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European identity and the learning union

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POLICY PAPER SERIES

IZA Policy Paper No. 121

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DECEMBER 2016

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European Identity and the Learning Union

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ABSTRACT

European Identity and the Learning Union

Europe and the European Union are close in values, in culture and in attitudes. Yet the EU has made little attempt to jointly reinforce the emotional attachment to Europe. Member States stress their differences in national identity through education and language. When the EU made the borderlines between European countries less visible, the language boundary remained, standing in the way of easy communication between citizens of different EU countries. We advance the "Learning Union" as a necessary complement to the EU. The Learning Union has three components: contributing to a sense of European belonging, the "communication EU" as well as the "competency EU". Belonging should be reinforced by aiming the content of education at underlining the common heritage, history and the common future. In communication every EU citizen should learn in school to be competent in one common European language (English is the likely candidate), next to one's own language. Competency is essential for competitiveness. Competency is bred by learning in settings decided by pedagogics, not by (the whims of) well-meaning politicians. The Learning Union is at "arm's length" distance from Governments with autonomy and funding designed to incentivize learning goals as well as equality of opportunity. Universities are a special case with regard to increasing competitiveness, but also for their impact on identity. If anything has contributed to a European identity to this day, it has been the exchange of students in full or part time studies in the EU. This brought about far more than the understanding of subjects and the development of competences: it also has enriched inter-European understanding. As next steps, firstly European student mobility should be increased by more transparency on the value added in learning in Higher Education in different EU countries. Secondly, basic education could increasingly be a source of intra-European social cohesion, equality of opportunity and of economic growth if countries would follow the principles of effective schools, of school autonomy and allocate sufficient funding. This would be convergence in structure, not necessarily in content/curriculum.

JEL Classification: D7, H7, I2, O4

Keywords: european identity, european citizenship, student mobility, higher education, citizen education, language

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1. Belonging and learning: intro.

The European project was realized in the post- Second World War period by European elites. These were not the old autocratic elites of the feudal times, but the new meritocratic elites of business leaders, academia, the arts, the judiciary besides the political elites. These elites recognized the need and the potential for what was to become the EU of the Maastricht Treaty. The public at large consented to their ideas as long as it would benefit them. It continued to feel first and foremost a part of their local communities, regions and nations, but also increasingly felt - in majority - to belong to Europe.

The 2008 European economic crisis upset the expectations of many citizens (see Chapter 2). In many countries some political leaders, some media and parts of the public opinion tended to blame “Europe” as the source of the less than prosperous state of their economies and the corresponding misery of the people in terms of employment, pensions and income. Although often presenting limited evidence, Europe became the scapegoat for individual, group or national problems and present difficulties. There are similarities with the Presidential Candidacy of Donald Trump in the US of 2016. In the US voters the dust of the economic crisis made people turn against the establishment, while in Europe Brexit subsequently showed that the slogan "we want our country back" apparently was appealing to many citizens; even if they might lose out economically. The financial, economic and other meritocratic elites were no longer able to turn the tide.

Brexit shows that the time for an EU trusted by the citizens because the meritocratic elites say so is gone. The EU has to prove itself in physical terms while at the same time strengthening the feeling of belonging to the greater Europe - of its citizens. .

In this chapter, we explore policy lines to strengthen the feeling of belonging. Section 2 focuses on what we know about the European identity of its citizens and what moves them. In engineering the European project, the development of a common European identity, a European culture and sense of European citizenship was not given much thought. The political compromise of the EU stressed the nationalness of culture, education and language. Culture, education and language are considered national affairs in all of the EU treaties, without any reference to the promotion of (gradual) Europeanization of any of the concepts. This should be considered not necessarily as a replacement for local or national identities and cultures, but as another layer that complements and interacts with a variety of local and national ones. Only surreptitiously the EU was allowed to promote an element of "European studies" in the curricula of primary and secondary education, as a means to contribute to "European citizenship". Despite so little effort it is remarkable how pervasive EU citizens feel European, according to available measurements.

Section 3 discusses the need for a common second language for all EU Member States, to be used as the first language in intra EU communications. The EU leadership put the onus of the differences of the languages on "Brussels". The Brussels EU headquarters has to ensure the translation of all EU

documents in the 24 working languages of the EU, rather than countries taking documents home to national capitals for translation. As a result, nearly half of the EU employees are involved not in policy or implementation, but in translation, while meetings of the Council or the Parliament still give a Babylon-like feeling: the words are perfectly translated, but there is little room for rhetoric or humoristic conviction. The stones add up but the cement of human communication is missing.

European student mobility is the focus of section 4. Learning across borders has been and will continue to be an important source of intercultural understanding and tolerance, the chief ingredients of conflict resolution without arms. The EU has substantially contributed to the increase of intra-EU student mobility. However, the convergence in the EU requires a more bold approach to ensure a quality upgrade. Such a quality upgrade should first of all serve the countries which see a predominant exit of university students to western European countries (unlikely to see them return). But it might also serve the countries of origin when they are able to bring about “circular migration”, so that the students who left also return with additional competences and life-experiences. The quality upgrade might take the form of a European Charter for selected universities in each of the EU countries. Through this Charter, universities can operate under similar conditions in all EU countries, both in terms of funding and in terms of autonomy, subject to the same control on output measured by value added in competences and behavioral traits.

Not only is quality learning in HE (higher education)[5] important for both social cohesion in the EU as for economic growth, this also applies to basic education (primary and secondary), the topic of section 5. The quality of education is explicitly mentioned in the Maastricht Treaty of 1992. This reference provides a foundation for an EU role in furthering the quality of basic education in all EU Member States. Hereby safeguarding education systems from undue political interference on methods and approaches, while – at the same time – stressing the role of EU Member States to be explicit on the expectations on the value added that is to be delivered by individual schools.

In the concluding section (6) we look at EU citizens’ sense of belonging in the context of territorial borders. The professed openness of the EU has increasingly harmed the feelings of safety and belonging of its citizens. If Europe does not have borders, people lack the sense of protection from outside forces. In the early part of this century, openness of the EU was very much a needed state of mind for the admission of new member states. Openness after the refugee crisis implied a kind of insecurity which led to the re-instatement of national border controls. The creed of openness has closed the mind for the EU for the many who saw their prospects on life deteriorate with the economic crisis and the influx of refugees.

2. Identity and citizenship.

A citizen’s national identity is a complex notion if it is considered as an exclusive set of characteristics which define a person as an X-lander, where all X-landers exhibit the same set, while the "foreign" Y-, Z-

[5] Universities and higher education are used interchangeably throughout this book.

and other -landers have a different set. Some say therefore that territorially defined identity, such as a national identity, does not exist. Others stress that identity is often charged from an adversary perspective, “by indication of what ‘we are not’ and by excluding what ‘they are not’” (Banús, 2007). We advance that there is such a thing as an "emotional" attachment, a pride to being part of a geographic group, a nation, based on culture, on values and indeed on language[6]. The belonging to a group is in itself exclusive. Yet one may belong to many different territorially defined groups at the same time[7]. However, it is not only in culture that an emotional attachment to Europe can be found. It is also in a long-gestated tradition of humanistic values that includes issues such as the concepts of human rights, freedom of thought and expression, and freedom of the media.

European identity cannot take its clues from national identity, neither in form nor in substance (Kohli, 2010). The same holds true for national identity versus regional or local identity, for example, for being a Rhinelander versus a German, or a Sicilian versus an Italian. The European identity may be found in the same way as the national identity: in a common cultural European heritage, in the cultural practices of celebration and ritualization, in shared (civic) values, in the shared history and in the consciousness of its citizens. Identity is often misunderstood as a rational element, while it is rather emotional: belonging to something and being proud of that.

From Asterix to the Swan Lake, from Fado to the *femme fatale*, from Bach to The Beatles, from Kafka to Monty Python, and from the Greek tragedy to Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony: Steinz (2014) suggests an unmistakable coherence in European cultural heritage, "without claiming a monumental, cast-iron unity" (Pels, 2016). Obviously these achievements by Europeans are far from "possessions" solely in the hands of Europeans. Yet they do appeal to a European identity, much in the same way as the citizens of China identify with the Summer-palace in Beijing. European culture is indeed celebrated throughout Europe as Bevers (2008, 2011) shows in an analysis of final secondary school examinations in ten European countries. He found a dual loyalty: in every country the cultural canon is comprised of one’s own cultural heritage embedded into a European setting. The one apparently does not exclude the other (see also: Gaxie et al., 2011 and Kufer, 2009).

Some people complain about the lack of a European identity. Pels (2016) puts this starkly as "Europe lacks a soul": there is in his view -in contrast to the nation states- too little emotional engagement with Europe. However, the answers from EU citizens on the question: "Do you feel you are a citizen of the EU?" give a different perspective. In 2015 more than two-thirds of Europeans indicate that they feel to be citizens of the EU (Eurobarometer, 2015). The proportion of Europeans who do not feel that they are citizens of the EU was 31%. Citizens of Luxembourg (88%), Malta (84%), Finland (81%) and Germany (81%) feel overwhelmingly (also) European. This is juxtaposed to Bulgaria, Cyprus and Greece where only half of the population feels European, with the Italy (53%) and the UK (56%) only slightly higher. In between are countries like the Netherlands (70%), Slovenia (65%) or Croatia (63%). European identity

[6] Winners or winning teams in international competitions between athletes who are compete for their nation, or national teams exhibit this identity by joining in the singing of the national Anthem.

[7] However, can one feel a "belonging” to different nations if the values expressed by these nations do not match? This is the often debated question around dual citizenship.

measured in this way has decreased during the crisis period. In 2009 a somewhat higher percentage of Europeans, namely 74% answered yes on the question on feeling a European (and 25%: no).

The same people were also asked the question: "Do you feel you are a citizen of your country?" 94% answers then "yes" (and 5 % "no"). The same question for the region is answered by 91% with yes and 8% with no. So Europe is in the minds of many citizens but has still a way to go before it reaches the kind of identification with the region and the nation. The European Commission (2012) notes: "identity of oneself as explicitly 'European' is likely to be rare" as if that were a surprise (see also: Duchesne and Frognier, 2008 and Bellamy, 2000).

European citizenship – focusing on values, representative democracy and civil society (Marques Santos and Silva, 2011) – is tied to the feeling of belonging. National education has the intention to contribute to national identity and national citizenship. The EU member states however shied away from linking national education to European citizenship[8]. But the Maastricht Treaty provided an opening. It states (Ch. 3, art. 126): "The Community shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States through actions such as promoting the mobility of citizens, designing joint study programmes, establishing networks, exchanging information or teaching languages of the European Union. The Treaty also contains a commitment to promote life-long learning for all citizens of the Union". This Treaty text is not surprising as the predecessors of the EU had already engaged in cooperation on the EU level, on the "European dimension of education" as well as on the promotion of European student mobility (see section 4). The focus on quality had been limited or absent in the pre-Maastricht EU time.

Since the Maastricht Treaty the EU has been actively involved in promoting 'a European dimension' in the curricula of the Member countries, through documents which bring items to the attention of countries without necessarily committing countries to anything. An example can be found in the declaration: "Promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination" (EC, 2015).This Declaration calls for the mobilization of the education sector to promote inclusion and fundamental values. It establishes a list of concrete objectives to be pursued at the national and the local level and defines four overarching priorities for cooperation at EU-level:

1. Ensuring young people acquire social, civic and intercultural competences, by promoting democratic values and fundamental rights, social inclusion and non-discrimination, as well as active citizenship;

2. Enhancing critical thinking and media literacy, particularly in the use of the Internet and social media, so as to develop resistance to discrimination and indoctrination;

3. Fostering the education of disadvantaged children and young people, by ensuring that our education and training systems address their needs; and

[8] Since the Treaty of Rome education was traditionally regarded as an area of the National States, precisely by being associated with the idea of national identity.

4. Promoting intercultural dialogue through all forms of learning in cooperation with other relevant policies and stakeholders.

Such a declaration is signed by the EU Commissioner and the EU Education Ministers. However, it is left to the Member States whether there is any priority attached to its implementation. There is no common action to translate the goals into effective strategies. As a result declarations like these have had at most a symbolic value[9].

In order to better express what is meant by "active citizenship" an indicator of active citizenship was developed for the EU. This indicator recognized the following “dimensions of active citizenship”: participation in political life, civil society, community life and the values needed for active citizenship (recognition of the importance of human rights, democracy and intercultural understanding) (Hoskins, 2006). However, to the best of our knowledge this indicator also lacks implementation.

This is all to show the pussy footing of EU around the European identity. The best prospect for the future of the citizens of the EU is achieved by more cohesion. This implies that more common European action is required to strengthen the European identity.

3. Language: a common European language as a compulsory second language in all EU countries.

National languages of EU Member states developed in the early parts of the 10th century at a time when Latin remained the common language for official documents in large parts of Europe. Gradually the local languages replaced Latin also as the official communication language. At the time, local language showed a considerable development and flux; there was no codification. Codification came with the emergence of the nation states and national borders. Language and borderlines became identical notions: once you cross the border the official language changes (with some exceptions of bi- or multilingual countries, like Belgium and Switzerland). When the Czechoslovak Republic separated, the Slovak Republic decided to have an own language, close to, but also different from Czech which had until been the language of Czechoslovakia. Codified national language have become the skin of national citizenship: it the “mother tongue” learnt, at latest, at basic education. Language is mostly thought of as an important marker for culture (in particular literature, theatre and, less so, in the lyrics of songs) and identity. Yet it is also an element of relative power in the relation between two partners with different mother tongues: if your negotiating partner can speak in his/her mother tongue and you have to engage in a foreign language, you are at a disadvantage. Language has also been in some countries linked with separatism, like in Catalonia or the Basque country.

Change in the codification of languages or the introduction of new or foreign words through youth culture has always been and will always be a contentious issue, within and between countries. There is a long story of the substantial political costs of language reform within countries, as it requires people to

[9] In this specific case the goals could just as well have been composed to strengthen national citizenship.

spend time and effort in relearning. The only time the Chinese leader Mao Tse Tong was in political difficulty was when he tried to reform the Chinese language for a second time in the 1960s (after a first revision in 1949). In addition, attempts to impose a national language on minority groups are bound to have serious political repercussions. This has resulted in compromises within nations to learn a common second language (examples are Switzerland and Belgium).

The EU agreed -as the lowest common denominator- to accept all 24 official languages of the EU countries as official languages for EU communication: an obvious herald for a genuine communication disaster. This communication scramble is visible in discussions of the European Parliament and in Councils of Ministers. Speakers read from a piece of paper so that the interpreters can follow them. If there is debate, it is most often without any rhetoric or humor: eloquence gets lost in translation, however competent the translators are.

The reason for the acceptance of all 24 official EU languages is found in many EU documents in the paradox: “only by respecting the diversity of languages in Europe can we ensure a feeling of common identity”. While one may agree with this view, there is little reason not to accept a common second language for all EU Member states. A language that is compulsory in primary and secondary education and that puts the onus of translation on the Member states rather than on the EU. So far, the EU has been unable to find a compromise on a common second language, for fear of favoring those who hold that language as their mother tongue. With Brexit, the English language will become a foreign language for all EU member states (except for Ireland) and could thus easily be a true common second European language, in line with the world-wide overriding use of English in scientific and business communication. Besides this recent development, a study into linguistic diversity in Europe shows that English is regarded as a neutral common language with only a marginal national connotation. Many non-native speakers, furthermore, perceive English as a “facilitator for further language learning, intercultural understanding and contact” (European Commission, 2012).

English would indeed qualify well for a second common language as almost 40% of Europeans speak English as a foreign language (not counting the pre-Brexit 13% that spoke it as a mother tongue). That is almost four times as many foreign language speakers as either of the next most popular languages in Europe, French, German and Spanish. And the English language is only growing increasingly more dominant, not just in Europe but around the world (Debating Europe, 2014).

The need for a European agreement on a common European (second) language is overriding, since the percentage of citizens who do not speak a foreign language is considerable in many EU countries: 65% in Hungary, 62% in Italy, and 60% in Ireland (and 61% in the UK, which has decided to leave the EU).

This is in sharp contrast with the assumptions of the Councils of Education Ministers who throughout the past 30 years bravely fought for “foreign language” education for all citizens. This culminated in the EU's multilingualism goals: every European should speak two languages in addition to their mother tongue. ”The best way to achieve this would be to introduce children to two foreign languages from an early age. Evidence suggests this may speed up language learning and boost mother tongue skills too”

(EC, 2016). Such a goal is clearly unrealistic, not to say frivolous (on the “every”), when the mastery of the first language is already far from perfect as the Project International Student Achievement shows.

The one common foreign language for the whole of Europe would of course not exclude the need for “neighborhood-language“-education. In the border regions (say 50 km from the border) schools should be allowed for the training of language of the neighboring country, in addition to the common EU second language. Often EU Member States have the same foreign language curriculum for all citizens, preventing, for example, in the border regions of France with Italy to learn Italian (and vice versa).

Language diversity may have a drawback on economic development. Bertola et al. (2013) suggest learning from the Swiss approach the diversity management in languages. Whereas other European nations “have always tried to homogenize their countries’ national cultures, and cultural heterogeneity, the Swiss, by contrast, are both very much aware of their internal cultural diversity, and very proud of their country, conscious of the advantages of belonging to it, while at the same time having found ways to deal with the cultural and language diversity, by embracing pragmatic compromises as a way of laying firm foundations for common institutions and policies”. They suggest that the success of the Swiss Confederation’s institutional structure is in a common legal and regulatory infrastructure. They then hasten to state that a comprehensive and rigorous fiscal system was built, such that “moral hazard” was avoided by ensuring self-reliance with public debt brakes in each of the cantons, with the threat of bankruptcy to ensure responsible and prudent lending and borrowing at lower levels of government and without being able to count on the assistance of others in case of irresponsible behavior. In contrast, the EU is built on redistribution and solidarity requiring more and better communication and understanding. This means that the language and communication diversity makes a common course more difficult and the EU is not a federal state either.

Thus, it is high time to introduce one compulsory common second language in European schools, use this language in European communication, while putting the burden of translation on those who need or want the translation. The room for border regions to introduce the neighboring country language as a second foreign language in school should be enlarged.

4. Intra-European student mobility and higher education.

Europe has given people unprecedented opportunities to enrich themselves to traveling and studying abroad within the EU, which has been particularly profited by younger generations (though some of the early cohorts of beneficiaries are nowadays already in their forties). These are among the most favored accomplishments of the EU in the eyes of European citizens according to Eurobarometer surveys (Eurobarometer survey on Citizenship, 2015). The EU programs encouraging mobility and increasing transparency of the (higher) education system have been highly beneficial to increase mobility. Moreover, the European court has had a decisive impact on mobility by allowing students to study in other EU countries on the same conditions as national students. In turn, mobility has benefited students and society at large, because of the boosts to employability and job mobility (EC, 2016). “Tests before and after exchange periods abroad reveal that Erasmus students show higher values for these personality traits [tolerance, confidence, problem-solving skills, curiosity, knowing one's

strengths/weaknesses, and decisiveness when making a recruitment decision] even before their exchange starts; by the time they come back, the difference in these values increases by 42% on average, compared with other students", while "92% of employers are looking for [these] personality traits". The benefits from student mobility are economic as well as social. Representatives from European higher education institutions have stressed that their role encompasses more than only the creation of the next generation of workers for the knowledge economy, and that it includes a responsibility for cultural, social and civic development at a national and European level (see for example, European University Association, 2003, see also Brodin, 2010 and Schomburg and Teichler, 2010). On the other hand, several studies have noted that studying abroad has not undermined their sense of attachment to local and national cultures. On the contrary, there is some evidence that those that experienced periods of study abroad developed a clearer perception about their local identity and its singularities (De Wit, 2009 and Risse, 2015).

At the same time, it is sad to note that student mobility, and all the privileges that come along with it, is still mainly a privilege of the higher educated youth. The OECD (2014) notes in a report on Vocational Education and Training (VET), "sschool and university, and the well-trod path between them, play a dominant role in thinking about education policy. But outside these two institutions there exists a less well understood world of colleges, diplomas, certificates and professional examinations – the world of post-secondary vocational education and training". And it is exactly this often overlooked sector that is to educate for the increasing demand for higher level technical and professional skills. Nearly two-thirds of overall employment growth in the European Union (EU25) is forecast to be in the "technicians and associate professionals" category, linked to Vocational Education and Training (OECD, 2014).In all, mobility has played an important role in creating a sense of European citizenship (Biesta, 2009). In 2005 young people in general did not have a clear idea of what Europe meant or what Europe wanted (Fernandez, 2005). For "mobile students" this is different (Ieracitano, 2014). "Based on the responses [to a survey among Italian and foreign students who took part in the Erasmus exchange program] we can say mobile students undoubtedly represent a civic resource for European integration because they have learnt to relate to cultural diversity". However, it is striking that this does not support the political construct of the EU. "For respondents the cultural dimension prevails over the political, around which there is a lot of skepticism". **Respondents rarely linked the advantages of mobility back to the intervention of European institutions, as if the formation of European citizenship could be achieved without the political and institutional side of Europe.**

The Italian respondents saw their European identity prevailing over their Italian identity (Ieracitano, 2014). "This is probably related to a reduced faith in Italian national institutions due to their handling of the economic crisis. The EU is seen as providing opportunities to improve and to recover, as well as a reality which is more capable of reflecting the ideals of growth and development of young generations". "To conclude, a culture of mobility appears to be not only an instrument for integration and construction of European citizenship, but above all a tool that is capable, with time, of overcoming the gap between citizenship in the cultural and civic sense. The image that emerges for now is not quite that of citizenship, but of a European humanism that helps lead to points of agreement between people, recognizing cultural differences without the illusion of being able to bypass them" (Ieracitano, 2014).

Again, we have to bear in mind that this line of reasoning only holds, fundamentally, for the higher educated students. And this, in itself, might very well be related to the lacking legitimization of the EU among large parts of its – predominantly - less educated citizens.

Similarly Van Mol (2013) concludes that there is a need for incorporating an 'experience-based' social dimension into the existing theoretical frameworks of political and cultural dimensions of European identity, not necessarily related to the EU as a political construct. This creation of an 'experience-based social Europe' among mobile students is the result of socialization processes that are characterized by internal and external identity observations[10]. These results are in line with those of study on US junior college students who studied for one year in Europe. They showed an increased level of international political concern, cross-cultural interest and cultural cosmopolitanism (Carlson and Widaman, 1988).

The 'Europeanisation' of higher education is partly the result of long-standing exchange programs such as the Erasmus program, which will celebrate its thirtieth anniversary in 2017 and which has received a serious boost in the 2014-2021 budget with an appropriation of 15 billion Euro. This program has been an important backbone for furthering the European identity in the sense described above: feeling connected with the overarching principles which govern the member states, in the sense of equality, freedom etc. Would its thirtieth anniversary not provide an opportunity par excellence to extend the extremely valuable mobility privileges to VET students?

The creation of a new type of Erasmus program (let us call it Erasmus 3.0) in which around 10% of the universities of individual member countries of the EU would be governed by EU legislation and partly financed through European funds by 2020 would be a step towards an EU with university quality competition. A second factor with a decisive impact on student mobility was the decision of the European courts to allow for all EU students to study in any EU country under the same conditions as national students (Schneider, 2005). The implications of EU Law (or its predecessor: European Community Law) on free mobility for student mobility turned out to be a boon for student mobility (Van der Mei, 2003), as students could participate in higher education in all member states under the same conditions as pertained to national students. A third factor was the increased transparency of the university systems brought about by the Bologna agreement. It began in 1999 as a commitment by 29 European governments to pursue complementary higher education reforms in order to establish a 'European Higher Education Area' of compatible national systems (Bologna Declaration 1999). It has evolved and was successfully implemented in the form of a transparent system in terms of the degrees awarded[11] (bachelor, master, PhD). The EU subsequently combined the Bologna Process with the EU's research agenda in order to represent higher education as economically beneficial for both individuals

[10] This conclusion was drawn from an online survey among foreign students at nine universities in Austria, Belgium, Italy, Norway, and Poland at the end of the 2008–2009 academic year and 40 in-depth interviews and five focus groups, conducted at the universities of Antwerp, Innsbruck, Oslo, Rome, and Warsaw in 2009–2010.

[11] This is exactly what post-secondary vocational programmes lack. As the OECD (2014) rightly notes, these programmes "go by a host of different names in different countries, hampering their capacity to compete with clearer brands, such as academic degrees. A clearly recognised international nomenclature would improve their status and make comparison easier."

and society for increasing the employability of university graduates, and spurring innovation as a means to become the most competitive region in the world (the Lisbon agreement of 2000).

The Bologna agreement was not an EU undertaking as the EU has no say in education. However it gradually turned into a "soft-law" EU approach and a matter of "open policy coordination" in the EU, meaning that ministries cooperate and learn from each other without being legally bound on one specific script.

A "second chance for Europe" should start with a clear acknowledgement of and a big hand for what has been achieved. European student mobility has increased substantially, increasing the competencies of the graduates while strengthening the values. These EU policy actions have helped European universities to become slightly more competitive to the US, even though this is hardly visible in terms of the rankings of universities like the Shang-Hai- and the QS ranking (Ritzen, 2010)[12].

But one might say that the glass is still half empty: the potential for a true European Higher Education Area in terms of structure, content and governance has been far from achieved. Let alone that of VET. Content is guided by national accreditation, rather than by a uniform European system of accreditation. The fiction of an equal quality of bachelors, masters and PhDs across the EU is –as a result of marked differences in accreditation across the EU- far from a reality. Moreover, the claim of universities delivering added value in positions of youngsters in international understanding, in tolerance and in other humanistic values is impossible to ascertain as it is not measured. Universities do engage in curricula, pedagogies and extra-curricular activities that might contribute to the development of this kind of citizenship. But it is, so far, unclear how European higher education contributes to the development of the competences necessary for active citizenship (see for such measurements: Hoskins and Mascherini, 2009).

Measurement of competencies in literacy, numeracy and problem solving has been relatively well developed, first in the Project International Student Achievement (PISA). This project focused on the competencies of 15 year olds in secondary education. Subsequently, OECD started the AHELO project: Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes with an experimental phase concluded in 2014 for three subject areas. The approach was similar: measurement has to be done in such a way that it avoids becoming corrupted, as "teaching to the test" is invited. This happens easily for "high stakes tests": tests which lead to a conclusion in the form a grade or a diploma. Even low stakes tests can lead to "teaching to the test" as in Canada (Cobb, 2015), when the test results are used to grade the teacher and the school. In PISA and AHELO the corrupting impact was negligible.

It is high time the EU engages in a joint effort of introducing measurement of the value added of higher education on a sample basis to establish the average quality and its distribution, similar to PISA, with the

[12] These rankings are mostly based on the research performance of universities, but are the only transparent info about universities available to the best and brightest from outside Europe and the US who want to study at a "top-university". The research accomplishments of the university are taken as a proxy for the education of the university when students from abroad make a study for a specific country.

one difference that it should be about value added. At the moment, only PISA-PIAAC[13] comparisons are available as a measure for value added (see: Ritzen, 2016). A comparison of the 2000 and 2003 PISA results and the 2011 PIAAC results shows that countries which do well in PISA also do well in PIAAC with regard to university graduates. However, there are some startling deviations from this general trend[14].

Accreditation based on measures of value added in university output would significantly improve the transparency of the European Higher Education Area and, hence, allow students to make better informed choices about where to study. Measures should no longer only be based on so-called cognitive competencies. The past decade has shown a tremendous increase in the development of reliable measures of non-cognitive behavior and positions on values (see e.g. Borghans et al., 2006 and Hoskins and Mascherini, 2009). The contribution of university education to European and national citizenship could be measured equally well.

Measurement of value added in HE also is likely to release forces of competition between universities on the two most important goals of university: teaching and learning. It is widely acknowledged that HE is too much led by research and too little by education. In the presence of the higher visibility of research outcomes relative to the vagueness in which the contribution of universities to student learning is currently observed, most university administrators feel they cannot avoid focusing on research. Competition between universities in the EU takes place under highly unequal circumstances. Governance in terms of a university's autonomy–under a clear accountability for results- and funding per student differs considerably. Research output is closely related to both funding and governance. One percent extra funding leads (causally) to a 3% higher place in the university ranking (Marconi and Ritzen, 2015). More autonomy means a better research performance (Aghion et al., 2009). It is a matter of the EU Member states themselves whether they want to see their system of higher education to prosper and to attract foreign talent. But within the European HE Area it should be transparent how well universities perform with regard to teaching and learning too, so that students can make better informed choices on where they want to study.

In recent years we have observed important forces promoting the development of an increasingly integrated European higher education landscape, which has been shaped by a reconfiguration of the sector alongside market rules, often through policy initiatives and government intervention (Teixeira et al., 2004; Teixeira, 2011). Like in other dimensions of the European integration, we are dealing with a complex process and raises significant perplexities and fears among national and institutional actors that may hinder further the drive towards greater integration. Some of the major fears refer to the potential locational and concentration effects that may be promoted by further integration and competition. The current picture is blurred, with some trends suggesting that the fears of concentration are real (especially in issues such research, funding, and prestige) and others less so (especially in what refers to the mobility of individuals, especially staff).

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[13] PIAAC is the Project International Assessment of Adult Competencies, measuring these competencies 23 OECD countries of which 17 EU countries or regions in 2011

[14] A non-European example is Australia: despite the good performance in PISA (in the OECD top) the graduates perform in the lower segment of the PIAAC distribution.

Although Europe has traditionally had a more egalitarian approach towards higher education, the signs of change have been multiple in recent years that this is becoming less the case. In recent years we have seen a greater willingness of governments in Europe to promote multi-level differentiation across national systems regarding aspects such as institutional missions, allocation of funds, or regulatory frameworks. Hence, the case for an egalitarian approach to European higher education has been weakened and the current trends suggest that this trend will evolve further. This should be counterbalanced by a capacity to sustain European cohesion, otherwise the risks of eroding further the sense of belonging to Europe in more peripheral parts of Europe are likely to grow.

There is still a long way to go for a true European University Area by allowing selected universities to be fully English language (English as the common second language of the EU). The mobility choice for a student to study in a non- major European language speaking country without the (e.g. Denmark or Hungary) involves substantial extra costs on the part of the student as they have to acquire another language while realizing that the future pay-off of that extra language is expected to be low. The EU Member States should therefore agree that at least one of the universities in their country is to be fully English language.

Entrepreneurship is a neglected item in university education and research, as it already is in basic education. Our future jobs will be created by entrepreneurship within existing firms or by new start-ups. Universities have done as yet little to take this notion on board in disciplines other than (business) economics and business administration. Entrepreneurship training should be a part of all disciplines, following up on a far greater emphasis on entrepreneurship throughout the entire education system. By doing so, universities could play a substantial role in reinvigorating Europe. The level of innovation might increase, and so would sustainable growth. This is likely to be accompanied by continued wage inequalities as noticed in Chapter 3, with a reflection on measures to avoid such a rise in income inequality and the associated loss of social cohesion.

University education and research can, furthermore, help to recreate in Europe hope and optimism for a bright future in two ways:

• If member states would learn from each other in terms of what works and what does not work in Government policy towards universities.

• If university education and research would compete on a European scale.

The idea behind competition is that students should be well informed about the qualities of individual university degree courses in Europe and are free to choose where they want to study, while the financial conditions are the same as if they would study in their home country. Subsequently, the universities which are good at attracting students are rewarded. The forces of competition in European Higher Education have not been exploited, mostly because the quality of higher education has been difficult to measure. Increasingly, however, good measures are available, not in the least thanks to the EU-project on Multidimensional Ranking (van Vught and Ziegele, 2012) and the OECD's AHELO project. Competition would create an upward quality spiral, increase student mobility and prepare students better for an increasingly international labor market.

But even more important is the reclaiming of ground by the European intellectuals inside or outside the universities to organize themselves and to overcome the crisis in trust between academia and society (Fresco, 2012).

Up to now European Union countries learn little from each other in education. They prefer to make their own mistakes, ignoring the experiences of other countries. Houreau et al. (2012) and Ritzen et al. (2014) have provided compelling information and analysis on the quality of university policies in European countries. There should be correction mechanisms on the European level for obvious bad policies, much like the correction mechanisms for bad macro-economic policies (the Country Specific Recommendations, CSRs). In that way learning from the experiences of other countries could upgrade the university-education-for-growth- machine as well as the university-education for social cohesion and identity machine.

Learning from each other with European correction facilities like CSRs would be a form of regulation. We could also use the forces of competition, either in addition or as an alternative.

For public research the case is simpler: it should be governed at a European level. There are clear disadvantages of small scale governance in many public research areas. The current existence of a European Research Council (ERC), next to 27 individual national research councils and thematic sub councils - each limited in their research calling, in selection of submitted proposals and in the granting of research funds to their respective national geographical boundaries - is very inefficient. Research excellence is heavily dependent on scale: the European scale seems to be the most logical scale for most publicly funded research activities, for reducing the costs in selecting and evaluating research proposals and for enabling high quality research specialization (Ritzen and Soete, 2011). This should be effectively used to promote not only excellence in research but also to foster greater collaboration between elite teams located across Europe, avoiding too much emphasis on an individualistic research star system that is likely to undermine academic and institutional cultures. Europe needs strong and competitive research and higher education organizations that are capable to nurture the next generations of talented researchers and entrepreneurs.

At the same time social security and pension provision for universities should be organized on a European scale to allow for full mobility of university staff. Pan-European higher education and public research has the substantial promise to contribute to a “saving of Europe” (Ritzen, 2012b) through the universities. It is a matter of conceiving the transition from knowledge strategies - mostly country specific with the idiosyncrasies of overlap and insufficient adjustment to the globalization of knowledge - towards a common policy which ensures cohesion and convergence in a sustainable growth strategy. It is also a matter of gaining the political support for this direction, because it means a different interpretation of subsidiarity. Subsidiarity has to this day been interpreted as: this is no business for Europe, because we have not included it in the treaty as a European concern. Yet, the original concept of subsidiarity implied that whatever can be better done at the national scale should be done there. University education and research can better be implemented by the member states. But they need a European framework in order to carry out the before mentioned agenda and, herewith, achieve a

vibrant Europe. The political support for more Europe is heavily dependent on the ability of Europe to act decentralized in the implementation of a European framework.

The intellectual leadership role of universities seems to have dried up and needs to be redeployed for a vibrant Europe. Universities have done too little to show their hand in contributing to major societal questions and coming up with potential answers. In particular the role of social science and humanities research could be strengthened. This is part of the broader loss of trust between academia and society, despite the major improvements which have taken place in university education and research (see for example Janssen et al. 2010 for the health sector). The voice of national university organizations, like "Rectors Conferences" or university associations, or of international organizations is not heard in politics. European society interprets this voice principally as self-serving, while at the same time university rectors and presidents tend to have little respect for the political leadership. They claim that the best social outcome from universities is realized by giving full autonomy to universities, without interference from Government. The university that "saves" Europe (Ritzen, 2012b) is besides being part of a European space of competition also trusted by society. That university is governed indeed by autonomy and not by detailed bureaucratic regulation, but with a clear understanding from society that the university is looking towards the future, focused on societal questions and constantly adjusting to the changes that are taking place in that society – even if this implies serious and possibly painful internal changes.

We, hence, need in Europe a new pact between politics and universities. Such a pact also requires that universities are willing to take the responsibility for far more drastic changes than have been brought about in the past. European universities should do away with the exclusion that national languages bring about and revert to one European language. Finally, it is obvious that universities can contribute much more to a vibrant Europe if they would be better funded by both public and private means. This applies both to education as to research. Additional funding is an investment with a substantial expected return for European society. The US spends twice as much (as a percentage of GDP) on HE (namely 4%). For Europe to be competitive with the US and to remain competitive with countries like South Korea or Singapore it should double its funding through public and private resources. At the same time Europe should maintain the strong focus on equality of opportunity and access to HE[15]. This has been not only

[15] Equality of opportunity seems to be far better safeguarded in Europe than in the US: private costs in the US are on average much higher than in Europe, while the public resources for student aid are the same. The US may be losing some ground compared to Europe in the global shifts in the race to develop human capital. However, both the US as Europe seem to have lost some ground compared to the increasing competition from Asia, visible in the worldwide rankings. At the same time the European systems of higher education continue to be regressive in their impact on income inequality: higher and middle income groups benefit disproportionally. In achieving equality of opportunity "affirmative action" can play a role as a way of channeling attention to the participation of underprivileged groups to HE. The US has shown that "affirmative action" can contribute to equality of opportunity (Pusser, 2004). The generally perceived decline in equality of opportunity in the US can be seen against the background

an important social achievement, but also brought substantial economic returns, as it implies that talents are better developed.

5. A Case for European Strength in Basic Education.

It is widely recognized that the quality of primary and secondary education is an important force for international competitiveness (Hanushek and Woessmann, 2012). If only from an economic perspective the quality of education in the EU Member States should therefore be a prime subject of cooperation. It is not without reason that the Maastricht Treaty stated this in 1992 in Chapter 3, art 126. But apart from an economic perspective, basic education functions as the front porch to equal opportunities in the rest of one's educational career. And we know that higher educational attainment is positively related to life satisfaction and good health (OECD, 2016)

Contrary to common expectations, however, the quest for effective educational policies is in the EU on a relatively low level. Despite 30 years of "effective school" research (see: Neeleman, 2016) there is a striking gap between school policy practice and effective school practice research. Schools and education systems have all been doing individual school improvement, but this is poorly understood, rarely measured and rarely used as foundations of researcher designed school improvement (Reynolds & Neeleman, 2016). OECD (2016) notes a "continuous strive to strengthen the link between policy needs and the best available internationally comparable data". Like in Higher Education, schools in many Western education systems are highly autonomous in their school policy practice. To make this education and school policies more effective altogether, also with Europeanization in mind, it would be helpful if EU Government stated clearly what they expect from educators in terms of value added in competences, in attitudes and in behavioral traits. As Andreas Schleicher put forward in his 2015 Global Education Industry Summit (GEIS) speech: "the world no longer rewards people just for what they know – Google knows everything – but for what they can do with what they know. Because that's the main differentiator today, education is becoming more about ways of thinking, involving creativity, critical thinking, problem solving and decision making; about ways of working, including communication and collaboration; about tools for working, and that includes not just the capacity to use technology but to recognise its potential for new ways of working; and, last but not least, it's about the social and emotional skills that help people live and work together. Think about courage, integrity, curiosity, leadership, resilience or empathy". At present, few EU countries invest proportionally in maintaining and updating educators' professional knowledge, including their education and their retraining. Despite the fact that expenditure per student has increased at all levels of education, teachers' salaries were

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of the withdrawal of affirmative action policies, without augmenting funds available for compensating for "capital market restrictions" (the means to acquire funding to participate) through other means.

either frozen or cut between 2009 and 2013[16] (OECD, 2016). Education policies are known to often be heavily connected to party politics. It is no exception if a new coalition or single party Government starts by undoing the changes made before by a preceding Government –if that was run by a different coalition or party, despite the acute awareness that changes in the education system take a long time to be implemented. This pattern does not help school effectiveness either. Hanushek and Woessmann (2012) shows: the lower the autonomy in a school system of a country, the lower the 15 year olds score on the PISA competency test. In a preceding study Hanushek et al. (2011) show that high local autonomy in combination with centralized accountability structures have high impact on student achievement. Cathles and Ritzen (2016) subsequently add: the higher the education funding during the school years, the higher adult competencies of the person.

As put forward in the youngest Education at a Glance (OECD, 2016), "governments are increasingly looking to international comparisons of education opportunities and outcomes as they develop policies to enhance individuals' social and economic prospects, provide incentives for greater efficiency in schooling, and help to mobilize resources to meet rising demands. "PISA has had great impact on the political discussions on education and been a corner-stone of the discussions among civil servants on the proper organization of basic education in the so-called "Open Method of Coordination" of the EU (Volante and Ritzen, 2016). Yet the political follow up actions have been limited and mostly symbolic. It appears that the short term political costs of change in the education system have outweighed the expectations of long run benefits.

Equality of opportunity in basic education requires a renaissance (Ritzen, 2012a). Social mobility has stagnated or decreased in the EU for the generations born around 1980. Immigration and social stratification in housing have presumably been important factors. In most of the more wealthy EU countries private supplemental education is made available on a substantial scale to the children of the well-to do. This stands in contrast to "what our [European] society should emphasize in order to face major global challenges" (a Eurobarometer question). The largest single answer is: "social inequality and solidarity" (see also: Solon, 2004 and Sauer and Zagler, 2014.)An important part of equality of opportunity is to provide better chances in education for young immigrants and children with an immigration background (see chapter 5 and OECD, 2015 and Gringa and Hadjar, 2014). OECD (2016) for example states that immigrants who attended pre-primary education programmes score 49 points higher on the PISA reading test than immigrant students who had not. Research, furthermore, suggests several directions for better learning prospects of children with a migration background (Areepattamannil and Berinderjeet, 2013, Dronkers et al., 2012, Shapira , 2012). These policy proposals all have one element in common: more money, directed at the education of these children. But let's not forget the available and ever growing knowledge base on school effectiveness.

[16] On average across OECD countries.

6. (Territorial) Room for belonging

Belonging as "being a German, or being a Rhinelander or being a European" is always defined in the context of territorial borders. The professed openness of the EU has harmed the feelings of safety and belonging of citizens. If Europe does not have borders, then we are at a loss; there is no protection from outside forces. Openness of the EU was very much a needed state of mind for the admission of new member states in the early part of this century. Openness after the crisis implied the kind of insecurity which led to the re-instatement of national border controls. The creed of openness has closed the mind for the EU for the many who saw their prospects on life deteriorate with the crisis.

Europe needs to ensure safe borders, as safety is one of the basic needs in the Maslow hierarchy of human needs. This is indeed –as many object- exclusive. However, at the same time, the humanitarian solidarity with those outside the EU can best be practiced with strong sense of belonging. More-over a political Europe defined within a well-defined geographic Europe is a strong competitor wide and can safeguard the interest of its citizens on world markets.

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