Education in a Single Europe

Second Edition

Edited by
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Contents

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Foreword

Since the first edition of *Education in a Single Europe*, the European Union has progressed still further on its long journey towards becoming a truly united continent. In 1995 Austria, Sweden and Finland completed the European Union's fourth successful enlargement and in 1996 the Intergovernmental Conference was concluded at the European Council meeting in Amsterdam. The European Union now faces another critical juncture in its history. The deadline for Economic and Monetary Union has been passed, and there are currently twelve membership applications on the table from states who have – for various reasons – been excluded thus far from the greatest success story this century.

The exchange of students between member states of the European Union facilitates the movement towards greater European unity. When Chancellor Adenauer of Germany met President de Gaulle of France in their great reconciliation at Rheims in January 1963, one of the foremost practical measures which emerged was their agreement about exchanges between the young people of both countries. The two Heads of Government agreed to make provision for tens of thousands of young people to visit each other's country each year. Generations of young French and Germans now fluently speak each other's language, have a better understanding of each other's way of life and share a wider knowledge of the traditions and treasures of each other's countries.

If we look back to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it was customary for the British to make the grand tour of the countries of Europe before they settled down to their life at home. I know from my own experiences in the 1930s that this will have led to a deeper appreciation of our common European culture and civilisation. That is why I am glad that British universities in particular are now very active in EU schemes such as Socrates, Erasmus, Comenius and Leonardo.

I constantly found in government negotiations that it was a considerable advantage to be able to speak the language of the other person as well as one's own. The quality and extent of language training teaching should be of concern for us all. The European Union's Lingua programme points the way forward.

I said in my foreword to the first edition of *Education in a Single Europe* that education is a vital means of building up the international trust that was

shattered during the first half of this century. I would like to reiterate this point. There are currently more than 60 million young people in the European Union aged between 15 and 25, and we must look to these youngsters to provide the next generation of European leadership. We must ensure that the educational systems across the European Union provide the right skills and training so that we and our children can look to the future with confidence.

The UK Presidency of the European Union, which commenced on 1 January 1998, illustrated the commitment of the UK. There is now a huge majority of MPs at Westminster who want the United Kingdom to be at the forefront of making the European Union work better, and more closely, together. The Conservative Party made a terrible mistake in thinking that a sceptical shift on Europe would prove popular amongst the voters in the last general election. The new leadership must not make the same mistakes that the Labour Party did in the 1980s with their short-sighted and immensely damaging views on the then European Community. The polling evidence of the last 25 years should destroy the idea that attacking the EU unfairly makes either political or economic sense. I believe that we must remain constructive, positive members, which will help the rest of the Union develop in a way that best suits the interests of the Union and the British people.

I was delighted to be asked to give my support for the second edition of *Education in a Single Europe*. This edition has been completely revised and redesigned to take into account the changes that have taken place within the educational systems of the European Union over the last few years. I warmly commend it to you all.

The Rt Hon. Sir Edward Heath, KG, MBE, MP
House of Commons

Preface

This second edition of *Education in a Single Europe* has arisen not only from demand for the first, but particularly in respect of the enlargement of the European Union. The book now comprises fifteen country chapters in addition to the introduction. In the meantime, the Community has developed significantly in terms of the degree of consolidation achieved, especially the start of monetary union. The overall effect of these movements has been towards a union of states based on the principle of subsidiarity, bringing 'Europe' closer to the people.

In planning and preparing this new edition, the editors have been able to secure the continuing support of most of the original contributors and to welcome the collaboration of several new colleagues. As with the first edition, we accepted from the outset the authors' of the fifteen chapters own interpretation of the brief provided. This in itself is instructive in enabling of a comparative overview of the situation of education in the European Union. Of particular interest is the degree in which the European dimension in each national system is evident in the text. In this way, the diversity of responses to the European reality given by the authors, within an overall framework, is a source of strength.

We are particularly grateful to Sir Edward Heath for his continuing interest in the project and for providing an illuminating Foreword to this edition. We are also indebted to Bill Musk, Deputy Director of the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges, and Dan Taverner OBE, formerly Chief Inspector of Schools in the London Borough of Newham, for reading the drafts and for making helpful comments.

Both editors acknowledge with thanks stimulating discussions of the European issue with Sir David Williams, formerly President of Wolfson College, Cambridge; Wolfgang Mitter, Director of Research at the German Institute for International Educational Research in Frankfurt; and Erhardt Schulte, Senior Executive of DG XII of the European Commission.

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Colin Brock
Witold Tulasiewicz

Introduction

The place of education in a united Europe

Witold Tulasiewicz with Colin Brock

The context

Introductory comments

The two principal policy objectives of the European Community, the goal of monetary union and 'concrete progress to European unity' reiterated in the Maastricht Treaty, are on course to being achieved by the start of the new century. The adoption of measures such as the working rules for the European Central Banks System and 'European Political Cooperation' are evidence of this. Implementing the principle of subsidiarity with 'decisions taken as openly as possible and as closely as possible to the citizen' in the words of Article A of the Treaty of Amsterdam, and involving the regional structures of the European Community, the subject of Part Five of Maastricht, are intended to smooth out the functioning of its administrative machinery. Considering the diversity of languages, cultures, religions and political traditions to be found in Europe, the setting in motion of a further enlargement of the Community confirms its dynamic growth.

In the context of this chapter, the specific mention of education in Title VIII of the Treaty on European Union (Maastricht) and in the Recital in the Preamble to the new Treaty for Europe (Amsterdam) promoting 'wide access to education and its continuous updating' deserve special mention.

The 'Single Europe' in the title is intended to highlight the aim of the Single European Treaty to accelerate progress by activating the integrating measures of free movement and right of establishment as an essential precondition to successful economic and political cooperation. A study of the vocational and educational articles and preamble of the post-Single Europe treaties is to reveal the close link between the economic and educational activities of the European Union.

At the same time the formulation of the detailed policies of the new treaties also illustrates the progress made since the immediate post-war impetus for uniting Europe in the 1952 Schuman Plan, whose aims of preserving peace were agreed upon by statesmen at a time when acutely felt threats coming from outside the Community in the east and fears of the danger of disunity in the west emphasised economic sufficiency and protective political objectives.

By the 1990s the threats and fears had largely disappeared, slowing down the original global imperative to unite and giving way to specific European Union policies, on human and civic rights, equality of men and women, ethnic and racial respect, high employment, environmental and social protection, of a broadly socio-educational nature and written into the Amsterdam Treaty, in addition to the political machinery facilitating agreement in the fields of foreign and security policy (Title V) and police and judicial cooperation (Title VI).

Indeed, the unequivocal 'contribution to education and training of quality and to the flowering of cultures of the Member States' as part of the Principles in Title II of the Maastricht Treaty, spells out the important role of education.

Each of the fifteen specialist chapters which follow examines the state of education in one of the member states of the European Union after the coming into force of the Single European Act (1987), the Maastricht Treaty (1993), the Amsterdam Treaty (1997) and the Intergovernmental Conferences of that time when decisions on relevant Union programmes, including research and technology, were made, and all on the eve of negotiations for a wider Europe in 1998 and 1999.

These critical accounts give an interpretation of the problems arising and the priorities for solutions necessary to face the challenge of the Single Europe and affect matters such as the programmes implemented and the socio-economic expectations associated with the educational reforms introduced within the context of the fifteen nation states, guardians of diverse linguistic, cultural and socio-political identities.

They feature 'readiness for Europe' on the part of their populations and their reception of elements of what is known as the European Dimension both in the wider socio-political practices of each member state as well as in parts of its school curriculum.

The chapters document national initiatives with an international interest, such as raising the status of vocational training to that of general education in France; citizenship and international friendship education through play projects, such as the Portuguese school-based *clubes europeus*; and networks on a primary school teachers' curriculum, such as the Irish *meitheal*. Because of the educational sovereignty of member states, details of the school curriculum and day-to-day portraits of classroom life are bound to be dramatically different in the fifteen countries.

Not all the economic, social and political objectives which prompted the original six member states to create the European Communities and attracted nine other nation states to join later have been accepted. The character and pace of introduction of some policies led to their abandonment. The European Defence Community was defeated early on in Paris, while the reference to a 'federal' Union was deleted in Article 'A' of the EEC Treaty. Indeed, attempts to forge a political 'union of the peoples' are not entirely clear to many Europeans.

It is frequently assumed that prosperous countries near the heart of Europe, such as Luxembourg, seemingly preoccupied with the priorities of European government, are more typically representative of the European Union than are later members such as the United Kingdom or Denmark. This is not so: the Grand Duchy has problems with the cultural and linguistic diversities within its borders which are similar to those of other European Union countries, and like them has maintained an individual approach in search of solutions, retaining its own distinctive educational structures to achieve its political and economic goals.

With Union membership expectations confined to economic and socio-political advantages, it may be that educational initiatives would not feature largely when compared with measures to improve production methods or to tighten up asylum policies. The most striking examples – the introduction of far-reaching Spanish educational reforms which coincided with Spain's joining the European Community in 1986, and Portugal's insistence in the same year on 'lining up with the rest of the European Union' in the preparation of new educational structures to raise educational standards – happened not only without much comment in the rest of Europe, but went unnoticed by most Spaniards and Portuguese.

Indeed, educational measures, when introduced, are often less likely to be seen as a direct response to the opportunities of the Single Europe than as an initiative of the nation state. After years of isolation under Franco the 'return to Europe' was particularly welcomed in Spain; Danish educational reforms are first and foremost an expression of Denmark's own two ideologies and Danish nationhood, matched with the need to compete in the production market. 'Testing educational performance' was introduced as a key component of British socio-economic policies without direct reference to the European Union, although comparisons with other countries' better pupil performance in science and mathematics are made particularly frequently in the United Kingdom. Swedish decentralisation and democratisation coupled with regular nation-wide performance testing to ensure educational quality may in part be paralleled by what goes on in the United Kingdom; however, it is not a case of imitating British practice but of national policy to secure Swedish relations with countries within as well as outside Europe in the conditions created by the free market. In Germany the structures of the former Democratic Republic have largely disappeared and the federal, selective system of education, which includes the once praised but since often criticised early vocational training, the so-called 'dual' system, has taken over, despite the fact that the compulsory education system is nearly everywhere else in Europe based on the non-selective comprehensive school.

National priorities are also evident in the far-reaching changes in vocational training and higher education, including privatisation, happening in Greece, indicative that the oldest nation in the European Union is becoming concerned with the implications for its identity among the fifteen as one of its more 'distant'

and poorer relations. To be sure, no industry–university research schemes existed in Greece before the adoption of European Community programmes.

National positions can be found in other policy areas, such as the negative attitude to the European Monetary Union in the United Kingdom and in Denmark, despite the fact that the absence of a single currency has been calculated to cost the European Union 2 per cent in lost growth and 1.5 million jobs.

Overt educational commitment in member states' legislation on Europe is usually regarded as stemming from their own national historical development within Europe rather than from membership of the European Union. Even so, initiatives such as the consultation on aspects of teacher preparation which were carried out by the *Réseau d'institutions de formation* (RIF) network,[1] and which stem from most European states' current involvement in reforming teacher preparation and raising standards in the lower secondary–higher primary school sectors, are distinctly European.

The physical dimensions of the Single Europe are dictated by political and socio-economic parameters rather than by geographical or indeed cultural factors. Economic advancement and participation in decision making in areas extending beyond the nation state, such as wider access to Irish goods or a voice in European decision making for Finland, were in these two cases strong motivating factors for European collaboration. However, these moves can as easily be taken as a wish for socio-economic emancipation and the expectation of economic help to be given to the poorer regions of the same countries from the Structural Funds under the provisions of EU economic and social cohesion policies.

More especially, economic factors are binding the European Economic Area (EEA) countries, Iceland and Norway but also Liechtenstein, closely to the fifteen; they may be said to be enjoying the mobility and citizenship rights of the Union without taking on members' political obligations. In the case of the Nordic countries, historical links have been responsible for including EEA countries in the agreements on the abolition of passport controls. Factors of cultural and historical affinity can be added to economic cooperation in the case of the Benelux area. The Federal Republic of Germany sees its political future firmly within Europe, a policy which has much to do with the early French espousal of the partnership for defence and peace.

More urgent in the present political perspectives are the circumstances which have brought the countries of Central and Eastern Europe to the threshold of the European Union.[2] The collapse of the former Soviet Union has led to a number of contacts, especially as far as the oil trade and measures to improve the environment are concerned, with member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

This seemingly consolidating situation is undergoing almost continuous change caused by new constellations forming and reforming. Smaller European nations, like the Catalans or the Welsh, have been able to synchronise their cultural policies protected by European legislation, the Bureau for the Lesser

Used European Languages in Dublin being an example. The cracks which are appearing as a result of devolution do not affect the state of the economy of the Union so much as demonstrate the status of national identities which, as the Spanish example proves, need not damage the economic integrity of the macro-state unit. Italy and Spain with their autonomous regions are two member states which can reconcile the implications for their plural cultural identities with an enthusiastic acceptance of economic union. Belgium is an even more classic example. Countries with a traditionally centralised form of government, such as the United Kingdom, are beginning to accept the prospect of devolution for some of their territories, the trend nearly everywhere being towards a 'Europe of the Regions'.

The aim behind the move to establish a Committee of the Regions during the negotiations of the Maastricht Treaty was to bring the European Union closer to the people, involving locals in the development and implementation of EU policies at regional level. It was not intended to devolve EU economic powers to member states. One of the specific aims of the economic and social cohesion policies is to improve the infrastructure of those regions that require it, with ECU141 billion allocated for this purpose in the period 1994–9.

This development demonstrates the existence of a variety of national and regional dimensions in the Single Europe where prioritising one dimension must not be seen as deliberately neglecting the others.

It is not the aim here to present statistics relating to commitment to Europe. Sampling figures taken at intervals can contradict each other; however, in the matter of attitudes of Europeans to European unification, a 1995 Eurobarometer registering an average 70 per cent as 'a good thing' showed that at the time of the poll a majority favoured some sort of unification. Social class, age and experience account for significant differences in attitudes to European integration in all member states.

The informed stance adopted by many Europeans indicates that they have had to take account of the historical and geographical European commonality and its cultural and political diversity, a combination that has registered triumphs, in the shape of scientific discoveries and humanitarian works, as well as tragedies, in the shape of wars and persecution. Both the older and the younger generations of Europeans seem to have been learning by adjusting to new experiences which are the outcome of the diversity inherent in the European commonality. In matters such as peace and social justice, this population of millions of citizens of sovereign nation states reacts more in concert than does the smaller population of the federal entity of the United States.

Perhaps because as sovereign nationals they have to live together as Europeans, these millions are more aware of their joint responsibilities, more careful to avoid extremes and anxious to secure negotiated solutions, in that they have to reconcile their individual positions with those of others, as shown in popular responses to international crises in the Middle East or the former Yugoslavia: a role performed perhaps less satisfactorily by their governments.

Democratic traditions make Europeans prefer to decide things at a more local level, requiring the application of subsidiarity and regional structures.

National upbringing with international insights is a factor which has played a significant role in the formation of the attitudes described. Significantly, 'Education and training' is one of the eight standing commissions of the Committee of the Regions.

Intra- and inter-European cooperation initiatives resulting from the need to promote unity while respecting diversity are in stark contrast to unification imposed from above and a departure from the 'Fortress Europe' mentality, where the installation of new external ramparts used to replace those of old; such criteria are crucial in any discussion of education in the Single Europe.

Educational change in member states of the European Union has to do with:

- the economic challenge which highlights the need for preparation for skilled work of school pupils and professionals through wide access to technological innovation, the socio-political skills of citizenship and the creation of opportunities for life-long learning.

In view of the virtually unrestricted mobility it has also to do with:

- the existence of the 'European machinery' concerned with European economic prosperity, such as access to international research and innovation, and the ability to respond to the different cultural and linguistic identities in the nation states, which requires making adjustments in their situation if people wish to live harmonious personal and productive working lives as citizens of the new Europe.

These challenges require the acquisition of common trans-national European items of knowledge, skills – such as languages, and attitudes referred to as the European dimension in the Resolution of the Council and the Ministers meeting within the Council (*The European Dimension in Education (1988)* OJ (1988) CL 177/02) and a sharing of national experiences through exchanges.

The seemingly obvious European educational objectives may well be in conflict with the existing educational diversity. The different populations and authorities of the fifteen member states are by no means equally enthusiastic about the prospect of European unity, whether in cooperation or in competition, and this presents problems with plans to achieve a European future in a context of nation states.

Socio-economics: political and legal backgrounds

Against the background of socio-political upheaval the policies of the European Economic Community have focused firmly on the aims of 'an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe'. With the emphasis, in the words of the Treaty of

Amsterdam, on 'social and economic progress for peoples', should be mentioned first of all:

- the institution of a European citizenship giving entitlement to European consular protection and political activity, including voting for and petitioning the European Parliament; together with
- commitment to a high level of employment and raising the standard of living, indicated by the insertion in Article 109N of the Treaty of the line 'coordinated strategy for employment . . . promoting a skilled, trained and adaptable workforce and labour markets responsive to economic change', with a view to achieving (as per Article 2): 'a high level of employment and social protection . . . raising the standard of living and quality of life'.

Unemployment in the European Union having risen to over eighteen million, the chapter on employment of the Treaty of Amsterdam is a timely reminder of the measures necessary to ease the problem. The European Social Fund distributes monies for vocational retraining and resettlement.

'Promoting a harmonious, balanced and sustainable development of economic policies' has absolute priority in all of the European Union's undertakings. The aim of economic integration moulds member states into a community which takes in every sector of the economy, the movement of money, goods and workers, consumer rights, citizens' freedom of establishment, with the ultimate objective of economic convergence and monetary union. The freedom to provide services as part of occupational mobility and the freedom of abode have, since 1991, included the mutual recognition of many higher education diplomas (Article 57.1) and, since 1992, of non-academic qualifications, such as those of crafts and trades, after a tentative start was made with plumbers and hairdressers in 1964.

The principle of solidarity and coherence which supports regional development (the richest European regions meanwhile being six times more wealthy than the poorest), is to ensure that the economic benefits of the Union are fairly distributed and that citizens' basic rights are fully respected. The social clauses follow on from the 1989 Community Charter of Fundamental Social Rights of Workers guaranteeing agreed workplace conditions, health, social and employment protection.

Cooperation in the fields of justice and home affairs has led to enabling legislation which allows for intergovernmental police and judicial measures regulating the movement and protection of peoples, such as asylum policies. The jurisdiction of the Court of Justice includes observance by the European Union of the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights.

European political cooperation assumes a Community foreign and security policy intended to 'safeguard the common values . . . , strengthen the security of the Union . . . preserve peace and strengthen international security' (Treaty

of Amsterdam, Article J.1). This includes the 'eventual framing of a common defence policy, which might . . . lead to a common defence' (Article J.7). Integrating the Western European Union (WEU) into the EU has managed to include the neutral member states in the common foreign and defence policy, with the European Council deciding the principles and general guidelines and cooperating with the Commission. Member states' freedom to keep their Transatlantic and European bilateral commitments within the general framework of the WEU and the Atlantic Alliance strengthens intergovernmental cooperation and prevents NATO being able to sign a treaty which ignores the European Union.

The successful achievement of its objectives requires an efficient EU administrative apparatus. In an important move, subsidiarity, defined as a social organisation, was elevated to a constitutional principle in the internal political transactions of the Union, bringing more decision making closer to member states. Though seen as a federal gesture, the decision making capacity of the Union has been strengthened by the direct and indirect post-Maastricht co-decision powers of the European Parliament in Community legislation which member states are obliged to introduce. Extending 'qualified majority voting' by member states and the stipulation that action by the Community 'shall not go beyond what is necessary to achieve the objectives of the Treaty' indicate the sensitivity of the entire process.

The revision of existing Community and Union treaties, which has been conducted since 1996 with full public participation, has improved the procedural politics of the activities of the Union and enabled increased initiatives in the socio-economic sectors. These qualifications make it possible to speak of the European identity which is resolved in the Preamble of the Maastricht Treaty.

Agriculture, transport, social provisions, trade, industry, the environment and aid figure prominently in all accounts of the work of the Union. The Common Agricultural Policy seeks to guarantee a livelihood to European farmers while preventing the accumulation of production surpluses. European Transport Policy recognises the goal of an open transport market centred on free and fair competition, essential for implementing EU agricultural, industrial, environmental and commercial objectives. The Common Commercial and Industrial Policies are concerned with the fixing and adjustment of customs tariffs, the resolution of trade conflicts, the dispensing of funding and the observation of the principles of fair competition. In the new treaties all these have assumed a more distinctive formulation than in the provisions of the Rome Treaties which established the original Communities.

The political implication of the European Union's economic objectives can be seen in the trading and training relations which the EU, as the largest single economic bloc in the world, maintains with close and distant neighbours. They range from common policies and practices within the Union, including the

European Economic Area, to agreements with individual countries or groups of countries outside the Union, which protect European markets from being flooded with imports while curbing European exports.

The European Union has economic agreements with Turkey, Cyprus and Malta as well as with countries of Central and Eastern Europe, several of which have been given association status in preparation for joining the Union.

A comprehensive range of economic and financial aid and cooperation packages, plus social and cultural dialogue programmes, such as Phare (originally with Poland and Hungary) and Tacis (with the Commonwealth of Independent States) are available to facilitate the process of socio-political and economic transformation. The former aid and education collaboration Tempus Programme has been phased out, with eligible countries becoming part of the all-European Union Socrates and Comenius Programmes in and after 1998–9. There is also participation in European Environmental Education (Envers) Programmes. In Africa, cooperation agreements have been concluded with the Maghreb and Mashreq countries. The Mediterranean area is scheduled to become a free trade area by the year 2010, the process being accelerated for important socio-political developments in order to prevent unrest on the southern flank of Europe.

The Treaty of Union imposes a special responsibility on the Union for development cooperation to help the poorest countries to become integrated in the world economy. Trade concessions and the abolition of customs duties for former European colonies are a part of the successive Lomé Conventions (the fourth covers the years 1990–2000), the generous commercial trade policy also used to relieve humanitarian crises. Seventy ACP countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific enjoy duty-free access for their industrial goods to the European Union. There is, moreover, no discrimination as regards the right of establishment and the provision of services. The European Development Fund, maintained by some 9 per cent of the EU's budget, has been used to benefit countries throughout the world, the European Union being the biggest provider of aid, including educational assistance in the form of bursary schemes, for students in developing countries.

The capacity of the Community as a whole is assumed to transcend that of the individual member states combined. Common interests involve countries within and outside the Union in pursuits such as nuclear research while the achievement of an EU–US 'Transatlantic Market Place' includes the liberalisation of services in an overseas context which extends earlier contacts among students and professionals.

It has been argued that the assumption by the European Union of a significant political role in the world has not received the same priority as the achievement of economic objectives. There is no general will perceived among member states for a closer political union and a more proactive role in world affairs, in contrast to the somewhat protective priorities of the clauses establishing the original Communities and identifying European economic concerns. This is despite the EU's commitment to the UN Charter and the principles of the Helsinki Final

Act and elsewhere in the world. To become a political force the European Union must be able to speak with one voice, forging its own European political identity. Full political integration is not an immediate prospect.

According to Joseph Weiler[3] the institutional machinery of the Union points in the direction of a European supra-statehood. However, particularly because of the flexibility in justice and home affairs permitted by the cooperation clauses by member states, the combined policy priorities have been pulling away from decisive steps taken towards political 'integration'.

Intervention in the political problems of other nations is more likely to be undertaken as a bilateral initiative. Thus, although the European Union has become involved in several parts of the world, action, such as that in east and west Africa involving former European colonies or whatever concerted progress can be made in the Balkans, has been the product of *ad hoc* arrangements under NATO, principally by Britain and France. Arguably, the Amsterdam Treaty may have done less to sharpen the Common Foreign and Security Policy than the Maastricht conferences.[4]

As against that, fulfilment of the EU objective of contributing to European growth for creating wealth by strengthening its scientific and technological bases through encouraging research and technological development is gathering pace. To achieve the policies listed in the treaties, their protocols and declarations require an implementation apparatus, in particular, for raising productivity and improving services and for managing the economic union by enabling the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital and administering the bureaucracy of the Union itself. The governments of member states and the institutions of the European Union have comprehensive policies for the training and education of the personnel needed for these tasks.

Significantly for the history of European development, about the time of the Single Europe the global economy was becoming dependent on the interaction between fewer and larger units in an internationalisation process. This situation requires the use of new types of skills acquired under different learning conditions as patterns of economic geography change. Though the demand for new initiatives comes from member states and their industrial enterprises, much of it is Union-mediated, the Union being involved in the coordination, support and execution of many of the projects.

To achieve full economic and monetary union in the EU on time, full convergence, for example in taxation, incomes and pricing policies, will be required, involving an explicit centrally orchestrated regulations framework in the form of direct agreement by member states. Such a framework is not available to date. As is shown by the outcomes of recent referendums, for example in Denmark, and the reservations of individual member states illustrated by the protocols and declarations attached to the treaties, for example concerning the Schengen Agreement, there is opposition to giving too much power to the Union.

This prompts the question: what precisely is the status of Union help given to joint activities undertaken by member states which involve EU economic relations outside the EU?

Access is necessary to information about Community activities and responsibilities, such as priorities of Union legislation over national law on, for example, flexibility over traditional immigration movement patterns into Europe. Education and training facilities which brought about economic and political success must be available to scrutiny and comment. There is a gap between the undoubted economic success and the profits achieved by the Union and the failure by the public to understand how this success is being achieved. A criticism made of the legislation contained in the recent treaties is that it is opaque,[5] and that its inaccessibility prevents ordinary Europeans from playing a more committed and proactive role.

The path to Europe

National and legal constraints

Political and institutional homogeneity in Europe tended to be achieved by conquest and influence exercised by a few powerful states. The unity imposed, such as that identified with Rome and its successors or with the Church, was broken at intervals by a power conflict started in the parts of Europe excluded from the original political links or by the breakup of philosophical and religious certainties leading to new upheavals. This situation prompted individuals to attempt to construct a unity by rational and peaceful means on the basis of socio-humanitarian principles. The concept of the *République très chrétienne* of Maximilien de Bethune Sully is one example of what continued in later centuries to combine in producing Republican, Socialist, Religious and Romantic thought on European unity. Nationalist aggression, much of it originating in Europe, succeeded in preventing the full realisation of plans which had begun to assume concrete political form in the League of Nations. Happily, after the Second World War, new attempts would include wider humanitarian, health and educational concerns.

The fact that the European Communities were founded on a smaller and more clearly circumscribed territory and were committed to achieving economic as well as defence objectives which strengthened their political status enabled the Community to act more decisively in its realistic pursuit of peace and international cooperation.

Even so, nation state attitudes which had prevented an earlier enlargement of the Community continued in the failure to realise the potential of the Common European Market to transform itself into an economic and political structure in which 'member states would not lose their individual identity but gain more by combining together'.[6] British reluctance to accept the implications of the political principles arising from an internationalisation of interest was illustrated by the pursuit of British-centred political priorities in the run up to the United

Kingdom application to join the Common Market clashing with the strength of French national interests determined to retain France's leading role in an essentially European construct.[7] The Nordic countries are an example of a smaller union of states which do not readily share all their affinities with the larger European Union.

Indeed, the intricacies of the unique grouping of fifteen states prepared to relinquish some of their sovereign competencies in favour of creating a community prompted by the prospect of economic growth in an international context conducive to promoting such growth make it difficult to expect equally lasting commitments from all member states in a rapidly changing socio-economic climate.

The Union is the outcome of compromise between the conflicting interests of Community and nation state priorities which affect its internal (such as interpretations of social democracy) and external (for example, defence policy) commitments, Anglo-Saxon liberal social policies clashing with more protective continental European ones. This is demonstrated by nation state governments, divided on more or less federalist or functionalist integration lines, trying to obtain acceptance of policies that meet with their approval.

Close links with non-European partners – for example, the UK often on the side of the USA – may cause resentment among member states which prefer to promote a European identity by, for example, access to the media for European culture. The recently proposed council of deputy prime ministers, it was feared, would turn out to be another European centralising fixture.

A particularly contentious issue requiring legal advice concerns the three so-called Pillars of the Community which determine centre and periphery responsibilities. Asylum, visa and immigration were moved to the First Pillar (Community) from the Third (Intergovernmental Matters) where Police and Judicial Cooperation still remain. With the First Pillar there is no need for ratification of measures by national governments although unanimity in the Council, which is being questioned, is required. In the Third Pillar no assent to legislation by the European Parliament is needed, enabling closer or looser intergovernmental cooperation.

Acknowledging the supranational remit of the European Court of Justice has been made part of the Treaty of Union despite the objections of individual member states, notably the United Kingdom. Many areas of activity are shared, for example employment is mainly a member state concern, but the Community is expected to introduce remedying measures. In foreign and defence policy the responsibilities are more evenly divided.

Citizens' expectations are an important factor to consider. In the words of the British Prime Minister at the end of the 1998 British presidency of the European Council: 'it is necessary to feel safe in your national identity while reaching out to European partnership'. Many Europeans see European Monetary Union as a blow to this cherished identity. Consulting the regions may have the effect of activating new policy makers representing transnational parties, expert professionals and lay partners, instead of national party interests.

Committed Europeans regret the inability of ordinary citizens to find their way in the European Union, an ignorance which politicians representing the different Community or member state priorities tend to exploit. The exact meaning of terms such as 'subsidiarity' when linked with 'qualified majority voting' and the need for Community 'intervention in competitive trading policies' has been the subject of extensive debate. Whether national sovereignty is compatible with economic interdependence is a topical question as the last regulations on monetary union have been put in place.

The acknowledgement of the existence of such problems triggers demands for opening up EU internal organisations and institutions, a right of freedom of information and open government. A citizenry directly affected by the macro-level economic integration and political cooperation processes in the European Union will be more likely to support initiatives expected to bring prosperity to Europe if it is informed about their implications for national sovereignty. New policies will require individual member states, preoccupied with economic and training cooperation, to find more room in their education programmes for spreading the European knowledge essential for maintaining the political will to progress, since 'a single currency cannot be constructed in a political desert'.[8]

Unity in diversity

The historical, expansionist or retreating, attacking or defending policies of the fifteen member states are part of their national experiences and as such have affected the structures and practices of their systems of government and administration. Even so, they have gained from centuries of parallel efforts to respond to social, political, economic, cultural and religious developments of a broadly comparable though asynchronic nature.

The social care work of Western (Catholic and Protestant) Christianity blossoming in the nineteenth century, which contrasts with its virtual absence in Orthodox (Russian and Greek) Christianity in the same period, is an example of religions shaped by different spiritual concepts and political realities.[9] Similarly, the socio-economic and political structures affecting the ownership of land and the emergence of democratic systems of government in the European west developed from different concepts of authority to those in the European east, which, because of the rise of Communism after the outbreak of the First World War, were modified less fundamentally between the wars.

Such developments had taken root within parameters in the form of frontiers secured in part by national systems of education which supported the processes of consolidation, cohesion and expansion inherent in the operation of the nation state as the highest order of regulation of human societies expressed in their identities.[10] The move to a united Europe is often in danger of facing new barriers

set up to protect interests tried out in one society working against reforms which require convergence.

The European Union growing organically from common pursuits, especially in the economic sectors already well in place which have agreed convergence in a number of areas, has a wider, global remit in which common aims and training and the availability of information have created new practices which are different from individual national initiatives. The question 'Which Europe?' which arises in this context can only be answered by allowing not just for the existing cultural and linguistic varieties and distinctive socio-political traditions of member states of the European Union, but also for the emerging new economic and political commonalities. Account must be taken of the contribution of variety brought in by non-territorial immigrants, citizens of member states whose often non-European origins confirm Europe's growing global dimensions.

The confrontations which arise have to be resolved. The number of Europeans freely seeking work in other member states or settling there, no more than 1.5 per cent of the total population of the European Union, is small. It would be unfortunate if dissatisfaction resulted in a two-tier Europe of a minority fully committed to the Union and of a majority who prefer to stay out.

Implications for European education

With economic multinationalism as the driving force pointing to convergence in an intercultural context and the growing practice of enterprise-based training in world-wide undertakings, a case has to be made out for a distinctive European education which does not assume the emergence of a European super-state. Indeed, since the dismantling of member states' national systems of education is unlikely, a European dimension with global perspectives may have to be placed beside each national and regional education system, enabling it to assume the supra-national features necessary for more efficient joint economic and political activity and as a sign of international understanding in the multilingual, European and global reality. In the areas of vocational training and research, collaboration and convergence schemes, involving both EU member states and countries which are not, are increasingly frequent.

The following scenario is there for consideration: the evolution of the European nation states over centuries and the role of education in that; the effect of the relatively recent migration to member states of significant numbers of peoples from extra-European cultural zones; the economic trend towards globalisation and the role of political associations of states. Together they combine in creating a complex mixture within the existing diversity in which the role of education has been rather less conspicuous.

In the context of the European Union the implications of a European education are bound to create difficulties for the educational sovereignty of member states, differences in the structure of school systems, school government as well as

rituals, being especially manifest. Even assuming full commitment to the European idea, the creation of a European awareness through curriculum development is still in need of definition. Curricular priorities may create problems with school mobility if certain subjects or subject combinations are given a different rating in different member states and are an indicator of the neglect of a European identity in education. Synchronizing procedural practice alone, for example releasing time for attending European meetings and participating in collaborative programmes, is not sufficient.

The components of a European education have to reconcile the already practised vocational training collaboration with the need for an education necessary for the provision of European services and the national education components, usually organised with little reference to Europe. This is because increasingly skilled people, with the combination of good local knowledge and of the wider European context and in possession of a caring attitude to that environment, will be managing the 'new Europe'. The 'People's Europe' will enable those who wish to do so actively to participate in designing the socio-political and economic construct of the European Union.

Experiences of collaboration involve an interdisciplinary approach (for example, social studies and engineering, French and legal studies), which suggests professional and vocational training programmes in which Community involvement is to coordinate and support national and regional initiatives, enriched by an educational value-added component.

A European education, in the form of an upbringing as well as of instruction, is to enable Europeans to rethink their futures. The components of such an education must show Europeans that they can work more efficiently and live more comfortably together because of mediating educational and professional procedures and training patterns agreed in the Union as part of the economic goals. Extra-curricular activities as much as traditional school curriculum subjects are involved. Pursuits dealing with freedom and liberty, justice and equality, peace and environmental protection will be the new priorities of a European and global education in which the importance of traditional subject matter handed down in national school curricula will decline, giving way to an international interest which is becoming available already.

A policy of facing up to the existing unity in diversity, emphasising the advantages of both unity and diversity, has been suggested by the Council of Europe as a policy for the European Union. It accepts diversity as an asset resource which, after a critical examination of their needs by EU member states, would enable the most appropriate models, a unifying move, to be adopted. Creating an intercultural process by exploiting the multicultural character of Europe in training and education initiatives which demonstrate the commonality of effort and the contribution made by the diverse elements involved must be a 'doing things together' approach. This recognises that European unity is not so much the result of a common legacy which is a static element, but that it is agreed common actions which are the catalyst to future developments – the dynamic

stimulus to the pursuit of social, cultural and environmental as well as economic goals uniting the participants in their endeavours.

The implications of membership of the Single Europe of which Europeans must be aware can be summed up as:

- *economic*: the internal market leading to closer fiscal policies and monetary union;
- *social*: the reduction of disparities leading to an improvement in the human and physical environments;
- *legal and political*: the democratically controlled powers of European institutions, leading to intensified cooperation involving citizens at all transactional levels;
- *educational and technological*: the essentially enabling instrument, having led to relevant socio-political and economic Community action, has moved beyond the acknowledgement of a common tradition to the achievement of future common goals.

The parameters of European education

General curricular considerations

Since the volume and variety of activity generated in the European Union requires the services of a qualified as well as an educated workforce, the omission of 'education' from the original EEC Treaty has been the subject of comment.

General education, professional and vocational training, and research to improve the quality of production and increase its quantity traditionally provided by nation states is increasingly becoming an international concern. Unlike workers confined to their nation states, those going to work in the European Union in the production, service and administrative sectors will have to be able to make the best use of their professional training as well as their mobility rights as workers and as citizens alongside fellow workers from other member states in what is a European undertaking. The success of the Union depends not only on the ability to keep up in the technology race but to do so in a multicultural and multilingual environment in which the relevant skills can be deployed most effectively. The link between education and vocational training and the expansion of the economy has to be fully established in the context of the European Union.

The route which, as with the predecessors of the European Union such as the Coal and Steel Community, has taken education to economic convergence is accepted as the most suitable way for educational collaboration in the Union in the future. Many good examples of innovative European education-vocational training and research collaboration can be found in the regions, such as the three-nation Alfa Vocational College Consortium.[11] It is encouraging that the take-up of cooperation contacts, such as the vocational Leonardo

Programme, is catching up with the more school and university orientated Socrates Programmes.

Using the wider connotations of the English and American term 'education' to include the contexts of upbringing and instruction it is possible to name the following five components of the education of citizens of EU member states.

National education

Mother tongue, national culture and history are the key elements of compulsory schooling, the responsibility for school programmes being vested in national education authorities. The content in some curriculum areas, such as mathematics and science, may begin to reflect increasing European collaboration on quality leading to the use of Europe-wide teaching materials. In subject areas such as history and geography there has been harmonisation of syllabuses in order to deliver a more Europe-orientated programme. The growth of foreign language education is encouraging the development of more efficient teaching approaches for both national and foreign languages, in which the role of a European or international language of communication will require consideration.[12]

National curricula are likely to continue to emphasise national achievements and an upbringing in national values, a task made easy with the curriculum delivered in schools where the methods and practices are predominantly national. Claude Thélot, Director of the INSEE CREST Institute in Paris, is confident that the national curriculum will remain, although it may be reduced to the distinctive 'national' cultural elements in school programmes, emphasising 'national pride and consciousness', for example by encouraging workers in their member state to outperform those of partner states in economic output. Astonishing is the quantity of similar curricular priorities but different teaching approaches and methods of assessment adopted in member states' schools.

With considerable variety in the assimilationist policies of individual member states, such as opportunities for first language maintenance,[13] the European Union, unlike the classic countries of immigration, is not a 'melting pot'. European identity is not being constructed by abolishing national differences, their existence guaranteed by the independent member states.

European education

European education which consists of items of European knowledge and foreign language skills to inform pupils about their continent and to enable them to live and work anywhere in the European Union is bound to grow and will encroach on curricular areas such as social and personal education, including citizenship, to facilitate communication. In the words of the UK National Curriculum Council Citizenship Group: 'young people should be able to live and work in Europe comfortably but not uncritically',[14] easily adjusting to the conditions found abroad.

The form of European education accepted in principle by all member states, in school curricula and teacher preparation courses without being made a compulsory part of the curriculum, has become known as the European dimension and identified with exchange visits and collaborative activities. Cross-disciplinary programmes such as environmental education and skills such as European citizenship, will be delivered through transnational projects which are beginning to be seen as the most important element of a European education. Details of the European dimension in education originally proposed by the European Commission, published in 1988, and being further defined can be found in Bell[15] and in Tulasiewicz.[16]

The European dimension

In addition to the above, this also comprises twinning and cooperation programmes in which educational institutions in at least three EU countries have to take part to prevent a bilateral partnership developing. Common projects and curriculum development initiatives, for example extending modern foreign language teaching or environmental education, enable this activity to be classed as an active education element distinct from the more cognitive learning approaches of European knowledge.

In particularly well thought through examples, pro-European attitudes and the acquisition of 'European cooperative' skills, such as travel, hosting and guiding, can be formed which enable young people to plan and execute activities together in a region they share as Europeans. 'Doing things together' can activate European values through pursuits which promote youth concerns, health and sport as well as civic education as a cross-curricular initiative. Young Europeans develop a spirit of European collaboration and comradeship which may include European competitiveness in contradistinction to the predominant cultivation of national 'one-upmanship'.

Vocational preparation

This involves, in addition to the preparation for employment, technological and research collaboration and 'work experience', which encompasses the skills and attitudes required of a well-adjusted member of a working team as well as of an efficient specialist. Work placement abroad can secure multinational experience.

Vocational training is an area in which the Community has always been involved since it is directly concerned with its central aim of economic development, 'a policy capable of contributing to the harmonious development both of the national economies and of the common market'. Arguably, the concomitant activities to vocational training can constitute an education.

Research and development

R&D at advanced and applied levels uses cooperation to improve products, production methods and their marketing. As such it is the concern of the Community, which under the new Article 127 'implements a vocational training policy', to strengthen the Community's economic base while 'respecting the responsibility of the Member States for content and organization'. Facilitating adaptation to industrial change through vocational training and retraining and encouraging mobility of instructors and trainees, stimulating cooperation on training and exchanges of information and experience are areas of EU involvement. Research and technological development (R&TD) conducted in Joint Central Research centres and elsewhere is financed by member states via the Union out of direct contributions and indirect levies to support the funds responsible.

The Union is involved in the 'development of the highest possible level of education . . . through a wide access to education and its continuous updating' (New Recital in the Preamble to the Amsterdam Treaty). This allows the Union to enact enabling measures to improve access to education for disadvantaged and disabled minorities through the application of directives under the social policy areas of Title VIII (Maastricht).

An imaginative approach in the five areas discussed may result in education becoming not simply an aid to building a socio-economic and political construct but as an integrated upbringing enabling Europeans to begin to think of themselves as Europeans, much as other heterogenous communities have developed a common American or Australian identity.

European considerations

To deliver a European education consisting of the dimensions discussed involves the removal of actual and perceived bias in curriculum areas such as geography, economics, social studies and language. Though no longer a problem in the EU, intergovernmental commissions as well as academic experts working on the revision of textbooks and teaching materials, notably members of the Eckart Institut in Braunschweig,[17] have been examining ways of achieving a homogeneous interpretation of episodes of European history. British geography textbooks have undergone a radical change with the departure of the British Commonwealth as the centre of study.

European history and geography textbooks are becoming available to those teachers who will use them, to enable children to learn about their common roots and environment, to study the phenomenon of prejudice and to encourage using the opportunities for travel and exchange visits. Reading texts are beginning to include European as well as national material. Even so, member states' cultural autonomy encourages differences in the acceptance and reception of innovations by existing national systems. The extent of EU responsibility is left to the interpretation of its member states.

As part of the general school curriculum, attention will focus on common upbringing and instruction elements, in order to instil 'European values' and attitudes while studying a diversity of school subjects. Social and personal studies, predominantly part of national education delivered as an enhancement of the individual as a person and as a member of society, are being exploited for the European curriculum.

In the European education sector school pupils as well as adult populations are becoming part of the rationale of the notion of European citizenship and European responsibility.[18] The concept of European citizenship has been receiving attention, not least in the United Kingdom where citizenship education has been a relatively late curriculum arrival. Citizenship education involves acquainting people of their rights, duties and responsibilities, making sure at the same time that they understand those of others.[19] The art of negotiation and so-called procedural awareness are important components of civic education. Political education can be acquired through studying the difference between participating in voting and in political pressure groups.[20]

A European education must consider the needs of the 'new Europeans', whose origins are outside the traditional boundaries of Europe, requiring schools to adapt their programmes to their intellectual and cultural priorities. Quantitatively and qualitatively, different minority groups of extra-European origin show considerable variation.

Since the 1960s the European Community has been promulgating agreed guidelines concerning the educational expectations and rights of minority groups, including the important Council Directive of 25 July 1977, but they pertain in the main to the equality of access to mainstream provision and the maintenance of territorial minorities' home cultures in line with their economic roles. Although important, the guidelines do not address the implications of the enlargement of the concept of 'European' to include the socio-cultural and political contribution of the non-territorial 'new European' minority groups or the potential for further migration within the European Union.

As a result, nationality–citizenship problems and rights associated with a two-way traffic, implying settlement, perhaps only temporary (unlike the one-way traffic of the traditional immigration pattern), have led to little more than a European Union travel and work permit for those eligible.

Learning from Europe

The similarities of educational structures and practices in European Union member states, the result of the application of explicit EU directives, cooperation and exchanges, have encouraged a pooling of resources and the joint organisation of parallel European courses in individual European institutions using the European Credit Transfer Scheme (ECTS) and other schemes. Similarity of broad educational objectives and practices has to do with countries pursuing similar socio-economic policies in similar socio-political and economic

circumstances requiring similar measures, for example seeking private investment in education or the involvement of customers of education in the choice of curriculum facilities. Notwithstanding, member states tend to work from their own conditions and traditions which do not encourage direct transfer of policies and practices.

The question whether Britain has anything to learn from Europe appears every now and again as when a quality problem arising from British membership of the Union has to be confronted. In cases of a negative trade balance in the competitive international market conditions, government and people tend to put the blame for the production of poor-quality goods on Britain's falling educational standards and to make comparisons with the situation elsewhere.

These actions have the effect of drawing attention to existing practices, such as the criticism made by Prais of the emphasis given to law and banking careers in the United Kingdom[21] instead of concentrating on a sound scientific education. Education for productivity is likely to figure prominently in outlines of education in Europe, with practice in such matters as the introduction of a central curriculum (as in France), the regular testing of pupils' performance (as in Sweden) or the provision of curricular guidance (as in Germany) being given out as models. Teaching mathematics for application in industry rather than for the 'intellectual stimulation of school pupils' is a curriculum example originating in Britain.

A comment on the nature of such comparative studies is appropriate. The fifteen chapters which follow can be said to attempt an idiographic approach which sets out to deliver an educational portrait of the European Union as a whole by providing individual educational portraits of the fifteen sovereign member states. This is useful in view of the increasing mobility of professionals, practitioners as well as learners, within Europe. Learning from diversity has been one of the stated aims of comparative education.

The approach suggested above would, for example, examine the principle of selective education, such as that found in the tripartite structure of German compulsory schooling which separates vocational preparation from general education, in the wider European context, assessing its impact on more than the equality of access alone. Indeed, a comparative examination of the educational problems found in the tripartite system may demonstrate the economic defects of 'a division between general and vocational education', suggesting phasing out the divisive system in Europe in favour of longer vocational preparation provided alongside general education to deliver an educated, professionally flexible workforce.

Education in the European Union

Status and scope

Education is placed among the socio-economic actions which include health, consumer and environmental protection, certain industrial and research measures as well as 'quality education', 'vocational training' and 'culture of the member states' which were added in the Maastricht Treaty to the other concerns which are the responsibility of the European Union. They represent areas of activity in which the sovereignty of the member states has traditionally been respected.

In the broadly federal-like character of the European Union member state responsibility is based on the principle of subsidiarity (Article 3b) according to which, with the exception of certain economic and political areas exclusive to the Union and the day-to-day running of national governments of the member states, the Community may only take action on condition that the proposed objectives cannot be sufficiently and efficiently achieved by the member states acting alone or jointly. There can be no interference in the structure and content of schooling and no attempt at harmonisation, for which full consultation and agreement among member states and the approval of the European Council, the executive arm of the Union, would be needed.

In matters to do with education policy the action taken will usually be that of a general outline commitment rather than the introduction of detail. Harmonisation in transport policy or consumer protection to enable a more efficient working of the Union by adopting common legislation or joint projects is more likely than in education and vocational concerns where EU support or complementation of member state actions has led rather to European collaboration and exchange initiatives such as Socrates. As an advisory body the Committee of the Regions may give opinions which encourage opening the way for popular and local involvement in educational and cultural programmes in which citizens of Europe will find it easier to be represented.

Collaboration is achieved by the application of decision making procedures, of which two, co-decision and information, were introduced at Maastricht. Vocational Training Policy (Article 127) involves co-decision procedures (following Article 189b) requiring European Parliamentary opinion on a Proposal by the Commission and a Common Position by the Council after a Qualified Majority Vote. Adoption by Council, if amendments are accepted after a further Parliamentary Reading, can happen within a maximum of four months. Education (Article 126) is subject to the same co-decision procedures in which Council Decisions are taken when, after a Qualified Majority Vote, the Council may adopt the Act subject to Parliamentary approval. Failure to obtain approval can prevent legislation from being adopted. In the case of Culture (Article 128), co-decision is further subject to unanimity.

In Research and Technological Development Framework Programmes (Article 130i), the Council also acts according to the provisions of Article 189b.

Maastricht Treaty Competition Clauses, a part of the EU's new competences, may affect the status of research and technological development. Community aid given to projects is only available if they are socially and economically beneficial, for example leading to improved production (Article 85). The Council has rules governing participation in research, of which the form, subject to budget restraints, is left to member states' decision.

The new and extended involvement of the Union in social concerns is important for interpreting the provisions of the Treaty and secondary legislation since it is subject to the same rules, the effect of which is to strengthen the powers of the European Parliament in co-decision procedures, with the result that the entire educational, vocational, cultural and research activity area appears to be lodged firmly as a member state responsibility.

In accordance with Article 189, in the task of fulfilling the provisions of the Treaty the institutions of the European Union shall make Regulations and issue Directives, take Decisions, make Recommendations and deliver Opinions. A Regulation is binding on all member states in every respect. Directives are likewise binding but details of implementation, form and method are left to the member state. A Decision is binding only on those who are addressed by it. Recommendations and Opinions have no binding force.

The application of the principle of subsidiarity is intended to stimulate debate by parties such as trade, business, professional and social associations on activities of a social and environmental concern not necessarily covered by existing legislation under the Treaty, for example the protection of children or the employment position of pregnant women, which could, at a later time, be put into formal channels as part of new EU social policy initiatives. In a way this is made relatively easy, since a legal examination of the obligations presented reveals that they are somewhat imprecise in character, with general phrases such as 'encouraging cooperation' and 'adopting incentive measures', expressly 'excluding harmonization of the laws and regulations of member states', although 'subsequent agreements may be concluded with the "unanimous approval" of member states' for purposes 'other than harmonization'.[22]

Even so, Chapter 3: Education, Vocational Training and Youth considerably expands EU competences to act in developing a European dimension in education, particularly through language teaching and the exchange of personnel, information and experience at all levels and the mutual recognition of diplomas and periods of study (education, Article 126). Improving vocational training policy aims at facilitating adaptation to industrial change and improving social and vocational integration in the labour market, cooperation on training between educational and training establishments and firms (vocational training: Article 127), so as to strengthen industry's competitiveness and ensure a high level of employment.

Like the two previous Articles, Title IX (culture: Article 128) does not allow harmonisation of laws and regulations. Indeed, it may 'give a legal basis for protection against Community action which is harmful to the identity and

language of a certain culture', explicitly preserving 'diversity', when allowing the free movement of goods and services (see note 22).

The provisions of Research and Technological Development (Artitles 130f–130p, especially 130i) emphasise the importance of securing the scientific and technological bases of Community industry and encouraging it to become more competitive at international level. The mention of 'complementing Member States' activities' and 'coordinating Member State and Community initiatives' again confirms the location of powers. The Council adopts the multi-annual framework programmes by a qualified majority vote.

The wider social policy competences, including education and training, of the European Union have generated media attention focused on interference and loss of national independence, especially in countries where, as in the United Kingdom, economic and social problems tend to be linked with falling educational standards.

Educational initiatives in the European Community

The education of the children of occupational travellers is a good example of the involvement of the EU Commission in education.

The improvement of provision is a socio-educational matter addressing equality of provision and the improvement of educational opportunity. These come under the remit of education and employment. In accordance with Article 126, an examination and sharing of educational information obtained, which leaves the exact curricular arrangements to be made by the member states, does not preclude collaboration but is unlikely to be taken as harmonisation, since the measures adopted do not constitute a general change in policy on school structures or grouping of pupils according to ability.

The statistics collected by national agencies are often incomplete and the measures adopted differ. In this particular case the additional educational provision made for children of occupational travellers to enable the employment of more teaching staff and the scrutiny of suitable reading materials provided under Section 210 of the English Educational Reform Act 1988 is not replicated in the other countries. In France literacy projects are singled out as part of a larger action which includes occupational travellers' children, while circus artists receive special training to help them cope with their profession in Belgium, Germany, Italy and France.

The delay in responding to proposals from the Community which, in the case of the Resolution of the Council and the Ministers of Education Meeting Within the Council of 22 May 1989 (EC Resolution 89/c 153/01 about the Education of Occupational Travellers' Children), led to national responses within five years, the last one being that from Belgium, is not unusual. In fact the EC Resolution of 24 May 1988 (88/c 177/02) on the European Dimension in Education was not formally addressed by the UK Department of Education and Science until three years later, although the National Curriculum Council Citizenship Task Group had prepared its definition of the dimension in 1990.

* * *

Much has been made of the fact that the original text of the Treaty of Rome does not deal with education, although it holds an explicit brief for implementing a common vocational training policy capable of contributing to the harmonious development of national economies and of the common market (Treaty of Rome, original Article 128). This somewhat false distinction has in fact enabled progress in preparing for the appropriate development of human resources for technological requirements, especially in the further and higher sectors of education.

Indeed, taking the wider interpretation of the term 'education', it can be said that the earliest education initiatives of the Community, the resolutions of the Council of the Communities of 9 February and 13 December 1976, and the 'Action Programme' and the Directive of 16 June 1976 which introduced the tentative mutual recognition of diplomas (those of medical doctors) and gave impetus to professional exchanges, confirming the 'European Principle' of cooperation to develop a 'Europe of quality and equal opportunity' through educational measures, predate the Treaty of Maastricht by some twenty years. The Jean Monnet lectures and lectureships providing education on problems of European integration go back to 1977 and 1973 respectively.

To be sure, although this activity was regarded as professional and vocational preparation with advice from higher education on research and development, the main consideration being the preparation of a qualified and mobile workforce, the interpretation of the original Article 128 by the European Court of Justice in a number of early cases in favour of allowing study in another member state (cf. Case 293/83 in 1983) before the full mobility of the Single Europe had been agreed, confirms an earlier than generally accepted emergence of 'education' as a Community concern.

The funding of a number of other initiatives of collaboration in education was enabled by the Court, which in Case 242/87 (*Commission* v. *Council*) deemed Erasmus collaboration eligible for EC funding, allowing the particular course in 1987, although educational in detail, to count as a vocational project.[23]

The Single Europe Act opened up wider opportunities. The then twelve member states could go beyond the purely economic and professional considerations of their collaboration in parallel vocational preparation schemes to look at socio-political circumstances in Europe involving European workers' social, moral, civic and political development, giving rise to the question: Where does training stop and education begin? The poor demarcation had already appeared with Article 128, since educational concerns could find their way into professional and vocational preparation schemes as part of job training unless they constituted national education provision. The provisions of the Maastricht Treaty which envisage developing the non-reserved areas of the European dimension and language teaching, and further promoting mobility and exchanges, can involve a further blurring of boundaries.

In the circumstances, the new social and environmental initiatives (Titles VIII and XVI) enable an educational collaboration of the type suggested,

notwithstanding the economic and political priorities allowed by the Treaties, which have led to education in the European Union being understood as an economic facilitator in the service of professional and vocational preparation. Thus, workers' mobility is a vocational necessity rather than a cultural experience; however, migrant workers' children's entitlement to mother tongue instruction and learning their cultures of origin constitutes education, though it is a consequence of the right to free movement of labour (Article 48).

Research and Technological Development, assisted, encouraged and coordinated by the Community and especially the establishment of scientific and technological objectives (Title XV) to strengthen the scientific base of Community industry, not being conducted in a social and political-ideological vacuum, would be linked with the higher and further education sectors.

The origins of educational initiative in the then European Economic Community can be traced back to the 'common cultural heritage' invoked in the Janne Report of 1973.[24] Although it envisaged an agreed vocational training policy only, it considered an Educational and Cultural Committee for the Community. By the time of Maastricht, educational collaboration initiatives had found favour with committed educators in all member states, encouraged by the provision of exchange facilities. The 'European dimension' could easily incorporate double aspect projects where the example of modern foreign language collaboration in the classroom would lead to discussions of computer training syllabuses, as part of vocational training but also to developing Europe-centred educational initiatives using e-mail. The Stuttgart Declaration of 19 June 1983 requested information on European history and culture.

The earliest initiatives concentrated on three areas:

- higher education, which introduced several collaboration and exchange schemes such as Comett (education and action for training in technologies), Eurotecnet (innovations in vocational training) as well as Tempus and Erasmus, which had the effect of revitalising European university and school links. The mutual recognition of diplomas was not intended to create a uniformity of qualifications or to seek legal equality but was based on trust of equivalence and the acceptance of diversity of content;
- equality of opportunity, which applies as much to employment prospects as to the elimination of discrimination against groups such as slow learners or other minorities. European 'democracy cannot allow the schooling of some 25 per cent of young people to be forgotten'. Programmes such as Petra helped young people to prepare for adult working life, updating qualifications through the use of new technologies. Foreign language Lingua programmes could aim at improving employment chances by enabling cultural flexibility;
- democracy and citizenship education, which launched pilot schemes in the 1984 Fontainebleau Declaration of a 'Community for Citizens and the Wider World' and the 1985 adoption by the Milan Council of the Report (*A Citizens' Europe*). The Resolution of 24 May 1988 on the European dimension in education, which called for an education in European values as well as joint economic development activity sponsored by the Community, gave the strongest impetus to later initatives. These involved the European Parliament with its June 1992 Resolution on the inclusion of the European dimension and European citizenship instruction in schools and the establishment of the Economic and Social Committee with the September 1992 Comments on the 'value added' of studying the European dimension and citizenship. Teacher preparation, particularly as educators in citizenship, led to some 210 actions, bilateral exchanges and partnerships.

The Commission produced three memoranda dealing with:

- easier access to higher education and diversification of courses, with increased collaboration with industry;
- investment in improving teacher education and the recognition of qualifications in the circumstances of the market;
- promoting open and distance education, thus ensuring virtual mobility.

Following the Commission's White Paper of 5 December 1993, *The Challenges and Ways Forward into the 21st Century: growth, competitiveness and employment* (COM(93) 700 final), especially its chapter 7, and the Resolution of the Council on the European dimension, the Commission's Green Paper (COM(93)457 final) stimulated discussions on the initiatives opening up in the wider areas of social cooperation, listed in Titles VIII and XVI of the Maastricht Treaty.

By that time educational programmes could be consolidated in three pilot schemes:

- Youth for Europe III (CL DEC 818/95), which subsumes the previous programmes, Petra and Tempus, and concentrates on retraining links with third world countries;
- Leonardo da Vinci (CL DEC 94/819) which subsumes Petra, Comett, Force and Eurotecnet proposals affecting all partners. Its aim is to improve the quality of all education and promote innovation in the market and the European dimension;
- The Socrates Programme (CL DEC 819/95) which includes Erasmus exchange initiatives, especially the promotion of inter-institutional links in preference to individual contacts. Its remit extends to the mutual recognition of diplomas and to counting time spent studying in another country towards qualifying for a degree. The European Credit Transfer Scheme (ECTS) constitutes Part iii – Socrates Policy Communication 1994 (COM(94)656).

'Europe at School' organises partnerships cooperating on common priorities, such as language education, protecting the cultural heritage and the environment, as well as twinning programmes involving exchanges of head teachers,

with the aim of developing an 'intellectual mobility' which constitutes a European flexibility and openness with a sense of community belonging.

Part iii – Socrates emphasises the European preparation of all personnel concerned with education, concentrating on language study and using the new technologies and information, much of it made available through distance learning. Teacher training is the aim of all three schemes, especially in-service programmes, which, more specifically than initial preparation, constitute professional training.[25]

Research and development programmes in 1994–8 were those of a socio-economic nature.

Extended educational and training collaboration resulted in activities of the then European Community in the medium term (1989–92) which promoted the setting of university entrance criteria, improving the mutual recognition of qualifications as well as facilitating mobility.

The dynamic effect of research conducted in joint research and enterprise centres and its potential as an investment in the future was recognised early on by European political leaders. Original Article 128 enabled the European Council to complement training activity at national level by promoting projects involving laboratories in several member states and a mingling of scientists from different disciplines, allowing it to finance a wide range of initiatives. The fourth Research Framework Programme adopted by the European Commission, which ran from 1994 to 1998, concentrated on improving the European Communities' industrial competitiveness as its prime objective, with 3 per cent of the Union's GNP devoted to research and development.

The Commission's full-term programme (1992–5) was more specifically 'educational', taking in secondary education. It led to the production of guides to European education systems for parents and pedagogical subject handbooks for teachers emphasising European and interdisciplinary teaching approaches. The Council of Europe produced packages on the Industrial Revolution, immigrants in Europe and education of the Roma.

Increasingly, the syllabuses of national school leaving certificates include a European dimension. Schools and universities have appointed officers in charge of European cooperation programmes, in some cases overseeing the European Credit Transfer Scheme (ECTS).

Exchanges and common study programmes at school level which bring Europeans together are helping in this process, complementing the traditionally more European higher education sector, whose involvement in professional preparation fitted into the vocational responsibility of the Union.

The learning objectives in a European context advocated in the Commission's White Paper on Education and Training (*Teaching and Learning: Towards a Learning Society*, 1995), which takes forward its 1993 White Paper on growth, reinforce the concept of a life-long European education made up of different but not necessarily incompatible initiatives. It stresses the 'merits of a broad base of knowledge', the ingredients for adjusting to the economic and employment

situation and the 'personal fulfilment of citizens', of which the third objective is traditionally at the centre of an education provided by the nation state. Paradoxically, it takes up the Community's concern in Article 126 with developing quality education.

The emphasis on world-wide research into production methods, marketing and technology policy is linked with the educational objective of mobilising and financing Europe's 'true wealth: the creative spirit and energy of its people' to help in the production of an educated, professionally trained workforce which is flexible and interculturally aware to respond to the diversity in Europe. Beside professional preparation, space is found for a European education ranging from human rights and social protection to an awareness of common financial policies and the standardisation of products.

Enabling students and teachers to find time to participate in collaborative programmes as a learning resource may require that member states give up some educational autonomy by relaxing the grip on school timetables, as suggested by the RIF (see note 1).

The priorities of educational outcomes

The wide interpretation of education which includes vocational and upbringing considerations allows the inclusion of literally hundreds of actions covering the entire gamut of pursuits as part of the educational achievements of the European Union. The volume of work produced in the past forty years can be gauged from the pages of Schäfer's *Bibliography of the Education Systems of the European Community*.[26]

An examination of the actions taken reveals that Community priorities are those of a socio-educational nature already suggested such as access to education, equality of opportunity, development of qualifications, training and retraining projects and the mobility of students and professional workers. The emphasis on technology and mobility in the EU accounts for the promotion of education–industry links, such as Leonardo and the study of languages through Lingua.

Increasingly, non-governmental agents, such as business, social and private interests, have been taking the initiative in promoting educational and development activities, some of which are of regional significance, and involving research. The effect of research has been of a cumulative nature, stimulating fresh thought on practices and moves towards encouraging the introduction of innovations in the Union through Council decisions and regulations.

In the ongoing process, teachers, pupils, researchers and the public at large take part in producing and studying ethnic culture, camp together and protect the environment with partners from other European countries or they are involved in expanding the teaching of certain foreign languages, the work having started through exchanges and collaborations under EU programmes such as Socrates or Lingua. In many institutions teaching and training approaches have changed as a consequence of the opportunity provided by the Community to observe practice elsewhere through exchange and collaboration.

* * *

The repeated and updated versions of Council Decisions and Directives reveal the topics of particular interest. Exchange and mobility programmes, such as CL DEC 819/95 establishing the Community action plan Socrates, the Youth for Europe Programme (CL DEC 818/95) as well as a number of directives and decisions which take up previous programmes on the European Community Action Scheme for Mobility of University Students (Erasmus: CL DEC 87/327 and following) and *An Action Programme for the Promotion of Youth Exchanges in the Community* (CL DEC 88/348), come up especially often.

Education of the Children of Migrant Workers (CL DIR 77/486) demonstrates the priority of access to education facilities, while *Establishing an Action Programme to Promote Foreign Language Competence in the EC* (CL DEC 89/489) confirms the importance in the Community of communication. The recent *Adoption of a Multiannual Programme to Promote the Linguistic Diversity of the Community in the Information Society* (CL DEC 96/664) proves the EU's long-term commitment to both diversity and to information technology.

Action Programmes on the Comparability of Vocational Training Qualifications Between the Member States of the EC (CL DEC 85/368) are the prerequisite enabling workers' mobility, while CL DEC 87/569, *Concerning an Action Programme for the Vocational Training of Young People and Their Preparation for Adult and Working Life* is a response to EU vocational preparation commitments under Article 127. Programmes to do with exchanges implementing an EC vocational training policy, continuing vocational training and preparation for adult and working life on a comparative basis are updated, for example, Eurotecnet and Force (CL DEC 89/657) into Leonardo (CL DEC 94/819).

The economic priority is evident in CL DEC 91/504, *Adopting a Specific Research and Technological Development and Demonstration Programme for the EEC in the Field of Agriculture and Agro-Industry Including Fisheries*, while the training and mobility of researchers is the focus of CL DEC 94/916, *Adopting a Specific Programme of Research and Technological Development, Including Demonstration, in the Field of Training and Mobility of Researchers*. Three recent directives on competition show the Union's commitment to a free production and marketing activity in the Common Market.

Many regulations deal with the recognition and status of professional and vocational qualifications, and are indicative of EU concern to ensure the maximum possible mobility and right of establishment. These are the *Action Programmes on the Comparability of Qualifications Between the Member States of the EC*.

The lists in *Butterworths' European Communities Legislation: Current Status*[27] run to many pages, going on to include environmental concerns, machine translation, stimulation plans for economic science and other initiatives, in many of which the distinction between education and vocational priorities is not at all clear.

Member states' compliance with the legislation varies depending on its type. Some states have been arraigned before the Court of Justice for non-compliance with directives on the mutual recognition of diplomas as qualification: for example, Greece, in the case of the *frontistiria* language schools and the exclusion of nationals of other member states from holding jobs in public education. In Germany, the status of teachers as professional civil servants was not relaxed for non-German nationals until 1993. In Italy, non-Italian graduates may still be excluded from permanent teaching posts in universities.

To find direct links between an EC or EU directive and national implementing legislation in the United Kingdom is relatively easy with *Butterworths EC Legislation Implementator*[28] which lists the Directive number (title and *Official Journal* reference), the target date and the corresponding UK legislation (that is, the Statutory Instrument number followed by the relevant acts). There are similar compendia in the other EU languages.

Financing education and training: deciding the priorities

Educational initiatives which merit Community assistance can be said to be financed by member states via the Union out of direct contributions and indirect levies on VAT takings as well as customs, agricultural and other duties which together sustain the European Social and Structural Funds. R&TD research conducted in Joint Research Centres such as that at Ispra in Italy is contracted out, with between 25 and 50 per cent of the total financed by the Community. National and business money is invested in specific research projects.

Transnational projects which can be commercially exploited are prioritised. They are likely to be of an industrial and economic nature, to do with changing employment patterns and vocational retraining, as, for example, in the recent cases of the steel and clothing industries. Funding is available under the *Treatment in Access to Employment* Directive (CL DIR 76/207) or the *Common Vocational Training Policy* Decision (CL DEC 63/266). Information technology and national education initiatives aiming at European identity or European Citizenship are new areas which attract Community support.

'Education' in the wider sense can be assisted by financing certain training and retraining initiatives: 'research, technological development and demonstration programmes' including 'dissemination and optimization of the results' (Article 130g). In addition to the Social Fund, research can be funded by activating the aim of developing and pursuing 'actions leading to the strengthening of . . . economic and social cohesion' (Article 130a). The reduction of disparities between the development levels of the various regions will ensure that better progress is made with the overall economic and political objectives of the Community. The resources of the Structural Funds set up for this purpose, the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Funds and the European Regional Development Fund, redress imbalances and make structural adjustments.

Cooperation and consultation through the 'educational mobility' programmes of the European dimension comes largely out of the budget of the Directorate General (DG XXII) responsible for Education, Training and Youth. Over the

years, all Union member states have received assistance from the various sources available.

In 1997 monies available for training, youth policy, culture and audiovisual media information and technology amounted to ECU780 million, which represents 0.9 per cent of the total available expenditure. This compares with research and training expenditure, including R&TD and JRC, of ECU3,160.4 million, representing 3.8 per cent in the same year. The sums received by member states are not in proportion to the payments made by them to the Community but are allocated in accordance with need.

It is significant that in the United Kingdom between the years 1995–6 and (March) 1998, according to statistics relating to actions for which the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges is the national agency, the take-up of cooperation contacts of the actions of the Lingua programme, which may have a readier vocational application (especially the 1990–4 programme), has been keeping up with the school and academic orientated Socrates programmes. Lingua Action B: Language In-service Training for Teachers/Trainers increased from 868 to 2,408, compared with Comenius Action 1: Multilateral School Partnerships Teacher Placements and Exchange, which went up from 100 to 688. To be sure, the statistical differences may reflect the different volumes of funding available.

Although in view of the economic objectives of the European Union financing the explicitly cultural and civic aspects of education will be a low priority unless their usefulness to improve productivity can be argued, it is not entirely fanciful to take Union involvement in the 'development of the highest posssible level of education . . . through a wide access to education and its continuous updating' (New Recital in the Preamble to the Treaty of Amsterdam) in the sense of promoting an environment and upbringing that will be conducive to the fullest exploitation of the knowledge and skills acquired, an area in which education as upbringing will have an important part to play. Improving access to education for the disadvantaged and disabled minorities through enabling social policy initiatives indicates the general drift in that direction.

Educational achievements

The European dimension

The 1988 European Community Resolution is generally recognised as the strongest stimulus to the whole range of educational activities, including the so-called European dimension which introduced European knowledge and attitudes into the curriculum of member states' schools. It is identified with collaborative exchange and research programmes mounted within the framework of existing Socrates and Leonardo exchange schemes, which make up its single largest voluntary component fostering a spirit of European cohesion and identity.

In a 1994 interview the former European Union Commissioner Antonio Ruberti said that educational visits and exchanges were an integral part of the European dimension. As part of the educational achievements of the European Union he listed the take-up of exchanges during his tenure of office as proof of the growth of the European dimension. As voluntary activities, these visits do not impinge on member states' educational autonomy.

Generously funded, they are available at all levels and for all types of education and promote group and individual activities geared to appeal to people at the ages for which they are designed, whether as general education or as vocational guidance for those already at work. Erasmus, Comenius, Lingua and Leonardo exchange sub-networks are available respectively to pupils, students, school and university teachers and researchers, workers in industry; apart from study visits, they include in-service professional development schemes in the form of European 'summer universities' or industry–education partnerships which include training and work placements. Leonardo focuses on education leading to professional qualifications.

The Erasmus schemes, generally considered as the flagship of the programmes, are an important exchange initiative in the influential higher education sector, bringing together as participants not only EU citizens: many are open to nationals of associate members.

Europeans probably already use or are learning to use exchange experience to improve their vocational and professional skills and knowledge. In addition, exchange helps to foster a spirit of European inquiry and adaptability together with the European knowledge used by workers and learners in the economy of an integrated Europe.

Its multiple, cognitive skills and affective character achieved through the medium of cross-curricular 'dimensions' enables it to have a strong influence on all Europeans by reforming the school curriculum and work plans, which encourages an active approach to intercultural and personal development.

Even so, opportunities for the mobility on offer have not been taken up to the fullest extent possible. Relatively few teachers spend part of their preparation period studying in another member state or extending their skills into areas such as health care or careers advice. Indeed, the effects of the exchanges and visits are mixed because they do not necessarily register an enhanced European awareness on the part of participants, many of whom see themselves as citizens of Europe, dedicated to the European ideals of peace and solidarity. An unpublished questionnaire administered to a cohort of British Comenius participants by Adams, Evans and Raffan in 1997–8 in Cambridge revealed ignorance about Europe and a reluctance, especially among boys, to admit to a Europeanness.

Organisations concerned with European education, such as the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges in the United Kingdom and its sister organisations in other member states of the Union, have introduced networks of information services, many of them taking on the function of processing applications for European collaborative research and study awards. They also disseminate European literature, such as the magazine *Central Bureau News*, and

examples of good practice. The popular series of television programmes *Inside Europe*, compiled by the Central Bureau, was shown and discussed widely in contemporary history lessons in schools in several European countries after its presentation on BBC 2's *The Learning Zone*.

Initiatives such as the European Schools Day and lectures on European events organised by the Central Bureau are part of a network of activities by linked organisations in other member states financed by the European Union. Jean Monnet Community and European Heritage lectures acquaint Europeans with their own home backgrounds and those of fellow Europeans. European dimension programmes at 'home' are an addition to study in institutions of another member state fitted into the regular teaching programmes, enabling a comparative European dimension.

The European schools which provide an education leading to a European or International Baccalaureate for the sons and daughters of expatriate European civil servants and workers in member states present a separate and distinctive way of experiencing the European dimension.

The above programmes are the achievement of the Directorate General of the European Community 'Education Training and Youth' (DG XXII) responsible for the organisation of most of the European education initiatives.

Collaboration in research

The Directorate General Science, 'Research and Development' (DG XII) shares some responsibility for education and vocational training with DG XXII, being concerned mainly with research. Other Directorates, such as Employment and Industrial Relations, may be marginally involved.

Technological and scientific development fits the economic and professional objectives of European Union intervention which is to deliver 'Knowledge and learning through Community and Member States collaboration'. Research pursued by Directorate General XII is in the areas marked as priorities for raising economic standards.

Targeted Socio-economic Research Programme 1995–1998 was awarded ECU105 million for its activities, 3 per cent of the Union's GNP given to R&TD. The Directorate used workmanlike approaches with three separate calls for proposals, ranging from an overview of the whole work programme, followed by a separate examination of the three areas focusing on priority topics encouraging 'Transversal Proposals' and onto 'Highlighting Strategic Orientation'. In the areas covered – information and communication technology (ICT), teacher training, teaching methods and education policies – thirty-eight projects were submitted.

The current (fifth) R&TD Framework Programme, as of May 1998, foresees 'Improving the human research potential and the socio-economic knowledge base' and includes joint Community and member state initiatives on the 'Quality of Life and Management of Living Resources', a 'User Friendly Information Society', and 'Competitive and Sustainable Growth and Preserving the Ecosystem'.

This Key Action encompasses four main blocks:

- societal trends and structural changes;
- technology, society and employment;
- governance and citizenship;
- new development models fostering growth and employment;

closely linked with Maastricht Treaty provisions on employment and citizenship.

Each of the four blocks is divided into what are educational issues of international concern which can be translated into school curriculum programmes, for the detailed framing of which member states alone are responsible. Their industrial application, for example in production, has to be negotiated in a different context.

Phenomena of xenophobia, racism and migration, changing patterns of work and organisation of time (Key Action 1), the impact of technologies in socio-economic, territorial, institutional, political and structural contexts or the role of the public sector in the innovation process (Key Action 2) can be incorporated into syllabuses or lead to rethinking on the roles of the state (public) and private (business) sectors in educational change. The concept of citizenship across Europe or the influence of the various components of culture and of educational models on the development of values (Key Action 3) are topics for inquiry by qualified representatives of member states for promoting national curriculum development in member states. Findings resulting from innovations in socio-economic partners' cooperation or organisational patterns, new types of work and employment (Key Action 4) are matters for economists and work-efficiency experts.

In the programmes, school education–upbringing concerns, including the need for different teaching and learning processes, such as integrating multimedia pedagogic material or safety at school, share pride of place with vocational training. Despite the widely proclaimed differences in national educational systems and practices in European Union member states, the advantages of a common approach are acknowledged as contributing to the achievement of a more efficient, just and prosperous Europe. The demarcation line between education and training indeed looks blurred when the topics being researched are compared. However, the economic objective of the Community is never lost sight of, while the actual introduction of new programmes in national curricula is devolved to the member states, which leaves the provisions of the Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaties unviolated.

Languages in a multilingual context: language awareness

The eleven official, national or main mother tongues plus the dozen or more regional languages of the European Union of fifteen states are one of the most

readily perceived features of diversity. To a varying but increasing degree, since the start of the European Communities all official languages have been taught not only in their countries of origin, but have been available in the other member states as school subjects. The regional 'territorial' languages of France are now officially admitted, which they were not in 1952.

Exact policies and regulations for teaching the first or 'official' language in school vary in the member states but it is the core subject of the curriculum. The main language, for example Castilian, will be available throughout Spain, but the regional languages, for example Catalan, will be used and taught in Catalonia, identified with their territory. Their status is left to individual member states, which in addition, for example in Spain, have to provide Portuguese and French as foreign or migrants' languages.

Foreign languages, in particular the other languages of the European Union, are supposed to be available in schools. In practice, some languages, especially English, have achieved the status of an additional language of instruction, for example in the Netherlands. This may result in competition with the regional languages. Several member states, notably France, have introduced foreign languages in their primary schools. Educational autonomy determines the details of teaching policies and methods. Unlike the Scots, the English teach hardly any foreign languages in primary schools.

There is a distinction between the prestigious languages which are part of the prescribed curriculum and the smaller languages which include territorial or non-European immigrants' home languages which, like dialects, do not enjoy the same status as languages. In this case also, individual policies are applied, for example on the position of 'standard' language in the United Kingdom.

All approaches can be justified, whether indicative of the government's responsibility for promoting the country's first language for historical and national–political reasons, as in Greece, or giving school leavers the advantage of qualifying for a wider variety of jobs because of their linguistic facility, especially with English. In the Netherlands minority languages can not only be taught as a subject but some are used as the medium of instruction in special schools financed by the state. The second approach is in response to the spread of Anglo-American influence through information technology.[29]

The status of minority languages depends on their users' attitude to maintaining them. Immigrant users of Castilian are more likely to resort to the language of their host country than are the Portuguese. The former find it easier to secure jobs without seeking the help of their own compatriots already in a job and are less worried if they cannot address them in their mother tongue when approaching them.[30]

The Lingua programme, which expands language instruction, first, second or foreign, at all levels, was created not only to facilitate communication but also in order to protect the identity of different language groupings in multilingual Europe. The actual policies differ in accordance with the status and popularity of the country with immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees.

Integrating immigrant minorities may be a problem in the case of those

non-EU immigrants whose languages and cultures do not enjoy the same degree of protection given to the territorial languages, although many can be used as the languages of school instruction. The gap between the parity of status of the territorial languages and of the 'new' languages is as wide as the related social problems. European Union provision for these minority interests is not necessarily reciprocal, as is the case of the official languages of EU member states.

Literature reading lists are national, while foreign language teaching emphasises the communicative skills in preference to the study of literature. Not much 'European' literature is taught in first-language lessons to encourage multiculturalism. However, the practice of reading texts and short works in the original or in translation is growing; while making use of more European texts in translation in literature classes in England, which used to rely exclusively on texts written by Commonwealth authors, marks a changed emphasis in the 'foreign' experience.

Making reference to foreign languages in general classroom transactions, as opposed to foreign language lessons, is left largely to the teachers. Member states' teaching methods and teaching traditions may allow more or less account to be taken of language structures and comparison made with other languages and dialects in lessons.[31]

The policy of encouraging the spoken language means that, as a rule, an approach which does not have much recourse to grammar teaching is preferred. In the 1980s a movement known in England as Language Awareness advocated the use of a language education which encouraged reflection on the language acquisition process in the case of both the mother tongue and modern foreign languages. This introduced a cognitive dimension to language learning[32] which broke up the routine of repetitions.

Language Awareness, which meanwhile is taken to include affective (sensitivity to other speakers and their languages) and somatic (pronunciation and listening skills) as well as cognitive (learning about language) approaches in language study, have found interest in a number of European Union countries.[33]

Awareness of language not only enables pupils to 'learn' more about their first language, making them more skilful, emancipated users of it, but can also give them an insight into how language is acquired in the first place. This allows them to use the experience also as a reference in the process of language acquisition made while learning a foreign language, expediting the undertaking by encouraging awareness of similarities as well as differences and distinguishing between regular and irregular occurrences.

Learners who are aware of how they acquire or learn a language are more likely to take an interest in learning other languages, and in their users and their cultures, language being recognised as part of a nation's culture.[34] In the European Union where languages enjoy a priority the use of a Language Awareness approach may improve learning motivation and encourage the finding of suitable ways of learning them.[35]

Since Language Awareness is an intercultural curriculum dimension sensitising learners to language functions, its structures and varieties, it has a role to play in the intercultural considerations of a European education in a multilingual Europe, encouraging tolerance and an involvement in the acquisition of language and a willing acceptance of language users[36] (see also note 32).

Salvadori's suggestions[37] for a thriving European partnership exploiting the technological and economic dimensions could be linked with the suggested language study as cultural diversity becomes a goal worthy of pursuit.

Intercultural education and European pedagogy

It will most likely always be possible to distinguish teachers' different nationalities by their general national 'mannerisms' as well as their professional preference for pupil-centred or teacher-dominated teaching approaches. The class teachers' role in a multiethnic situation must be that of an expert intercultural practitioner who can act for the whole multicultural group, requiring both a systematic theoretical and a practical preparation.

Interdependence, a two-way traffic from group to group and group to teacher in a classroom of pupils with an equal claim to time and resources, is the key to intercultural pedagogy. Personal experience acquired through participation in exchanges enables intercultural expertise to develop.[38]

The curricular elements suggested in the European dimension defined earlier must be practised by the teachers themselves. They will be expected to have a global outlook and to teach across European borders. At least an acquaintance with some European languages or linguistic facts and a language awareness, are essential.

The acquisition of a multicultural and multilingual view of Europe is an integral part of factual knowledge of the continent, which includes one's own member state. Quoting official documentation, Convey[39] gives details of the skills and knowledge necessary to work in other member states. Intercultural teaching is cooperative teaching free of bias and prejudice, giving pupils the opportunity to study ethnic materials and to learn about the cultures around them[40] and to acquire indispensable European travel skills.

The European Association of Teachers (AEDE), the Association for Teacher Education in Europe (ATEE) and the European Secondary Heads Association have taken initiatives to develop practical approaches to intercultural teaching. The European skills suggested above are part of a European pedagogy to be used by the growing numbers of what will be ethnic teachers teaching in multiethnic classrooms. So far, research conducted on European topics has not included an explicit European pedagogy.

Mario Reguzzoni[41] sees European pedagogy (*pédagogie européenne*) as addressing European super-values, helping to overcome the reluctance to acknowledge one's European identity. He develops his concept by suggesting a shift of the Community's general 'European dimension' towards promoting specific Europe-

orientated project initiatives, with the users of education exploiting the opportunities of Socrates and Leonardo for this purpose, and developing a sense of pride in European achievements.

'The *principle of subsidiarity [which] will become a pedagogic medium*' appropriates the socio-economic priorities of the Community for creating a new identity for Europe, not in the sense of one nation stronger than the others but 'as an economic and political space shedding hidebound national traditions and prejudices in which distinct, original initiatives can be developed by Europeans for the benefit of the European Union as a whole', with the help of available European Union facilities.

The new pedagogy assumes starting with the providers and recipients of education and training. Reguzzoni warns of the danger of a European superstate which would destroy the equilibrium between central and peripheral responsibility; this may arise despite restrictions placed on excessive Community involvement.

Unifying European super-values subsumes those of individual member states, the new component being the adoption of an autonomous, overarching supranational position which supplants the outdated, national forms of thinking and doing.

Reguzzoni pleads for the Community to promote the development of the European dimension in the direction of discarding member state government initiatives in favour of fresh European ones by practitioners at below-government level. This would involve social workers, voluntary groups and others, drawn from the wider range of European citizens acting as agents, professional and non-professional parties, teachers and experts, as well as pupils, parents and business, attempting to find solutions to problems of health, environment, employment and safety as well as education besetting Europe being dealt with as a part of the economic and political priorities of the Union. Poor linguistic ability which inhibits students in making full use of exchange programmes is also responsible for the lack of interest in a European pedagogy.

Global and regional education perspectives

An entire section of European dimension syllabuses is given over to extra academic aspects of the curriculum such as human rights and environmental and citizenship education, which are global concerns that cannot be limited to Europe or the European Union. The European knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired as a European 'literacy' must address wider world issues to keep pace with economic developments, through the contacts which the European Union maintains with the rest of the world.

National curricular procedures and suggestions such as those of the Commission on Citizenship (see note 19) can be used for the efficient teaching of regional schemes through linking with national ones that confront the same problems but concentrating on their local implications. Working on such parallel projects is an example of cooperation by the two sets of interests, combining

the satisfaction of regional and local achievement with activities which are necessarily world-wide.

Recognition given to the 'regions' is a feature of the European Union. The Committee of the Regions attempts to bring Europe closer to Europeans by placing decision making in matters of politics, economy, employment and ecology, health and education at the centre of local activity, encouraging a 'bottom-up' collaboration in matters which affect their everyday lives and open to innovatory practice in the region, with regional legislation approving and financing socially and economically valuable projects for regional development.

The educational implications of the rise of regional units are reflected in the revival of local crafts and skills and collaborative efforts for improving employment prospects. In borderland areas there may be provision for teaching a minority territorial language or dialect (see note 11) and the award of regional diplomas.[42]

Several hundred regions can be found within one 'nation state', such as Catalonia in Spain, or they can straddle two or three state borders such as the 'Euregio' links between communities in the Tri Rhena area around Basel or those in the Noord of Holland and North Westphalia. The transborder links are particularly good examples of 'European' areas fought over in the past by different sovereign states and currently administered by different governments but meanwhile sharing economic or ecological concerns and often a common dialect and cultural tradition.

Regional work is seen as enhancing the 'European dimension' in an education concept demonstrating concern for employment, public health, vocational training, transport and social legislation: matters on which the European Council is enjoined to consult the Committee of the Regions. The economic and ecological revival of a number of areas has been particularly successful, the result of joint micro-European effort. It is not an attempt to encourage the growth of exclusivity and separatism because the work is carried out against a multilingual and multicultural background replicated in other regions and on a European level also.

Conclusion

General comments

It has been the aim throughout this chapter to qualify the attempt to claim that education is one of the EU areas of activity for which the sole responsibility has been left with its member states. To be sure, it is in the actual provision of educational services that most of the differences between member states can be found, in a pattern described as a 'mosaic' by Francine Vaniscotte,[43] and in a political system which foresees no powers being available to impose structural or curricular change from outside.[44]

Schools which deliver compulsory education and supply the basic work skills of a country's economy differ most in respect of their structure and content

(provision of nursery schooling, the length of compulsory education, pupil admission policies, the 'national' parts of the curriculum) and the details of their management (involvement of parents, teachers, pupils, business interests and the community at large in school administration). Teaching methods and styles which depend on the form that teacher–pupil relations assume can vary from school to school. What may be referred to as school rituals, the minutiae of length of teaching periods, pupils' dress or personal freedom differ most of all. The countless differences which affect pupils, their parents and their teachers are variously determined by local school governors or by central government.

At the same time, the national systems of education have been in receipt of financial assistance through regional aid from the Community, which member states have been able to invest in their own prioritised projects, as shown in the following chapters. They have also been able to benefit from the professional advice forthcoming from the Community through the findings of research and collaboration. Innovatory projects, for example in teacher education to improve the quality of education in Europe, have been eligible for EU funding.

Member states have had to comply with Community legislation on such educational concerns as equality of provision or the mutual recognition of diplomas. The use made of exchange facilities has had the cumulative effect of making educational practice in the European Union more homogeneous.

A helpful way to make a comparative examination of the provision of educational facilities by EU member states is to concentrate on the common problems which confront them and the solutions arrived at. Such an examination reveals differences, for example in the involvement of schools in the professional preparation of teachers as opposed to locating most of it, apart from practical teaching, in institutions of higher education, as well as similarities in tackling a Europe-wide reform of teacher preparation. Differences will continue alongside convergence, for example in the adoption of the European Credit Transfer Scheme and work on curricular schemes towards common European qualifications. They have not managed to supplant the award of national certificates, despite the unique freedom to manoeuvre that mobility has created.

Of the uses that can be made of the knowledge gained from a comparative study of education provision, the most important one is probably the stimulus given to considerations for further improving educational quality. The raising of standards of the first phase of secondary education in the comprehensive school, involving the elimination of the lower-level vocational school, or the greater control of access to tertiary-level education, safeguarded by the scope of national leaving certificates and student fees, are examples of a common tradition and response to economic developments.

The implications of practices such as the existence of a selective school system in Germany and Belgium, even though access to it is administered differently, or of central curriculum planning, while leaving its delivery to the schools, being differently resolved in Belgium from the solutions adopted in England, are matters which are debated not only in the national context but are also the

subject of discussions by politicians and professionals meeting in European Union assemblies and conferences.

The involvement of parents, business and community interests in the government of schools is indicative of the status of central and local control of education. Total financial devolution of many schools in England contrasts with the role of central government in controlling the system by its teams of inspectors, indicative of both the speed and extent of the introduction of a market economy in education.[45]

If the outcome of a collaborative and agreed approach to European *vocational preparation* has been the production of better trained and skilled European employees and employers, then the aim of a European *general education* is to produce committed Europeans able to live and work in the European Union. The two are not incompatible, education including:

- schooling at all levels, in which the best practice in conventional curricula would to a large extent be shared in order to promote economic growth;
- professional preparation of a well-educated, trained and skilled workforce which will use shared research facilities to improve practice;
- personal and social education with a European bias to promote an inter-cultural, cooperative approach to learning and the formation of European attitudes;
- political awareness and the skills of European citizenship which include commitment to Europe with a global respect for human rights and the environment;
- knowledge, values and general skills and an open and flexible stance required to operate within the Union, together with adequate language and travel skills, and the European expertise needed to use that mobility beyond the workplace;
- the ability to interpret communication initiated by those using different media and to understand what is being transmitted thanks to the education received.

There are six educational areas where developments, to a varying degree, affect a 'European identity' in the school:

- the curriculum: administration and school governance and parental involvement;
- business and community representation: government control;
- the status of denominational and private education;
- admission policies: responses to minority interests;
- work experience in school;
- restructuring the higher education sector.

The allocation of time to humanities and science education areas may allow for a different emphasis to be given to the study of modern foreign languages and the choice of languages, for example to reduce the dominant position of French

in England. Account should be taken of the fact that teaching methods differ, for example in the teaching of reading due to the different length of words and the different syllable structure in different languages.

There are significant differences in 'personal and social' education and the teaching of health and hygiene, partly determined by the denominational character of some schools.

In the administration of schools the position of the head teacher and the independence of teachers as the agents responsible for delivering education play a crucial role. This is handled differently due to practices stemming from developments such as the involvement of the state, the Church or private individuals in the provision of compulsory education and its status.

Although the so-called 'independent' schools have to provide a prescribed core curricular minimum, there is freedom in interpreting ministerial guidelines and the production of an individual school profile in many EU countries. French commitment to transmitting national republican values mitigates undue individualisation and commercialisation of education on the scale happening in Britain.

The representation of teachers and pupils on governing bodies varies; the United Kingdom allows less place to these interests than does France. The role of parents has grown, commensurate with their right to choose their children's school and their newly found status as consumers.[46]

Parents' say in deciding parts of the curriculum has led to involvement in 'personal and social', including sex, education. Assisted denominational and ethnic minority schools may have their own religious components of the curriculum. Socio-political reformers have been promoting tighter control of social science syllabuses to fight hidden misrepresentation and bias.[47]

The influence of business and community interests reflects the application of market principles to financing education.[48]

The involvement of business interests in the provision of education facilities can be seen in the changed vocational preparation sector at secondary and tertiary levels in Greece, in further and higher education in the UK, and the arrival of private universities in Germany. It may result in a different emphasis being given to subjects such as foreign languages, mathematics or the arts. Increasingly, local businesses have become identified as the main employers of school leavers.

The nation state usually has ultimate responsibility for and control of education, extending to deciding the curriculum taught and monitoring the award of certificates. Concern with quality has prompted governments, in Britain and France for example, to create academic centres of excellence. Fear has been expressed that Educational Action Zones may threaten the continuance of innovative curricular practices, such as Sommerhill, whose priorities lie in the areas of personal development and independence.

Control of the teaching syllabus has led to the detailed prescription of daily 'literacy' and 'numeracy hours' in England and Wales ten years after the introduction of the National Curriculum and of central inspections of all schools by the OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education) agency, evidence of

a stricter application of government control of 'quality worthiness' leading to the publication of performance 'league tables', a development closely watched elsewhere.

Financial support of denominational schools is practised in EU member states although details of the conditions attached to it differ. Regulations arise from different arrangements made with the Churches to relinquish control of education, as in England, or the introduction of a secular school, as in France.

Historical developments in the provision of compulsory education by the state are responsible for the prestige of 'private' schools as well as the status of Christian schooling in Europe. The Republic of Ireland, with almost total provision of state-maintained Catholic schools, is exceptional, but in the Netherlands some 3.3 per cent, as against 1.7 per cent, of GDP intended for state schools is being allocated to the state-assisted denominational and secular schools. This compares with 0.8 per cent and 5.1 per cent respectively in France in the year 1992. The need to increase provision and improve educational and vocational standards which requires substantial outlay is likely to affect Church involvement in education in Europe, particularly that by the established denominations.

Admission policies according to ability vary. Most state-maintained schooling is non-selective and free. However, there may be links with a system of 'donations' from parent and business interests, documented in England, which can secure admission. Limiting comprehensivisation to the end of the lower secondary stage or the end of compulsory schooling, after which selection takes over,[49] illustrates the different origins of compulsory education and its control.

The introduction of work experience as part of the general education curriculum throughout the European Union is intended to make education less 'academic' by preparing school leavers for employement through giving them an insight into the world of work and the economy. The link between general education and industrial experience is a contribution to school–industry links, work experience placement in another member state being the type of European dimension supported by programmes such as Leonardo.

European vocational schemes include student exchanges and work practice locations under early European Vocational Education (EVE) and the Leonardo and Lingua programmes, as well as schemes run by business firms. Economic priorities prompting change in order to achieve a supply of skilled workers reflect a trend which has led to a shrinking of the academic school sector. The greater permeability between the three parts of the German system is an example of dilution of the strict selective practice of the *Gymnasien*.

Tertiary-level religious academies and universities have shared a common European educational tradition for longer than other institutions, with a travelling population of academics and students having its origins in a culturally united Europe. Though this tradition began to break up as education became more closely identified with the achievements of nation states, features of an international and religious character can still be seen in the management and rituals of the older universities.

The ready exchange of students and research findings, the mutual recognition of degrees and the appointment of teaching staff on an international scale have experienced an upsurge in the European Union, strengthened by prioritisation of professional and vocational study and the greater involvement of higher education in professional preparation.

Contacts among EU institutions, strongly supported by the Union as well as some national governments, notably the UK, Germany, Austria, the Netherlands and France, and professional associations have led to the establishment of degrees and diplomas with a European profile and to courses run jointly by several institutions leading to the award of what are called European qualifications. New degree and diploma courses reflect the high demand for qualifications in science, technology and engineering, business and the law as well as information technology. Though often financed by national or regional governments, their contents are not as a rule government-controlled, although the economic viability of courses is an important factor in their continued existence in those countries where the concept of 'education as an entitlement' is less respected now than it was in the immediate post-war expansion of university education. EU economic and business priorities, including manning the European administrative machinery, have kept up the numbers of applicants.

With education in Europe increasingly being received in more than one country for Europe-wide positions, the possession of 'European' qualifications, such as the International or European Baccalaureate or the European Diploma in Education being instituted in Italy, is likely to be expected not only of new recruits to the Union bureaucracy but of professionals in other specialisms. This area is still being explored.

Especially in the more 'popular' European countries, particularly England, France and Germany, exchange study is very much on the increase. An English language component is particularly valuable despite EU initiatives to expand the knowledge of more than one language and of more than one education system among Europeans (see note 12).

The absence of an agreed European policy on the funding of university education and the payment of tuition fees by students has been known to hold up some ECTS schemes. Students may be reluctant to study where the facilities are inferior because the low funding received in some member states, including fees, does not allow the same scale of improvement as in their home countries, where financial help from industry is more readily forthcoming. The introduction of tuition fees has not been tackled on a Europe-wide scale.

Students from all EU member states can take up available places in the institutions of other member states as if they were studying in their own countries, subject to paying the same fees and with entitlement to the same grants or scholarships provided for member states' own nationals. They are eligible for financial assistance from European Union exchange and collaboration schemes.

* * *

Teacher preparation, of primary teachers in particular, has recently become an integral part of the higher education sector almost throughout the Union, consisting of academic study followed by professional training. This policy has put the theory of education among tertiary-level professional qualifications and is favoured by teachers' professional bodies and unions. The reform of teacher preparation in France involving the introduction of compulsory professional training at university level in the *Instituts Universitaires de Formation des Maîtres* (IUFMs) is particularly noteworthy.

The mutual recognition of foreign qualifications is linked with the eligibility of teachers for employment in other member states. England and Wales (not Scotland) have been in the forefront of recognising teaching qualifications awarded by other states for teaching posts. This practice, its slow growth linked with the civil servant status of teachers in some member states, is being extended in the Union. This is confirmed, for example, by the acceptance of teachers who are nationals of other member states as permanent teachers in Spain and France. In the UK, the Department for Education and Employment in particular is involved in mobility. The influence of teachers' unions on training and remuneration varies from very little in, say, England compared with the major role of unions and professional associations in France or Sweden.

Teachers as the purveyors of a 'national' education, expected to educate their nation's children according to national criteria, have, in many ways, to undergo the most dramatic changes to qualify for their role as European teachers. While perfectly capable of responding to innovations, proved by their enthusiastic espousal of computer pedagogy, they have often shown a conservative, even nationalistic, stance in other areas of professional activity, their loyalty rewarded by their civil servant status, salaries and working conditions.[50]

The division of competences for education and training implied in the definitions found in documents produced by way of commentary on the Maastricht Treaty makes it difficult to agree an explicit joint education programme in member states of the European Union. Without prejudice to actions undertaken by member states, regional and borderland collaboration is probably the best forum for trying out educational collaboration constructed on the unity and diversity experienced by borderland dwellers in the regions and which may lead to more lasting educational institutions throughout the Union.

European educators will continue to share their new findings and their acquired expertise to develop suitable approaches to deliver a qualitatively different education, a European education for the socio-economic and political advancement of member states of the Union and their citizens, respecting diversity without abandoning their individuality, a challenge for the coming years.

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1 Austria

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Introduction

During the last decade or so Austria, like many other European countries, has been confronted with four major challenges: two of them highly political, the consequences of the fall of the Iron Curtain and the accelerating processes of European integration facilitated, in part, by the end of a divided Europe; two of them in the field of education, on the one hand the globalisation of the world economy, and the explosion of the information society on the other.

Austria is a relatively small country (8 million inhabitants, approximately 84,000 sq. km), and it has the rather unique geographical position of common borders with eight neighbouring states: the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Italy, Switzerland, Liechtenstein and Germany. In light of its history as an empire up until 1918, it has a rich historical tradition shared as a common heritage with many of its neighbours. For obvious reasons, its cultural-linguistic and economic ties are most intensive with Germany.

During the last three or four decades, Austria has accumulated a considerable amount of experience in accommodating to fluctuating political circumstances – from the Cold War in the 1950s to the advent of the 'new Europe' at the end of the 1980s. An intense debate about the necessity for a closer relationship with the European Community in the late 1980s culminated in the establishment of a domestic political consensus on that issue just as Communism began to collapse in central and eastern Europe. The prospects of accession to the European Union and the end of Communism not only facilitated a dual process of reorientation; they also presented Austria with an unprecedented opportunity to redefine its relationship within the region. In figurative terms, Austria moved west and east at the same time: to the West by joining the European Union, to the East by re-establishing long and historical connections with its immediate neighbours.

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