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Results of the consultation on the education of children from a migrant background

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1. INTRODUCTION

On 3 July 2008 the European Commission published a **Green Paper on "Migration and Mobility: Challenges and Opportunities for EU Education Systems"**, part of a package of measures accompanying the Renewed Social Agenda. The aim of the Green Paper was to launch a broad public consultation on the best ways of supporting the education of children from a migrant background in the education systems of the EU Member States.

The Green Paper analysed the main aspects of and reasons for educational disadvantage among children from a migrant background, outlined a number of positive national policy responses and explored the opportunities for further action at European level. The Commission invited all interested parties to make their views known on the main policy challenges and the best policy responses to address them, on the possible role of the European Union in supporting Member States in the area and on the future of Directive 77/486/EEC on the education of the children of migrant workers.

The Green Paper consultation closed on 31 December 2008. The **101 contributions** received cover a wide range of stakeholders, including Member States authorities, the European Parliament and the EU advisory bodies, regional and local authorities, European and national associations, religious organisations, social partners, academics and individuals. All contributions are published in full on the website of the Directorate General for Education and Culture at http://ec.europa.eu/education/index_en.htm.

This report summarizes the written contributions received during the consultation. It aims provide an overview of the ideas, opinions and suggestions presented by the respondents. The content of this report does not necessarily reflect the views of the Commission; it does not draw policy conclusions from the responses and does not anticipate policy proposals.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF CONTRIBUTIONS

The contributors welcomed the Commission's initiative and highlighted the value added of a debate at EU level. There is a large consensus in the responses received on the nature of the challenges faced by national education systems in the context of increased numbers of migrant pupils. Common challenges include the need to increase policy coordination between educational and social policies at all levels, an increased focus on equity and equal opportunities in education and the prevention of school segregation and early school leaving. Most respondents also highlighted a common need for schools to be inclusive and multicultural, to update the skills and competencies of teachers and to strengthen contacts with parents and communities.

The policy responses identified in the contributions focus on language acquisition and on intercultural education in schools and on strengthening and adapting teacher education. Schools should develop closer partnerships with parents and migrant communities and provide systematically additional support in the form of mentoring, tutoring, guidance and cultural mediators. Education policies should focus on increased access to early childhood education and care, increased quality provision for all and on preventing and combating school segregation.
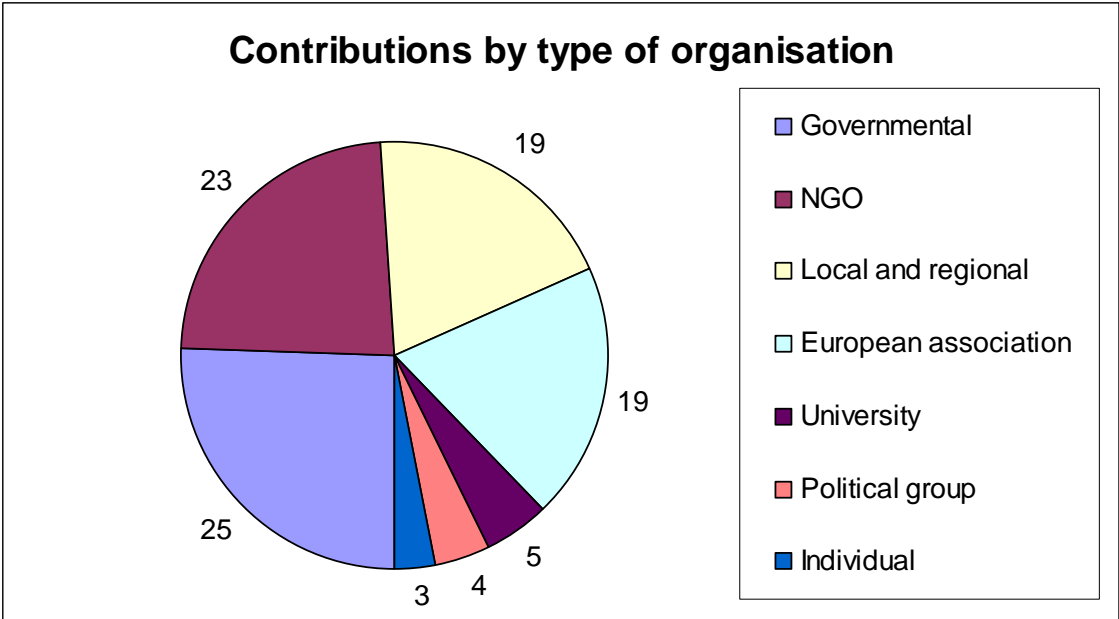
Almost all the contributions argued that the European Union can play a positive role in supporting and stimulating debates and exchanges in this area. More systematic and streamlined support through programmes and the development of peer learning within the open method of coordination focused on the topic of migration were broadly supported by all types of contributors. Many contributors also asked for more support for research in the area and for more policy integration at EU level. There was more divergence of opinions on the appropriateness of developing benchmarks or further indicators in the area. The contributions also showed a lack of consensus on the future of Directive 77/486/EEC. While most responses acknowledged the value of its objectives, the great majority of contributors recognised its inadequacy in the current European social context (it was adopted at a time when nearly all migration in the EU was between Member States). Some respondents advocate updating the Directive to include children coming from non-EU Member States, while others favour its withdrawal, and the use of other means to achieve its objectives.

3. RESPONSES

Almost all the contributions received were institutional responses, with only three of the 101 responses sent by individuals. Most contributions were wide ranging, providing an in-depth analysis of the issues raised.

3.1. Contributions by types of organisation

Half of all contributions (50) come from public authorities. The governments of 16 Member States (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Sweden, United Kingdom), as well as the Norwegian government contributed to the consultation. The Green Paper attracted particular interest among local and regional authorities: 8 local and regional public authorities and 13 national or European associations of local and regional authorities provided responses to the consultation. The German, Irish and Danish governments initiated their own national stakeholder consultations on the Green Paper. Three national parliaments and seven other national authorities and bodies provided a contribution.


Contributions by type of organisation

Governmental: 25
NGO: 23
Local and regional: 19
European association: 19
University: 5
Political group: 4
Individual: 3

It should also be noted that the European Parliament[1] adopted a resolution on the topic of the Green Paper and that the Committee of Regions[2] and the European Economic and Social Committee[3] provided opinions on this topic.

The Green Paper also attracted considerable interest within the civil society organisations. 23 non-governmental organisations from the Member States expressed their views during the consultation. 16 European level associations sent their responses to the consultation, generally after internal consultations with their members. Five responses came from universities and four from national or regional political parties. The annex to this summary provides a detailed list of contributors.

3.2. Geographic distribution of contributions

A large majority of the contributions received comes from the 'old' Member States, which are also generally facing a higher inflow of migration or have already a long tradition as immigration countries. Only 6 responses were received from the twelve new EU Member States, all of them governmental. 22 contributions were received from EU-level organisations, mostly representing civil society.

Contributions by country
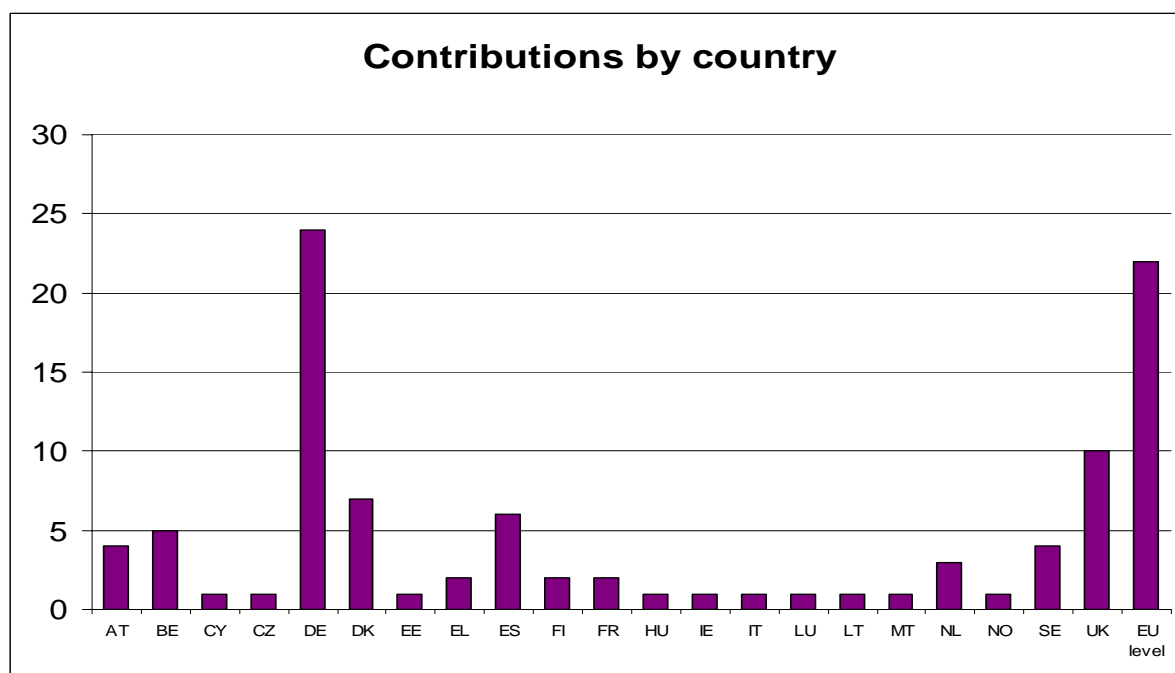
4. DETAILED OVERVIEW OF CONTRIBUTIONS

This summary focuses on identifying the most common issues invoked by the participants, highlighting the points of consensus and the main issues on which there are divergences of opinions. The uneven geographical distribution of the responses and the unequal representation of different types of responses make a detailed quantitative analysis on groups

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[1]   European Parliament resolution of 2.4.2009 on educating the children of migrants (2008/2328(INI))
[2]   Opinion of the Committee of the Regions of 13.02.2009 on the Green Paper 'Migration and Mobility' (OJ 2009:c 12/07)
[3]   Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee of 25.2.2009 on the 'Green Paper - Migration & mobility: challenges and opportunities for EU education systems' (Opinion EESC/2009/344)

of responses irrelevant. It is also worth noting that many contributions do not answer all questions asked in the Green Paper, preferring to focus in depth only on some aspects, while others did not follow exactly the five questions proposed. The focus will thus be on the main arguments proposed and not a numerical breakdown of the opinions expressed. For the analysis, the stakeholders were divided into four roughly equal groups: governmental, NGOs, European associations and, finally, local and regional authorities. Where relevant, a reference to the major types of stakeholders supporting an argument is provided.

The structure of the summary of the contributions follows that of the Green Paper. This section covers the way contributors received the Green Paper, some of the criticisms and definitional points discussed in the responses. The following four sections follow the order of the questions proposed for the consultation, focusing on the main challenges identified, the policy responses at national level, the role of the EU in the area, and finally on the future of Directive 77/486/EEC.

4.1. Main points of support and criticism of the Green Paper

Many contributions explicitly welcome the initiative of the European Commission, acknowledging the relevance and salience of the topic of the Green Paper. Migration and intra European mobility are seen as major social and economic challenges and education is widely considered to be crucial for successful integration in the host communities. At the same time, increasing migration flows require national educational systems to adapt to new social realities. In this context, several governmental contributions see the topic as a high political priority at national level.

Overall, there is broad support for initiating a debate at the European level on the topic of the education of migrants. The respondents see it a useful complement and source of stimulation for national policy debates. Many of the challenges faced by education systems are shared across European borders and the contributors identify considerable scope for mutual learning and exchange of best practice. Many contributions strongly support the emphasis of the Green Paper on schools, arguing that compulsory education, together with early childhood education and care, play a decisive role in the inclusion of children with a migrant background.

The main criticism expressed in a small minority of contributions to the Green Paper is that it insufficiently acknowledges the essential role of partnerships with families and the important role of NGOs and community organisations in the education of migrant children. Several contributors prefer a more holistic approach, covering the wider social context and its influence on the education of migrants. Other points of criticism refer to the endorsement in the Green Paper of language classes for migrants, seen as segregating, to insufficient attention to the recruitment of teachers from migrant backgrounds, to insufficient attention devoted to higher education, to anti-discrimination or to gender issues. Some contributions consider that the Green Paper endorses too strongly measures to support the mother tongue of migrant pupils, while others see it as too weak.

4.2. The scope of the definition of migrant children

The Green Paper focuses on pupils characterised "both by linguistic and cultural differences between homes and schools, and by the low status of parents and ethnic identities in the host

society"[4]. It therefore adopts a broad definition of migrant pupils, covering children of both EU and non-EU citizens who do not reside in the country where they were born.

Most contributions do not comment on the scope of the definition proposed by the Green Paper. In some cases, contributors welcome the broad definition, considering that the education challenges posed by both EU and non-EU citizens are similar, requiring a common policy response.

A minority disagrees, considering that the definition is too broad and thus of limited practical relevance, as it fails to recognise differences in status between EU and non-EU nationals. The European Economic and Social Committee shares the view that given the different legal situation of EU and non-EU citizens, a differentiated approach to their educational challenges would be more appropriate.[5]

Several contributions emphasise the heterogeneity of the group of migrant learners, but based on different dimensions than those discussed in the Green Paper. Many stress that a distinction should be made between legal and illegal migrants. Contributions from local authorities point out that from a practical point of view, migrant children arriving after the starting age for compulsory education require significantly different treatment from those who can be integrated in schooling right from the start.

Some contributions advocate the inclusion of ethnic minorities and especially Roma in the definition, but there is limited agreement on the appropriateness of extending the analysis to this group. A small minority of respondents argues that focusing policy making on the category of children with a migrant background has potential discriminatory effects, and proposes instead that the focus should be on the broader group of disadvantaged learners.

4.3. Opportunities deriving from the presence of migrant children

A small number of contributions criticize the Green Paper for focusing excessively on the *problems* of integration of migrants in European education systems, arguing that it should have paid more attention to the *positive potential* of migrants and their contribution to the development of education systems.

A minority of contributors warn against promulgating too negative an image of migration. As in the Green Paper itself, these responses stress that migrants represent a resource for educational systems which is often insufficiently used. Their presence could be better valorised for the development of multilingualism and multicultural approaches in schools. Several contributors point out the fact that migrant children provide the opportunity for schools to develop new pedagogical tools, to increase flexibility and can favour more inclusive educational settings through an orientation of teaching and learning towards individual needs. Several respondents also argue that the presence of migrant children has a positive effect on society as a whole, as it increases cultural and linguistic diversity, raises awareness of different cultures and favours international contacts. Their educational success is seen as an important factor for economic growth at regional and national levels.

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[4]   COM(2008) 423
[5]   Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee of 25.2.2009 on the 'Green Paper - Migration & mobility: challenges and opportunities for EU education systems' (Opinion EESC/2009/344)

5. POLICY CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED IN THE CONTRIBUTIONS

Question 1. What are the important policy challenges related to the provision of good education to children from a migrant background? In addition to those identified in this paper, are there others that should be taken into account?

The policy challenges related to the education of the children of migrants identified by the contributors are largely congruent with those mentioned in the Green Paper. There is a high level of consensus on the most pressing issues facing the European educational systems with regard to the integration of migrant children. The increasing numbers of migrant children require more coordination between social and educational policies across government levels. Education policies should put emphasis on increasing equity, avoiding segregation and providing equal opportunities for all. Schools must adapt curricula and pedagogy to new social realities, should focus more on language development, while teacher should be better equipped for working with pupils with a range of backgrounds.

There is a strong consensus across all types of contributors that the crucial challenge of the education of migrant children consists breaking the link between **socio-economic disadvantage** and educational disadvantage. Many contributors follow the analysis of the Green Paper in indicating that the lower socio-economic status of migrant families is the main reason for their educational disadvantage. Contributors also emphasise the link between low socio-economic status and lack of integration into host societies and communities.
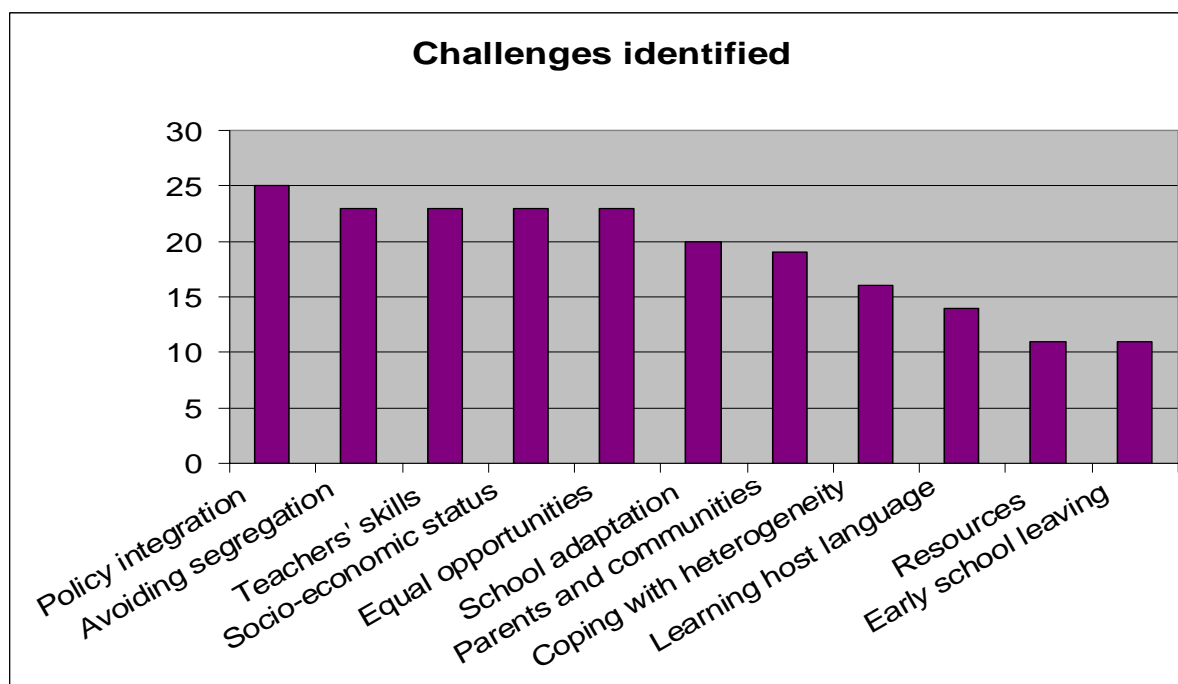
Governmental contributions and the responses of regional and local authorities generally emphasise the need for an **integrated policy response** to the challenges faced by migrant children. This is seen in close relationship to the challenge of addressing socio-economic disadvantage. Policy integration must occur both horizontally, linking education, social, health, housing and employment services and vertically, by coordination between national, regional and local authorities. Schools cannot alone compensate the social disadvantage of migrant pupils and a coordinated effort of increasing integration within communities is often needed.

The challenge of **avoiding school segregation** is also considered a high priority for many contributors from all types of organisations. Many contributors find the main cause of school segregation in the above-mentioned link between low socio-economic status and lack of social/community integration. However, some of the contributors also point to causes linked to the structure of the educational system. Selective systems with early tracking are considered by several contributors, including governmental ones, as a significant contributing cause of segregation. The over-representation of migrant pupils in vocational tracks and in special schools is also considered an important problem which needs to be addressed.

Contributions mainly from NGOs and religious organisations argue that the presence of migrants raises additional challenges for education system in ensuring **equality of opportunity** and providing non-discriminatory access to education. They see increasing tendencies for segregation and the low expectations for the educational potential of migrant children as potential discrimination sources. They also raise the issue of access to education for particularly vulnerable groups of migrants, such as undocumented migrants, unaccompanied minors and asylum seekers.

Contributors from all types of organisations point out the fact that the presence of migrant children requires **adaptation on the part of schools and curricula**. Schools need to focus more on the individual needs of pupils, providing personalised learning. More intercultural education needs to be included in curricula, which should further support tolerance and diversity. Several responses point out the need to adapt assessment methods and to follow continuously the progress of migrant pupils.

There is a consensus across all types of contributors that success in the education of the children of migrants requires further strengthening of the **contacts with parents and migrant communities.** Many contributions also point to the need to support parents through social services or by providing adult education.

The need to extend the range of **teachers' competences** for dealing with multicultural and multilingual environments is mainly supported in governmental contributions. It is also mostly governmental contributions which identify insufficient knowledge of the **host country language** as one of the main barriers to educational success for children. Some other contributions point out the insufficient attention and resources allocated to supporting mothers in the learning of the heritage language.

The **heterogeneity** of migrant groups and the variability of migration flows are highlighted mainly in the contributions of the regional actors and of the European associations. This requires tailored policy solutions, adapted to the needs of the various migrant groups. For the regional actors, one of the most pressing challenges concerns **financial resources**. Local and regional authorities and schools with many migrant pupils face additional costs for providing language teaching and/or staff training. The variability in migrant flows poses additional challenges for local and regional authorities, requiring contingency planning and funding flexibility. They also note the need for peer learning at local level in several countries where migration has started to spread to localities which are facing the phenomenon for the first time.

The link between the education of migrant children and social cohesion is raised in several contributions. Ensuring high educational attainment and combating early school leaving are advocated as key priorities for all integration policies. Several contributors also stress the

need to focus on the transition to work and on reducing unemployment among youth of migrant origin.

6. SUGGESTED POLICY RESPONSES

Question 2. What are the appropriate policy responses to these challenges? Are there other policies and approaches beyond those listed in this paper that should be taken into account?

The policy responses described in the contributions largely concurred with the presentation of the Green Paper. The most frequently mentioned policy responses were an increased focus on language learning, stronger partnerships with parents and communities and increased teacher education in dealing with multicultural and multilingual classes. There was a high level of consensus on the importance of supporting the acquisition of the language of instruction, on the need for professional development of teachers and on the introduction of a stronger element of intercultural education in schools, as well as on the benefits of early childhood education and care for migrant children. The participants highlighted a need to indentify best practice on policies targeting language support, combating segregation and on introduction programmes for newly arrived migrants.
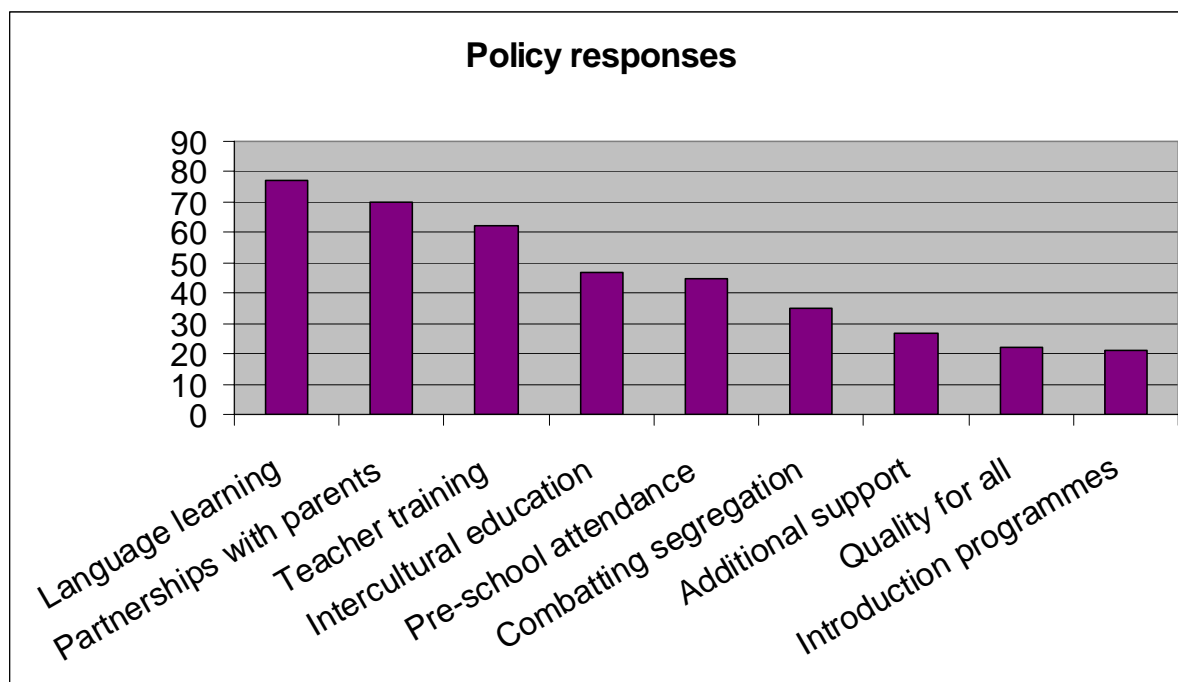
6.1. Language acquisition

The most frequently recurring policy response highlighted in the contributions is support for the **acquisition of the language of instruction**. Knowledge of the host country language is highlighted as a fundamental pre-requisite for integration into the mainstream education system. A majority of contributions emphasizes the need for powerful and early intervention for the acquisition of the teaching language, which should be followed by continuous support during the entire compulsory education phase.

Policies directed towards the support of the language of instruction should address problems of equal access to language learning, the lack of qualified teachers and the reticence of some

parents to take advantage of the available opportunities. Many contributions point out that this requires further development of curricula, evaluation standards and methods and didactic material for teaching the country's language as a second language. Other contributions emphasise integrating language teaching in other subjects (CLIL), as well as the need to continue language learning throughout the school years. A number of contributions emphasize the need to set up systems of continuous monitoring of individual progress in the acquisition of the language of instruction. Many call for increased teacher training in the host country language as a second language, emphasising that there is often a lack of qualified teachers in the area.

Some contributions present innovative approaches to teaching the language of instruction, based on arts, music, sports and exploiting non-verbal communication to support language acquisition. Bilingual projects in schools, development of e-learning materials, awakening interest in reading among children of pre-school age and after-school programmes are given as examples of good practice. A number of success examples target improving the knowledge of the language of instruction among parents and involving them in language support programmes for their children.

The development of **language screening tests** administered at the beginning of school education or in pre-school is emphasised as a means for assessing the needs of children with a migrant background. In some countries they are followed by compulsory language courses, while other countries use language screening as a voluntary tool. A few contributions warn against the risk of exclusion associated with screening and separate classes for acquiring the host country language, calling for the identification of best practice to avoid this occurring.

The **support of the mother tongue** of migrant children is a more contentious issue, as contributors disagree both on the utility of promoting the acquisition of the heritage language in schools and on the means dedicated to this. Those opposing the promotion of the language of origin point out that research results are ambiguous on the value added of supporting the mother tongue for learning the language of instruction. They equally express fears that separating migrant children in classes for teaching the mother tongue may increase segregation in schools.

Many of the contributions of regional authorities discuss practical difficulties in providing mother tongue education to the children of migrants. Often school authorities face a lack of financial resources and lack qualified teachers in the mother tongues of migrant communities.

The Netherlands created continuous learning paths for the language of instruction, setting reference levels from pre-school to the tertiary level. *Denmark*, *Germany (Nordrhein-Westfalen)* and *Belgium (Flemish Community)* provide language screening tests for evaluating the language development needs of children either in pre-school or in primary education. In *Germany*, the FÖRMIG (Support for immigrant minority children and youth) project supports exchanges on innovative practices in language education.

Sweden guarantees a right to learning the mother tongue throughout compulsory education. Schemes for recognizing and certifying the knowledge of heritage languages were introduced in the *United Kingdom*. In *Ireland*, it is possible to include the knowledge of the heritage language in the leaving certificate. In *Germany (Nordrhein-Westfalen),* the Rucksack language development programme provides bilingual material addressed to both pupils and parents, for supporting both the instruction and the heritage language. In the *UK (Scotland)*, Community Learning & Development centres provide language tuition targeted to both children and carers.

The diversity of mother tongues of the migrant students also limits the degree to which the needs of individuals can be met. The involvement of the communities and diasporas or of the states of origin is seen as a useful way of reducing the financial burden for the provision of mother tongue. The promotion of mobility and exchanges for both students and teachers is seen as an important way of supporting mother tongue learning.

Some contributions, generally coming from the NGOs, universities, religious organisations and some European associations, argue that a solid knowledge of the mother tongue is the necessary bridge towards learning the host country language; it contributes decisively to early socialization, and to emotional and cognitive development. They argue for clearer recognition and integration of the mother tongue in curricula and in examinations. Furthermore, some contributions advocate introducing an obligation for Member States to teach the mother tongue, while a few others refer to a right to the mother tongue, which should be respected in national education systems.

Many contributions point out that there is insufficient **research into second language acquisition** for bilingual children, especially on the relationship between the mother tongue and the acquisition of the language of instruction.

The majority of responses take a mid-way position with regard to the mother tongue, pointing out that supporting the heritage language is an important contribution to the effort of **promoting multilingualism in schools**. A few warn about differences in the perceived status of mother tongues and of the need to see bilingualism as an asset and not just as a problem. Changing attitudes through dialogue with the parents and the communities should be an important aspect of the transition from mono- to multilingualism in schools. The opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee emphasises the continuous support of language development both in the host and heritage languages throughout education.

6.2. Partnerships with parents

The importance of involving parents and communities in the education of children of migrant background was the second most frequently invoked policy response in the contributions. There is a consensus among Member States and among all other types of contributors on the important role which parents play, and on the need to strengthen their links to schools.

Many contributions point out that the **expectations of parents** have a strong bearing on the educational achievements of the children. Often migrant parents have low expectations and negative attitudes towards schools and it is therefore crucial to reach out to them. Increased attendance of early childhood education and care for migrant children most in need of it cannot be secured without involving and reassuring parents. The opinion of the Committee of the Regions also emphasises the need for "motivating the parents of children with a migrant background to make use of existing education opportunities"[6].

Even when the parents' expectations are high, the lack of **accessible information on the educational system** of the country of residence can pose considerable obstacles. Information programmes targeting migrant parents, involving community mediators, the translation of

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[6]   CdR 253/2008

information on the school system and the provision of guidance in the language of origin are some of the means identified to narrow the gap between schools and migrant parents.

Many responses advocate initiatives for **addressing the learning needs of both parents and children**. Numerous organisations contributing to the consultation emphasize the special role of mothers and the effectiveness of mother-children language classes. More generally, adult education aimed at providing parents with solid knowledge of the language of instruction is often seen as an important factor in supporting the language acquisition of their children.

Involving the migrant communities is often highlighted as an important means for providing support for children. Community organisations can provide non-formal and informal learning that offer additional means of engaging children from a migrant background and of countering socio-economic disadvantage. Several contributions emphasize the effectiveness of involving a wide pool of actors, ranging from sports, cultural associations, libraries, youth and social NGOs, to enterprises and artistic centres working together in supporting migrant children. Community organisations are also seen as potential mediators between schools and parents, as local NGOs can reach out to parents who are reticent to establish contacts with schools.

The role of families and communities should be better understood and integrated into existing policies. Contributions from NGOs and also from local and regional authorities point out that the experience of community organisations, including migrant associations, should have more influence on the policies and programmes targeting children from a migrant background.

In *Ireland*, the Home School Community Liaison Scheme provides a bridge between schools and parents, mobilizing the skills of all actors involved in order to address the needs of children in disadvantaged communities. In the *UK (England and Wales),* the Extended Schools Initiative encourages schools to open up to communities by providing additional services such as adult learning, childcare or after-school programmes. Schools organize "Academic Tutoring Days", if possible in the first language of families, in which school staff is available to meet parents all day long in order to increase parent engagement. In *Belgium (Flemish Community)*, the Broad schools initiative aims to develop a broad network of stakeholders involved in the childrens' development. In *Germany*, a broad network of local actors mobilized by the "Kommunalen Bildungslandschaften" work together to prevent social exclusion.

Many communities organize supplementary school programmes outside regular school hours, which are supported by local funding in cities such as *Birmingham (UK)*. Websites with accessible information on the education system support parents and families in *Ireland* and the *UK*. The information needs of parents on the national education system are met through publications in the heritage languages in *Denmark*, through interactive radio programmes in *Luxembourg* or through a depository of translated letters for parents in the *UK*.

Civil society organisations often act as bridges between schools and parents. The Odissea project and the Itaca Sud projects promoted in *Italy* by Caritas, a charity, allow members of local and migrant communities to act as social animators in a multicultural environment. Projects run in *France* by La Ligue de l'Enseignement, an NGO, and in *Spain* by MPDL, an NGO, provide supplementary education and accompanying services, involving ethnic minority parents.

6.3.   Teacher education and recruitment

A large majority of contributions emphasise the key role of teachers in facilitating the integration of the children of migrants in schools, advocating policies to strengthen teacher education and to adapt teacher recruitment. There is a consensus among Member States' contributions that the **quality of teachers** impacts decisively on educational achievement and that there is a need to adapt teacher education to the new social realities created by migration.

There is equally a consensus among contributors on the importance of equipping teachers with the competencies for dealing with increasingly diverse classrooms. Several contributions emphasise the special challenge of training early childhood education and care professionals for successfully supporting the integration and language development of migrant children. Teacher education at all levels should directly address the topics of migration, inclusion, conflict prevention and resolution, making use of current research to do so. A number of contributions call for the mainstreaming of human rights, anti-discrimination and race equality elements in teacher education.

Numerous contributions focus on **integrating intercultural education in teacher education**. This would provide teachers with the necessary tools for harnessing diversity and introducing a multicultural element in their classes. Intercultural communication, understanding identities and stereotypes and awareness of different cultures are important for allowing teachers to welcome children from different cultures into school communities and to deploy pedagogic and assessment approaches that are sensitive to cultural and linguistic differences.

Initial and continuous education for all teachers should also cover to a larger degree **language acquisition and development** and should be more directly focused on the needs of bilingual children. A reoccurring theme is that training in teaching the language of instruction as a second language should include the tools for the diagnosis of problems of language development and offer ways of addressing them. In-service training is mentioned as an effective way of acquiring first hand experience of learning for bilingual children, while including international mobility in teacher training can increase openness to diversity. Several contributions emphasise the important role in schools of teachers and teaching assistants speaking both the language of instruction and the mother tongues of children with a migrant background.

> In *Denmark*, the reform of initial teacher education has aimed at providing teachers with better knowledge of language stimulation techniques and to better equip them for teaching bilingual children. In *Belgium (Flemish Community)*, intercultural education was strengthened in the teacher education curriculum as part of the basic competences for future teachers, which aiming to provide more insight into diversity, and to improve the intercultural competences of teachers.
>
> *Nordrhein-Westfalen* (*Germany*) has introduced special positions ("Integrationsstellen") for teachers who have the task to help the integration of migrant pupils in schools with high numbers of students from migrant background.
>
> A new bachelors' programme for educating bilingual teachers was set up in *Norway* in order to increase diversity and knowledge of heritage languages among teachers. The *Birmingham* City Council (*UK*) has its own scheme for supporting applicants from an ethnic minority background to train as teachers.

There is also a consensus on the importance of **recruiting teachers from migrant or minority backgrounds**. They can provide much needed role models and can increase motivation and identification with the school for migrant children, while supporting respect for diversity within the teaching profession. Several respondents argue that the teaching profession should reflect as closely as possible the composition of society. The need to identify the barriers that limit access by minorities to the teaching profession and targeted measures to support their recruitment are recurring themes in the responses.

Finally, a number of contributions address policies targeting teachers in schools or areas with a large proportion of students from a migrant background. Additional financial incentives, targeted support, adapted didactic materials and training are advocated in order to retain them in teaching and to harness their experience in dealing with difficult social situations. A few responses emphasise the need to diversity among early childhood education and care personnel, given the important role of early education in the inclusion process.

6.4. Intercultural education

Policies strengthening **intercultural education in school and pre-school** curricula aim at promoting the understanding, acceptance and valuing of diversity. Their strength is generally seen to lie in the inclusive way they reinforce the migrant child's self esteem, personal and cultural identity. Intercultural education aims at including all students, migrants and natives, in common learning activities, thus providing an alternative to targeting migrant students. By including all children in activities related to the migrants' cultures, it offers a way of valuing the cultural and linguistic assets of migrant children.

Many contributions emphasise the importance of **mainstreaming key democratic values**, human rights principles and the respect for diversity in intercultural education. It should provide a forum for active dialogue around different cultural heritages, while promoting tolerance and respect, raising awareness of different cultures and preventing conflict. The contributions advocate mainstreaming intercultural perspectives across subjects and reflecting more diversity and multiple perspectives in curricula, textbooks and even the physical environment of schools. A few even propose introducing intercultural education as a separate subject in the curriculum. The development of intercultural education is closely linked to improving teacher education, as mentioned in the previous subsection. Generally, the responses reflect a stronger support for introducing intercultural elements in teacher education than in school curricula.

In *Finland*, a pilot project supports schools in developing a intercultural development plan including collaboration with families, teaching arrangements. The pilot project "School-Community Approach", piloted by CEJI, an NGO, across 5 EU countries brings together local stakeholders, students and teachers, but also public authorities, social workers, business owners, for a process of diversity training, needs analysis and action planning leading to improved education for diversity.

In *Germany*, extracurricular cultural education offers provided by cultural institutions complement the curricular offer in schools. At school level, The Interkulturelle Waldorfschule in Mannheim Neckardstadt (*Germany*) provides lessons in the subject 'Cultural Encounter' where children form migrant background act as experts on their language and culture, while native children learn to deal with other cultures.

The practical examples of provision of intercultural education often include the local migrant communities acting as resources and partners, usually in a mix of curricular and extracurricular activities. Intercultural education thus becomes a means of strengthening community cohesion and of putting diversity at the core of schools' ethos.

6.5. Access to early childhood education and care

Many contributions highlight the importance of participation in early childhood education and care for addressing what is often a double disadvantage of lack of knowledge of the language of instruction and lower socio-economic status. There is a general consensus in the contributions on the positive effects of a wider participation of children with a migrant background in pre-school provision for language development and especially for the acquisition of the host country language. Contributions also stress that participation in pre-school also contributes to the social and communication skills of migrant children and prepares them for the encounter with schools.

There is a consensus in governmental contributions on the need to strengthen pre-school education for migrant children, as one of the key policies for raising their educational achievement. The governmental contributions focus on the need to have **high participation rates from early ages**, on broadening provision in disadvantaged areas and on the need to engage the most excluded and isolated families.

Many contributions highlight the need for **good quality early childhood education and care**. Successful integration of migrant children requires small class sizes and personalised learning approaches. Some contributors point out that additional targeted support may be needed from an early age. Others emphasise the importance of close coordination with schools to ensure a smooth transition to compulsory education. However, several contributors warn on the tendency to concentrate too much on educational success and plead for an increased focus on emotional development.

Many contributions stress the importance of **language support in pre-school** and argue that institutions still have to adapt to the new task of language teaching and support. There is an increasing need for professional development of personnel on intercultural skills and on early language development. In the responses there is, however, some disagreement on whether both host and heritage language should be supported at this level. Early intervention for screening deficiencies and supporting the language of instruction is seen by some contributions as necessary from pre-school levels. Others advocate more general language development activities in pre-schools.

Many Member States have introduced policies for increasing participation in early childhood education and care. In *Belgium (Flemmish Community)* the action plan "Toddler Participation" targets increasing attendance rates for $2^{1/2}$ year olds.

In the *Netherlands* and in *Denmark*, there is a focus on strengthening the acquisition of the language of instruction from early childhood. The PARLER project in *France (Région Rhône-Alpes)*, a partnership between national, regional, local authorities and universities, provides individualised language support for 5-8 year olds, leading to significant improvement in literacy skills. In *Nordrhein-Westfalen (Germany),* the programmes 'Bookstart' and 'Zum Lesen geboren' support the reading culture of children in pre-school age and their parents.

Several contributions mention that pre-school participation has a levelling effect on socio-economic differences in education. However, children from migrant families are less likely to attend pre-schools. Increasing participation requires affordable fees, links with social services and social programmes for disadvantaged families, and especially openness towards and involvement of parents in the activities.

6.6. Combating segregation

A majority of governmental contributions recognises the **prevention of segregation** as a priority policy for improving the educational outcomes of children with a migrant background. These contributions concur with the weight put in the Green Paper on prevention rather than correction of "ghettoisation" tendencies.

A number of Member States have set up financial arrangements which link the financing of schools to the socio-economic background of the pupils in order to counterbalance segregation tendencies. Others try to tackle segregation by changing school admissions policies, by linking funding to non-discriminatory access rules or by promoting multi-denominational schools. A few emphasise the need for additional policies aiming at more mixed classes in systems with school choice. In cases where segregation occurs, some contributors argue that it can be alleviated by strong involvement of the community in school development projects and by twinning, projects and exchanges between schools with predominantly native children and those with a major migrant population.

A more contentious issue relates to **permeability and selectivity** of educational systems. Some Member State contributions identify early tracking, selectivity and low permeability of tracks within the education system as tending to place migrants at a disadvantage. Policy responses mentioned in the contributions include the transition to more comprehensive systems, as well as increasing the resources for and improving the quality and attractiveness of vocational education and training. Other contributors however explicitly reject the link between selectivity and segregation, claiming that it is the permeability and not the structure of the educational systems that influences segregation. Overall, a majority of contributions tackling the subject establish a direct link between segregation and early tracking, arguing that selective systems which track at early ages encourage school segregation.

In the *Netherlands* and in *Belgium (Flemish Community)*, school financing is tied to the socio-economic profile of the students, in order to counter segregation tendencies. In *Ireland*, the programme Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools allocates a comprehensive package of support to schools serving disadvantaged communities. *Denmark* has strengthened the provision of the language of instruction as second language in all schools, in order to broaden the school choice opportunities for migrant parents.

In the *Netherlands*, the government provides financial support for parent initiatives to create mixed schools and appointed an "education ambassador" for combatting segregation and facilitating joint projects among schools of different "colours". Additionally, there are pilot projects experimenting with ways of tackling segregation, eg by arranging partnerships between schools, by prescribing fixed times for registration or by making use of double waiting lists for schools enrollment.

Many contributions agree with the analysis of the Green Paper on the importance of an **integrated approach to tackling segregation**, which should involve asylum, social, urban development and housing policies closely coordinated across school, local and regional levels. Several contributions warn against tendencies to concentrate migrants in schools which

provide language support and about over-representation of migrants in special schools. The development of more inclusive school environments, including collaborative learning strategies or heterogeneous groupings is emphasised as essential for combating segregation at school level. Finally, a number of contributions call for more research on school choice decisions to inform desegregation policies.

6.7.   Additional support: mentoring, tutoring, mediators and guidance

Many contributions mention appropriate accompanying structures tailored to children's needs, such as **mentoring, tutoring or coaching**. Mentoring and tutoring approaches attempt to involve external actors with whom migrant children can easily identify themselves, such as senior high school or university students, or community members, usually speaking the mother tongue of the children. The responses advocate such practice from pre-school throughout compulsory education and even at university level, and with a particular emphasis on the upper secondary phase, in order to reduce drop-out and to support newly arrived migrants entering schooling directly at that level.

By recruiting senior pupils, students with a migrant background or adults from the migrant community to offer individualised support and guidance for children from a migrant background, mentoring initiatives use the power of **role models and peer empowerment**. They are particularly suited to the various needs of migrant children, as they focus on individualised learning and promote a holistic view of education, addressing the social and community contexts. These approaches result in better study motivation, more efficient study methods and a better self-image and more self-confidence for individual students.

In many cases, mentoring and tutoring programmes are organised in close collaboration with and sometimes are even co-funded by communities. The importance of such programmes is especially highlighted in the responses from local and regional actors. Many contributions however present isolated programmes and initiatives and only in a few Member States such practice is mainstreamed across regions or specifically supported through dedicated policies.

Many contributions refer positively to the presence **of teaching assistants** and **community mediators** speaking the mother tongue of migrant children in schools. They are able to provide individualised support and to enable the process of integration for newly arrived students, while being able to engage in dialogue with the parents, often providing the missing link between the school and the parents who do not speak the language of instruction. Strengthening the networks of **school psychologists** is also advocated in several contributions as a means of further addressing the complex individual needs of migrant children.

In *Greece* and *Belgium (Flemish Community)*, higher education students provide mentoring and tutoring to the children of migrants, with very positive results in terms of academic support. In the *Netherlands* and in the *Czech Republic*, personal coaching is used as a tool for making schools more inclusive.

In *Sweden*, tutoring in the mother tongue of the children with a migrant background allows the development of the instruction language while avoiding that children fall behind in the other subjects.

Cultural mediators are successfully used in *Spain* and *Luxembourg* for facilitating contacts with parents.

Many contributions focus on the importance of **guidance provided in the mother tongue**, targeted towards both parents and children. Migrant parents usually have very little

knowledge of the system of education, and providing accessible information in the mother tongue is highlighted as an important issue in many countries. Some contributions go beyond this, arguing for the presence of interpreters in schools.

Many contributions highlight the important role of individual guidance for children with a migrant background. It is especially important for newly arrived migrants, who need support in their mother tongue in order to become familiar with the schools and to accelerate their integration into mainstream classes. Individual guidance is also advocated for facilitating the recognition of previous periods of study, for facilitating inclusion at the appropriate level in the school system of the country of residence, and for facilitating transitions between levels of education.

6.8.   Increasing quality for all

Many contributions take a horizontal approach to the problem of how to tackle the challenges raised by the presence of children with a migrant background, arguing that an overall strengthening of the quality of education is especially beneficial for this group. The **improvement of quality standards in <u>all</u> schools** and targeted support to schools lagging behind, naturally counter segregation tendencies. More inclusive schools, open to various educational needs, increased provision of personalised learning, and more orientation towards the individual learning needs of each student are seen to benefit migrant children. Equally important are improved **strategic school leadership** and community planning for the development of schools with a strong diversity component. Policies targeting early school leaving, combating absenteeism or bullying, are also particularly supportive for this group of children.

Many contributions emphasise the **quality of vocational education and training** (VET) as having a strong impact on the achievements of the migrant students, since many of them follow a vocational track. They advocate more attention to language learning in VET, more investment in equipment, the development of apprenticeships and more guidance provision. Partnerships with employers and enterprises are seen as a useful tool for a successful integration in the labour market. The Committee of Regions emphasises inter alia the importance of including in vocational training language classes for the acquisition of the relevant vocabulary for the sector in question.

Mechanisms for **identifying and supporting all students at risk of underachievement**, implemented in collaboration with parents, are generally seen to benefit migrant children. The responses emphasise the positive effect of reducing class sizes especially at pre-primary and primary levels, as sufficiently limited classes allow more individualised teaching, more student engagement and discipline. Others argue for attracting the best teachers to the most disadvantaged schools, while warning against the presence of too many teachers from a migrant background in schools with a concentrated migrant population.

A bilingual task force established in *Denmark* assists school and local authorities to develop action plans for the education of children from a migrant background.

An example of integrated support comes from the Catholic Education Centre in Den Bosch in the *Netherlands*, offering education opportunities and remedial facilities, assistance with language delay, school advisory services, parental panels, community school and early childhood education.

Contributions from regional authorities insist on the importance of strong links between school leaders, community associations, teacher unions and local authorities. They also identify the importance of coordinating support at local level between schools, social services and child welfare authorities. A few contributions also emphasise the importance of democratic process within schools for empowering and motivating both children and their parents.

Examples of good practice include **partnerships** between local authorities, school leaders and community leaders, aimed at identifying the needs for support, joint planning and targeting. The development of schools as centres for intercultural dialogue or as integrated centres of support for vulnerable families, including child care, health advice and family support services are examples of successfully reaching out to families and communities.

6.9. Introduction programmes for newly arrived migrants

The responses highlight the importance of a **positive welcome** for newly arrived migrant children and the significance of the first contacts with the schools in the new country of residence. There is a need to identify best practice, as there are many conflicting views on the best ways of introducing children to the school system.

Many contributions point out the importance of **intensive language classes for newly arrived** migrant children. There are however concerns that bridging classes are a potential means for segregation, and quick integration into mainstream classes is preferred by some contributors. Others take a mid-way approach, arguing for progressive inclusion underpinned by individualised support targeted at the various and complex needs of newly arrived migrants. Additional support in the form of mentoring, coaching, training and guidance is highlighted as particularly relevant for this group.

Many contributions emphasise the need to provide quickly the necessary support for migrant children, avoiding idle periods and further delays in their education. However, local and regional authorities point out the problems related to large variations in the numbers of newly arrived migrants and high turnover of students. They call for flexible funding mechanisms to provide adequate resources for varying needs over time.

In *Spain*, the 'Aula de acogida' programme attempts to provide the knowledge and emotional support for facilitating the inclusion of newly arrived migrant children. *The Netherlands*, *Belgium* and *Luxembourg* provide preparatory classes for facilitating for the acquisition of the language of instruction. In *Belgium (French Community)*, bridge classes for newly arrived refugee children are complemented by a programme "Adaptation à la Langue d'Enseignement" which reaches a more diverse pool of needs.

Luxembourg set up a special body (Cellule d'accueil scolaire pour élèves nouveaux arrivants) coordinating the integration of the newly arrived from the age of 12 to 18 in the education system. In *Ireland*, the Learning for Young Newcomer Students, programme facilitates the collaboration between a small group of secondary school principals and representatives from Government Departments responsible for education and immigration.

In the *Netherlands*, the Civic Integration Scheme aims to provide a smooth transition into the Dutch education system, engaging children already before coming into the country. In *Finland*, preparatory Internet-based education on Finnish and Swedish language is provided before migration, accessible already in the country of origin.

The coverage of the introductory classes is criticised as too narrow in some of the responses. In some systems, these are limited to reception centres for asylum seekers and the contributions argue that many legal migrants and mobile EU citizens do not have access to suitable introductory provision. There are also arguments favouring more flexibility in provision and for complementing the bridge classes with other forms of introduction programmes open more widely to different categories of children from migrant backgrounds.

Another contentious issue relates to subject teaching in the mother tongue as a means of facilitating the integration of newly arrived migrants in the schools while ensuring that they do not lag behind their native peers. Some contributors propose it as a way of facilitating subject learning and supporting the host and heritage languages, while others perceive a danger of segregation and of hampering the acquisition of the language of instruction.

Some of the responses advocate an integrated support system for newly arrived migrants, which should include support for traumatized refugee children, quick skills assessments for identifying appropriate training or school placements, and even civic education or reception programmes for parents. They identify a need to coordinate with asylum and social services. Early involvement of parents is emphasized, for instance through introductory classes for newly arrived parents which present the school system and help define their expectations for their children.

6.10.   Other policy responses

All-day schools and support of free time activities are frequently mentioned as one of the main examples of successful initiatives tackling both the integration of migrants and early school leaving. Homework support programmes and extracurricular activities within schools are also seen as important means for counterbalancing socio-economic disadvantage and for supporting social interactions between migrant and native students. **Extracurricular and out-of-school activities** create informal environments for interaction between migrant and non-migrant children and adults. The involvement of community organisations in the development of such activities is perceived as an important factor for their success. Many contributions call for additional financial support and for closer partnerships with community organisations for the development of non-formal education.

Adult education is another area with a positive impact on the education of migrant children. Many contributors point out the importance of adult education for parents, especially the importance of widespread availability of language courses for adults for increasing access to mainstream education. The European Economic and Social Committee observes that educational disadvantage among migrants tends to perpetuate throughout life, limiting their participation in adult education. The availability of remedial measures, especially second chance schools, is also highlighted, given the high incidence of early school leaving among migrant youth.

> In the *Netherlands*, a project for increasing migrants' participation in professional higher education draws up ambitious targets for influx, dropout rate and success rate in partnership with universities, setting up projects involving tutoring, mentoring, language support and summer courses.
>
> The *Danish* system of afterschool "efterskole" provides a broad extracurricular offer aiming the influence the complete development of young people. A number of municipalities with a high number of bilingual children currently pilot all-day schools.

In the *UK*, the collection of data disaggregated by ethnicity and migrant background allows a better evidence base for anti-discrimination measures. In *Italy*, second chance street education has proven effective in addressing the educational needs of unaccompanied minors.

Many consultations emphasize the need for improved **recognition and validation of prior learning,** including diplomas and qualifications obtained abroad. Several Member States have adopted specific programmes for recognising the competencies of migrants acquired in the country of origin. Official systems of assessment and accreditation of competence in the mother tongue or including mother tongue in official graduation examinations are seen as important means of recognising the educational assets of migrant learners. The adoption and implementation of the European Qualifications Framework is seen as a positive step in this direction.

Flexible financing mechanisms are considered a key policy issue in the contributions of local and regional authorities. As migrant flows are subject to sudden changes, schools and localities can face rapid inflows which put stress on the capacity of schools to adapt to the new social situation. The availability of flexible funding sources, including national or EU financial mechanisms targeting the needs of migrant students, is seen as essential for increasing the capacity of schools to cope with migration. These contributors also emphasize the scope for peer learning among schools at national level, as schools that only recently became exposed to migration can learn from their more experienced peers.

Several contributions call for **strengthened anti-discrimination** measures in the national school systems, supported through the collection of statistics differentiated according to ethnic or migrant background. A few contributions mention as well the need to reduce the legal differences between EU and non-EU migrants and to provide access to education irrespective of the legal status of the pupils or of their parents.

A few contributions call for greater attention to the low attendance rates of students with a migrant background in **higher education**. They advocate extending language support, and additional support such as mentoring, coaching and tutoring to higher education. More research is needed for identifying factors contributing to academic success among migrant students and for tracking the barriers which limit their access to higher education.

7. THE ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Question 3. What actions could be undertaken via European Programmes to impact positively on the education of children from a migrant background?

Question 4. How should these issues be addressed within the Open Method of Coordination for Education and Training? Do you feel that there should be an exploration of possible indicators and/or benchmarks as a means to focus policy effort more strongly on closing the gaps in educational attainment?

Almost all the contributions received identify a positive role for European Union in the area of the education of children with a migrant background. The large majority considers that this theme should be reflected more strongly in the policy cooperation undertaken through the open method of coordination and in the EU programmes.

The governmental contributions emphasise that the EU can play a supporting role for national policies in the area of education and migration. There is a common recognition that the challenges of the education of children with a migrant background are relatively new and widely shared across Member States. A number of governmental contributions, especially those of national Parliaments, support initiatives at EU level while emphasising that education

policy is a competence of the Member States. There are also cautionary warnings on the diversity of national situations and policies and the heterogeneity within migrant groups. However, governmental contributors consider that this very diversity can be a useful source for mutual learning and a resource for policy development at national level. Contributions from the Member States generally support the exchange of experience and the identification and dissemination of best practices, as well as expressing support for research and programmes at the EU level.

The Resolution of the European Parliament also supports a dialogue within the open method of coordination on best practices in the education of migrant children and calls for the development of a common agenda for future work. It also calls on the Commission to provide regular reports on the progress made in the integration of migrant children in European education systems.

Many of the non-governmental contributions refer to the role of the EU as a multiplier and disseminator of good practice. The EU should stimulate debates, thus providing renewed momentum for national initiatives. Other contributors see a role for the EU in the development of evaluation tools for programmes targeting migrant students. Among NGOs, several contributions restate that the principle of subsidiarity should be observed, while a few others call for stronger role of the EU in the area, including through direct support for multicultural identity-building and through legislation. Respondents from all types of contributors propose reinforcing existing cooperation in the areas of teacher education, language learning, intercultural education and in the recognition of diplomas and prior learning.

On the concrete methods for future collaboration in the area at EU level, the contributions most often refer to programmes and peer learning. The support for comparative research at EU level and the development of benchmarks are also widely mentioned, as well as the need for better integration and coordination with other EU policies.

7.1. Programmes

A large majority of governmental contributions supports explicitly the further development of programmes at EU level targeting the education of migrants. There is widespread consensus in the contributions received on the potential added value of increased community financing and many highlight the importance of joint transnational projects. Support for programmes is particularly strong among governmental contributors, local and regional authorities and NGOs.

The Lifelong Learning Programme and especially the Comenius and Leonardo da Vinci sub-programmes are often mentioned as a potential source of extra community resources for the education of migrants. Many contributions from European associations and NGOs advocate the development of a stronger European dimension in teacher education through mobility programmes, exchanges and through supporting teacher training in intercultural skills and second language acquisition. Intercultural awareness and education, including the development of didactic tools and materials also receive support in the responses. Other suggestions include the promotion of mobility and cooperation for school leaders and teachers working on the education of migrants, for instance through a separate call concerning the education of migrants within the Comenius programme.

Some contributions provide suggestions how to improve the existing programmes. Many support stronger reflection of policy developments in the Lifelong Learning Programme, for instance through allocating more resources to the dissemination of the good practice identified within peer learning activities. There is also widespread support for reducing the bureaucratic burden for school administrations in order to broaden participation in the programme. The Commission is encouraged to improve the evaluation and the dissemination of the results of projects, to identify innovative practice and to synthesise policy lessons from programme activities. Some also suggest evaluating the participation of students and teachers from ethnic minority groups or reinforcing incentives to increase the sustainability of projects.

More support for the education of migrants is also sought from the Youth in Action Programme, for instance through increased targeting of projects outside schools, including those leading to VET qualifications for migrants, language learning or the development of social competencies. Contributions also highlight the importance of the European Social Fund in supporting the education of migrants, teacher education, language learning, and more inclusive schools. The European Regional Development Fund and especially the city partnerships developed in the URBACT programme are cited as particularly relevant for this area.

A couple of local authorities advocate expanding the coverage of EU funds for the integration of migrants, especially the European Fund for the Integration of Third-country Nationals, to EU citizens. They draw attention to the fact that no specific fund targets intra-EU migrants and that it is difficult to finance these through EU funding schemes that target at the same time EU and non-EU migrants. Other local and regional authorities propose earmarking EU funds for countries, cities or even schools with a higher proportion of migrants, in order to support integration efforts. A few NGOs call for stronger conditionality attached to EU financing, based on criteria of non-discrimination.

More general suggestions include organising international exchanges with the country of origin of pupils, and sending teachers on placements in order to favour the knowledge of the language and culture of those countries. Twinning or e-twinning of schools from the country of residence and the country of origin or exchange programmes for students are also proposed as facilitating communication and integration.

7.2.   Peer learning

There is a wide consensus that future collaboration should target the exchange of best practice among Member States, including strategies and programmes aimed at improving the achievements of migrant children. Peer learning is seen as a resource for evidence based policy making and the results of the exchanges should be made widely available, as an input and stimulus to national debates. Support for peer learning is particularly strong among governmental contributions, European Associations and NGOs.

The contributions support including the topic of the education of children with a migrant background as a priority for the next phase of policy cooperation under the Education & Training 2010 open method of coordination. Topics proposed in governmental responses include language skills, parental involvement, support for children who are lagging behind, guidance, vocationally relevant language training, social integration, personalising learning, subject teaching in mother tongue and the effects of early tracking on the school performance of pupils from a migrant background. Other proposals for peer learning include personalising learning, increasing quality in schools, the provision of bilingual education inclusive of the

migrants' languages, access to quality early childhood education and care, the education of unaccompanied minors and non-formal education for migrant childen.

There are also suggestions for improving peer learning, focused on defining a clear mandate, calendar and objectives for clusters, better links between clusters and political activities, better links between peer learning and existing EU programmes, or increasing the transparency of the process. A governmental contribution suggests grouping states with comparable economic and social situations or those facing similar migration patterns for exchanges of experience and peer learning.

Many local and regional authorities emphasise the need of exchanges and peer learning at the regional and local levels, in recognition of the important role played by these authorities in the field. Other contributions propose peer learning in broader networks including school leaders, education professionals, policymakers, NGOs and civil society groups and migrant organisations. A further proposal is for a programme of conferences and seminars on topics covered in the responses to the consultation.

7.3. Data and research

There is a strong consensus on the benefits of further comparative research at EU level focused on the best policies for integrating children from a migrant background migrant. The support for further support of research and data collection is more frequently expressed explicitly among governmental contributions and among local and regional authorities.

A number of contributions call for the inclusion of the education of migrants as a priority topic in the EU's research Framework Programme, in order to cover the gaps in research and knowledge on the inclusion of migrant children. Comparative studies could cover the impact of different policies and the performance of different migrant groups across countries. Topics suggested for further research include second language acquisition, bilingual education, access and progression of migrant children, especially to post-secondary education.

NGO and local and regional authorities' contributions support the idea of a knowledge centre or a database to collect and disseminate information on initiatives from the Member States. Some contributors see this as a continuation of the study of the education of migrants published by the Eurydice network, noting however that access to existing information should be broadened and updated. Others envisage a stronger role for EU institutions in disseminating scientific research and evaluations internationally.

7.4. Benchmarks and indicators

There are mixed opinions on the appropriateness or desirability of developing new indicators on the education of migrants and on the adoption of European benchmarks on the topic. While some contributions see these as useful for increasing the commitment of the Member States to improving the educational performance of children with a migrant background, others express concern about the administrative burdens of new data collection requirements and question the impact of European benchmarks on national systems. Support for the development of benchmarks is stronger among European associations and NGOs and relatively weaker among local and regional actors and among governmental contributions.

There is no consensus among governmental contributions on the adoption of benchmarks. Most governments express support in principle for new benchmarks, without mentioning

explicitly a given indicator. Others support them only provided that they do not imply additional data collection, while other governmental contributions explicitly reject new benchmarks in the area.

There is a consensus in governmental contributions on the utility of using existing indicators and on the need to better exploit the results of large scale comparative studies such as PISA, PIRLS or TIMMS. There is however limited consensus on the opportunity of developing new indicators: while some Member States explicitly oppose it, others call for comparing the performance of migrant and native students in existing indicators and data collections. Other governmental contributions go further and support the development of new indicators, even taking into account the ethnic origin and migrant background of students. Others propose indicators on the quality of the learning environment, integration of migrants, teacher competences in teaching migrant pupils.

Many European Associations and NGOs consider that the EU should take a leading role in collection of evidence, based on both quantitative and qualitative data. Several contributors advocate disaggregating according to ethnic and migrant status the indicators on progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education. A few propose further disaggregation by the country of orgin, gender and socio-economic status. Proposed indicators include the attainment gap between native and migrant students, the participation of migrants at different levels of education, the proficiency in the language of instruction, the proportion of teachers from a migrant background in schools or the intercultural competencies of teachers and students. A few contributors propose city-to-city or regional benchmarking exercises.

Several contributions from local and regional organisations express more scepticism on the utility of benchmarking and of indicators, arguing that there are large differences among regions which cannot be captured in national level statistics and pointing out that they offer limited guidance for concrete policy responses. A few respondents express objections on the possibility of quantifying educational achievements, while a few others are sceptical on the impact additional benchmarks on national policies. There are also warnings on testing fatigue in schools, or on the potential stigmatising effect of measuring the achievement gaps of migrant students.

7.5.   Policy integration and coordination

Several contributions emphasise the importance of providing stronger links between the open method of coordination in education and in the field of social protection and social inclusion. Given the strong links between social and employment policies and the education of migrants, many contributions press for a stronger role for education in the broader social agenda of the European Union. Some of the contributions call for stronger protection of the right to education and of the equal access to educational opportunities in the context of EU migration and asylum policies.

Coordination with anti-discrimination policy and monitoring its implementation is also emphasised in several responses. A few identify scope for additional legislative action under the non-discrimination legal basis or call for closer scrutiny by the Commission of national anti-discrimination measures in education.

Several contributions emphasise the need for closer cooperation in future initiatives with other international organisations active in the area, such as the Council of Europe, UNESCO and

especially with the OECD. They propose stronger coordination on data collection and joint research projects among the organisations.

8.   THE FUTURE OF THE DIRECTIVE 77/486/EEC

> *Question 5. How can Directive 77/486/EEC, taking into account the history of its implementation and bearing in mind the changed nature of migration flows since its adoption, play a role in supporting Member States' policies on these issues? Would you recommend that it be maintained as it stands, that it should be adapted or repealed? Would you propose alternative approaches to support Member States' policies on the issues it addresses?*

The final question of the consultation concerned the future of Directive 77/486/EEC. The Green Paper questioned the appropriateness of the Directive to the realities of an EU of 27 Member States, stressing the poor record of transposition and implementation so far. The Commission deemed the scope of the Directive, restricted to children from the Member States, and its impact on current policies, as very limited.

70% of the contributions received expressed an opinion on the directive. A large majority agrees with the analysis of the Commission, stating that the Directive no longer corresponds to the realities of current migration flows. Its scope, covering only children of Member State nationals, is generally seen as too restricted and limiting its impact. There is also general dissatisfaction with the fact that the directive does not offer enough policy tools to help implementation. An overwhelming majority (90%) of contributors expressing an opinion advocates either a revision or a withdrawal of the Directive and only 10% favours leaving the Directive unchanged. 58% of those expressing an opinion support revising the Directive, while 32% favour repealing it and identifying other means of collaboration in the area.

Among those favouring a revision of the directive, a large majority from all types of contributors argues for including third country nationals in its scope. Some contributors advocate extending the scope of the Directive even further, to illegal immigrants and unaccompanied minors. Adapting the Directive to current social conditions would necessitate, in the perspective of all types of contributors a broader approach which goes beyond teaching the language and the culture of the country of origin. A few contributions advocate introducing specific references in the Directive to pre-school education or an anti-discrimination clause. Overall, many contributions also emphasize that voluntary approaches, such as the use of the Open Method of Coordination or funding through EU programmes, could be equally fruitful ways of cooperation in the area. Some of those favouring a renewal of the Directive stress that its implementation could be facilitated by policy learning, exchanges and support programmes for policy development at EU level.

A minority of the contributions favours repealing the Directive. The usefulness of a legislative approach is questioned in some of the contributions which advocate a voluntary approach at the EU level. There is relatively more support for withdrawing the Directive among regional authorities, who question its relevance to the current social situation and the financial burden of teaching a wide variety of heritage languages in schools. They emphasise policy exchanges and sharing of best practice as better means of policy development, with the involvement of local and regional authorities.

There is no consensus on the future of the Directive among the Member States expressing a position. Some countries support repealing it, for reasons ranging from subsidiarity and the inappropriateness of legislation at EU level to invoking the specificities of national education systems and the differences in the migrant population which would hinder implementation.

The added value of the provisions on teaching the language of instruction is also questioned, as this is already part of the educational system in many Member States. A couple of governments argue against a policy focused on teaching the heritage language, which should be left to communities or to individual schools.

Other Member States consider that although the Directive is outdated, its policy message, focused on the host and heritage language, remains valid. There is a consensus among these governments that a re-drafting should broaden the scope of the Directive, to include third country nationals. Only one governmental contribution recommends that the Directive should be maintained as it is, requesting a renewed commitment to its implementation.

The European Parliament's resolution also advocates the substantial amendment of the Directive, broadening its scope to cover the education of children who are nationals from non-Member States[7]. The European Economic and Social Committee also supports an amendment of the Directive broadening its scope beyond the issue of language acquisition.

9.   CONCLUDING REMARKS

The great majority of contributions received welcome the Green Paper as a timely addition to the national policy debates. Contributors underline the common challenges faced by national education systems and identify a potential for mutual learning and exchange and development of best practice. There is broad support in the contributions for further initiatives at EU level in the area, through programme funding, peer learning and support for research. Many contributors advocate further work on the education of children from a migrant background within the open method of coordination.

Building on the support received in the consultation process, the Commission will organise a stakeholder conference to encourage debate on the policies needed to support the education of the children of migrants. The Commission has already announced its intention to continue working on this topic, proposing the education of the children of migrants as a priority theme for future work within the Education and Training 2010 programme (Open Method of Coordination).

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[7]   European Parliament resolution of 2.4.2009 on educating the children of migrants (2008/2328(INI))

ANNEX

LIST OF INSTITUTIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED

	Governmental contributions	
1	Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur	AT
2	Ministerie van Onderwijs en Vorming	BE
3	Vlaamse Onderwijsraad	BE
4	Conseil de l'Education et de la Formation	BE
5	Cyprus Education Council	CY
6	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports	CZ
7	Bundesrat	DE
8	German Federal Ministry of Education and Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of German Länder	DE
9	Ministry of Education	DK
10	Danish Parliament	DK
11	Ministry of Education and Research	EE
12	Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs	EL
13	Consejo Escolar del Estado	ES
14	Opetusministeriö - Ministry of Education	FI
15	Working group for the education of migrant children	HU
16	Department of Education and Science	IE
17	Ministry of Education and Science	LT
18	Le Grand-Duché du Luxembourg	LU
19	Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport	MT
20	Kabinet – Ministry of Education	NL
21	Kunnskapsdepartementet - Ministry of Education and Research	NO
22	Ministry of Education and Research	SE
23	Swedish Parliament	SE

24	UK Government	UK
25	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority	UK
European institutions and consultative bodies		
1	Committee of the Regions	EU
2	European Economic and Social Committee	EU
3	European Parliament	EU
European associations		
1	A Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe (CEJI)	EU
2	Assembly of European Regions (AER)	EU
3	Caritas Europa	EU
4	Commission des Episcopats de la Communauté Européenne	EU
5	Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union (COFACE)	EU
6	Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)	EU
7	Don Bosco International	EU
8	Eurochild	EU
9	EUROCITIES	EU
10	EuroCommerce and Uni-Europa Commerce	EU
11	European Association for the education of adults (EAEA)	EU
12	European Association of Regional and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning (EARLALL)	EU
13	European Council For Steiner Waldorf Education	EU
14	European Federation for Street Children	EU
15	European Forum for Freedom in Education	EU
16	European Network Against Racism (ENAR)	EU
17	European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE)	EU
18	Open Society Institute	EU
19	Solidar	EU

	Regional and local authorities	
1	Commission consultative « Formation Emploi Enseignement »	BE
2	Österreichischer Städtebund - Association of cities and towns	AT
3	Nordrhein-Westfalen	DE
4	Landesverband Hessen	DE
5	Deutscher Städtetag - Association of cities	DE
6	Local Government Denmark - Association of municipalities	DK
7	Foreningen af Skolebestyrelser i Århus	DK
8	Generalitat de Catalunya	ES
9	Suomen Kuntaliitto - Association of local and regional authorities	FI
10	Association of Netherlands Municipalities VNG	NL
11	Stockholm region	SE
12	Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting	SE
13	Birmingham city council	UK
14	East of England	UK
15	Kent County council	UK
16	Local Government Association	UK
17	Merseyside	UK
18	East of Scotland European Consortium	UK
19	Aberdeenshire Council	UK
	NGOs	
1	Interkuturelles Zentrum	AT
2	Netzwerk SprachenRechte	AT
3	Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund - Trade Union Federation	DE
4	DBB Beamtenbund und Tarifunion - Civil Service Association	DE

5	Fachverband für Kunstpädagogik BDK	DE
6	Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Kinder- und Jugendhilfe	DE
7	Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Kath. Jugendsozialarbeit	DE
8	Comitato degli Italiani all' Estero	DE
9	Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Evangelische Jugendsozialarbeit e.V.	DE
10	Deutscher Kulturrat	DE
11	Deutscher Verein für öffentliche und private Fürsorge e.V.	DE
12	Verein zur Förderung von Sprache und Mehrsprachigkeit	DE
13	Europäische Föderalisten Oldenburg e.V.	DE
14	Deutscher Caritasverband e.V.	DE
15	Protestant Church in Germany (EKD)	DE
16	Diakonisches Werk der EKD e.V.	DE
17	Documentary and Advisory Centre on Race Discrimination (DACoRD)	DK
18	Foro para la Integración Social de los Inmigrantes	ES
19	Fundación Tomillo	ES
20	Confederación Empresarial Española de la Economía Social	ES
21	France Terre d'Asile	FR
22	Caritas Italiana	IT
23	Dutch Catholic Bishops' Conference	NL
Political parties		
1	Fraktion Die Linke im Deutschen Bundestag	DE
2	SPD-Bundestagsfraktion	DE
3	Fraktion Die Linke im Hessischen Landtag	DE
4	Landtagsfraktion Bündnis 90/Grüne Niedersachsen	DE
Universities		
1	Aarhus University, Institut for Pædagogik	DK

2	Hellenic Observatory for Intercultural Education	EL
3	Universitat de Barcelona, CREA	ES
4	l'Université de Grenoble	FR
5	University of Cambridge	UK