

Tuesday 27 September 2011

77. Is in favour of small and medium-sized projects forming the focus of future research funding; believes that small and medium-sized projects are easier and less costly for universities and SMEs to manage; and that they will also enable to increase the hitherto unsatisfactory success rates of applications;

78. Believes that, when certain societal needs are not being met by our present innovation models, new public licensing schemes and innovation inducement prizes can be used to focus research in these areas and to assure the efficacy of public expenditure; calls on the Commission to launch as soon as possible a pilot initiative for inducement prizes in the medical sector;

79. Calls for coherent coverage of the full R&D&I chain through the implementation of transparency rules and clear coordination between the different Commission DGs dealing with research and innovation funding;

80. Calls for an intensification of international cooperation, where appropriate, with the strategic partners of the European Union, including fast growing countries such as the BRICS countries, on a reciprocal basis, in order to better tackle global challenges; recalls that participation of third-country researchers would be encouraged by more simplified procedures and significantly shorter lead times for applications; stresses the need for a stronger scientific capacity building in neighbouring countries, based on a better coordination of the Common Strategic Framework with EU neighbourhood policy instruments; believes that effective reinforcement of capacity building and the establishment of fair and comprehensive partnerships with developing countries is crucial to boosting their sustainable development;

81. Considers that cooperation with third countries in the domain of research with possible dual use should be avoided with any country that does not respect human rights, UN resolutions and international law;

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82. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

European Schools system

P7_TA(2011)0402

European Parliament resolution of 27 September 2011 on the European Schools system (2011/2036(INI))

(2013/C 56 E/02)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of European Union,
- having regard to the Commission report to Parliament entitled ‘The European Schools’ system in 2009’ (COM(2010)0595),
- having regard to the Convention defining the statute of the European Schools ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 8 September 2005 on options for developing the European Schools System ⁽²⁾,

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 212, 17.8.1994, p. 3.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 193 E, 17.8.2006, p. 333.

Tuesday 27 September 2011

- having regard to Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 723/2004 of 22 March 2004 amending the Staff Regulations of Officials of the European Communities and Conditions of Employment of other servants of the European Communities ⁽¹⁾,
 - having regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which came into force on 3 May 2008 and was ratified by the European Union on 23 December 2010, in particular Article 24 thereof ⁽²⁾,
 - having regard to the annual report by the Secretary-General of the European Schools presented to the Board of Governors at its meeting of 12, 13 and 14 April 2011 in Brussels ⁽³⁾,
 - having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Culture and Education and the opinions of the Committee on Budgets and the Committee on Legal Affairs (A7-0293/2011),
- A. whereas Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union states that the Union shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity,
- B. whereas the preamble to the 1994 Convention defining the Statute of the European Schools states that the European Schools system is 'sui generis' and constitutes a form of cooperation between the Member States and between them and the European Communities while fully acknowledging the Member States' responsibility for the content of teaching and the organisation of their educational system, and for their cultural and linguistic diversity,
- C. whereas Article 1 of the Convention allows for other children to attend the Schools within the limits set by the Board of Governors, who, according to point II.7 of Chapter XII of the Digest of Decisions of the Board of Governors, can award Category I status to "Staff of any Community organisation set up by an act of the Community Institutions and staff in the service of other organisations recognised by the Board of Governors",
- D. whereas the European Schools enable pupils to affirm their cultural identity and to attain a high level of knowledge of at least two languages, including their mother tongue, which they are encouraged to learn from an extremely early age, highlighting the importance of multiculturalism and fostering mutual understanding and mutual respect,
- E. whereas the European Schools cannot be put in the same category as international schools because, rather than existing to offer parents the option of a particular type of schooling for their children, they meet a need to educate children in their mother tongue, and to develop the European dimension in education,
- F. whereas the European Schools' way of operating, based from the outset on an intergovernmental convention, should be improved and the system will have to be given a legal basis that will allow it to be simplified and to become more transparent and effective,
- G. whereas the reform of the European Schools system was approved by the Board of Governors in April 2009,

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 124, 27.4.2004, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ <http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf>.

⁽³⁾ Ref.: 2011-02-D-39-fr-1.

Tuesday 27 September 2011

- H. whereas the experience of over 50 years of functioning of the European Schools has shown the system and its educational model to be unique and attractive; whereas one of the aims of the reform is to open up that system and the European Baccalaureate to other pupils in the Union, whereas the aims of the reform cannot be attained successfully without a fundamental change in the legal status on which the whole system is based,
- I. whereas the Commission report on the European Schools' system in 2009 ⁽¹⁾ pointed to persisting and worsening systemic problems, such as the lack of seconded teachers or delays in, or non-provision of, sufficient infrastructure at the schools' locations, which have a direct effect on the quality of education, enrolment policies, the quality of life of students, parents and teachers and financial aspects of the functioning of the Schools,
- J. whereas in the Schools in Brussels and Luxembourg the lack of school buildings and infrastructure is detrimental to the quality of education and prevents the Schools being opened up to children other than the children of EU institutions staff; whereas it is necessary to ensure that all pupils receive the same quality of education regardless of mother tongue, school location or category,
- K. whereas the main aim of the 2009 reform of the European Schools was to open them up to a wider and more diverse intake, while at the same time ensuring the system's long-term viability,
- L. whereas the educational model on which the European Schools are based should be promoted in the Member States, since it provides added value, and made an integral part of their educational systems,
- M. whereas it is difficult to bring together within the same educational system – geared solely towards the European baccalaureate examination – students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, who may have very different talents and capacities, and whereas it is thus necessary to provide appropriate support for students with special educational needs (SEN),
- N. recognising the need to consider the introduction of a school-leaving certificate other than the European baccalaureate for students wishing to specialise in vocational courses,
- O. whereas, in its resolution of 8 September 2005, one of the things that Parliament called for was a pilot project for an SEN resource centre; whereas the sum of EUR 200 000 was earmarked for that purpose in the 2008 EU budget and whereas the money was eventually used to fund a study of policy and practice with regard to SEN provision in the European Schools,
- P. whereas Article 4 of the Convention defining the Statute of the European Schools stipulates that, in order to help bring students from the various language sections together and to foster mutual understanding between them and to improve students' language skills, certain lessons will be taught in any Community language, where circumstances justify its use, to joint classes of the same level,
- Q. whereas, in accordance with Article 25 of the Convention defining the Statute of the European Schools, the Schools are funded essentially by contributions from the Member States in the form of the secondment of teachers, which in 2010 made up 21 % of the European Schools' budget, and a balancing contribution from the EU, to cover the difference between the Schools' overall expenditure and their total income from other sources, which in 2010 made up 58 % of the budget; whereas the European Schools are also dependent, via their Board of Governors, on an intergovernmental executive,

⁽¹⁾ COM(2010)0595.

Tuesday 27 September 2011

- R. whereas Article 25 also provides that the European Schools' budget may include a financial contribution decided on by the Board of Governors acting unanimously,
- S. whereas the economic crisis has had repercussions on the financing of the European Schools and the Commission has therefore called for reforms to rationalise costs in the Schools, but whereas this should not be allowed to affect the education of vulnerable children with learning difficulties and special needs, and should not affect teaching in mother tongue or bring about a reduction in the teaching of languages other than French, German and English,
- T. whereas, following the two most recent EU enlargements, the number of students without a language section (SWALS) is continuing to grow, but whereas they should not be penalised in any way owing to the fact that they do not have a language section,
- U. whereas the increase in the number of European School pupils is a direct consequence of the EU institutions' post-2004 recruitment policy, which resulted in employing staff below the age of 30; in the meantime these young officials have established families and subsequently enrolled their children in European Schools,
- V. whereas the SWALS are given learning support in the language of the language section in which they enrol, so as to be able to follow the classes, and classes in their mother tongue, a few hours a week being the very minimum necessary to maintain ties to their mother tongue and culture,
- W. whereas a special levy on the salaries of officials, intended to be used inter alia for the European Schools, was introduced in 2004 for the declared purpose of reflecting the costs of social policy, improved working conditions and the European Schools,

General considerations

1. Regrets that the European Schools are often wrongly considered to be elitist schools, a luxury rather than a necessity, when their mission is in fact to provide mother-tongue education for students whose parents may be required to change their place of work or return to their country of origin, as well as to develop the European dimension in education;
2. Recalls that this specific educational system enables pupils to study all subjects (particularly the sciences) in their mother tongue with qualified teachers or, in the case of SWALS, with the necessary learning support and classes to maintain their mother tongue;

Organisation and spread of the European baccalaureate system

3. Believes that this specific system of education enables pupils to study all subjects in a multicultural, multilingual environment, with qualified teachers, while retaining their mother tongues;
4. Takes the view that the European Schools, which constitute an excellent educational showcase based on a tried and tested teaching approach, should become an example of one of the best possible forms of schooling in Europe, based on the dissemination of European culture, values and languages, and whereas incorporating certain elements of this model, such as the emphasis on foreign-language knowledge, into the national and regional education systems would assist professional mobility and help to foster multilingualism and European integration;

Tuesday 27 September 2011

5. Believes that European Schools play a valuable role in their communities;
6. Considers that the European Schools should also function as promoters of multiculturalism and multilingualism, and as models for the protection and promotion of languages of lower international usage; believes that the small number of pupils requiring education in a given language should not lead to education in that particular language being discontinued, bearing in mind that mother-tongue education constitutes the founding principle of the European Schools;
7. Draws attention to the need to make the European Schools' syllabus more compatible with national education systems in order to facilitate the swift reintegration of pupils returning to their countries of origin;
8. Takes the view that the budgetary restrictions that the Schools will have to accept must be accompanied by a real increase in their management autonomy – by, for example, allowing the schools to find other funding – and in the resources for exercising that autonomy, in accordance with the aims set out at the time of the reform in 2009; takes the view also that the organisational reform that is to be implemented should not negatively affect the founding principles of the European Schools;
9. Takes the view that giving each of the European Schools a greater degree of budgetary autonomy may be an effective way of improving the management of the resources allocated to them; stresses that this must only be implemented following an assessment by the Commission to ensure that a greater degree of autonomy would benefit the schools.
10. Emphasises that the European Schools are currently in a legal limbo, which manifests itself in the unclear legal and jurisdictional status of acts adopted by the Schools' bodies, insufficient possibilities to challenge those acts before national courts, no possibility of recourse to the European Ombudsman;
11. Considers that the current intergovernmental legal status of the European Schools has reached its limits and requires profound change; considers that this change should be of such a nature as to allow Union action to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the Member States, without superseding their competence, and to adopt legally binding acts to that end within the meaning of Articles 2 and 6 TFEU;
12. Stresses the need to give the European Schools the foundation of an adequate legal base, within the EU's area of competence, and hopes that the Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture, together with the Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education – responsible under Annex VII of its Rules of Procedure for the promotion of the system of European schools – can be involved in any discussions on the subject and in any consideration of the future of the Schools;
13. Considers that the European Schools should be brought under the umbrella of the Union; considers that an appropriate legal basis in this regard could be Article 165 TFEU, which reads: 'The Union should contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and organisation of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity', and further specifies the aims of the Union's action, which correspond to the aims of the European Schools;
14. Urges the Board of Governors to think further ahead about infrastructure requirements and to take measures that will allow real demand for the European Schooling to be met; calls on the Member States and the Commission to encourage the development of Type II and Type III Schools;

Tuesday 27 September 2011

15. Encourages the Member States and regional governments with legislative powers in education to promote the concept of European Schools on their territory by organising campaigns to increase awareness of European education, promoting the European baccalaureate and creating pilot establishments, as provided for in the 2009 reform, with the aim of opening up the system with a view to promoting access to European studies and the European baccalaureate throughout the Member States;

16. Invites the Member States to cooperate when developing their national syllabuses, drawing on the educational experience of the European Schools, so as to bring the national systems and the European School system closer together; highlights the particular role of languages, history and geography syllabuses in fostering a common European identity; repeats its request to the Member States to promote the inclusion – in studies at baccalaureate level or equivalent – of a specific subject on the background, goals and functioning of the European Union and its institutions, which will help young people to feel more involved in the process of European integration;

17. Invites the Member States to pursue collective consideration of how best to realise the aim of opening up the system;

18. Recommends that the Member States promote within their own educational systems certain concepts borrowed from the European School system, to encourage the emergence of European citizenship from a very young age;

19. Calls on the Central Enrolment Authority to establish an exchange forum for all parents who have not secured a place for their children in their school of choice, so that they can be transferred to the desired school by means of exchanges with other pupils;

20. Points out that, under Article 5 of the Convention defining the Statute of the European Schools, students who hold the European baccalaureate can apply to any university in the EU, with the same rights as nationals of the country in question who hold equivalent qualifications, and urges the Member States to ensure that the relevant provisions are complied with, so that the European baccalaureate is automatically recognised in all Member States, thereby preventing discrimination of any kind between pupils of European Schools and those in possession of equivalent national qualifications;

21. Urges the Member States to ensure that all their universities and higher education institutions apply the same requirements when recognising the education of students from European Schools as for students from national schools and that these students receive the same credits for their education, in order to have equal chances and opportunities when applying for higher education;

22. Encourages the Member States and regional governments with legislative powers in education to homologate a relevant proportion of their public school system so that it can award students the European baccalaureate diploma when they finish secondary school;

23. Encourages the Board of Governors to develop more actively the European Schools by following the examples of the best schooling systems in the world as demonstrated by PISA studies, and encourages twinning between the European School and national schools as a means of promoting student and teacher exchanges and raising awareness of the European Schools system in the Member States, along the lines of the Comenius programme;

Budgetary aspects

24. Notes that revenue is static or falling, particularly in connection with enrolment from contract bodies or families outside the Community institutions, who are now being turned away because of lack of places, and urges that new solutions be sought in the light of the new financial resources available from mobility workers from private-sector and other international institutions;

Tuesday 27 September 2011

25. Notes the need to rationalise the Schools' management costs, but points out that attempts to curb expenditure must not call into question fundamental principles that form the basis of the European Schools concept, such as mother-tongue teaching by native speakers, must not affect the core curricula, such as science and mathematics, and must not take place at the expense of educational quality; stresses that equal and equivalent teaching conditions for children of all language communities in the European Schools must be guaranteed;

26. Calls on the European Union to define its budget contribution so that these principles are respected, and so that there is adequate provision for students with special educational needs (SEN) or other learning difficulties which require specific support, and to provide a detailed breakdown of the funds allocated for students with SEN in order to ensure optimal use of those funds; invites the Commission, before deciding on any budgetary changes, in cooperation with the Schools and parent/teacher associations, to draw up an impact assessment of the various options for rationalisation of the system, including examining the educational aspects;

27. Considers that, in the short term, the European Union's commitments should be honoured, while, at the same time, account should be taken of the prevailing climate of budgetary restrictions at both Union and Member State level; notes that the 2012 draft budget provides for a 1,7 % increase in funding for the European Schools, at a time when budgetary difficulties have led the Commission to propose a freeze on its own administrative expenditure and a 1,3 % increase in administrative expenditure for the European institutions generally; undertakes to scrutinise the appropriations on the budget lines in question in order for all budgetary needs to be met;

28. Emphasises that the Union's involvement in the European Schools is disproportionately little compared to the financial contribution from its budget;

29. Points out that the proposed cuts in the budgets of the European Schools constitute a serious threat to the quality of education and the proper functioning of the European Schools, and therefore opposes any budgetary cuts;

30. Considers that many of the systemic problems amount to non-fulfilment of the obligations of the Member States; points to the non-existent legal guarantees of Member States' fulfilment of their obligations under the Convention;

31. Notes that some states are increasingly going back on their obligations regarding the secondment of teachers, particularly because of the difference between the percentage of children of their nationality being taught and the contribution that they are being asked to make to the Schools' budget;

32. Points out that the cost-allocation mechanism must also help to encourage a fairer system with regard to payment of the school fees charged to parents who do not work for the European institutions or for companies that have an agreement with the European Schools;

33. Asks the Commission to consider introducing a system of reserve lists for filling those posts that cannot be filled by teachers on secondment and those which need to be filled by locally recruited staff, in order to ensure that needs are met with regard to teacher numbers and that educational quality and continuity are guaranteed;

34. Encourages the creation, once the quota of students is reached, of new language sections so the SWALS can be educated in their mother tongue and there is no discrimination with regard to students from other language sections, with a consequent reduction of the costs associated with the SWALS' particular status;

Tuesday 27 September 2011

35. Notes with concern that the lack of seconded staff must be compensated by local recruitment of staff whose salaries are paid by the Schools; calls on the Board of Governors to ensure that the Member States who do not contribute financially by seconding teachers pay an equivalent financial contribution to the Schools' budget;

36. Considers that the current funding system places a disproportionate burden as regards secondment and supply of infrastructure on certain Member States, and calls on the Board of Governors to review the way in which the Schools are funded and the recruitment of teachers;

37. Reaffirms that the European Schools must be financed on a sound and adequate basis so that the commitments made in the Convention and in the Staff Regulations of Officials and Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union can be fulfilled and the quality of the education provided, as well as equal and equivalent teaching conditions for children of all language communities in the European Schools, can be guaranteed. Notes, in this regard, the recent petition by the parents' and teachers' associations of the Brussels European Schools pointing out the serious threats posed by the proposed cuts to the quality of education and the proper functioning of the European Schools and therefore opposing any budget cuts;

38. Calls on the Commission to take steps to define the percentage of the special levy assigned to the European Schools;

39. Emphasises the long-term importance of making the European Union's financial contribution more transparent and doing more to guarantee openness and diversity in the schools, while also introducing a sustainable financing system; calls on the Commission, in this context, to specify for which purposes the special levy has been used; asks the Commission to submit to it an update on implementation of the 2009 reform and on the financing requirements for the coming years, especially in respect of the buildings policy;

Educational aspects

40. Wishes – in accordance with Article 4 of the Convention defining the Statute of the European Schools, which aims to bring pupils of the different language sections together by offering joint classes of the same level in certain subjects – to see general use of the working languages for teaching all non-fundamental subjects, without this being detrimental to those whose mother tongue is not one of working languages;

41. Maintains that there is an intrinsic value in teaching certain subjects in the 'less widely used' national languages spoken by a small number of EU citizens;

42. Stresses the need for an external evaluation of the European Schools' syllabuses, which would not result in additional costs to the Schools, and the importance of implementing the ongoing baccalaureate reforms;

43. Requires that the recruitment of local staff meet the excellence criteria, that the quality of teaching, training and replacements in case of absence be ensured, and that the Board of Governors ensure that the professional abilities of such staff are evaluated by inspectors;

44. Considers that special training programmes and professional workshops for teachers coming from the different national systems should be organised in order to prepare them — in accordance with common standards and criteria – for the work within the European Schools' system;

Tuesday 27 September 2011

45. Reaffirms that provision for students with special educational needs remains a priority and that the European Schools must do everything possible to improve their capacity for educating students with disabilities; asks the Board of Governors, in this regard, to ensure that coefficients are applied to this category of student when calculating class sizes and to ensure full integration of such students;

46. Calls on the Board of Governors of the European Schools to implement the recommendations on students with special educational needs made following the 2009 study by a team of Swedish experts, and to draw up an SEN action plan;

47. Stresses the need to work out a properly functioning system to help students with disabilities during their integration process in the European Schools (e.g. assistance by special teachers) in order to ensure their parents' mobility;

48. Notes that the official 2.7 % failure rate reported by the Board of Governors does not reflect the great disparity in results across the European Schools, where there has for many years been an abnormally high failure rate in the French language section; calls on the Board of Governors to examine the educational and financial causes and consequences of this malfunction, of the failure rate in general and of the on-going high rates of children repeating a year;

49. Calls, once again, on the Board of Governors to work on providing alternatives for those students who drop out of preparation for the European baccalaureate, and to consider the creation of a school-leaving certificate other than the baccalaureate for students who wish to specialise in vocational courses; argues that any new certificate must undergo impact assessment and that it must be ensured that it adds value to existing qualification frameworks;

50. Reaffirms that provision for students with special educational needs must continue to be a priority, particularly as the European Schools still offer only one type of school-leaving certificate and therefore need to ensure that maximum support is provided with a view to preventing academic failure insofar as possible, so that students do not then risk finding themselves without other options if, for language or other reasons, they cannot take alternative courses in their host country's national education system;

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51. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Member States and the Board of Governors of the European Schools.

Future EU cohesion policy

P7_TA(2011)0403

European Parliament resolution of 27 September 2011 on absorption of Structural and Cohesion Funds: lessons learnt for the future cohesion policy of the EU (2010/2305(INI))

(2013/C 56 E/03)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Articles 174 to 178 thereof,
- having regard to the Commission's Communication of 26 January 2011: 'Regional Policy Contributing to Sustainable Growth in Europe 2020' (COM(2011)0017),
- having regard to the Commission's Staff Working Document on Regional Policy contributing to sustainable growth in Europe 2020 (SEC(2011)0092),