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Policy makers' involvement coordinator

## **POLICY MAKERS' MEETING**

**In the framework of**

### **SIRIUS GENERAL MEETING IN BARCELONA**

3 - 4 April 2014

*Palau Macaya – Barcelona and L'Hospitalet de Llobregat*

## **LEARNING COMMUNITY OF SIRIUS POLICY MAKERS**

*Report on the process and results*

### **Participants**

19 Policy Makers from Croatia, Austria, Germany (Hessen), Belgium (Flanders), Estonia, Lithuania, Portugal, Spain (Catalonia), Norway, and Latvia participated in the first SIRIUS meeting of policy makers. They represented Ministries of Education, Education management bodies of the local municipalities, and national integration agencies. More policy makers from SIRIUS network countries were invited (Germany, France, Bulgaria, Ireland, Greece), but could not reach Barcelona due to conflicting agendas and other reasons.

<b>Country and institution</b>	<b>Name</b>
Latvia, Society Integration Fund	Alda Sebre
Germany, Hessian Ministry for Social Affairs and Integration	Layla Bahmad
Lithuania, Ministry of Education and Science	Vilma Balčiute
Lithuania, Ministry of Education and	Ona Čepuleniene

SIRIUS: European Policy Network on the education of children and young people with a migrant background

Lifelong Learning Programme – Call for proposals EAC/01/2011 – Decision no 1357/2008/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council



Science	
Austria, Ministry for Education and Woman's Affairs /Representative in EU	Martin Pletersek
Portugal, High Commission for Migration	Pedro Calado
Estonia, Ministry of Education and Research	Kersti Kiviruut
Spain ( Catalonia), L'Hospitalet Municipality ( Music school)	Nuria Sempere
Spain ( Catalonia), L'Hospitalet Municipality	Pep Valerilla
Spain ( Catalonia), L'Hospitalet Municipality	Teresa Sambola
Spain ( Catalonia), Department of Education	Jaume Viñals
Belgium ( Flanders), Flemish Educational council	Patrice Caremans
Croatia, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports	Nada Jakir
EU, DG Education and Culture, School and ERASMUS + unit	Diana Jablonska
Norway, NAFO ( National Centre for Multicultural Education)	Sigrun Aamodt
SIRIUS	Berta Espona
SIRIUS	Liesma Ose

### Preparation stage

Before the meeting, on February 12, invitees had received a short questionnaire, where they were asked to submit recent statistics on the number/percentage of migrant pupils and students in their country, existing relevant education policy provisions, consultative bodies with migrant representation if such exist. (See country data sheets in zip. file attached).

Revised agenda for the meeting, agreed on in January 17 by the Steering committee, suggested initial involvement of policy makers in the opening part of General Meeting to familiarize them with the context of SIRIUS as a network, outputs delivered in 2012 and 2013 by Working Packages to the following debate in a professional circle. Also, a school visit in L'Hospitalet de Llobregat was included as a show case on Catalonia's achievements in the integration of migrant pupils in the mainstream education. Also, important asset in this first separate SIRIUS network policy makers' gathering was an

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active participation and input of Diana Jablonska, representative of European Commission, DG Education and Culture.

## Process

The contextual approach and gradual involvement in the network agenda and familiarization with impressive outputs presented by WPs' leaders proved itself as important and has been valued by new participants (Latvia, Estonia, Portugal), less by more experienced ones (Croatia, Lithuania), but has influenced the timing for actual needs assessment and discussions on the future policy developments (no time was left for the latter) of the meeting.

12.00. - 13.30. Field visit in L'Hospitalet de Llobregat School and spontaneous conversation with headmaster, teacher and 11-12 years old pupils were educational and productive, and all participants have appreciated this opportunity. Catalan colleagues, by immersing meeting participants into a classical music performance by pupils, have proved that skills enhancement (in this case- musical/performativity competence) , implemented in a differentiated and culturally sensitive way could cause significant raise of self-esteem and meaningful further studies of pupils from migrant descent (representatives from 16 cultures attend the school).

After common lunch in 14.30-15.00 and short introduction circle SIRIUS network policy makers' involvement coordinator Liesma Ose has presented activities for year 2014, especially designed for networks' policy makers. (See *short PP presentation in the attachment*). Coordinator has emphasized the importance of political support to SIRIUS goals and values, and underlined the significance of each individual involvement into sharing and learning process which will be continued during Riga Forum of Experiences (June 5-6) and contribution to the SIRIUS final conference *joint vision/policy recommendations* paper, as well as the Memorandum of Understanding, to be signed by the representatives of all the SIRIUS countries in Final conference in November. She has also contextualized the forthcoming work of a newly established "learning community of SIRIUS policy makers" as a potential contribution to the *future EU policy dialogue* platform on migrant education, being currently developed as a proposal by the MPG.

Meeting's guest from the European Commission, DG Education and Culture Diana Jablonska actively joined the debate by presenting an opinion *On Developments in EU support to school policy: potential roles for partners and*

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*networks*. She emphasized the importance of best practices of schooling, as an excellent example positioning recent school visit in L’Hospitalet. We need to know what works, and what does not, that is why the analysis/cases studies of potentially important initiatives in EU scale are so important. SIRIUS Thematic workshops, peer reviews and policy briefs ensure the dissemination of this kind of knowledge. Ms. Jablonska recognized the importance of the message that should be distributed across the EU countries “School who supports migrant pupils’ benefits everybody”. Consequently, a transformation of organizational culture in schools and schooling philosophy is needed. She also underlined the importance of inclusive preschool education; necessity of transversal models of initial teacher training – core curriculum for intercultural pedagogy specialty. Norwegian SIRIUS colleagues from NAFO (National Centre for Multicultural Education), presented a bilingual teacher BS programme available in 9 higher education establishments nationwide which could be a possible source of studies and further adaptation in EU countries. In this context also the idea of a short -track teacher training programmes like GBs “Teach first”, USA “Teach for America” could be adaptable , focusing (in this version) on bright students with migrant background potentially entering the schools. In Latvia such a programme, called “Mission possible”, has been successfully operating on private financing grounds since 2007.

Different EU countries have different sets of indicators on how to assess intercultural school environment and performance (GB, Portugal, Latvia etc.) Ms. Jablonska, finishing her dialogical presentation, posed a question: what should be done more – mainstreaming existing instruments or developing new ones?

*15.00. - 15.30. Country representatives on migrant education: current needs.* Coordinator has invited country representatives express their needs and concerns, structured as responses to three problem areas:

I GOOD GOVERNANCE (Is the whole education system inclusive enough regarding the education needs of all stake holders? Is the distribution of all kind of resources in education centralized, decentralized, combined – circular? Does money follow pupils (and his/her special education needs) or does the country has a program based funding instead?

II CAPACITIES OF POLICY IMPLEMENTERS (Does the country have enough interculturally competent, bi – or multi- lingual teachers, school administrators? Is there intercultural leadership among local/regional policy makers? Is it the right time to plan and implement targeted measures to tackle



human resources mentioned above? Are there any best practices in this regard on the ground?)

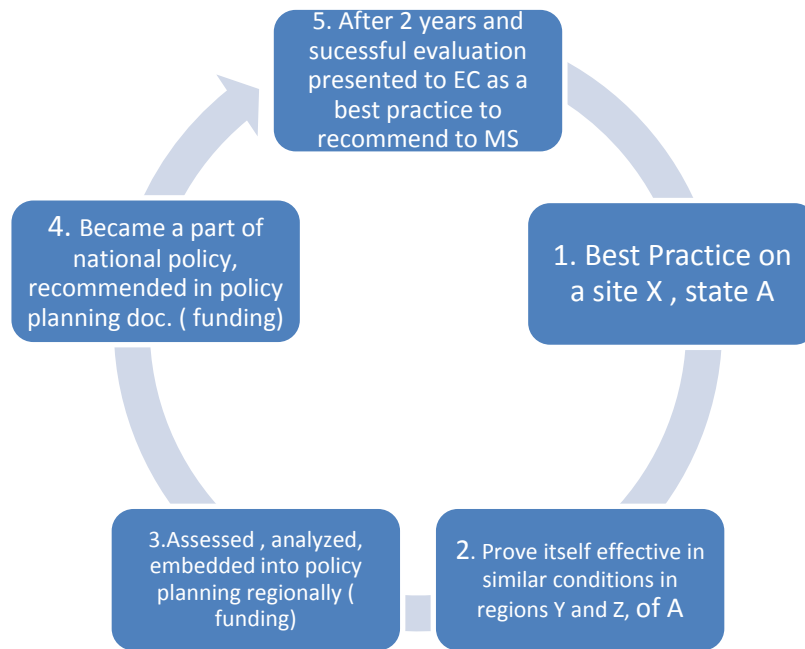
### III. EFFECTIVE MAINSTREAMING OF GOOD PRACTICES NATIONALLY and INTERNATIONALLY (Does any regional cooperation exist? Do national media support or hinder migrant education?)

All participants joined the discussion. Pedro Calado (Portugal) emphasized the influence of structural factors on development/implementation of migrant pupils/students' friendly education policies. Having in mind several examples of failed multicultural policy models that have been separating communities, boosting self-esteem at their best, but not increasing participation of their representatives, Mr. Calado instead offered a Model of interculturality, presuming policy implementation as social design of communities (co-existence, co-creation) in a broader sense. He also presented a model describing how directive, centralized and top – down policy making in education could be transformed into a circular model via assessment and analysis of mistakes. The procedure could be summarized in these steps: *best practice – analyzed and assessed, adapted via several variations, local adjustment – mainstreamed regionally – tested – mainstreamed nationally – assessed – embedded into policy design, legal provisions made.*

Sustainability strategies of inclusive education of migrant pupils/students were commented by Latvian participant Alda Sebre and German participant Layla Bahmad (Germany, Hessen). Answer to the question *How to maintain innovative inclusive strategies – projects?* In the Hessen, Portuguese and Latvian contexts were “co-funding”. One should encourage local political actors to co – fund best practices, to "own" them and to experience freedom of implementation, which is always much easier in the decentralized settings.

Norwegian participant Sigrun Aamodt presented the work of NAFO, mandated by Ministry of Education. The keystone was permanent involvement on all levels of intervention, delegating many responsibilities to academics, teacher training colleges, keeping all actors involved via continued involvement and activities.

Through common efforts, the group of SIRIUS policy makers proposed mainstreaming of best practices on an EU scale, offering a Circle of Change.



Regarding targeted measures, the Croatian representative Nada Jakir expressed that instead of many separate targeted policy strategies (for Roma, for migrant pupils, for ethnic minorities etc.); one holistic model would be the best. In this context, the Lithuanian approach should be acknowledged: policies are elaborated having in mind education needs both of migrant students/pupils, refugees, asylees, and reemigrants. Estonian participant Ms. Kersti Kivirrut presented customized services for national minority/migrants/reemigreees: differentiated approach in language acquisition and exams. Flemish representative Patrice Caremans openly discussed the issue in national policy- it has proved to be almost impossible to overcome the routine of vocational education as the only realistic carrier path for persons with low SES and migrant background. Consequently, instead of targeted measures, holistic mainstream education for everyone would be promoted. Recent NAMS study (EC, 2013) proved that both targeted measures and holistic inclusive education policy design could be equally valued in terms of meeting the needs of pupils/students with migrant background.

Final comments were made by the Austrian representative, Mr. Martin Pletersek. In his opinion, there is no question regarding implementation: “we know what to do, but it stops on the local, school level.” A possible cause of this problem might be lack of leadership to bring it forward.



The discussion was started by EC representative Ms. Jablonska emphasizing the whole school approach, where leadership plays a crucial role, and the debate ended here. Policies are meant to open schools, but policy makers cannot do it on their own: school administrators and teachers are a crucial force. Finally, it is up to the leadership – either to design closed (exclusive) or opened (inclusive) school environment for everyone.

*15.30.-16.00. Interactive group work- scenario development exercise "Possible futures". Unfortunately, due to restricted time resources, it was decided to exempt this important exercise from the meeting agenda and to put it on Riga Forum agenda.*

*16. 00. Departure from L'Hospitalet de Llobregat, arrival in Palau Macaya – Barcelona*

## **Results**

- Contextual approach of policy makers' involvement has paid off – appreciation of SIRIUS as a tool and resource for further policy making from the international comparison angle was shared by participants.
- School visit: empowerment approach to working with pupils from migrant background in order to promote social change, demonstrated by school staff and Nuria Sempere, influenced the participants and the EC representative Ms. Jablonska deeply.
- During the meeting learning and sharing process started, initiated by the EU DG Education and Culture representative Ms. Diana Jablonska.
- The first round of needs assessment was only partially successful due to time restraints. Productive sharing and learning process was started and will be further extended during Riga Forum of Experiences in June 5-6.
- The most discussed issues were performance assessment tools (incl. view that using PISA as a universal set of criteria is outdated and does not reflect real diversity of human capabilities across cultures) and importance to test and introduce new tools for

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formative and summative assessment in line with 1) “third culture kids” (David C. Pollock<sup>1</sup>) learning styles; 2) competence-measurement oriented, performed in action; teacher training, sustainability of good practices, errors of inclusive education policy implementation, integration strategies – from accepting –but-dividing multiculturalism to interactive interculturalism.

## Conclusions

Output planned for this meeting along with SIRUS activity plan 2014 was achieved.

Before the meeting, new data regarding migrant education policies were collected from participating policy makers’ (homework on national situation update (statistics, institutional structure, participation of migrant organizations) in order to

*Create the state –of –art documentation regarding migrant education policies in SIRIUS countries.*

*Presentation of SIRIUS as a resource for policy making and identification of their expectations was accomplished during common and separate sessions on April 3 and 4.*

*Mapping exercise: national structures, identification of differences between old and new migration countries was carried out by participants in a round-table discussion manner. Detailed information is presented in the attachments on country data.*

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<sup>1</sup>A Third Culture Kid (TCK) is a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents' culture. The TCK frequently builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any. Although elements from each culture may be assimilated into the TCK's life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background