



Verein zur Förderung von Begabungsforschung und
Begabungsiniciativen im European Council for High Ability

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Comments and suggestions on Commission Working Document (COM2009/647) consultation on the Future „EU 2020“ Strategy

Dear Honourable Members of the European Commission,

Prof. Peter Csermely informed me about his suggestion to include the support of young talents of Europe to the strategy. As the chairwoman of the non governmental organisation “ECHA-Austria”, the national branch of ECHA (European Council for High Ability), I want to declare that our association supports this suggestion. Primarily our members are teachers, for whom the development and nurture of young talents in the classroom are the most challenging tasks they have to cope with. The foundation of this support as a main educational goal in the strategy “EU 2020” would help to narrow the diverse barriers, which interfere with existing structures of the national educational system.

Focusing the purpose of the paper we want to suggest further additions to the text:

Priority 1: Creating **values** by basing growth on **talent and abilities**, knowledge, **motivation and values-consciousness**

Following the proposal of Prof. Csermely (*“According to modern psychology talent can be hidden in each one of us. A special emphasis on talent support is needed to discover the hidden values of schoolchildren and to encourage their most appropriate development. School programs, extracurricular enrichment and integrated nationwide networks are all needed to bring talents to top universities, the industry and all segments of European societies.”*) we continue:

These efforts have to concentrate on the development and nurture of abilities, starting with the positive turn of the predominant paradigm of educational practice from efforts on eliminating disabilities towards efforts on strengthening the abilities and the self-consciousness of any single person.

Motivation is the basic principle for the development of the individual’s potential. Sense-finding and willpower for the transition of potential into praxis have to be evoked.

The consciousness and the orientation towards values, primarily shared within the European community, have to form the foundation of any decision making process and of any action performance

The arguments for our proposal are:

1. The educational practice in school puts the main efforts on the acquisition of knowledge, but the special talents and abilities of schoolchildren are mostly ignored. If an identification-process of talents and abilities goes ahead of the process of knowledge acquisition, the desired growth can get a higher quality. These two processes are the supporting pillars for the development of stable identity based self-consciousness. The realisation of the EU 2020 Strategy needs persons knowing who they are, on which personal strengths they can rely and how they can cope with their personal inadequacies.

2. Gaining knowledge and nurturing talents and abilities is not sufficient for the stimulation of growth. Growth arises from the activities and actions of people. But a person will set his or her potential into practice only when he or she can find a personal sense in doing so. Furthermore also finding sense in an action is not sufficient. The power of will is the motor to start an activity and to bring it also to an end. The existing educational praxis in general shows too little interest in providing opportunities to nurture sense-finding and willpower, especially on concerns of a European dimension.
3. Beside other origins, the economic and financial crisis having hit Europe derives from a special type of values - material ones. So if this crisis should be overcome by the creation of values based on talents and abilities, knowledge and motivation, we have to explicate the type of values we think to be a good base for the intended growth. The charter of values has to place immaterial values first: tolerance, responsibility, care, respect, fairness, justice, human rights, common welfare etc. These values have to come into a person's mind, when a decision has to be made. Only this values-orientation can save the global society from further similar crisis. With the EU 2020 strategy Europe as a highly diverse community can set role models to create economical and social growth on the balance between material and immaterial values.
4. Especially holders of leading positions in politics, economy, research and culture do need an education, which focuses the importance of immaterial values.

With a view on the realisation of priority 2 and 3 we propose these amendment statements to include into the working document "EU 2020 strategy".

Salzburg, January 15th, 2010

Yours sincerely,

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