

Chapter 3

Education for European Identity and European Citizenship

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The concepts of 'European identity' and 'European citizenship' are prominent in the aims, commitments and policies of the European Union, and more specifically in its aims, commitments and policies in relation to education.

These concepts are, however, far from unproblematic. What is meant by the notions of 'European identity' and 'European citizenship' and in what senses and to what extent is their promotion and development through education justified? This chapter engages in a broadly philosophical exploration of these questions. A full treatment of the questions, of course, requires attention to be given to wider considerations than philosophical ones. Matters of a political, social and economic kind (for example) need to be taken into account. However, whilst a philosophical exploration of the questions under consideration is not sufficient it is necessary. A concern with clarity of meaning and with critical questioning in the search for justification (two important hallmarks in a philosophical approach) are important ingredients in any adequate discussion of the questions at stake.

An exploration of 'European identity' and 'European citizenship' invites some attention to be given to the contrasting notions of 'National identity' and 'National citizenship'. Our discussion will therefore allude to these matters of national reference to some extent as the argument proceeds.

Our intention in this chapter is not to argue against the educational policies of the EU or against the EU itself.¹ The achievements of the EU are

¹ On positive aspects of 'the European Project' see, for example, Williams (2000, pp. 49-51).

significant, especially when considered in relation to the catastrophic violence of war which has afflicted Europe for much of the last century. Our aim rather is to contribute to the call for greater clarity in European educational goals. Our motive in doing this is not only to achieve a proper interpretation and justification of these goals, but also to contribute to their more effective realisation.

Our discussion focuses on education at school level (i.e. up to the age of 18 years). Whilst education for 'European identity' and 'European citizenship' has been urged as a task on higher education in Europe (on this matter see, for example, Crawley et al., 2000) the higher education sector of education will not be considered specifically here.

The chapter has four sections. In the first section we offer some background remarks concerning the general notion of 'the European dimension of education'. The second section considers the concept of 'European identity' and its educational implications. In the third section, attention is focused on the concept of 'European citizenship'. The educational implications of 'European citizenship' are considered in the final section.

1. THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION OF EDUCATION

Education for 'European identity' and for 'European citizenship' are elements within the broader notion of a 'European dimension' to education in the European community and (latterly) the European Union. As a background to our discussion, it is appropriate to outline briefly the gradual emergence of this 'dimension' and the events and policy statements in which it is embodied.²

This gradual emergence needs to be understood against the background of a parallel gradual emergence of the significance of 'identity' and 'citizenship' within Europe. The idea of a shared community identity came into prominence in the 1973 Copenhagen summit and was re-iterated in the 1984 Fontainebleau declaration. The idea of European citizenship was mentioned in the 1957 Treaty of Rome only briefly and in economic terms. Plans were made at the 1990 Rome summit to include European citizenship in the 1992 Treaty of Maastricht. Following the intergovernmental conference of 1996/7 European citizenship was given particular attention as part of a review of the Treaty of Maastricht and some amendments were made relating to European citizenship in the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam.

² A useful point of reference for all matters relating to the European Union is the website 'The European Union on Line': <http://europe.eu.int>.

'Towards a European Educational Policy' issued by the Community in 1977 (European Community, 1977) was one of the first documents to introduce and elaborate the notion of a 'European dimension' to education.

A central event in the development of this dimension was the 1988 Resolution on the European dimension in education of the Council of Ministers and the Ministers of Education (OJ C 177, 6-7-1988). The Resolution was based in part on a report *Enhanced treatment of the European dimension in education* prepared by Vanbergen (European Commission, 1988). The report claimed that by the end of the 1960's national governments had come to believe that greater co-operation in the Community in relation to education was necessary in order to foster Community development. The Economic and Social Committee of the European Community recognised that "the Community's economic policies would be effective only if they were accompanied by appropriate policies in the field of education" (ibid., pp. 4-5) which would support "a European model of culture correlating with European integration" (ibid., p. 4) which is conceived "economically, socially, politically and culturally" (ibid., p. 5).

Vanbergen suggested that through "appropriate intellectual, psychological and occupational preparation" (ibid., p. 13), the desired perception of young people would enable them "to participate in the development of the Community and the achievement of European union" (ibid., p. 5).

The Vanbergen report recognised that approaches to the 'European dimension' varied between the countries in the Community, that not all of them offered courses of the relevant kind and that there was concern in some quarters about the potentially sensitive and controversial nature of the issues which might arise and the possibility of accusations of illicit influence. Nevertheless these reservations were not pursued, and the report did not take them into account in its recommendations.

Without much debate, Vanbergen's recommendations formed the basis of the 1988 Resolution adopted by the Community which aimed to "strengthen the European dimension in education by launching a series of concerted measures for the period of 1988-1992" (OJ C 177, 6-7-1988). While it is possible to identify unobjectionable aspects in the tone and spirit of the aims of the Resolution (for example, relating to the safeguarding of the principles of democracy, social justice and respect for human rights), its educational objectives extend beyond these to strengthening a sense of 'European identity' as part of the preparation of pupils for making 'concrete progress' towards European union.

In spite of the fact that the Resolution had no legal force in the various countries of the community and that it was unclear to what extent there was a genuine consensus on the meaning and implications of what was being



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