

Commission's Education and Training Monitor encourages reforms in the member states

Eugene Eteris, RSU, 18 Oct 2018

The 2018 European Commission's Monitor shows that the member states made further progress towards EU-2020 targets in education and training. The Monitor analyses the main challenges for European education systems and presents policies that can make them more responsive to societal and labour market needs. However, differences among countries remain, showing that more reforms are needed.

The Commission-2018 “Education and Training Monitor”, ETM-18 is the seventh edition of this annual report to show how the evolution of the EU's education and training systems. Besides, ETM-18 measures the states’ progress on several EU-2020 education and training targets. The analysis of education challenges and trends recorded in the Monitor helps to inform the treatment of education issues in the annual European Semester process. Furthermore, it will help to identify where EU funding for education, training and skills should be targeted in the EU's next long-term budget.

General political guidelines

The European Commission supports the states in ensuring progressive development of their education systems; hence, the ETM's annual publication on education and training provides a general overview of the states’ actions in these areas.

Citizens’ education is the main focus of the ETM-18 report, reflecting the role of education in fostering engagement, inclusion and enforcement of citizens' rights. Using a range of examples, the ETM shows how the states are working to ensure that young people learn about the values the European Union, its democratic and institutional competences.

Present ETM also indicates that the states have made sufficient progress towards the targets for reforming and modernising education systems according to the EU-2020 targets. These targets are the following: = to reduce the early leavers from education and training below 10%; = to reach 40% tertiary educational attainment among 30 to 34-year-olds; = to reach the 95% participation in early childhood education and care; = to reduce the underachievement in reading, maths and science below 15%; = to reach the employment rate of recent graduates of 82%; and = to reach 15% adult participation in learning.

Source: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/et-monitor_en

EU Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, **Tibor Navracsics** underlined in connections with the Monitor’s publication apparent progress in the member states in order to meet the EU-2020 targets for education to enable young people to become engaged members in the national communities. The EU and the states together have given fresh impetus to the European goal: promoting European shared values, inclusive education and the European dimension in teaching.

Progress in reaching the goals

The 2018 edition of the monitor shows that the states have made progress towards European-wide targets. However, differences between and within countries remain, showing that more reforms are needed. This is particularly the case for basic skills, where a bigger effort is required to ensure that young people learn to read, write and do math properly, a precondition for becoming active and responsible citizens.

The share of pupils dropping out of school without a diploma fell to 10.6% in 2017, very close to the EU's objective of less than 10% by 2020. It, however, means that more than one in ten pupils faces both difficult prospects in further education and stable employment, including due opportunities available for adult learning.

The percentage of those completing tertiary education rose to 39.9%, almost reaching the goal of 40% agreed on in the EU-2020 targets. And 95.5% of children aged four years or older participated in early childhood education and care, slightly more than the target of at least 95%.

The ETM-18 also looks at how much the states spend on education which is an important investment in economic and social development. In 2016, public funding for education rose by 0.5% in real terms compared to the previous year. However, many EU states are still investing less in education than they did before the economic crisis, and thirteen states actually spent less on education and training.

Conclusion

The ETM-18 analyses main challenges for European education systems and presents policies that can make them more responsive to societal and labour market needs. The report comprises a cross-country comparison, i.e. in-depth country reports, and a web-page*) with additional data and information.

Education is high on the EU's political agenda; the Commission is cooperating with the states towards building a *European Education Area* by 2025, which is about enhancing learning, cooperation and excellence. It is also about opening up opportunities for all, strengthening values and enabling young people to develop a European identity. Thus, the ETM-18 encourages reforms in the member states.

Several EU programs help stimulate investment and support policy priorities in education. Suffice mentioning such programs and initiatives as: the European Education Area, the Erasmus+ programme, the European Structural and Investment Funds, Youth Employment Initiative, European Solidarity Corps, as well as Horizon 2020 and European Institute of Innovation and Technology.

However, the Commission suggested a significantly boost in funding for young people's education and training in the EU's next long-term budget.

Reference:

Press release “Education and training in Europe: member states made further progress”, Brussels, 16 October 2018. In:

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-6132_en.htm; Latvian version in:

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-6132_lv.htm

*) More in the EU web-page at:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/et-monitor_en

Factsheet on Latvian situation in: https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/document-library-docs/et-monitor-factsheet-2018-latvia_en.pdf