



European Forum for Freedom in Education
Europäisches Forum für Freiheit im Bildungswesen

www.effe-eu.org contact@effe-eu.org

Dear *effe* members,

Here is *effe*'s first newsletter of the new year with the latest news from the EU office in Brussels and from *effe* members.

We are very much looking forward to the coming year and the developments in the area of education. We hope once again to get as much support as possible.

Best wishes from Brussels and have fun reading!

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Background Information

For many years, there have been ongoing attempts to establish some sort of legal framework for European associations like ours. Last year renewed efforts were made and a written declaration was submitted to the European Parliament for their approval (a copy of the declaration can be found at this address: <http://www.europeanstatuteswrittendeclaration.eu/>). The idea is to give institutional recognition to the work and status of European associations and to promote their work at a trans-national, European level. European Statutes have been used in the past to help companies and cooperatives fully participate in the single market. However, at the time of their adoptions, European associations (as well as Foundations and Mutual societies) were left out.

To be adopted, the statute requires the signature of the majority of MEPs by the 17th February 2011.

effe Statement

The ‘European Forum for Freedom in Education’ (*effe*) is an NGO in the area of compulsory education. We see our organisation as a forum in which current issues concerning education in Europe can be discussed. Our members are interested and active citizens from the educational sector -teachers, schools, school-organisations - but also from administrative and university life, etc. All members of the *effe* stand for the right to education and to the promotion of diversity and freedom in education.

On 10th November 2010, a written declaration was launched in the European Parliament to establish a European Statute for Mutuals, Associations and Foundations. *effe* welcomes this move and urges the European Parliament to adopt the declaration. *effe* is also proud to be a member of the European Alliance for the Statute of the European Association (EASEA); an alliance of civil society organisations working together to support the declaration.

European Associations play a crucial role in enabling and promoting the active participation of citizens in Europe. By supporting individuals, or civil society organisations, European Associations foster a European-wide sense of community and cohesion and allow those at every level to engage with their environment and those around them. They build a bilateral relationship between the national level and the European Union institutions themselves, offering a dialogue of understanding and an exchange of information between the two. This is essential to the development of European Union policies and their implementation.

***effe* believes that a *Statute for European Associations* will help support the work done by such organisations and in turn help to build an active European citizenship.** Facilitating participation in trans-national schemes and programmes will not only foster inter-cultural understanding but a shared European identity as well.

effe* believes that a *Statute for European

Associations will give institutional recognition to these organisations and their work. It is important that those making a positive contribution to civil society are recognised and supported at the highest levels. This recognition could highlight the work done by these organisations and help make their voice heard.

effe believes that a Statute for European Associations will be a means of creating cohesion between European associations and European institutions. Through a common framework, European associations would have a clear point of registration at a European level, offering a European legal status. As significant economic actors, this legal status could afford European associations greater ease

in their economic activity.

Together with other civil society organisations, the ‘European Forum for Freedom in Education’ (*effe*) hopes to present a clear and decisive message to the respective institutions of the European Union in support of the “Written declaration on establishing a European Statute for Mutuals, Associations and Foundations”. Considering that Statutes already exist for companies and co-operatives, we see that it is only right that Mutuals, Associations and Foundations all receive similar treatment and recognition. This statute will benefit European Union institutions with the development of their policies and programmes and benefit the European Associations who work to make an accessible Europe a reality for all.

Hungarian Presidency of the European Council

The chimes of the midnight hour on the 1st January not only hailed the beginning of a new year but the first day of Hungary’s sixth-month term of the rotating Presidency of the European Council. An enormous New Year’s party followed by two days of cultural events in Budapest celebrated the start of the Hungarian Presidency and signalled the beginning of a what will be an ambitious programme¹ for the coming months. However, after the European Commission expressed ‘concerns’ about the recently passed media laws in Hungary², the first few weeks have been far from smooth.

The rotating President of the European Council works together with the Permanent President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy. Hungary is

also the last of the current three-country ‘trio’ made up of three consecutive Presidencies (in this case Spain and Belgium preceded Hungary in 2010) which



work together to achieve a certain level of policy continuity.³ Viktor Orbán (pictured here), the Prime Minister of Hungary outlined the Presidency’s four main priorities during the Presidency hand-over

ceremony; economic growth and employment, a 'stronger' Europe, a 'citizen-friendly' Union and EU enlargement.⁴ Other issues on the agenda include the development of a permanent 'crisis management system' for the Euro, Bulgaria and Romania joining the Schengen area (the area in Europe in which there are no internal border controls between countries) and the development of a European Roma policy.⁵ The latter has been particularly prominent in the fields of education and youth policy.

Education still remains, of course, the responsibility of individual member states. That said the European Union has found a way of becoming an important player in this area. The Europe 2020 goals regarding education (reducing the school drop-out rate to below 10%, reaching 40% of 30-34 year olds with a completed tertiary or equivalent education) are once again central to the rotating Presidency's education priorities. Early-years schooling will receive special attention as it is regarded as an important means of helping to combat school drop-out rates.⁶ For similar reasons the Hungarian Presidency

available for sport in the EU budget, but it became an EU area of competency for the first time with the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009. Hungary has chosen to make it a central theme of its youth policy.⁷ Hungarian Minister of State for Sport, Mr Attila Czene, told the European Parliament's Culture and Education Committee on the



25th January that sport has far-reaching social, cultural, health and economic benefits. He went further to say that for every euro invested in sport initiatives, two are saved on other social programmes. With the adoption of the first ever communication concerning sport in January 2010 by the European Commission⁸, it seems that all European institutions are increasingly willing to explore this new policy area.



hopes to raise the profile of vocational learning between now and the end of June.

Due to the nature of the trio (as explained above) a lot of the policy in the Hungarian Presidency's programme finds its roots in the work of the Spanish and Belgian Presidencies. However, there are two 'new' main policies areas whose appearance is striking; the first of which is sport. Currently there is no direct funding

The development of a single European policy on Romas is the second policy area that appears for the first time in the programme of a rotating Council Presidency. As the largest ethnic minority group in Europe the Roma people are often subjected to discrimination and exclusion.⁹ Education would be a key means of integrating the Roma people, or indeed any marginalised group, into mainstream society. The Hungarian Presidency hopes to have a so-called 'Framework strategy' in place by June 2011 aimed at becoming the "basis upon which member states could

then build their own respective Roma integration programmes".¹⁰ This ambitious and complex task will undoubtedly take up a lot of the Presidency's time if it is to be completed within the 6 month period.

As mentioned in the introduction of this article, the opening month of Hungary's Presidency of the European Council has not passed without controversy. With the continued financial troubles of the Eurozone, it will not be without challenges either. Prime Minister Orbán, who swept to power when his party won the national legislative elections in April of last year, remains optimistic however that the Hungarian Presidency will display "unprecedented momentum".¹¹

effe wishes to underline the importance of education outside of a strictly economic remit. The use of education as a means of combating social exclusion is certainly a worthy cause and one that *effe* fully supports. The EU-wide discussion on Romas must take place at a European Union level. Only then can an integrative and inclusive solution be found. Education

in all shapes and sizes can and should play an essential role in this respect. However, the continued focus on the economic goals of the Europe 2020 strategy remain a threat to the development and prospering of freedom in Europe's education systems. *effe* will keenly observe the events over the coming months and wishes the Hungarian Presidency all the best in pursuing a child-centred approach to their education priorities.

¹ See: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/priorities/hungarian-eu-presidency-links-dossier-500814>

² See: http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20110104/wl_afp_hungarypoliticsmedialaweu_20110104175218

³ Poland, Denmark and Cyprus will take make up the next 'trio' and take over at the beginning of July of this year. For more information see *effe*'s October 2010 Newsletter http://effe-eu.org/images/Newsletter/infobrief_2010_4_en.pdf

⁴ See: <http://www.eu2011.hu/priorities-hungarian-presidency>

⁵ See: <http://www.eu2011.hu/developing-european-roma-policy>

⁶ Ms Rózsa Hoffman, Hungarian Minister of state for Education addressing the Culture and Education Committee on the 25th January 2011.

⁷ See: <http://www.eu2011.hu/education-youth-culture-and-sports-eyc>

⁸ See: http://ec.europa.eu/sport/news/news984_en.htm

⁹ See: <http://www.eu2011.hu/developing-european-roma-policy>

¹⁰ See: <http://www.eu2011.hu/developing-european-roma-policy>

¹¹ See: <http://www.eu2011.hu/news/belgium-passes-eu-presidency-flag-hungary>

"On our way to holistic European education?"

*This is a an article presented by
Prof. Dr. Köpcke-Duttler (original in German)*

At the Institute for Educational Research and Education Law's (IfBB) Symposium on 5th February 2010 in the new Town hall in Hannover (entitled "Education and Economics in Europe – Schools in the battlefield of the State and the Market"), Anne Liekenbrock was not the only one examining Art. 149 Paragraph 1 of the European Community Treaty after

the Community voiced its support for the activities of member states with regards to the shaping of their education systems and in light of the expansion of diversity of cultures and languages where necessary. Her criticisms of the targeted establishment of a "single European education market" (Reinhold Sackmann) runs along the lines that Education should not (or at least not exclusively) be regarded as a means to drive economic growth or job creation. She spoke out against the strictly

economic role of education as well as the positioning of education for the means of economic growth. Even if the promotion of justice, social cohesion and active citizenship, amongst others, were discussed in the ET 2020, there is still the danger that the old aims remain the top priority. On the other hand, the speaker saw signs of a fundamental shift in the general beliefs about education. Though the thinking from the very beginning of the Lisbon Strategy regarding education has had a strong economic focus, it also contained an “extra dimension with a more holistic and social approach to education”.¹ Despite this, towards the end of the presentation Ms. Liekenbrock criticised the increasingly apparent focus of education terms on the economic dimension (e.g. Human capital); she argued that they seem poorly suited to developing responsible and ‘democratic’ people. The importance of ‘Human capital’ for economic improvement was challenged here. It clearly means, that they may only be a part of ‘holistic education’, of which the first signs are already perceptible in the European Union. For over twenty years, the European Forum for Freedom in Education (*effe*) has been advocating the importance of social education, active citizenship, quality teachers, learning through doing.

It seems however that these discussions have yet to be fully embraced at every political level. Here, I turn my attention to the Convention of the United Nations on the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. With this convention, the process of universalising human rights was strengthened, particularly in the areas of violent situations, human rights abuses such as torture, war and inhumane punishments, forced mutilation, enforced poverty. This process of universalising

human rights must permeate the whole of Europe as well, especially the new convention on human rights with its ethos of the universal bond of humanity. Where the necessity to respect the difference of people and the acceptance of disability is described as “*part of human diversity and humanity*”, it also means that ‘humanity’ (that is to say ‘mankind’ as well as ‘humanity’) can not be seen without the consideration of philosophical and religious dimensions. In this respect the “Vienna Declaration for a future-ready world” discusses “key Global solidarity”², which shall foster a new sense of affinity, a common awareness of the vulnerability of all people, compassion and a sense of belonging. The understanding of the vulnerability and the resistance to the suffering of innocent people, human thinking and feelings on the horizon of education, embracing ecumenical solidarity, inter- and trans-cultural discussions, is evolving. People should not be humiliated, nor subjugated to cruelty, nor faced with humiliation, nor viewed or treated as sub-human. This view is equally relevant to a European legal system as well; that dignity and honest ways are not given to people, that the universal spirit of brotherhood and valuing one another are threatened by hunger, war and the many obstacles to living one’s life. The search for a European humanity which contributes to a worldwide humanity does not defer to an “economic Imperialism” (according to the Theologian Hans Küng); it is in this that environmental issues must be brought into educational paths, particularly in as much that a person can only live in an environment worth living in. A European education must include the value of truly universal human rights, the search for mutual recognition and solidarity, where by the relationality of human rights (the defence, development, demand and participation of rights) is highlighted

(freedom, equality, participation). The expansion of these relationship terms is also taking place in the reflection on ecological human rights and the construction of environmental democracy- also on a European horizon. The democratisation of education systems leads to new forms of social and environmental learning. An “inclusive pedagogy”³ refers to the (ever-enduring) universality of human rights, where suffering, weakness and limitation are not denied or suppressed by an economic triumphalism, but instead are explored on the European level as a challenge to co-existence.

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¹ Anne Liekenbrock, The Influence of the European Union on national education, in: Education and Economics in Europe / Schools in the battlefield of the State and the Market. Special publication No. 3 Information sheet of the Institute for Educational Research and Education Law (IfBB), June 2010, p.26

² H. Rauch / A. Striegl, Die Wende der Titanic. The Vienna Declaration for a future world order, Munich, 2005

³ Annedore Prengel, Inklusion in der Frühpädagogik. Bildungstheoretische, empirische and pädagogische Grundlagen, Munich 2010, p.46; Heiner Bielefeldt, Essay: Zum Innovationspotenzial der UN-Behindertenrechtskonvention (Essay: On the innovation potential of the UN Convention for Persons with Disabilities)

Consultation on non-formal and informal learning

The European Forum for Freedom in Education (*effe*) has responded to the European Commission’s “Consultation on the validation and promotion of non-formal and informal learning”. This paper is already available on the *effe* website (http://effe-eu.org/images/Publications/nfil_consultation.pdf) and will be published in the next *effe* newsletter.

Consultations are regularly launched by the European Commission on a wide-variety of issues to seek the input of civil society organisations and individuals.

The results of this consultation will be published in Spring 2011 and will appear on the website of the Directorate General for Education and Culture.

effe Colloquium 2011

The *effe* Colloquium 2011 will take place from the 28th-30th April 2011 at the Werkstätten- und Kulturhaus in Vienna, Austria.

For more than three decades, the educational landscape of Austria has been marked by alternative, pedagogical initiatives. Independent schools and children’s groups have led the way in showing pioneering new approaches:

determined, democratic and socially competent. The event will offer an insight into current alternative teaching methods and the related education policy debates through a series of lectures, workshops, discussions, performances and installations.

You will find the detailed programme soon on: www.effe-eu.org. Make sure to put this date in your diary!

New *effe* website

The European Forum for Freedom in Education (*effe*) has been redeveloping its website over the last couple of months and it is now finished and online - www.effe-eu.org - Here you will be able to find the latest news from *effe*, the latest developments in EU education policy and download the current and past *effe* publications such as Newsletters. Information on the *effe* Colloquium will also be published there very soon.

Currently only the English version is online but the German version will be available soon.



The website is still being developed but if you have any comments or suggestions, please do get in touch and let us know. We would be very interested to hear what you think.

Find *effe* on Facebook!



You can now follow the European Forum for Freedom in Education (*effe*) on Facebook. We have set up our very own Facebook page where you can receive the latest updates from the EU office in Brussels as well as any developments in EU education policy.

To get these updates simply go to the *effe* Facebook page (search for the "European Forum for Freedom in Education" or go directly to <http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/pages/European-Forum-for-Freedom-in-Education/147517865292876>) and 'like us'.

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