Initiatives to complement national school curricula providing appropriate teaching materials to include the European Dimension

2006/2041(INI) - 28/08/2006

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Christopher BEAZLEY (EPP-ED, UK) on initiatives to complement school curricula providing appropriate support measures to include the European dimension. It pointed out that there were disparities both in and between Member States as regards the inclusion of the European dimension in education, and stressed that efforts were needed "to agree on a common understanding of history and a definition of European values".

The report said that all education systems in the EU should ensure that, by the end of their secondary education, their pupils have the knowledge and competences they need to prepare them for their role as future EU citizens. The Council was urged to recognise the two different aspects of the "European dimension": firstly, access to information about the EU, its institutions, methods and practices and, secondly, knowledge of Europe's shared history and cultural heritage, the development of linguistic skills, and a grasp of European current affairs.

The committee acknowledged that it was difficult in some Member States, in particular for those whose mother tongue is English, to maintain sufficient interest and motivation in becoming proficient in other European languages, which would underpin mutual understanding and empathy across Europe. It stressed that in this connection learning the languages of neighbouring peoples was especially important. The Member States were urged to promote multilingualism by a policy of learning a broader range of languages than those taught today and to establish the teaching of at least two foreign languages from a very early age in their school curricula.

Other recommendations included an exchange of best practice between all Member States with regard to language teaching and the inclusion of European content in education. The report also suggested promoting teacher training courses which provide trainees with the necessary understanding of European issues so teachers can complement their teaching of national and local issues with European ones. Lastly, MEPs stressed the importance of using multi-media and Internet educational resources as modern teaching methods for introducing the European dimension into school curricula, and recommended the setting up of a multilingual Internet service to provide educational assistance and serve as a platform for the exchange of experience.