

Political Programme of EUPAS

Our believes. Our ideas. Our claims.



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I. Preamble

The European Pupils Association (EUPAS) is the European network and representation of national pupils organizations and organizations' branches for pupils.

Our purpose is to give European pupils a voice in the European Union and to improve cooperation and communication between the several national pupil organizations themselves. By exchanging information and initiating discussions about educational issues we want to develop solutions for those same. Moreover, we want to enthuse pupils for democracy and participation in the meaning of political education.

We take a stand for a Europe based on quality education for ensuring a promising future for the next generations. For this future, we have developed several ideas and aims we should set ourselves for achieving it.

II. Democratic Participation for Pupils

Democracy and its bodies need people believing in its values and taking part in its system. We must enthuse the members of society for democracy from their childhood on, saving them from extremism of any kind.

For achieving this those young members of society have to be enabled to engage in decision-making processes affecting them by establishing pupils councils in every school. Those councils need to be fully supported not only by law but also by the parties cooperating with them - teachers, parents and administration.

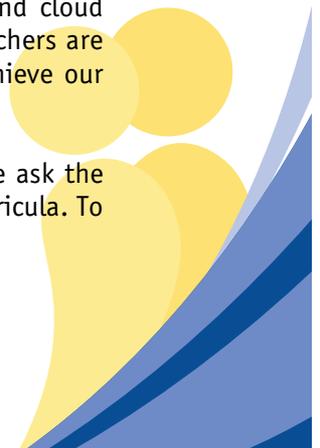
We ask especially the teachers to campaign for the engagement in those councils as democratic participation is part of the educational ideal of humanism. By taking the pupils' voice into account and showing them that their opinion is valued we can raise generations of strong democrats.

III. School 2.0

Our modern world is globalized, working with fast communication via digital media that are technologically advancing every day. Pupils are 'digital natives' and used to modern technology - which is why they need to be taught the theoretical knowledge and practical expertise that reaches farther than average operations they already know.

We see the urgent necessity of modernizing Europe's schools by providing Internet, computers and equipment like Smart Boards to make our education competitive in the digitalized world. Besides the hardware there must be the appropriate software including e-books and cloud systems as well - modern curricula, effective teaching methods and well-trained teachers are key for combining modern media with traditional teaching methods in order to achieve our model of 'School 2.0'.

As there are vast differences in the technological state of schools across Europe we ask the European Council to set standards for the modernization of the buildings and the curricula. To compensate inequalities we call for a School 2.0 funds.



IV. Dual educational system

The dual educational system has proven itself a functioning concept for connecting theoretical knowledge and practical experience. For spreading this idea and develop the system we call on the Ministries of Education to cooperate on that by organizing European forums or workshops.

In support of the dual educational system schools must be granted greater autonomy to ensure an easy surpassing of bureaucracies and cooperation with companies and enterprises.

V. Educational Fees

We take a stand for education that is accessible for everyone, regardless of their social and economical background. The public educational system needs to be free of economical obligations so that it provides equal chances for all children - intelligence and talent do not depend on money.

Facing the funding differences we see this issue as far from resolved and still to be acted against by erasing tuition and school book fees. Funding for this must be made available - because investing in education is investing in a country's future.

Achieving the free accessibility of education is one of the most important goals we must set ourselves for ensuring the endurance of our most valuable resource: education.

VI. Citizenship Education

European values like democracy, human rights and freedom are what we and our political work are based on. This basis is frequently challenged by extremist parties and persons. Facing this danger, pupils need qualified information about the political system, the European Union and the ideologies we are dealing with.

Our support for initiatives to introduce citizenship education as an own subject is strong - the curriculum must cover the ways of democratic processes, its bodies and possibilities to engage as well as other models of political systems in comparison; furthermore it must cover all levels of politics from local to international including the differences and links between them. The pupils must be enabled to develop a critical thinking, the use of several sources and discussion skills.

Especially nowadays many young but also older members of society are not willing to engage in the said as they do not understand its origin and values anymore. Extremism can mainly be fought with knowledge and education – we need to enable our citizens to think critically and form their own opinion facing news and statements from various sources.



VII. Economic Education

As we claim for citizenship education, we want basic economic knowledge to be included in the curriculum to be taught during the last years of a pupil's school career. The lessons should inform the high school students about the tax system, the economic sector and the stock market on the national and international level.

We highly recommend the Ministries of Education to take this opportunity and propose a unified European program related to the economic education. The example of the partnership between Italian banks and institutions should be taken to increase the general knowledge of Europe's pupils.

VIII. Volunteering

Our vivid society depends on the associations contributing to it by offering voluntary communities of mutual interest that subscribe themselves to certain democratic rules stated in their statutes. Sport clubs, beneficial societies, political organizations and any other bodies uniting volunteers are essential for multiplying democratic values and the cohesion of the society.

Furthermore they are very important for helping the very young citizens in developing their character by interacting with others who have different backgrounds and opinions. Engaging in the voluntary sector must be actively promoted at schools and supported by teachers and parents. Timetables and training sessions must be geared to each other in consequence of a strong cooperation including joint events.

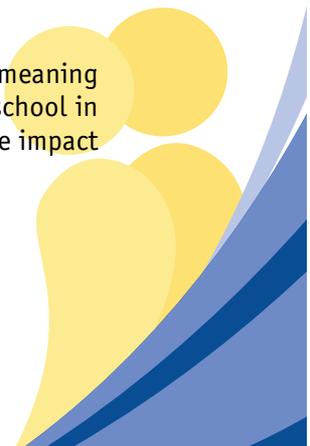
Many pupils are still passively forced to quit their engagement in the football club because they have to take lessons or are not exempt from some of them for big organizational events. This has to change for the better if we want the pupils to stay active and develop.

IX. Economical Education

After graduating and entering the working sector the young have to pay taxes, bills and fees while frequently not being sufficiently educated about those at school. Additionally, the ways of saving money and investing it are abilities learned only from the parents - which lowers the chances for the social-economically deprived.

As we claim for citizenship education, we want economical education to be an own subject on the curriculum to be taught during the last years of a pupil's school career. The lessons should inform the high school students about the tax system, the economical sector and the stock market.

School should prepare the youth not only for university or a certain job but for life - meaning the daily business of a citizen - as well. An additional reason for the significance of school in this case is the decreasing education by the parents who have high expectations to the impact of scholar education.



X. Linguistic education

The concept of a unified Europe of education with strong connections between the youths of Europe is highly dependent on the language skills of young people – to improve this part of education we propose to prefer teachers that are native speakers for teaching their language.

XI. European Educational Standards

Our first European Pupils Congress has given us the opportunity to compare educational systems from 16 European countries and realize the huge differences that make the graduation degrees quite incomparable. Thinking of the social mobility promoted in the Europe 2020 program we see this incomparability as one of the biggest issues to face.

For reaching the goal of appropriate circumstances for the comparison of high school degrees we call for common European educational standards. The European Council has to set up certain standards that the final exams have to fulfill in order to bring Europe's pupils to a mutual level. In the same means the educational systems must be modernized in an eclectic way towards internationalization also by including international degrees and the development of international school partnerships.

Those actions have to be taken while maintaining educational federalism according to subsidiarity.

These educational standards will therefore enable universities and companies to compare applications simpler and expect similar knowledge backgrounds. Another effect will be the reduction of extra basics courses and therefore the relief of teaching personnel.

XII. Erasmus+

We are glad that Europe's youth is growing together, expediting the understanding between pupils from all throughout the continent. This development is also the result of exchange programs, especially Erasmus+. Looking at our history it is great to see the differences disappear and the trans-European connection grow stronger every day.

In order to promote this positive development EUPAS calls for the European Union to increase the reach of the Erasmus+ program. The range of schools and pupils involved also from vocational education must be broadened, including the better accessibility for economically disadvantaged as well through less bureaucracy, more transparency and better promotion of the program. In the same context the recognition of scholar achievements and allowance to move up after a year in another country must be granted.

The Erasmus+ program had shown impressive results in spreading the European spirit. Especially in today's crisis it is essential for keeping the cohesion in our European society and shaping our youth's international future. Therefore we strongly support the development of the same and look forward to see coming generations of Europeans profit from it.



XIII. Lifelong learning

Europe's citizens should not stop gaining knowledge after they finish the school life. We strongly promote the concept of lifelong learning through adult education centres and seminars or workshops offered by other institutions or non-profit organizations.

XIV. Conclusion

The pupils of Europe are determined for a bright future in a Europe of education. We have the opportunity to set the frame for it - therefore we need to put all our efforts into developing the best circumstances for this as education is the most important resource our continent has.

By exchanging our knowledge and experience about the educational systems we developed solutions for the issues prevailing across Europe. We would be glad to have them heard in the European Union and its bodies and see them realized in political decisions.

This political program of EUPAS is the result of all our work and efforts to improve educational politics. It stands for what we believe, our ideas and our claims - this is what we want to promote in order to spread our message for a Europe of education that prospers and flourishes.

