

## **OBESSU Position Paper on EC Communication**

### **“Improving and modernising education”**

#### **Modern education is inclusive**

OBESSU advocates for ensuring quality education for all students, despite their social, cultural, geographical or economical background; in this sense OBESSU agrees with the concern expressed by the Communication regarding students with a disadvantaged socio-economic background, which are over-represented among students with low-achievements. Furthermore, OBESSU urges to pay more attention to student physical and mental health. Every school student has the right to concentrate fully on their studies without worrying about their health, financial or social situation<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, OBESSU demands:

- free education for all without access barriers,
- study material, transport costs, food and other supplies should be provided by schools for free,
- a student grant to secure that students can live independently,
- more attention to students' health services in schools.

#### **Modern education is innovative**

OBESSU understands more diverse teaching and learning methods as crucial aspects of modern education. OBESSU promotes the principle of learner-centred education to be the core value of all pedagogical methods in school, and claims for teachers to have advanced pedagogical skills, reflective practice and ability to adapt teaching to the needs of each individual as well as to the needs of the group of learners as a whole<sup>2</sup>. OBESSU demands:

- innovative teaching methods centred on learners,
- learner-led adaptation of teaching methods and content in classrooms,
- increased peer-to-peer learning,
- interdisciplinary learning,
- balanced and critical integration of digital tools in classrooms,
- assessment to be seen as a cooperation between teachers and students.

#### **Modern education is democratic**

OBESSU welcomes the fact that the Communication pushes for putting education on top of the policy agenda; nevertheless, it is not acceptable that the Commission will draw policy conclusions and support policy development mainly based on the PISA data and the cooperation with the OECD: “This way of assessment completely overlooks factors such as the mental well-being of the students, democratic school structures and the social climate of the school. Aiming at assessing quality in education, not only quantitative factors, but also other elements characterising quality education have to be taken into account”<sup>3</sup>. OBESSU believes that one of the key forms of modernising education is to make schools more democratic in order to adapt to the learners needs. OBESSU believes that democratic schools will foster active and democratic citizens for the future. It is not enough to teach about democracy in classes. OBESSU demands:

- development of democratic structures in schools, giving school students an equal say in every part of the school community,

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<sup>1</sup> OBESSU Political Platform p.7,  
[https://obessu.org/site/assets/files/1337/obessu\\_political\\_platform\\_adopted\\_ga\\_2017.pdf](https://obessu.org/site/assets/files/1337/obessu_political_platform_adopted_ga_2017.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> OBESSU Political Platform, p.11

<sup>3</sup> OBESSU Political Platform, p. 13-14

- seats for school students in school boards and committees,
- supporting the development and function of democratic school student councils.

In this sense, OBESSU appreciates the approach of MEP Krystyna Łybacka to the modernisation of education in the EU, that stresses the fact that “modernising education should encompass the different dimensions of individual development. Going to school is not just about getting a job. Good work is a shared core of both education and social improvement. Students need to develop not only labour market skills, but also social skills”<sup>4</sup>.

OBESSU is looking forward to receiving the CULT Committee decision on the European Parliament report on the Communication, and to continue advocating for high-quality education for all European students.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/130600/CULT-Newsletter-19-October-2017.pdf>