Resolution on education for children in emergency situations and protracted crises

2015/2977(RSP) - 26/11/2015 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 499 votes to 61 with 86 abstentions, a resolution tabled by the Committee Development on Development on education for children in emergency situations and protracted crises.

Members stressed the importance of universal high-quality public education as a catalyst for development

They highlighted education's role as a powerful tool to help young people overcome trauma, and promote peace-building and reconciliation. They also underlined that, over the longer term, quality education could be a critical ingredient in the reconstruction of post-conflict societies.

Members emphasised **the positive role education plays in children's development and well-being**. They recognised the progress made since the adoption of the MDGs and called for the EU and its Member States to make these goals the **top priority in their internal policies and their relations with third countries.**

Stressing that these goals – especially poverty eradication, universal access to education and gender equality – will not be attained, Members called for strengthening the resilience of education systems in these countries and of ensuring uninterrupted learning when crises struck. They stressed, therefore, the need for greater commitment on the part of the EU, the Member States and all other stakeholders, in order to provide instruments to ensure development and widespread education in such crisis-stricken countries.

Education and refugees: Parliament highlighted the fact that millions of children have been forced to become refugees, and stressed that access to education for refugee children is of paramount importance. It called on host countries to ensure that refugee children are given **full access to education**, and to promote as far as possible their integration and inclusion in the national education systems. It also called also on the humanitarian and development communities to pay more attention to the education and training of teachers from both the displaced and the host communities, and on international donors to prioritise education when responding to refugee crises.

At the same time, Parliament called on Member States to develop specific reception schemes for unaccompanied children and single mothers with children. It urged the Commission and Member States to support refugee students in transit, by cooperating with various international organisations. It called on the Commission and the Member States to establish '**education corridors**' to ensure that students from countries in conflict, in particular Syria, Iraq and Eritrea, are accepted in universities.

Welcoming the establishment of the Bekou Trust Fund, the Madad Trust Fund and the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa as effective tools for addressing the divide between humanitarian and development funding in complex emergencies, Members called for the EU and Member States to include **education for children as a priority in allocating resources** from EU Trust Funds.

Education in emergency situations: Members called for the EU to work with partner countries, other donors, the private sector and civil society to **improve educational opportunities for young people in conflict situations** and other emergencies. They praised the EU Children of Peace initiative, which seeks to fund humanitarian education projects in emergency situations, and called on the Commission to scale up this initiative.

Parliament also welcomed the No Lost Generation initiative, launched by a number of donors and humanitarian and development entities, including the EU, with a view to providing access to education for millions of children in Syria and neighbouring countries.

Increasing resources: Parliament deplored the fact that despite the important role of education in emergencies, this policy area received less than 2 % of all humanitarian funds in 2014. It hoped therefore that, under the **new programme to restructure the distribution of EU funds, funding for child education programmes**, including in third countries affected by wars or general emergencies, could be **supplemented and increased**.

It called on all humanitarian actors, given the protracted nature of contemporary crises, to include education as an integral part of their humanitarian response and to increase their commitment to education by mobilising the education cluster in the early stages of an emergency and by ensuring that sufficient funds are dedicated to it

Parliament welcomed the announcement by the EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management of his **objective of dedicating 4 % of the EU humanitarian aid budget to education for children in emergency situations by 2019**. It stressed that, while an increase in humanitarian funding is necessary, this would not be enough to address the financing gap, and called for the EU and other donors to increase the profile of education in development cooperation in fragile states.

Prevention: Parliament called for the EU to support third-country government commitments to developing national legal frameworks for resilience, prevention and disaster and risk management. Stresses the importance of the private sector as a potential source of innovative financing for education.

It called on the Commission to be involved in the international platform that will create dedicated instruments for education in emergencies for the **World Humanitarian Summit in 2016.**

Lastly, Parliament called for the EU and its Member States to promote the issue of education for children in emergencies and protracted crises at the World Humanitarian Summit, ensuring that this theme has an adequate place in the outcome document. It underlined that, in light of the growing number of humanitarian crises and the highest number of displaced people since World War II, the international community should consider education to be a central element of its humanitarian response, as education is a catalyst which can make the overall response more effective and contribute also to the medium- and longer-term development of affected populations.