

CONCLUSIONS OF THE COUNCIL AND THE MINISTERS FOR EDUCATION MEETING
WITHIN THE COUNCIL ON IMPROVING THE TREATMENT OF THE EUROPEAN
DIMENSION IN EDUCATION

1. The ever-closer union among the peoples of Europe which is called for by the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community can be achieved only on the basis of the citizens' understanding of political, social and cultural life in other Member States; they must also be well-informed about the goals of European integration and the European Community's means of action. Teaching about the European dimension is therefore part and parcel of the education of the future citizens of Europe.
2. Thus, the Resolution of the Council and of the Ministers for Education, meeting within the Council, of 9 February 1976 comprising an action programme in the field of education proposes measures to bring a "European dimension to the experience of teachers and pupils in primary and secondary school in the Community". Equally, the European Council, both in the Solemn Declaration adopted in Stuttgart on 19 June 1983 and in the statement of the Fontainebleau meeting on 25 and 26 June 1984, stressed the need to improve the level of knowledge about other Member States of the Community and for better information on Europe's history and culture so as to promote a European awareness and the desirability of strengthening and promoting Europe's identity and image, both among its own citizens and in the world. The European Parliament's various resolutions on education demonstrate the importance which it attaches to this issue.
3. Taking account of these statements, of the Commission communication dated 8 June 1978 and of the Education Committee's general report, the substance of which was approved by the Council and the Ministers for Education, meeting within the Council, on 27 June 1980, the Council and the Ministers for Education, meeting within the Council, consider it necessary, within the framework of and in accordance with the methods of their respective education systems, to give fresh impetus to the introduction of a European dimension into education.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN

Promotion of the teaching of foreign languages as an important factor for strengthening the European Community

4. While acknowledging the differing circumstances of individual Member States, the Council and the Ministers for Education, meeting within the Council, consider that the development of a European dimension in education should be accompanied by measures for the promotion of the teaching of foreign languages, such as were adopted at their meeting on 4 June 1984.

Promotion of measures designed to encourage contacts between pupils from different countries

5. They acknowledge the importance of educational visits and class exchanges in familiarizing pupils with the reality of the European Community and its Member States and consider that they should be stepped up as far as possible. One way of doing this would be through the designation of information services at national level with the task of facilitating contacts among schools in Community countries, with a view to exchanges of pupils, documentation, teaching material, audiovisual presentations, etc.

Moreover, in addition to intensifying this action, measures would be needed to increase pupils' interest in other Community countries (for example, special foreign language and foreign civilization courses; European history compositions; holidays and educational visits abroad for motivated pupils; travel scholarships; general tourist possibilities, etc.).

Highlighting of the European dimension in curricula, in teacher-training courses and in teaching material

6. The Council and the Ministers for Education, meeting within the Council, will encourage the competent authorities to improve the treatment of the European dimension in education and in particular to:
- (a) allow for the presence of the European dimension in school curricula and teacher-training courses;
 - (b) encourage co-operation among teacher-training establishments in different Member States;
 - (c) promote the organization of short in-service training seminars for teachers on this subject;
 - (d) support the development of appropriate teaching material.

European Awareness Day

7. At the Ministerial meeting on 4 June 1984, the French delegation proposed organizing a European Awareness Day in schools. In some Member States a "European Schools Day" is already being promoted jointly by the Council of Europe and the Community. The Council and the Ministers for Education, meeting within the Council, welcome the efforts already made to draw the attention of schools and their pupils to Europe and the Community. They consider, however, that the institution of a "European Awareness Day" to support these efforts must be seen in the light of the work carried out for the European Council by the Committee for a People's Europe, aimed at improving public information on Community activities. If it were decided to establish a "European Awareness Day", the operation and content of any action in schools would have to be determined by the relevant authorities having regard to individual education systems.

Commission backing

8. The Commission will support the activities of Member States as set out above and will encourage the activities of non-governmental bodies which aim to promote a European dimension in education. In particular, it will encourage consultations on the means to achieve the above objectives and, more specifically, exchanges of views and of experience in those sectors where co-operation measures between several Member States are being carried out.

9. The Council and the Ministers* for Education, meeting within the Council, invite the Education Committee to present a report every two years on progress made in the Member States and at Community level in improving the treatment of the European dimension in education.

 10. These conclusions will be transmitted to the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee.
-