

# EURO-LATIN AMERICAN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY



## RESOLUTION:

### **Formal and informal education and continuing education**

based on the resolution of the Committee on Social Affairs, Human Exchanges, the Environment, Education and Culture

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**Saturday, 29 March 2014 - Athens**

## **EUROLAT – Resolution of 29 March 2014 - Athens**

[based on the resolution of the Committee on Social Affairs, Human Exchanges, the Environment, Education and Culture]

### **Formal and informal education and continuing education**

*The Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly,*

- having regard to the Declaration of Santiago, adopted within the framework of the 1st EU-CELAC Summit, which supports the implementation of the Joint Initiative for Research and Innovation to boost construction of the EU-LAC Knowledge Area and reiterates the importance of improving direct regional broadband interconnectivity, particularly with a view to facilitating academic and knowledge exchange between groups and institutions in both regions,
- having regard to the European Parliament resolution of 8 June 2011 on European cooperation in vocational education and training to support the Europe 2020 strategy,
- 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,
- having regard to Recommendation 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning,
- having regard to the Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, of 21 November 2008, on better integrating guidance into lifelong learning strategies,
- having regard to the Commission Communication of 23 October 2006 entitled ‘Adult learning: it is never too late to learn’ (COM(2006)0614),
- having regard to the Commission Communication of 2 April 2009 entitled ‘A new partnership for the modernisation of universities: the EU Forum for University Business Dialogue’ (COM(2009)0158),
- having regard to the Commission Communication entitled ‘Delivering on the modernisation agenda for universities: education, research and innovation’ (COM(2006)0208),
- having regard to the Commission Communication of 21 November 2001 entitled ‘Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality’ (COM(2001)0678),
- having regard to the Commission Communication of 16 December 2008 entitled, ‘New Skills for New Jobs: Anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs’, (COM(2008)0868),
- having regard to the Commission Communication of 12 November 2007 entitled

- ‘Delivering lifelong learning for knowledge, creativity and innovation’  
(COM(2007)0703),
- having regard to the Commission Communication of 23 November 2011 entitled ‘Erasmus for all: The EU Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport’ (COM(2011)0787),
  - having regard to the Council conclusions of 11 May 2010 on competences supporting lifelong learning and the ‘new skills for new jobs’ initiative,
  - having regard to ‘Adults in Formal Education: Policies and Practices in Europe’, (Eurydice, 2011),
  - having regard to the Commission report of 18 February 2011 entitled ‘Interim Evaluation of the Lifelong Learning Programme (2007-2013)’,
  - having regard to the report by Nuffic (Dutch organisation for international cooperation in higher education) entitled ‘Formal recognition of non-formal and informal learning: final report’ (The Hague, 2008),
  - having regard to the study entitled ‘Public responsibility for higher education’ (Bergan, Sjur, UNESCO, 2009),
  - having regard to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,
  - having regard to the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education,
  - having regard to the UNESCO Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education,
  - having regard to the final declaration of the 20th Iberoamerican Summit, the Declaration of Mar del Plata of 4 December 2010 and the approval of the project ‘2021 Educational Goals: the education we want for the generation of the bicentenaries’,
  - having regard to Decision 020/2011 of the Council of the Mercosur Common Market, approving the 2011-2015 Action Plan for the educational sector in Mercosur,
  - having regard to the Resolution of the Central American Parliament of 27 October 2011 on ‘Equal access to high quality education and solidarity with Latin America’s students in the face of crisis’ (AP/3-CCXXXIV-2011),
  - having regard to point 14 ‘Approval of the 2021 educational dialogue’ of the Declaration of the 31st Ordinary Meeting of Heads of State and Government of the countries of the Central American Integration System (SICA),
  - having regard to Erasmus+, the new EU programme for education, training, youth and sport for 2014-2020, which was implemented in January 2014,
- A. whereas education is a right which is not only important economically, with regard to obtaining employment, but is also very important socially, as it is a tool enabling individuals to develop their potential and play an active part in society;
- B. whereas education is a universal, free, social and secular right which should be guaranteed by the state, without prejudice to other forms of participation in this sphere;

- C. whereas learning is an indispensable tool for achieving social inclusion, gender equality, human development, social justice and peace and facilitates sustainable economic growth, by helping to create better jobs and greater social cohesion;
- D. whereas there is a need to further develop public policies to improve access to education and the quality thereof at all levels, including bilingual intercultural education and literacy campaigns in countries where illiteracy rates remain high;
- E. whereas the aim of the continuing education policy is to integrate adults, and young people who have left school prematurely, into either the formal or informal education system in order to facilitate the full development and use of their capacities and other rights intrinsically linked to the right to education, and to ensure economic rights, progress, social reinsertion and individual personal fulfilment;
- F. whereas the enhancement of learning for adults may play a key role in integrating groups at a greater disadvantage, such as immigrants, the elderly, ethnic minorities and any other group who may suffer discrimination for any reason, into the labour market;
- G. whereas the project ‘2021 Educational Goals: the education we want for the generation of the bicentenaries’ was approved at the 20th Iberoamerican Summit and the achievement of its goals will make a decisive contribution to the development of our peoples and the wellbeing of citizens, as a far-reaching initiative of great significance to the Iberoamerican community of nations;
- H. whereas in 2001 the European Council adopted strategic objectives based on quality, accessibility and openness, to turn the EU’s education and training systems into a worldwide quality reference;
- I. whereas the EU as a block did not meet the 2010 goal of at least 12.5 % of adults in continuing education;
- J. whereas the new strategic goals for 2020, adopted in 2009 in the ‘Updated strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training’, are based on promoting lifelong learning and mobility, improving the quality and efficiency of education and training, promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship, and enhancing creativity and innovation;
- K. whereas the qualitative benchmark for 2020 for adult participation in education in the EU has been set at 15 %, with 2007 as the reference year when 9.7 % of the adult population participated in continuing education;
- L. whereas education and training are core components of the Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, and of the integrated guidelines for the economic and employment policies of the Member States;
- M. whereas early school leaving is one of the priority themes in education policy; reducing early school leaving rates and increasing rates for continuing education will always be advantageous for a country or region;
- N. whereas EU-Latin American cooperation on education has benefited students through regional cooperation programmes such as Alban and Alfa, or the specific Erasmus Mundus education programme and, as of 2014, the new Erasmus+ programme, which will offer further opportunities for cooperation through the education, training, youth and

- sports sectors and will be easier to access than its predecessors, with simplified funding rules;
- O. whereas in Latin America approximately 96 % of children in the 6-12 age group are enrolled at an educational establishment, with the millennium goal target for 2015 for this age group having been achieved;
  - P. whereas a very high proportion of boys and girls in Central America continue to drop out of the education system and a significant percentage of those teenagers who move from primary to secondary education abandon their studies before having acquired the minimum level of education and skills with which to exit poverty during their active life, thereby failing to exercise the rights to education enshrined in the relevant international declarations and passing on the same unequal opportunities to the next generation;
  - Q. whereas immigration poses a significant challenge for education systems in Europe, while at the same time providing a huge pool of potential human capital which may offset the aging of the EU population and the lack of skills in certain sectors;
  - R. whereas public perception of continuing education needs urgently to be changed as it undervalues the personal development and improved employment prospects to be gained from such efforts;
  - S. whereas financial constraints often prove to be major obstacles to adult students taking part in continuing education programmes;
  - T. whereas geographical disparities and physical access to learning facilities present huge problems in attaining established goals for children, teenagers and adults on formal education programmes;
  - U. whereas the time required to be spent in class and the fact that timetables and modules mean programmes are inflexible may also be relevant when considering why people leave school prematurely;
  - V. whereas another major obstacle to accessing formal education for many adults is their lack of any qualification from a non-tertiary education institute;
  - W. whereas social media, whose role in our societies is constantly growing, represent one of the vital components of informal education, impacting children in particular;
1. Emphasises that education is a human right enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; reiterates that this right includes access to free, basic, compulsory education and all available forms of secondary and higher education; points out that the right to education is, like any other human right, linked to other fundamental human rights, such as the right to equality between men and women and to equal participation in the family and society and the right to work and receive wages contributing to a decent standard of living;
  2. Recognises that formal and informal education and continuing vocational training are important for the economic and social development of countries, and stresses the fact that success here depends on all interested parties being actively involved in designing the policies in this field, the budget allocated by the State and other funds for their implementation;

3. Recognises the progress made in Latin America and the Caribbean in relation to the 2012 Educational Goals, which aim to address simultaneously the 21st century agenda and pending issues from the 20th century, in order to achieve a level of educational development similar to that of the developed countries;
4. Stresses that a higher level of skills and knowledge is necessary to reduce unemployment, to facilitate geographical mobility, to promote professional mobility, and to provide businesses, in particular SMEs, with an adequately educated and trained workforce;
5. Considers it essential to attach greater value to vocational training, so that students who choose this type of training can receive proper social and employment recognition;
6. Emphasises the need for the State to become, or continue to be, socially responsible for universal free, secular, public education;
7. Points out that formal and informal education and continuous education are fundamental tools of national development and that it is impossible for peoples and populations to progress unless education is afforded maximum priority in public policies;
8. Recommends that governments continue to combat illiteracy, preferably by taking into account the languages of native peoples, in countries where there is still a high rate of adult illiteracy;
9. Urges governments to improve coordination between public and private stakeholders in adult learning projects, with particular reference to political decision-makers at the various levels and all partners involved in policy design and implementation;
10. Believes that to guarantee quality in teaching and education, good quality personnel, providers, teaching and facilities are needed, together with methods and materials tailored to suit the needs of the students;
11. Asks governments to promote clear legal frameworks and incentives for the private and public sector in order to have a budget and resources that suffice for the creation of a good quality continuing education system which encourages scientific and technological research, while at the same time promoting a systematic analysis of the national and international context and monitoring the need for reforms and assessing laws and public policies designed to strengthen the educational system;
12. Emphasises the importance of developing educational policies aimed at strengthening specialised technical training programmes and systems to continuously update training to match the needs of the labour market, thereby facilitating the social integration of people at risk of social exclusion, such as immigrants, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, etc.;
13. Stresses the need for educational and vocational guidance to help learners, trainees and workers identify the education and training path best suited to their inclinations and interests, and recognises that the anticipation of labour market trends can be very useful for all those involved in order to better target their actions and make informed choices;
14. Calls for studies to be carried out to assess the impact of academic programmes in terms of their contribution to sustainable human development and integration processes and to identify alternatives and needs for meeting the demands of the labour market as a basis for updating and/or opening new areas of education;

15. Urges countries to develop specific programmes and political frameworks for the recognition of non-formal and informal education, as it has been proven that recognition of skills acquired non-formally or informally allows better integration into the labour market;
16. Urges governments to encourage social agents (workers, businesspeople and trade unionists) to develop systematic mechanisms for continuing education so as to constantly update the qualifications needed for success on the labour market and thereby achieve better living conditions;
17. Points out the importance of developing a learning culture to motivate students and raise their levels of participation and interaction during the educational process and to encourage access to education by all age groups;
18. Recommends stepping up promotional campaigns and development of communication strategies to increase adult participation in continuing education and training;
19. Believes learning provision and updating needs to be made more accessible to all population groups, in particular by creating new local learning centres in the workplace and facilitating learning in the context of employment;
20. Points out the importance of public education in all levels of training, including continuing education; considers it necessary to provide public schools with adequate resources, facilities and high quality teaching staff in order to safeguard the right to education and equal access to it by all population groups;
21. Calls on countries to promote the creation of legal frameworks on access to higher education, bearing in mind the question of recognition and/or validation of previous studies and in which the acquisition of empirical knowledge through information education would be taken into account;
22. Considers that governments ought to become aware that national qualifications frameworks are intrinsically linked to adult education programmes, and take measures therefore to ensure these frameworks facilitate access to continuing education;
23. Calls on the Member States to strengthen and/or update the relevant legal frameworks and take steps to simplify the intraregional and interregional procedures for recognising foreign professional qualifications, ensuring that job skills can be demonstrated not just on the strength of formal qualifications, but also through proof of employment,, theoretical and practical examinations and expert assessment;
24. Calls on the Member States and Latin American and European universities to develop common credit systems for recognising and validating learning outcomes, including systems to recognise previously acquired competences, so that learning may be appraised and assessed in order to boost regional academic mobility;
25. Reiterates that learning systems have to consider population aging and, therefore, the sustainability of the welfare state, for which reason countries need to commit to developing policies to help as many people as possible join the labour market; considers that this makes it a priority to combat premature school leaving and raise the skills level of those at greatest risk of exclusion from the labour market (low-skilled workers, young people, women, the over-40s and the long-term unemployed) with a view to helping them join this market;

26. Recommends that countries devise more equitable adult education programmes that contribute to social and labour insertion, focusing on young people not in education or employment, less well qualified people, older people, the disabled and those living in isolated regions;
27. Notes that women participate in the labour market on unequal terms and therefore calls on governments and enterprises to pay special attention to designing continuing education policies which facilitate equal access to the labour market, combat wage disparities, allow for work-life balance and encourage greater representation of women in management posts;
28. Believes that it should be made easier to enter the educational system at any time, particularly for people who have dropped out of education and find it difficult to enter the labour market;
29. Recalls that, despite the reduction in illiteracy achieved over the last decade, an unacceptably high rate of illiteracy still persists in some countries, particularly among the elderly, ethnic minority groups and the less well-off; calls on States to pay special attention to eradicating illiteracy and improving access to training by all sectors of the population;
30. Suggests that financial incentives be introduced for people outside of the education system, to be based on direct financial support, in the form of study grants, work experience grants, tax incentives and study leave;
31. Points out that a focus on prevention has to be created to combat premature school leaving, concentrating on why this occurs, in the full knowledge that it affects not only human development but also the progress made by the countries of the region and striving to understand the social, economic and other factors leading to premature school leaving, with a view to mitigating its impact on education as a whole; sees a need for special efforts to combat premature school leaving by girls in countries where girls still tend to drop out of education;
32. Stresses the need for young people to be given tangible support to continue their studies, particularly in the context of the current financial crisis, where rising levels of poverty are resulting in higher numbers of early school leavers;
33. Believes that it would be of great use to create and develop new channels for education, for example distance education (e-learning), as well as to develop staggered programmes to ease the problem of timetabling for participants; considers that the use of modern information and communications technology (ICT) in these programmes should also be encouraged;
34. Calls for increased cooperation in the educational sphere between Latin America, the Caribbean and the EU, in order to expand mutual collaboration, learn from successful experiences and forge closer links and encourage exchanges among students, teachers and researchers;
35. Considers it highly important to incorporate information and communications technology (ICT) as a teaching and teacher-training resource, since the information society needs students and teachers who are capable of operating in a context characterised by mass-media exposure and constant technological change;

36. Considers that the time has come to replace teaching practices which seek to uphold taboos and reproduce a patriarchal society in which women are assigned roles mainly linked to the domestic sphere, and to ensure the provision of equal, high-quality universal sexual and reproductive health education capable of helping to prevent sexually-transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies and, in all cases, to ensure the continuity of schooling for girls and young women;
37. Considers it necessary to promote the use of new technologies in the learning process, particularly among the elderly, so that they can more easily adapt to the new global reality;
38. Stresses the importance of and need for the 'internalisation' of universities and the promotion of academic mobility and student and researcher exchanges;
39. Believes that improving foreign language skills is vital for students to be prepared for the globalised workplace and to achieve higher levels of professional mobility;
40. Calls, in light of the success of cooperation programmes on education such as Erasmus Mundus, Alban and Alfa, for EU-Latin American cooperation in this field to be encouraged and enhanced, in order to boost student exchanges between these two regions;
41. Believes establishing programmes for the exchange of EU-Latin American best practice in the field of continuing education and training would also be opportune, in order to optimise existing systems in both regions;

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42. Instructs its Co-Presidents to forward this resolution to the Council of the European Union and the European Commission, and to the parliaments of the Member States of the European Union and all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, the Latin American Parliament, the Central American Parliament, the Andean Parliament and the Mercosur Parliament, the Secretariat of the Andean Community, the Committee of Permanent Representatives of Mercosur, the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American Economic System and the Secretaries-General of the Organization of American States, the Union of South American Nations and the United Nations.