



Resolution 500 (1971)¹

Present trends in educational reform and further prospects with a view to permanent education

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Recalling its [Recommendation 611 \(1970\)](#) and [Resolution 463 \(1970\)](#) on permanent education in Europe ;
2. Having regard to the report by its Committee on Culture and Education on present trends in educational reform and future prospects with a view to permanent education ([Doc. 3019](#)), and noting especially the results of the Symposium on Basic Education held in accordance with the aforementioned resolution on 28 and 29 June 1971 at Salerno (Italy) ;
3. Noting that the aim of this symposium was to study :
 - a. in what way education, and more generally educational activities open to young people from birth to 18 years of age, should be devised so as to meet the demands of permanent education ;
 - b. in support of this study, to put forward a set of specific measures for consideration by governments ;
4. Noting in this context that the symposium dealt with the following subjects, on which the problems of school reform in Europe are concentrated :

the three groups of participants in the educational process : parents, teachers, pupils ;

the acquisition of means of expression at the various levels of basic education ;

reappraisal of the attitude towards knowledge ;

the place of technical education at the basic levels of education,

Invites the Conference of European Ministers of Education and the Council for Cultural Co-operation, in their work aimed at reforms in the school system from the viewpoint of permanent education to be proposed to the States adhering to the European Cultural Convention, to be guided by the principles and measures set out hereunder.

General principles and specific measures

(i) In regard to the three participating groups (parents, teachers, pupils)

There is a crisis in the relationships among parents, teachers and pupils. Participation should be neither a dilution of responsibilities nor a misapprehension as to where competence lies, nor a rejection of authority. Thus it shall be organised on a realistic footing, by :

preparing the pupils to assume a measure of responsibility according to their degree of maturity, while satisfying their need for security and guidance ;

1. Assembly debate on 6 October 1971 (12th Sitting) (see [Doc. 3019](#), report of the Committee on Culture and Education). Text adopted by the Assembly on 6 October 1971 (12th Sitting).



encouraging the "school for parents" by bringing in large-scale educational assistance and integrating this into an educational insurance scheme on the lines of existing social insurance schemes as part of a coherent system of methods designed to train children for their full responsibility as adults ;

in an endeavour to correct the inequality of social opportunities, developing nursery schools and taking steps to bring them within closer reach of families, particularly in sparsely populated rural areas ;

encouraging co-operation according to the age of pupils from the viewpoint of continuing education ;

studying the mutual responsibilities and the deontology of the teaching profession ;

making the relations between parents and teachers more reciprocal and more functional ;

developing appropriate methods of compensation in favour of children whose family background is culturally inferior ;

developing a critical spirit among the under-eighteens and defining the limits of protest action that represents a constructive preparation for maturity.

(ii) In regard to the acquisition of means of expression

One of the main objects of basic education is to equip the individual with means of expression so that he may then develop his personality fully and establish relations with his surroundings.

This, then, is a matter of developing normative expression (mathematics, languages, conventional drawing) and at the same time spontaneous expression (artistic, poetic) to encourage individuality.

Measures proposed :

to stimulate artistic expression from pre-school days, primarily through games and the child's freedom of choice, and to continue such action by appropriate means at all stages so that it can be dove-tailed with subsequent artistic activities when adult age is reached ;

to introduce the practical and direct teaching of a foreign language at the pre school stage, and to this end :

to see that teachers are trained ;

to define a teaching system geared to the objectives peculiar to each of the stages in compulsory education ;

to plan and make the best use of the teaching aids made available by modern technology ;

from the outset of compulsory schooling, to teach pupils to speak, particularly in discussions or at symposia and in front of an audience, beginning before their own class.

(iii) In regard to the reappraisal of the attitude towards knowledge

In view of the rapid increase in knowledge, its changing pattern and frequently its obsolescence, the basic question is how to approach and use knowledge. It is a matter of reshaping education, giving the methodology of access to knowledge priority over the acquisition of knowledge.

There is need for a reappraisal of the concept of "discipline" in the sense of the multidisciplinary approach to social and to scientific thought in the contemporary world. Basic education should prepare the pupil for integration into three environments :

the human environment, through the study of civilisation ;

the natural environment, through knowledge of ecology ;

the technological environment.

Measures proposed :

to introduce into basic education practical training in the "processing" of information so as to prepare young people, through their own active participation, to "store" information or to "select" it. For this it is necessary to pass from the stage of the static library, designed for the scholarly, to the data-processing laboratory ;

to encourage docimological research which should be developed with the aim of defining what qualities of the pupil's personality require analysis, particularly by reference to an ideal "profile" where basic qualities would be precisely defined and capable of quantitative assessment ;

to redefine the teacher's function, which should aim at developing in the pupil a dynamic and responsible attitude towards knowledge and in face of the situations he will meet, in particular the pressures of information (conditioning of the mind : see report on the present crisis in European society ; Doc. 2432, paragraphs 26 - 31).

(iv) In regard to the place of technical education at the level of basic education

The aim is to give to technical training, an essential factor of economic and social progress, the position and prestige consonant with its mission.

Specific measures :

To improve the rewards for "production" duties, at present lagging behind "service" duties :

to help persons with trade qualifications (craft workers, skilled workers, technicians) to gain easier access to jobs as representatives and to positions of responsibility ;

to ensure that operational skills and the corresponding diplomas rank as high in public esteem as degrees testifying to academic excellence ;

to expand technical education in two directions : better interchangeability between specialisations and better training in human terms, particularly in the mastery of expression and knowledge of social patterns ;

to introduce technical subjects into the general education preceding initial technical education, principally in the lower secondary stage ;

to link up the technical educational establishment and professional circles with a view to permanent education, from several viewpoints :

by developing vocational training through combined efforts on the part of teachers and firms ;

by arranging training periods during school studies ;

by arranging for supervision and sponsorship of adaptation periods for those who have just left school ;

by arranging for people already at work to undergo training for different jobs, to bring themselves up to date, or to qualify for promotion ;

to combine political action with suitable co-operation between technical education and industry on behalf of young people who, after their national service, have not undertaken any further studies and have not yet secured a job.