
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

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DOCUMENT 158/78

Report

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and
Education

on residential adult education as an element of the European Community's
education policy (Doc. 281/77)

Rapporteur: Mrs M.E. KELLETT-BOWMAN

1.2.2

On 23 February 1977 Mr WALTMANS and Mr FRUH tabled a motion for a resolution (Doc. 558/76) in the European Parliament, entitled 'Residential adult education as the nucleus of the European Community's education policy'. By letter of 28 February 1977 the President of the European Parliament referred this motion for a resolution to the Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education as the committee responsible and to the Committee on Budgets for its opinion. At its meeting of 15 March 1977 the former appointed Mrs KELLETT-BOWMAN rapporteur.

After the motion for a resolution had been given initial consideration at the meetings of 23 June and 12 July 1977, Mr WALTMANS, Mr FRUH and Mr ALBERS tabled on 15 September 1977 a new text (Doc. 281/77) to replace Doc. 558/76 which was entitled 'Residential adult education as an element of the European Community's education policy'.

At its meeting of 12 July 1977 the Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education decided to set up a working party to consider the document in detail. The following were appointed to the working party at the meeting of 23 November 1977: Mr ALBERS, Lady FISHER of REDNAL, Mrs KELLETT-BOWMAN, Mr MEINTZ, Mr PISTILLO, Mr SCHREIBER and Mr VANDEWIELE.

The working party met on 17 January, 2 March and 31 March 1978. At the first meeting Lady FISHER of REDNAL was elected chairman and at the last meeting a motion for a resolution (PE 49.547/rev. 2) was finalized for submission to the Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education as a whole.

The committee considered this draft at its meetings of 16 and 23 May 1978 and adopted the motion for a resolution contained in this report at the latter meeting by 11 votes to 1.

Present : Mr Van der GUN, chairman; Mr NOJAN, vice-chairman; Mrs KELLETT-BOWMAN, rapporteur; Mr CUNNINGHAM, Mr DINESEN, Mr GRANELLI, Mr PISTILLO, Mr POWER, Mr SCHREIBER, Mr SCHYNS (deputizing for Mr VANDEWIELE), Mrs SQUARCIALUPI and Mr WAWRZIK.

The opinion of the Committee on Budgets is attached.

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A

The Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution together with explanatory statement:

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

on residential adult education as an element of the European Community's education policy.

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr Waltmans, Mr Früh and Mr Albers on residential adult education as an element of the European Community's education policy (Doc. 281/77),
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education and the opinion of the Committee on Budgets (Doc. 158/78),
- 1. Accepts that this is a positive contribution to the improvement of education policy in the Community and that the idea of residential adult education springs from an idealistic desire to bring the European Community closer to the people;
- 2. Refers in this connection to the programme of action in the field of education which expressly states the intention of the Council and Education Ministers to engage in European cooperation in the field of education;
- 3. Is of the opinion that residential adult education, whilst forming only one element of the European Community's education policy, can, nevertheless, play its part in strengthening confidence in the Community;
- 4. Does not consider either that the creation of residential adult education centres should be forced, since their existence must be the result of a spontaneous desire on the part of the people, and consequently pilot projects should as a first step be created with local support and participation in the Member States in order to ascertain the real demand;

5. Is of the opinion that a large number of establishments would have to be set up in the various Member countries if a broad section of the population were to be offered residential adult education, a development which must be regarded as impracticable within the foreseeable future;
6. Therefore considers that it is absolutely essential to ensure that the students attending the provisionally limited number of establishments should be drawn from all sections of society;
7. Feels that the contribution to European understanding which can be made by the Europe Houses must not be underestimated;
8. Endorses the view that Community assistance should be granted not only to existing institutions already running European education programmes or planning to offer them, but also to group initiatives for establishing new institutions for European residential adult education in those areas of the Community where 'Europe Houses' or residential adult education centres do not yet exist;
9. Is of the opinion that a sum in the region of 350,000 u.a. should be made available for implementation of such a programme in the 1979 budget, to be amended in the light of experience in each succeeding budget;
10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission and Council of the European Communities and the Ministers of Education of the Member States.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENTI. INTRODUCTION1. Historical background

The folk high school originated in Denmark in the first half of the nineteenth century. The special merit of this type of school lies in the fact that it has brought together adult students for voluntary courses lasting several months aimed at providing general education and developing personality, rather than offering technical qualifications or examinations.

The founder of this form of education was N.F.S. Grundtvig, a Dane who held the view that, if townsmen and countrymen were to participate effectively in the running of the country, it was essential for them to have a knowledge and understanding of their common history, language and culture.

2. Folk high schools in the Community(a) Denmark

In Denmark there has been continuous growth in the number and type of folk high schools: there are now more than 80 of them, and the original agricultural high schools have been joined by high schools in various other fields. About 8,000 students a year currently take the longer courses, while at least twice as many take part in shorter courses. Grants covering 85% of high schools' expenditure are given by the State, which also reimburses students for up to 70% of their expenses.

In addition, it should be noted that, alongside the more traditional Danish folk high schools, there now also exist high schools dealing with European problems.

One example is the International Folk High School in Elsinore, which founded after the First World War, takes the whole world as the framework for its activities but which also concerns itself with European problems. Then there is the Europe High School on Møn, founded in 1975 and specializing in European questions. Finally, there is a Nordic-European folk high school in South Jutland which concentrates specifically on the problems arising out of the tensions between Nordic and European cooperation. Set up in 1977, this is the latest addition to the family of European folk high schools.

(b) The Netherlands

The first folk high school based on Grundtvig's ideas was founded in 1932 as a private and independent body. From 1948 State support of up to 50% has been given. There are now almost 20 schools whose aim it is to encourage people to take part and act in everyday life on the principle that all men are equal.

(c) The United Kingdom

The short courses are the best known. There are about fifty 'Short-Term Residential Colleges', founded over the last 30 years. A wide range of adult education courses is offered.

(d) Federal Republic of Germany

Very similar to the Danish folk high schools, with courses of up to six months in length, and guaranteed pedagogic freedom in politics, economics and culture, in the form of non-compartmentalized instruction. More than 100 establishments.

3. Europe Houses

The Europe Houses, of which there are about thirty in the various Community countries, seek to contribute to solving topical problems through organizing conferences, seminars and day courses on improvement of standards of living, regional policy, the democratization and strengthening of the European institutions, development aid and Western European integration.

II. INITIATIVES ON ADULT EDUCATION

1. The Hougardy Report¹

This 1972 report states, in paragraph 18 of its resolution, that the Council should take steps to establish a European folk high school for non-academic youth.

2. The Dillington House Declaration²

In 1973 a Conference on Adult Education was held in England, the final declaration of which stated that the European Parliament's proposal was welcomed, but that other possible forms of residential adult education should first be examined, and that, in any case, existing adult education organizations should be consulted before a final decision was taken.

¹ Doc. 232/71

² PE 40.411, p.10

3. The Leck statement¹

A European Folk High Schools Conference was held in 1974 in Leck, in the Federal Republic of Germany, which produced a resolution on the European folk high schools' view of themselves, their role and organization.

This stated that the task of the folk high school was to give extra depth and breadth to the school system by developing people's critical faculty in respect of thought and action.

International problems were said to be a natural part of the work at all folk high schools, one merit of such activity being its furtherance of European unification. The declaration therefore welcomed the prospect of a number of establishments on a European basis.

4. Motion for a resolution tabled by Mr Waltmans and Mr Früh²

This proposal, whose object was to make adult education the nucleus of the European Community's education policy, called for the programme of action in the field of education to be supplemented by a campaign of political education within the framework of residential adult education (paragraph 1). To this end, assistance from Community funds was then solicited for the 'Europe Houses' and residential adult education centres concerned with European education (paragraph 4), this being put into concrete terms in paragraph 9, which calls for 350,000 u.a. to be made available in the budget for 1978 for the implementation of such a programme.

5. Provisional draft report by Mrs Kellett-Bowman³

At its meeting of 12 July 1977, the Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education discussed the above motion for a resolution on the basis of a draft report by Mrs Kellett-Bowman, who stated that residential adult education could form only a part of the European Community's education policy

¹ PE 38.978

² Doc. 558/76

³ PE 49.547

(paragraph 3). She felt that, to begin with, pilot projects should be set in train in the Member States with local support and participation in order to ascertain the real demand (paragraph 4). It was essential for the Community to make greater resources available for educational policy in general, which should also be used for the benefit of European adult education.

During the committee's discussions of the two texts it became clear that the whole question would have to be gone into thoroughly before there could be any further discussions; the authors of the proposals were therefore asked to produce a new document and, at the same time, it was decided to set up a working party to discuss the whole problem of adult education¹.

6. Motion for a resolution tabled by Mr Waltmans, Mr Fröh and Mr Albers²

The new document was submitted in September 1977 and differed on several points from the original. For instance, adult education was no longer to be seen as the nucleus itself, but only as an element of education policy. There was also an addition to the last indent of the preamble to the effect that adult education could be an important instrument - not the most important - for political and social education. Furthermore, paragraph 10 had been rewritten: Community aid should be granted with due regard to the political or ideological orientation of the institutions concerned, since these were an expression of the Community's plurality.

¹ PE 49.762, p.6

² Doc. 281/77

7. Working Party on Adult Education

At its three meetings¹ the working party discussed the background for, and the purpose of, introducing residential adult education as an element of the European Community's education policy.

Its discussions were based on a working document², on the abovementioned motions for resolutions by Mr Waltmans and Mr Fröh and by Mr Waltmans, Mr Fröh and Mr Albers respectively, and on the provisional draft report by Mrs Kellett-Bowman.

The working party reached general agreement that an attempt should be made to have an amount entered on the 1979 budget to assist existing institutions already running European education programmes and, not least, new institutes for European adult education in those areas of the Community where 'Europe Houses' or residential adult education centres do not yet exist. The intention was to try and grant this aid by tabling an amendment to the 1979 draft budget in October, should the Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education not itself wish to move an amendment to this effect.

Agreement having been reached on these points, it was therefore decided to amend the text of the provisional draft report accordingly and submit the new version to the Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education.

¹ PE 52.191, PE 52.718 and PE 53.104

² PE 52.228

III. THE RAPPORTEUR'S CONTACTS WITH EXPERTS

To obtain the best possible insight into the problems of adult education, the rapporteur has, over the past six months, held discussions with experts on the subject.

These have included visits to the Danish Ministry of Education, the Europe High School on Møn and the Folk High School at Skaelskør, both in Denmark. The outcome of these conversations will be summarized below.

It was interesting to note that the Danes thought it would be unrealistic to expect more than 10% of people in the 18 - 25 age group to be interested in residential adult education.

The Danish experts were sceptical about the possibility of 'exporting' the Danish folk high school system as the basis for European adult education, and thought that the Europe high schools under consideration should be designed to suit the Member States' individual characteristics. The general view was that one Europe high school in each Member State would be enough to start with; actual interest could then be ascertained.

At the existing Europe High School on Møn in Denmark, the importance was stressed of establishing another Europe folk high school - possibly in Luxembourg in view of its central position in the Community - to permit contacts between Europeans of different nationalities.

In the course of the visit to Skaelskør Folk High School, it was pointed out that a common factor in all Danish folk high schools was the great importance attached to active participation by the students. The aim was not to provide them with information but to advise them on the various ways of acquiring it when they needed it.

Later, in July 1977, the rapporteur visited Europe Houses in Luxembourg and the Federal Republic. He learnt that the aim of the Europe Houses was to contribute to a united Europe through political information and education suited to all social and age groups. The Europe House in Luxembourg concentrated on the problems of European unification, and knowledge about the European institutions, to which frequent visits were made.

During a visit to the European Academy in the Federal Republic, it was stated that aid from the present European Social Fund could not be given to Folk High Schools unless evidence could be furnished that the function of the school was to provide further education.

IV. BACKGROUND TO THE MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

On the basis of conversations with experts in Luxembourg and Strasbourg, it is possible to outline briefly the background to the motion for a resolution tabled by Messrs. Waltmans, Fröh and Albers.

When the programme of action in the field of education was adopted on 9 February 1976, the authors of this motion for a resolution saw a chance of giving impetus to the concept of European adult education at Community level.

Their view was that the Community was losing in increasing measure the support of the population, and that a spiritual crisis had arisen which placed the political will for the continued construction of Europe in jeopardy.

However, the fundamental idea was that the European Community was not rooted sufficiently in popular support. There was a need for the development of European awareness among the population and, since it was a political responsibility

to promote European unity, political education had therefore to be the nucleus of the European education programme. There was also the need to improve trust between the peoples of Europe, which should be achieved by creating opportunities for Europeans of various nationalities to meet each other.

But so far exchanges have been restricted to a narrow stratum of society, mainly at university level, whereas a European education policy should have the task of creating structures to give people from all walks of life the opportunity of studying and living together with citizens from other countries for a certain length of time.

The authors of the motion for a resolution feel that the best way of doing this is through residential adult education.

V. CONCLUSION

The provision of more information on European problems and on other Community countries is a task that has today become the responsibility of the entire educational structure of each Member State. The discussion of European problems in geography, history and other subjects is being increased at primary and secondary school level. Teachers' training colleges and universities take account of this in courses for teachers. European institutes have been set up by a number of universities, the Community has set up a new university institute in Florence, and elsewhere, too, the teaching world is today devoting more attention to European questions than in the past, and the Community has given grants to teacher training colleges to establish European Leisure Centres, e.g. at St. Martin's College, Lancaster.

Proper political education, however, is more effective in the framework of adult education than during compulsory schooling. In any case, schools for children up to age 18 can only lay the foundations for proper understanding, though this foundation is most important. Education in European affairs at university level reaches only a tiny minority of the population. Liberal adult education facilities can, however, provide courses in European affairs for all politically interested people.

Residential adult education in particular has several important advantages: on the one hand, during educational vacations at weekends, it can reach those who are normally too tired during the working week to take part in educational courses, and on the other, residential adult education is the one type of education in the context of which intensive and genuine meetings between people from all social classes and all countries can take place. Residential adult education, therefore, starts off with a strong European accent. An aim of the Community's educational policy should be to exploit the advantages of adult education in bringing Europeans closer together.

The Community's action programme unfortunately omits political and general adult education entirely. It is understandable that a degree of priority should be given to those problems which, like the harmonization of diplomas, directly affect the functioning of the common market, but it is nevertheless regrettable that the main emphasis is on academic subjects, since European unity affects all citizens and is a subject they should all understand. The Community should therefore recognize its responsibility for providing its voters with adequate educational facilities to enable them to learn about European politics and what lies behind them, and where they can meet and get to know people from other countries.

In the field of professional training and university education, as well as with regard to primary and secondary schools, the Community finds itself up against well-entrenched institutions and traditions in each Member State, the differences between which it is now trying to reduce by means of detailed study and research and exhaustive negotiations. This is not the case in the field of adult education. Here the Community finds itself with a vigorous movement which is in a position to create at popular level new and liberal educational structures. In the field of residential adult education, therefore, the Community's programme does not need to be expanded through the harmonization of laws and courses: it would suffice to provide direct subsidies to support the spontaneous popular initiatives which already exist. In most cases the Community would need only to act as catalyst.

An Education Committee was set up in Brussels at the time of the adoption of the programme on education. Among the tasks of this committee is the preparation of proposals for further action by the Community. It could draft a proposal laying down the criteria on which Community funds could be made available in support of initiatives in the field of European residential adult education.

Support for the Europe Houses from the information budget was an emergency measure which made sense while the Community had

no education programme. Now that the Community does have an education programme with the appropriate budgetary headings it would be more logical and straightforward for the Europe Houses and residential folk high schools - which are not information agencies but educational centres - to be supported by appropriations from the education budget, thus relieving the information budget.

In their motion for a resolution Mr Waltmans, Mr Früh and Mr Albers propose that a sum of 350,000 u.a. be entered on the 1979 budget to assist both existing and new institutes running European education programmes. An amount of this kind, spread over nine Member States, appears fairly low; however, as far as the Community is concerned, what is required is merely recognition and encouragement for these initiatives, which spring from the people themselves. Such an amount would suffice for the already existing Europe Houses and residential folk high schools which offer European courses, would make it possible to help other centres to start offering European courses, and might even be enough to help towards the establishment of a new centre each year. There is no need to assume that, by providing support for spontaneous popular efforts, large numbers of new centres would suddenly spring up and start asking for financial help from the Community. A realistic forecast might be the addition of one new centre per year in the Community.

The fact that financial aid has so far been supplied from the information budget has meant that it has been project-related, i.e. the educational establishments have had to ask for grants for specific courses. This causes major bureaucratic difficulties and considerable uncertainty for the centres concerned. If the support measures were shifted to the education budget it would be more sensible to grant the schools fixed annual subsidies on which they could then count. A part of the funds could be set aside each year to help the establishment of new European adult education centres. Such funds could be used especially in

regions which so far possess no such residential centres. In this way appropriations would also be spread more evenly throughout the Community.

There is widespread suspicion that political adult education, and more particularly European political adult education, is intended to provide one-sided political propaganda. However, the long tradition of freedom of instruction and learning in adult education, which exists in all of our Member States, makes such fears unfounded. Such fears are also unjustified, since adult education is largely left to the autonomous administration of regional and local authorities which, because of their numbers, guarantee freedom of choice and thus exclude the possibility of partiality.

In contrast to the attempts of authoritarian regimes to inform and indoctrinate their citizens in a specific political direction, the ethics of liberal adult education in democratic societies require that the teacher, while putting forward his own point of view in discussion, should give his students, as free citizens, the opportunity to form their own opinions in open discussion. That is the actual purpose of such courses: help in forming individual opinions. It is in the Community's own interest to support all initiatives intended to freely involve adult citizens with European issues, irrespective of the political or other motivations of those responsible.

The right answer to this question is probably this: while part of the Community funds may be used to finance studies and research into the organization and methods of residential adult educational courses, and from time to time to organize meetings and conferences for experts from education authorities and teachers employed in adult education (as the Council of Europe has done for years), the bulk of the money should be used for directly assisting educational establishments, which could, for example, use Community funds to employ an extra foreign teacher, refund travelling expenses to foreigners etc. Another important aspect would probably be the promotion of joint advertising on behalf of these establishments to make them better known.

Residential adult education is intended, first and foremost, for non-academic sections of the public. A joint advertising campaign could persuade employers to grant generous (paid or unpaid) leave for those wishing to participate in European courses. The unemployed, and particularly unemployed youth, should be given the chance to use their

period of unemployment to good effect by taking part in educational courses without the loss of benefits. In the long term a number of additional measures could be implemented, e.g. educational leave, recognition of course-participation certificates etc.. Much of this will require lengthy legislative preparation. What is important at present is that residential adult education courses should, in accordance with tradition, offer a level of education open to everybody, and that course fees be kept as low as possible.

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON BUDGETS

Letter from the committee chairman to the chairman of the Committee on
Social Affairs, Employment and Education

2 May 1978

Subject : Motion for a resolution tabled by Mr WALTMANS, Mr FRUH and
Mr ALBERS pursuant to Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure on
residential adult education as an element of the European
Community's education policy

Dear Mr Chairman,

At its meeting of 17/18 May 1978 the Committee on Budgets examined the financial aspects of the abovementioned motion for a resolution, which had been referred to it on 16 September 1977 for an opinion.

The committee noted that paragraph 4 of the motion for a resolution calls for assistance from Community funds for the 'Europe Houses' and residential adult education centres concerned with European education. Paragraph 9 calls for the sum of 350,000 u.a. to be made available for the implementation of such a programme in the 1978 budget. Since it is quite clear that this sum cannot be expended at this stage of the financial year, the committee recommends that paragraph 9 be deleted. Furthermore, paragraph 7 ought to be redrafted in order to avoid the risk of considerable and unforeseeable costs arising.

While recalling the position it has always defended, namely that it will only support proposals when sufficiently detailed financial information is made available, the Committee on Budgets takes the view that cost estimates must be accompanied by precise calculations to enable Parliament to consider the overall financial consequences.

As for control of expenditure, the wording of paragraph 11 is regrettably vague '... calls for no more than material controls over the use of funds'. Parliament must retain full responsibility for financial control.

In principle the Committee on Budgets welcomes this proposal. It seems, however, expedient to examine the financial aspects of this scheme within the framework of the 1979 budgetary procedure. More financial data are required.

.....

(sgd) Erwin LANGE

Present : Mr LANGE, chairman; Mr COINTAT, vice-chairman; Mr ALBER,
Lord BESSBOROUGH, Lord BRUCE of DONINGTON, Mr CROZE, Mrs DAHLERUP,
Mr RIPAMONTI, Mr SCHREIBER, Mr SHAW and Mr SPINELLI.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (DOC. 558/76)

tabled by Mr WALTMANS and Mr FRUH
pursuant to Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure

on residential adult education as the nucleus of the European Community's
education policy

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the crisis of imagination and confidence facing the European Community at present,
 - having regard to direct elections to the European Parliament and the need to strengthen a sense of parliamentary democracy in the general public, for which not only information services but also more substantial educational opportunities are required,
 - having regard to the need to increase public awareness of the European Community through political education and to provide more members of the public with an understanding of Community problems and procedures,
 - aware that more opportunities must be created to enable people from various Member States, and especially young adults, to meet one another,
 - aware that residential adult education can be the best means of political and European education and of enabling adult citizens from various Member States to meet one another,
1. Calls for the programme of action in the field of education¹ to be supplemented by a campaign of political education within the framework of residential adult education;
 2. Calls for the Committee for Educational Affairs, which was established on the adoption of the programme of action on 9 February 1976, to be entrusted with the task of preparing such a campaign within the framework of residential adult education without delay;
 3. Considers that a campaign of this kind must form the nucleus of any future Community educational policy;
 4. Therefore calls for assistance from Community funds for the 'Europe Houses' and residential adult education centres concerned with European education;
 5. Proposes that a particular aim of such promotion should be to provide encounter opportunities where teachers from more than one Member State provide European studies for participants from more than one Member State;
 6. Proposes that the Community campaign should not only cover extended basic courses for young adults but also shorter continuation courses;

¹ OJ No. C 38, 19.2.1976, p.1

7. Proposes that Community assistance should be granted not only to existing institutions already running European education programmes or planning to offer them, but also to group initiatives for establishing new institutions for residential adult education in those areas of the Community where 'Europe Houses' or residential adult education centres do not yet exist;
8. Insists that, in view of the wide dispersion of participants, Community assistance must include a joint campaign to promote such opportunities for European education;
9. Calls for the sum of 350,000 u.a. to be made available for the implementation of such a programme in the 1978 budget, to be amended in the light of experience in each succeeding budget;
10. Calls for Community aid to be granted without reference to the political orientation of the institutions concerned and for the full preservation of pedagogic freedom in the said adult education institutions;
11. Therefore calls for no more than material controls over the use of funds, while continuing qualitative improvement in educational opportunities will be sought by means of the voluntary cooperation of such institutions on curriculum planning and staff refresher courses;
12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission and Council of the European Communities and to the ministers of Member States responsible for educational affairs.