

Report on the Informal meeting of European Education ministers

**28 - 29 March 2011
Budapest - Gödöllő**

1. Policy rationale and framework

2. Proceedings

3. lessons learnt, conclusions and possible outcomes

Rationale and policy framework at EU level

- Crisis: strong social consequences and ethical dimensions
 - Youth unemployment esp. the most vulnerables, risk of poverty and social exclusion, heightened social tensions and weaker social cohesion
 - OECD SOL project: Education is the most cost-effective options to improve some of the key measures of social progress
- Growing interest internationally to look at facets of well-being and social progress (health, civic engagement, happiness, etc)
 - ex.: French initiative – Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress –
 - Society is not as cohesive as it should be, citizens are not healthy as they deserve to be
 - Decline in indicators of social cohesion: voting, volunteering, interpersonal trust, high prevalence of obesity, depression, etc → quality of democratic societies and of life, raise public expenditure

Rationale and policy framework at EU level

- Implementation of the EU Recommendation on Key Competences
 - Social and civic competences
 - Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
- Education and Training 2020 Strategic Framework
 - **Objective 3.:** Promoting equity, social cohesion, active citizenship
Intercultural competences, democratic values and respect for fundamental rights and the environment, as well as combat all forms of discrimination, equipping all young people to interact positively with their peers from diverse backgrounds.
 - **Objective 4.:** Enhancing creativity and innovation including entrepreneurship
transversal key competences incl.: a sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, and cultural awareness + Broader learning communities
- European Year of Volunteering
 - Valuing civic participation – increasing solidarity and social cohesion (voluntary activities provide new skills and competences)

Rationale and policy framework at EU level

- EU Trio Presidency program
 - Explicit social dimension – how to enhance social benefits of education
 - ESP: Council Conclusion on the Social Dimension of Education and Training
 - BE: Council Conclusion on ESD
 - HU: ESL, ECEC, Informal ministerial meeting
- ICCS – International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (some correlations)
 - Self-beliefs (self-efficacy), attitudes toward various civic institutions and interest
 - Civic knowledge and engagement at school related to expected voting behavior
 - Widespread participation at school BUT not very common in wider community
 - Current participation in wider community is a positive predictor of expected active participation
 - Economic background not directly linked to expected participation
- EC/CRELL Civic competence composit indicator

	Input indicators for educational content	Input indicators for culture of education	Output indicators
Very relevant	Debating and writing skills	Classroom climate, teaching methods, assesment methods, opportunities to participate in and have influence on schools, and to participate in the community through school	
Relevant			Political efficacy, trust, interest, tolerance, non-violence, rule of law, human rights
Somewhat relevant	Tolerance, non-violence, acknowledging the rule of law, human rigths, critical reading skills		

2. Proceedings: HU PRES goals: informal ministerial

- What value international and EU frameworks could add?
- Discussing – reconstruction of contents of active citizenship according to new emphasis
 - Economic capability/financial literacy, Entrepreneurship, Environmental sustainability, Social/community cohesion, Intercultural competence
- Sharing experiences – content: what, why; policy implementation: what how, by whom and contexts: how and where
- Identifying points of interests and convergence
- Serving a contribution for the forthcoming discussions and negotiations on the operational priorities of the E&T 2020 next cycle

Topics of the ministerial

- Morning session – ‘human capital’
 - Looking inside the competences required for students to be active and responsible citizens for the 21st century
 - content issues – what and why + policy practices
 - Key note delivered by Prof. David Kerr
 - Round table guided by PRES questions
- Afternoon session – ‘social capital’
 - context issues – how and where + policy practices + school bullying
 - 3 examples incl: FIN - KIVA
 - Round table guided by PRES questions

Status of education for citizenship- ICCS

- Civics and citizenship are priority in educational policy
- Different approaches to citizenship education including
 - teaching as specific subject
 - integration into other subjects
 - implementation as a cross-curricular theme
- Half of the EU MS's have a specific subject concerned with civic and citizenship education
- Broad range of topics in the curriculum, mainly human rights, understanding different cultures and ethnic groups, parliament and government systems, voting, etc. political and administrative institutions
- Aims of civic and citizenship education
- Most important aim according to teachers and principals:
 - development of knowledge and skills
- Not frequently indicated aims:
 - preparing for future political participation
 - development of active civic participation

3. Lessons learnt: Educating for Citizenship in Europe

- Civics & citizenship a policy priority in education
- Different approaches to citizenship education
- Approaches include:
 - teaching as a specific subject
 - integration into other subjects
 - implementation as a cross-curricular theme
- Dominant is to have a specific subject
- Importance of financial literacy, entrepreneurial education, MSs are active in these fields → It is not widespread to include them into the curriculum – more dominant to implement it in form of projects, simulation games/mini companies, internet and e-tools, partnerships with banks or companies. NGO's are active in this field

Lessons learnt

- Important knowledges, skills and competences: cognitive and non-cognitive skills
→ apply, contribute and develop knowledge that facilitate CSE
- Promoted through curricular and extra curricular activities → values, attitudes, beliefs and motivations that encourage CSE
 - emphasizing situated learning in which students learn democracy in action by engaging in democratic participation
 - open classroom climate in which students feel free to openly participate in classroom discussion
- Healthy, safe and open environment, school ethos and peer-effects matter most
 - KIVA project assessment:
 - Decreases in reinforcing the bully
 - Increases in empathy toward victimized peers & self-efficacy to support them
 - Increases in school liking, academic motivation and performance
 - Decreases in depression, anxiety, and negative peer perceptions
 - Among teachers, increased efficacy to reduce bullying
- BUT school cannot do it alone → local communities should provide opportunities for children to engage civic activities, volunteering

Some conclusions

- Children's cognitive, social and emotional skills should be developed early
- Broader understanding of citizenship:
 - designing civic environment (e.g. conflict resolution, social and economic entrepreneurship)
- Improve curricula: attention necessary to focus on civic learning, broadening from knowledge and related skills to participatory skills and strategies
- Pre-service and in-service teacher education, student parliaments/governments/councils, programs aiming at community participation (volunteering/service), internet and e-tools
- Ensure horizontal complementarities
 - Broader teacher and school instruments, mediation
 - Parents and local communities
- Promote policy coherence – holistic approach
 - horizontally: across sectors and all stakeholders – health, family, welfare, social
 - vertically: across levels of governance
 - dynamically: across different levels of education

Outcomes

- **EU cooperation adds value:** tools of the OMC especially exchange of best practices, expert group, support network, LLP, mobility programs (YOM, YIA), thematic year programs
- **Commission:** all aspects of active citizenship in an LLL perspective
 - Collection of best practices
 - Policy handbook
 - Stakeholder conference
 - Partnership with the Council of Europe (EDC program)
 - Extension of the mandate of the expert group on indicators for active citizenship
 - Commission Communication on Media Literacy (2012)



Thank you for your attention.