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**GREEN PAPER**  
**ON THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION**  
**OF EDUCATION**

**(presented by the Commission)**

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### INTRODUCTION

1. This Green Paper on "The European dimension of education" is intended to provide the basis for a consideration of the possible future directions of action at Community level in the field of education. Indeed, the Treaty establishing the European Community (referred to as "the Treaty" from now on) - as modified by the Treaty on European Union - introduces, in Article 126, **new competences for the Community in the field of education.**
2. For the first time, a legal framework exists which allows the Community to propose cooperative actions in the area of education, and in particular in school-level education. This would not rule out the use of other provisions of the Treaty, especially Article 127, where actions were appropriate to its subject of vocational training.

However, before concrete proposals are made for action to implement the objectives set out in the Article referred to above, it is important to take time for preliminary consideration of the aims and the means which would enable the Community to contribute "to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of Member States for the content of teaching and the organization of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity"<sup>1</sup>.

3. Such consideration should take place within a much wider context featuring the completion of the Single Market and its impact on the area of education and training, as well as changes in the need for human resources in the light of social and technological changes. It should include the contributions to education of sandwich courses and company-based training, which enable young people to have a better understanding of their socio-economic environment and so, in due course, to be better equipped to participate both as citizens and as workers.

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<sup>1</sup> Treaty on European Union, Chapter 3, Article 126, Paragraph 1.

4. As the organisation and the content of teaching are matters entirely for Member States, it is for them to take measures to promote the development of quality in education. **For this reason this Green Paper invites all those involved in education to concentrate their thoughts on the appropriate means of accomplishing this, while also asking them to identify areas for complementary and subsidiary Community action.**

Consideration of this question will also be important in the context of the enlargement of the Community, especially for the EFTA countries.

5. In the new context afforded by the Single Market, education has as one of its aims the preparation of young people to exercise their responsibilities in a wider social and economic area. It is in this perspective that the development of a European dimension of education must be seen as an important factor in the adjustment of the educational process to the new economic, social and cultural environment.

Indeed, the improvement of linguistic competence, the mutual understanding of the practices and cultures of other Member States, and even the ability to work with those of other nationalities or in another setting, are among the most important factors which help young people to become integrated into society and to accept more readily their responsibilities as European citizens. At the same time, the new possibilities available in the context of building the European Community, in particular the greater range of educational opportunities, are a bonus which Member States should recognise.

6. It is important here to stress the efforts and the changes which national education systems, in all their diversity, have already made to respond to the new conditions, particularly within the framework of bilateral cooperation.

It has up to now been possible for the Community to support only pilot actions at school level; and these have a limited impact. Some examples of the action already undertaken are given in Annex A. **However, the experience gained from these does of course provide a basis for further action; but the new possibilities offered by Article 126, quoted above, call for a comprehensive and coherent approach to complement action taken by Member States.**

7. In order to meet this objective, this Green Paper consists of three sections:

- **the first section** places Article 126 in the context of the cooperation actions undertaken since 1976. Annex B contains a short description of the main stages;

- **the second section** sets out the theme of the European dimension and its main objectives;
- **the third section** attempts to identify possibilities for complementary action, describing the instruments and strategies as well as the people involved.

#### I. THE NEW LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

8. The scope for Community action in the field of education is set out in Article 126 of the Treaty but, as indicated below (paragraph 11), other Community policies also take education into account.
9. Article 126 of Chapter 3 of the Treaty is very clear. It says that "the Community shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States..." and that "Community action shall be aimed at:
  - developing the European dimension in education, particularly through the teaching and dissemination of the languages of the Member States;
  - encouraging mobility of students and teachers, inter alia by encouraging the academic recognition of diplomas and periods of study;
  - promoting cooperation between educational establishments;
  - developing exchanges of information and experience on issues common to the education systems of the Member States;
  - encouraging the development of youth exchanges and of exchanges of socio-educational instructors;
  - encouraging the development of distance education".

Each of these objectives, whether they concern mobility or exchanges of information and experience, or those involved in the educational world - pupils, teachers, - or even educational methods - the new technologies of information and communication - is relevant in relation to potential value added by Community action in this area.

10. It is appropriate to note that this Article is the result of a process which has its origins in the Resolution of the Council and Ministers of Education meeting within the Council of February 1976. A summary of the various steps taken since then is given in **Annex B**.

11. At the same time, it should be borne in mind that education is also taken into account at Community level in other areas. This applies particularly in research and development but also in regard to health (health education) and the environment (environmental education). Indeed, in this last-named area, the role of education is of prime importance for making pupils aware from a very young age of the widely-held concern about protecting the environment.

It is also particularly important to stress the considerable contribution made by the structural policies of the Community to education in the most disadvantaged regions; the reform of these policies recently adopted by the Council is the most obvious illustration of this.

## II THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION OF EDUCATION AND ITS OBJECTIVES

12. The general objectives of schools include contributing towards:
- equality of opportunity for everyone;
  - giving all young people a sense of their responsibilities in an interdependent society;
  - developing their pupils' ability to act autonomously, to make judgements, to assess matters critically and to make and adapt to innovations;
  - enabling all young people to achieve their full potential in their working life and in their own personal development, especially by developing in them the taste for life-long learning;
  - giving their pupils training and qualifications which will facilitate their transition to working life, in particular through being able to master technological change.
13. In considering these general objectives of education, it is important to set out the specific objectives - and, through these, the "added value" - of Community action in the sphere of education. This "added value" would contribute to a European citizenship based on the shared values of interdependence, democracy, equality of opportunity and mutual respect; it would also help to extend the opportunities for improving the quality of education; and finally, it would help pupils towards social integration and a better transition to working life.

a. Contributing to European citizenship

14. Respecting different cultural and ethnic identities, and combating all forms of chauvinism and xenophobia are essential components of action in the field of education.
15. Education systems are not limited to ensuring the continuation of their own cultures; they must also educate young people for democracy, for the fight against inequality, to be tolerant and to respect diversity. They should also educate for citizenship; and here, Europe is not a dimension which replaces others, but one which enhances them.

Community action must therefore stress an education for citizenship that includes:

- experiencing the European dimension through learning languages, working on a joint transnational project, knowledge of other countries and through information given as the basis and stimulus for thought;
- socialisation in a European context, through transnational exchanges, because ~~this~~ enables each citizen to play a part on the European stage;
- a better understanding of Europe today, and of its construction for tomorrow.

b. Offering opportunities for improving the quality of education

16. When schools take proper account of the European dimension, they may find it a stimulus to development. It may act as a lever to stimulate education systems and to encourage innovation, especially through the meeting of different approaches and teaching methods, and through the sharing of experience in developing teaching materials - all of which contribute to improving the quality of education.
17. It should be stressed that, since the 1988 Resolution on the European dimension in education, the majority of Member States has progressively integrated this dimension into teacher training as well as into the curriculum; and they have encouraged the production of suitable teaching material. Such efforts have been complemented, at regional, national and Community levels, by different actions and initiatives led by the various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) active in the field of education.

18. This sort of enrichment of the content of teaching should be accompanied by:

- on the one hand, **the raising of awareness among, and the provision of appropriate information to,** educational administrators and others involved, about the opportunities available;
- on the other hand, **transnational cooperation** between institutions responsible for initial and in-service teacher training; and, finally,
- **collaboration on the development of appropriate teaching material.**

c. **Preparing young people for their integration into society and for a better transition to working life**

19. In the context of the achievement of the Single Market, with all that that implies, as well as the gradual development of a European labour market, the development of a European dimension of education can contribute to easing pupils' transition to working life and to extending their opportunities for employment.

Indeed, knowledge of languages and familiarity with other cultural and professional environments, especially that of business, are among the positive factors in helping young people to move out into the world and to be able to master change, and in preparing them for professional mobility and for better integration into society.

20. In this area, Community action could be directed towards:

- the development of **transnational partnerships** involving a closer relationship between schools and the worlds not only of business, but also of local authorities, non-governmental organisations, etc..;
- **transnational cooperation networks** to promote a better relationship between general education and initial vocational training.

**III. PLAYERS, STRATEGIES AND INSTRUMENTS**

21. The school is one of the main focal points for action in the field of education within the Member States; and the same should be true for Community action. A school is an entity comprising a system encompassing many players (pupils, teachers, parents, the local community etc..). It is a place for organising the resources available, as well as one capable of offering services to its community, with which it develops dynamic and interdependent relationships.

