



Resolution 1193 (1999)¹

Second-chance schools – or how to combat unemployment and exclusion by means of education and training

(Extract from the Official Gazette of the Council of Europe – June 1999)

1. The Assembly is concerned about low achievement at school, which draws too many young Europeans into a spiral of failure. Leaving school early without completing their education, they are virtually excluded from the labour market.
2. Hundreds of thousands of adolescents and young adults in greater Europe fall outside the scope of training systems, and have no access to employment. The gap between the qualified and the unqualified is expanding, and the unemployment rate tends to be twice as high for the latter.
3. This situation is unacceptable to any policy maker because, as well as being unfair to the young people concerned, it is also a threat to social cohesion. It jeopardises the future of our model of democratic society and results in a tremendous waste of our most valuable asset: human resources.
4. Economic and social progress depends increasingly on development of the intellectual capital that is the basis for innovation and creative activity. Tomorrow's society will be based on information and knowledge, placing greater emphasis on human intelligence than on natural resources.
5. Our society has a major responsibility to offer all its members equal opportunities to participate in its development. This principle is the basis for the values that unite the member countries of the Council of Europe, which has presided over the emergence of human rights and promotes solidarity and social cohesion in Europe.
6. Investment in education and training will be the key to growth and progress. Equal access to knowledge and education must therefore be available to all, regardless of differences of gender, ethnic origin and income.
7. The European Commission has proposed to improve the integration prospects of young people excluded from the labour market by implementing pilot projects on second-chance schools (white paper on education and training "Teaching and learning: towards the learning society", 1995).
8. The Assembly considers that such projects should be extended to all European countries by setting up schools that pursue the following goals:
 - i. to mobilise all local forces and provide young people with high-quality educational resources in addition to the measures taken by the member states;

ii. to reintegrate unqualified young people by offering them a second chance through the setting-up of new education centres and schools and colleges as locally based as possible;

iii. to offer quality supervision by employing well-qualified teachers and trainers;

iv. to improve the motivation, ability to learn, basic knowledge and social skills of the young people concerned in order to make them more "employable".

9. This new type of school should be legally independent of traditional education systems so as to ensure a maximum level of autonomy and flexibility. The following methods should be applied:

i. a genuine, active tripartite partnership should be established between young people, schools and firms in order to help young people take up the challenge of successful personal, social and vocational integration by giving them the prospect of obtaining jobs at the end of the training period, which should not last more than two years;

ii. training should be provided at an appropriate pace and use methods based on the new educational and multimedia technologies, in close co-operation with partner firms;

iii. there should be intensive pooling of teaching methods between second-chance schools;

iv. sports and cultural activities should be organised as part of the training programme.

10. The Assembly accordingly invites the governments and parliaments of Council of Europe member states and urges states enjoying special guest status to:

i. take note of the social and educational objectives of the "second-chance schools" scheme;

ii. produce for a given geographic area – neighbourhood, town or sector – a report containing the demographic data relating to school statistics and a review of the voluntary sector;

iii. define on the basis of the above the needs relevant to the sections of the population targeted by the second-chance schools scheme;

iv. implement one or more pilot projects, bearing in mind the above considerations;

v. evaluate these pilot projects and, if appropriate, consider implementing them on a larger scale;

vi. incorporate such a scheme into their general machinery for combating unemployment and exclusion.

11. The Assembly calls on the European Union to consider the possibility of co-financing second-chance schools projects in associated countries of central and eastern Europe.

1. Assembly debate on 22 June 1999 (19th Sitting) (see Doc. 8282, report of the Committee on Culture and Education, rapporteur: Mr Kollwelter).
Text adopted by the Assembly on 22 June 1999 (19th Sitting)