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**"European Dimension and Teacher Training (EU.DI.T.T.) in the
European Union"**

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Introductory remarks

This paper outlines specific issues related to the European Dimension (EU.DI.) in the teachers' initial and in-service training in the European Union. I first outline basic components of the concept of European dimension and some features of the current situation in the EU member states and secondly I attempt to elaborate proposals aiming to enhance the EU.DI. and the Internationalisation in the Teacher Training (T.T.).

I'll make use of official documents of the Ministries of the member states and of the European Institutions, which I compare with my own personal experience in Italy and in some European countries.

The European Union is a young entity and most European citizens still leave school without any awareness of their belonging to Europe and are deprived both of correct information and of real contact with foreign schools in Europe.

The European cooperation is a democratic project which lives on the consensus of the citizens. According to Eurobarometer "The Europeans in 2009", only 52 % of European citizens think that being member of the European Union is a good thing for the own country¹ (53 % in the year 2008).

The schools and the teachers are called to give a solid education to the pupils as basis for democratic and competent decisions. The work quality of teaching staff is one of the key determinants of the educational success of students, and has profound implications for the economic and social development. Teachers bring information to their classrooms and act as role models.

Teachers meet high complex challenges in the contemporary era and it is worth to search further how they are trained to prepare young people for the future, what they learn about the European cooperation process, during their training.

The syllabuses of the schools of the European member countries were changed in the last decades and include the European dimension, on the contrary most programmes for the prospective teachers are not appropriate or sufficient to match up to the trend towards europeanisation.

¹ Eurobarometer "The Europeans in 2009",
http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_308_en.pdf , p. 88.

The Lifelong Learning Programme and many European actions give good exchange and cooperation opportunities to students and teachers and the J.Monnet Programme is successful at the University in many faculties in teaching and research (as law, international relations, economy, history etc.), anyway educational studies are not among the main J.Monnet subjects. In order to reach all citizens it is helpful to work a lot, in my opinion, in the field of teacher training because teachers are on the front line in education and mostly they teach more willingly and better what they learned during their initial training in the university years.

Changes in our society and in our economy require high quality education for all. People need high qualification, awareness of the challenges of our time, competences for active participation in democracy a sustainable development.

The concept of European Dimension (EU.DI.) in the 21. century

The European integration is a demanding project. Following the Second World War the first aim has been 'never again war' among the European countries, and afterwards the growth of social welfare became a leading theme. In the 21. century the results reached by the EU are mostly taken for granted or not seen nor appreciated enough by many citizens.

The major goals of the Education and Training programme 2010, agreed upon by the EU Ministers of education to be achieved by 2010 are: to improve the quality and effectiveness of EU education and training systems. The European Dimension is a prerequisite for implementing the Lisbon strategy.

Already on 24 May 1988, the Resolution for enhancing the European dimension in education, adopted by the European Council and the Ministers of Education meeting within the Council gave important inputs to the schools and the teachers of the member states and the candidate countries. The Article 149 of the EC Treaty determines the basis of the initiatives adopted to support and supplement the work of the Member States in the area of education and for the EU.DI.

The concept of the European dimension in education needs to be more clearly identifiable in order to be concretely and efficiently implemented in the teaching materials and in the schools and the TT Institutions of the EU Member States. I see three aspects in the concept of the European dimension: - information, - awareness and identity, and - project and skills, closed connected to each other.

Firstly there is the need for providing information related to the European integration:
- the member countries, taking a broader view on the cultures or ways of seeing, speaking and shaping the world characteristic of different groups, - the EU, its institutions, methods, practices, initiatives, decisions and their implications for the daily life, - Europe's cultural heritage, differences and commonalities, - the cooperation process (forerunners, founders etc.), - results and open questions etc.

At the same time EU.DI. includes efforts for the development of open mindedness and respect for people of other countries, cultures and religions, raise awareness of cultural stereotypes, by helping young people to identify the origins (and not just the psychological ones) of xenophobia, combating racism both as the consequence of individual prejudice and as a reflexion of cultural, structural, economical and institutional processes as well.

Teachers are expected to teach a new range of skills, in order to promote tolerance and social cohesion, to prepare their pupils for the increasingly knowledge-based society, paying attention to pluralistic values and human rights, aiming to strengthen in young people a sense of European identity and make clear to them the value of European civilization, the mutual understanding and empathy across Europe.

Active citizenship and civic competences are very important. On the basis of the acquired knowledge, learners can understand the meaning of the EU as common project and develop skills for enhancing it in the best direction. It includes thinking about the common future and about the place of Europe and the own country, discovering that neighbour countries are a Community of destiny, developing a sense of belonging. To define and put in practice the European project citizens need to work together, with the help of proficiency in foreign languages, cultural pluralism and intercultural competence.

Teaching the EU.DI. is never indoctrination², it implies thinking about and asking for what sort of Europe and what sort of world do we want and to we work to build up. The teaching contents and methods are effective if they are realistic and understandable. Put too much emphasis on utopic ideas can cause economic and political issues to be overlooked and reinforce prejudices.

The European dimension is not a separate subject, nor just a supplement, is incorporated into lessons or curricula in all subjects (history, geography, humanities, foreign language³, education and citizenship, economics, music, art, media literacy, though

² S. Beutelsbacher Konsens (in many languages on http://www.schule-bw.de/unterricht/faecher/gemeinschaftskunde/didaktik/beutelsbacher_konsens.html).

³ S. the Communication from the Commission "A New Framework Strategy for

these subjects may have different titles in different countries), dealing with topics which may help pupils to understand global issues and the role of the European Union in the present scenario.

The European Dimension in Education and in Teacher Training/ current situation

It is difficult to know what is going on at school and in the teacher training, whereas the information about Europe that is conveyed to pupils, teachers and students varies widely from country to country.

National Surveys, Eurydice⁴, OECD⁵ collected information on teacher's participation in professional development. The European Commission is working closely with the Member states to improve the quality of teacher education⁶ and cooperated with EU Member States taking part in the OECD's new survey – TALIS (Teachers, Teaching and Learning)⁷, to collect information on teacher education and professional development.

There are fragmented information about the situation of the European dimension in the design of the initial and in service training (aims, general contents of courses, exchanges, recruitment etc.) in the EU member states since there have been few empirical studies carried out in this area. Whilst in several countries, Europe has become an increasingly prominent feature in national school curricula⁸, others have barely touched upon the subject of the European dimension in their education system.

Multilingualism"(COM(2005)0596).

⁴ Eurydice (2009), Key Data on Education in Europe 2009
http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/key_data_series/105EN.pdf consulted August 2009.

⁵ Education at glance <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/22/1/39317141.pdf>

⁶ According to the request, expressed in the 2004 Council and Commission *Joint Report on Progress Towards the Lisbon Objectives in the Fields of Education and Training*, that a set of common European principles be developed to improve the competences and qualifications of teachers and trainers. S. also Commission of the European Communities. Commission staff working document. Progress towards the Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training, Indicators and Benchmarks, 2008.

⁷ Creating Effective Teaching and Learning Environments: First Results from TALIS
http://www.oecd.org/document/54/0,3343,en_2649_39263231_42980662_1_1_1_37455,00.html

⁸ According to the Draft Report of the EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT 2004 –2009, *Committee on Culture and Education* PROVISIONAL 2006/2041(INI), 23.6.2006, in some countries such as Austria, Spain, Portugal or Slovenia, the place occupied by the European dimension in a country's education system is well established, and may take the form of an obligation or PR\620563EN.doc 7/8 PE 374.479v01-00. In Belgium and the Netherlands, departments in charge of education even draft special documents for teachers, students or the general public aimed at raising awareness of the increasing internationalization of teaching and the various benefits inherent in the study of foreign languages and school exchanges. In some Member States, such as Belgium, the national executives keep their teachers as well informed and equipped as possible via their "Vademecum", special packs containing textbooks, brochures, videos or CD-ROM are also produced by the authorities and circulated to teachers and their students. In Malta, for example, one such

The homepages of the National Education offices in many countries underline initiatives in European dimension. The EU and International bodies produce very interesting teaching material⁹ aimed at raising awareness about Europe among both teaching staff, pupils and students. Specialist journals and magazines available or distributed by the authorities account for much of the material used. Henceforth, user-friendly and accessible websites play a similar and increasing role. Anyway their impact and efficiency depend on the teachers' awareness in this field; it seems that very few teachers know and use it. A lot of them have no information at all and don't feel the need to look for them.

Teaching the EU.DI. does not take place in a vacuum, experiential learning is possible and effective. The European dimension is not only up to teachers or to school systems. Learning about Europe is result of informal and non formal learning as well; it is improved by the cooperation of the whole society and is closed related to traditions, cultural and socio economic backgrounds, budget, political system, mass media.

Prospective teachers have to take a certain number of ECTS credits in the university courses, in the research work (thesis) submitted when they finish their university year and in teaching practice. Curricular structures of the primary level teacher education programmes are mostly at bachelor level (according to the BA –MA structure of the Bologna process 1999), in Departments of teacher education or at Faculties of education; programmes leading to secondary level teaching certificates (grades 7-12) are comprised of academic studies in one, two or three subjects with relevance for curricula of schools, and pedagogical studies. Only in few Institutions, mostly where civics is part of the teacher training, student teachers have the chance to take at least 3 of their ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) devoted to the European dimension to access to the teacher job.

In service training for teachers is growing in importance and the offer is wide-ranging; unfortunately no exact information is available on teachers' actual participation because of the large variety of habits and providers. In about half the EU countries it is compulsory¹⁰, mostly 20 hours a year, never more than 5 days.

pack known as "In search of Europe" is used for European studies.

⁹ S. f.i. The Teachers' corner (s. "Inspiring teaching material about the European Union" http://europa.eu/teachers-corner/index_en.htm), European Schoolnet, which includes a multilingual European education portal for teaching, learning, cooperation and innovation and tools such as eSchoolnet or the 'European Treasury Browser', and 'Europe at School'; S. European Education Thesaurus, <http://www.freethesaurus.info/redined/en/index.php?tema=222>. Interesting are Projects as Certilingua.

¹⁰ S. Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers - Home Page http://www.oecd.org/document/9/0,3343,en_2649_39263231_11969545_1_1_1_1,00.html Teachers Matter, OECD, 2005 The education ministers from OECD countries met in Dublin 2004 debated largely about Improving Teacher Supply and Effectiveness (s. also Descriptors of Dublin)

Goals and design of the Initial and in service training education programmes (aims, length, general contents of academic courses, theory –praxis methods, exchanges, recruitment etc.) are stated by the National Authorities. The International bodies both at European (EU, the Council of Europe) and global levels provide a number of broad orientations for developing policies and practices in order to help young people to acquire the competences listed in the European Reference Framework of Key Competences¹¹ and National Authorities can decide to introduce the suggestions in the own school and university system.

Recently the European Commission has set out proposals to improve the quality of teacher training programmes across the Union¹² and it is working closely with the Member States in order to improve the quality of teachers' education in the EU, as part of an overall process of policy cooperation in the field of education and training.

There are European Documentation Centres in all province and many cooperation and research bodies at European level, European Associations committed to promoting information and the EU.DI., operate at a trans-national or European-wide level, but in general teachers in their daily practice follow the rules of their National Authorities and their national syllabuses.

Teaching mobility, while not legally required, is generally held in high esteem as one of the means of disseminating European information and ideas into school life, promote reflection amongst university staff about the implications of student mobility and to enhance skills of university teaching staff who send and receive incoming European exchange students.

The amount of International exchanges of teachers, prospective teachers, school heads and mentors are quite low because of language barriers, big differences between school systems, culture-bound teaching styles and expectations. Double degree programmes at university level are difficult due to the big differences of outputs officially required by different countries.

As long as the EU.DI. is not part of the initial training only a small minority of teachers will use European teaching materials and participate in international exchanges, in European meetings and projects. If teachers are not aware of the European dimension in

http://www.oecd.org/site/0,3407,en_21571361_27379727_1_1_1_1_1,00.html. http://www-en.us.es/eees/formacion/Descriptor_Dublin_Ensenanza.pdf.

¹¹ European Reference Framework of Key Competences. (Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council 2006/ 962/ EC)

<http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/basicframe.pdf>.

¹² Jan Figel, the European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, Brussels, 6 August 2007.

the daily life and in the school subjects the school teaching can become a barrier hindering the development of the European dimension.

Proposals for enhancing the European Dimension in the teacher training

It is not easy building up and updating teachers' skills for an European dimension, referred to both content and methods in teacher training courses. The following proposals aim to foster the teachers' professional development and the coordination of efforts, promoting a culture of reflective practice and research within the teaching profession focussing on the EU.DI.

We need to clarify further the concept of the European Dimension and to develop qualitative indicators for the European dimension for each country in order to facilitate monitoring, evaluation and accreditation processes, as a guide for teacher training Institutions concerned in developing the European dimension.

The Draft Report of the European Parliament 2004 –2009, *Committee on Culture and Education* PROVISIONAL 2006/2041(INI), 23.6.2006 deals with initiatives to complement school curricula providing appropriate support measures to include the European Dimension and urges the European Council and the Ministers of Education to update the resolution passed on 24 May 1988.

Institutions of teacher education have an important role to introduce the trainees to the necessary understanding of European related issues so that they may compliment their teaching of national and local awareness with the European dimension. Improvement can be reached by cooperating closer for research in teaching field, in searching for new and innovative educational practices, enabling a significant expansion of educational approaches across borders, organising multilingual access and training for the greatest possible number of educators.

There is therefore a need to design training modules for teachers to deal with this topic which often requires new teaching approaches, as the J.Monnet Programme is doing for its traditional subjects and faculties.

A key step toward a EU.Di in the TT is establishing some pilot European projects in Higher Education Institutions for international teacher training. Develop a group of experienced trainers in order to extend the experiences as widely as possible will facilitate assisting teachers on how to incorporate the European dimension efficiently in their lessons and will also keep talented teachers on the job.

Enhancing the EU.DI. And Internationalisation in the teacher education systems is a mechanisms of coherent quality management and quality assurance¹³, thanks to the widening of horizons, the enhancement of possibilities given by the exchange of information, experiences and of good practices.

Quality is improved by connecting studies and research at international level, introducing joint Master and Doctoral study programme (Joint Degree), disseminating best practices over the borders, at school and in university education developing new or improving existing teacher training programs. High quality of TT at European level together with clear awareness of the social relevance of the teaching profession is a prerequisite for promoting the status and recognition of the profession as well.

Teaching mobility and networking among Higher Education Institution help prospective teachers, teacher trainers, head teachers and mentors in acquiring, near the traditional disciplinary and interdisciplinary competence, open horizons not restricted within local and national borders, providing opportunities for developing inquiry oriented learning, focussing more explicitly on collaborative learning and problem solving in teams, publishing teaching material for teacher training institutions.

International contacts, as integral part of an extended curriculum as “powerful learning environments” for student teachers. International placement and mobility¹⁴ of student teachers in mixed groups with home students should be strengthened; mentoring, peer observations, visits to foreign schools and universities, participation in national and International networks and conferences, courses and workshops, bilateral meetings, work –campus, school trips.

Only well prepared, international exchanges help to dismantel prejudices and put people’s own cultural beliefs into perspective, otherwise the international meetings not necessarily establish European and international contacts; they can be even reinforcing stereotypes as unintentional consequence.

Information and research in the field of Educational studies should be developed at international level exchanging processes and national results, performing international research and projects development. so that teachers can learn from the experience of others in school linking the development of a European dimension in the curriculum.

¹³ Already in 2001 the European Parliament and Council recommended that Member States establish transparent quality evaluation systems and encouraged them to create a framework. S. Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 February 2001 on European cooperation in quality evaluation in school education (2001/166/EC).

¹⁴ S. Study Mobility of Teachers and Trainers, on behalf of directorate –General for Education and Culture, 2006 <http://ec.europa.eu/education/doc/reports/doc/mobility.pdf>

The “European dimension” doesn’t aim to standardisation and/or implementation of “one European model” of teacher education. More coordination between structures of teacher education at EU level doesn't mean homogenization, it is synergy, co-operation, for quality, flexibility, establishing an European minimum core curriculum and adopting a modular approach, for prospective teachers.

Student teachers and teachers can make more use of the available international programmes, first of all in the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) in its different branches: Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, J.Monnet, Grundtvig, Student Placement and join opportunities of going abroad for learning, studying or volunteering.

Considering the many difficulties which twinning operations entailed, it is vital to monitor carefully the international work of Higher education institutions and universities, school districts, teacher professional associations, NGOs, policymakers and educators seeking to raise teaching standards and awareness for high-quality education and for strong enhancing the EU.DI., to encourage and award efforts for developing network of international training programmes.

Final remarks

The European democratic cooperation is a vital factor for the further development of the European countries and for contributing to a sustainable global order; citizens living in Europe need more information and awareness about this process. Education in the 21. century makes heavy demands on the skills, commitment, stamina and imagination of the teachers who play an important role.

In this paper I first dealt with the concept of the EU.DI. and outlined some features of the current situation in the EU member states keeping in mind the contribution of the teacher training for the European Dimension in the schools of the EU, secondly I attempted to elaborate proposals aiming to enhance the European dimension, quality and Internationalisation in the teacher training.

Improvements in the European cooperation can be done by teachers when they are competent in citizenship education and convinced. Still an enormous amount needs to be done in this area. Teachers cooperate in building up the future anyway, conscious or unconscious, positive or negative. the quality of teacher training influence the quality of their work and needs the due attention by Institutions and by all decision makers.