

VIII. Conclusion

The development and implementation of education policies and political instruments dealing with ESL after the Lisbon Strategy (2000) and building towards achieving the targets of the EU 2020 Strategy (2010) in this publication take into account the interactions of supranational, national and local institutions involving the reconfiguration of educational governance and regulation within the *globally structured agenda for education*. The analysis has shown that the definition, steering and implementation of policies and public action is informed by the international setting and enrolls increasingly more stakeholders *in* and *with* the state in a multiple scale governance (super-national, national and sub-national).

The analysis also shows that Europeanisation takes place on the basis of countries' diverse interpretation and implementation of a *common grammar*, by means of the national policy and under the framework of programs of cooperation, support, research and development set by different international organisations and with EU funding, evaluation systems and soft law. Moreover, the analysis of the goals, 'drivers' and rationales underpinning education and social policies related to ESL suggests that the economic concern prevails over educational and social goals. In spite of the fact that in some countries, such as UK and the Netherlands, this concern is more visible, in others the encompassing discourse on the need to respond to the new labour market needs is pervasive. In Belgium and Poland, for instance, this driver is more nuanced as social and educational concerns could also be identified. In Austria, both economic and social drivers can be identified.

The study also allows underlining a close relationship between social and economic policies, on the one hand, and educational policies, on the other. In line with the Lisbon Strategy, education is pointed out simultaneously as a factor of economic competition and a factor of social cohesion. In this sense, 'drivers' and 'rationales' identified are to be seen in a continuum where tensions between social and educational goals and new labour market needs are present to diverse degrees. Notwithstanding, educational and social drivers and rationales addressing equality of opportunities and educational development are uncommon.

When looking at the level of local stakeholders, the picture is apparently more nuanced. The educational concern with youth development and empowerment becomes more visible. This might be explained by those interviewees' individual contexts and their proximity to the field. However, even at this level, tensions between drivers and rationales are to be signalled, reflecting actors' roles and commitments – i.e. there are differences between local authorities and project leaders. The majority of the people interviewed expressed 'drivers' and 'rationales' that point out the centrality of labour market and labour market integration as an instrument dealing with ESL.

Even if EU influence on ESL policies and measures is neither visible nor recognised by some actors, the 'soft' introduction and development of EU ideas is present in all countries involved. Most countries state that there is a widespread view that education is a national remit, an idea stemming from the fact that the EU does not have the power to legislate on education. The rhetoric changes in education were pulled by the EU and were used even in countries where ESL is not identified as an urgent issue, let alone a problem to be addressed.

The current socio-political and economic crisis, together with migration processes and the labour market volatility, have reshaped the ways in which different countries address the educational problem and ESL and try to make the best of EU funding schemes through rhetorical resistance to its ideas and implementation.