

Policy Coordination Issues

Report of Phone call 30 June 2014.

- The respondent is an academic with experience in the area of EU policy formulation in education policy.

The OMC

Processes are very complex – there are too many groups of experts, Ministers etc. (thematic working groups, high level group, Ministers' meetings, expert groups... The Eurydice report is trying to outline all these in a diagrammatical form and has given up trying to do so)

There is a lack of synergy across the groups, their outputs aren't coordinated. Although all the ET2020 groups are now to produce reports its not clear how these link to groups such as eg the High Level Group, or the Indicators and Benchmarks Group. There is no clear map, eg on the Cion website, of how these outputs are feeding in, what they are leading to, or how they link together.

The TWGs – The Commission is focussed on how ET2020 can be linked to Europe 2020 and the CSRs. For countries like the UK that don't have education CSRs, this limits how the UK can be involved.

The OMC focusses on CSRs, ie MS on problems. They should be an exchange of excellence and good practice. The OMC is too focussed on bringing countries up to speed rather than promoting excellence.

The groups tend to be too bureaucratic - the Cion is careful to give everyone a say, and there are too many presentations and not enough discussion.

We are careful to enable the DAs to be involved in the groups but there isn't enough time to do this. There is a problem with discontinuity of participants. The meetings need to be better prepared and coordinated.

There is a problem that policy people not being totally open when stakeholders such as social partners are involved. The SPs are European organisations giving a pro-European and cross-European view, which limits discussion of national issues.

OMC works best for the VET groups where MS see the value of improving employability.

Bologna – when the process starts to coordinate it tends to impinge on MS competence. Eg Netherlands and UK have been hostile to U Multirank. The problem is that decisions to set up such structures then tend to be included in policy documents or linked to Erasmus Funding.

There is a lack of coordination of Bologna within the UK – due to the independence of HEIs we haven't had a consistent approach to getting funding, although we are now moving towards a position where UUK will coordinate HEIs. A better funding model is the Erasmus Mundus model (see below)

Avoid Prescription in the OMC – attempts to link funding to CSRs are a step too far.

A good example of how to run coordination and funding is Erasmus Mundus, where the funding is based on business plans from applicants and the programme can be used to build excellence. This works and the programme is bringing in the big players amongst Universities.

CSRs directed at the UK are too general, and may not take into account what is happening in eg Scotland.

The Programmes

It is important to have a centre to organise the programmes (eg the EU)

Eg Japan-China-Korea tried to organise a similar programme, and it is difficult without a neutral centre. They have not managed to create a programme like Erasmus. The neutral centre is one of its success factors. Having a large central fund enables all MS to obtain funds for their own mobility.

Future

Employers organisations are involved in the EMCO discussion of CSRs, so are likely to be interested in how MS are implementing apprenticeships, EQF ECVET etc. This would be useful as we are very much in favour of EQF and VET reform, to improve skills, even within countries. – As the Association of Local Authorities has noted, [also in the Brussels stakeholder session] it is more expensive to get young people back into the labour market than to make sure they have the right skills for the labour market in the first place.

The new Cion is likely to want to make education and training more visible in the semester process as youth employment will stay on the agenda.