

The European Union Action Programme in the Area of Education: A Comparative Analysis

Avrupa Birliği'nin Eğitim Alanındaki Eylem Programı: Karşılaştırmalı Bir Analiz

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Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Avrupa Birliği Eğitim Alanındaki Eylem Programı açısından aday ülkeler olarak Türkiye ve Litvanya ile üye ülke olarak İngiltere arasında karşılaştırmalı bir analiz yapmaktır. Çalışmada dokümanlara dayalı betimleyici yöntem kullanılmıştır. Önce ülkelere ilişkin veriler sunulmuş, sonra karşılaştırma yapılmıştır. Sonuç olarak, Avrupa Birliği Eğitim Alanındaki Eylem Programı açısından İngiltere'nin Litvanya ve Türkiye'den ayrıca Litvanya'nın da Türkiye'den daha başarılı olduğu anlaşılmıştır. Avrupa Birliği'nin eğitim amaçlarına yakınlık açısından da aynı durum söz konusudur. Bu iki ülke (Türkiye ve Litvanya) Avrupa Birliği Eğitim Alanındaki Eylem Programı'nın önemli bir parçası olan Socrates Programı'na daha fazla önem vermelidirler.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Avrupa Birliği, eğitim alanındaki eylem programı

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to make a comparative analysis between the United Kingdom as a member and Turkey and Lithuania as candidate countries for the European Union Action Programme in the Area of Education. In the study, a descriptive method has been used on the documents. Therefore, the data related to the countries is presented and a comparison has been made. The results indicate that the United Kingdom is more successful in practice than Turkey and Lithuania. Moreover, Lithuania is more successful in practice than Turkey. Moreover, Turkey has no projects regarding the European Union Action Programme in the Area of Education. It is suggested that, if the candidate countries –Turkey and Lithuania– want to accomplish the action programme to the same degree of success as the members –as the United Kingdom– they will firstly have to reorganise their educational goals. It is also argued that Turkey and Lithuania should give serious importance to the Socrates Programme as an integral part of “the European Union Action Programme in the Area of Education”.

Key words: European Union, action programme in education

Introduction

The continuation of human life as social existence based on globalization that aims for a more conscious use of world resources has made the growing together of countries unavoidable. One example of such cooperation is the European Union. The union that was established at beginning of this century is likely to be confronted with different problems. In the same way, the countries of the

union, being sensitive to these problems, combine with each other in slow and careful effort. This combination has been based on the features that are the parts of the political, cultural, economic, and social whole. One of the features of this process is the union of education that is required between the member countries (European Union, 2002a).

Education is a primary concern of government in all European countries, but the structures of education systems differ considerably, both within and between countries. There is a great variety of responsibilities in Europe for the funding, management and evaluation of

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education and training. There are different approaches to private and specialist schools, apprenticeship and vocational training, higher and further education, examinations and qualifications.

Different countries, and different sectors within countries, do not have a common terminology to describe skills, occupational titles and job qualifications. Moreover, as the blackboard gives way to the keyboard and the concept of lifelong learning becomes a reality, acquiring skills and knowledge is increasingly a matter of individual responsibility. In this rapidly evolving arena, the European Union is a forum for the exchange of ideas and good practice. It does not have a 'common education policy', nor a top-down approach. While each Member Country remains responsible for the content and organization of its education and training systems, the EU provides:

- Multinational education, training and youth partnerships.
- Exchange schemes and opportunities to learn abroad.
- Innovative teaching and learning projects.
- Networks of academic and professional expertise.
- A framework to address across-the-board issues, such as new technologies in education and the international recognition of qualifications.
- A platform for consensus, comparisons, benchmarking and policy-making.

This European dimension is based on a close partnership with the Member Countries. It is open to everyone concerned with education – from individual school classes, teachers, parents and students to managers, university rectors, professional organizations, experts and government ministers – and with training in all forms, at all ages.

The challenge in the Directorate-General for Education and Culture is to help to preserve the best of the diversity of educational experience in Europe, while harnessing it to raise standards, remove obstacles

to learning opportunities and meet the educational requirements of the 21st century.

Similarly, the department of the European Commission, plays a major role in anticipating these requirements, raising awareness, supporting European policy-making and creating the mechanisms to implement EU policies.

The policy development process is based on open coordination and wide consultation, reflected in White Papers, declarations, resolutions and the joint definition of objectives rather than the EU's heaviest legal instruments, regulations and directives. Examples are the White Paper on youth and the Communication on lifelong learning adopted by the Commission in November 2001.

The mechanisms for implementing policies include EU funding programmes for education, training and youth. These have provided a great deal of practical experience in the past 15 years, providing a solid basis for extending their achievements through broader initiatives. The funding programmes are managed on a largely decentralized basis, with national agencies in all participating countries.

Action plans, designed to draw on a wider range of Commission services and resources, and work programmes, to follow up reports by European education experts requested at the political level. Examples of these more recent instruments include:

- the Mobility Action Plan, supported by EU government leaders in December 2000;
- the eLearning Action Plan, adopted by the Commission in March 2001;
- the Action Plan on Skills and Mobility, provisionally scheduled for adoption in January 2002;
- the work programme to implement a report on the concrete future objectives of education and training systems, scheduled for adoption in February 2002.

Since education and training have broad implications,

the Directorate-General for Education and Culture works in close liaison with other Commission departments on such issues as skills and mobility, e-learning and lifelong learning, employment and social inclusion.

This is reflected in a growing climate of innovation and closer cooperation between institutions in the Member Countries. For example, ministers from 30 countries have resolved to create a 'European higher education area' by the year 2010.

The union has put into practice the kind of programmes related to the education (Europe Union 2002b). One of these is Leonardo da Vinci. Leonardo da Vinci is the action programme for implementing the European Community's vocational training policy, supporting, and supplementing action taken by the Member Countries. The other one is Tempus. Tempus is the trans-European programme of cooperation in higher education, established in 1990. Tempus is a Community aid scheme for the restructuring of higher education systems in these countries in order to adapt them to the requirements of a market economy.

Another one, which is especially examined in this study, is SOCRATES. The union put into practice Socrates Programme in 1994 (Europe Union 2002b). The budgets for programs in preparatory period have been determined as 1.500.000 Euro and 1.100.000 Euro for Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci (MEB 2001a).

Socrates is the European programme for education. Its aim is to promote the European dimension and to improve the quality of education by encouraging cooperation between the participating countries.

The programme sets out to develop a Europe of knowledge and thus better cater for the major challenges of this new century: to promote lifelong learning, to encourage access by everybody to education, to acquire qualifications and recognized skills.

The first phase of the Socrates programme was for five years (1995–1999). The programme has been renewed and the second phase will run for seven years (2000–2006). Socrates has a budget of 1 850€ million for the seven-year period.

Socrates comprises eight separate actions:

1. **Comenius:** school education
2. **Erasmus:** higher education
3. **Grundtvig:** adult education and other education pathways
4. **Lingua:** learning and teaching of European languages
5. **Minerva:** information and communication technologies in education
6. Observation and innovation of education systems and policies
7. Joint actions with other European programmes
8. Supplementary measures

The European Union has 15 member countries today. The countries that have applied are (Europe Union 2002e):

- Turkey: application received on 14 April 1987;
- Cyprus: 3 July 1990;
- Malta: 16 July 1990;
- Hungary: 31 March 1994;
- Poland: 5 April 1994;
- Romania: 22 June 1995;
- Slovakia: 27 June 1995;
- Latvia: 13 October 1995;
- Estonia: 24 November 1995;
- Lithuania: 8 December 1995;
- Bulgaria: 14 December 1995;
- Czech Republic: 17 January 1996;
- Slovenia: 10 June 1996.

In December 1997, the Luxembourg European Council decided to open negotiations in 1998 with six countries: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovenia. These six countries form the 'first wave' of applicant countries. A 'second wave' will be made up of Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia. Opening negotiations with these applicants will depend on their political and economic progress.

After two years during which its application was put on ice (1996 to 1998), Malta has indicated that it intends

to return to the negotiating table. A special report by the Commission on the progress made by Malta is due out soon. This will allow a decision to be taken on whether Malta can be included in the first or second wave of applicant countries. As far as Turkey is concerned, the Luxembourg European Council concluded that the political and economic conditions allowing accession negotiations to be envisaged were not yet satisfied, and that the European strategy to prepare Turkey for accession should be continued.

In the expansion process of the union, determining the conditions of the candidate countries requires to do a number of different researches. At the same time, it is difficult to do for the union to do this research by itself. For this reason, the candidate countries will facilitate the solutions of these problems by conducting such research.

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the union's education by comparing United Kingdom, Turkey and Lithuania with each other and by determining the positions of United Kingdom as an important member and two candidate countries, Turkey and Lithuania for The European Union Action Programme in the Area of Education.

Method

The European Union Action Programme in the Area of Education has been carried out by local organizations of the member and candidate countries. Because of this, the "goals" of the educational systems of these countries are very important. On the other hand, it is very necessary to include the European Dimension in their national education goals. Based on this condition, first, the educational goals of United Kingdom, Turkey and Lithuania were studied in the light of the European Dimension in Education. Then these goals were compared with each other. Then, all the conditions of these countries were compared, especially as regarding the "Socrates Programme" for the European Union Action Programme in the Area of Education

Findings

This section of the study consists of two parts. In

the first part, we compare the educational goals of United Kingdom, Turkey and Lithuania. The second part of the section considers the findings of comparisons related to the positions of United Kingdom, Turkey and Lithuania for Socrates Programme as an important part of the European Union Action Programme in the Area of Education

1. Comparative National Education Goals of United Kingdom, Lithuania and Turkey for the European Dimension in Education

1.1. National Education Goals of United Kingdom for the European Dimension in Education

Following the European Community Council of Ministers' Resolution on the European Dimension in Education of 24 May 1988, the Department of Education and Science (DES), now the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), published the 'European Dimension in Education' (DES, 1992). This document sets out the Government's aims in this area as (Eurybase 2001):

- helping pupils and students to acquire a view of Europe as a multi-cultural, multi-lingual community which includes the UK;
- encouraging awareness of the variety of European histories, geographies and cultures;
- preparing young people to take part in the economic and social development of Europe and making them aware of the opportunities and challenges that arise;
- encouraging interest in and improving competence in other European languages;
- imparting knowledge of political, economic and social developments, past, present and future, including knowledge about the origins, workings and role of the European Commission;
- promoting a sense of European identity, through first hand experience of other countries where appropriate;
- promoting an understanding of the European Community's interdependence with the rest of

Europe and with the rest of the world.

As is seen, national education goals of United Kingdom have essentially been accommodated to the educational goals of the European Union. The country has included the European Dimension in its education. Actually, when the goals are examined it can be clearly seen that there is only a reference to "Europe as a multi-cultural, multi-lingual community which includes the United Kingdom". That is to say, it appears that the concept of European Nation has replaced the concept of an English Nation. Through their educational goals, basically, they aim to educate individuals having European values at a universal level.

1.2. National Education Goals of Lithuania for European Dimension in Education

Application for EU accession: 8 December 1995. Accession negotiations started in February 2000 (Europe Union 2002)

In the Republic of Lithuania, education is a priority supported by the state. It is based on the humanistic values of the nation and world culture, democratic principles as well as generally recognized human rights and freedoms. Education predetermines the cultural, social, and economic progress of a country; it promotes solidarity, tolerance, and cooperation of people and nations.

In 1992 the Lithuanian Government approved a General Concept of Education in Lithuania which has been the main and the most important document of educational reform ever since.

The following were defined as the most important goals of the General Concept of Education (Eurybase 1999):

- to help the individual discover universal human values and base his life upon them;
- to foster a person who is able to think critically, evaluate existential questions, make decisions responsibly, and operate independently;
- to foster an individual who is prepared for professional work, determined and able to

adapt to an everchanging social, and economic environment and to participate in its betterment;

- to develop the individual's national and cultural consciousness;
- to prepare the person for democracy;
- to raise a citizen of Lithuania.

To achieve these goals a permanent, differentiated, and integrated educational system is being created in Lithuania. The educational system is based on European cultural values: the absolute value of the individual, neighborly love, innate equality among people, freedom of conscience, tolerance, the affirmation of democratic social relations.

Lithuania's Education Goals include universal human values, free development of the individual, democracy and also European and national cultural values. Compared to the United Kingdom as a member country it is clear that Lithuania's goals on European cultures and values are not as detailed. In Lithuania's goals there are no clear statements which change national qualities into European qualities as is the case with the United Kingdom's goals. Yet the last paragraph mentions an educational system that will be based on European cultural values.

1.3. National Education Goals of Turkey for the European Dimension in Education

The legal basis of Turkey – EU relations is the attached protocol, which is an indispensable part of the partnership document enforced in 1973 with the Ankara Partnership Agreement of 1963 envisioning the full membership of Turkey as the final target. Turkey was accepted as candidate country by unanimous vote at the Europe State and Government Leaders' Summit in Helsinki on 10–11 December 1999. (MEB 2002b)

The general goals of National Education are (MEB 2001c):

1. To raise all individuals as citizens who are committed to the principles and reforms of Atatürk and to the nationalism of Atatürk as expressed in the Constitution, who adopt, protect

and promote the national, moral, human, spiritual and cultural values of the Turkish Nation, who love and always seek to exalt their family, country and nation, who know their duties and responsibilities towards the Republic of Turkey which is a democratic, secular and social state governed by the rule of law, founded on human rights and on the tenets laid down in the preamble to the Constitution, and who have internalized these in their behavior;

2. To raise them as constructive, creative and productive persons who are physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and emotionally balanced, have a sound personality and character, with the ability to think freely and scientifically and have a broad worldview, that are respectful of human rights, value personality and enterprise, and feel responsibility towards society;
3. To prepare them for life by developing their interests, talents and capabilities and providing them with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes and the habit of working with others and to ensure that they acquire a profession which shall make them happy and contribute to the happiness of society;

In brief, then, to increase the welfare and happiness of Turkish citizens and Turkish society, on the one hand, and to support and accelerate economic, social and cultural development within national unity and cohesion, on the other hand, and finally to make the Turkish Nation a constructive, creative and distinguished partner in contemporary civilization.

Turkey's Education Goals include universal human values and democracy in a national frame. These values are intended to educate the individuals in harmony with the Turkish Republic. This seems to be a hindrance to the contribution of youngsters to democratic and human values. This loyalty to the present values may prevent the education of individuals who can bring about this development. However, democracy and universal human values are concepts the development of which should be attempted. Otherwise, it will serve to maintain the status

quo. On the other hand, in Turkey's Educational Goals, nothing is mentioned about European values and it can also be considered that its goals are far from developing into a European concept as is the case with Lithuania's goals.

In looking at the lengths of application procedure, it is clear that Turkey applied considerably earlier than Lithuania. It seems that Lithuania has educational goals which are more unified and related with the union. In particular, the emphasis clearly made in their goals justifies this observation.

2. The Socrates Programme in United Kingdom, Lithuania and Turkey

It is possible to reach the comprehensive information related to Socrates Programme on the European Union's web site. The countries that have applied for the programme are (Socrates 2002b): **EU COUNTRIES:** Belgique, Denmark, Deutschland, Ellas, España, France, Ireland, Italia, Luxembourg, Nederland, Österreich, Portugal, Finland, Sverige, United Kingdom. **EFTA/EEA COUNTRIES:** Island, Liechtenstein, Norge. **ASSOCIATED COUNTRIES:** Bulgary, Ceska Republika, Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Polska, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia (Socrates 2002a).

United Kingdom as a member country is on this list. In the same way Lithuania as a candidate country has been also given place on the list. But Turkey had not been given a place on the list. All the countries on the list have been assigned web space with a link to these sites from the main web site.

2.1. Socrates Programme in United Kingdom

On the United Kingdom's web site the practice and the details related to the programme are presented. Correspondence details, further information and the practice of United Kingdom in this area is given below:

Socrates Programme: National Agencies–United Kingdom

All SOCRATES Actions except Erasmus

The British Council Education and Training

Group 10 Spring Gardens London SW1A 2BN. Tel: (44) 207 389.41.57. Fax: (44) 207 389.44.26. E-mail: socrates@britishcouncil.org
Internet: <http://www.socrates-uk.net> ERASMUS

UK- Socrates Erasmus Council Research and Development Building University of Kent Canterbury. UK-Kent CT2 7PD. Tel: (440) 1227 76.27.12; Fax : (440) 1227 76.27.13. E-mail: erasmus@ukc.ac.uk
Internet : <http://www.erasmus.ac.uk>

As seen above, all SOCRATES activities except Erasmus are carried out by The British Council Education and Training Group and Erasmus by the Socrates Erasmus Council Research and Development Building at the University of Kent Canterbury. There are addresses, telephones, faxes, e-mail and web sites for both Socrates and Erasmus.

There is a list of Socrates projects currently underway in that area of the United Kingdom. The projects on the list are divided according to region (United Kingdom 2002a). The United Kingdom Counties and Regions are East, East Midlands, London, North East, North West, South East, South West, West Midlands, Yorkshire and Humberside. For example, in the North West there are Comenius School Projects (Primary)-Saint Joan of Arc RC Primary School, Comenius School Projects (Secondary)-All Saints High School, Comenius Language Projects- Toucan Europe Ltd., Manchester, Grundtvig Learning Projects- Ridge Danyers College and Action for the Blind, Carlisle (United Kingdom 2002b). For example, in of these projects (United Kingdom 2002c), Saint Joan of Arc RC Primary School with partners in Belgium and Hungary. School Project: *Lydia, Sandor, Veerle in a School in the World*, the main project activities can be seen as follow:

- Celebrating Christmas in our country
- Making a video
- What foods do we eat?
- Song and Dance
- Developing a joint website.
- Curriculum areas covered: History, Geography,

English, PSE and Culture.

United Kingdom has been understood to put into practice a lot of projects related to Socrates Programme. When the project above is examined, it calls attention to activities related to European culture. Moreover, this is a natural result. As it is expressed in the goals, education is considered as an important means of creating the European culture. However, the United Kingdom claims that the budget that the union provides is not sufficient for implementing these kinds of programme. In a study conducted by Brine (2002), it is stated that the budget of Further Education in United Kingdom has decreased as the Union expands.

2.2. Socrates Programme in Lithuania

Lithuania has been participating in the Socrates programme since November 1, 1998. The second phase of the programme covers the period 1 January 2000 to 31 December 2006. It draws on the experiences of the first phase, building on the successful aspects of the programme, improving and amalgamating several of the previous Actions and introducing a number of innovations. On the web site of Socrates Programme created by the European Union, for Lithuania, the following web site and to other correspondence addresses is given (Lithuania 2002).

Socrates Programme: National Agencies- Lithuania

All SOCRATES Actions, ES Socrates programas koordinavimo paramos fondas. Geležinio Vilko g. 12 LT-2600 Vilnius. Tel: (370-2) 610.592. Fax: (370-2) 610.592

E- mail: socrates@socrates.lt

Internet : <http://www.socrates.lt>

As a candidate country, the reports presented by Lithuania to the union can be used as criteria to evaluate what they have done for the programme. The following are presented as related to the subject in the report submitted by Lithuania in 1999:

The reform of the education system, including vocational education and training has started. In particular, in February 1999, the Ministry of Education

issued guidelines for the reorganization of the general education system. Since November 1998, Lithuania has been participating in the Community Programmes Leonardo da Vinci, Socrates and Youth for Europe. In 1998–99, 432 students have benefited from Erasmus mobility grants to study in EU countries and 1177 young Lithuanians have taken part in the Youth for Europe programme. In 1998, 154 Lithuanians participated in exchanges within the framework of the Leonardo programme (Regular Report, 1999).

These are also presented in the report submitted in 2000: Since the last Regular Report Lithuania has made progress in the area of education and training. In 1999 Lithuania continued to successfully participate in the Community programmes. In addition, the Association Council adopted in September 2000 a decision to allow participation in the second phase (2000–2006) of the Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci programmes. Lithuania has made progress in reforming its education and training system and in introducing European standards. Lithuania should build on progress already achieved by completing the legislative alignment and fully implementing the reform of the education and training system. The EC Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth for Europe programmes have been successfully administered in Lithuania by the national agencies. Lithuania's participation in these programmes during 1998–1999 was a good tool for its integration in Community networks and the preparation of accession. Lithuania has prepared actively for participation from 2000 in the new programmes (second phases of Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci, and Youth) (Regular Report, 2000).

Finally, these are presented in the report submitted in 2001: Some further progress has been made in this area. In the past year, Lithuania has continued to participate in the Community programmes. National policy in the field of education and studies is implemented by the Department of Science and Studies of the Ministry of Education and Science.

These reports state that Lithuania actively joined the first stage of the Socrates Programme and has started to introduce the necessary regulations to take place in the

second part as well.

2.3. *Socrates Programme in Turkey*

All countries listed above but Turkey are already participating in the programme. For Turkey, the year 2001 will be a preparatory year (Europe Union 2002d). Therefore, on the web site of the Socrates Programme designed by The European Union, there is no web site for Turkey. Likewise, as a candidate country, considering the reports submitted by Turkey to the union, it has been understood that Turkey is not participating to the programme.

The information available does not allow for an evaluation of progress made in this field. The Commission and the Turkish authorities are currently discussing the preparatory measures to be put in place in Turkey to allow future participation in the Community programmes Leonardo da Vinci II, Socrates II and Youth for Europe. EU funding is foreseen for these measures. (Regular Report 1999)

In the past year, further preparations took place for the participation of Turkey in the Community programmes in the fields of education, training and youth. (Regular Report 2000)

Only limited progress has been achieved in the area of education and training. A new impetus has been given to Turkey's preparations for participating in the Community programmes in these fields (Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth). A preparatory phase within Turkey under the management of the Ministry of National Education is due to begin in 2001, with a view to full participation from 2003 onwards. A clear proposal is now needed on how the National Agency will be set up.

Examining the submitted reports by Turkey, Turkey is in a position that cannot be compared with United Kingdom, even with Lithuania. In addition, it is claimed that Turkey lost its chance for the first part, will lose out in the second part as well (Duman, 2001).

Conclusion

Education has a critical role for the expansion and strengthening of the union. The attitudes of individuals

will determine the success of all the projects that the union undertakes. Education is the most important variable regarding these attitudes. That's why both the member and candidate countries are concentrated on this education variable.

Considering the findings of this study, it appears that the importance of education has been well understood in the United Kingdom as a member country. In other words, the United Kingdom seems to have included the European Dimension in its education system through the regulations in the goals and also with involvement in Socrates Programme. It will be an important step for the other member countries to follow a similar path for the achievement of the union.

It seems that Lithuania, a candidate country, has not completely included the European dimension, which should have been done, in its education goals. Considering the findings, it can be seen that Lithuania is at an intermediate level in terms of The European Union Action Programme in the Area of Education, or at least the Socrates Programme. It is obvious that Lithuania is trying to increase its level of participation in the action programme and the educational goals of the union. Considering its population and recently candidacy for the union, it is possible to say that Lithuania is in a positive situation.

Considering the findings in terms of Turkey, it seems that Turkey is not in a good position since it has not included the European dimension in its educational programme. Similarly, it can be argued from these findings that Turkey has not been included in the union. It may be even more difficult to make any improvements although it has a long experience in this area.

Depending on the findings of this study, in general, United Kingdom can be considered more successful than the candidate countries of Lithuania and Turkey in regard to harmony with and involvement in The European Union Action Programme in the Area of Education. When compared to Turkey, Lithuania can also be considered in a better position and more successful as a candidate country. The reason underlying this failure on the part of the candidate countries compared to the

member ones stems from the interpretation that they do see the European Dimension in Education as a student exchange between the countries. However, whether as candidate countries or not, Turkey and Lithuania have a certain level of interaction with the member and other countries. This approach to education may be recognized as an obstacle to full membership. For this reason, if the candidate countries, (such as Turkey and Lithuania), would like to be full members of the union, they should participate actively in several action programmes in the field of education (such as Socrates), firstly by including the necessary regulations in their educational goals (as, for example, has the United Kingdom).

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