

“Bilateral and Multilateral Cooperation in Achieving Educational Goals”.

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Sofia, Bulgaria, November 28-30, 2002.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all I would like to thank the organizers of the conference for inviting me to participate in it. This is the continuation of the Dakar 2000 World Congress of UNESCO where the program “*Education for All*” was adopted. I was interested in participating in this meeting because I also participated in the Dakar meeting (in fact I was the only person from Greece or Cyprus that attended that meeting). I represented the European Network of National Councils of Education, which is something that I will come back to, a little later. I would like to congratulate the organizers and UNESCO for taking the initiative to organize such a meeting. I consider the Education for All initiative of UNESCO as one of the most important initiatives that have been taken at an international level in education.

The Dakar conference was a very interesting experience for me. Although I have been in many international meetings over the years I found the Dakar meeting very illuminating because I had the chance to realize how important and significant the education problems are in many countries of the world. I also came to the conclusion that, unless these problems are dealt with, a better world would be impossible to built.

I was a member of the educational committee of the OECD that conceived the idea of developing indicators for education, something very useful for monitoring the progress of education in different countries. The UNESCO initiative expands these ideas and also covers a wider area of countries and subjects. As many studies indicate equality in education is becoming more and more like a dream. A more realistic goal would be equal opportunities, which is a goal we have not yet developed the necessary policies to attain. The UNESCO initiative is an important step in this direction. As I realized

in the Dakar meeting, for such a goal to have any chance, it is necessary that the debts of the Third World Countries are forfeited. It would be impossible for these countries to finance education in the way it should be financed for their young people to have something to hope for in life, unless this happens. As a Professor of Probability and Statistics, I should emphasize that developing indicators for education is an important step in understanding what is happening. One may argue that such indicators have been developed by many different international organizations like the OECD, the World Bank etc. UNESCO, in cooperation with Statistics – Canada, have the credentials to develop these ideas further and expand them to cover all the countries of the world. One more point that I would like to make as a professional in this field is that great emphasis should be placed on the quality and reliability of the data collected because it would be great disappointment to develop policies that are based on wrong information.

No one denies these days that fundamental changes are necessary in the way that education is offered all over the world in order that it becomes more efficient and productive. For this to happen it is necessary that society, in all its expressions, participates in the debate on education. It isn't only the governments or the teachers that should play a role in the development of educational policies. All the partners in society have something to say and they should be heard of, and listened to. Any changes in education should be the result of a consensus in the society. The need for this approach was understood by the ministers of education of the European Union and in 1994 they put forward the idea of promoting such an involvement of the social partners in education. As a result of this policy, representatives of EU countries that had National Councils for Education met in Tomar Portugal and established the network of National Councils of Education. Many European Countries have councils where the social partners in education participate and discuss relevant problems. It was stressed at that meeting that one quarter of the population in Europe, are under 25 years of age and it is important to discuss policies related to their education. The Tomar declaration is as follows:

**Education Councils and Educational Partnership
STATEMENT
Tomar 23-24 May 1997**

Successful projects, scientific research, technical documents and political statements are nowadays unanimous in recognition and conviction that the contribution of economic, social, pedagogical and cultural partners is indispensable not only for analyzing and understanding problems of

educational policy, but also for the effective execution and for the development of adopted solutions.

In some countries, social partners organized themselves in institutions that, although with different geographic frame, changeable competency and variable statute, have in common the characteristic of showing themselves as educational partners. These social-educational partners are in effect Educational Councils at local, regional or national levels.

The International Conference “Educational Partnership against Social Exclusion”, assembled at Tomar (Portugal) on the 23rd and 24th May 1997, gathered representatives of some Educational Councils as well as social-educational partnership projects of European Union countries.

The Educational Councils at the Conference propose to implement a European network with the following aims:

- to exchange information and experiences;
- to evaluate their initiatives and projects;
- to collaborate in the elaboration of proposals and recommendations;
- to become active on the definition of educational policies at European level concerning all our countries;

The Educational Councils at the conference constitute themselves as a contact group in order

- to promote the communication with Educational Council or equivalent in each country of European Union that were not present at Tomar;
- to meet again during this year 1997 in order to intensify the relationship within the network and to set out action proposals.

Tomar 24th May 1997

Conselho Nacional de Educacao - Portugal

Consiglio Nazionale della Pubblica Istruzione - Italy

National Council of Education - Greece

Conseil Superieur de l'Education - Luxembourg

Conseil de l'Education et de la Formation - Belgium

Vlaamse Onderwijsraad - Belgium

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment - Ireland

As a continuation of the Tomar meeting another meeting, took place in Lisbon in 2000 to give this network a formal structure.

As Professor Wielemans of the University of Leuven, Belgium pointed out in a very interesting study at the time of the meeting, the following Councils of social participation were functioning in Europe.

1. AUSTRIA

- 1.1 National councils
 - Schulreformkommission (Federal Council for Educational Innovation)
 - Bundesschulervertretung (Federal Council for Pupils Representatives)
 - Elternbeirat (Federal Council for Parent)
 - Bundesberufsausbildungsbeirat (Federal Council for Professional Training)
- 1.2 Regional councils
 - Kollegien of the Landesschulrate (Associations of Provincial Councils)
 - Landessschulervertretung (Provincial Council for Pupils Representatives)
 - Landesberufsausbildungsbeirat (Provincial Council for Professional Training)
2. BELGIUM
 - 2.1. French Community
 - Conseil de l'Education et de la Formation
 - 2.2. German speaking Community
 - Education councils do not exist
 - 2.3. Flemish Community
 - Vlaamse Onderwijsraad (Flemish Education Council)
3. DENMARK
 - 3.1. National councils
 - Folkeskole-council (Primary Education and Lower Secondary Education)
 - Erhvervsuddannelse-council (Professional Education and Training)
 - Tekniker-council (Technical Education)
 - Uddannelse-council (Higher Education)
 - 3.2. Regional councils do not exist
4. FINLAND
 - 4.1 National councils
 - Koulutustoimikunnat (Training Committees)
 - Aikuiskoulutusneuvosto (Adult Education)
 - Opetuksen, tutkimuksen ja kulttuurin tietoyhteiskuntaneuvottelukunta (Information Society and Education, Research and Culture)
 - 4.2 Regional councils do not exist
5. FRANCE

- 5.1. National councils
 - Conseil suprieur de l'Education - CSE
 - Conseil national de l'Enseignement superieur de la Recherche - CNESER
 - Conseil national des Programmes - CNP
- 5.2. Regional councils do not exist
- 6. GERMANY
 - 6.1. National (federal) councils
 - Wissenschaftsrat - WR (Council for Sciences)
 - Hochschulrektorenkonferenz - HRK (Conference for Rectors of Higher Education)
 - 6.2. Lander-councils
 - Landeschulbeirat (Provincial Education Council)
- 7. GREECE
 - 7.1. National councils
 - Ethniko Symvoulio Pedias - ESYF (National Council of Education)
 - Symvoulio Anotatis Pedias - SAP (Council University Education)
 - National Academy Arts and Natural Sciences
 - Symvoulio Technologikis Ekpedefsis - STE (Council of Technological Education)
 - Institutoto Technologikis Ekpedefsis - ITE (Institute of Technological Education)
 - 7.2. Regional councils
 - Normachiaki Eparchiaki Epitropi Pedias (Prefectural Education Council)
 - Periferiako Symvoulio Technologikis Ekpedefsis (PSTE) (Regional Council of Technological Education)
- 8. IRELAND
 - 8.1. National councils
 - National Council for Curriculum and Assessment -NCCA
 - Higher Education Authority - HEA
 - Irish National Certification Authority - TEATAS
 - 8.2. Regional councils do not exist
- 9. ITALY
 - 9.1. National councils
 - Consiglio Nazionale della Pubblica Istruzione (National Council for Public Education)
 - Consiglio Universitario Nazionale (National Council for Universities)

- 9.2. Regional councils
 - Consiglio scolastico provinciale (Provincial School Council)
 - Consiglio scolastico distrettuale (District School Council)
- 10. LUXEMBOURG
 - 10.1. National councils
 - Conseil superieur de l'Education Nationale
 - Commissions des Programmes
 - Commission de coordination de l'enseignement secondaire technique
 - Commission de coordination de la formation professionnelle continue
 - 10.2 Regional councils do not exist
- 11. NETHERLANDS
 - 11.1. National councils
 - Onderwijsraad - OR (National Advice Council)
 - Overlegraden (Councils for Negotiation)
 - 11.2. Regional councils do not exist
- 12. PORTUGAL
 - 12.1. National councils
 - Conselho Nacional de Educacao (National Education Council)
 - Conselho coordenador do Ensino Particular e Cooperativo (Coordinating Council for Privat and Co-operative Education)
 - Conselho para a Coopearacao Ensino Superior-Empresa (Council for Co-operation between Higher Education and Industry)
 - Conselho Nacional para a Accao Social no Ensino Superior (national Council for Social Welfare in Higher Education)
 - 12.2. Regional councils do not exist
- 13. SPAIN
 - 13.1. National councils
 - Consejo Escolar del Estado (State Education Council)
 - Consejo General de Formacion Professional (General Council for Professional Education)
 - Consejo de Universidades (Council of Universities)
 - 13.2 Regional councils
 - Consejo Escolar de la Communisad Autonoma (School Council of the Autonomous Community)
- 14. UNITED KINGDOM
 - 14.1. England, Wales and Northern Ireland
 - 1) National councils
 - Qualifications and Curriculum Authority - (QCA)

- 2) Regional councils do not exist
- 14.2. Scotland
 - 1) National councils
 - Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum (SCCC)
 - General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)
 - Scottish Community Education Council (SCEC)
 - Scottish Council for Educational Technology (SCET)
 - Scottish Council for Research in Education (SCRE)
 - Scottish Further Education Unit (SFEU)
 - Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC)
 - Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) after merging with the Scottish Vocational Education Council (SCOTVEC) and the Scottish Examination Board (SEB)
 - 2) Regional councils do not exist
- 15. SWEDEN
 - 15.1. National councils do not exist
 - 15.2. Regional councils do not exist

At the Lisbon meeting, the first executive committee of the network was elected with a president (from Portugal) and two vice-presidents (from Greece and Belgium). Also, the statutes of the network was unanimously adopted and are as follows:

EUROPEAN CONFERENCE OF NATIONAL COUNCILS OF
EDUCATION
STATUTES

Approved by the Constituent Assembly, 18th March 2000

INTRODUCTION

Education and training today draw on the efforts and commitment of several groups and sectors of social, cultural and economic life. Their range of action is every day moving beyond the frontiers of school and the traditional education system. Many of the actors involved in education-individuals, groups, and professional, cultural, economic and national or regional institutions - take an active part in designing, planning and implementing education and training policies and activities.

In the European countries there has, in recent years, been wider public acknowledgement of these social partners and a proliferation of formal consultative and advisory bodies both nationally and at European Union level. Nearly every Member State has its national and regional education

councils, with varying terms of reference, on which sit representatives or experts with a varying background, to provide advice and to prepare consultation bases and prospective studies on education and training policy issues.

In the wake of a year long survey and a report on national councils throughout the EU, and in the light of the interest in stepping up co-operation, the organisations involved now create a European network of national and regional education councils as set out in the statutes below.

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

I. TITLE, SEAT, AIMS, DURATION

Article 1 - TITLE

An international association called the "Standing Conference of National/Regional Educational Councils in the European Union" is hereby established.

Article 2 - SEAT

The seat of the association shall be established in the country where the secretariat of the association is situated.

Article 3 - AIMS

The aims of the association are to provide its members with a framework designed to :

- exchange experience;
- keep abreast of developments in education;
- make co-operation between the education councils easier;
- examine the ways and means of enhancing the performance of their tasks;
- act as a talking partner with other supra-national organisations and bodies involved in the field of education within a European context;
- Co-operate with non-governmental organisations.

Article 4 - DURATION

The association shall be established for an unlimited duration. It may be dissolved by decision of the General Assembly.

II. MEMBERS

Article 5 - STATUS OF THE ASSOCIATION'S MEMBERS

The Standing Conference of National/Regional Education Councils of the European Union shall be made up of national/regional education councils.

An education council must meet the following criteria:

- be composed of several partners from the educational community and/or experts;
- serve as a forum for consultation;
- acts by parliament and/or government order;
- operate at the level at which education policy is shaped;
- fulfil *inter alia* an advisory role in relation to the minister responsible for education;
- it must be a council with competency over the whole of the education system (whether higher education is included or not) or, at least, a council linked to one or more levels of education.

Organisations that fulfil the same objectives as those of the education councils in other countries may be admitted as full members.

Article 6 - MEMBERSHIP

The association shall have three categories of members:

- 6.1 Full members with voting rights are the national/regional education councils, as defined in Article 5, which have applied for membership having submitted notification of the appointment of their representative(s) to the Conference and who have paid their fee for the current year.
- 6.2 Associate members without right of vote are national/regional education councils of countries outside the EU associated with or part of the education programmes of the European Union.
- 6.3 Observers without right of vote are supra-national organisations and bodies which have responsibilities in the field of education, including the representative of the European Commission, and representatives of the Member States of the European Union which have no council meeting the criteria set out in Article 5.

Article 7 - ADMISSION, EXCLUSION

- 7.1 The admission of new members shall be subordinated to their approval by the General Assembly.
- 7.2 The exclusion of a member shall be a matter for the General Assembly alone to decide. The assembly shall take its decision on the basis of a two-thirds majority of the votes present or represented, after hearing the member concerned or asking them to provide explanations.

7.3 The members shall be free to withdraw at any time from the association by written notification to the executive committee.

7.4 Members who no longer meet the criteria mentioned sub art.5, shall be excluded from the association.

III. BODIES OF THE STANDING CONFERENCE

III.1 The General Assembly

Article 8 - COMPOSITION

The General Assembly is the supreme body of the association to which the members belong.

The President shall represent each member in the General Assembly and/or a person so empowered by the Council.

The Executive Committee may invite other persons or experts to take part in an assembly meeting, depending on the topics discussed.

Article 9 - RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of the General Assembly shall include the right to:

- discuss and decide on matters concerning the operation, activities and working programme of the association;
- approve new members;
- elect the President and the Vice-Presidents of the Standing Conference;
- appoint the auditor;
- discuss and decide matters concerning the existence of the association;
- determine the amount of the annual subscription, the subscription period and the method of payment upon the proposals of the Executive Committee;
- amend the terms of reference;
- approve or amend the internal rules or procedure upon the proposal of the Executive Committee;
- approve the accounts after receiving the auditor's report.

Article 10 - CALLING OF MEETINGS

The General Assembly shall meet once yearly.

Extraordinary meetings of the General Assembly may be convened by the President of the Standing Conference on the basis of a decision by the Executive Committee, or when at least one third of the full members so request. The notice and agenda for an extraordinary meeting shall be sent to the members at least three months beforehand.

The terms of reference may be amended and the Standing Conference dissolved only by an extraordinary meeting of the Assembly. In the event of the association being dissolved, the assets remaining after liabilities have been cleared shall be passed on to an association or body whose activity is closest to the aims underlying the association.

Article 11 - VOTING DURING THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The President of the association shall chair the General Assembly. The quorum is reached when at least one third of the full members are present. Decisions shall be taken by simple majority voting. Decisions concerning amendments to the terms of reference or the dissolution of the association require a two-thirds majority of the members' votes.

Decisions may not be taken on matters, which are not included on the agenda sent with the notice of meeting. In the event of the votes on both sides being equal in number, the person chairing the meeting shall have the casting vote.

Each member of council has the right to vote. At the decision of the General Assembly, several councils of the same member-state of the European Union may have the right to vote providing the Constitution of these countries has entrusted full competency for education to regional structures.

Three councils at the most per Member State have the right to vote.

III.2 Executive Committee

Article 12 - COMPOSITION

The Executive Committee shall be composed of three members, each from different member states of the EU, the President and two Vice- Presidents. The representatives of the councils in the member states which have the presidency during the year in which this General Assembly is held may be part of the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee determines where the Secretariat is located.

Article 13 - RESPONSIBILITIES

The Executive Committee must:

- implement the decisions of the General Assembly;
- announce the meetings of the General Assembly and the other Conference activities;
- make a proposal on the budget and annual subscription of members;
- in exceptional circumstances, take decisions in cases of emergency, and at all times in accordance with the terms of reference of the Conference, in

accordance with the interests of the association or with the policy of the General Assembly.

- report to the General Assembly on its activities and its financial management.

IV. THE PRESIDENCY

Article 14 - PRESIDENCY

The President and the Vice-Presidents of the Association shall be elected by the General Assembly from the presidents of the member councils or other persons empowered by these same councils.

The President and the Vice-Presidents shall have a two-year term of office which may be renewed once by the General Assembly. When a person loses the mandate conferred by their council, that same person may end the mandate with the respective council, if the latter gives consent.

The President represents the Conference and chairs the General Assembly and the Executive Committee.

In the absence of the President, the longest standing Vice-President replaces him.

V. FUNDING THE STANDING CONFERENCE

Article 15 - RESOURCES

The association's resources consist of:

- annual subscriptions from full members;
- any direct or indirect support from member organisations (organisation of meetings, hosting of events instigated by the General Assembly);
- subsidies linked to the work of the association;
- fees, royalties and generally any income linked with the association's activity.

The General subscription Assembly establishes each year the amount of the annual subscription.

Article 16 - AUDITING

An auditor appointed each year by the General Assembly among its members, from a council not represented in the Executive Committee, audits the accounts. Once audited, the accounts are submitted for the approval of the General Assembly.

VI. RANGE OF ACTIVITIES

Article 17

In order to fulfil its aims, the association will pursue action to:

- organise studies and/or working parties on issues of special interest to the Conference;
- promote exchanges between members of the association or their representatives and between their counterparts in other countries, as well as with specialists in the field;
- disseminate studies and documents, which come under these activities,

VII. RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF MEMBERS, INTERNAL RULES OF PROCEDURE

Article 18 - RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF MEMBERS

The members of the association:

- shall take part in the work and activities planned by the General Assembly;
- shall contribute to attaining the objectives set and to implementing the decisions of the General Assembly;
- shall pay their annual subscriptions within the specified period;
- shall fulfil the tasks for which they were elected;
- have the right to include items on the agenda of the General Assembly.

By decision of the General Assembly, the rights of members who have not paid their annual subscription will be suspended.

Article 19 - INTERNAL RULES OF PROCEDURE

The General Assembly shall decide on the drafting of internal rules of procedure.

Article 20 - PROVISIONAL PROVISIONS

The members of the Executive Committee are elected at the Constituent Assembly and their mandate to set up the network expires at the General Assembly.

Article 21 - ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS

All matters, which are not covered by the statutes, must be decided by the General Assembly.

Article 22 - COMING INTO FORCE OF THE STATUTES

These statutes come into the General Assembly, on force on the date on which they are approved by 18 March 2000.

Article 23 - REFERENCE VERSION

In the case of litigation or opposed interpretations, the French version must be followed.

Lisbon, 18th March 2000

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I believe that it is necessary that all countries of the world have such fora in order that changes in education are discussed by the social partners and are effectively implemented. At the same time, the ministers of education and the governments in general can be helped by the existence of such councils because they allow the social partners in education to exchange views and ideas on proposed educational policies.

In closing, I would like to share with you my firm belief that social participation and social cohesion is one of the most important elements in achieving the educational goals because democracy is not just a way of government. Democracy is a way of life.

Thank you.