



Doc. 12061

13 October 2009

Families' freedom of choice in education in each member state

Motion for a resolution

presented by Mr Volonte' and others

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only the members who have signed it

Many member states of the Council of Europe are afflicted by social unrest, especially among their youth, resulting particularly from a serious and widespread emergency in education.

The economic and financial crisis is itself a result of a failure in ethical instruction, which has led people to make irresponsible choices that are inimical to the common good.

Economic difficulties notwithstanding, it is clearly necessary to dedicate greater attention and resources to all those who work in society towards the attainment of the human, moral, spiritual and cultural development of the new generations.

The right of every person to be educated implies introducing true freedom of education, so that each family, which is the sole holder of the responsibility for the education of its children, may choose its school on the basis of its beliefs.

Compared with the responsibility of the family, schools have a secondary function.

Some of the school systems in several member states continue to operate according to a centralised model, whereby the state maintains a monopoly on education to the exclusion of the family as a decision-making force in the educational process.

It is necessary to accept and sustain real freedom of choice in education to enable genuine pluralism in schooling, in order to improve the competitiveness of educational institutions with a view to enhancing quality and making the best use of merit.

It is necessary to fully implement the basic principles of Part I of the European Social Charter. In particular, the economic and legal violation by many states of the freedom of educational choice of families is prejudicial to the rights enshrined in articles 4, 9, 10 and 16 of the revised Social Charter of 3 May 1996.

Autonomy, subsidiarity and equal opportunity in schooling are constitutional principles that should be guaranteed and promoted by the more democratic, free, socially equitable and efficient states and in Europe's most modern systems of education.

Freedom of education is a measure of the genuinely democratic nature of a society and a necessary condition for achieving both autonomy and increased quality in all schools.

The Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly intends to monitor compliance of the right to effective and non-discriminatory education and freedom of families and children to choose between state and non-state schools.

Signed (see overleaf)

*Signed*¹:

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¹ EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group
ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EDG: European Democratic Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: not registered in a group