



EUNEC Year Book 2021

CONTEXT

Education and training are seen as key actors in the development of a knowledge society. And more recently, the role of education and training in strengthening a shared European identity is stressed. Therefore, both the EU and the member states put forward daring targets to energize the sectors of education and training making them more performing.

A SHORT HISTORY OF EUNEC

In order to give these innovation policies a broad societal support, governments mobilize the educational and social-economic stakeholders such as representatives of school boards, teacher trade unions, parent and student organizations and social partners to participate actively in the conception and the implementation of policies and activities in education and training.

Therefore most of the member states have set up national or regional formal institutions of consideration and consultation, bringing together all these stakeholders or part of them, in some cases together with experts, to formulate their recommendations.

Education councils have diverse statutes, but they all function as an advisory body towards governments on future education policies.

In 1999, some councils decided to work together on European educational subjects, and, to encourage a closer and more intense cooperation, the education councils created in 2000 EUNEC, a **European network of national and regional education councils**, with the support and the help of the European Commission.



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From 2008 until 2013, EUNEC was recognized and granted as European organisation acting at European level in the field of education and training under the Jean Monnet programme (DG EAC N° 28/07). Within this programme, EUNEC obtained two consecutive three year Framework Partnership agreements.

In 2014, EUNEC was granted under the Erasmus+ programme, Key Action 3 for civil society cooperation in the field of education and training. This grant allowed the network to continue its efforts to enhance cooperation on education and training in Europe and to aim for more sustainable results.

From 2015, EUNEC is no longer granted under Erasmus+, because of changes in the eligibility criteria. EUNEC continues its work and pursues its objectives, supported by member contributions.





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MISSION

EUNEC is convinced that all those involved in education (the European Commission, the governments of the Member States, the education councils, the stakeholders and all European citizens) can benefit from this European network where major evolutions in educational systems can be discussed thoroughly and prepared for a successful implementation.

EUNEC aims to discuss the findings of European policy documents in the field of education and training, to determine points of view 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 members and participants at national level. EUNEC has the objective that the councils should put the main international policy lines high on the national agenda.

EUNEC wants to work in two directions:

EUNEC wants to disseminate and discuss – at the national and at the European level - documents, texts, studies... that are launched by the European Commission within the framework of the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Bologna process, the Copenhagen process, Education and Training 2020 and the upcoming frameworks, mainly the European Education Area. With sound and coherent statements, the members of EUNEC want to influence the discussions and the decisions on the major European issues in education and training both on the European and on the national level.



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TARGET GROUPS

Through the members, education councils, EUNEC reaches stakeholders, experts and policy makers in the field of education and training in Europe.

EUNEC members are education councils. An education council must meet the following criteria (Statutes, Chapter II, art. 6.1):

- The council operates as a permanent body
- The council acts independently from any single interest through the presence of a range of members from different social groups, political affiliations and/or academic perspectives.
- The council has as principal goal to provide advice on educational and training policy.
- The advisory role is embedded in the policy making process at the level where the main competences on education and/or training policy are attributed.

The composition of the education councils guarantees the involvement of all the principal stakeholders in education in a region/country. This way, EUNEC wants to reach all stakeholders (policy makers, social partners, parents, students, teachers, providers...) in education throughout the European Union and beyond.



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EUNEC MEMBERS IN 2021

Members are national councils, or regional councils, such as in Belgium where education and initial training are exclusively regional matters.

Members of the Executive Committee and of the General Assembly

Those members are entitled to take part in all the activities of the network. They have a full responsibility in the network as described in part III and IV of the Statutes (competences of the general assembly and the executive committee).

FLEMISH COMMUNITY (BELGIUM): Vlaamse Onderwijsraad (VLOR)

FRENCH COMMUNITY (BELGIUM): Conseil de l'Education et de la Formation (CEF)

THE NETHERLANDS: Onderwijsraad

PORTUGAL: Conselho Nacional de Educação (CNE)

LITHUANIA: Lietovous svietimo taruba (LST), the Lithuanian Education Council

CYPRUS : Symvoulío Paideias, the Cyprus Education Council

SPAIN: Consejo Escolar del Estado (CEE) (from 17 October 2021)



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Members of the General Assembly

Those members are entitled to take part in the general assembly, in the seminars and conferences and other initiatives they are invited to by the executive committee. They receive information produced by EUNEC on European, international and national policy lines.

QUEBEC: Conseil Supérieur de l'Education

MOROCCO: Superior Council for Education, Training and Research

FRANCE: CNESCO (Centre National d'Etude des Systèmes Scolaires)

IRELAND: Teaching Council

MALTA: Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes

HUNGARY: Public Education Council

ESTONIA: Public Education Forum





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YEARLY SEMINAR POSTPONED DUE TO COVID 19 PANDEMIC

EUNEC had planned to organize a 'double' event in the Netherlands, hosted by the Dutch Education Council:

Seminar 'Are our education systems fit for the future?'

Topic:

- How can education systems be organized so that they can react in a flexible way to future developments?
- The governance and organization of education and of the education system.

Anniversary celebration

Objectives:

- Celebrate 20 years of EUNEC;
- Enhance the visibility of education councils;
- Demonstrate the added value of structured independent policy advice;
- Emphasize the importance of cooperation between education councils at EU/international level;
- Enhance the visibility of EUNEC towards organizations that are not (yet) part of the network.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this double event has been postponed until Spring 2022.



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PUBLICATION OF A READER 'EDUCATION COUNCILS IN EUROPE. GOING BEYOND THE TENSIONS'

The network decided to prepare a reader with contributions of EUNEC members on the role and functioning of education councils in Europe, and beyond.

The letter below, sent by EUNEC president, Mr Manuel Miguéns, explains the intention and invites member councils to contribute:

Dear colleagues

I am writing to you about our initiative to celebrate the EUNEC 20th anniversary.

Our network was founded in the year 2000 by a group of Education Councils that recognized the relevance and benefits of close collaboration and envisaged networking and partnership as the best approaches to identify and disseminate good practices helping education councils to fulfill their missions within a European context.

We have agreed in Paris that we would prepare a special publication, a book that will include a set of articles written by invited authors from each one of the countries that have an Education Council as a member of EUNEC.

It would be perfect if the articles reflect a perspective of the history, the role, the relevance and the future of Education Councils in the context of the policy-making processes, including the relationships with Parliament, Government, and civil society. In a way, demonstrating the relevance of structured and institutional



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consultation in the decision making processes concerning education policies.

Thus, I thank you in advance for all your efforts to make sure that your Council's paper and your country representation are included in that book commemorating the 20th anniversary of our network.

During the working year 2020, the reader has been prepared. The book (online and printed availability) was presented to the General Assembly in Spring 2021, and contains, following an introduction by EUNEC president, Manuel Miguéns and by EUNEC secretary general, Mia Douterlungne, the following articles, written by ten EUNEC member organizations:

1. Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth, Cyprus
'Reform of the Cyprus education system and the contributions of advisory bodies and stakeholders in the policy making process'
2. Flemish Education Council
'Participation from civil society for high-quality education'
3. CNESCO, France
'Cnesco: From scientific and participatory diagnosis to education policy support'
4. Teaching Council, Ireland
'A little more conversation, a lot more action: Consultation in education policy development in Ireland'
5. Education Council, Lithuania
'Understanding the role of education stakeholders in Lithuania'
6. Higher Council for Education, Training and Scientific Research, Morocco
'A road map for the reform of education in Morocco'



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7. Dutch Education Council
'Building connections'
8. National Education Council, Portugal
'The advisory role in education, in Portugal'
9. Conseil Supérieur de l'Education, Québec
'The Conseil Supérieur de l'Education du Québec: a governmental organization examining educational issues that has existed for more than 55 years'
10. State School Council, Spain
'The Spanish Case: an interview with the President of the State School Council'

Marleens Brans and Ellen Fobé (Public Management Institute, KULouvain) accepted to write an academic chapter, overviewing all contributions: 'Education Councils. Critical boundary actors bridging the worlds of policy, science, practice and society'





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EXCHANGE ON THE POSITIONS OF EDUCATION COUNCILS REGARDING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND RECOVERY

On 21 April 2021 EUNEC general assembly members gathered online in order to **exchange on the impact of the pandemic on education and the role of education councils**. The exchange was based on the results of an online consultation, organized in 2020. EUNEC took this initiative in order to gather insights from all the members, facing similar challenges during this global crisis, so that they can inspire and learn from each other.

Members discussed in two consecutive rounds of three parallel sessions on the following questions:

- First session: how did your national education system react to the crisis. Lessons learned?
- Second session: How did your council position itself during the crisis? Lessons learned?

After the parallel sessions, the rapporteurs presented for the whole general assembly a summary of the outcomes of the discussion in the three groups. The integrated [report](#), based on that presentation, is published at the website. The outcomes of the exchange are clustered around the following topics:

- Organization of education;
- Challenges for education during the crisis;
- Opportunities;
- Position of education councils: what can be the role of education councils in this crisis?



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On 15 November 2021, EUNEC General Assembly members had a fruitful online exchange on **how education councils can take up their role towards recovery after the pandemic.**

In order to prepare the exchange, the secretariat provided all members with a summary of the OECD-publication: [Ten Principles for Effective and Equitable Educational Recovery from COVID](#). EUNEC members discussed in two smaller groups, trying to answer two guiding questions:

- How is your national education system working on recovery?
- How did your council position itself in view of recovery?

The following highlights came out of the exchange:

School systems are catching up relatively well; schools are running more or less as before and the importance of keeping schools open is accepted in most countries, although sometimes with restrictions or strict protocols. Investments are being made, mainly in the fields of:

- Learning: many countries have changed some aspects of schooling and curriculum, or made a concrete plan for making up for learning losses;
- Mental health: some countries provide professional psychological help for teachers and students;
- Infrastructure: providing schools with the needed equipment is an ongoing process. Schools that were already used to using digital tools to some extent, adjusted more easily to the digital shift that was needed for distance learning.

Assessment of the current situation remains a challenge, but it is good not to put guilt on teachers and pupils for the learning losses. Some



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countries tried to make inventories of students that needed help most, for instance students in rural areas or with a migration background. In terms of the curriculum, more attention is paid to digital skills. Digital literacy has become a structural part of education in some curricula. In Portugal for instance, schools that focused on the autonomy of students concerning digitalisation, had less problems with the digital shift. This might be an interesting starting point for other countries to look at. Most Councils are focusing on strategic advice. Some Councils have been 'extremely influential' during the pandemic, although this is not the case everywhere. In some countries the advice of the Council is asked frequently, in other countries the communication between the Ministry and the Council was intensified. The fundamental right to education is stressed, education is promoted to be an essential service, such as health. The importance of education was made clear once again by the crisis and many countries tried to ensure students and parents were aware of this. In the general population, there is more appreciation for the teachers and the schools; the community is recognising the pivotal role of education. Not to be forgotten: the importance of teachers, and thus also of teacher education. Many countries have made efforts to provide more support for teachers. For instance, in Ireland, teacher learning was accentuated and teachers became teachers of their colleagues on the subject of technology, and in Lithuania, assistance packages have been provided to teachers, students and schools.

A [full report](#) of the exchange is available on the website.



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NETWORKING BETWEEN MEMBERS FOR SHARED ACTIVITIES

EUNEC members regularly work together by means of bilateral contacts or in subgroups on specific themes in the field of education and training, according to their own national agenda or to the European agenda. Executive committee meetings, general assembly meetings and seminars are excellent occasions to see which colleagues from other education councils could offer help or work together on specific themes.

In order to prepare a specific event or a specific document, the members of the executive committee decide to organize temporary working groups: A working group (Flemish Education Council, Portuguese Education Council, Dutch Education Council) has finalized the programme for the seminar on the theme 'Are our education systems fit for the future?' and the anniversary celebration.

The Flemish Education Council and the Dutch Education Council have close contacts between staff members on thematic issues, following first contact during two exchange meetings.

The invitation for the [transnational comparison conference](#) on governance of educational policies, and more specifically, on the issue of their implementation, organized by Cnesco (15-18 November 2021), has been forwarded to all members. Several EUNEC members representatives participated actively and shared material in their own organization.



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There is a [bilateral cooperation agreement](#) between the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation (Québec) and the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, de la formation et de la recherche du Maroc.

CNE closely works together with the CEE (Consejo Escolar del Estado, Spain) and has a bilateral agreement with the Higher Council for Education, Training and Scientific Research, Morocco.

MANAGEMENT OF THE NETWORK

Organization of the network

All the members of the organization are allowed to be represented in the **General Assembly**. The responsibilities of the General Assembly include the right to:

- amend the statutes;
- elect the President of the network;
- nominate and discharge the members of the Executive Committee
- determine the status of members and acceptance and exclusion of a member
- approve the budget and the annual account
- discuss and decide on matters concerning the operation, activities and working programme of the network;
- discuss and decide matters concerning the existence of the network;
- approve or amend the internal rules of procedure



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- dissolve the organisation;

In 2021, the General Assembly met on 21 April and on 15 October. The minutes of these meetings are published at www.eunec.eu (management section).

The **Executive Committee** is the board of the network. The executive committee has to prepare the proposals that are submitted to the General Assembly.

The Executive Committee must:

- implement the decisions of the General Assembly;
- announce the meetings of the General Assembly and the other network activities;
- approve new members
- appoint the auditor
- prepare the accounts after receiving the auditor's report
- decide on the budget
- take decisions in accordance with the statutes of the network, in accordance with the interests of the network or with the policy of the General Assembly;
- report to the General Assembly on its activities and its financial management
- nominate the general secretary
- decide on the annual fees

The executive committee is at the same time also the place of real exchanges and networking about the national and European priorities in



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the field of education, the place to discuss new European policy documents, the place where the state of affairs is presented.

Composition of the Executive Committee in 2021: Manuel Miguéns (president), Mia Douterlungne (general-secretary), Karin Westerbeek, Maria Emilia Brederode Rodrigues dos Santos, Carine De Smet, Manuel Dony, Eleni Hadjidakou, Saule Maciukaite-Zviniene.

In its meeting on 15 October, the General Assembly unanimously approved the application of the CEE (Spanish Education Council) to become member of the Executive Committee. This membership is to be formalized in the Belgian Law Gazette in 2022.

In 2021, the Executive Committee met on 29 March and on 27 September. The minutes of these meetings are published at www.eunec.eu (management section).

The **EUNEC secretariat** is composed by the President, the General Secretary, an expert and the secretary.

They coordinate the project and assume the daily management of the network; they keep the contact with the European institutions. They also represent the network in several European events organized in Brussels, where the secretariat is based.

In 2021, the presidency was taken up by the Portuguese Education Council; the General Secretariat and the secretariat are assumed by the Vlaamse Onderwijsraad (Belgium, Flemish Community)



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DAILY MANAGEMENT OF THE NETWORK

EUNEC activities are coordinated by the secretariat, based at the Flemish Education Council. This coordination includes

- the daily management of the network (accountancy, membership,...);
- communication with the target group and internal communication;
- networking;
- the organisation of statutory meetings.

The activities include:

- The redaction of a document with an overview of main international policy lines in education and training put at the disposal of the members (for information, agenda setting, ..);
- A regular update of the EUNEC website;
- Representation of the network at international working groups and events related to education and training by the members (Education Summit, presidency events, ..) and a report of this participation.
- The possibility of cooperation between member councils on specific subjects, following networking at EUNEC meetings;
- Contacts with partner organizations and meetings with representatives of the European Commission (invitation for our events, attendance of their events, exchanges, ..);
- Answers to relevant stakeholder consultations;
- Reporting of meetings.



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Annual Account EUNEC 1 January 2021 - 31 December 2021

earnings		23.166,13
	Membership fees	23.000,00
	Reimbursement Law Gazette	166,13
expenditure		18.759,61
	Hosting and support and restyling website	4.015,12
	Law Gazette publication costs	434,26
	EUNEC anniversary publication	12.409,92
	Auditor	1.900,31
balance		4.406,52

bank account balance 31/12/2020	35.358,75
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bank account balance 31/12/2021	39.765,27
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