Smart Education in Smart Cities and Smart Regions
OUR MISSION
To influence EU policies to create a business-friendly environment

OUR PURPOSE
To work together to achieve growth and competitiveness in Europe

WHO ARE WE?
BusinessEurope is the leading advocate for growth and competitiveness at the European level, standing up for companies across the continent and campaigning on the issues that most influence their performance. A recognised social partner, we speak for all-sized enterprises in 34 European countries whose national business federations are our direct members.

OUR STRUCTURE
- Economic & Financial Affairs Committee
  - Tax policy, VAT, Green taxation, Regional policy, Financial affairs
- Entrepreneurship & SME Committee
- Industrial Affairs Committee
  - Energy and climate, Research & technological innovation, Environment, Waste task force
- Internal Market Committee
  - Free movement of goods, Public contracts, Free movement of services, Transport, Better regulation, Digital economy task force
- International Relations Committee
  - WTO, Bilateral free-trade negotiations, China Network, India Network, Japan network, United States, Mediterranean network, Mercosur network, Russia, Customs, Market access, Trade policy instruments, Development, Export controls on dual-use products
- Legal Affairs Committee
  - Competition, Company law, State aid, Trademarks and designs, Accounting harmonisation, TRIPs, Consumer/Marketing, Patents, Copyright
- Social Affairs Committee
  - Industrial relations, Social protection, Employment, Health and safety at work, Education and training, Corporate social responsibility/social clauses, immigration and mobility, Equal opportunities
- Communication Directors Network

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Smart Education in Smart Cities and Smart Regions

Brussels | November 22nd-23rd, 2017
It is a real pleasure to welcome the participants of the New Education Forum in the European Parliament.

The New Education Forum proved that it is possible to create strong synergies within the triangle of education - training systems - labour market. Today’s event is an opportunity to discuss how to facilitate young peoples’ integration into labour market. There are still many challenges ahead of us: to modernize education and training systems by integrating SMEs in apprenticeship programs; to acknowledge informal learning pathways through a universal certification; and to build learners’ self-assessment of their transversal competencies.

All of the above are indispensable for boosting European industry. In the coming years not only occupations, but the work organisation and business models will have to undergo considerable transformations. If our companies want to be competitive, they need a new generation of highly-qualified employees able to embrace frequent technological changes.

The New Education Forum, to which I am Honorary Ambassador, is a perfect platform for social dialogue. The Forum gives opportunity to debate how to prepare European youth for its future. It is a chance for different education stakeholders to discuss ways of reaching higher learning standards, especially in VET – a high-quality learning and training pathway to adulthood.

I wish you fruitful discussions, new inspirational ideas and interesting meetings!
Indicators presented at this year’s Forum derive from the work continued at the Regional Meetings of the New Education Forum in Turin, Sopot and Edinburgh. It was an important achievement for these cities to host experts from the fields of business, research, teaching as well as parents’ representatives. Consciousness of the Meetings’ participants allowed for further elaboration in the scope of three topics: importance of imbedding transversal competencies development into formal education curricula, employers’ crucial role in promotion and improvement of vocational learning and training and acknowledgement of growing businesses’ demand for quick learning pathways.

We are looking forward to today’s discussions providing concrete proposals for VET policies that can be implemented at the regional and city level with the help of companies. We hope for them to take into account businesses of all sizes and to advocate for industries’ having key influence on vocational education curricula. This necessity becomes a crucial element for the European companies to thrive and remain competitive in the fast-evolving world.

However, the New Education Forum doesn’t only look at education as a pathway for delivering skilled workers to the labour market. The holistic approach foreseen in the Smart Education Indicators is based on the principle that the whole society, including employers, benefits from development of transversal competencies through high-level formal education. It is therefore highly appreciated that representatives of recognised European business institutions have joined us today to give their support to the concept of Smart Education. Employers also wish for their workers to be engaged in the civic society and to understand and embrace the current of the arriving civilizational changes.

Through such approach to learning curricula it is possible to contribute to building properly skilled European workforce in the same time assuring businesses’ rightful participation in proper VET realisation and life long learning attitude of youth. Agreeing to such complex processes requires effective dialogue among all education stakeholders and we are grateful to all NEF participants for their continuous contribution.
Schools in their current form were created in 19th century to address the needs of the industrial-era world. Modern times require a new education system to be introduced. European cities need to develop education environments, which allow all stakeholders more freedom in vocational training and improve skills teaching and forecasting. Cooperation with local authorities is a key issue as they are the ones who are usually responsible for the implementation of the educational policy of the governments.

The OECD has developed four possible scenarios for education systems: [1] status quo (school and education systems mirror those from late 20th century), [2] re-schooling (school systems are re-shaped in order to adjust them to the changing social conditions), [3] de-schooling (a single traditional school system is abandoned and a number parallel forms of education are adopted, including online ones, leading to the dissolution of the current schooling model) as well as [4] system meltdown (education crisis triggered by aging of the teacher profession; the profession’s status is lowered as a result of low salaries and difficult working conditions). The Charter of Smart Education for Smart Cities and Smart Regions positions itself between 2nd and 3rd scenario, proving the role of the cities and regions in imaginings of the future of education in its 26 indicators. Despite the education, vocational training and youth remain within the competences of the member states, the Charter shows the role, which the EU shall play to support actions on the local educational landscape.

The world is changing around us, and the skills that will be needed tomorrow will be different from those that are needed today. It is my hope that all of European students will be able to have their minds opened and their motivations enriched by helping to improve their own cities. The Charter’s role is to encourage city and national leaders to recognise this opportunity and provide the foundation that only they can deliver.

Learning can be fun.

Authors believe that education should help students understand the world and develop their natural talents. As a result, it would be advisable to abandon tests and marks, and offer students more free time. For instance, over a single generation, Finland was able to create a system, in which students do not get any homework, but all are able to speak English. Nonetheless, such experiments are not translating into educational success immediately – with each new study Finland is slipping down in PISA ranking. Yet, instead of re-instating tests, in 2015 Finnish authorities extended their teaching framework to include more art, music and interdisciplinary team projects.

Programming as an obligatory subject.

Authors of the Charter are fixed on the idea that students should be comfortable with computer programming – this would help adjust the education system to the needs of the labour market that looks for IT specialists. Such programmes began several years ago in Poland – its partners include Samsung, Orange, and – most recently – the government. In March 2016, British authorities launched a programme in which each student aged seven receives BBC micro-bit, a small circuit board that contains a computer chip – its production costs under one pound. Taking advantage of open source software, students are able to programme, extend the system or connect new devices. Estonia introduced programming to its school curriculum already in 2012.

Kids in nurseries.

The compulsory school age varies from country to country – most children start school aged six or seven. But across most developed countries compulsory education begins at nursery school, so effective education starts when those children are three or four years of age. In Poland, compulsory nursery school education begins at age four. By way of comparison, South Korean children start nursery school aged three and learn, among other things, English, Chinese, Maths, healthy-eating rules and memory techniques, all through play and games. In Israel, nursery schools teach kids new technologies, including computer programming. Each responsible education strategy should include earliest phase of education. To capitalise on the digital revolution fully, one has to invest beyond infrastructure technology to education on the whole ladder. I would like to see every pupil and student in the EU having the opportunity to put their creativity to work in making their environments better (classroom, school, home, communities, neighbourhood, city) since early beginning. We can do this with the right digital infrastructure and the practical education activities as mentioned in the Charter. On the other hand, adequate skills of teachers shall be delivered too. Teachers’ environments should be invited to share the best practices and innovative solutions moving their schools forward. That must be open to individuals from all sectors - public, private and non-profit.
To adjust curricula to the local labour market.

Many experts raise the issue that the schools do not cooperate sufficiently with local employers. As a result, companies are not interested in trainees from the vocational schools nearby. That could be changed if the facilities adjusted their specialisations to the local needs. Today, some vocational schools successfully continue educating their students owing to their cooperation with a number of companies. Examples include, among others, Volkswagen, which employs students from a vocational school in its factories amongst Europe. In addition to that, in some Polish towns (for instance in Szczecin) employers’ associations start their own cooperation with vocational schools. The Charter says that efficient vocational education requires close cooperation among a number of entities: European Commission, national governments, local authorities, NGOs and employers. School education, which runs parallel to trade apprenticeship forms the “dual system”. It is present in countries where greater pressure is applied to vocational rather than general education, i.e. Germany, Austria or the Czech Republic. What is more, employment forecasts and the foresights on workers needed in the local economy shall be carried out regularly, and the offer of vocational schools should be adjusted according to their results.

There is no ideal education system yet, but a number of directions in which reforms should be heading, are proposed in the Charter. A majority of experts recognise that 19th century school with traditional classes, subjects and tests no longer addresses the needs of future economies. On the one hand, a rigorous Asian-type education model cannot be re-created in individualistic western societies. On the other hand, however, it is hard to envisage a free educational system, such as the one adopted by Finland. The proposed indicators share the need for a considerable role of teachers and the importance of methods used to train them. They also recommend to introduce computer programming to schools and reduce standardised test to absolute minimum.
The European Economic and Social Committee is an EU advisory body comprising representatives of workers’ and employers’ organisations and other interest groups. It issues opinions on EU issues to the European Commission, the Council of the EU and the European Parliament, thus acting as a bridge between the EU’s decision-making institutions and EU citizens.

What does the EESC do?

It gives the interest groups a formal say on EU legislative proposals. Its 3 key tasks are to:

- ensure that EU policy and law are geared to economic and social conditions, by seeking a consensus that serves the common good
- promote a participatory EU by giving workers’ and employers’ organisations and other interest groups a voice and securing dialogue with them
- promote the values of European integration, and advance the cause of participatory democracy and civil society organisations.
What is the Center for Innovative Education?

The Center is a Foundation working at the European level with legal seat in Warsaw, Poland and offices in Zaragoza, Spain and Brussels, Belgium. The Center was created on 2015.

What are the mission and the vision of the Center?

MISSION:
To reduce the imbalances between education system and labour market in the European Regions risking depopulation, especially in the highlands.

VISION:
> To be the leader in developing innovative education tools, which have an effective and measurable influence on the European mountain regions
> To advise regional and local governments in tailor-made development and implementation of such tools
> To be a reference point at global level finding solutions for mountain regions suffering depopulation.

What is the purpose of CIE creation?

The Center emerged as an evolution of the international platform for social innovation Konkordia (2009 – 2015) with the goal to increase the effectiveness of partnerships between education systems and labour market stakeholders.

Three areas of CIE’s specialization are:
> Innovative learning methods in vocational learning and training, including quick learning pathways
> Transversal competencies development in youth, especially through Outdoor Learning
> Talent development and management.

How CIE works?

The Center fulfils its objectives through:
> Creating and participating in transnational consortia for EU funded projects aiming at labour market enhancement
> Sharing and promoting good practices and generating opportunities to develop educative innovations expected by the employers i.e. through organisation of the New Education Forum and its Regional Meetings (Brussels, Turin, Edinburgh, Sopot)
> Developing CIE’s own solutions and offering workshops for teachers and trainers, i.e. “Transversal competencies in outdoors”, “Vocational schools support”, “Mentor”
> Own research and studies related with such areas of specialization as: “Analysis of parents’ influence on the career choices of youth”.

What are the CIE goals?

The Center for Innovative Education’s goals for the years 2018 – 2020 are:
> Focus on innovative education’s influence on reduction of youth unemployment rates in the European mountain regions and counteracting depopulation
> Creation of educational solutions within the RIS3 Framework to improve the competitiveness of the highlands especially with respect to its labour market
> Development of education tools particularly dedicated to improve the competitiveness of youth at the labour market from mountain regions
> Advising local and regional governments in the implementation of such tools and good practices originating from diverse European Union regions
November 22nd (Wednesday), 2017
the Members’ Saloon, the European Parliament
Working Dinner

19:00 OPENING

Opened by:

• Jerzy BUZEK
  MEP, Chair, the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy - ITRE

  • Welcoming the participants
  • The New Education Forum evolution, bringing support from Brussels to the regions and showing best practices at the European Parliament
  • ITRE priorities on education: EU’s legal and economic frameworks should require education programs to effectively respond to the needs of EU industrial sector in order for it to be innovative.

• Jorge GIMENO
  CEO, the Center for Innovative Education

  • Welcoming the participants
  • Turin, Edinburgh and Sopot: summarising the NEF Regional Meetings
  • From NEF 2016 Recommendations to Smart Education: why EU needs strong Cities and Regions.

19:30 INTERVENTIONS

Topic:
THE NEF REGIONAL MEETINGS: PROMOTED OUTCOMES

moderated by

• Jorge Gimeno
  CEO, Center for Innovative Education

Speakers:

• Brando BENIFEI
  MEP, Member, Committee on Employment and Social Affairs - EMPL, host of the Turin Regional Meeting of NEF

  • Conclusions from Turin’s meeting – challenges of cooperation between EP and Regions
  • Employers’ participation in education – healthy learning environment in Italian practices
  • Labour market challenges for 2018 from the EMPL perspective.
• Sigrid DE VRIES
  Secretary General, European Association of Automobile Suppliers CLEPA
  • Future challenges of automotive branch: embracing new technologies and decline of traditional occupations
  • Innovative forms of learning meeting new skill’s needs
  • CLEPA’s position on the European Commission’s new Education strategy.

• Ellen DOHERTY
  Director, Education, Registration and PLD, General Teaching Council for Scotland, host of the Edinburgh Regional Meeting of NEF
  • Conclusions from the Edinburgh meeting – scaling up Scottish educational models and adapting them in other European Regions
  • Importance of educational good practice exchange
  • Redefining the key role of teachers and companies’ engagement in the learning environment.

• Jacek KRAWCZYK
  President, Employers’ Group, European Economic and Social Committee
  • European Commission’s new Education strategy supporting future-oriented schools
  • Development of cooperation between diverse stakeholders of formal and informal education needs to be addressed by EU policies and their outcomes and given validation paths.

20:30 DINNER CLOSING
  statement from the hosts

• Joanna BOCHNIARZ
  President of the Center for Innovative Education
November 23rd (Thursday), 2017
Conference Room 6Q1, the European Parliament

9:00 OPENING BY
statement from the hosts

• Joanna BOCHNIARZ
  President of the Center for Innovative Education

9:10 FIRST PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Topic:
YOUTH TRANSVERSAL COMPETENCIES
DEVELOPMENT IN SMART CITIES &
REGIONS ERA

Participants:

• Michał BONI
  MEP, Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice
  and Home Affairs, Panel’s Moderator
  • Complex process of becoming
    Smart City / Smart Region.
  • Role of education in City’s / Region’s
    transformation and how can diverse
    stakeholders contribute.
  • European Parliament’s long-term approach
ten to Smart City / Smart Region concept.
  Importance of mapping Smart Cities and
  its benchmarks and Europe 2020 strategy.

• Reinhold WEIß
  Professor, former President, BIBB
  • The most effective and efficient solutions
to adjusting education to expectations
of Smart Cities / Smart Regions.
  • Case study of German VET and its present
  challenges connected with adaptation to
  Smart City / Smart Region concept.
  • Characteristics of the industry and workforce
  most needed in Smart City / Smart Region.

• Michał ŁAKOMSKI
  Mayor’s Proxy for Smart Cities, Poznań City
  • Good practice in Smart City’s education,
    importance of job counselling relevant
    to region specifics of labour market.
  • Challenges of Smart City: shaping
    smart education policies.
  • Rigidity of national regulations and support
    needed from European Institutions.
The European Parliament,
Brussels, rue Wiertz 60

November 22\textsuperscript{nd}-23\textsuperscript{rd}, 2017

Agenda

**Brendan BURNS**  
President, NAT at the EESC

- Sustainability of jobs - challenge for European regions; new term interpretation is needed.
- Support needed from European Institutions; Cohesion Policy post-2020; shaping education policies on the regional level.

**Pirita LINDHOLM**  
Director, ERRIN

- Good practice of cooperation and partnership of Smart Regions in the scope of education.
- Support needed from European Institutions; Cohesion Policy post-2020; shaping education policies on the regional level.

**Sophia ERIKSSON WATERSCHOOT**  
Director, Youth, Education and Erasmus+, DG Education and Culture, European Commission

- Development and support of Smart Cities / Smart Regions concept by Erasmus+ and other EU funds.
- Summary of Smart Education projects funded by Erasmus+: promotion of good practices.

**Stanisław DYLAK**  
Professor, Chair of Department of Research on Teacher and Teacher Education, Adam Mickiewicz University

- However difficult, it is important that we strengthen the resilience of EU citizens with regard to changes, especially in the scope of education and dynamic skills.
- Students have to be made aware of the importance of transversal competencies, also in the view of labour market demand in Smart Cities and Smart Regions.
- Challenges of prevalent education methods in the scope of developing transversal competencies among children and youth.

10:45 COFFEE BREAK/NETWORKING
II:30 SECOND PANEL DISCUSSIONS

**Topic:**

PROMOTION OF VET THROUGH FORMAL EDUCATION AND EMPLOYERS

**Participants:**

- **Jorge GIMENO**  
  CEO of the Center for Innovative Education is the panel’s moderator

- **Dana-Carmen BACHMANN**  
  Head of Unit, VET, Apprenticeships & adult learning, D-G Employment
  - Reimagining VET - counteracting prejudice
  - Importance of VET promotion: European Vocational Skills Week, its’ evolution and goals
  - Further European Commission’s plans to promote VET.

- **Uwe COMBÜCHEN**  
  Director General, CEEMET
  - The metal, engineering and technology-based industries’ engagement in the development and promotion of VET
  - Evolving employers’ expectations from VET and actual cooperation within the formal education and its most significant obstacles.

- **Alan SHERRY**  
  Principal & Chief Executive, Glasgow Kelvin College
  - Importance of professional counselling: right age and right advisors
  - Tertiary education after VET – important factor for VET promotion
  - Bringing employers closer to education – valuable contribution at different stages of learning.

- **Montserrat GOMENDIO**  
  Deputy Director, Education and Skills, OECD
  - VET promotion variations in Europe: comparative study in the scope of most and least efficient solutions and their possible influence on the youth unemployment rates
  - Future prospects for VET’s better recognition and region’s characteristics.

- **Juan Manuel Ramon IPAS**  
  Mayor, Jaca City
  - Promoting VET in the mountain regions: difficulties of attracting industry and the youth
  - Encounters of VET for tourism branch: changing sector = changing learning
  - Challenges of small regions and cities related with lack of qualified employees.
• Peter HIGGINS  
  *Professor, Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh*

  • Importance of upbringing children and youth in connectivity with their local environment and building awareness of their future possibilities in terms of education and careers

  • Evolution of the cooperation between companies and formal education: challenges and risks.

• Agnieszka KOZŁOWSKA-RAJEWICZ  
  *MEP, Member, the European Parliament’s Committee on Employment and Social Affairs*

  • Transversal competencies: not only employers but societies’ expectations

  • New Skills Agenda for Europe – revision of key competencies necessary for building more just societies and more competitive European businesses

  • Good practices of cooperation between MEPs and regions in terms of VET promotion.

**12:45 CLOSING SPEECHES**

**By:**

• Danuta JAZŁOWIECKA  
  *MEP, Committee on Employment and Social Affairs*

• Joanna BOCHNIARZ  
  *President, the Center for Innovative Education*
Speakers

Dana-Carmen BACHMANN
Head of Unit, VET, Apprenticeships & adult learning, D-G Employment

She is responsible for vocational education and training and adult learning policy. In the past, she worked as a lawyer at the European Court of Human Rights and she managed diverse projects in the field of environmental law in Central and Eastern Europe.

Joanna BOCHNIARZ
President, the Center for Innovative Education

Previously she was the President of the Roman Czerniecki Education Foundation (2010-2015) and a business lawyer at the international law firm Chadbourne & Parke (1994-2009). Since 2004 she is a creator of educational programs addressed to school communities, business and national and regional governments. She is an ESADE Business School alumni.

Brando BENIFEI
MEP, Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

Member of the European Parliament. He is the European Federalist, one of the youngest MEPs and is from La Spezia, Italy. He has been chair of European affairs for the Young Democrats and Vice-President of ECOSY (youth organization of PES) for 4 years and was part of the PES working group, which originally drafted the European Youth Guarantee.

Michał BONI
MEP, Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

Member of the European Parliament. He was the Minister - Head of Strategic Advisors to the Prime Minister Donald Tusk from 2008 and Minister of Administration and Digitisation of Poland from 2011 till 2013.

Brendan BURNS
President, NAT at the EESC

Member of Employers’ Group at EESC responsible for Section for Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society and Section for Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment. Director and senior partner of Burns Burns & Burns, director and owner of Burns-Scotland. He is a former vice chairman and policy chairman of the UK Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) and former chairman of the UK Forestry Contracting Association (FCA).
Jerzy BUZEK
MEP, Committee on Industry, Research and Energy


Sigrid DE VRIES
Secretary General, CLEPA

She started her career as a journalist and correspondent for the Amsterdam Stock Exchange, Het Financieele Dagblad and De Tijd, before joining ACEA as director of communications in 2006, and subsequently leading the European communications and institutional relations of CNH Industrial, before taking the lead at CECE in 2014. She became Secretary General of CLEPA in 2017.

Ellen DOHERTY
Director, Education, Registration and PLD, GTCS

She graduated from the University of Glasgow with an Honours Degree in English Language and Literature. Prior to appointment as Director she held the following posts as (i) Adviser of English, Classics and Drama – North Lanarkshire Council, (ii) Senior Education Officer (Personnel) – North Lanarkshire Council and (iii) Senior Education Officer (Professional Learning) – GTCS.

Uwe COMBÜCHEN
Director General, CEEMET

In 1997 he became Director General of Council of European Employers of the Metal, Engineering and Technology-based Industries (Ceemet) in Cologne. Since its relocation to Brussels in 1999, Ceemet became the leading European lobbying organisation representing 200 000 companies and recognized social partner for the manufacturing industry in employment and industrial policy issues.

Stanisław DYLAK
Professor, Chair of Department of Research on Teacher and Teacher Education, Adam Mickiewicz University

Professor, Head of the Department of Research on Teacher Education and Teacher Professional Development Adam Mickiewicz University AMU in Poznań. For the last 38 years he has conducted research in teacher professional development, information technology in teacher education, theory and practice of primary science teaching and learning, such as EyeTracker, Polish Curriculum in an European Context, Science and Life Sciences Teaching and Advance Learning Strategy.

Jorge GIMENO
CEO, the Center for Innovative Education

He is in charge of international relations of CIE and consortia coordinator. He is a project developer, events coordinator and is actively engaged in supporting Mountain regions, i.e. under RIS3 parameters. He is ESADE Business School alumni.
Speakers

Montserrat GOMENDIO  
Deputy Director, Education and Skills, OECD  
She supports the OECD Secretary-General’s strategic orientations in the area of education and skills with the aim to help countries strengthen employability, social participation and inclusiveness and to build effective and efficient educational institutions to make reform happen. She was Secretary of State for Education, Vocational Training and Universities at the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports, from 2012 to 2015.

Danuta JAZŁOWIECKA  
MEP, Committee on Employment and Social Affairs  
She is a Member of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs in the European Parliament. Former European Parliament’s Rapporteur of the Enforcement Directive on the posting of workers, expert in labour mobility within the EU. Author of Parliament’s resolution on social investments in Europe. She is interested in strategies on skills development and accelerating youth employment.

Peter HIGGINS  
Professor, Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh  
He is also Director of the Global Environment and Society Academy and of the UN Regional Centre of Expertise in Education for Sustainable Development for Scotland, Director of the Global Environment and Society Academy and of the UN Regional Centre of Expertise in Education for Sustainable Development for Scotland. He supports the work of several education and development charities and a UNESCO programme on teacher education and sustainability.

Agnieszka KÖZŁOWSKA-RAJEWICZ  
MEP, Committee on Employment and Social Affairs  
She works on Committees on Employment and Social Affairs, and Women’s Rights and Gender Equality. Former member of the Polish Parliament, in which she served on committees on education and health. In 2012-2014 she worked as the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment in the position of Secretary of State in the Prime Minister’s Chancellery.

Juan Manuel Ramon IPAS  
Major, Jaca City  
He has been in Jaca City Council since 1995, since 1999 he is part of the Government team, being for 8 years Deputy Mayor, was economy councilor, for 4 years Vice President of the Comarca de la Jacetania, among other charges. Currently, since June 2015, he is the Mayor of the City Council of Jaca, and Secretary of the Santiago’s Fairway Municipalities Association since 2016.

Jacek P. KRAWCZYK  
President of the Employers’ Group, European Economic and Social Committee  
He has been the President of the EESC’s Employers’ Group since April 2013. Between 2010 and 2013 he was Vice-president of the EESC, with responsibility for the budget. Vice-president of Lewiatan, the Polish Confederation of Private Employers. An entrepreneur with many years’ experience. Former CEO and chairman of supervisory boards of companies from various branches of the economy: IT, transportation, insurance and aviation.
Speakers

Pirita LINDHOLM
Director, ERRIN

She is the Director of ERRIN - the voice of 130 member regions. With over 15 years of experience working in several European organisations representing cities and regions in Brussels, she also worked 10 years at Climate Alliance leading a team working on initiatives such as the Covenant of Mayors. She served as an expert in the European Commission H2020 Advisory Group on Energy between 2013 and 2016, and before she worked at the Council of European Municipalities and Regions.

Michał ŁAKOMSKI
Mayor’s Proxy for Smart Cities, Poznań City

He is a graduate of management at the Faculty of Law and Administration of Poznan University and postgraduate studies in web and mobile applications. Deputy director in the organizational department of Poznań City Hall. Supervises fields in the area of management system, information services development, information security, organizational matters and archiving. Since October 2017 he is the Mayor’s Proxy for Smart City.

Alan SHERRY
Principal & Chief Executive, Glasgow Kelvin College

He is an advocate of VET in supporting socio-economic equality. He has been involved actively in a range of national widening participation initiatives over many years. He is the Glasgow Colleges Group Convenor; Chair of the Colleges Partnership, he is a board member of Eurashe and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

Sophia ERIKSSON WATERSCHOOT
Director, Youth, Education and Erasmus+, DG Education and Culture, European Commission

She is in charge of Europe’s flagship programme Erasmus+, the newly launched European Solidarity Corps, youth policy and supporting the modernisation of education systems. She has previously held various positions within the Commission in the field of strategy and investment in education, higher education policy, employment policy, European structural and investment funds and the European social fund. She is an Eisenhower Fellow.

Reinhold WEIB
Professor, former President, BIBB

Professor, working at the Cologne-based Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft, from 2005 to 2017 Deputy President and Head of Research of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (“BIBB”) focused on vocational training, company training and personal development.
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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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President
Emma Marcegaglia

Director General
Markus Beyrer
Charter of Smart Education for Smart Cities and Smart Regions

(draft)

Introduction

There is a predominant opinion that the education systems in Europe have been lagging behind the fast pace of technological, scientific and economic changes taking place in recent years. As such, the systems are not meeting either the expectations or needs of their communities, particularly those of parents, employers, and - most importantly – youth. The heavy dependence of current education on simplistic performance indicators such as class attendance, the number of courses taken, or an increasingly lower passing grade based on multiple-choice questions, does not prepare students to possess the basic knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to think critically and be able to resolve practical problems and thus succeed in their adult lives. In addition, the rigidity of the prevailing education systems does not allow incorporating either the newest scientific achievements, including neuropsychology applied to the learning process or the newest technologies offering more flexible and effective learning.

However, the worst feature of the current education systems, one which can be observed in many countries, is the imposition of ideologically-based curricula of the ruling party with strictly enforced mechanisms which deprive ambitious teachers of the freedom to experiment, innovate and inspire their students. Instead, the teacher is treated as the basic and non-questionable source of knowledge, who is supposed to transfer it rather passively to students. This way the systems shape passive and dependant citizens, instead of active and creative participants in civic and economic life. Consequently, the education systems must undertake deep reforms to adjust to XXI century requirements, with the active involvement of all major stakeholders.

Municipal and regional governments, facing real problems of their communities and forced to resolve them immediately, understand much better than national governments the need for effective education programs producing graduates with modern knowledge, practical skills and collaborative attitudes. This understanding means that, “The capacity to support skill-up and startups will be key to economic development. Every city in the world shares the need to make rapid, broad-based improvement in employment-related skills. That should make education—from early learning to job training—a top regional priority” wrote Tom Vander Ark and Mary Ryerse. (1)

Origins and aims of the Charter

The Charter of Smart Education for Smart Cities and Smart Regions results from Recommendations presented at the New Education Forum (NEF) 2016 by the Center for Innovative Education. It was later enriched during Regional Meetings of NEF in Turin and Edinburgh in 2017 in the scope of transversal competencies, vocational learning and training (VET) promotion and quick learning pathways – as especially crucial to the enhancement of the modern labour market. Thanks to active engagement of these meetings’ participants, recommendations gained the present form.
The Charter aims at building education strategies where all stakeholders are involved, including not only school principals and teachers with their trade unions, but also parents, governmental and NGO representatives, employers and their associations, and student representatives. Following the OECD’s 2015 Innovation Strategy’s first area, where action should be concentrated is on the “Effective skills strategies: Innovation rests on people that have the knowledge and skills to generate new ideas and technologies, bring them to the market, and implement them in the workplace, and that are able to adapt to structural changes across society. But two out of three workers in OECD countries today do not have the skills to succeed in a technology-rich environment. A broad and inclusive education and skills strategy is therefore essential.” (2)

The Nigerian proverb, “It takes a whole village to raise a child,” has special meaning a time of uncertainty resulting from cultural, habitual, and technological change. It has a universal character applicable on other continents, including Europe. The proposed Charter is based on the strong belief that such innovative ideas and programs as Smart Cities, Smart Regions, Closed Circuit Economies and others following them came out of a holistic approach applied to the place we live. They can be implemented effectively only through the commitment of all stakeholders who care for appropriately preparing young people with their knowledge and skills to enter and succeed in their adulthood.

Charter of Smart Education for Smart Cities and Smart Regions and other Education Stakeholders

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<th>Rationale and Approach</th>
<th>Stakeholders’ sources</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>From the youngest age, children and youth become deeply aware of the environment they live in through formal education. Local governments adapt policies*: 1. expecting educational leaders to contribute and follow its resolutions; 2. encouraging local business and other stakeholders to be involved in this task on a regular basis.</td>
<td>Smart City/Smart Region promotes programs similar to Scotland’s Learning for Sustainability - LfS (3) and enhances other stakeholders’ local and regional strategies exercised with LfS use. Every school has a whole-school approach to LfS that is robust, demonstrable, evaluated and supported by leadership at all levels. School buildings, grounds and policies support LfS.</td>
<td>At least once a week, students as young as three (3) leave the school area to learn about different perspectives of local community life and its challenges, including business characteristics, environmental protections and social issues.</td>
<td>All stakeholders led by teachers acting as stimulators of the students’ exploring world outside school.</td>
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<td>II.</td>
<td>EU Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport - within the political mandate - enhances learning strategies embedded in sustainable development.</td>
<td>Programs such as Erasmus+ and others include LfS elements in their values.</td>
<td>Public funding to transnationally coordinated programs, which include values of LfS. Application of LfS in projects enhances effective learning of entrepreneurship, apprenticeships abroad and prepares the youth for adulthood in other aspects.</td>
<td>EU Commissioner and all Stakeholders who can partake in Erasmus+ and other EU funded projects.</td>
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<td>III.</td>
<td>The success of the Smart City/Smart Region depends on effective cooperation of all Stakeholders and getting all students acquainted with different employment possibilities before they reach the age of 14. Meetings organized by governments on local and regional levels encouraging Stakeholders to actively partake in the learning process.</td>
<td>Smart City/Smart Region fosters schools’ engaging of NGOs, local administrations and business communities, including industrial and agricultural entities, in the education process.</td>
<td>More business and more community presence at school is necessary for the youth to make responsible education-career choices. Institutions from public to private and NGO sectors include education activities as part of their action plans, adjusted to the scale of their activities.</td>
<td>All Stakeholders led by school leaders acting as stimulators of the students’ finding their paths to adulthood, either outside and/or inside of schools.</td>
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<td>IV.</td>
<td>LfS values are featured in universities and other teacher education/ training programmes.</td>
<td>Smart City/Smart Region fosters academia applying LfS values in their curricula of teacher education and training. Every practitioner, school and education leader demonstrates LfS in his or her practice.</td>
<td>Academia institutions ensure that present and newly qualified teachers are able to promote and embed LfS into their teaching. Such approach ensures quality of teaching.</td>
<td>Academia cooperating in this scope with local governments.</td>
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<td>V.</td>
<td>Concept of learning in sustainable environment is constantly evaluated and adjusted by Smart City/Smart Region in order to increase its effectiveness.</td>
<td>Smart City/Smart Region regularly evaluates engagement of outside partners in education process especially their influence on education and career decision-making of the youth.</td>
<td>Assessment ensures sustainability of a holistic approach to the learning process and youth’s constant awareness of the environment they live in.</td>
<td>Leaders from academia and research with other Stakeholders.</td>
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<tr>
<td>VI.</td>
<td>General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) with the Center’s aid undertakes promotion of values of LfS.</td>
<td>GTCS makes available to NEF, and wider EU partners, the resources it has developed to promote LfS and will provide examples of best practices in the delivery of LfS.</td>
<td>These resources will include the microsite and associated toolkit being developed to promote LfS in teacher education/training programmes.</td>
<td>All Stakeholders led by GTCS supported by CIE.</td>
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# Active Citizenship and Inclusion

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<td>VII</td>
<td>EU Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport - within its political mandate – enhances learning strategies focusing on youth’s solving local social-environmental problems.</td>
<td>Programs such as Erasmus+ and others include local social-environmental problem solving values.</td>
<td>Public funding to transnationally coordinated programs, which include global impact awareness values. This is the most effective way for building awareness of the global impact of students’ daily activities and for shaping their proactive, civic approach.</td>
<td>EU Commissioner and all Stakeholders who can partake in Erasmus+ and other EU funded projects.</td>
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<td>VIII</td>
<td>The Smart City/Smart Region ensures that schools provide tools developing transversal competencies at a very early learning stage and throughout the student’s growth. Smart City/Smart Region policies are adopted* with the active contribution of educators, implementing transversal competency enhancement methods at all learning stages.</td>
<td>From preschool through primary, secondary and post-secondary education, students work on a daily basis in teams with an emphasis on inclusion, responsibility, problem-solving and effective communication, including descriptive feedback and leadership skills.</td>
<td>Transversal competencies and attitude building are important parts of everyday learning processes and are highly valued in adulthood and among employers. It takes years to develop transversal competencies.</td>
<td>Parents, teachers, and educational leaders supported by other Stakeholders.</td>
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<td>IX</td>
<td>Smart City/Smart Region policies are adopted* with the active contribution of educators, encouraging learning strategies based on games and the enjoyment of the learning process.</td>
<td>The everyday learning process of all students is enhanced through the usage of innovative methods based on games and enjoyment.</td>
<td>Both research and experience confirm that such friendly environments speed up the acquisition of knowledge and skills, as well as deepen and prolong memory.</td>
<td>Educational policy-makers in close collaboration with teachers and other Stakeholders.</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>Smart Cities and Smart Regions of the Member States exchange knowledge and know-how in the scope of inclusion using such tools as NEF and other EU-funded projects.</td>
<td>Smart City/Smart Region fosters the exchange of research-based best practices among Member States, such as in the Flemish community in Belgium (4) - demonstrating that inclusion is beneficial for the learning process of students and for school communities.</td>
<td>In order to improve their own performance, schools provide a healthy environment open to diversity within its community.</td>
<td>Smart City and Smart Region authorities involving school leaders and teachers.</td>
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<td>XI.</td>
<td>Education is universally understood as a process based on presenting learning opportunities to students. With the active contribution of educators Smart City/Smart Region adopts resolutions* encouraging self-motivation in learning and creativity.</td>
<td>High standard policy-making at the local / regional level boosts young people’s self-motivation and creativity in diverse projects involving them, also through non-formal education.</td>
<td>Smart City/Smart Region has a significant role in education policy-making to secure appropriate policy design encouraging students’ self-motivation and creativity. It is necessary for students to take responsibility for their learning processes through setting themselves goals and achieving them, which will help them develop as life-long learners when they are adults.</td>
<td>Policy-makers and other Stakeholders, including NGOs focused on education projects.</td>
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<td>XII.</td>
<td>The Smart City/ Smart Region ensures interdisciplinary learning enhancing innovations. The Smart City/Smart Region – with the active contribution of educators - adopts resolutions* encouraging teaching methods which balance interdisciplinary learning with subject-oriented learning and encouraging the sharing of curricula among schools, which implement these methods.</td>
<td>Network of schools exchanging interdisciplinary curricula among each other; constant growth of subject topics taught through interdisciplinary learning in Smart City/Smart Region schools.</td>
<td>The best results are achieved when interdisciplinary learning is well-balanced with subject-oriented learning. Interdisciplinary learning equips students with the ability to think and act across different subjects, whether in the fields of the sciences, arts, humanities or all of these areas at once.</td>
<td>School teachers encouraged by education leaders and local / regional authorities accompanied by other Stakeholders.</td>
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<td>XIII.</td>
<td>The Smart City/Smart Region ensures parallel learning paths. The Smart City/Smart Region – with the active contribution of educators - adopts resolutions* encouraging teaching methods, which allow for the implementation of parallel learning paths and encourage the exchange of best practices in this scope among schools.</td>
<td>A network of schools exchanging good practice among each other; constantly growing number of Smart City/Smart Region schools implementing parallel learning paths in their teaching.</td>
<td>Adapting this approach to learning allows for the comprehension of different education topics at an individual pace and strengthens the development of individual potential. The research of prof. Dr. Gerald Hüther (5) and German best practice of Schule im Aufbruch (6) show that everyone in the same age learns in different manner and at a different speed and it is more stimulating for brain to learn in a diversified environment.</td>
<td>Local / regional authorities with educational leaders accompanied by teachers and other Stakeholders.</td>
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<td>XIV.</td>
<td>The Smart City/Smart Region enhances tools for learning in nature. The Smart City/Smart Region - with the active contribution of educators - adopts resolutions* encouraging learning to be conducted in the natural environment.</td>
<td>Constantly growing number of Smart City/Smart Region schools conducting classes outside of school on a daily basis.</td>
<td>Changing the learning venue from routine to nature inspires imagination, creativity and strengthens transversal competencies. By letting the terrain teach the kids and youth, they develop individual talents, strengthen self-esteem and acquire team-working qualities.</td>
<td>Schoolteachers supported by local / regional authorities, with educational leaders, environmental NGOs and other Stakeholders.</td>
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### Vocational Learning and Training (VET)

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<td>XV.</td>
<td>The Smart City/Smart Region ensures parents and their children understand VET as a different (not better or worse), more independent path to enter the adulthood. Manners of promoting VET are attractive to youth.</td>
<td>The Number of VET students and graduates rises. A societal approach to VET students and graduates is positive. Promotion is conducted in the scope of: • VET partnerships with business • Communication about VET with parents • Usage of innovative communication channels: apps, social media, and visits to VET centres are used regularly.</td>
<td>Allowing attainment of actual job as early as at the age of 16, VET education is made attractive to youth when choosing career pathways (15 at the latest) as well as to their parents. Parents should be taught as to changing labour markets to be prepared to give good advice to their children.</td>
<td>Local / regional authorities involve parents, businesses and education leaders.</td>
</tr>
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<td>XVI.</td>
<td>Through incentives, Smart Cities/Smart Regions support employers, particularly business sector who implement in their action plans strategies addressing youth employment through pathways adjusted to the job post specifics, based upon factual employers’ needs, thus boosting the students’ employability.</td>
<td>Diverse pathways are created for large, medium and small size employers’ engagement in VET. The number of apprenticeships and job posts reflects actual labour market needs through smooth communication between VET and employers. Smart City/Smart Region supports fulfilment of these posts through their wise promotion.</td>
<td>Companies’ needs as to employees’ professions are changing fast, if they are close to VET they can efficiently communicate their expectations. The youth should be made aware of a region’s specific pathways as to potential jobs.</td>
<td>Policy-makers and employers, especially in the business sector, engage schools, parents, youth and other Stakeholders.</td>
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<td>XVII.</td>
<td>EU Commissioners for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport and for the Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility - within the political mandate – promote VET pathways in diverse manners.</td>
<td>Programs such as Erasmus+, Erasmus Pro and others are made easily accessible to youth and promote diverse VET pathways and make VET attractive to students and their parents.</td>
<td>Public funding to transnationally coordinated programs, which include promotion of VET in projects, changing attitudes toward this kind of educational-professional pathway.</td>
<td>EU Commissioners and all Stakeholders who can partake in Erasmus+, Erasmus Pro and other EU funded projects.</td>
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<td>XVIII.</td>
<td>Smart City/Smart Region encourages higher education institutions to provide relevant, practical training for students and encourages their direct cooperation with employers, particularly business.</td>
<td>Skills and training at a post-secondary level are similar to those provided in VET programs, including up-to-date digital skills.</td>
<td>This complex and important issue should be supported by dialogue of all Stakeholders and the right incentive systems. Building coalitions around VET may be working on the simplest, least bureaucratic model where communication and cooperation between VET post-secondary education and companies is easier and more direct, like in Scuola Camerana (7).</td>
<td>EU, academic and business leaders with other Stakeholders.</td>
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<tr>
<td>XIX.</td>
<td>The Smart City/Smart Region builds umbrella over small enrolment programmes as local/ regional solutions. Through incentives, the Smart City/Smart Region engages employers, especially businesses in developing VET curricula for teachers and learners.</td>
<td>Diverse pathways are created for large, medium and small size employers’ engagement in VET. The number of apprenticeships and job posts reflects actual labour market needs through smooth communication between VET and employers. VET Teachers are engaged in their constant up-skilling, pursuant to curricula drawn up with employers’ participation.</td>
<td>Employers should have a clear view of what outcomes they expect from VET. They should be actively engaged in curriculum design and teacher education programmes and governments should encourage such employers’ involvement.</td>
<td>Policy-makers, employers, especially in the business sector; engaging schools, teachers, youth and other Stakeholders.</td>
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<td>XX.</td>
<td>Smart Cities/Smart Regions rely on international research made by the OECD and other institutes as well as employers in terms of setting VET outcomes and impacts when creating local/regional policies.</td>
<td>VET outcomes are measured by: • opportunities for up skilling and moving up in education and training, • the engagement of employers in their design and practice, • the passive/active role of learners in the learning and working process, • the extent to which VET equips the youth with wider attributes that business views as a priority, i.e. confidence, resilience, enterprise, ambition, creativity and initiative.</td>
<td>Training integrated in the work process of companies needs criteria for the quality of learning and as well the quality of training and trainers.</td>
<td>Schoolteachers supported by local / regional authorities, educational leaders and other Stakeholders.</td>
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### Up-to-date skills

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<tr>
<td>XXI</td>
<td>The Smart City/Smart Region - with the active contribution of educators - adopts resolutions* encouraging continuation of strengthening transversal competencies of students, broadened by topics related to life-long learning. Transversal competencies are an integrated part of professional competence.</td>
<td>During one’s upper-secondary education the youth is:  - made aware of the changing labour market, which allows for dynamic careers, provides unstable job posts and requires a greater level of specialization,  - encouraged to explore new technologies and  - acquainted with the necessity of life-long learning.</td>
<td>Upper-secondary programmes should be tailored to every student, engaging them with the usage of diverse tools and strengthening their transversal competencies. The acquisition of such skills is justified by the instability of jobs and employers’ expectations for their employees to posses them. They are transferable, non-job specific, core, intangible, and translate into positive and efficacious working attitudes. Transversal competencies diminish when unemployed.</td>
<td>Schoolteachers supported by local / regional authorities, educational leaders and other Stakeholders.</td>
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<td>XXII</td>
<td>The Smart City/Smart Region supports regulatory frameworks, which foster the acquisition of digital skills as early as in preschool.</td>
<td>The Smart City/Smart Region promotes self-organized, competency-based learning and the development of personal competencies on the basis of e-learning tools such as offered by the Austrian model of CoOperative Open Learning (8).</td>
<td>The new 4.0 industrial revolution creates unmet demand for such skills. Usage of digital media, mobile devices and open pedagogical settings enables acquiring individual competencies using individualized competence grids as an innovative method that is attractive to young people.</td>
<td>Local/regional governments, schoolteachers and other Stakeholders.</td>
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<td>XXIII</td>
<td>By offering the right incentives Smart City/Smart Region support entrepreneurs’ efforts in facilitation their employees’ further training.</td>
<td>Business engagement in government initiatives and the popularity of up-skilling among workers.</td>
<td>Employers should be aware of their responsibility to popularize life-long learning among their employees. Employers investing in the acquisition of up-to-date skills for their employees are recognized as contributors to their communities by policy-makers.</td>
<td>Business and policy-making leaders with other Stakeholders.</td>
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<td>XXIV</td>
<td>The Smart City/Smart Region engages in the research and promotion of quick learning methods allowing people to enter the labour market faster.</td>
<td>Quick learning pathways, with the usage of digital technologies, are implemented to train employees and future employees dynamically, effectively and cost efficiently. Only employers provide such pathways, reducing mismatches between career pathways chosen by youth and companies’ expectations.</td>
<td>Mismatches between career pathways chosen by youth and companies’ expectations are a common problem for the EU. Investing in more effective and efficient methods of learning should be encouraged, taking into account that every learning opportunity needs time and the more time learners have to achieve relevant competences, the better the results will be. A short learning pathway may narrow skills to singular jobs and employees would not be able and flexible enough to react to changing requirements.</td>
<td>Educators and researchers with other Stakeholders.</td>
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<td><strong>XXV.</strong></td>
<td>The Smart City/Smart Region fosters participation of students, their parents, teachers, principals, local communities as well as businesses to implement research-based best practices.</td>
<td>Settings similar to the New Education Forum are a regular part of the Smart City/Smart Region environment. Decision-making as well as responsibility in the scope of education are passed through mutual agreement to other Stakeholders.</td>
<td>This cooperation constitutes a paradigm shift in order to introduce factual educational transformation moving from a XIX century model to the present.</td>
<td>Policy-makers and other Stakeholders.</td>
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<td><strong>XXVI.</strong></td>
<td>The Smart City/Smart Region enforces a strong emphasis on the preparation of teachers as an effective investment.</td>
<td>Teachers modify their role from knowledge transfer to mentor.</td>
<td>With constant access to knowledge, i.e. through smartphones, pedagogues are willing to fulfill other more important task as students’ mentors. The Polish Mentor (9) practice provides solutions preparing teachers to hold such a role. Also, the transversal competency development of teachers is a life-long challenge, in part because children of different generations are diverse.</td>
<td>Policy-makers, educational leaders, teachers and other Stakeholders.</td>
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* - local/regional governments’ empowerment in the scope and enforcement of education policies varies upon different EU Member States.

Joanna Bochniarz  
Center for Innovative Education,  
Charter of Smart Education (draft), October 16, 2017  
Edited by Marek Przemieniecki, MEd, OCT.

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(1) T. Vander Ark, M. Ryerse “Smart Cities that work for everyone”, 2015
(3) The Scottish Government has accepted the recommendations in the report Learning for Sustainability, The report of the One Planet Schools Group, 2012. The professional actions, values, skills and knowledge of Learning for Sustainability are embedded within the General Teaching Council for Scotland’s Professional Standards for Registration/Career-Long Professional Learning/Leadership and Management, recognising that all teachers should be confident in their knowledge and understanding of the challenges facing society locally and globally.
(5) G. Hüther, U. Hauser, “All kids are talented – Wszystkie dzieci są zdolne”, 2015
(7) Scuola Camerana, www.scuolacamerana.it
The indicators developed by New Education Forum (NEF) fully resonate with the demands parents have formulated recently and address the issues that concern responsible parents all over Europe. The approach that emphasises the important role the EU and its institutions must play in the major paradigm shift towards an education that can give answers to major demands of the 21st century and help fundamentally reforming outdated education systems resonates with concerned parents all over Europe. A joint effort to revamp our provisions for the future of Europe, our children, could help rebuild trust in the European project. At the same time the EU is not rich enough to finance the long-term consequences of school systems that do not have solutions, thus creating environmental and health problems, unemployment, lack of participation in society and growth of extremism. We also need to support non-EU countries in their efforts to provide a desirable future to children. It is crucial for a sustainable future that people can see there is a future for them and their children, also where they were born – be it anywhere in the EU or outside - and a decision for migration should not be for sheer survival, but based on a real choice.

At the same time there is a general belief that decisions are best made as close to the people, children as possible, so we fully support subsidiarity and the focus on municipality level to carry out universally agreed goals involving all major stakeholders, in the case of education first of all children, their parents and professional educators. When designing and implementing new education, policy makers not only need to stick to the principle of “nothing about them without them” in the case of children, but also to “nothing about us, parents, and our children without us” acknowledging that the primary responsibility for educating children is with the parents – as stated in the UNCRC, a piece of legislation ratified by all EU countries.

### 1. Learning within sustainable environment

It is very important to start introducing this topic in early childhood education, but starting in formal provisions is too little too late. Education for sustainability should start as early as possible. It is crucial to empower families, especially young parents, in order to introduce environmentally conscious home practices. Early education done by the parents in the first 1-3 life-years is absolutely crucial, so there is a need to focus on this age group, too, making all professionals working with young families (paediatricians, district nurses, social workers, etc.) aware of their role and responsibility in it.

### 2. Active citizenship and inclusion

Active citizenship starts at home in early childhood with the introduction of participatory parenting practices. For this, parents need support and training. As many parents and teachers come from a different culture, we also need to make kindergarten/school the training ground for participatory democracy, where children, teachers and parents learn this practice together, having responsibilities for their decisions, but in an ultimate safe environment where wrong decisions have no grave consequences, but you experience the downside of opting out. Implementing a whole school approach, highlighted by EC policy messages in 2016 is the best to-date to involve stakeholders, helping them to take ownership of the school and of their own learning.

It is extremely important to also provide adequate support to special education needs and disabled students either in the form of accessible and safe environment for them, or by dedicated supporting staff and specialised teachers. This is crucial to provide a really diverse and inclusive education to all and for students to experience the full diversity scale of society.
It also requires schools to become community learning spaces where the whole local community can learn and also educate nearly 24/7.

Children deserve to get childhood back, and thus playful approaches are very much welcome. It is also the best basis for lifelong learning, playfulness helps it become second nature as it makes learning enjoyable and satisfactory. Learning best happens in the state of flow research shows, and it happens in the case of the right mix of challenge and joy. Inclusion in education is necessary for cradle-to-grave lifelong learning to become natural in Europe.

A good tool to evaluate the inclusiveness of institutions against another set of indicators is the Index of Inclusion developed this year by NESET.

3. Development of potential

Education, a joint effort of the home, the community, non-formal providers and formal education, should aim at every child to reach their full potential. For this, there is a need to fundamentally reform curricula, to make them mainly focus on skills rather than mostly academic content. It is the joint responsibility of professional educators, policy makers and parents’ organisations to help parents understand why it is in the best interest of their children.

There is a need to introduce an equitable approach to education and ensure that every child and also adults have access to provisions best for that individual. Access should never be restricted by financial constraints, so there is a need for adequate funding for all forms of education – be it formal or informal, state, church or private – according to the joint choice of children and parents.

This is the only way to provide children with the right education for them – a basic right ensured by the UNCRC.

This also means the need to introduce a holistic approach to education, ending subject and segregation, for all learning to be endorsed and validated, and for schemes that acknowledge learning outside of school, especially education at home by the parents.

4. Vocational education and training

Policy makers and educators – both professionals and parents – need to make efforts to change the public opinion on vocational education in order to stop seeing it as a second choice and making VET pathways an equal choice to academic pathways. This should be the choice of at least 2/3 of the population and they must feel themselves first class citizens.

At the same time all stakeholders are also responsible for ensuring vocational pathways to provide skills development, up-to-date professional knowledge and fosters aptitude for learning throughout life. Career guidance and vocational education need to promote entrepreneurial spirit and new forms of employment. This is also crucial to ensure current and future parents can balance work and family life better.

5. Up-to-date skills

Policy makers, professionals and parents need to work together to move away from a culture of standardised testing and towards a focus on developing skills, especially transversal ones. School leaders should leverage their autonomy (and fight for it if it is not a-given) in order to introduce and maintain an educational offer aiming at the improvement of soft/transversal/life skills, encourage their students to take advantage of it and help parents to understand and endorse their importance.

Embracing and exploiting digital opportunities as well as introducing digital practices as early as possible should be part of it. Children and adults need to learn to safely navigate in the digital world and we should stop believing that it is possible to create some kind of safe parallel digital highway for minors.

Up-to-date skills also mean there is a need for up-to-date validation, certification and acknowledgement of skills regardless of the settings they had been acquired at – be them formal, non-formal or informal.

6. Broad cooperation

Inclusion of ALL parents and ALL children as well as all professionals in reforming education and operating the revamped systems is crucial for success. But it cannot happen without investing in empowering each stakeholder group for this role, and developing skills, especially for democratic participation, taking responsibility and managing challenges. Different stakeholder groups also need to learn to acknowledge and appreciate other stakeholders. This can only happen if we can make sure everybody is included, appreciated and thus participate.

Smart indicators should be implemented in a smart way, implementing specific SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely) goals. The European Parents’ Association is ready to be a partner in it.

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European Parents’ Association, euparents.eu
The Educational Challenge for the configuration of Smart Cities

In 2007, there was indeed a significant turning point in the history of mankind. The majority of the world’s population became urban for the first time. In addition, several studies show that this demographic trend will continue and deteriorate over the next decades. In fact, it is expected that by 2050 the world population will have doubled, and cities will absorb about 70% of the total growth. Within this framework, we must begin a deep rethinking of the concept of the city itself, in order to avoid that cities become a serious threat to the sustainability of the planet.

Cities are already the main poles of the concentration of talents, knowledge and innovative potential, which is an excellent opportunity to contribute to the global improvement of the quality of life and social security. With this view, it is extremely important to transform our cities into Smart Cities, in spaces of coexistence with a broad and integrated approach, where the new technology serves to increase the effectiveness of the vast array of operations that occur in it, as well as the quality of life of its citizens and the competitiveness of the local and regional economy. This is the way to sustainable development in all its aspects. In this sense, it is appropriate to emphasize the importance of strengthening the bonds from childhood that every citizen should have in their material and human environment, as indicated in the Indicator III (Smart City/Smart Region fosters schools’ engaging NGOs, local administration and business community, including industrial and agricultural, in education process).

The way to Smart Cities by any means should not ignore the subject of education and training of a person since it will depend on the future sustainability of the same. In the reflections on the configuration of the Smart Cities, the educational question usually falls under the “intellectual society”, together with social integration and civic cooperation. In a broad sense, we can assert that an intellectual society must be characterized by constant efforts to promote the education of all citizens and respect for pluralism while encouraging the integration of those who are less profitable.

Some pedagogical trends have argued that in recent times the school has lost its hegemony as the only institution where the entire educational process was developed, confirming that in any cultural form there is a “pedagogical segment” that multiplies scenarios or spaces inside of which the individual is educated or trained. Such educational decentralization responds to the recent cultural transformation, but it easily finds its predecessors in ancient historical societies in which knowledge was transmitted through a variety of cultural institutions, including from the family to the craftsmen’s guilds. In modern societies, the educational experience is a phenomenon that contains multiple meanings and forms, completely overflows the limits of educational centers and extends to other spaces (for example, cyberspace), which are called educational environments.

The concept of “educational environment” has been modulated over time from its inception, although it can now be argued that there is a sufficient consensus to understand it as a physical space in which certain interactions that facilitate learning are realized by an individual. Therefore, in its most established definition today, aspects such as the organization and disposition of that space, the type of relationships established between the various components of its structure, and the activities, roles, criteria, and norms of conduct that develop among its agents are taken into account.

This multitude of aspects has a positive impact on the strengthening of cross-sectoral competencies, in accordance with Indicator XXI, that says the following: «During upper secondary education years the youth is: made aware of the changing labour market, which allows for dynamic careers, provides unstable job posts and requires greater level of specialization encouraged to explore new technologies and acquainted with necessity of lifelong learning». Therefore, we are talking about strengthening such opportunities as an approach, analysis and solving complex problems, cooperation and teamwork, communication skills, logical and mathematical reasoning, language learning and, of course, the use of digital language and computer technologies.

Now, since it is incontrovertible that today the school continues to have a huge weight in the entire educational process, it must be from the same schools where the necessary conditions are given to extending education and training to other educational environments. Thus, their redistribution within the school itself will be forced, which should lead to a profound transformation of the physical space, of the available material and human resources, of the educational projects that are carried out and of the forms of interaction. The goal

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is to turn the educational center into a real dynamic, flexible and open system of which the entire educational community is a participant and is reflected (from the teaching staff to the managers, going through the families or the managers). Achieving this goal could contribute to the creation of a strong network of schools working in the same direction, considering that the synergies that could be established between them would accelerate this redistribution process. This capability complements, to some extent, the Indicators XII and XIII (Network of schools exchanging interdisciplinary curricula among each other, constant growth of subject topics taught through interdisciplinary learning in Smart City/Smart Region schools; y Network of schools exchanging good practice among each other, constantly growing number of Smart City/Smart Region schools implementing parallel learning paths to their teaching).

An “intelligent society”, in short, is capable of creating multiple and diverse educational and training environments, beyond the limits imposed by the school. Here, the city becomes an ideal space in which many and fruitful environments can be intertwined. On the other hand, it is important to link this characteristic with education to other types of transformations that it has been experiencing in recent years. Recent changes in pedagogical methodologies and even in the very understanding of learning require constant innovation that should always take into account the role of new technologies as they allow the introduction of traditional educational programs a wide variety of formats and content able to connect better with the current interests of students, often much more accustomed and predisposed to work with electronic devices than with traditional learning tools. Correspondingly, it is appropriate to pay close attention also to the Indicator XXIV (Quick learning pathways, with usage of digital technologies, are implemented to train employees and future employees dynamically, effectively and cost efficiently. Only employers provide such pathways, reducing mismatches between career pathways chosen by the youth and companies’ expectations).

Therefore, with all of the above, the way to achieve sustainability in all its dimensions is to develop and strengthen the Smart Cities / Smart Regions from the education of citizens. Better training, which should include a better and more appropriate adaptation to the new professional profiles that a globalized labor market requires and in constant transformation, will influence the development and competitiveness of different regions of Europe. All this will require a collective effort that will necessarily include families, teachers and trainers, associations, companies and organizations, governments and European institutions, and the consistent and effective use of all new technologies that we have at our disposal today. A sustainable future of Europe is in our hands; in Smart Cities that we are able to think and build together.

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