DRAFT AGENDA

REVIEW OF EDUCATION POLICY IN ESTONIA, LATVIA AND LITHUANIA

Helsinki, 26 and 27 June 2000
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

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Monday, 26 June

10h00-11h15 Opening Session

Mr. Gaby Hostens, Chair on behalf of the Education Committee, OECD

Representative, Ministry of Education of Finland

Mr. Tõnis Lukas, Minister of Education of Estonia

Mr. Karlis Greiskalns, Minister of Education and Science of Latvia

Mr. Kornelijus Platelis, Minister of Education and Science of Lithuania

Mr. Barry McGaw, Deputy Director, Directorate for Education, Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, OECD

Mr. Peter de Rooij, Director, European Training Foundation

Mr. Aims McGuinness, Rapporteur -- Overview

11h15 - 11h45 Coffee Break

11h45 - 13h00 Pre-school and compulsory education: All three countries are implementing new requirements for pre-school/early childhood education, national curricula and new testing/assessment requirements for pre-school through grade 9/10. Efforts are being made to ensure that all children are ready to begin school and to improve the quality of education for all students in compulsory education. What should be the goals for pre-school and compulsory education? What are the lessons from recent reforms?

13h00 - 14h30 Lunch Break
14h30 - 16h00  **Upper secondary education and the interfaces between secondary general and vocational secondary education and higher education:** What strategies can be pursued to diversify upper secondary education while at the same time retaining high expectations and options for all students? How to achieve both improvements in quality and optimisation for rural schools? What programmes and schools should be retained in the smallest communities (pre-school, primary school), and how can this be done in ways that ensure quality in teaching and learning? What are the options for developing larger and better upper secondary schools? What about linking secondary vocational education to general secondary education at the municipal and regional levels? Should students with special needs be mainstreamed, and if so, what training and support system should be in place to make this really work in the schools? What is the relationship between school leaving and university entrance examinations and how do these affect reform of upper-secondary education? What issues regarding equity should be considered?

16h00 - 16h30  **Coffee Break**

16h30 - 18h00  **Systemic change:** What are the conditions for systemic reform? Each of these countries has been aggressively pursuing new national curricula, standards, assessments, and examinations. All have the problem of inadequate support systems (in-service education, instructional materials, training for school directors) for teachers and schools to implement the new reforms. How to reform pre- and in-service training and foster policies and strategies to create a better interface between pedagogical universities or other institutions and the need for change? What are the state's options for leverage to get the institutions' attention to issues such as teacher education? What is the role of distance learning? What financing and governance policies should be in place to provide incentives for change and to provide the support systems for change?

*Reception, hosted by the Ministry of Education of Finland*
Tuesday 27 June 2000

9h30 – 11h00  
Regional co-ordination of vocational education and training, employment services and other education services: How can countries develop strong relationships between vocational education and training and regional labour markets and economic development? What is the future of regional training centres? What should be the relationship between state employment services (short-term training, training for the unemployed, etc.) and the formal vocational education and training system? What should be the relationship between reform of general secondary and secondary vocational education? How should financing and governing relationships change to support these relationships (e.g., more responsibility for both at the municipal and regional levels)? What is the future of open/distance learning to support regional training networks?

11h00 – 11h30  
Coffee Break

13h00 – 14h30  
Lunch Break

14h30 – 16h00  
Tertiary education: How should tertiary education systems change as they move from elite to mass higher education? What is the appropriate balance between institutional autonomy/decentralisation, and the State interest in national priorities and accountability? In the light of growing diversity in learning options at this level, how should quality assurance and accreditation standards and processes be designed and strengthened? What changes are needed within universities such as changes in curriculum and pedagogy?

What is the future role of open/distance learning in delivering tertiary education? What changes are necessary to policy at the institutional and State levels to move to a system of open/distance learning to support lifelong learning?

What alternatives for financing of tertiary education should countries consider? Alternatives to traditional "budget and non-budget student" policies? Transparent funding formulae using a combination of costs by discipline, profession, level of study, and the number of students? What are the implications for equity of student fees and loans? What are alternatives for funding of research and other missions?

16h00 – 16h30  
Coffee Break
National leadership and the future role of ministries of education: How to develop a general strategy for education (cutting across pre-school to higher education, adult learning, etc.) using principles of lifelong learning? How is the role of ministers and ministries of education changing? How can countries develop and sustain a long-term agenda for reform? What strategies can be used to engage the general public, social partners, NGOs and others in support of improving education? What should be the balance between decentralisation to schools, institutions and regions, and the responsibility of ministries in system co-ordination, supervision, quality assurance, and technical assistance? What are the essential capacities of ministries in the areas of planning, policy research and analysis?

Closing remarks

Mr. Gaby Hostens, Chairman of the Education Committee