Logos Universality Mentality Education Novelty: Political Sciences and European Studies
ISSN: 2284-5968 | e-ISSN: 2501-0417
Covered in: ERIH PLUS, CEEOL, HeinOnline, Index Copernicus, CrossRef, CrossCheck, J-Gate, Google Scholar, Ideas RePeC, Econpapers, Socionet, KVK, WorldCat.

2019, Volume 5, Issue 1, pages: 36-45| doi: 10.18662/lumenpses/07

The Role of European Personalities in Building Cooperation in the Field of Education

Cristina - Iulia GÎLĂ[1]

[1] PhD candidate, Ovidius University, Constanţa, Romania,
gila_cristina2000@yahoo.com

Abstract: The present research aims to analyze the importance of the efforts made by different personalities, starting with the second half of the twentieth century, in order to broaden the exchange of ideas and best practices in the field of vocational education and training. The great personalities played an essential role in building and relaunching a Europe of nations, but also a Community Europe. These visionaries, with significant functions at the level of their country, but also at European level, have contributed to the configuration of common directions of action regarding education. The "Parents of Europe", Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman laid the foundations for economic cooperation at European level between states in the 1950s. Continuing the political construction of the community edifice was the mission of European leaders François Mitterand and Helmuth Kohl. The two protagonists are also due to the beginnings of the collaboration on education through the conclusion of bilateral agreements. The leaders understood that a political union between states would not be possible without achieving a cultural, linguistic, or educational union. Jacques Delors was President of the Commission of the European Communities between 1985 and 1995 and President of the International Commission for Education for the 21st century. In this capacity, he demonstrated that educational policies should aim to build a world based on mutual support. Any project of international cooperation must be based on common values and a common destiny. The European Commission through the Directorate General for Education, Culture was able to initiate educational programs that were approved by the Member States and subsequently ensured the mobility of pupils, students and qualified teachers from across the Union. Actions and steps taken over time by different personalities have demonstrated that in a global world, education is the key factor, and lifelong learning, supplemented by new programs and actions in the field of education, training and youth play an overwhelming role in building a Europe of citizens.

Keywords: *cooperation; European personalities; globalization; educational policies; school education.*

How to cite: Gîlă, C.-I. (2019). The Role of European Personalities in Building Cooperation in the Field of Education. *Logos Universality Mentality Education Novelty: Political Sciences and European Studies, 5*(1), 36-45. doi: 10.18662/lumenpses/07

Introduction

The European Union has developed in the form of a dynamic process of integration, the evolution being possible through the periodic revision of the treaties: the deepening of the European project - opening to more and more fields, but also democratizing the decision-making system due to the personalities that have contributed to the relaunch of the European construction (Luzarraga, Llorente, 2011:26).

The education of the 21st century must permanently offer solutions to the challenges of the changing world today. Under these conditions, innovative learning is needed, which is meant to prepare citizens and societies to act in new situations, assuming autonomy and possibilities for adaptation, integration. (Cucoş, 2002:50). The education was given different and unique tasks, starting with the second half of the twentieth century, an aspect also noticed by the European personalities, who understood that economic Europe could not be built without the growth of performances through instruction and vocational training.

The great personalities played an essential role in building a Europe of nations, but also a Community Europe. These visionaries, prominent personalities at the level of their country, but also at European level, have contributed to the construction of the European edifice, as well as to the setting up of common directions of action regarding education.

The difficulties at the end of the Second World War, the "iron curtain" that separated the two worlds: democratic and communist, caused businessmen or politicians to overcome the traumas war and historical rivalries for centuries and to create not only a common historical-geographical space, but also a common economic, political, cultural experience to generate prosperity, balance, the feeling of accomplishment of each citizen.

Although the European peoples have evolved differently, however, there have been common elements that have allowed for a unique construction. The development and progress of the states were also determined by the education that allows the adaptation of young people to a changing world. At first, the "parents of Europe"aimed to create an economic unit, and then a political unit.

European personalities - from economic to political and to cooperation in the field of education

The personalities were the craftsmen of a new European entity, contributing to the strengthening and widening of cooperation between states.

One of the persuasive French personalities with an essential contribution was Jean Omer Marie Gabriel Monnet. After completing his studies, he left France, settling in London to do business, traveling to different countries. Due to his oratorical style, his ability to argue has succeeded in influencing European politicians, prompting them to support the idea of interstate cooperation (Sâmbeteanu, 2019). During World War I, Jean Monnet coordinated war supplies in the UK. Because he accomplished his mission successfully and seriously, in 1919, at the time of the creation of the League of Nations, he was appointed Deputy Secretary General. During World War II he collaborated with the two great leaders Winston Churchill, British Prime Minister and with Charles de Gaulle, the future President of France in 1958. Since 1943, he was in exile with the French government in emigration in Algiers where he has expressed its ideas about the need to create a union of Europe, a federation in which peace and prosperity should be strengthened. Known as the "Father of Europe", he became one of the most influential figures of the post-war era. At the end of the war together with Robert Schuman, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, they initiated the creation of a coal and steel community, and its members were to use the two resources together. After long negotiations, the ECSC treaty was signed in 1950, which represented the beginnings of economic cooperation at European level between states. The first founding states were France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy and Luxembourg.

Until the last moments, Jean Monnet felt that nations must unite to survive. "Go on, go on, there is no future for European people except in union" (The Jean Monnet Association, accessed 2019).

Robert Schuman, another parent of Europe, was characterized by contemporaries, a man without ambitions, sincere, timid, pacifist. In the atmosphere of agitated parliamentary debates, Schuman was willing to always talk calmly, respectfully with people, being the person who fought an idea gently (Lejeune, 2000: 9). Robert Schuman invited the European democratic nations to freely join in creating a community of destiny unprecedented in history, on May 9, 1950. Both the French Minister of Foreign Affairs and the German Chancellor, Conrad Adenauer, considered this date, the day of the birth of Community Europe. Robert Schuman

showed that "the unity of Europe is not only achieved by the European institutions, their creation follows the path of the spirits" (Lejeune, 2000: 229).With regard to education in Europe and the idea of cooperation, Schuman's work showed the need to rewrite history school textbooks and identify the causes of the antagonisms that led to wars and affected humanity. Schuman felt that teaching-learning History should result in a less pessimistic, more constructive view of the future. These personalities understood that in order to build an economic Europe, the role of education and training of young people is also needed.

If the names of the personalities Jean Monnet (1976: 378) and Robert Schuman were related to the creation of the ECSC and the EEC, as well as to the economic unity of the continent, the beginnings of the political unity were correlated with the meeting of the Fontainbleau European Council and with the president François Mitterand.

One of the great French personalities who made a significant contribution to shaping the European community at the end of the twentieth century, was François Mitterand. Man of a vast culture, intellectually remarkable, important French politician, who also served as president of the French Republic (1981-1995), laid the foundations of a competitive economy, of a democratic society in France, but also in the construction of the community building. Through his actions, the proposed speeches and reforms, the French President and other leaders, such as the German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, will remain as initiators and founders of the European Union.

Another commendable initiative to strengthen Franco-German relations is the conclusion of education agreements, supported by the implementation of bilingual sections in different high schools in France and Germany, between 1970-1974, but also in 1972, the establishment of three Franco-German high schools. (Pătruţiu-Balteş, 2012:319). The president was convinced of the importance of education and culture, but also of the need to bring the two nations closer together. Mitterrand paid more attention to language learning, specifying that a political union between states would not be possible and access to culture through language is necessary. He demonstrated the importance of developing school and university exchanges.

In the early 1970s, education actually meant instruction, preparing the pupil and the student for a qualification in a particular field. Subsequently, the globalization process, the mobility of the skilled workforce led to the creation of European educational policies. Officials from the European Commission have set up trans-European programs and financially

supported mobility for educational purposes. These measures were also supported by intergovernmental resolutions.

At the beginning of Francois Mitterand's term, social inequalities were considerable, three-quarters of the sons of senior executives and only 4 percent of the sons of workers went to universities, and a quarter of the young people left the school system without completing preparation (Attali, 2008: 116). This led him to take measures in the field of education. Therefore, it imposed reforms in higher education, the law - program on technical and vocational education, differentiated pedagogy, extension of schooling. He provided additional financial and human resources. Among the measures proposed by the French president we mention: he called for the reduction of the number of subjects taught in primary school, the increased professional training of teachers, the learning of foreign languages in kindergarten, the strengthening of basic education, the development of research and the modernization of universities. All this did not apply because Prime Minister Lionel Jospin only granted social benefits to teachers, without asking for anything in return (Attali, 2008: 116). Many of the ideas of the visionary Mitterand are found today in the documents of the European Commission and of the European Parliament on the importance of multilingualism, broadening European cooperation at university level, early education from the age of 3 years.

In May 1995, when François Mitterrand's term of office ended, the German Chancellor Helmuth Kohl published an article in the daily *Le Monde* entitled "a great European leaving" (Helmut Kohl, 1995).

Together with French President François Mitterand and German Chancellor Helmuth Kohl, Jacques Delors has made a remarkable contribution to European construction (Pătruţiu-Balteş, 2012). It was proposed in 1984 by President Mitterand to hold the position of President of the European Commission, also called "Mr. Europe" by Professor Gérard Bossuat (Pătruţiu-Balteş, 2012: 399). Delors played the role of community political leader between January 6, 1985 and January 23, 1995. At the time of his appointment as President of the Commission, he was a convinced, rational European, influenced by the socio-economic problems of France after the war, eager to create an international society. From 1981 to 1984, as a minister, Delors contributed to the French economic and political preparation to face the European Economic and Monetary Union, furthering the European construction. During the first two terms, Delors's prestige increased in the Commission, but also among the Heads of Government and State, meeting in the European Council.

Jacques Delors served as French Minister of Economy and Finance. He was President of the Commission of the European Communities between 1985 and 1995 and President of the International Commission for Education for the 21st century. His publications include: "The New European Concert" (1992), "Our Europe: France and the European Future (1994)".

The International Commission on Education for the 21st Century was set up at the initiative of UNESCO and the General Director Federico Mayor. The person who worked closely with UNESCO officials and "studied and reflected on the challenges facing education in the coming years and made suggestions and recommendations" was Jacques Delors. In fact, at the beginning of the 21st century, advances in the field of knowledge, science and technology brought people hope about the possibility of coping with extreme dangers, preventing the emergence of new conflicts. Education is one of the most powerful tools with which we have been able to shape the future. Delors is trying to answer the question: "What is education doing today to prepare the active citizens of tomorrow?" "Another commission chaired by Mr. Edgar Faure had published twenty years earlier another report entitled" Learn to be." The work of Jacques Delors, *The Inner Treasure - The report to UNESCO of the International Commission for Education in the 21st century*, carried out an in-depth analysis of the globalized world and of the education systems, the challenges due to the phenomenon of contemporary migration and the importance and respect for other cultures. Another aspect addressed is democratic citizenship "... civic education is a complex issue, which involves accepting values, accumulating knowledge and learning how to participate in social life." (Delors, 1996: 46). Attention to the problems of a globalized world and has established broad guidelines that can be applied in all national contexts. Four crucial problems were identified: 1. the capacity of the education systems to become a key factor in development, 2. the capacity of the education systems to adapt to the new trends in society, 3. The relations between the education system and the state, 4. The promotion of values vis-à-vis others and mutual understanding.

Concerning the first problem, the Commission has shown that education systems must become a key factor in development, fulfilling both economic, scientific and cultural functions. Education contributes to the creation of a qualified and creative staff for different fields, who can adapt to new technologies. Also, education brings its contribution to the formation of citizens who respect their own cultures but are equally open to other cultures.

The second problem is the ability of education systems to adapt to new trends in society. This determines the need to prepare for change, respecting individual or social values, family structure, the role of women, the status of minorities, environmental issues, urban space.

The third issue addressed by the Commission is that of the relations between the education system and the state. The role and responsibilities of the state, subordination to local authorities, the balance to be established between public and private education, are different aspects that differ from one country to another.

The fourth problem is the promotion of human values, of openness to others, of mutual understanding, that are, the values of peace. Education can lead to overcoming contradictions, but also sending a common message to all the inhabitants of the world, it can also express the richness of civilizations and different cultures.

The interconnections between nations provide a scope for international cooperation. The purpose of the commission created was not to build a philosophy of education systems, or "scenarios for the future", but to provide decision-makers support to develop educational policies, or to trigger lively debates that go beyond the world of education, to involve parents, children, businessmen, trade unionists and associations that support the efficiency of the teaching act (Jacques Delors, 1996).

As a result, education has a vital contribution to human progress. Education is one of the most powerful tools to shape the future, or to orient ourselves in the future, taking advantage of constructive tendencies and trying to avoid pitfalls. What does education do today to prepare the active citizens of tomorrow? The same idea regarding the role of education and the need for preparation for the knowledge-based society can be found in the documents of the European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, Andoulla Vassiliou, position performed during 2010-2014. A valuable Cypriot and European politician, he studied law at the Middle Temple, then International Affairs at the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London, UK from 1961-1966.

After her return in 1968 in Cyprus, she was law advisor to the Standard Chartered Bank and the Bank of Cyprus. She was elected in 1996, in the House of Representatives in Cyprus, being a candidate from the United Democrats Movement. She has also been on the board of directors of different public and private companies. In 1988, she resigned from his position when her huseband was elected president of the Republic of Cyprus. As a first lady, she was very active in the social and cultural fields. She has been involved for four years, four consecutive terms, as president of

the United Nations Association in Cyprus. As such, she has participated in many international and regional conferences, especially in the field of human rights. She was re-elected in 2001 and in February 2008, Androulla Vassiliou was appointed European Commissioner for Health. Within the second Barroso Commission, in February 2010, she was offered the portfolio Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth. In a speech by the Commissioner, on the occasion of the Juvenes Translatores awards, in 2010 it was stated that: "Education plays a crucial role in improving Europe's future as a whole, as well as its own chances of getting a better job: capacity to easily use different languages. Young people can switch from one language to another, from one culture to another,that means adopting a different perspective, a different thinking, based on tolerance and respect". (Vassiliou, 2010).

Since 2014, with the new ERASMUS + program, the attention paid to education by the European Union, but also by the Member States has increased. First, the budget granted reached 40%, the technologicalization and the acceleration of the change in the scientific field determined the need to adapt the young people to the demands of the labor market. Also, jobs that require high qualifications are growing, as opposed to those with low qualifications. Innovation elements have been introduced in the new Erasmus + program such as: granting the importance of mobility and applying to complete Master's studies. Another strength of the new program is the creation of the European Investment Fund and the possibility of obtaining loans in very good conditions, guaranteed by the European Union. Another achievement is the alliance of knowledge and alliance of skills. Partnerships between schools and businesses are structured to bring the world of workers closer to the one of education, in order to adapt the school curriculum and school programs to the needs of the market, in order to eliminate unemployment. Young people are supported technically but also financially. The world of education is becoming globalized, which has led to the opening of the program for third countries. Europe needs to remain attractive, competitive, allowing the mobility of millions and millions of people for educational purposes (Smith, 2014).

Conclusions

The analysis shows that education represents a timid concern of the founding parents and politicians, since the 1950s. As the economic and political aspects develop, the need to adapt the educational ideal of the states in a globalized world is becoming increasingly apparent to learn to know, to

learn to do, to learn to work with others and to learn to be / become (Delors, 2000).

In order to keep up with the changes in the economic, social level at European level, it was necessary to develop strategies to deal with the competition, which resulted in the emergence of the learning organizations.

The "opening" of the borders had the effect of human mobility: a large number of people found a job in other countries than in the native one. This has led to a myriad of changes both in terms of demographics and the economy.

In a globalized and digitalized era, the efforts of the European states tend to be directed towards the introduction of ICT in all teaching and learning processes, as a separate or cross-curricular discipline, according to a study carried out by the European Commission / EACEA / Euridyce in 2012.

The personalities that contributed to the construction of Europe set out to capitalize on the positive experiences of the states in order to build communication and exchange of ideas. Their mission was common, namely the transition from instruction to education, emphasizing the development of young people's lifelong learning skills for professional insertion into the labor market.

Within the European institutions (European Commission and European Parliament), the specialists set new directions on the common European dimension, the importance of multilingualism, the equality of education for women, the importance of lifelong learning, education being a path to social and technological progress, of adapting education to the challenges of the late twentieth century. European officials formulated initially limited European education policies, based on cooperation, information exchange and, much later, on the creation of specific programs aimed at increasing the mobility of students, teachers and qualified professionals throughout the Community.

References

Attali, J. (2008). *Francois Mitterand așa cum a fost*, București: Historia

Cucoș, C. (2002). *Pedagogie*, Iași: Editura Polirom.

Delors, J. (1996). *Education for tomorrow*, extract from The UNESCO Courier, April 1996, 7.

Delors, J. (ed.) (2000). Comoara lăuntrică. Raportul către UNESCO al Comisiei Internaționale pentru Educație în secolul XXI.Iași: Polirom.

Helmut Kohl, H. (1995). Le grand Européen qui s`en va, în "Le Monde", 11 mai 1995.

https://thepienews.com/pie-chat/androulla-vassiliou-european-commissioner-education,

Lejeune, R. (2000). Robert Schuman, père de l'Europe 1863-1963 : la politique, chemin de sainteté , Paris, Fayard, Paris: Edition Fayard.

Luzarraga, F.A., Llorente, M.G. (2011). *Europa viitorului. Tratatul de la Lisabona*. Iaşi: Polirom.

Monnet, J. (1976). *Mémoires*, Paris: Edition Fayard.

Pătruţiu-Balteş, L. (2012). *Epoca Mitterrand şi impactul său asupra construcţiei europene*, Iaşi: LUMEN

Scăunaş, S. (2008). *Uniunea Europeană. Construcţie, reformă, instituţii, drept*. Bucureşti: Editura C.H.Beck,68-72.

Sîmbeteanu, I. (accessed 2019) Părinții fondatori ai Uniunii Europene: Jean Monnet, vizionarul vânzător de coniac, care și-a încheiat studiile la vârsta de 16 ani, *Historia, retreived from* https://www.historia.ro/sectiune/portret/articol/parintii-fondatori-ai-uniunii-europene-jean-monnet-vizionarul-vanzator-de-coniac-care-si-a-incheiat-studiile-la-varsta-de-16-ani

Smith, B. (2014). Androulla Vassiliou, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism, Sport, Media and Youth, delves into the details of Europe's new student mobility and research programme Erasmus+ as it rolls out across Europe, *The Pie News*, May 2, 2014. https://thepienews.com/pie-chat/androulla-vassiliou-european-commissioner-education/

The Jean Monnet Association (accessed 2019).The history of the European Union. The European citizenship. Jean Monnet (1888-1979). *Historiasiglo20.org*, retreived from http://www.historiasiglo20.org/europe/monnet.htm

Vassiliou, A. (2010). Young talents for an ancient art, *Juvenes Translatores Award Ceremony*, Brussels, Charlemagne Building, Speech 10/131, 25 March 2010.

Vătăman, D., David, I. (2008). *România şi Uniunea Europeană. Istorie şi actualitate*. Bucureşti, ProUniversitaria, 27-29.