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29. Welcomes the Commission's intention to improve the filtering of enquiries and complaints by businesses and citizens through Solvit and other Single Market Assistance Services to ensure that they are directed immediately to the right administrative body regardless of which network they are tabled through; emphasises that experiences from Solvit should be fed into national and EU policy-making, resulting in structural or regulatory changes where necessary;

30. Calls on the Commission, in cooperation with Parliament and the Presidency of the Council, to hold a yearly Internal Market Forum with participation of the Member States and other stakeholders in order to establish a clearer commitment to proper implementation in due time and to provide an arena for benchmarking and exchange of best practices;

31. Calls on the Council to give a higher priority to Internal Market issues either by establishing a new Council formation addressing these questions or by giving them top priority on the agenda in the existing Competitiveness Council;

32. Recalls its abovementioned resolution on the Single Market Review, where it called for the Commission to establish an Internal Market Test; calls on the Commission to take action to introduce such a test;

#### ***The Internal Market and Consumer Markets Scoreboards***

33. Holds the view that the Internal Market Scoreboard and the Consumer Markets Scoreboard both serve to promote an improved Internal Market to the benefit of citizens and consumers;

34. Welcomes the Commission's intention to ensure a better communicated Internal Market, and holds the view that the two Scoreboards are important steps in that direction;

35. Emphasises that while the two Scoreboards are interlinked and that it is important to promote their coherent development, they have however different target addressees and hence should be kept separate with different sets of indicators;

36. Holds the view that a review of the indicators used as well as the relationship between the two Scoreboards should be carried out on a regular basis in order to adapt them to development in the Internal Market;

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37. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission and to the governments and parliaments of the Member States.

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### **Improving the quality of teacher education**

P6\_TA(2008)0422

**European Parliament resolution of 23 September 2008 on improving the quality of teacher education (2008/2068(INI))**

(2010/C 8 E/03)

*The European Parliament,*

— having regard to Articles 3(1)(q), 149 and 150 of the EC Treaty,

— having regard to the Commission communication entitled Improving the Quality of Teacher Education (COM(2007)0392) and to the related Commission staff working papers (SEC(2007)0931 and SEC(2007)0933),

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- having regard to Decision No 1720/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 November 2006 establishing an action programme in the field of lifelong learning <sup>(1)</sup>, which includes the specific objective of enhancing the quality and European dimension of teacher training (Article 17(2)(e)),
  - having regard to the eight key skills set out in Recommendation 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 entitled Key Competences for lifelong learning — A European Reference Framework <sup>(2)</sup>,
  - having regard to the 10-year Education and Training 2010 work programme and specifically to Objective 1.1 'Improving Education and Training for Teachers and Trainers' <sup>(3)</sup>, as well as to the subsequent joint interim reports on progress towards its implementation,
  - having regard to the European Union's multilingualism policy and to the Commission's High Level Group Report on Multilingualism (2007),
  - having regard to the Presidency Conclusions of the Lisbon Special European Council of 23-24 March 2000,
  - having regard to the Presidency Conclusions of the Barcelona European Council of March 2002, which adopted concrete objectives for improving, among other things, education and training for teachers and trainers,
  - having regard to the Council Conclusions of 5 May 2003 on reference levels of European average performance in education and training (Benchmarks) <sup>(4)</sup>,
  - having regard to the conclusions adopted by the Education, Youth and Culture Council at its meeting of 15-16 November 2007 and specifically to the conclusions on teacher education <sup>(5)</sup>,
  - having regard to the OECD's triennial PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) surveys as well as to its report 'Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers' (2005),
  - having regard to the report 'How the world's best performing school systems come out on top' (McKinsey & Co, September 2007),
  - having regard to the study published by the European Parliament in February 2007 entitled Current situation and prospects for physical education in the European Union,
  - having regard to its resolution of 13 November 2007 on the role of sport in education <sup>(6)</sup>,
  - having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Culture and Education (A6-0304/2008),
- A. whereas high quality education and training have multifaceted benefits that go beyond job creation and the promotion of competitiveness, and are important components of lifelong learning,
- B. whereas there is a need to educate individuals to become self-sufficient, informed and committed to a cohesive society, and whereas the quality of teaching is a critical factor in contributing to the European Union's social and economic cohesion as well as its job creation, competitiveness and growth potential in a globalising world,

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ L 327, 24.11.2006, p. 45.

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ L 394, 30.12.2006, p. 10.

<sup>(3)</sup> OJ C 142, 14.6.2002, p. 7.

<sup>(4)</sup> OJ C 134, 7.6.2003, p. 3.

<sup>(5)</sup> OJ C 300, 12.12.2007, p. 6.

<sup>(6)</sup> Texts Adopted, P6\_TA(2007)0503.

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- C. whereas the European Social Fund can play an important role in education and training development, thus contributing to better teacher education,
- D. whereas the quality of teacher training is reflected in educational practice and has a direct effect not only on pupils' level of knowledge but also on the formation of their personality, particularly during the first years of their school experience,
- E. whereas the challenges faced by the teaching profession are increasing as educational environments become more complex and heterogeneous; whereas these challenges include advances in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), changes to social and family structures, and the increasingly diverse mix of students in many schools resulting from increased immigration and the emergence of multicultural societies, the increase in the autonomy of schools, which entails an increase in teachers' duties, and the need to pay more attention to the learning needs of individual pupils,
- F. whereas there is a clear and positive correlation between high quality teacher training and pupils achieving high success rates,
- G. whereas in the light of the growing supply of information in conjunction with ongoing digitisation, the capacity must be developed to use media and their content effectively in accordance with individuals' aims and needs, and whereas media education is a type of pedagogical approach to the media which should enable users to develop a critical and reflective approach when using all media,
- H. whereas more than 80 % of primary school teachers and 97 % of pre-school teachers in the Union are women, while in secondary education the equivalent figure is only 60 %,
- I. whereas the quality of teacher education can affect early school leaving levels and older students' reading skills,
- J. whereas pre-school and primary education have a particularly critical impact on children's eventual educational achievement,
- K. whereas with more than 27 different teacher training systems in place across the Union, the challenges facing the teaching profession are nonetheless, in essence, common to all Member States,
- L. whereas teaching is a vocational profession in which high levels of job satisfaction are important for the retention of good staff,
- M. whereas it would be unfair to make teachers solely responsible for their educational activity; whereas it needs to be stressed that the ability of teachers to offer a proper education to all their pupils, create a climate in which all can live together, and reduce violent behaviour, is closely linked to the conditions in which they teach, the means of support available, the number of pupils with learning difficulties in class, the social and cultural environment in the school, the cooperation of families, and the social support received; whereas the level of teacher commitment depends to a large extent on society's commitment to education, and both factors interact in the interests of better teaching,
- N. whereas every effort needs to be made to ensure that all teachers feel they belong to a respected and valued profession, given that a large part of professional identity depends on society's perceived view,
- O. whereas attracting top-performing recruits to the teaching profession requires corresponding levels of social recognition, status and remuneration,
- P. whereas teachers play important social and developmental roles that extend beyond traditional subject boundaries, and can perform an important function as role models,

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- Q. whereas the objective of equal opportunities for all is enshrined in the EC Treaty, particularly in Article 13 of the Treaty, which provides a legal basis for combating discrimination on grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation,
- R. whereas the quality of schools is to a large extent dependent on the degree of autonomy attaching to their plans and management,
- S. whereas appropriate professional qualifications for physical education teachers play a very important role in the physical and mental development of children and in encouraging them to adopt a healthy way of life,
1. Strongly supports the analysis that raising the quality of teacher education leads to substantial gains in student performance;
  2. Considers that the provision of more and better quality teacher education combined with policies aimed at recruiting the best candidates into the teaching profession should be key priorities for all education ministries;
  3. Believes that increases in education expenditure should target the areas that produce the greatest improvements in student performance;
  4. Emphasises that Member States must attach greater importance and allocate more resources to teacher training if significant progress is to be made in achieving the Lisbon Strategy's Education and Training 2010 objectives, namely that the quality of education is to be boosted, and that lifelong learning is to be reinforced across the Union;
  5. Strongly encourages the promotion of continuous and coherent professional development for teachers throughout their careers; recommends that all teachers have regular academic, work and financial opportunities, such as government scholarships, to improve and update their skills and qualifications, as well as their pedagogical knowledge; considers that these training opportunities should be structured in such a way that the qualifications are recognised in all the Member States;
  6. Stresses the need for increased transnational dialogue and exchanges of experience, especially in the provision and effectiveness of continuing professional development in the field of pre-school, primary and secondary teacher education;
  7. Urges that particular attention be paid to the initial induction of new teachers; encourages the development of support networks and mentoring programmes, through which teachers of proven experience and capacity can play a key role in new colleagues' training, passing on knowledge acquired throughout successful careers, promoting team-learning and helping to tackle drop-out rates among new recruits; believes that by working and learning together, teachers can help improve a school's performance and overall learning environment;
  8. Calls on the Member States to ensure that, while maintaining the focus on recruiting and retaining the best teachers, notably by making the profession sufficiently attractive, the composition of the teaching workforce at all levels of school education represents the social and cultural diversity within society;
  9. Emphasises the close link between ensuring that teaching is an attractive and fulfilling profession with good career progression prospects and the successful recruitment of motivated, high-achieving graduates and professionals; urges the Member States to take further measures to promote teaching as a career choice for top achievers;
  10. Stresses the particular importance of gender policy; stresses also the importance of ensuring that pre-school and primary school teachers are of high quality and that they receive the appropriate levels of social and professional support that their responsibilities entail;

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11. Recognises the importance of the ongoing participation of teachers in working and discussion groups relating to their teaching activity; believes that this work should be backed up by mentors and educational authorities; considers that participation in critical reflection activities concerning the teaching process should generate greater interest in teachers' work and thus improve their performance;
12. Insists on the important role of school in terms of children's social life and education as well as in giving them the knowledge and skills necessary for participating in democratic society; stresses the importance of having qualified, competent and experienced teachers involved in the conception of effective pedagogical training methods for teachers;
13. Calls on the Member States to ensure that only suitably qualified physical education teachers can give PE lessons within the public education system;
14. Highlights the marked differences between the average wages of teachers, not only between different Member States, but also in relation to average national incomes and GDP per capita; believes that teachers should benefit from good remuneration packages which reflect their importance to society, and calls for action to address the 'brain-drain' of top teachers to better-paid private sector posts, particularly in the areas of science and technology;
15. Emphasises that teachers must be better equipped to meet the range of new demands made on them; recognises the challenges that developments in ICT present to teachers, but also the opportunities; encourages the prioritisation of ICT education during initial and subsequent training to ensure up-to-date knowledge of recent technological developments and their educational application and to ensure that teachers have the necessary skills to take advantage of these in the classroom;
16. Believes that training should aim, amongst other objectives, to provide teachers with the innovative framework they need in order to mainstream the environmental perspective into their activities and into the new subject areas; favours local seminars aimed at meeting needs detected in particular contexts and courses intended for the staff of a given establishment, with a view to implementing concrete projects which take into account their needs and their particular context;
17. Emphasises that teacher mobility, better cooperation and team work could improve the creativity and innovation of teaching methods and would facilitate learning based on best practices;
18. Calls on the Commission to reinforce the financial resources available to support teacher education through the Lifelong Learning Programme, and in particular teacher exchanges between schools in neighbouring countries and regions; emphasises that mobility facilitates the spread of ideas and best practice within teaching and promotes improvements in foreign language skills as well as awareness of other cultures; stresses that teachers should benefit from greater language learning facilities throughout their careers, which, inter alia, will maximise the opportunities provided by Union mobility programmes;
19. Calls for media studies to be assigned priority in teacher training and for media studies modules already underway to be an important component in the basic training of teachers;
20. Highlights the crucial role of the Comenius and Comenius-Regio school partnership in this teacher mobility framework;
21. Strongly supports foreign language learning from a very early age and the inclusion of language lessons in all primary curricula; emphasises that sufficient investment in recruiting and training foreign language teachers is vital in order to achieve this objective;
22. Stresses that every teacher should be a role model as regards the mastery of his or her own language, since this is a vital tool for correct transmission and facilitates pupils' learning of the remaining subjects while developing their ability to communicate, a factor of ever greater importance in numerous professional activities;

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23. Underlines the need for teachers in all Member States to have certificated competence in at least one foreign language;
  24. Calls for media competence to be promoted in the school, post-school and extramural education of teachers in the context of media studies and lifelong learning by means of cooperation between the public authorities and the private sector;
  25. Emphasises that there is no substitute for the time teachers spend in the classroom with students and is concerned that increasing administration and paperwork can be detrimental to this and to time spent preparing classes;
  26. Calls for civic education to become a compulsory subject both in teacher training and at schools, so that teachers and pupils have the requisite knowledge of citizens' rights and obligations and of the Union and can analyse and critically assess topical political and social situations and processes;
  27. Considers that every school has a unique relationship with its local community, and that school leaders should have greater decision-making responsibility that allows them to address the educational challenges and teaching requirements particular to their environment, in collaboration with parents and with local community stakeholders; stresses that, with the arrival of a highly diverse immigrant population, the teaching profession needs to be made specifically aware of intercultural issues and processes, not only within schools but also in relation to families and their immediate local environment, where diversity flourishes;
  28. Emphasises the extremely beneficial impact of the Comenius programme on teachers and its importance for small communities, especially in socially and economically deprived areas, in that it promotes inclusion and greater awareness of the European dimension in education;
  29. Welcomes the agreement of the Member States to work together to enhance the coordination of teacher education policies, notably through the Open Method of Coordination; urges the Member States to take full advantage of this opportunity to learn from each other and asks be consulted on the timetable and developments in this area;
  30. Underlines the need for better statistics on teacher training across the Union, in order to encourage the sharing of information, greater cooperation and the exchange of best practice; proposes that the Member States, in cooperation with the Commission, put in place systems that ensure comparative data is readily available on teacher education across pre-school, primary and secondary education;
  31. Considers that, in order to deal with violence at schools, it is vital to achieve closer cooperation between head teachers and parents and to create the tools and procedures to tackle the phenomenon effectively;
  32. Stresses the importance of gender-sensitive teaching and of the gender aspect in teacher training;
  33. Calls on the Commission to disseminate best practice models from the Member States which improve general life skills by means of school projects, e.g. healthy diet and sport, domestic science and private financial planning;
  34. Calls on the Member States to include in teacher training conflict resolution programmes, so that teachers learn new strategies for resolving all kinds of conflicts inside the classroom, and also for coping with violence and aggression;
  35. Calls on the Member States to include in teacher training basic knowledge about the European Union, its institutions and their mode of functioning and arrange for practical visits by trainee teachers to the institutions of the Union;
  36. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission, and the governments and parliaments of the Member States, to the OECD, to Unesco and to the Council of Europe.
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