The European Education Area: a shared holistic approach

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The European Parliament adopted by 483 votes to 25, with 52 abstentions, a resolution on the European Education Area: a shared holistic approach.

The need for a European Education Area (EEA)

Parliament underlined the role of the EEA in increasing and improving the mobility of learners, teachers and knowledge, in fostering a sense of European belonging and civic awareness, in guaranteeing rights and values and in providing fair and equal opportunities. It called for an **EEA with common European policy objectives** that ensure quality, inclusive and accessible education, strengthen the exchange of good practice and provide an effective framework for European mobility.

The EEA should play a unique role in **improving access to and quality of education** across the Union and have a clearer geopolitical dimension so that the Union can use its educational strength strategically with its closest neighbours and partners.

A strategic framework to 2030 with effective governance

Members urged the Commission and Member States to **establish, by the end of 2022, a concrete strategic framework for the EEA by 2030**, with a comprehensive steering, monitoring and evaluation mechanism. It welcomed the proposal for an EEA Steering Committee, which would lay the groundwork for a structured and systematic governance framework specifying the type of involvement that will be required from Member States, other levels of government, including local and regional authorities, and the European institutions.

Taking note of the different approaches on the EEA, which express a common wish to provide fresh impetus to the European project, Members underlined the need for more collaboration on education across Europe and beyond to develop **common approaches** and solutions to common challenges.

Parliament stressed the need to establish clear medium and long-term priorities with achievable targets and deadlines for action. It called for the urgent development of a **common strategy and roadmap** for implementation involving the EU institutions, Member States and all relevant stakeholders, including local and regional authorities and civil society, and defining responsibilities and opportunities.

Common strategic priorities and EU-level targets

Parliament recommended that all EU institutions and Member States are called on to agree on the same vision, priorities, targets and benchmarks regarding the EEA. Members, on the other hand, underlined the importance of establishing **academic freedom** and pedagogical autonomy as core principles of the EEA while stressing that inclusion should be a central dimension of the EEA and a prerequisite for achieving quality education for all.

They stressed the importance of:

- placing the learner at the centre of the learning process and adopting a tailor-made approach to vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities or learning differences, such as those on the autism spectrum or those with high potential;

- improving the working conditions of teachers and educators and for them to be adequately remunerated;

- investing in the initial training of teachers and trainers, by giving their programmes a European dimension and providing for transnational mobility;

- establishing a common European system for the recognition, validation and certification of digital skills, qualifications and diplomas in order to bridge the digital divide in Europe.

Parliament supported the creation of a **common framework** for the shaping and development of teacher qualifications across the Member States. It supports the initiative of the Commission to set up teacher academies and suggests that an adequate name for them would be the '**Comenius Teacher Academies**'. European history and cultural heritage should be taught and a common framework on citizenship education with a European dimension should be developed according to Members.

Member States and the Commission should provide the requisite funding for the establishment, implementation and development of the EEA and the establishment of a dedicated financial instrument in the 2028-2034 multiannual financial framework with a view to developing the EEA further and facilitating the mutual recognition of qualifications. Parliament reiterated its call to allocate at least 10 % of the funding under the Recovery and Resilience Facility to education, including digital education.

Sector-specific measures and considerations

The resolution underlined the importance of learning foreign languages, and of English in particular. Research and innovation should be promoted in education as well as the study of cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics.

On vocational training, the resolution called for the creation of a European apprentices statute.

Members called for the gender gap to be closed in education, including in education and careers in science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics (STEAM).