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European Centre for the Development
of Vocational Training

Quality issues in European Education and VET policy - making

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European Education and Training (E+T)

- Full status of EU policies gradually, over a period of 50 years;
- Dynamic process: tensions between EU initiatives and Member States' sovereignty;
- Stable process;
- Parallel evolution but at a different pace;
- Mutual influence

E+T in the Treaty of Rome (1957)

Article 126 (education): 'The Community shall *contribute to* the development of quality education'. (without specifying school or tertiary education, this elusiveness was deliberate);

Mention of students and 'academic recognition of diplomas and periods of study'.

Article 127 (VET): 'The Community *shall implement* a vocational training policy' to 'facilitate adaptation to industrial changes' and 'vocational integration and reintegration into the labour market' through initial, continuing training and retraining.



Articles 126-127-128 and cooperation between Member States and education sub - sectors

- Cooperation foreseen from the start but the one on education and culture initially entrusted to the Council of Europe;
- Articles 126-127 clearly mentioned that EU action will fully respect ‘the responsibility of the Member States in content and organisation matters’;
- Cooperation actions would accompany all future programmes in education and training, but they limited it to institutions of the same level and status (not between higher education and training establishments);
- Cooperation between voc. training and businesses (to face employment-related consequences of the application of the common market);
- Cooperation between training and general education with the Council Decision of 2 April 1963 laying down the general principles for implementing a common vocational training policy (Article 128).



European social policy rise in 1970s

- ✓ **European social policy:** dormant up to the mid-1970s;
- ✓ First reform of the European Social Fund in 1971;
- ✓ Paris Summit of 1972: European social policy as part of the European policy to realise economic and monetary union and to respond to challenges (youth unrest, aftermath of May 1968, the economic crisis and unemployment following the two oil crises of the 1970s);
- ✓ First European social policy programme launched in 1974;
- ✓ European Foundation on improving living and working conditions (Eurofound) 1975, Dublin.
- ✓ **VET** rise: new professions (information technology, services) and new categories of people (women and young people);
- ✓ Included in reforms of education systems as vocational *education* and training;
- ✓ European Centre for the development of vocational education and training (Cedefop) 1975, Berlin. Trade unions: VET: a way for workers to cope with labour market changes and a field for a Community social dialogue;



European social policy rise in 1970s (cont)

- A new European governance model: Eurofound and Cedefop;
- **Education:** cooperation on the basis of resolutions and conclusions;
- First Community action programme on education, Council resolution, February 1976 : first comprehensive programme containing all the seeds of future Community action in education. It called for better language teaching, the education of migrants' children, closer relations between education systems to promote mutual understanding and the continuous comparison of policies, equal opportunities for free access to all forms of education and the compilation of documentation and statistics that was entrusted to the Eurydice.
- **Higher Education (HE):** The European University of Florence, 1972;
- Cooperation and exchanges between universities mainly through joint study programmes (basis of the future Erasmus programme);
- Common policy on the admission of students from other Member States and
- Creation of possibilities for the academic recognition of diplomas and studies acquired abroad.



European identity in the 1980s

- Enlargements of 1973, 1981, 1986 and adoption of the Single European Act in 1986: need to make Europe's identity known within European society and worldwide;
- Council Resolution on the European dimension in education of May 1988: Member States to integrate the European dimension in their schools, curricula, teaching material and into teacher training in order to prepare young people to participate actively in the construction of the European Union and to exercise their responsibilities “in a wider social and economic area” in full knowledge of its advantages and challenges.



The development of Community programmes in the 1980s

- ✓ First Research Framework Programme (1984-87) adopted in 1984 : seven objectives including one on improving the effectiveness of the Community's scientific and technical potential (horizontal action);
- ✓ European cooperation in HE enabled by the 1985 Court of Justice's interpretation of the Treaty which brought HE within the scope of the Treaty and of Article 128 on vocational training;
- ✓ University-industry cooperation (UIC) intensified through the recognition of service provision as one of the three key missions of universities next to education and research;
- ✓ Major programmes launched by Council decisions in the second half of the 1980s: Comett, Erasmus, PETRA, 'Youth for Europe', Lingua, Eurotecnet and FORCE; they changed both the scope and scale of the Community cooperation (albeit with some difficulty owing to several Member States' objections concerning the legal basis of Article 128);



The development of Community programmes in the 1980s (cont)

- Unprecedented budgets;
- Community closer to the citizens and their needs, reinforcing its acceptance and legitimisation;
- These programmes dealt with European labour market issues i.e recognition of diplomas, the approach to which changed radically in late 1980s: the system based on harmonisation of training abandoned in favour of a system based on mutual trust and comparability;
- European dimension of HE facilitated by ECTS inclusion into the Erasmus programme.

Education and VET within the EU Commission

- ✓ Under Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Education;
- ✓ Delors Commission of 1989 moved them into a separate structure, the Task Force on Human Resources, Education, Training and Youth, which became a DG in its own right in 1995.



Maastricht Treaty of 1992

- ✓ Created the European citizenship and endowed education with its legal status by incorporating it into Article 126;
- ✓ European citizenship is a social induction mechanism that operated across Member States' education systems to embed a transnational understanding of Europe. Citizenship and economic integration tightly linked;
- ✓ The Treaty covered the fields of culture and public health - first time in the history of EU integration;
- ✓ European cooperation reinforced observing the principles of subsidiarity and complementarity;
- ✓ Transnational partnerships foreseen not only with schools and businesses but also with local authorities and NGOs. 'Transnational cooperation networks to promote a better relationship between general education and initial vocational training' promoted;
- ✓ A new institutional governance: the Treaty made the European Parliament joint decision-maker in the area of education on an equal footing with the Council and set up the Committee of Regions, as the second advisory institution.



Rise of Quality in 1990s

- The Council Resolution of 5 December 1994 on the ‘Quality and Attractiveness of Vocational Education and Training’;
- The Council Recommendation 98/561/EC of 24 September 1998 on the ‘European cooperation in Quality Assurance in Higher Education’ paved the way for the developments to follow in the next decade;
- Quality remained in the hands of the Member States since the organisation and the contents of the Education and VET systems, under national responsibility;
- Emergence of concepts: ‘knowledge-based economy and society’, ‘lifelong learning’, ‘life-wide learning’, ‘adaptability’, ‘flexibility’, ‘employability’ and ‘individual responsibility’;
- Rationalisation of the EU programmes: Socrates for education and Leonardo da Vinci for VET.

Lisbon Treaty and Strategy of 2000

- Education and training at the forefront of efforts to make Europe *the* most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010;
- Education and training openly connected to the economic and social development of the Union. Importance of the quality of the human resources underlined;
- Investment in education and training considered essential not only for economic growth but also for social cohesion: enlargement of 2004, structural unemployment, ‘society of two-thirds’ and the “new poverty” placed the EU project in danger – and they still do.



Towards integration through a new governance

- ✓ Changes in the architecture of cooperation between education and VET: a single integrated framework for policy cooperation adopted by the Council, for the first time: both education sub-sectors under the same roof within the 'Education and Training 2010' work programme;
- ✓ New management approach: Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci programmes in one: 'Lifelong Learning' programme. Council adopted five European quantified targets or benchmarks: Member States to converge and EU Commission to monitor progress in programme implementation;
- ✓ New governance method: the open method of coordination (OMC): intergovernmental method peer review and positive peer pressure for all policies falling within national competence (employment, social protection, social inclusion and youth);

In this way, social policies are not exclusively a matter of national legislation.

New impetus for Quality in 2000-10

Lisbon agenda to make European HE and VET a 'world *quality* reference by 2010'.

❖ **HE:** changes based on the Sorbonne (1998) and Bologna (1999) Declarations and their follow-up conferences, which form the so-called Bologna process; 2000, the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA); 2001, the European University Association (EUA); 2003 the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA);

Bologna process: enormous impact on HE over the last decade. It blurred the boundaries between universities and colleges/Fachhochschulen/or non-university higher education institutions; harmonised university degrees and achieved broad adoption of the three-cycle degree structure: bachelor, master and doctorate/PhD;

Policy cooperation already functioning on a pan-European scale, with the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the Bologna process with its 48 members. EHEA first to define a qualifications framework, the EHEA qualifications framework. Agreed in Bergen in 2005, the framework is compatible with the EQF, adopted three years later in 2008. In Bergen, the European Standards and Guidelines on QA in HE were adopted also .

❖ **VET:** Copenhagen Declaration, the milestone for the Copenhagen process of 2002. EQARF Recommendation on quality in VET mid-2009 and establishment of the EQAVET network to implement it the very last year of the Lisbon agenda of 2000-10.

Both processes included objectives, targets and benchmarks.

Quality Assurance at European level: a bright future

- Ten years of implementation of the Bologna and Copenhagen processes: growing importance of QA in education and training world since EU tools produced need to be quality assured and better inter-linked;
- The shift to learning-outcomes-based frameworks, with its related standards curricula, certification processes, assessment mechanisms and teaching methods needs credible and robust QA arrangements to support it;
- Strong growth in quality assurance, especially in HE with a large number of institutional players; Quality in VET less developed with fewer actors and tools available at EU level;
- Open issues related to how to render QA into a mechanism for promoting a quality culture within education and training institutions and for achieving permeability between education sub-sectors.

Thank you for your attention!



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