



European Economic and Social Committee

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The Economic Crisis, Education and the Labour Market

PROGRAMME
24.01.2012

EESC
Room JDE 52
5th floor

Europe is undergoing a far-reaching financial, economic and social crisis, with thousands of companies going out of business, higher unemployment, falling salaries, budget cuts in social security systems, rising poverty and social exclusion. The difficult labour market situation has had and is continuing to have detrimental effects on the very fabric of society. Preserving the European Social Model requires society as a whole to make a collective effort, demonstrating solidarity with people excluded from the labour market but also with future generations.

In times of crisis, it should be reiterated that education is a fundamental human right and a public good, which should be guaranteed for everyone under equal conditions. A well-educated young generation able to make its own choices is a prerequisite for emerging successfully from the crisis. Member States should therefore pay particular attention to public investment in

education and vocational training as well as in research and innovation.

The Europe 2020 Strategy reinforces the idea that education in Europe should be improved in order to boost productivity and combat inequalities and poverty. Europe can only recover from the crisis if people have the skills enabling them to contribute to «smart growth». Education therefore has to be adapted to the economic and social challenges of the future. It concerns all stages of life, from pre-school to higher and adult education and different educational settings – formal, non-formal and informal.

How can young people be better integrated into the labour market? How can we meet the challenges of lifelong learning? How can the skills of older workers be improved and their potential better harnessed? These are some of the questions we want to look at during the conference.

9 a.m. Registration

9.30 a.m. Opening Session

Moderator: **Leila KURKI**, President of the EESC SOC Section

Staffan NILSSON, President of the EESC

Anna DIAMANTOPOULOU, Greek Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs

10.00 a.m. Keynote speech: Commissioner **Androulla VASSILIOU**

10.20 a.m. **Andreas SCHLEICHER**, Head of the Indicators and Analysis Division, Directorate for Education, OECD

10.40 a.m. **Mário SOARES**, EESC rapporteur for the opinion "The economic crisis, education and the labour market" (SOC/410)

10.50 a.m. **Luigi BERLINGUER**, MEP (S&D)

11.00 a.m. Coffee Break

11.15 a.m. Panel 1 with open debate: Getting youth on board

Moderator: **Anna Maria DARMANIN**, Vice-President of the EESC

Pavel TRANTINA, Member of the EESC

Mario MAURO, MEP (EPP)

Marko GRDOŠIĆ, Vice-President and External Relations Director, European Students' Forum (AEGEE)

Luca SCARPIELLO, Vice-President European, Youth Forum (YFJ)

Michael SCHWAB, Chair of Rural Youth Europe

1 p.m. Lunch

2.30 p.m. Opening of afternoon session

Christine ANTORINI, Danish Minister for Children and Education

2.45 p.m. Panel 2 with open debate: Education as a vehicle for "smart growth"

Moderator: **Georgios DASSIS**, President of EESC Group II

Vladimíra DRBALOVÁ, Member of the EESC

Damien ABAD, MEP (EPP), Intergroup on Youth

Stephen HUGHES, MEP (S&D)

Arianna MAZZEO, Fundación i2cat

Martin RØMER, European Director, European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE)

Andreas PERSSON, Policy Officer, European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public services (CEEP)

Gina EBNER, Secretary-General, European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA)

4.15 p.m. Concluding remarks: **Georgios DASSIS**, President of EESC Group II

4.30 p.m. End of conference