

R11 No Future Without Education: Facing Inequalities through Educational Rights

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Agenda item: 8. Resolutions

Motion text

1 Usually, when we talk about politics, we reflect on the past, we analyse the
2 present and, most importantly, we envision the future we want. However, when it
3 comes to building this future, we tend to fail to take a closer look at the most
4 basic level, education, thereby overlooking the material conditions in which
5 children and young people are being shaped. Across Europe, it cannot be denied
6 that children and young people are not being granted full access to the
7 necessary tools they need to thrive, both as individuals and as a society.

8 Nonetheless, education systems in Europe are not failing by accident: they are
9 shaped by political choices. Insufficient and uneven funding, unequal access,
10 disparities in educational standards across neighbourhoods, persistent social
11 exclusion and the growing commodification of education are the direct result of
12 systemic priorities that place the capitalist market logic above social justice
13 and education. At the same time, these political decisions continue to prevent
14 students from acquiring essential and valuable knowledge in terms of human
15 development, such as notions of sexuality, emotional well-being, and democratic
16 participation.

17 The first problem is that education can function as a driver of inequality.
18 However, education can serve as its most powerful remedy. Despite this
19 possibility, it currently reproduces existing social hierarchies. Whilst formal
20 access to education is widely guaranteed across Europe, this access remains
21 deeply unequal in practice. Thus, students from wealthier backgrounds benefit
22 from structural advantages, ranging from private extra tuition to supportive
23 learning environments and access to modern technological devices that enhance
24 their learning process, while others face systemic barriers that limit their
25 opportunities and prospects from an early age.

26 When dealing with these inequalities, we should broaden the focus and address
27 these issues beyond the classroom. In this sense, access to extracurricular
28 activities, such as sports, arts, or language learning plays a key role in

29 cognitive development, social integration, mental wellbeing and, ultimately, in
30 the students' future. However, these opportunities are increasingly shaped by
31 purchasing power. Hence, children from unprivileged backgrounds are effectively
32 excluded from spaces that are essential for their personal and social
33 development, reinforcing class-based inequalities across generations.

34 A second main problem is the lack of education in key aspects such as education
35 on diversity, environmental, social values and sex education. Against the far-
36 right narrative that states that education must be reserved exclusively to
37 parents, we claim that schools must not only teach knowledge and skills but also
38 shape humans who can form a better society and co-educate alongside parents.
39 Inclusion and respect of all kinds of diversity are not instilled in all
40 centers.

41 In this sense, sexual education and education on sexual diversity are still not
42 widely implemented over the EU. There is a conservative push against it: for
43 instance, the recently developed policy in Italy, which under the Government of
44 Meloni wanted to ban sex education. In the end the government settled for a
45 restriction on sex-ed only allowing it when parents give permission. Sex
46 education should be accessible to all and taught from a young age, starting with
47 learning to deal with emotions and consent, respecting each other and ourselves
48 to give children the ability to communicate better and be respectful with each
49 other.

50 A third main issue is the lack of history education regarding the most recent
51 developments and the origin of other countries and cultures. To have a better
52 understanding of our society and the rich culture of every country, it would be
53 fundamental to introduce historical teachings of native people's culture around
54 the world. Focusing mainly on European history and neglecting native people's
55 way of life leads to harmful and biased thinking. Fundamental to this is the
56 teaching of democratic values and respect for other people, their culture and
57 origin.

58 A fourth issue is the lack of education about climate change in close connection
59 with social justice. It is essential to teach children about nature, animals and
60 sustainability; respect for our planet and its fragile ecosystem. Ultimately,
61 understanding the balance between nature and climate connects the topics of
62 social and climate justice. The lack of contact with nature among urban kids is
63 also a health and education absence that must be solved.

64 A fifth issue is the persistent educational disparities between rural and urban
65 areas across Europe. Students attending school in rural regions often face
66 limited access to specialised teachers, advanced courses and essential
67 infrastructure. Not only do they have restricted possibilities of accessing
68 libraries or laboratories but also the internet. In addition, extracurricular

69 activities such as sports clubs or arts programmes are frequently scarce or
70 absent, which may restrict both cognitive and social development. Furthermore,
71 rural schools regularly struggle to attract and retain qualified teachers due to
72 their remote location, leading to higher staff turnover and interruptions in
73 learning continuity. Another factor is the lack of reliable public transport in
74 a high proportion of rural areas, which exacerbates these inequalities, forcing
75 students to travel long distances to attend day-to-day lessons. Across Europe,
76 these structural barriers result in a tangible gap in educational outcomes and
77 future prospects between rural and urban students (without prejudice to the
78 latter and the structural short of investment in them), thereby further
79 reinforcing generational inequalities shaped by one's dwelling.

80 A sixth issue is the working conditions of teachers, which directly influences
81 the quality of education. Many educators are underpaid and experience high
82 workloads, which contributes to stress and a decline in educational quality.
83 Having overburdened teachers with less time for lesson planning and student
84 support affects learning outcomes, and this reality should not be overlooked. We
85 acknowledge that teachers play a huge role in our system and want to ensure that
86 they are supported and understood, although many issues have to be solved by a
87 better family policy framework, allowing people to have time for their children
88 again.

89 We call for attention to uneven provision of education across Europe,
90 encompassing disparities in resources, extracurricular opportunities, and
91 teacher conditions, as well as alarming gaps in instruction on diversity, social
92 values, sexual education, climate and, ultimately, social justice. These factors
93 shape the learning environment and determine the extent to which students can
94 acquire both the knowledge and skills necessary for personal growth and active
95 participation in society.

96 **CALL TO ACTION:**

97 **We Call on the Council of Europe, European Union institutions, Member states and**
98 **regional governments to:**

- 99 • **Invest in teacher training, affordable and high-quality school materials,**
100 **and reducing student-teacher ratios**

- 101 • **Ensure that teachers are fairly remunerated (and without unjustified**
102 **disparities), in accordance with national and regional necessities, and**
103 **provided with continuous acquisition of knowledge in relation to**
104 **diversity, history, climate, social justice, etc. Unions play an important**
105 **role in this, and teacher's access to them must be protected**

- 106 • **Reform assessment systems by replacing traditional grading with fair and**
107 **holistic evaluations that reflect students' actual learning and**
108 **development**

- 109 • **Remove grade-based barriers to scholarships and traineeships in order to**
110 **guarantee students' achievement of their full potential and professional**
111 **aspirations. Use an alternative selection method such as applications**
112 **based on motivation letters and an exam that doesn't require specific**
113 **preparation to avoid punishing students who have barriers for exclusive**
114 **dedication to studying.**

- 115 • **Create public and good quality distance and flexible education for people**
116 **who work at the same time they study and offer same prices than for in-**
117 **person public degrees**

- 118 • **Provide funding for low-income students who prepare exams to become civil**
119 **servants as top positions in public administrations are usually covered by**
120 **people from a privileged background, fueling inequality and causing**
121 **institutions to be less representative of society.**

- 122 • **Ban unpaid internships and eliminate any cost students have to assume to**
123 **do curricular internships**

- 124 • **Promote collaboration between different schools across regions and**
125 **countries. Allow children from low income families to access EU mobility**
126 **and educational programmes, such as Erasmus.**

- 127 • **Increase EU and Council of Europe funding for Erasmus+ activities and**
128 **other kinds of short educational activities that help promote EU values,**
129 **protection of the environment, human rights, etc.**

- 130 • **Help funding after school activities such as learning a new language or**
131 **sports. Provide funding and support for extracurricular activities,**
132 **including sports, arts, and language learning.**

- 133 • **Address rural and regional disparities by using tools such as the European**

134 **Regional Development Funds in order to allocate resources to marginalised**
135 **rural areas to reduce gaps in access, opportunities, and learning**
136 **outcomes.**

137 • **Revise history curricula to avoid justification of previous crimes against**
138 **human rights and prevent colonial views.**

139 • **Adapt schools to climate change by favoring natural presence around them**
140 **to tackle rising temperatures and protect kids from excessive air**
141 **pollution. Guarantee schools are well-equipped to be a safe and healthy**
142 **learning environment which fosters well-being.**

Reason

We believe education is a very important topic in these times, with a lot of young people voting for the far right and a society that's failing to solve our most concerning issues. Young people are the future of this society, and with an educational system that fails us we won't be able to solve any of the threats we face. We cannot let inequality start from childhood, and as a Youth Federation, we must speak up for a better education for ourselves and also for the kids who have an even weaker voice than we do