



EUROPEAN SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN EDUCATION

WORKING GROUP 1: QUALITY IN EDUCATION

ORIENTATION PAPER

1. Background Information

Last year the ETUCE and the European Federation of Employers in Education (EFEE) agreed upon a work programme for the upcoming European Sectoral Social Dialogue in Education (ESSDE). The Work Programme involved that the ESSDE would create 3 specific working groups to discuss 3 themes: Quality in Education, The Demographic Challenges and Education and Training beyond 2010. During the first plenary meeting of the ESSDE on the 11th of June 2010, the Social Partners agreed that the third theme will be postponed to a later period. Instead, the ESSDE Committee has created two WGs on the two first themes and a third on Higher Education and Research. This note is aimed at preparing the work ahead for the WG 1: The Quality in Education.

1. What issues does the WG cover?

The ESSDE work programme enables for discussion over the following issues:

- (a) How initial teacher education and training and continuous professional development can improve the quality of teaching, leadership and management;
- (b) Quality assurance in education.

A note with some preliminary considerations on these issues is attached to the present document.

2. How will the WG operate?

The Working Group is meeting for the first time on the 8th of November. Over the year 2011, it will be possible for the WG to meet twice.

Given the possibility for the WG to meet only 3 times before the end 2011, the WG may have time to focus in depth on only one specific issue. The WG should come back to the Plenary after one year of work with a proposal for action. In accordance with Clause 2 of the ESSDE's internal rules of procedure, this proposal will be in the form of "recommendations" to the Social Dialogue Committee. The proposal will constitute the achievement of the WG. The ETUCE and EFEE secretariats will support the WG to prepare the meetings.

The proposal from the EFEE and ETUCE secretariat to plan the work for 2010/2011 is the following:

Meeting 1: 8 November 2010:

- Presentation of the issues from the Work programme;
- Choice of one particular issue from the theme of *Quality of Education*;
- Preliminary discussion of the chosen issue;
- Discussion of the possible outcome(s) of the WG;
- Allocation of tasks among the WG members, the ETUCE and EFEE secretariats to prepare the next meeting.

Meeting 2: April 2011

- Report from the WG members, ETUCE and EFEE secretariats on their recent work/findings on the issue;
- Discussion of a draft proposal
- Allocation of tasks: the draft proposal has to be sent to the WG members before the next meeting

Meeting 3: September 2011

- Discussion of the draft proposal
- Amendments
- Finalisation of the proposal (in the form of recommendations to the ESSDE)

3. What can be the final outcome?

The EC Communication, 'Partnership for change in an enlarged Europe – Enhancing the contribution of European social dialogue' (COM(2004) 557) of 12 August 2004 lists a typology of social dialogue outcomes at European level:

- Agreements implemented in accordance with Article 139(2), either by Council decision or by the procedures and practices specific to management and labour in the Member States;
- Process-oriented texts: frameworks of action, guidelines and codes of conduct, and policy orientations;
- Joint opinions and declarations;
- Tools (surveys, study visits etc.);

Depending on their purpose the joint productions can address different targets: the EU institutions, the Member States, the national or the European social partners.

It is to be underlined that the outcome can be a combination of the above listed elements. As an illustrative example, a joint declaration can be accompanied with a proposal for a joint project to undertake further activities with specific aims like the design of guidelines.

ANNEX: PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS ON QUALITY IN EDUCATION

-THE CULTURE OF EVALUATION -

Introduction

The two main objectives of the Working Group on improving quality in education by professional staff development and by quality assurance combine to focus more narrowly on one specific topic: the culture of evaluation in schools. Personal, social and labour market demands advocate the spread of a more comprehensive culture of evaluation, notably by changing from evaluation systems of a *controlling* nature to *supportive* ones, at national, regional and school level. The culture of evaluation involves all actors of the school, making them responsible for quality development, whether they are students, teachers, school leaders or parents. The central role; however is that of the school leaders, whose coordination is essential to the design and implementation of the evaluation process. The secretariats of EFEE and ETUCE therefore suggest that focus of the Quality Working Group should be *to undertake an analysis and discuss the requirements for the establishment of a Culture of Evaluation in education that is accepted by all parties involved.*

General principles

Evaluation, as a tool of management, targets the continuous examination of a work process and of its achievements in every level, form and constituent of the education system, from kindergarten to the universities. In spite of the fact that some countries can demonstrate successful supportive types of national/regional/school evaluation systems, the recent OECD (TALIS) Survey¹ revealed that 1/3rd of the European teachers had not yet participated in any evaluation process. The survey reported that teachers still feel that they lack feedback/reliable feedback on their work, and that around 75% of them do not receive rewards after improving their work. It became also clear that many EU Member States do not have an appropriate evaluation structure; they neglect the results and the benefit of evaluation.

Consequently, a culture of evaluation should be initiated and successfully implemented more comprehensively at institutional level by either self- or internal/external/combined evaluation policy. It has to use effective, structured, well balanced and accepted evaluation methods, as well as to support development in a continuous process to create a learning environment.

Social dialogue on Culture of evaluation

Considering the fact that the culture of evaluation covers both institutional and classroom management, the employers, the school leaders and the teachers as the main involved partners can initiate the development or re-launch of a discussion on creating a culture of evaluation. Not only do the teachers need feedback on their work, but school principals also

¹ <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/17/51/43023606.pdf>

do on their decision making and its methods. As a result, constant dialogue and feedback from teachers to school principals and employers and in reverse are crucial to the culture of evaluation.

Results

The effect of creating a culture of evaluation would be a more democratic and open decision making and wider access to information for all parties involved. It contributes to a mutual commitment to individual, team and management development by an open-classroom and open staff-room way. This creates a work environment by mutual trust among the teachers and between employers, teachers, students and [school] leaders, raises the appreciation of the teaching profession, while it improves professional development and transforms the institution to a quality learning organisation.²

Requirements for establishing a culture of evaluation

To create a Culture of Evaluation in Schools that is accepted by all parties involved is certainly not an easy task. However experience shows that acceptance by all parties involved is crucial to the success of the evaluation. Secondly, it is very important to acknowledge the context in which you are implementing a culture of evaluation. The diverse education systems in Europe do not just point to one way of or one direction of implementing a culture of evaluation. The historical, social and political context is important to take into account as a frame for possible action.

There is a lack of evidence as to which model for evaluation should be the "best". This is both because the national and local contexts are so important and because the research in this area over the last 10 years has been limited.

The working group is asked not to engage directly into discussions about possible models for evaluation , but rather **to discuss the general requirements for establishing a culture of evaluation that are accepted by all parties involved.**

Such discussion will imply analysis of the roles of each party involved and consideration of how to take the initiative and to whom the different responsibilities would be assigned. It also implies a discussion of the process and the involvement of the authorities, the ownership of the outcome and the consequent use of the results.

² D.F.Murphy. 2001. Developing a culture of evaluation. Thames Valley University, London