



Republic of Bulgaria
ECONOMIC
AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

RESOLUTION

on

"MEASURES AND ACTIONS TO REDUCE THE SHARE OF EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS"

(own-initiative resolution)

Sofia, 2013

The President Board of the Economic and Social Council (ESC) decided to develop a resolution on the following topic:

**"Measures and Actions to Reduce the Share
of Early School Leavers"**

ESC President – Prof. Lalko Dulevski, submitted for discussion to the Plenary Session the draft resolution adopted by the President Board.

At its meeting held on 26 November 2013 the Plenary Session adopted the resolution.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The problems associated with early school leaving, and their impact on the educational status of young people in the long term has been one of the priorities of the Economic and Social Council (ESC) ever since its establishment.
2. In a series of opinions and resolutions on demographic challenges, responsible parenthood, the problems of education and vocational education and training, and policies restricting early school leaving ESC has analysed the problem and proposed measures to solve it, one of which is the development of a national strategy to reduce the share of early school leavers to less than 11%.
3. ESC participated in the public discussion of the draft national "Strategy for Preventing and Reducing the Share of Dropouts and Early School Leavers (2013-2020)" (the Strategy), by adopting on 26 April 2013 a special resolution on this issue. In it ESC presented concrete proposals concerning the discussed vision, strategic and operational objectives, and key measures related to the prevention, intervention and compensation, which should lead to the achievement of the national target for Bulgaria – reaching by 2020 a share of early school leavers below 11% and 12.5% for 2012.
4. ESC expresses its satisfaction that the adopted on 30 October 2013 by the Council of Ministers "Strategy for Reducing the Share of Early School Leavers (2013-2020)" reported findings, suggestions and recommendations of a number of acts issued by ESC on this subject¹.
5. ESC welcomes the intersectoral approach, underlying the Strategy, bringing together actions at the municipal and school level guaranteed by the Coordination Mechanism between the institutions as well as the participation of NGOs in the development and implementation of specific policies for education. ESC has proposed the implementation of such an approach in many of its acts.
6. In its resolution² ESC found a trend of decline in the net enrolment rate of the population in groups 7-10 and 11-14 years of age and recommended indicators strategy pay particular attention to the degree of involvement in the education of these age groups, and persons who never attended school. ESC is pleased to note that these recommendations have been take into consideration in the adopted Strategy and that the following new indicators have been formulated:
 - share of the population aged 7-11 in school education;
 - share of the population aged 12-14 in school;

¹ ESC Opinion on "Policies Reducing Early School Leaving" and Resolution on the "Draft Strategy for Preventing and Reducing the Share of Dropouts and Early School Leavers (2013-2020)."

² Resolution on the "Draft Strategy for Preventing and Reducing Dropouts and Early School Leavers (2013-2020)."

- share of the population that has never attended school in the age groups 7-11, 12-14, 15-17 and 18-19.
7. According to ESC, is especially important that the guiding principles of the Strategy – coherence, partnership, innovation, transparency, as well as the measures laid down therein, to be promoted among the educational community. Guided by the belief that overcoming the negative trends in education that require timely and prompt action involving all stakeholder institutions, ESC initiated a series of regional roundtables on issues related to early school leaving. Public discussions were held in the municipalities of the north-western and the south-eastern³ districts as well as in Sofia, where they were also attended by representatives of the ESC of Spain.
 8. With this resolution ESC summarizes the reasons for early school leaving and makes a proposal to the responsible institutions specific measures to prevent and reduce early school leaving and vocational training for young people with primary or lower education, which may find their place in the action plan for the implementation of the Strategy.

II. EDUCATION AS A NATIONAL PRIORITY

1. ESC has repeatedly stated its position that education should be a national priority of the institutions and society as a whole. According to the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria "school education up to 16 years old is mandatory"⁴. Education is defined as a priority in the "National Development Programme: Bulgaria 2020" and in the next programming period a separate operational programme was created: "Science and Education for Smart Growth". However, early school leaving and the low level of received education continue to be the main factors for the lack of sustainable employment and poverty that affect the moral and cultural values of the nation.
 - 1.1. Considering that the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria stipulates the right of every Bulgarian citizen to education and ensures compulsory free education to citizens to 16 years of age, ESC believes that the national target, adopted in the context of the Europe 2020, for reducing early school leaving to 11% should be much more ambitious.
 - 1.2. ESC pays particular attention to the positive role played by Bulgarian cultural community centres ("читалища") in the process of education, integration and creation (preservation) of values in different regions of the country. ESC also highlights the role and capabilities of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church to have positive impact and promote the moral values of the nation, particularly among young people. In this regard, ESC recommends that the state should provide the necessary resources to support the activities of the Bulgarian cultural community centres, which exist in most settlements in the country as centres for spreading knowledge and preserving traditions.

³ Varna, Sliven, Tundzha

⁴ The Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria, Art. 53 (2).

2. ESC finds that the majority of students do not do (do not cope with) their homework, which strongly affects the results of the learning process. The reasons for this, according to ESC, are: the lack of adequate living conditions; lack of interest and even negative attitude on part of the parents; inadequate funding, scope and quality of pre-school education to achieve the minimum required output level of proficiency in the official language of the Republic of Bulgaria; excessive complexity and heavy academic style of teaching content, etc.
 - 2.1. ESC finds that one of the reasons for early school leaving is associated with the poverty of the Roma community, which has many dimensions – poor housing conditions and health status, low level of educational, high unemployment. This affects their attitude to school attendance and the desire for education.
 - 2.2. According to ESC, the primary task of our educational system is the reintegration of school leavers through appropriate training, they should be given the so-called. "second chance education" and professional qualification. For this purpose it is necessary to expand the opportunities for vocational education and training through "dual" training and validation of competences acquired through formal and informal means, including by providing opportunities for educating parents (at least to completing the degree "primary education") by which to transform the negative trend towards the creation of generations of traditionally uneducated and unemployed families.
 - 2.3. ESC proposes the introduction of a targeted voucher system within the monthly child support until the completion of secondary education, which transforms a certain share of the social benefit for children in preschool and school age into a targeted voucher. Its purpose must be for school materials, tools, supplies, food, clothing and shoes that should be received through the schools in which students are enrolled and trained. This will ensure the targeting of these benefits and their stimulatory effect on the education of children.
 - 2.4. ESC believes that within the all-day organisation of the school day should be given more importance to the work of interest to students and a practical orientation in the curriculum.
 - 2.5. According to the ESC, childcare fees for children of compulsory pre-school age (5 and 6) should be removed and those for children up to 5 years of age should be significantly reduced. It is also necessary to provide assistance to children and students at risk of early school leaving due to financial difficulty.
 - 2.6. ESC finds that the teaching content through basic education is too complex. A good deal of the textbooks for studying different disciplines are written with a heavy academic style that does not adequately correspond to the age of the students and the nature of their perceptions. There is a trend for elements of teaching content from upper grades to be gradually "moved" to become part of the teaching content of lower grades.
 - 2.7. ESC notes with concern the inappropriate increase in the number of textbooks for basic subjects as a result of the liberalisation of the market.
 - 2.7.1. On the one hand, this creates major difficulties for teachers and students, as well as financial difficulties for their parents. On the other hand, it prevents the "equal start"

for students and blocks the free movement in the system, i.e. free transition from one school to another;

2.7.2. ESC recommends that the international experience should be examined in ordering, creating and approving textbooks and other learning resources, while considering the benefits and disadvantages of the introduction of a single textbook on base subjects;

2.7.3. ESC proposes that committees for assessment and approval of textbooks should include national organisations of trade unions and employers in the field of education;

2.7.4. ESC believes that after the state orders, finances and approved the creation of certain books, they should be available in electronic form to the public, including teachers, students and their parents;

2.7.5. ESC recommends that the possibility of reducing VAT on textbooks in order to ensure access to them should also be discussed.

- 2.8. Considering the fact that state educational requirements apply to all students in the country, ESC recommends, on the basis of a broad public debate, to uniformise the content of textbooks for students to the point of completing their secondary course of education. ESC also proposes the style of presenting the learning content to be as consistent with the age of the students as possible, using practical examples, illustrations and other additional forms of interactive information.
3. ESC recommends that the principle of transparency and openness should be applied to the management of education at the municipal level and that such discussions should be held with the participation of the parents. This will not only ensure transparency, but also shared responsibility and increased involvement of all stakeholders.
4. ESC finds a number of discrepancies in the statistics provided by the National Statistical Institute (NSI) and the Regional Education Inspectorates (REI) on the number of school leavers in a given year. On the one hand, NSI does not provide details of the data available in the series. On the other hand, REI, while providing more detailed information, do not account for factors such as reasons for leaving school; continuing their education abroad; changing the place of residence/school within the country. ESC believes that in order to overcome the challenges associated with participation in the scope of education, it is necessary to ensure the most accurate and current information.
- 4.1. Having received broad public support for its proposal, ESC again recommends the introduction of a unified educational number (register) which will provide individual information for each student, the schools that he or she has attended, his or her academic achievements in individual subjects, and the level of completed education, incl. the last completed educational level and the student's enrolment in the next grade (year of study).

4.2. ESC believes that the integration of such information system and allowing access to the competent state bodies to it will help solve a number of problems such as:

- proving the completed educational degree to regional labour offices and job centres;
- tracking of the so-called "occasional" students who often change schools;
- analysing the number of unexcused and excused absences, and the reasons for them. It is also possible to monitor and control speculations with absences excused by medical leave;
- it would help keep track of the periods and reasons for leaving school;
- realization of the so-called "Youth Guarantee", etc.

4.3. Examples of countries using such an information system are Great Britain, the Netherlands, Germany and Italy. Despite the differences in the formulation and implementation of such an information system, ESC believes that given the pressing issues in the education sector in Bulgaria and the need for significantly more accurate and more comprehensive information on qualitative and quantitative processes, it is necessary that the responsible institutions (especially the Ministry of Education, the National Statistical Institute, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Employment Agency and the municipalities⁵) To join forces and develop a plan for the establishment of a register by individual education number (profile) for each student and Bulgarian citizen.

5. ESC believes that the procedure for recognising completed stages of schooling conducted in other countries⁶ is too administratively complicated. It largely prevents the smooth transition back to the Bulgarian education system for children who have studied in another country due to the labour migration of their parents or other reasons.

5.1. According to ESC, the "clumsiness" of the current Regulation can be seen as a cause for discouragement in education and is a prerequisite for school leavers.

5.2. ESC notes that based on the open labour market within the European Union, the number of Bulgarians who participate in seasonal employment abroad is increasing. The number of children in primary education leaving school and diving as a reason for this "departure abroad"⁷ is constantly increasing. For the 2007-2008 school year, these children make up 23.7% of school leavers from grade I to VIII, whereas for 2011-2012 school year – their share rose to 35.8%.

⁵ Education Act - Art. 36 (1) (amended - SG, issue 36 of 1998, previous version of Article. 36 amended - SG, issue 90 of 2002)

⁶ REGULATION № 2 of 14 April 2003 for the recognition of completed stages of schooling or degrees of education and professional qualification on the basis of documents issued by foreign schools. Issued by the Minister of Education and Science, Prom. SG, issue 40 of 29 April 2003, effective from 1 May 2003, amended. and suppl. issue. 60 of 22 July 2005, issue 32 of 28 April 2009, issue 78 of 7 October 2011, effective on 8 November 2011.

⁷ According to NSI data: Dynamic order "Students and Leavers by reasons for leaving and completed educational level".

- 5.3. According to ESC, it is necessary to simplify the procedure for recognising completed stages and grades of schooling or degrees of education and professional qualification documents issued by foreign schools for children who wish to continue their education in Bulgaria. ESC recommends that it is of high priority to create a streamlined procedure for recognition of completed grades, phases or levels of school-age children who have studied abroad for a period of less than one (academic) year.
- 5.4. ESC recommends that more attention should be paid not so much to the "completeness" of the submitted documents from the foreign school, but to the results of equivalency examinations in basic school subjects. If the results of such examinations show that the student has the necessary basic knowledge to build on in the coming year, it is morally unjust to hinder his or her education due to administrative obstacles.
- 5.5. ESC proposes to give greater attention to the forms and systems for validation and certification of formal and informal education and training received to facilitate the integration of students in the national education system.
6. ESC finds a number of negative phenomena and processes that are explained mainly as a consequence of the system of delegated budgets. The first and most obvious consequence is that from a recipient of the public service "education" the student becomes the condition/factor for its funding (through the so-called. unified funding standards). Each student leaving school means not only that there may be restructuring of the division of students into classes, as well as a decrease in teacher work load, but it also means less revenue for the school, which leads to various unlawful practices for the retention of such students:
- concealment or falsification of the actual number of excused and unexcused absences of the student;
 - issuing certificates for attendance (required from the parents to receive child benefit from the social funds);
 - artificially increasing the academic score of the student by subject/discipline or vice versa – artificially decreasing the score in order to keep the student in this school and reduce the possibility of his or her admission to other better schools;
 - admission to the next grade, despite the fact that the student has not performed up to standard in one or more subjects, etc.
- 6.1. ESC believes that the system of funding places schools in smaller settlements at a disadvantage. While in big cities "students are fighting for a particular school" in smaller settlements "it is the school that is fighting for the students". In this case the school will have to either retain the students at all costs, or it will find itself forced to reduce the number of class divisions, to lay off teachers, or even close down.
- 6.2. The model of funding based on the number of students poses another problem for the protected, focal and/or schools in small settlements. In the merged classes in which students from different class divisions learn together, as in the so-called "small classes", the teacher is required to teach the planned material regardless of the number of children. However, when the financing is based on the unified funding standards, i.e. per student, it turns out

that the teacher's salary depends precisely on the number of students. Therefore, the ESC recommends in smaller schools where there are undersized and/or merged classes, provisions should be made for funding (exceptionally) based on the number of class divisions, not on the number of students in each of them.

- 6.3. ESC calls for improving the enrolment of children in primary education and overcoming enrolment only on paper (hidden non-attendance). According to ESC, this phenomenon is another unforeseen consequence of the system of delegated budgets.
- 6.4. To avoid a new phase of optimisation of the school network in the country, ESC recommends reviewing the statutory regulations relating to the application of the system of delegated budget for schools in smaller settlements. It is necessary to create an additional mechanism for their financing, so that in these schools, despite the smaller number of students it would be possible to ensure as much as possible good quality education.
7. ESC notes the need for additional financial and educational resources that would make possible the integration of migrants and refugees.
8. According to ESC, a problem with many dimensions (motivational, structural, a question of values, etc.) is the low level of participation in education after completing the primary school phase, or – low rate of completion of secondary education. While in keeping children within the framework of primary education there are positive trends and practices, most of the children from smaller settlements and ethnically vulnerable communities the completion of secondary education continues not to be of particular interest. Besides entirely financial reasons, a prerequisite for this is the geographic distance to the nearest secondary school.
 - 8.1. The Public Education Act restricts free school transportation to students up to 16 years of age. ESC notes that much of the secondary/vocational schools are situated in municipal and regional centres. These considerations can be seen as a reason for migration and displacement from smaller to larger towns.
 - 8.2. In this regard, ESC recommends to provide resources for the transportation of vocational/high school students from remote locations to improve attractiveness of secondary and vocational education at the regional level.
9. ESC found that one of the reasons why parents in small towns do not allow their children to attend school, is the distance from its community (protected) school. Usually children have to travel to unfamiliar to them (and their parents) settlement and come back home late. Parents inevitably regard these processes in terms of their cost which they often cannot afford to pay. In this regard, ESC believes that free transportation to and from school and whole-day organisation of the school day (including providing lunch) are crucial prerequisites for the integration of children in school.
 - 9.1. ESC proposes that in cases when the families of students and children of compulsory school age take care for their transportation from/to their places of residence, an average cost of commuting per kilometre should be determined statutorily which should correspond to the cost of commuting by special school transport.

- 9.2. In connection with the need for transportation also of children subject to compulsory pre-school education from settlements without kindergartens or schools to community schools and kindergartens within the municipality, ESC proposes that municipalities should have the right to use the buses provided to them by the Ministry of Education and Science for transporting children subject to compulsory pre-school education.
10. With the adoption of Ordinance №162 of the Council of Ministers of 30 June 2009 amending the regulations for implementation of the Public Education Act, the practice children from I to IV class to repeat the year due to poor grades was discontinued. Subsequently, however, in subsequent years of education, the lack of basic knowledge leads to the accumulation of unsatisfactory grades and the lack of motivation to participate in the learning process. ESC views this phenomenon as one of the prerequisites for early school leaving.
- 10.1. ESC recommends to reconsider the above ordinance and consider the possibility for students to repeat the year's work in specific disciplines not the year in general. He or she may continue to attend classes with their peers, but catch up with the problematic discipline under an individual education plan.
11. ESC found shortage and difficult access to the groups for compulsory pre-school and kindergarten in many settlements in the country. In this regard, ESC notes that since pre-school is regulated to be "mandatory", the necessary steps should be taken to ensure that it is also "free of charge" and bound by mandatory baseline proficiency in the official language in Bulgaria, as is the case with pre-school children of immigrants in EU member states.
- 11.1. ESC recommends to find a legislative solution of the problem related to the unified funding standard for children in mixed groups of 3 to 6 years of age.
- 11.2. According to ESC, it is necessary legislatively establish the status of "protected kindergarten", and to provide unified funding standard for such establishments.
12. ESC assumes that the prevention of early school leaving is related to the change of position of students from an object of educational initiatives to a subject of his or her own development and improvement. ESC proposes this change to be effected through legislative amendments that will introduce student representation through student councils in each class division after the fourth grade. This will allow students to approach school not as an obligation but as an opportunity for personal and general realisation by means of:
- mutual support and mutual responsibility, representation of interests and early socialisation;
 - developing organisational skills, creativity, teamwork;
 - enrichment of the tutor session by the enhanced activity of the students;
 - investments in infrastructure, facilities and the expansion of the so-called. extracurricular work, incl. study circles, "green schools" temporary and seasonal employment in community work, sports competitions between classes, schools, municipalities, regional and national level, etc.;

- combination of formal and informal education within the school as an opportunity for the recognition and selection of young talents.

III. MUNICIPAL POLICIES FOR THE PREVENTION OF EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING AND REINTEGRATION OF DROPOUTS

13. ESC found that municipal policy in education is the most important measure for the integration of children and students from vulnerable ethnic communities. In municipalities with clearly expressed desire to solve the problem of educating Roma children, there are municipal strategies specifically targeting the integration of ethnic minorities. ESC found that in places, where there are well developed municipal policies, schools have adopted educational programmes for working with children and students belonging to vulnerable ethnic communities including measures to attract and retain the Roma children in the education system. The implementation of such programmes achieves very good results in terms of:

- improving the quality of education in community schools;
- providing transportation for all students living in villages with closed down schools; opening semi-boarded school groups; conducting extracurricular activities; repairing school canteens;
- recognising all-day organisation of the school time as a top priority;
- early integration of children (aged 3 and 4) in kindergartens to ensure their early adaptation and socialisation as well as learning Bulgarian.

14. In this regard, ESC offers in municipalities and schools with an overwhelming majority of children and students from vulnerable ethnic communities to develop a comprehensive approach to integration policies which would contain a set of measures to ensure integrated services for children and families including:

14.1. Implementing systems for early identification of children and students at risk of early school leaving and identifying the reasons for this;

14.2. Improving the quality of pre-school and school education by providing additional training for children and students with learning difficulties and implementing an all-day organisation of the school time;

14.3. Removing childcare fees for children of compulsory pre-school age (5 and 6 years of age) and reducing the monthly fee for children aged up to 5;

14.4. Providing support to children and students at risk of early school leaving for financial reasons;

14.5. Increasing the participation and involvement of parents in the education process;

- 14.6. Applying the model of mentoring – i.e. Roma mediators;
- 14.7. Providing education and training to adults – over 18 years of age, mostly parents of Roma children;
- 14.8. Opening information centres in the municipal centres for computer education of children and students with the opportunity to attend classes together with their parents ;
- 14.9. Setting up community advisory councils (CAC) that would work together with mayors to address the problems of integration and would include representatives of the ethnic communities.
15. ESC believes that the exact solution to the continuing education of children and students from ethnic communities is the opening of educational institutions which could provide training for professional qualifications in line with the needs of the labour market in the region. With respect to this ESC proposes the following measures:
- 15.1. Monitoring and analysing the trends related to the desire of vulnerable groups, including Roma, for participation in the process of primary and continuing vocational training and the opening of schools/centres for vocational education;
- 15.2. Decentralisation- to enable the schools themselves to find effective forms and offer many more options. At the moment the only possibilities for continuing formal education are evening schools and individual training.
- 15.3. Developing and introducing urgently in vocational schools the so-called
- "dual system" apprenticeship (working under an employment contract for students aged 16 and above, for example. at least one year and up to two or three years, 3-4 days a week);
 - programme "second chance" for vocational training and education of Roma young people.
- 15.4. Increasing the horizontal and vertical mobility between vocational education and training and artisan training, especially in the field of traditional Roma crafts and for this purpose ESC proposes:
- 15.4.1. Young people to be directed to learning traditional Roma crafts, seeking opportunities to find state subsidies for the production, especially in the field of artistic crafts.
- 15.4.2. To stimulate the creation of cooperatives for disadvantaged persons, both in the education system and on the labour market, bringing together people who practice traditional crafts, in order to help them place of their produce on the market.
- 15.4.3. To develop programmes aimed at the acquisition of necessary additional knowledge and skills (including literacy) in addition to traditional crafts.
16. A major problem associated with school leaving, which is found both in larger and the smaller settlements, is the so-called "early marriage" or cohabitation. On the one hand, this phenomenon is an ethical problem. On the other, it explains the distinct profile of early

school leaving among girls. ESC notes that this phenomenon in many cases leads to many negative consequences, such as the paradoxes "a child to give birth and raise a child" or mother and daughter both to obtain child benefits.

16.1. ESC notes that education is a major factor affecting the limitation of early partnerships ("marriages") – in principle, the higher the education, the later a family is created. In relation to overcoming the phenomenon of "early marriages", ESC proposes the following preventive measures:

- professional intervention at the level of the school, community centre, church, mayor, police, doctors through consultation on the legal, social, health and emotional consequences of early marriages and support for the families;
- monitoring and control on part of the institutions for finding an appropriate solution for each individual case;
- developing adequate methods for increasing the sensitivity at the various social levels (school, family, community) to overcome the problem;
- educational services for parents ("school for parents") and complex, integrated services, including multidisciplinary teams of school mediators, school principals, nurses, psychologists, social assistants and other stakeholders;
- through programmes implemented by local NGOs to organise campaigns focusing attention on the negative effects and the consequences of early marriages and promoting models of successful Roma women who have received recognition in various fields: education, family, career development;
- organise prevention activities by teachers and psychologists at schools for girls in the risk group – over 12 years of age.

IV. PROBLEMS OF TEACHING PERSONNEL WORKING WITH CHILDREN AT RISK OF EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING

17. The regional consultations conducted by ESC with teachers working with children at risk of early school leaving helped formulate the following key recommendations:

17.1. Additional efforts should be made to ensure an equal start for children in school education;

17.2. Additional educational support to students at risk of dropping out should be provided; creating opportunities for successful socialisation of adolescents and young people from ethnic minorities;

17.3. The process of cultural self-determination of the students and their families should be supported; further work should be done with the parents of children from vulnerable groups;

- 17.4. An atmosphere of tolerance and intercultural understanding should be promoted at the school and within the community.
18. According to ESC, a crucial prerequisite for the implementation of these recommendations is to improve the motivation and skills of teachers to work in a multicultural environment. In this regard ESC proposes to take the following measures:
- 18.1. In order to overcome the observed outflow from the teaching profession to discuss and develop a mechanism with adequate incentives to attract and retain young teaching staff, especially in schools with a higher risk of early school leaving.
- 18.2. Priority should be given to training psychologists, mediators, educators, etc. belonging to the Roma ethnic group. Practice shows that they are much better accepted by the parents of children of Roma origin who are at the greatest risk of dropping out of the school system. Another good practice is the employment of Roma labour mediators with the labour offices, but their number is insufficient.
- 18.3. Training and retraining of teaching staff in relation to the need for trained professionals for individual and preventive work in a multicultural environment.
- 18.4. Introducing positions such as "social pedagogue" and "mediator" and their inclusion in the classification of occupations.
- 18.5. To discuss the normative work load of primary teachers in this type of schools and to provide hours for consultancy and training in communication skills.
- 18.6. Legislative solutions should be sought for the problem with incentive payments for class tutors and teachers working with ethnic groups, since the system of delegated budgets in these small schools do not provide enough resources for such stimulation.
- 18.7. Developing the electronic database of good practices which could be accessed by teachers on the internet.
- 18.8. Providing legislative base for the implementation of new educational methodologies enabling the detection and preservation of the ethnic, cultural and social identity of each child; overcoming prejudices and educational discrimination on the ground of ethnicity related to intercultural education.
- 18.9. Developing international links with similar institutions in other EU Member States and other countries and preparation of joint projects with similar centres in EU countries.
- 18.10. Creating opportunities to attract young people – volunteers to engage with these problems through projects.

In conclusion, ESC recommends to all state and municipal bodies, NGOs and schools to discuss concrete measures related to the implementation of the Strategy and to develop them into specific policies within the National Action Plan for its implementation, so that when funding

becomes available it would be possible to achieve the national goal – reducing early school leaving at levels much lower than 11%.

(signature)

Professor Lalko Dulevski, Ph.D

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