



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE



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... from the Council

EU leaders nominate José Manuel Barroso for new term

EU leaders have unanimously endorsed President Barroso for a second five-year term. The nomination now goes before the European parliament.

The new assembly holds its first meeting in July. If it backs him for another term, Mr Barroso will be charged with putting together a new commission.

The president urged member countries and the parliament to support his plans for an ambitious agenda over the next five years.

...from the Parliament

Election of the President of the European Parliament

The first act of the newly elected European Parliament when it meets on 14 July 2009 will be to elect its President.

The seventh directly elected European Parliament holds its inaugural session from 14-16 July in Strasbourg. The outgoing President, Hans-Gert Pöttering, who has been re-elected to Parliament, will preside over the election of his successor, under Rule 12 of Parliament's Rules of Procedure.

[Read more...](#)



... from the Commission

Teacher effectiveness hampered by lack of incentives and bad behaviour in the classroom

Three out of four teachers feel that they lack incentives to improve the quality of their teaching, while bad behaviour by students in the classroom disrupts lessons in three schools out of five, according to a new report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) prepared with the support of the European Commission. The report is based on the new Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) and provides, for the first time, internationally comparable data on conditions affecting teachers in schools based on survey findings in 23 participating countries.

Launching the report, OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría insisted on the need to push for better teacher performance. *“High-quality teachers are key to the successful implementation of education policies”* he said. *“The bottom line is that the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers and their work.”*

The European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, Ján Figel', added: *“There are an estimated 6¼ million teachers in the EU, and they need all the help that education authorities can give them to provide the right kind of teaching in our rapidly changing classroom environments. This requires determination and commitment by policy makers to support our teachers, not only in enhancing their training, but also in improving their working conditions.”*

The report, [“Creating effective teaching and learning environments”](#), draws on the TALIS findings, and reveals the following:

- In Australia, Belgium (Flanders), Denmark, Ireland and Norway, more than 90% of teachers say they don't expect any reward for improving the quality of their teaching.
- Teachers are less pessimistic in Bulgaria and Poland, but still almost half of them see no incentive to improve.
- In Estonia, Italy, the Slovak Republic, and Spain, more than 70% of teachers at lower-secondary level work in schools where it was felt that classroom disturbances hinder the teaching process “to some extent” or “a lot”.
- On average, 38% of teachers surveyed worked in schools which suffered from a shortage of qualified staff. In Poland, the problem affected only 12% of schools. But in Turkey, 78% of schools were suffering from such shortages.
- On average, teachers spend 13% of classroom time maintaining order. In Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania and Poland, less than 10% of classroom time is lost in this way.



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- Aside from classroom disturbances, other factors hindering instruction included student absenteeism (46%), students turning up late for class (39%), profanity and swearing (37%), and intimidation or verbal abuse of other students (35%).
- Along with the lack of incentives for improvement, teachers in some countries do not even undergo any systematic appraisal or receive any feedback on their work. This is the case for more than 25% of teachers in Ireland and Portugal, 45% in Spain and 55% in Italy.

The **main policy lesson** is that education authorities need to provide more effective incentives for teachers. Many countries make no link between appraisal of teachers' performance and the rewards and recognition that they receive, and even where there are such links they are often not very strong.

Overall, the survey indicates, educational planners could do more to support teachers and improve the performance of students if both the public and policy makers **focused less on control over resources and educational content and more on learning outcomes**.

Background

TALIS is the new OECD **Teaching and Learning International Survey**. It is the first international survey to focus on the learning environment and the working conditions of teachers in schools. It looks at issues affecting teachers and their performance, seen through the eyes of school principals and the teachers themselves. In doing so, it aims to fill important information gaps in the international comparisons of education systems.

The survey was conducted with the support of the European Commission , and covers **23 participating countries** : Australia, Austria, Belgium (Flemish Community), Brazil, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Korea, Lithuania, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain and Turkey.

In each country, around 200 schools were randomly selected, and in each school one questionnaire was filled in by the school principal and another by 20 randomly selected teachers.

Questions addressed such issues as teacher preparedness, the teaching practices they adopt and recognition and rewards for teachers.

See www.oecd.org/edu/talis/firstresults



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The European Commission challenges to "Imagine a new world" through photography

In the context of the European Year of Creativity and Innovation (EYCI) 2009, the European Commission has just launched the "Imagine a new world" photo competition. Professional and amateur photographers of all ages from across the EU are invited to express their creativity. A prestigious jury will select the winners who will receive prizes in photographic equipment and trips to EU cities. The competition has a dedicated website: www.imagine2009.eu. The deadline to submit the photos is 31 August 2009.

Imagination is a vital faculty for the human being: imagination helps provide meaning to experience and understanding to knowledge; it is thanks to imagination that we can make sense of the world. In these times of rapid change, we need to be flexible and creative, to make full use of our imagination and capacity for innovation and to project ourselves into the future.

The European Commission is inviting all professional and amateur photographers, photography students and all other talents to submit their photos to the "*Imagine a new world*" photo competition. It is open to anyone who is a resident of an EU Member State, of a candidate country or of Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway, and who shares our passion for photography.

The "Imagine a new world" competition jury will be chaired by Professor of Photography and president of the European League of Institutes of the Arts (ELIA) **Chris Wainwright**.

The European public will be asked to select the winner of the "*Public's Favourite Award*" through an online voting process. The four winners of the competition will receive important prizes in cameras, photographic equipment, trips to European cities and wide recognition of their talent on the European scene.

The photo competition is one of several events organised by the European Commission in the framework of the European Year of Creativity and Innovation 2009 (EYCI). Under the slogan "*Imagine, Create, Innovate*", the EYCI 2009 aims to raise awareness of the importance of creativity and innovation as key competences for personal, social and economic development. By emphasizing creativity and innovation, the EU aims at shaping Europe's future in a global competition by fostering the creative and innovative potential in all of its citizens.

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...the Czech Presidency

European Council as culmination of the Czech Presidency

The European Council, presided by Czech Prime Minister Jan Fischer, was held on 18 and 19 June.

Important issues on the agenda of the meeting were the negotiation and adoption of the wording of the guarantees for Ireland, financial and economic issues (including European financial supervision and employment), negotiations on the future President of the European Commission, development in preparations of the Copenhagen conference on the fight against climate change and EU international policy relations, particularly with respect to Afghanistan and Pakistan.

In light of the extremely complex programme of the European Council, the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister and the Minister for European Affairs have embarked on a tour of European countries, the "tour des capitales", where they discussed the preparations of the European Council with their counterparts. On Monday 15 June the Czech Republic also presided over the ministerial meeting of the General Affairs and External Relations Council in Luxembourg, which carried out preliminary discussions of the topics of the European Council.

On Thursday, 18 June and Friday 19 June, the Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt, Minister for Foreign Affairs Carl Bildt and Minister for EU affairs Cecilia Malmström were also in Brussels to participate in the meeting of the European Council.

The European Council is the EU's top political body. It generally meets four times a year to set priorities and goals for the Union and to chart the course for achieving them. These will be presented in the form of "Presidency conclusions", which will be published at the close of the summit and made available immediately and in full on this website.

Website of the Swedish Presidency

<http://www.se2009.eu/>

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