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Betreff: support-education-eu

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An: President@europaparl.europa.eu, europabuero.schulz@spd.de

Esteemed President of the EU-Parliament Martin Schulz,

deep concerns about the future of the education system in some EU-countries under heavy economical pressure led us earlier this year to start an EU-wide initiative, in which we have asked our colleagues and friends to sign a petition (which we include as an attachment to this e-mail) on the website

<http://support-education-eu.itp.uni-heidelberg.de/>

The reaction from our professional environment was very positive and we collected in a short time signatures from colleagues all over Europe, in particular from the Southern EU members and from Germany. Many of the people who have signed are professors and therefore representative for higher education. We want to stress, however, that in our initiative we also have school education in mind. We are now trying to reach a larger community interested in education. We will continue to collect signatures until the fall of this year.

We are aware that the EU has already taken some steps to improve the educational situation, in particular with Erasmus 2014-2020, and also with the fight against unemployment of young people. But we are not quite convinced that this can already be seen as the ultimate emergency program of the EU.

Here we want to refer to the speech of EU commissioner Androulla Vassiliou of April of this year in which she addressed the severe problems of education in the EU. We agree that binding EU efforts in one program (Erasmus for all) is well indicated. We hope that this program will clearly go far beyond the earlier tasks (exchange, mobility.. which however we have in good positive memory also from our university) and efficiently address the problem of the deterioration of the educational systems in parts of the EU.

How this should be achieved can only be decided by the competence and political will in the European Organizations (Council, Commission, parliament). We could in our petition only make some suggestions, the most clear and urgent being that any negotiations with the member states (in particular concerning required savings in the national budgets in connection with financial aid) should explicitly involve the commitment that no undifferentiated cuts in education systems should be done. This would also involve performance rating of staff and projects, as well as addressing mismanagement. Such a commitment could ensure that a hoped for, even if slow economical recovery could build upon and be supported by a well functioning education.

Concerning the "Erasmus for all" program we notice that the list of applications is very rich and strongly varies from country to country. A selection of the projects requires referees which know the country very well, and in addition do not just serve some interest groups.

Furthermore we do not see how such important issues as "dual learning" will be promoted and sustained by the present "Erasmus for all". Is this a case for measures going beyond this program- e.g.for the newly founded European Social Fund ? What will be the framework for the Marie-Curie-fellowships? It seems to us that many of the issues require correlations beyond the present "Erasmus for all" program.

The reason for contacting you before we have completed collecting signatures for our petition is the hope that our initiative and the support it has received so far might be of some use in your efforts to address the problems the educational system in Europe is facing. In turn, your comments on our initiative will be very helpful for us and are highly welcome. We would include them, provided you agree to this, in the "discussion forum" on our website. A related mail was sent to commissioner Androulla Vassiliou and General Director Jan Truszczyński.

You can find further information about our petition, including the list of signatures collected to date on our website.

With respectful greetings Michael Schmidt and Ion Stamatescu
Mit hochachtungsvollem Gruss!

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