



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE



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Quality assurance in European Higher Education

[COM \(2009\) 487](#) REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS Report on progress in quality assurance in higher education.

In its first progress report on quality assurance in higher education in Europe, the European Commission points to significant developments towards more transparency and credibility over the past few years. Progress has not only been made in the way universities and other institutions deal internally with this, but also on external evaluation of institutions and programmes. Many new quality assurance agencies have been established at national level and there is increased awareness of the European Standards and Guidelines on quality assurance.

This first triennial report on quality assurance in higher education in Europe is published in response to a request by the European Parliament and the Council in 2006 (Recommendation on further European co-operation in quality assurance in higher education). The report looks at developments at national, European and international levels, and suggests a number of areas for further discussion including the need to make the infrastructure of quality assurance more efficient for users. The Report will be discussed for the first time under the Swedish EU Presidency at the meeting of Directors-General for Higher Education in Kalmar (7 October).

Main developments at national and European level

At national level many new quality assurance agencies have been created. There are now agencies in almost all of the 46 countries of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). They are rather heterogeneous in terms of size, scope, statute, focus and international capacity.

At the same time, quality assurance is receiving a more and more solid foundation at the European level. There is an increased awareness of the European Standards and Guidelines on Quality Assurance, through the work of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). A growing number of agencies are engaging in quality assurance outside their national context. The European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR), the major new body in the European context, was set up in 2008, with support from the European Commission. The Register is open to agencies operating both in the European Higher Education Area and worldwide who can demonstrate their compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines.



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IDEAS Programme

COM (2009) 488 REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT on the European Research Council's operations and realisation of the objectives set out in the Specific Programme "Ideas" in 2008

The European Research Council (ERC) was created in February 2007 by a Commission Decision as an ambitious new component of the EU's research policy under the provisions of the Seventh Framework Programme. It is the means for implementing the Specific Programme "Ideas" whose budget stands at € 7.51 billion over the period 2007-2013. The ERC comprises of an independent Scientific Council supported by a dedicated implementation structure (DIS) and operates according to the principles of scientific excellence, autonomy, efficiency, transparency and accountability.

This Annual Report of the Commission for 2008, drawn up in co-operation with the ERC Scientific Council, presents the Commission's assessment of the ERC's operations and the achievement of its objectives in its second year of existence.

ERC Main Activities

The ERC's activities for this year can be grouped under two main headings. The first is the continued implementation of the programme, in particular, the implementation of the first call for ERC Advanced Grants and the publication of the second calls for the ERC Starting and Advanced Grants. Related activities include the operational refinements to the call management and peer review systems, measures intended to ensure the integrity of procedures and processes, provision of strategic and administrative support to the Scientific Council and communication with the scientific community.

The second area of activities concerns the creation of the ERC Executive Agency which will eventually take on the role of the DIS, currently being performed by the Commission. Activities in this area included adoption of a Delegation Act, selection and recruitment of new staff for the Agency and appointment of a Steering Committee. In addition, the Commission prepared the methodology for a review held in 2009 on the mechanisms and structures used to implement the programme.



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Migrant children and education: public consultation underlines common challenges across the EU

EU countries face common challenges in adapting their school systems to the changes brought about by immigration. This is one of the key messages received in a public consultation conducted by the European Commission on the issue of migration and education. Respondents identified the need for better co-ordination between education and social policies, more focus on equity and equal opportunities in education, action to prevent school segregation and to provide targeted support to schools lagging behind as key issues to be addressed across Europe. Most respondents to the consultation also found that the EU can play an important role in supporting the efforts of the Member States to develop good policies and in stimulating debates and exchanges in this area.

The Commission has now published a summary report and copies of the responses received in the public consultation, which it had launched in July 2008 with a Green Paper entitled 'Migration and mobility: Challenges and opportunities for EU education systems' and which was open until December 2008.

The Green Paper highlighted that the share of pupils of migrant background in the EU has increased, and that many of them suffer from educational disadvantage. This, together with tendencies towards segregation along socio-economic lines, represents a serious challenge for the social cohesion of European societies. The Green Paper also pointed out, however, that migration can be enriching for the educational experience of all, as linguistic and cultural diversity may bring an invaluable resource to schools.

The public consultation received 101 responses, most of them from stakeholders' organisations.

Common challenges

Contributors to the consultation welcomed the Commission's initiative and highlighted the value added of a debate at EU level. There is a large consensus in the responses received on the nature of the challenges faced. Among the challenges most frequently quoted are:

- the need to break the link between socio-economic and educational disadvantage, and
- the lack of co-ordination between the different policies addressed to migrant children and their families.



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Other fundamental challenges are:

- the trends towards school segregation;
- the absence of comprehensive equal opportunities policies;
- the fact that schools have often still not adapted to the needs of migrant pupils or cannot reach out to their families;
- the lack of necessary intercultural skills by teachers; and
- the lack of financial resources for addressing these problems.

Policy responses

The policy responses identified in the contributions focus on language acquisition, on intercultural education in schools and on strengthening and adapting teacher education. Schools should develop closer partnerships with parents and migrant communities and systematically provide additional support in the form of mentoring, tutoring, guidance and cultural mediators. Education policies should focus on widening access to early childhood education and care and on preventing and combating school segregation. Increasing quality standards in all schools, together with targeted support to schools lagging behind, are also seen as fundamental policy responses. Supporting measures for newly-arrived immigrant children are crucial for ensuring their rapid inclusion. Moreover, some important policy responses lie outside schools themselves, e.g. in non-formal education or in adult education for the parents of migrant pupils.

Conference on migration and education

As an immediate follow-up of the public consultation, the Commission will hold on 20 October 2009 a European conference in Brussels which will bring together representatives from the Member States, international organisations, local and regional governments, European and national associations and practitioners. Results of the public consultation will be presented in detail together with the latest evidence from research on what works best in the education of migrant children.

[Consultation results](#)



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EU Healthy Eating Campaign "The Tasty Bunch" – A new initiative to promote healthy lifestyle and balanced diet among kids

Mariann Fischer Boel, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, launched a new Healthy Eating Campaign for European school children. Under the slogan "Eat it, Drink it, Move it" three roadshows will tour seven European countries, giving children a chance to take part in educational activities and games. The European Commission also launched an interactive website, competitions and other events with one key goal in mind – to change children's eating habits for the better. To help get the message across, Belgian tennis champion Justine Henin and 8 year old Guinness record holder Rosolino Cannio will be lending their support.

Background

The **Healthy Eating Campaign** will run alongside the EU's **School Fruit Scheme** and **School Milk Scheme** – important initiatives for a more balanced diet and healthier eating habits amongst children.

The Healthy Eating Campaign takes the message: **Eat it, Drink it, Move it** right into schools. Over the course of eight weeks, the roadshow will travel through Belgium, France, the UK, Ireland, Estonia, Lithuania and Poland. Each roadshow will visit two schools a day. In total the healthy eating activities will reach 18 000 kids in 180 schools. The message to deliver is: Eat well, because **it's fun to be fit**.

In parallel with the roadshow, an interactive treasure hunt game will be running over the 8 weeks on the EU's Tasty Bunch web site, where all EU schoolchildren aged 8 to 15 could try to win a number of sports items.

A recent Eurobarometer survey showed three quarters of respondents "totally agreeing" that "there seem to be more overweight children these days than five years ago". Indeed, around 22 million kids are overweight in the EU, of which 5 million are obese.

For further information:

Tasty Bunch campaign: ec.europa.eu/tasty-bunch



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... Sport

Reports on EU Working Groups online

During the summer months, two meetings of EU Working Groups in the field of sport took place in Brussels.

The third meeting of the EU Working Group "Anti-Doping" was held on 25/06/2009 and the first meeting of the EU Working Group "Education and Training in Sport" was held on 01/07/2009.

The respective reports are available online:

[Anti-Doping - 25/06/2009 - Brussels - 3rd meeting](#)

[Education and Training in Sport - 01/07/2009 - Brussels - 1st meeting](#)

Human Resources Development Conference 2009

16 October 2009

The FHRD conference will be looking into the paradigm shift that is needed in Leadership style in order to build confidence again all around. It will define and explore the new forms of leadership approaches, identify how to connect and embody the many competing values that make our organizations so complex and demonstrate how the breed of leaders enable others to consistently achieve their highest performance.

[Conference Programme](#)

[FHRD Home page](#)