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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.



22. These interdependent relationships create their own dynamism and bring together:
- those at the different levels of educational administration;
  - those directly involved in the life of the school: pupils, teachers and other staff;
  - people involved in the educational process and associated with the school: teacher-trainers and inspectors; universities and research teams; the staff of libraries and other sources of information;
  - the organisations which constitute the social and cultural fabric of the local community and which can make valuable contribution to schools: professional associations and trade unions, parents, local authorities, trade associations, leisure centres, etc..;
  - the didactic and pedagogical resources, methods and the materials used by those involved.
23. Action at Community level in the area of education could thus be centred naturally on schools, through transnational educational projects set up on the basis of partnerships.

These could include the following:

- cooperation through mobility and exchanges;
- the training of teachers and others involved in education;
- the development of language teaching;
- distance learning through multimedia systems;
- the promotion of innovation in teaching;
- the exchange of information and experience;
- using the experience of the European Schools.

a. Cooperation through mobility and exchanges

24. One of the major elements in the construction of the new Europe is the free movement of people. Bringing this about will be considerably easier if young people are able while at school to have a first experience of mobility. Indeed, so far as cultural customs are concerned, it is necessary for pupils as young as possible to have opportunities for meeting and for encountering different surroundings.
25. Such transnational mobility could be based on improved knowledge and recognition of other countries' systems. This is already available in a number of ways, for example through the wide variety of bilateral exchanges and trips. However, Community action might be concentrated on:
- **partnerships**, on the basis of cooperation between schools with a shared interest in specific areas (languages, the environment, cultural heritage, etc.);
  - **networks**, in the sense of structures which allow the partnerships action to be extended with a view to the wider dissemination of the results and experiences.
26. It is indeed very clear that Community support for such exchanges would have little point unless the actions envisaged would be certain of having a multiplier effect leading to a dissemination of the experience to a wider public. In this context, the use of new information and communication technologies is an important element.

b. The training of teachers and others involved in education

27. Teacher training is the main tool in the development of teachers' pedagogical practices. It therefore should be in the forefront of action to promote pedagogical innovation as well as to develop the European dimension in teaching.
28. Indeed, teachers and their trainers have an important role to play in the definition and introduction of new teaching areas. They are therefore the main players in integrating the European dimension into the content and practice of education.
29. Introducing this dimension requires teachers:
- to learn about the different aspects of Europe today and its construction for tomorrow;

- to learn to share and pass on the wealth of European cultures;
  - to develop a European perspective alongside national and regional allegiances;
  - to make use of the shared cultural heritage, and existing partnerships and networks as anchor points for establishing a teaching approach with a European dimension;
  - to overcome cultural and linguistic obstacles so as to develop multilingual and multicultural practice.
30. It is therefore crucial to strengthen initial and in-service teacher training. Here again, the accent should be put on **transnational cooperation between teacher training institutions, especially in the form of European networks, using the medium of exchanges** and building on the pilot actions already started.
31. Such transnational cooperation should not involve the teachers alone: experience so far shows that those responsible for schools, inspectors, advisers or, for example, careers guidance counsellors, play an important part in the life of the school. It would therefore be logical for any Community action in the field of education to be open to these people as well.

c. The development of language teaching

32. The lack of linguistic proficiency and of knowledge of other cultures is today one of the main obstacles to mobility. **How can one move to another country if one has no way of communicating?** Linguistic proficiency is thus a pre-requisite for mobility and for exchanges, and a priority for the development of the European dimension in education and the knowledge of other cultures.
33. Based on the experience of the LINGUA Programme, and in particular Action II (support for the initial training of foreign language teachers), a more developed Community action, aimed at a wider public, could be envisaged.
34. Such an action could be accompanied by **encouragement for teaching and other supporting materials** to be developed through partnerships. In fact, it would contribute to the improvement and enrichment of teaching methods and foreign language learning and, as a result, enhance the status of such teaching.

35. Such an approach could be built on the experience of bilingual classes and on the more recent experience of European classes.

d. Distance learning through multimedia systems

36. The school must help the pupil to adapt to the demands of the rapid technological and social changes which characterise society today. It must seek out the best way of enabling pupils to adapt easily to a society in which the free movement of people is increasingly common.
37. Open and distance learning presents a whole range of possibilities for giving the younger generation the ability to adapt to changes in the workplace or even to retraining, facilitating the transfer of knowledge. Joint distance training projects in programmes such as COMETT, ERASMUS or FORCE, have already shown the advantage that this teaching approach can bring to the diversification of the education and training offered.
38. From the point of view of ensuring the greatest effectiveness of Community action, distance learning - including the use of telematics - is essential in that it allows for better access to education, in particular in the less well-off regions. In addition, it is a support for transnational partnerships and could be a major instrument for disseminating innovations resulting from Community activity.
39. However, it must be stressed that the use of new technology is not limited to open and/or distance learning. Indeed, multimedia systems are called to play an increasingly important role in the transmission of knowledge and in increasing the range of places where learning happens.

Community action on the use of new technology in education should therefore be particularly concerned with such developments, especially those involving the joint development of teaching material.

e. The promotion of innovation in teaching

40. Research into education and training would also gain from the European dimension. The fourth Framework-Programme for Research and Development, already presented by the Commission, opens up interesting possibilities in this area.
41. Indeed, the sharing of problems and of methodologies on particular themes enables economies of scale. This would involve cooperation between research institutes and universities on educational issues. For example, the study of innovation and cooperation strategies in and between

schools in different Member States, as well as of their impact, could provide an area of common interest.

42. **The dissemination of innovation in and between teaching systems contributes to an improvement in the quality of education and should for that reason be encouraged.** It would be facilitated if transnational networks of researchers and teachers, based on themes of common interest to be defined by those involved at the appropriate levels, were to be established.

f. The exchange of information and experience

43. **Information on the education systems of Member States, on their reforms and innovations provides the essential basis for mutual understanding between Member States and for the development of the European dimension of education.** In this context, the activities and the publications of the information network on education in the European Community (EURYDICE) are of great interest for all those in the world of education. It would be useful to reinforce the comparative analyses on educational systems and methodologies, as well as the dissemination of information produced as a result.
44. Information on education in the Member States provides essential support to the exchange of experience among those responsible for, and involved in, education. The ARION Community action providing study visits for education specialists could be extended to offer such exchanges to those responsible for education at the different levels of administration, as appropriate.
45. Equally, the comparison of national statistics, meetings of experts and seminars can contribute to the formation of common frameworks of reference. EUROSTAT would be able to play an important role in securing the comparability of international statistics on education and training.

g. The experience of the European Schools

46. The educational approach developed by the European Schools has already made a contribution to the development of the European dimension of education and is worth highlighting. In particular, through the multicultural mix and the introduction of foreign languages into the teaching of different subjects, these schools have a potential for innovation which should be developed.
47. Their experience could serve as a reference point in the development of "laboratories" of pedagogical innovation promoting multicultural teaching and respect for diversity.

CONCLUSIONS

48. As stated at the beginning of this document, this Green Paper is intended to stimulate discussions on the possibilities offered by Article 126 of the Treaty. As such, it does not comprise a proposal, and the possible future directions which it suggests are rather indicative of the actions which could most appropriately be encouraged by the Community in the spirit of Article 126 of the Treaty.
49. It is clear that all the possible actions sketched out in this document would need to be looked at in possible interaction and combination. The aim is to contribute to the identification of those which in complementing and supporting the activities already underway in Member States, could bring an added value to the development of quality in education.
50. Such a reflection is necessary for the implementation of Article 126. It will require the involvement and collaboration of those responsible for education and their partners at the various different levels and in their own area of responsibility.

The debates and discussions which it is hoped that this Green Paper will stimulate will without doubt enhance future Community cooperation in the field of education.

## ANNEX A

## SOME EXAMPLES OF COOPERATION PROJECTS

I. PILOT ACTIONS SUPPORTED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSIONPilot action for the development of 40 multilateral school partnerships

1. One significant example is that of a partnership known as "Columbus", a project coordinated by the Netherlands, the stimulus for which was provided by the 500th anniversary of the discovery of America. It brought together schools from five city ports to study how the development of these ports grew around the development of trade, particularly maritime trade. Pupils from Genoa, Antwerp, Lisbon, Barcelona and Palermo thus studied the historical, geographic and cultural aspects and the consequences of trade development linked to Christopher Columbus's discovery. They also studied the development of these ports in the 19th and 20th centuries, a period during which contacts intensified between Europe and America as a result of emigration and industrial and technological development.
2. This work was backed up by visits which enabled each school to invite some of the pupils from the other schools involved. The project was staggered over three years and enabled every pupil from the classes involved to go at least once to another city, and at the same time involved all the classes in the study and was of interest to the whole of each school concerned.

The teacher exchange scheme

3. Since the scheme began it has expanded links between the pupils and the schools of the teachers involved in the exchanges. This can be illustrated by a common pattern. The starting point was an exchange between two highly enthusiastic teachers of classical literature, one Greek and the other French. This developed into a project: putting on a play with the children of the two schools, mixing ages and classes. The exchange of teachers was therefore extended to the pupils' comparing aspects of Greek and French theatre and putting on the plays in both countries. After two years, the teachers (aware of the limits of a bilateral approach) extended the scheme to a third school in another country, choosing the topic "Greek, French and Italian theatre: the master-servant relationship".
4. Shared reading and theatrical work therefore then covered three works, depending on the group or class. The text was spoken in the working language (French, either learnt or

