

## **P6\_TA(2009)0202**

### **Educating the children of migrants**

#### **European Parliament resolution of 2 April 2009 on educating the children of migrants (2008/2328(INI))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to Articles 149 and 150 of the EC Treaty,
- having regard to Article 14 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
- having regard to the Commission Green Paper of 3 July 2008 entitled Migration and mobility: challenges and opportunities for EU education systems (COM(2008)0423),
- having regard to the Council Directive 77/486/EEC of 25 July 1977 on the education of the children of migrant workers<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to the Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to the Presidency Conclusions of the Lisbon European Council of 23 and 24 March 2000,
- having regard to the Presidency Conclusions of the European Council of 13 and 14 March 2008,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 October 2005 on integrating immigrants in Europe through schools and multilingual education<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 27 September 2007 on efficiency and equity in European education and training systems<sup>4</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 16 January 2008 on adult learning: it is never too late to learn<sup>5</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 23 September 2008 on improving the quality of teacher education<sup>6</sup>,
- having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee of 25 February 2009 on the Commission Green Paper - Migration and mobility: challenges and opportunities for EU education systems,

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 199, 6.8.1977, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 180, 19.7.2000, p.22.

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 233 E, 28.9.2006, p.121.

<sup>4</sup> OJ C 219 E, 28.8.2008, p.300.

<sup>5</sup> OJ C 41 E, 19.2.2009, p. 46.

<sup>6</sup> Texts adopted, P6\_TA(2008)0422.

- having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Culture and Education (A6-0125/2009),
- A. whereas the European Council of 13-14 March 2008 called on Member States to improve the achievement levels of learners with a migrant background,
  - B. whereas the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 provided the right moment to launch the debate on the challenges and opportunities for EU education systems,
  - C. whereas migration within the Union and immigration into the Union has increased over the last decades, changing in many places the composition of schools,
  - D. whereas cultural differences frequently hamper understanding and dialogue between pupils and between pupils and teachers,
  - E. whereas clear evidence exists that the educational attainment of migrant children is considerably lower than that of non-migrant children; and whereas a large number of children in schools from a migrant background are in precarious socio-economic situation,
  - F. whereas the fact that migrant children's talents often are not discovered and remain unused entails social, cultural and economic disadvantages for society as a whole,
  - G. whereas school education up to a certain age is a basic right as well as an obligation for children, regardless of their background, as enshrined in Article 14 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, requiring also compliance with national education laws,
  - H. whereas the content and organisation of education and training are national competences and whereas it is at national or regional level that strategies need to be defined and implemented,
  - I. whereas migration can enrich schools culturally and educationally, but can, in the absence of suitable accompanying measures, lead to serious divergences,
  - J. whereas Member States must reform their national education and training systems; whereas they need to work together to develop the policy instruments necessary to manage the consequences of migration,
  - K. whereas the increasing diversity of the school population, arising from increased migration, is a challenge for the teaching profession, which does not receive training in how to deal adequately with this new form of classroom diversity,
1. Welcomes the abovementioned Commission Green Paper of 3 July 2008;
  2. Believes that the Commission is right to address the consequences for Member States' educational systems not only of migration within the Union but also of immigration into the Union;
  3. Stresses that workers within the Union may be less willing to work abroad if there is a risk that their children will suffer educationally, and that satisfactory education for migrant children is related to freedom of movement of workers;

4. Is of the opinion that greater efforts at EU level are necessary as all Member States face similar challenges in this respect; recalls that the percentage of migrant children in school is likely to rise in the future;
5. Recalls that the establishment of integrated support centres for legal immigrants are of great importance as they allow immigrants to address effectively all integration obstacles (e.g. work-related subjects, education, health, etc) with the assistance of a professional;
6. Encourages the development in the Member States of a model of partnership between schools and communities enabling children whose parents are working abroad to benefit from programmes of assistance, support and counselling from the community;
7. Insists that migrant children and adults must have and be willing to take the opportunity to learn the languages of the host country if they are to integrate fully in it;
8. Calls on the Member State governments to ensure education for the children of legal migrants, including the teaching of the official languages of the host country and the promotion of their native languages and cultures;
9. Believes it is essential that the parents, and especially the mothers, of migrant children should be involved in the programmes for teaching the official languages of the host country, to ensure that the children are not separated from society and to help them integrate at school;
10. Believes that preserving and promoting multilingualism must be a part of every school curriculum; insists that language-learning should be encouraged from pre-school age in order to promote the inclusion of migrants; believes, however, that the place given to teaching in the mother tongue within the curriculum and the organisation thereof must specifically be left to the Member States;
11. Calls, in respect of children accompanying parents who move to another Member State for employment, for difficulties, in terms of registering in school at a level corresponding to that at which they had been studying in their Member State of origin, to be tackled;
12. Insists on the importance for families and other members of the local community to be directly involved as social integration is the responsibility of the entire society not only of schools; underlines the fact that bodies providing social advice for immigrants must be encouraged to cooperate in providing better information on education and vocational training in the context of the labour market of the host country;
13. Recognises that civil society plays an important role in supporting migrants and that it can, in parallel to the official education system, make a vital contribution in areas such as teaching the host country's language;
14. Stresses the need to integrate migrants and social categories such as Roma people, in society; emphasises that integration must be based on the principles of equal opportunities in education, ensuring equal access to quality education; rejects any solutions - whether temporary or permanent - that are based on, or lead to, segregation and poor education;
15. Underlines the importance of developing inter-cultural communication skills of children, both migrants and those of host countries, and believes that the ability to communicate one's

own culture and understand the culture and values of others shall constitute a central element of the key competence: 'cultural awareness and expression';

16. Suggests that additional financial and administrative support for language courses should be provided to legal migrants, by trained staff who also understand the mother tongue of the migrants;
17. Insists on the importance of migrant children learning their mother tongue and the languages of their country of residence as well as acquiring reading and writing skills from pre-school age;
18. Recognises the importance of introducing into school curricula classes taught to migrants in their native language so as to ensure the preservation of their cultural heritage;
19. Stresses the importance of sport in education and training and its important role for the integration and social inclusion of those from less privileged backgrounds; recommends that the social policy of the Member States take full account of the important integrative role of sport for migrant populations;
20. Stresses the need to involve young migrants in a wide range of extracurricular activities, since this is an excellent means of social integration;
21. Underlines that the earlier and the more successfully migrant children and young people are integrated into schools the better they will do at school, in further education, and in the labour market; strongly believes that early pre-primary education considerably reinforces such prospects and therefore calls on the Member States to strengthen the participation of migrants in pre-primary education;
22. Recommends that the Member States avoid creating ghetto-type schools or special classes for migrant children, and that they promote an inclusive educational policy under which children are allocated to classes on the basis of educational level and individual needs;
23. Considers that in schools attended by migrant children the curriculum should pay much more attention to their needs, and that the teachers should be trained in intercultural skills to enable them to deal as effectively as possible with diversity in the school;
24. Insists that adult education for migrants can promote integration of both adult migrants and their children and stresses therefore the need to strongly develop lifelong learning for migrant parents;
25. Is concerned about the high level of early school leaving of the migrant children and believes that efforts shall be made to ensure the completion of the courses by the migrant children;
26. Stresses that a high-quality education system must be open to everyone;
27. Is convinced that measures to improve the education of migrant children benefit society as a whole;
28. Believes that teacher education should be interdisciplinary and should equip teachers for diversity, and multicultural and multilingual education approaches;

29. Favours mobility schemes under which teachers are recruited from the country of origin so as to facilitate migrant children's contact with the culture and civilisation of their country of origin;
30. Stresses that the quality of teacher education should be focussed in terms of teachers' missions;
31. Underlines in this particular context the importance of the mobility of teachers as an integral part of teacher education programmes; considers that teachers should have the opportunity to spend one or two semesters at host universities abroad;
32. Believes that schools need immigrant teachers as they offer an important experience to their colleagues, represent the success of social integration and could serve as role models for children in difficulty;
33. Underlines the importance of special training for teachers that explicitly addresses the special situation of the children of migrants, the necessity of integrating them successfully in mainstream school education systems, and the need to improve their level of educational attainment;
34. Emphasises the need for counselling services to help migrant children and young people deal with culture shock and adapt to the host society;
35. Proposes that individual Member States develop educational programmes aimed at improving awareness of human rights issues, with the stress on equality, inclusion and personal freedom, so as to avoid the xenophobia and segregation which might appear inevitable where migrants are concerned and which can spread alarmingly fast;
36. Insists that all migrants and non-migrants should have the same equal treatment; believes that school institutions and individual teachers should regard diversity as a normal situation, treat each individual with respect, and give migrants the support they need;
37. Appreciates the contribution of non-formal education to providing young migrants with valuable skills which are complementary to the ones acquired in schools and calls upon schools to cooperate more intensively with providers of non-formal education such as youth organisations;
38. Reiterates that discrimination on the grounds of race and ethnicity in the field of education is prohibited by Directive 2000/43/EC, and calls for discrimination on any grounds, including nationality and residence status to be outlawed in the field of education;
39. Recognises that, the current provisions of Directive 77/486/EEC do not correspond to the new social reality of the Union; strongly supports the consultation process launched by the Commission;
40. Emphasises that diversity in schools should be promoted and that special attention and support should be given to the most vulnerable migrant groups, including migrant girls;
41. Believes that the Directive 77/486/EEC must be amended and should cover the education of children who are nationals of non-Member States or children whose parents are non-nationals of Member States;

42. Stresses the importance of the existing EU legislation guaranteeing the educational rights of third-country students, such as Directive 2004/38/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States<sup>1</sup> and Council Directive 2003/109/EC of 25 November 2003 concerning the status of third-country nationals who are long-term residents<sup>2</sup>; calls on the Commission to undertake ongoing monitoring of all measures taken in the Member States tending to curtail or abolish the rights acquired;
43. Calls for schools with a high proportion of immigrant children to receive the necessary staff and facilities to cope with the challenge of diverse classes and to enable them to provide good teaching; requests the Commission and the Council to launch a dialogue amongst Member States in the framework of the open method of coordination to exchange best practices and to develop a common agenda to address the shortcomings in the education of immigrants;
44. Calls on the Commission to report regularly on the progress made in the integration of migrant children in the school system of the Member States;
45. Considers that large towns and cities must be given, and must make use of, the freedom to coordinate policy designed to promote the integration of migrant children with policies and strategies regarding housing, (child)care, the employment market, health and welfare, areas which all have a proven impact on the academic results of migrant children and their successful integration within society;
46. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 158, 30.4.2004, p. 77.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 16, 23.1.2004, p. 44.