

Short summary of the Hearing on Support Talent and Creativity
23 January 2013, 10.00 - 12.00
Brussels, European Parliament, Room JAN6Q1

SPEAKERS:

Ms Kinga Gál, MEP (EPP), one of the proposers of the WD, chair and host of the meeting

Ms Mojca Kleva, MEP (S&D), one of the proposers of the WD

Dr. Anneli Pauli, Deputy Director General of DG Research & Innovation

Mr. Michael Privot, Director of European Network Against Racism

Prof. Franz Mönks former ECHA president

Prof. Péter Csermely, President of the European Council of High Ability (ECHA)

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Dr. Kinga GÁL gave a short introductory speech to the conference:

- introduced Prof. Péter Csermely, who initiated the exemplary talent management and support network in Hungary
- detailed the meaning of the word "talent" (in ancient times it meant a unit of weight and money; New Testament where it appears with the meaning of ability). Among various synonyms of the word gift - aptitude - ability - faculty - genius - capability can be found.
- quoted from the *Budapest Declaration* on Talent Support endorsed by representatives of 24 European countries in April 2011: "*Everyone may be able – in something. A talented person is somebody, who has an excellent gift combined with extraordinary general skills, a high level of special skills, creativity and devotion to a certain field. Talented people are able to perform at a high level in any walk of life regardless of age.*" - which gives the best definition.
- talked about the development of the first Talent Point network in Hungary, which calls on stakeholders on all levels to help spreading the good practices and build partnerships and collaboration on European level.
- and based on the above mentioned she became one of the initiators and proposers of the initiative to launch a Written Declaration (WD) on talent support in the European Parliament, because "*finding gifted people and the development of their talents is in direct interest of any nation and Europe as a whole*" - the WD has already 165 signatories.

Ms. Mojca KLEVA talked about the following in her introductory remarks:

- detailed the (current) unfortunate situation, when exactly in the time of monetary cuts more money should be spent on research and education - which is not the case;

- however the missing economic growth in the EU - could be helped and supported by the promotion of talents, as the spent money would return to the society - probably doubled;
- argued that the Life-Long-Learning is a European tool, that could perfectly fit to the support of talents, thus should be addressed in this relation; As every generation, not only of the youth could be benefited from it;
- expressed her satisfaction that four political groups are working together on the WD.

Dr. Anneli PAULI gave the view of the Commission on talent support as a key measure for the sustainability of high level research & innovation in Europe:

- argued that there is definite need to improve competitiveness in Europe (in the fields of innovation and research) - for that Europe needs talents;
- the funding until 2020 should ensure to have enough (discovered) talented men and woman in Europe, to have more jobs with higher ability for research (100.000 new posts), to have new problem solving skills (in mathematics, IT, human sciences), and the scientific literature should also be raised;
- elaborated on the importance of education, explained that school education on talents and the creative education in school sciences should be strengthened;
- introduced some projects of the European Commission related to these topics:
 - 1) 'Young Scientist Initiative' and its European contest, which always calls the attention of the media.
 - 2) 'Innovative Doctoral Training' - which allows the candidates to gain experience and practice in some other EU-country. There will be extra 20 million Eur spent on this program in the coming financial periode.
- touched upon gender-related facts: with regard to PhD candidates there is more or less a good representation of women, however when it is about transferring the knowledge into practice there is a clear lack of women among such talents; Therefore the Commission adopted a recommendation to both Member States and Research Institutes to increase the gender balance in the field of research;
- concluded by saying that "Talents are the heart of the future EU's research area", thus they will work hard on it that the Horizon 2020 will offer enough support to them.

Mr. Michael PRIVOT outlined the importance of talent support for the inclusion of immigrants and minorities in Europe:

- expressed his view that the talents among Roma, Immigrants and women in general are overlooked in Europe;
- pointed out the fact that by 2050 EU's workforce will be less by 17 million people, which should be compensated somehow; thus he claimed for a broader understanding

of talents and skills, and furthermore for an easier acknowledgement of diplomas (in terms of qualifications from outside Europe);

- pointed out furthermore that 60% of the migrants have higher skills, that the job they are doing; thus Europe should reach out for talents, especially for second generation talents;
- argued that talent centres could foster integration of immigrants, and could contribute to innovation and creativity in Europe;
- believes that the change of this situation is not a financial question, rather a political one;
- finally, brought up the example of the United States where money is spent on these hidden talents.

Prof. Franz MÖNKES outlined the development of European talent support during the 25 years of ECHA:

- the first book on gifted education was published in 1916 that already summarised all the most important things on talent-support: thus "*we are all gifted in something, and that talents are needed everywhere*";
- talked about the first talent-support conference, which took place in Hamburg, in 1980; about the first talent-centre founded by Germany, Denmark and the Nederland at the end of the 80's, and about the first Recommendation of the Council of Europe (Recomm.1248, 1994) on the education on gifted children, which was the first "political" document in this field, thus a milestone of reference;
- outlined the excellent work of the more than 100 seminars and workshops ECHA held in the past;
- emphasized the need for national teacher trainings in order to treat and teach the talented children and people properly;
- finally he concluded that it is not enough to have good ideas, but there is a need for real policy-makers as well.

Prof. Péter CSERMELY outlined the current and future efforts of European governmental and NGOs to develop a European Talent Support Network:

- started by stating: "the support of talent is not a luxury, but a life-insurance"
- argued that all Commissioners are involved and concerned in talent-support, there are unusual connections, but there are connections;
- claimed that on one hand the talented people need the support of the society, but on the other the society needs the support of its talents as well;
- explained that Talent Points serve the locals and are open for all, these centres can advise everyone (both parents and teachers) how to treat talents; For the functioning of talent points there is a need for the support of governments;

- The Hungarian Presidency in 2011 held a conference in Budapest, which claimed for a need of an EU-wide movement for the support of talents;
- called the attention to the facts that China adopted a 10years road-map of talent support, and the United States plans to adopt a Talent Act, furthermore a World Talent Day is also to be organised;
- the above mentioned show that other countries are a bit ahead of Europe; therefore there is need for a wider EU awareness on the issue: EU-wide talent-support points are needed, European Talent Points Network, a European Talent Day could be organised, or even a Year of Excellence and Talents could be implemented in the future, too.
- argued also for the importance of teacher-training and identification of talents.

COMMENTS from the guests:

- agreed that the EU should pay much more attention to talent-support, as a key asset for the future; suggests that the EU pays at least so much attention to the gifted children, that it pays to children living with disabilities;
- called attention the fact that on the Dubai Talent Conference numerous ministers participated from the region, however in Europe on such conferences the highest level of policy makers are not present from the European countries; Thus there is a gap between Asia and Europe in this sense;
- shared the view that the inclusion of talent-support in the curricula of teachers is of utmost importance;

Closing remark of Mrs **Kinga GÁL**:

- argued that gifted and talented children or adults are a kind of "natural resource" for the EU; thus all tools should be used to promote and raise awareness of this issue on EU-level (from the elementary school to the universities onwards);