

# Political Issues and Social Policy in the E.U.

*Professor John Wilton*

## Lecture 6

**Education and training policy**

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### *Erasmus Socrates programme*

- designed to promote educational exchange of ideas, experiences and teaching processes
- but also to promote greater cultural exchange and understanding
- politically designed to assist E.U. integration

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*'Spillover'* – between the  
development of E.U. common  
market and education and  
training

- 1974 Social Action Programme

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1976 resolution to Council of Ministers

- action programme in education

- 1) improved facilities for education and training;
- 2) closer relations between educational systems;
- 3) improved statistics on education;

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- 4) greater co-operation between Member states in the field of higher education – covering recognition of qualifications and periods of study abroad;
- 5) the promotion of foreign language teaching;
- 6) the promotion of equal opportunities in access to education;
- 7) the need to address the problem of unemployment among young people (from an education and training perspective);

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- 8) the need to address the educational needs of the children of migrants;
- 9) The need to address the preparation of young people for work, and the smooth transition from education to working life

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1988 European Commission communication  
‘on education and training in the European  
Community’

- set out medium-term perspectives for  
education 1989-92
- stated need to create “an educational  
space for mobility and interchange”

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- the right of education and training policy to be recognised as a necessary part of the E.U. agenda – to compliment the needs of the development of the Single Market
- the right to recognition of some ‘equivalence of standards’



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1991 European Commission memo on higher education  
- referred to the “wider responsibilities of higher education institutions for maintaining, developing and transmitting the cultural heritage of Europe and its Member states and for mobilising the creativity of people to advance the boundaries of knowledge, in the humanities as well as in science and technology”

*(COM(91) 349 final, 5 Nov. 1991, pp. 1-2)*

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- identified a number of factors influencing higher education in the Community:
  1. increasing pace of European integration and labour mobility;
  2. impact of scientific and technological advances for economic and daily life;
  3. enlargement of the Community and increasing opportunities for co-operation, partnership and mutual support

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3 major dimensions of E.U. policy objectives on  
education and training

1. From economic viewpoint, aim was to promote quality education, vocational training and re-training designed to ensure supply of multi-skilled, flexible, mobile workers capable of operating on European scale;
2. From social perspective, E.U. seeking to secure equality of opportunity for young people to develop their talents and skills

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3. from the cultural and political perspective – used as an ‘instrument’ of policy designed to facilitate and promote greater E.U. political integration and cultural understanding

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1988 European Commission Communication  
– guidelines for the medium term (1989-  
1992) on education and training formally  
recognised that:

“Blanket harmonisation or standardisation  
of the educational system is entirely  
undesirable”.

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Instead, E.U. took as its objective:

“to improve the overall quality of educational provision by bringing the different systems into a long-term process of contact and co-operation ...”

AND simultaneously “avoiding unnecessary divergences which would otherwise impede the free movement of persons and ideas”.

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End of 1980s, organisational instrument for  
“educational movement of peoples” – the  
European Community Action Scheme for  
the Mobility of University Students  
(ERASMUS)

1991 Trans-European Scheme for University  
Studies (TEMPUS) extended exchanges to  
Central and Eastern Europe

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### 1995 SOCRATES programme

aim = to strengthen the European dimension of education at all levels:

- through the development of language learning;
- through the promotion of co-operation by encouraging exchanges;
- through the removal of obstacles to labour mobility by recognition of diplomas and periods of study abroad.



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E.U. educational exchange programmes:

- Socrates
- Comenius
- Grundtvig
- Lingua
- Atlas

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### *June 1999 – Bologna Declaration*

- set out to increase the international competitiveness of European higher education by:
  1. adopting system of comparable degrees at undergraduate and graduate level;
  2. agreeing that undergraduate training should last minimum of 3 years, and should lead to qualification relevant to the European labour market;

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### *June 1999 – Bologna Declaration*

3. agreeing that graduate training should be to a Masters and/or Doctorate level;
4. advocating use of a system of credits to encourage student mobility, combined with access to study and training opportunities and related services

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### *June 1999 – Bologna Declaration*

Proposals and policies based upon:

- a) greater EU wide co-operation across the Member States on ‘quality assurance’ (monitoring of higher education standards)
- b) the development of comparable education criteria and methodologies, comparable curricula, and integrated programmes of study, training and research.

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2 level 'principle' process operating;

1. *harmonisation* of aims and principles in  
E.U. education and training policy;

2. *mutual recognition* of diversity in  
education and training application (based  
on common fundamental 'harmonised'  
principle of 'European dimension of  
education')

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## ‘Spillover’

- the economic needs of the E.U.

*lead to*

- social and cultural developments in  
education and training policy

*facilitate*

- political aims (within E.U. integration  
project)

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[www.europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/education\\_training\\_youth/general\\_framework/ef0016\\_en.htm](http://www.europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/general_framework/ef0016_en.htm)

- *Education and Training 2020 (ET2020)* – new strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training

- making lifelong learning and mobility a reality
- improving the quality and efficiency of education and training
- Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship
- enhancing creativity and innovation

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**[http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/et-monitor\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/et-monitor_en.htm)**

- The Education and Training Monitor - annual series that reports on the evolution of education and training systems across Europe, bringing together the latest quantitative and qualitative data, recent technical reports and studies, plus policy documents and developments.
- Focused on empirical evidence, but each section in the Monitor has clear policy messages for the Member States.