

Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education 6ème session - Versailles, France, 20-22 mai 1969

[Resolution on re-examination of function, working methods and procedures of the Conference, Studies and Surveys concerning the main themes and Reports on international activities in education \(N°1\)](#)

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Resolution on re-examination of function, working methods and procedures of the Conference, Studies and Surveys concerning the main themes and Reports on international activities in education (N°1)

(adopted during the Sixth Conference of Ministers of Education of the Council of Europe, Versailles, 20-22 May 1969)

The European Ministers of Education at their Sixth Conference,

TAKE NOTE of the documents prepared for the Conference, in particular of

- the Progress Report presented by the Conference Secretariat;
- the Survey prepared by Professors E. Egger, R. Girod and L. Pauli on disadvantaged and less-gifted pupils and the background report by OECD concerning the main theme of the Conference "Educational Opportunity for All";
- the report on the conclusions of the school building officials and their recommendations;

TAKE NOTE furthermore of the opening speech by the Chairman of the Conference, Mr. Edgar Faure, French Minister of Education, and the statement of the Secretary of the Conference, Mr. Peter Smithers, Secretary General of the Council of Europe;

EXPRESS their gratitude for the information supplied by the international organisations and the contribution to the main theme of the Conference;

ACKNOWLEDGE with appreciation the work of the Council for Cultural Cooperation of the Council of Europe and of OECD in following up the resolutions adopted at former Conferences and note the importance of the work undertaken by UNESCO in this geographical region;

CONSIDER that the profound changes in education which are increasingly affecting all member States and which have common origins call for intensified international action and co-operation;

CONSIDER that it is imperative, therefore, having regard to the limited resources available for such work, that international action and cooperation must be directed towards priorities for the years to come to meet more effectively the real needs of education in member States and to allow each international organisation to contribute to them according to its own working methods and programmes;

CONSIDER that the Conference could provide useful guidance for such orientation and that for this purpose the function, working methods and procedures of the Conference might call for re-examination;

CONSIDER that the suggestion made by the Chairman in his opening speech towards the idea of a European educational community deserves close study;

INVITE the Committee of Senior Officials

- in the light of the above considerations and in consultation with the Secretariat of the Conference, to examine the function, working methods and procedures of the Conference and to report thereon to the next Conference;
- to consider ways in which study and discussion of common, trends and major developments in education in Europe could be more effectively promoted with a view to achieving harmonisation;
- to submit to future Conferences background studies or surveys on the main themes and ask the interested international organisations to report on new results achieved and conclusions reached between Conferences.

Resolution on the educational needs of the less academically gifted child (N°2)

(adopted during the Sixth Conference of Ministers of Education of the Council of Europe, Versailles, 20-22 May 1969)

The European Ministers of Education, at their Sixth Conference,

HAVING CONSIDERED the United Kingdom report on the educational needs of the less academically gifted child presented by the Secretary of State for Education (CME/VI (69) 7),

HAVING STUDIED also the survey prepared by Professors Egger, Girod and Pauli on disadvantaged and less gifted pupils (CME/VI (69) 7),

ACKNOWLEDGING the primacy of the child, rather than of the curriculum, as a fundamental principle in education,

ASSERTING that all children are of equal importance, and that the school system should offer the fullest opportunity to children of different patterns of ability, interests and needs,

DEPLORING any tendency to stress exclusively the development of scholastic or academic ability as the object of school education, together with the spirit of competition this produces, and the consequent sense of discouragement or rejection in pupils whose results are unsatisfactory or who are forced to repeat a year,

DEPLORING also the effects of selection at an early age for different forms of secondary education, since any such selection is liable to give an inadequate index of innate ability or future promise, and to be unduly biased by factors in a child's home or environmental situation,

ASSERTING that no child in Europe should be thus penalised because of his social background,

ASSERTING further that the implications of this objective must be followed through in terms of school organisation if the objective is to be achieved,

BELIEVE that a system of non-selective comprehensive education at the secondary level, allowing the largest possibilities for pupils of different abilities and of different social backgrounds to associate together both in and outside the classroom, offers a means of attaining this end;

RECOGNISING moreover that other measures, including a constant review of curricula and examination systems and methods at all levels of education, are equally necessary;

DRAW ATTENTION

to the practical opportunities offered by modern educational methods for developing the capacities of the less gifted;

WELCOME as particularly relevant in this connection developments and experiments in such matters as:

- new combinations of scholastic and vocational training,
- widening of curriculum possibilities and options beyond the traditional range,
- special arrangements for "late developers",
- recreational activities, work experience and community service integrated into school courses,
- guidance and counselling, which must take on a new dimension in the education of the future

- "internal assessment" and increasing influence of schools and their teachers on examinations with which they are concerned,.

- school/parent relations;

DRAW ATTENTION

in particular to the increasing responsibilities of the teacher in attaining the objectives of this Resolution, considering that the prime object of his initial and further training should be to equip him not merely to impart knowledge but also to develop the individual and human capacities of his pupils;

INVITE member governments to keep each other informed of the progress of reforms and innovations in their countries in this field;

INVITE the Council of Europe and other international organisations concerned to conduct further studies of the problems involved, with regard both to the structure of school systems and to pupil problems bearing in mind the distinction between those who are intellectually less gifted, those who are socially or economically disadvantaged, and those who for other reasons are undermotivated or ill-adapted to existing educational systems;

DRAW THE ATTENTION

of governments to the political importance of the issues involved; to the opportunities presented for changing the structure of society by achieving a greater measure of true equality among its members by educational means; and to the need to engage public opinion and support for educational policies directed towards this end.

Resolution on the nursery school and primary school in relation to the demands of educational opportunity for all (N°3)

(adopted during the Sixth Conference of Ministers of Education of the Council of Europe, Versailles, 20-22 May 1969)

The European Ministers of Education, at their Sixth Conference,

HAVING CONSIDERED the report by the French delegation on "The nursery school and primary school in relation to the demands of educational opportunity for all",

BELIEVING that education should be primarily concerned. with the child's development in a context of permanent education;

BELIEVING that, in that context, the opportunities of all should be equalised as far and as early as possible, particularly in developing capacities for oral expression;

BELIEVING that pre-school education can foster such equalisation if it is able to widen the experience offered by the home environment or to compensate for its inadequacies, by providing a richer environment to explore and enabling the children to become part of a community in which they can learn to live and work together and communicate with others;

HAVING REGARD in this connection to the problems of children who experience particular difficulties of expression as a result of their social and cultural environment;

HAVING REGARD also to the special needs of the children of migrants whose difficulties in this respect are particularly acute;

BELIEVING that primary schools, should, over a given period, with due regard to differing natural talents, bring all children to comparable levels of skills and knowledge;

BELIEVING that primary education, as a natural sequel to pre-school education, should prepare children for social life by giving priority to education over instruction and by fostering the development of the personality and of human qualities, independently of economic and occupational considerations;

RECOMMEND that governments:

(a) continue as fully as possible with the establishment of nursery schools, particularly in rural areas;

(b) accepting permanent education as an objective to be attained, should conceive the training and further training of nursery and primary school teachers in that light;

(c) bring the concepts of primary school teaching into line with those which have proved successful in nursery schools, notably by:

centring education on the child, who should be guided in this development rather than brought to an arbitrarily defined standard of attainment;

associating children with their own education;

paying, in consequence, much more regard to what a child is than to what it is wished he should become;

developing in him curiosity, a creative urge and independence;

establishing contact and consultation amongst all those responsible for education;

establishing contact between the school and the family, having regard to the social and cultural influences exerted on the latter;

(d) determine what adjustments need to be made in education in view of the special difficulties experienced by certain children in their social and cultural environment and by migrants who have to adapt themselves to a new environment;

(e) expedite the implementation of recommendations adopted in the Council of Europe relating to the teaching of a foreign language to all children as early as the primary school stage;

INVITE

(a) governments to pool all relevant information on experiments and innovations in nursery and primary education in their countries and communicate it to the interested international organisations;

(b) international organisations, particularly the Council of Europe, to stimulate, support and disseminate all research which can help the objectives stated in this resolution to be achieved.

Resolution on the educational opportunity for all: evolution prospects and implications for educational policy (N°4)

(adopted during the Sixth Conference of Ministers of Education of the Council of Europe, Versailles, 20-22 May 1969)

The European Ministers of Education, at their Sixth Conference,

HAVING CONSIDERED the Council of Europe report on "School education: Evolution And Prospects" and the OECD paper on "Development of secondary education: policy implications",

EXPRESS their warm thanks to-the Swedish Minister of Education, Mr. Palme, for the broad avenues opened up by his excellent introductory statement,

OBSERVE, after a wide-ranging exchange of views, the convergence of their concerns,

NOTE their agreement on the main patterns of the new trends in education,

OBSERVE the unanimous concern that education should be democratised. This implies in their view, that the period of education should be extended to 11 or 12 years for all and that education be based on a broad common curriculum,

STRESS the need to continue efforts to adapt educational structures and curricula with a view to postponing specialisation as long as possible and ensuring flexibility in order to avoid blind alleys,

BELIEVE that education can be effectively democratised only through individualisation of curricula and of teaching methods and techniques in a manner consistent with the social objectives of education,

STRESS the importance of pupil participation and co-responsibility in decisions concerning school activities,

REALISE that the development of education along these lines will require substantial human and financial resources and therefore agree on the need to give particular attention to the evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of the educational system and to the establishment of new means and methods for the full achievement of its objectives,

EMPHASISE the key role of educational research and development work in this context,

NOTE the consequences which the developments in the school system have for post-secondary education and agree on the urgent need to consider various patterns of post-secondary education suited to the changing needs of society and the development of the human personality,

INVITE

- member governments to keep one another informed of new trends in their countries and communicate them regularly to the interested international organisations,

- the Council of Europe, in particular its Committee for General and Technical Education, to give special attention in its programme to the problems referred to in this resolution,

- OECD to continue its work on the evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of school systems and on the elaboration of new patterns of post-secondary education.