

Political Issues and Social Policy in the E.U.

Professor John Wilton

Lecture 6

Education and training policy

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Erasmus Socrates programme

- designed to promote educational exchange of ideas, experiences and teaching processes
- but also to promote greater cultural exchange and understanding
- politically designed to assist E.U. integration

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'Spillover' – between the
development of E.U. common
market and education and
training

- 1974 Social Action Programme

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1976 resolution to Council of Ministers

- action programme in education

- 1) improved facilities for education and training;
- 2) closer relations between educational systems;
- 3) improved statistics on education;

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- 4) greater co-operation between Member states in the field of higher education – covering recognition of qualifications and periods of study abroad;
- 5) the promotion of foreign language teaching;
- 6) the promotion of equal opportunities in access to education;
- 7) the need to address the problem of unemployment among young people (from an education and training perspective);

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- 8) the need to address the educational needs of the children of migrants;
- 9) The need to address the preparation of young people for work, and the smooth transition from education to working life

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1988 European Commission communication

‘on education and training in the European
Community’

- set out medium-term perspectives for
education 1989-92
- stated need to create “an educational
space for mobility and interchange”

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- the right of education and training policy to be recognised as a necessary part of the E.U. agenda – to compliment the needs of the development of the Single Market
- the right to recognition of some ‘equivalence of standards’

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1991 European Commission memo on higher education
- referred to the “wider responsibilities of higher education institutions for maintaining, developing and transmitting the cultural heritage of Europe and its Member states and for mobilising the creativity of people to advance the boundaries of knowledge, in the humanities as well as in science and technology”

(COM(91) 349 final, 5 Nov. 1991, pp. 1-2)

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- identified a number of factors influencing higher education in the Community:
 1. increasing pace of European integration and labour mobility;
 2. impact of scientific and technological advances for economic and daily life;
 3. enlargement of the Community and increasing opportunities for co-operation, partnership and mutual support

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3 major dimensions of E.U. policy objectives on
education and training

1. From economic viewpoint, aim was to promote quality education, vocational training and re-training designed to ensure supply of multi-skilled, flexible, mobile workers capable of operating on European scale;
2. From social perspective, E.U. seeking to secure equality of opportunity for young people to develop their talents and skills

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3. from the cultural and political perspective – used as an ‘instrument’ of policy designed to facilitate and promote greater E.U. political integration and cultural understanding

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1988 European Commission Communication
– guidelines for the medium term (1989-
1992) on education and training formally
recognised that:

“Blanket harmonisation or standardisation
of the educational system is entirely
undesirable”.

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Instead, E.U. took as its objective:

“to improve the overall quality of educational provision by bringing the different systems into a long-term process of contact and co-operation ...”

AND simultaneously “avoiding unnecessary divergences which would otherwise impede the free movement of persons and ideas”.

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End of 1980s, organisational instrument for
“educational movement of peoples” – the
European Community Action Scheme for
the Mobility of University Students
(ERASMUS)

1991 Trans- European Scheme for University
Studies (TEMPUS) extended exchanges to
Central and Eastern Europe

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1995 SOCRATES programme

aim = to strengthen the European dimension of education at all levels:

- through the development of language learning;
- through the promotion of co-operation by encouraging exchanges;
- through the removal of obstacles to labour mobility by recognition of diplomas and periods of study abroad.

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E.U. educational exchange programmes:

- Socrates
- Comenius
- Grundtvig
- Lingua
- Atlas

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2 level 'principle' process operating;

1. *harmonisation* of aims in E.U. education
and training policy;

2. *mutual recognition* of diversity in
education and training application

(based on common fundamental principle of
'European dimension of education')

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‘Spillover’

- the economic needs of the E.U.

lead to

- social and cultural developments in
education and training policy

facilitate

- political aims (within E.U. integration
project)