



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels,
C(2018) final*

*Mr Liviu DRAGNEA
President of the
Camera Deputaților
Palace of the Parliament
Str. Izvor nr. 2-4, sector 5
RO – 050563 BUCHAREST*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Camera Deputaților for its Opinion concerning the proposal for a Council Recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education and the European dimension of teaching {COM(2018) 23 final}.

This proposal is part of a wider initiative to strengthen European identity through Education and Culture¹. It has been developed drawing on the work of experts involving Member States' representatives as well as stakeholders, including businesses, professional organisations and trade unions. The Council of the European Union has meanwhile adopted this Recommendation on 22 May 2018².

The Commission agrees that it is important to emphasise the common values set out in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union: respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights. They underpin the history and evolution of the European Union, especially in the current political context.

The Commission also agrees that challenges such as populism, xenophobia, divisive nationalism, discrimination, disinformation and radicalisation are multi-faceted and have many contributing causes. The above-mentioned proposal for a Council Recommendation seeks to contribute to the wider work tackling these issues by presenting how education can play an important role here.

The Commission is grateful for the focus of the Camera Deputaților on the subjects of history and geography in the context of teaching about Europe. While it is not for the

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/communication-strengthening-european-identity-education-culture_en.pdf

² <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8015-2018-INIT/en/pdf>

Commission to comment on the content of national curricula, these are indeed subjects, together with civic education and language learning, in which the European context and the development of the European Union can be discussed.

The Commission shares the concern of the Camera Deputaților that teachers need support to help achieve the objectives of the Recommendation. Such support will continue to be provided through peer learning, exchanges of best practice and Union funding, especially the Erasmus+ programme and the European Social Fund.

As regards virtual exchanges, the Commission is not seeking to replace physical exchanges but rather to supplement them by enabling a wider group of learners to have a shared experience. The Commission believes that virtual exchanges can help students, especially those in compulsory school education, meet their peers in other countries and open their eyes to other cultures.

Concerning the European Solidarity Corps, the Commission strongly believes that this initiative can make an important contribution to social cohesion across the European Union. It empowers young people as they gain inestimable experience and acquire valuable skills by participating in solidarity activities.

The Commission shares the view of the Camera Deputaților that the family is the most important place for children to grow and develop, and that parents (and guardians) are responsible for each child's wellbeing, health and development. At the same time, it believes that early childhood education and care complements the family environment. There is strong evidence that high quality early childhood education and care contribute to the cognitive and non-cognitive development of children and have long-lasting benefits. They help to lay solid foundations for learning at school and throughout life as well as for social integration and personal development.

Regarding the request of the Camera Deputaților to carry out an in-depth study of the phenomenon of harassment at school, the Commission would like to draw attention to the study on 'How to Prevent and Tackle Bullying and School Violence: Evidence and Practices for Strategies for Inclusive and Safe Schools'³. It examines evidence from European and international research, reviews national practices and sets out the most effective strategies for preventing bullying and violence at school.

The Commission shares the interest of the Camera Deputaților on how digitisation and technological advances are affecting social relations. The Commission is supporting Erasmus+ projects in the field, and a study on the social dimension of education and training on how (social) media literacy can be taught in schools is under way. The results of this study should be available in November 2018.

The Commission acknowledges that education is influenced by many socio-economic and family-related factors that are outside of the control of the educational system per se. Nevertheless, good quality inclusive education, in particular for disadvantaged learners,

³ http://nesetweb.eu/NESET-II_Bullying-Report.pdf

is shown to have a significant impact on the learner's educational, personal and social outcomes.

The Camera Deputaților underlines how important it is to promote students' involvement in sports and other extra-curricular activities that promote mutual tolerance and understanding. This is fully in line with the Union's policy focus on youth involvement and sports as drivers of social inclusion.

The Commission appreciates the strong support expressed by the Camera Deputaților to the European Year of Cultural Heritage. The Commission intends to ensure the legacy of the European Year through an Action Plan for Cultural Heritage.

The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the issues raised by the Camera Deputaților and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Tibor Navracsics
Member of the Commission*