

Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education

2nd session - Hamburg, Germany, 10-15 April 1961

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Resolution on Methods of standing co-operation (N°1)

The Ministers of Education,

Convinced of the need for periodic consultations at their level, both to keep each other informed of the problems common to them. all and to pool their resources and authority in the achievements "" undertaken by the various. international organisations in the field of European cultural co-operation;

Take note of Resolution (60) 32 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe;

Welcome the invitation to contribute to a Council of Europe programme of action in the field of general scientific education and culture;

Record their conviction that the implementation of such a programme, which might be based on the resolutions adopted by their present Conference, will not be possible unless highly qualified staff and funds are made available;

Accept with gratitude-the proposal made by the Italian delegation to hold their next Conference in Rome at a date to be determined later;

Instruct the officials preparing this Conference to submit to it inter alia proposals on the links to be established between it and the European co-operation organisations, particularly the Council of Europe.

Resolution on educational problems requiring European intergovernmental co-operation (N°2)

The Ministers of Education,

Having taken note of the Report on primary and secondary school curricula in European countries;

Convinced of the need for Europe to institute a system of education which shall provide European youth with the best prospects in a world in which competition is becoming more and more intense and international co-operation increasingly necessary;

Recalling that educational expansion in Europe is to a large extent governed by the following facts:

- (a) the post-war increase in populations has in all countries resulted in a larger attendance of pupils at various levels of education;
- (b) in many regions increasing; numbers of children who previously would have gone without education are now attending school;
- (c) in all countries many more children now continue at school, either voluntarily or compulsorily, from the secondary level of education onwards;
- (d) the improvement in social status is everywhere reflected in a greater ambition to acquire increasingly higher technical or scientific qualifications.

Realising that these facts impose considerable burdens upon all their governments in respect of capital equipment and manpower investments;

Finding that as a result of this educational expansion a new approach is being adopted in all the countries of Europe to the revision of current methods and curricula and to the reorganisation of educational facilities;

Note with interest that there are a number of constantly recurring problems of concern to their respective governments, including:

- (a) prolongation of school attendance by all possible means including legislation where necessary;
- (b) study of improved methods of education for those pupils remaining longer at school but not aiming at a traditional academic course;
- (c) school guidance and selection according to ability;
- (d) need to combine general educational training with specialisation;
- (e) need to ensure that an adequate place is reserved for the humanities, considered as essential to the intellectual, social and political training of the European citizen,
- (f) status and training of teaching staff;
- (g) improvement of methods of modernisation of curricula with the active participation of teachers;

Undertake to keep each other informed of the progress made in working out these reforms and of the results obtained, and to provide mutual assistance in carrying out their educational plans in the hope of gradually-achieving educational systems which, while conserving the originality of national cultures, shall give practical effect to the determination to promote European cooperation; and

Consider, moreover, that certain steps may be jointly taken forthwith to promote European and international understanding by suitably adapting history, geography, literature, civic education and other curricula.

Resolution on the education of children (N°3)

The Ministers of Education,

Having taken note of the report presented by the United Kingdom, delegation and having exchanged their views on this report;

Convinced of the importance of the problems which present themselves for the education of children in the next four decades;

Decide to include this same point in the agenda of their next Conference.

Resolution on enquiries into continued general education and the use of television (N°4)

The Ministers of Education,

Having considered the joint memorandum of the Ministers of Education of Austria and the United Kingdom relating to proposals for:

- (a) a study of the continued general education of young people (under the age of 21) after they have left secondary school; and
- (b) the use of television for adult education;

Recommend that the enquiries proposed should be made in the context of the programme of the Council of Europe referred to in paragraph 2 of Resolution (60) 32; and

Recommend further that an education specialist be appointed to the Secretariat General of the Council of Europe to administer those projects and be responsible in general for educational co-operation; and

Record their wish that the progress made and the concrete results achieved be brought to their knowledge.

Resolution on the equivalence of degrees (N°5)

The Ministers of Education,

Have noted with interest the proposals contained in the report on means to ensure a more active promotion of equivalence of university degrees among member countries of the Council of Europe;

Affirm their joint conviction that progress in this direction will constitute an important step forward in educational co-operation in Europe;

Consider that the above-mentioned proposals suggest a new approach to the solution of the difficult problems of the equivalence of degrees and provide an example of how progress might be made;

Recognise that an essential part of the questions involved comes within the competence of universities;

Express the desire that new conventions be concluded as soon as the preliminary work, including the preparation of model curricula, has been completed by specialists in the various disciplines;

Suggest accordingly that the Committee for Higher Education and Research might usefully cause consultations to be held to this end and record their wish that the progress achieved and the concrete results obtained will be brought to their knowledge.

Resolution on the expansion and improvement of modern language teaching (N°6)

The Ministers of Education express the conviction that greater importance than ever before must be attributed to increasing the knowledge of modern languages. The Ministers are well aware how indispensable this knowledge is, both for the individual and for Europe as a whole, and how much international co-operation and the safeguarding and development of our common heritage depend on it.

The Ministers agree upon the need to provide, or to improve, facilities for teaching modern languages at school. Consideration should be given to the possibility of this instruction being made compulsory.

Experience in certain European countries has shown that a great extension of the teaching of modern languages is practicable. This seems to hold good also for relatively young pupils.

The Ministers recommend that periodical surveys be made in each country in order to ascertain the proportion of children following modern language courses. The results should be published in order to show the progress made.

The Ministers consider it highly desirable that members of the teaching profession should have studied at least one foreign language.

The Ministers recognise the success of numerous official and private organisations in the promotion of language teaching, of exchanges of teachers and pupils, of correspondence between school children, and in related forms of international co-operation; they will endeavour to increase their support for these activities.

The Ministers confirm their intention to assist each other in the task of improving and expanding the teaching of languages. This will, of necessity, affect teaching methods as well as school curricula and the training of teachers.

The Ministers further suggest that oral self-expression in foreign languages should be encouraged and that examinations should be adapted accordingly.

The Ministers recommend that careful attention be given to the adjustment of teaching methods to modern conditions and to the needs of different categories of pupils and types of school.

To this end, they deem it desirable that the following measures be put into effect:

- Each country should stimulate linguistic and psychological research, the object of which would be the improvement and expansion of modern language teaching;
- Arrangements should be made to exchange information, equipment (for instance, films and tape recordings), and services; the use of tape recordings in correspondence between the very young is particularly to be encouraged because it eliminates the difficulties of written expression and preserves the spoken language of the young;
- further meetings of experts should be held under the auspices of the Council of Europe for the purpose of studying methodological and other problems of modern language teaching;
- courses should be organised for students and in-service teachers;
- more intensive use should be made of audio-visual methods of teaching modern languages in accessory school activities.

Lastly, the work of promoting international co-operation in the field of modern language teaching should also include a concerted effort with regard to the study of the specialised language needed in scientific and technical branches. The Ministers accordingly hope that the Council of Europe will convene meetings of research workers and technical and linguistic specialists to consider these problems.

Resolution on the educational and scientific activities of international organisations (N°7)

The Ministers of Education,

Have taken note of the report on educational and scientific activities carried out within the framework of various international organisations whose aim does not fall specifically within the cultural field and stress the importance of these activities;

Express the wish of the responsible authorities at ministerial level who deal in each country with the problems of education and science that they should be actively associated from the outset in the determination of educational policy and in the preparation of the programmes of such organisations; Define as follows the role which these authorities might play in working out the policy to be followed in all fields relating to education and science:

- (a) They should be regularly and invariably consulted on all problems concerning them;
- (b) They should promote the co-ordination of activities in order to avoid duplication of action;
- (c) They should themselves take any steps within their competence which are likely to assist organisations in carrying out their tasks.

The Ministers are glad to see that several international organisations are associating these authorities more and more closely with their educational and scientific work;

Conscious of the importance of the problems arising in the field, they decide to place them on the agenda of their next Conference.