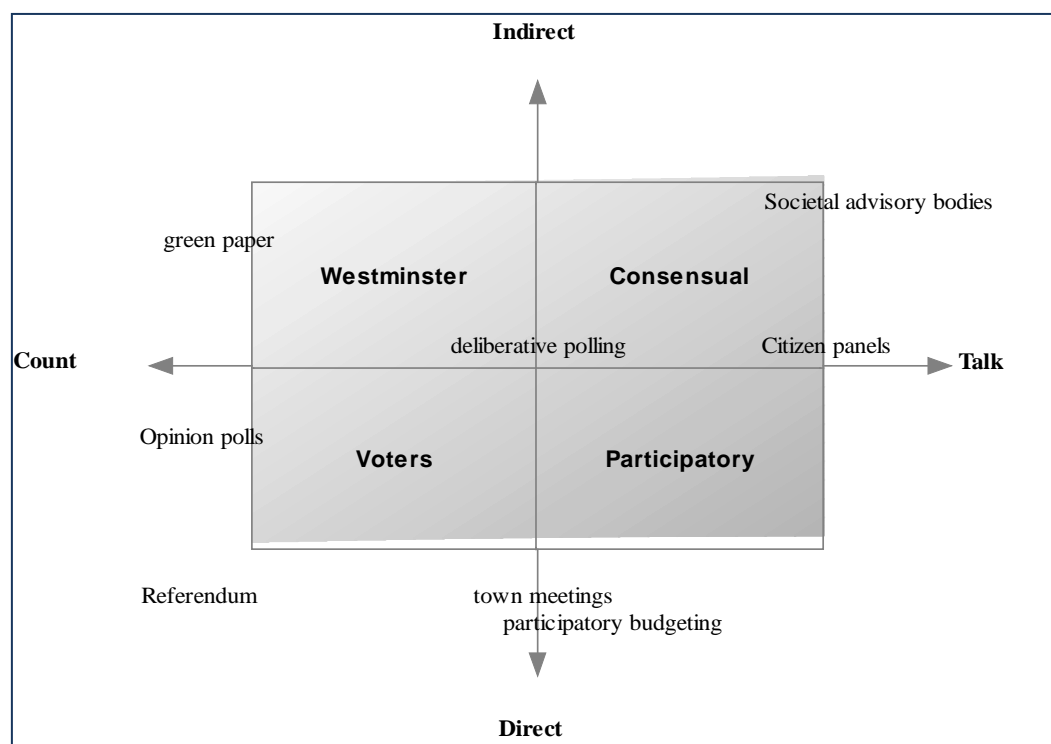
This gives a scheme with different models of democracy.

In the first quarter we have the Westminster model, where the winner takes it all, with majority governments. In the second quarter we have the consensual model, a system based on consensus, with coalition governments.

What we have found in recent studies is that, in both the Westminster and the conceptual model, one seeks to borrow methods and techniques that traditionally belong to the other model. An example: in the Westminster model, we see experiments with citizens panels; another example: in the consensual model governments are interested in opinion polls. So, things are moving, a lot is happening: the strict division between both models does no longer exist. On the first day of this conference, Mia Douterlungne talked about the use of green papers, an instrument that traditionally belongs to the left side of the scheme. A green paper, in fact, collects views of different interest groups, and governments make their choice, without deliberation. It is interesting to see how education councils, in an early stage of the decision making, start to react to a green paper, but in a consensual way.

Conclusion: Education councils clearly have the added value of complementing classical models of democracy.

Added value for policy making

Added value for problem solving.

If a problem has to be analysed in a correct way, one has to take into account different types of theories, in order to be able to assess symptoms and to frame problems:

- Scientific theories. This approach can help to identify causes and priorities.
- Policy theories. Explanations are linked to past policies and to the language that is used by the government.
- Field theories. It is important to take into account the expertise of the people in the field: lay experts and stakeholders, who have a very specific knowledge of what is going on in the classroom, of what is working in the classroom.

Very often, it is difficult to reach an agreement on the nature of a problem, which makes it, of course, almost impossible to find the solution. There are two basic causes for this problem:

- The lack of scientific consensus
- The lack of normative consensus.

		Scientific consensus	
		great	small
Normative consensus	great	Tractable problems	Intractable scientific problems
	small	Intractable ethical problems	Intractable political problems

On the basis of these criteria we actually distinguish four types of problems:

- Tractable problems
- Intractable scientific problems
- Intractable political problems
- Intractable ethical problems.

Conclusion: The added value of education councils lays in the fact that their work can turn intractable problems into tractable problems, and thus help to find the solutions.

Added value for professional policy making for the 21st century

Professional policy making for the 21st century is a movement that takes its origin in the late nineties in the UK and the Anglo-Saxon countries, and that has been transferred to the majority of OECD countries.

In order to realise effective policy making, you need to have a number of ingredients. It is clear that those ingredients are, in fact, to a very large extent the characteristics of good functioning education councils that have been discussed during the last two days.

Professional policy making has to be:

- Forward looking and strategic

Education policy has to be forward looking by its nature: many of the decisions in education policy are only effective two or three decades after the decision. If we invest now, we only see the results later. An example: If education invests in integration, one will only see the results of this policy when the children of today enter the labour market. Another example: Training in citizenship will only show its effect when the children of today become young adults. That's why, as Minister Smet already said, education councils have to concentrate above all on strategic issues.

- Outward looking

Professional policy making has to try to look across the country borders. This is exactly what EUNEC is doing: learning lessons from examples of good practice in other countries.

- Joined up

Joined up policy making is a big challenge. Policies have to step out of their vertical silo's. Education is to a very large extent horizontal, transversal,

because education itself is a policy instrument for other policy fields (health, energy..).

- Based on evidence and learning

Education councils are developing also as knowledge institutions. Of course, an important condition is the capacity of staff and resources. However, if boundary workers within education councils are creative, they can widen the knowledge base in a less expensive way. One example from my own experience: in our bachelor-master structure, a lot of students are looking for themes and subjects for dissertations. Why not target those university students?

- Innovativeness and flexibility

We must not play with the future of our children: to experiment in education is a risk. But education councils are well placed to make recommendations on the development and the implementation of innovations.

- Consultation

This is the core business of education councils.

Conclusion: Based on what we learned from the study on education councils, and based on what we heard from expert stakeholders and policy makers during the conference, we can conclude that education councils are there to meet all the challenges of professional policy making for the 21st century.

Friday 3 December 2010

Ten years of EUNEC, past present and future

Interview with past and present presidents of EUNEC: Simone Barthel, Louis Van Beneden and Fons Van Wieringen and Domenico Lenarduzzi, honorary director general of the European Commission and co-founder of EUNEC.

The interview is conducted by *Manuel Miguéns, secretary general of the Portuguese Education Council.*

Manuel Miguéns:

Mr Lenarduzzi, what was your main motivation in supporting the creation of the European network for education councils?

Domenico Lenarduzzi

Education councils are very important because they include the voices of the different stakeholders in society, from the educational sector, but often also from outside: the economic sector, the cultural sector. When I first heard about the existence of EUNEC, I welcomed the network as a great initiative, and supported it because it would allow the implication of stakeholders not only at regional or national level, but also at European level.

As long as I worked in the European Commission, EUNEC was sure to have a contact point in the European Commission. This remains a very important issue for EUNEC: it is absolutely necessary to have someone at the European decision making level who really listens to the recommendations.

Manuel Miguéns

Mr Van Beneden, you were involved in the creation and development of councils of education at national level and at international level. What do you consider as the main role of councils' stakeholders in policy development at national level? And what was the relevance of creating a European network?

Louis Van Beneden

Let me go back in history. The seventies, following the May 68 movement, were a period of great change and innovation in society: the accent was put on a more human environment, with more participation of stakeholders. The notion of partnership was on the agenda of national and international politics. A dialogue was organized with different partners in education: a difficult process, but all were convinced of the benefits.

We thought, at that time, that it was important to create an advisory council, where all stakeholders had the opportunity to gather for debate. It was a period of great enthusiasm, of success. The council became a stable, permanent structure bringing together stakeholders, and with a high degree of independence, assured by multiple principals (as is stated correctly in the conclusions of the research of the Public Management Institute on education councils in the EU).

This is what happened at the regional level, in Flanders. At the same time, at the international level, within organizations such as UNESCO, OECD and the Council of Europe, the need was felt to create a forum of stakeholders in education, producing recommendations. Thanks to this general spirit of innovation, started in the seventies, and thanks to the support of Domenico Lenarduzzi in the European Commission, the concrete outcome was the creation of EUNEC.

Manuel Miguéns

Mr Van Wieringen, for two or three years you combined the presidency of the Dutch Education Council and of EUNEC. What were your ambitions by combining this? What is the added value for a national council to be member of EUNEC?

Fons Van Wieringen

EUNEC has an added value horizontally and vertically. In the beginning, I was highly interested by the horizontal aspect: different councils, each with its own characteristics and priorities, came together to discuss educational issues and to learn from each other. A large number of topics have been discussed within EUNEC: for each topic, the member councils had a different point of view, which offered a rich variety of opinions. At this horizontal added value, I add the vertical one, the fact that, through EUNEC, it is possible to address the European policy makers more directly.

For me, living in the Netherlands, the fall of the Berlin wall, some ten years earlier, meant a huge change: we have always lived turning our back to Europe, oriented to the sea. At this historical moment, we got in contact with the former Eastern Europe, central Europe. We created a European network for the improvement of the educational management: it was a key moment.

Manuel Miguéns

Ms Barthel, as current president of EUNEC and as one of the oldest members, do you see an evolution in the work of EUNEC? What are the chances to this network?

Simone Barthel

In the beginning EUNEC needed to appear legitimate: there was the urgent need to set up things formally. I think, after different phases, that today EUNEC has gained this legitimacy.

Moreover, the connection with the EU institutions has changed. In the beginning, members of EUNEC were rather reluctant: we wanted to go on being what we were, go on working on our own topics, EU topics seemed remote from our world. Now, thanks to Domenico and colleagues in the European Commission after him, we became partners, we work together, the European institutions are very often represented at our meetings.

The next challenge will be to open up our network to the European Economic and Social Committee and to the European Parliament. This is a necessary step if we want to make a difference.

Another important evolution is the fact that we opened up to the newcomers in the EU, which brought a lot of enthusiasm in the network. This enlargement helped us to adopt a more open vision. We realized that life is very different in other Member States, this made us see EU affairs differently.

EUNEC has the chance to have a dynamic secretariat, secretary generals are and have always been key persons for the network. And finally, another lucky chance was the Jean Monnet support, which gave us independency in organizing ourselves. Travelling became possible, we were able to organize seminars and conferences. An important challenge for the near future is the application for the upcoming Jean Monnet three year framework partnership.

Manuel Miguéns

What do you consider to be the main educational challenges for the next decade at national and at European level?

Domenico Lenarduzzi

We must be aware of the fact that Europe before the eighties was not a Europe of the citizens. At the time, I was in charge of education in the European Commission, and we worked on how a Europe of citizens could be achieved: we came up with a set of symbols (the flag!) creating a sense of belonging. Even if we did not have the legal basis in the field of education, thanks to the strong will of the stakeholders, there was the agreement that education constitutes a very important part of the development of society.

Education remote in an ivory tower is an idea that really belongs to the past now.

It was the time that the idea of the so called 'knowledge based' society was born: people in Europe decided to invest in knowledge and in education more than in material goods: all education systems had to be adapted. A big innovation is the fact the that accent is much pore put on learning outside school, outside of the classical system of primary – secondary – higher education. It appeared that only 20% of the knowledge is acquired in schools; 80% is acquired elsewhere in society. Education is also based on a kind of informal education. The time that children went to school, obtained a degree and closed their books for the rest of their lives is over. In the field of medicine, for instance, this always has seemed natural and obvious: one would never trust a doctor who does not follow closely new developments. In the field of education, this becomes evident too: we have the responsibility to prepare our youngsters to live in a society that we don't know yet: in what kind of world will the children of today live in twenty thirty years? We have to prepare them providing them with a solid basic education, not a narrow specialization, given the quick evolution of society, and of the world of work. Everybody has to be convinced of the fact that he will be in lifelong learning during the rest of his life. And the education system has to adapt to this new reality.

What strikes me, when I see young pupils around me, is that, doing their homework, the first thing children do, automatically, is go to their computer: they find all their information there, and education has to take that into account.

For the parents, the new educational didactics are difficult to understand. Parents almost need to have a didactical training in order to be able to understand they way their children learn at school, and to be able to help them; the paradox is that now, more than ever, children need help: the 'after school' is very important. Which brings us back to the fact that the education system has to be rethought: we have to get out of the narrow cage of formal learning and open the system up to informal and non formal learning. Young people will have to take up there responsibility: they will have to make clear for themselves what they are capable of, and what they want to achieve; and they must have the possibility to get help in trying to achieve their goals. This is a complete shift in the role of the school.

EUNEC represents all stakeholders in society: it is a great privilege that within the network representatives of the world of school and representatives from the world outside of school are brought together. Within EUNEC, important new evolutions have to be discussed. But not only there need to be discussions, the network also needs to come up with clear and pertinent recommendations. The follow up and the monitoring of these recommendations is extremely important: they have to reach those they are meant for: the decision makers that have the possibility to implement them.

That's why it is very important for EUNEC to invite representatives from the European Commission to the meetings, people who have responsibilities in the field of education: it is not enough that they make a presentation at some conference, they really have to participate in the debate and listen to the networks recommendations.

Louis Van Beneden

I am in fact out of education for six years now, but I have two new experiences that have an impact on my ideas on education: I am a grandfather, and therefore interested in the challenges and opportunities for my grand children. And I'm active in a centre for handicapped people: often I realize that they share the same challenges as the world of education.

I would like to tackle the issue of the self managed schools. Schools face many problems: safety problems, difficult students, shortage of teachers, the inclusion of disadvantaged groups etc. We see that many ideas are launched in order to improve education, without giving schools the means and the possibility to realize those ideas, because schools continue to suffer from material problems, their staff is insufficient or not well trained. The awareness of this paradox is one of the main challenges for the future.

A second issue is the focus on learning outcomes: does our school system have the possibility to realize this shift towards learning outcomes?

A third aspect, linked to what Domenico Lenarduzzi already said: how to link schools to the world outside in a common approach to help youngsters to find their way in life? How to find a way to introduce reality from outside in schools and vice versa?

The international origins of education innovation policies are often not enough stressed by our politicians; many times they say, if something good comes up, it comes from them; if something bad comes up, it's from Europe . So let us be aware of what is going on at the international scenery in the field of education, and answer to it according to our own accents.

The growing impact of the labour market and of the world of finances is a tricky thing: to think that the labour market oriented approach is the solution for everything is a mistake. Let's be wise and underline from an educational point of view a humanistic approach taking into account the real needs of young people and of society.

Manuel Miguéns

Mr Van Wieringen, educational management is very much your topic. What do you consider will be the main educational challenges in the future?

Fons Van Wieringen

First, when we see the PISA results, the results of our 15 years old, we sometimes notice a difference of 2 to 3 years of schooling in terms of results. This gap is enormous, we have to concentrate on this: this is the first job of education.

Second, in the field of informal and non formal learning, the Dutch Education Council is working on two recommendations now. The first is an advice on extended learning: not only school delivers learning opportunities. How to organize learning within schools (a huge amount of hours per year) and learning in the context of other providers (for instance museums).

There is no official interface between the offerings of people/institutions willing to do something for education and the school. It is difficult for them to get into the schools. So the Dutch Education Councils is preparing an advice looking at their social responsibilities. It is clear that they have a specific responsibility for education, but education has to organize an interface in which they can perform this responsibility. A concrete example: give retired people with educational experience the possibility to get into the schools on Saturday morning. This might be a form of informal and non formal learning brought into school. Moreover, in the financial crisis we are facing, it is important that education is stimulated in a more creative – and less expensive – way.

Simone Barthel

I am happy to see that, after so many years of common work within EUNEC, we very much share the same ideas. So, me too, I would like to stress the importance of opening up the education system to other partners of civil society that can complete the work of teachers.

There is a double challenge for schools: on the one hand, the external challenge, that is to open up to the recognition of learning outcomes acquired outside the schools. On the other hand, the internal challenge that is closely linked to the training of teachers.

The recognition of what is learned outside of school is in fact a major challenge. Nowadays, the traditional diploma is highly valued. And very often, this diploma mainly means that the student has been capable of reproducing what the teacher said.

Getting into schools good teachers is another challenge. Teachers have to be engaged because of their professional quality, and not because they are simply available at the moment a school needs a teacher. Nowadays, because of the shortage of teachers, school tend to – or have to – engage teachers that are less well trained, or less motivated. There is an important role here for initial teacher training: it should not concentrate exclusively on the teaching subject – which remains important of course – but future teachers should most of all develop a transversal vision. Next to the initial

teacher training, the induction phase is important. Too many times, young teachers arrive in a school and don't have the luck to be integrated in a coherent team. It is no surprise that 40% of the young teachers leave the profession in the first five years. This is an enormous waste of time, of energy, of money. And, not to forget, even if the initial teacher training and the induction phase are over, it remains extremely important that teachers participate in lifelong learning.

I would like to insist also on the scandal of early school leaving. It is simply not acceptable that 35 % of our youngster leave school without having acquired the basic competences, which means they are simply not prepared to life in society, and there is a real risk that they will be marginalized. That's why school should not turn its back to the world of work and of economy: education has to stay in touch with this world without giving up its soul and specificity.

Mia Douterlungne

Taking into account this last remark, it is important for our network to make statements and recommendations and to communicate them not only vertically, but also horizontally, to get out of the domain of education and training, towards employment, work, health..

Domenico Lenarduzzi

I'm really preoccupied, just as Simone, by the high percentage of early school leavers. We are witnessing a duality in society, between two groups: those who know, and those who don't. If we cannot solve this problem, we don't realize the main objective of education. EUNEC can play an important role here: one of the main objectives of the network should be to contribute to avoid this duality, and to put this issue as a priority on the agenda.

Simone Barthel

Referring to the introduction by Pascal Smet, Minister of Education, Youth, Equal Opportunities and Brussels in the Flemish Government, I like to stress the challenge for education to try to reconcile the world of school and the world outside. Very often, we see that modern schools still use old methods: the blackboard, the teacher in front of the classroom putting all his energy in trying to have his pupils attention. When children go out of the classroom, they are absorbed by a variety of impulses: publicity, media, games. They are offered to the child without any questioning: children do not learn enough to judge and to question all the information that comes to them. The major challenge for education is this reconciliation of the world inside and outside of the schools.

Statements

EUNEC wants to disseminate these statements pro-actively towards the European Commission, the European Parliament, relevant DGs. EUNEC also wants to promote actions by its members at national/regional level. These critical remarks and statements offer an input for national advisory opinions of education councils. They should provide a significant input for reflection and action by relevant stakeholders in the field of education and training such as providers of education, teacher trade unions, social partners, experts in the field of education and training.

Education councils as places for participation and consultation of stakeholders, a key element in education policy making

Participation and consultation of citizens and stakeholders is a key element in policy decision making. It is generally being recognized as a main indicator of good governance.

Education councils are regional or national bodies that provide regional or national ministers, governments, parliaments, with policy advice on innovation in educational policies. In fact, it is one of the most important formal bodies used by governments in their decision making processes as an efficient and effective way for involvement and participation of stakeholders. In the European field, EUNEC, the network of national and regional education councils is considered as a partner in the European policy making process for education and training.

What are Education Councils ? A scientific study gives the answer

Education councils are diverse bodies, with their own characteristics. There is a growing interest to examine the benefits of a council, both by governments and stakeholder organisations, aiming to make consultation processes more transparent and efficient.

Therefore, EUNEC decided to undertake a study on the concept of participation, expertise, legitimacy and involvement of stakeholders and experts in educational policy processes: "*Education councils in Europe - Balancing expertise, societal input and political control in the production of*

policy advice" (Marleen Brans, Jan Van Damme, Public Management Institute – KUL).

EUNEC organized a conference on stakeholder participation in Brussels on 1 – 3 December 2010, based on the lessons drawn from the research, with the input of European policy makers and national or regional representatives of education councils. EUNEC adopted the following recommendations, on a meso and micro level. The recommendations are based on the conclusions of the discussions in workshops during the same conference. Participants at the workshops came from countries that have an education council, that used to have one or that intend to create one.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY MAKERS

These meso recommendations pertain to institutional and political decisions and contexts. They thus appeal to those policy actors who are responsible for organizing and employing advisory organizations, should they seek to raise the legitimacy of the input, throughput and output of their advisory councils, and ultimately also of their policy decisions.

These meso recommendations can be useful also for countries that don't have yet an education council.

➤ To be efficient and real partners in the policy making process, education councils need to be recognized and to be stable.

1. Give some sort of **legal recognition** to the advisory council. Legally embed its role.
2. Legally settle the council's **access points** at different stages of the policy advice, to ensure the connectedness of the council with the actual policy making. It is important that education councils can be involved in the decision making process at different stages: to have influence in the early stage and also in the implementation stage.
3. Ensure **sufficient funding** to the advisory council as an organization or to the members. Only this way, the council can become a stable organization where expertise can be built up over time. This favours independence and continuity and helps foster a stable policy environment in which policy memory can grow. In times of economic crisis, this recommendation is even more relevant.
4. Invest in the **knowledge base** councils may draw upon (benchmarking, monitoring, evaluation and research).

5. Combine legal guarantees with sufficient discretion[1]. With **discretion and flexibility**, a council can make most of possible policy windows and successfully deliver boundary work[2].

6. Allow for the **inclusion of different communities in** order to broaden the knowledge base of policy making, if not through membership, representation and co-optation, than through mechanisms of consultation of experts and civil society interests.

➢ Education councils, as advisory bodies, need some formal contacts with principals[3].

7. Raise the commitment of the governments as a principal by **communication with leading civil servants**. However, the autonomy of the council and its legitimacy have to be guaranteed, and therefore the role of the civil servants has to be clearly defined.

8. Raise the **number of principals**, by for instance including the parliament as a client of the council's advice.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EDUCATION COUNCILS

These micro recommendations concern education councils themselves as organisations, to help them to improve the quality of processes and organization, and outline possible routes and mechanisms for increasing their input as well as throughput and output legitimacy.

➢ Concerning the internal organisation

1. Adopt strategies and tools for **combining civil society input and expertise**. Supplement inclusion through membership structure with consultation mechanisms such as expert pools, e-fora or focus groups. When information is imperfect, councils do best to consult their past knowledge base or engage in ad hoc consultation of academic experts. EUNEC is convinced that councils still need to go outside to have access to the best available knowledge.

2. **Adopt mechanisms to avoid domination** by certain groups and/or persons by virtue of their knowledge or position.

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[1] Discretion is the flexibility a council has to organize its structure and work. The higher the level of externally imposed rules, the less discretion. Typically, if there is very detailed legislation stipulating how a council should work, there is less discretion.

[2] Boundary organizations (as we see education councils) can be situated between the worlds of science, policy making and society. They are 'matchmakers'.

[3] Principal-agent theory holds that organizational relations may be understood as a series of delegations of authority from principals to agents. If we see the council as the 'agent', we say that this agent can have up to three principals: member organizations (if members are representatives); government; parliament. They all provide the agent with a certain authority and with a certain task. The agent is also to a certain extent accountable to and dependent on the principals.

3. Adopt **different advisory tracks.** These different tracks can have different rules on membership, mandate, decision making rules etc.

4. Develop strategies to **train staff and leaders as boundary workers.** Boundary workers need communication skills, skills in policy analysis, journalistic skills. They have to be able to understand the perspectives, sensitivities and constraints of different principals in the policy environment, and to have receptive antennae for political and organizational behaviour.

➢ Concerning the dissemination of the outcomes

5. Adopt conscious and **diversified dissemination strategies** in order to communicate with different principals and raise the utility of the products.

6. **Customize information to the different principals** and audiences. Translate expert opinion or academic research into information accessible to societal representatives; vice-versa, translate the needs of various societal actors into relevant information for academic experts. Narrow the gap between the experts and the public. Turn academic research into practical points for policy intervention.

7. Engender with members and principals **different understandings of advisory success** in order to prevent frustration and to raise commitment. Longer term impact is no lesser success than affecting policy immediately. Education councils need feedback mechanisms after the advice is given, rather than a simple acceptance or rejection. Education councils should communicate and celebrate success, even if it is partial.

➢ Concerning the agenda

8. Efficiently **plan and time advisory processes** and products in annual and multi-annual work programmes. This allows the council to align with the government's policy cycle.

➢   Concerning external cooperation

9. Work together with similar structures in other countries in order to create a 'European common sense'. Learn from each other. **International cooperation** improves the efficiency of processes and products.

List of Participants

Šarūnas Bagdonas	Education Council, Lithuania
Simone Barthel	EUNEC president, Belgium
Soetkin Bauwens	Vlor, Belgium
Patrick Belpaire	ETDF (European Training and Development Federation)
Ana Maria Bettencourt	CNE president, Portugal
Carmel Borg	Malta
Jacques Bounameaux	IFAPME (Institut wallon de formation en alternance et des indépendants et petites et moyennes enterprises), Belgium
Marleen Brans	PMI Louvain, Belgium
Maria Emìlia Brederode	CNE, Portugal
Alain Bultot	Communauté française, Belgium
Maarten Coertjens	European Youth Forum
Sharon Cousins	SELB, Northern Ireland
Hugo Deckers	Vlor, Belgium
Muriel De Leeuw	CEF, Belgium
Ann Demeulemeester	Vlor president, Belgium
Tom Demeyer	Vlor, Belgium
Carine De Smet	EUNEC secretariat, Belgium
Mia Douterlungne	EUNEC general secretary, Belgium
Gina Ebner	EUCIS – LLL president
Mireille Falesse	CEF, Belgium
Antonio Frías del Val	CEE, Spain
Marie Anne Garnier	CEF, Belgium
Elena Hadjikakou	Education Council, Cyprus

Brigitte Haider	European Parents Organisation
Jana Hainsworth	Eurochild general secretary
Roos Herpelinck	Vlor, Belgium
Kaat Huylebroeck	Vlor, Belgium
Miroslaw Krzanik	AEGEE European Students Forum
Hanna Laakso	National Board of Education, Finland
Peter-Paul Knops-Gerrit	VLEVA, Liaison Agency Flanders Europe
Hanna Laakso	National Board of Education, Finland
Dominique Lamotte	CEF, Belgium
Kenneth Lasoen	Vlor, Belgium
Dominique Lemenu	CEF, Belgium
Domenico Lenarduzzi	European Commission, honorary director general
Krista Loogma	EEF, Estonia
Robert Loop	FOREM, Belgium
Jean-Pierre Malarme	CEF, Belgium
Maryse Menu	CEF, Belgium
Manuel Miguéns	CNE secretary general, Portugal
Jacques Perquy	Vlor, Belgium
José Pessanha	European Commission, DG EAC
Joseph Pirson	CEF, Belgium
Maari Põim	EEF, Estonia
Silke Ruebens	Vlor, Belgium
Emilija Sakadolskienė	Education Council vice-president, Lithuania
Pasi Sahlberg	University Helsinki and Oulo, Finland
Pascal Smet	Flemish Minister of Education, Youth, Equal Opportunities and Brussels
Tas Szebedy	Education Council vice-president, Hungary
Guy Selderslagh	CEF, Belgium

Angela Soufli	Education Council, Greece
Johannes Theiner	European Parents Organisation president
Elena Theodosiadou	Ministry of Education, Cyprus
Marc Thommès	CEF, Belgium
Louis Van Beneden	Former EUNEC president
Jan Van Damme	PMI Louvain, Belgium
Tony Van den Heurck	Vlor, Belgium
Jana Váňová	NTF, Czech Republic
Wim Vansteenkiste	Eurydice
Karine Van Thienen	Vlor, Belgium
Fons Van Wieringen	Onderwijsraad, Netherlands, president and former EUNEC president
Giedrė Vėsulaitė	Education Council, Lithuania
Jens Vermeersch	Vlor, Belgium
Noé Viedma	EUCIS-LLL
Erja Vitikka	National Board of Education, Finland
Christian Vulliez	HCE, France
Jacques Wilkin	CEF, Belgium

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