

Education, vocational training and youth: review of the balance of competences

Response of the Association of School and College Leaders

- 1 The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) represents more than 18,000 heads, principals, deputies, vice-principals, assistant heads, business managers and other senior staff of maintained and independent schools and colleges throughout the UK. ASCL has members in more than 90 per cent of secondary schools and colleges of all types, responsible for the education of more than four million young people. This places the association in a unique position to consider this issue from the viewpoint of the leaders of secondary schools and of colleges.
- 2 ASCL welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this review.
- 3 On the whole the balance of competences has not created any difficulties that have been apparent to school and college leaders. Since EU institutions cannot take direct action in relation to the content and organisation of Member States' education systems, the EU has had relatively little impact on the education systems of the UK.
- 4 Programmes aimed at better mutual understanding, and the promotion of mobility, such as Socrates, Leonardo, Comenius and Grundtvig, have been welcomed by school and college leaders. These have to a large degree achieved their aims and supported language learning, exchanges, secondments, enrolment of students from other EU countries, and labour movement.
- 5 The European Social Fund has been successfully used particularly by colleges and government agencies to promote a number of initiatives in education and training.
- 6 An issue that remains unresolved is that of comparability between the qualifications issued by and in the member states. This is a problem for employers and for education and training providers when assessing the suitability of a person from another member state for employment or enrolment onto a course of further study. This is therefore an area where an increase of competence at the EU level could be beneficial, but the comparability problem is a difficult one even within a single jurisdiction.
- 7 I hope that this is of value to your consultation, ASCL is willing to be further consulted and to assist in any way that it can.

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Association of School and College Leaders
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