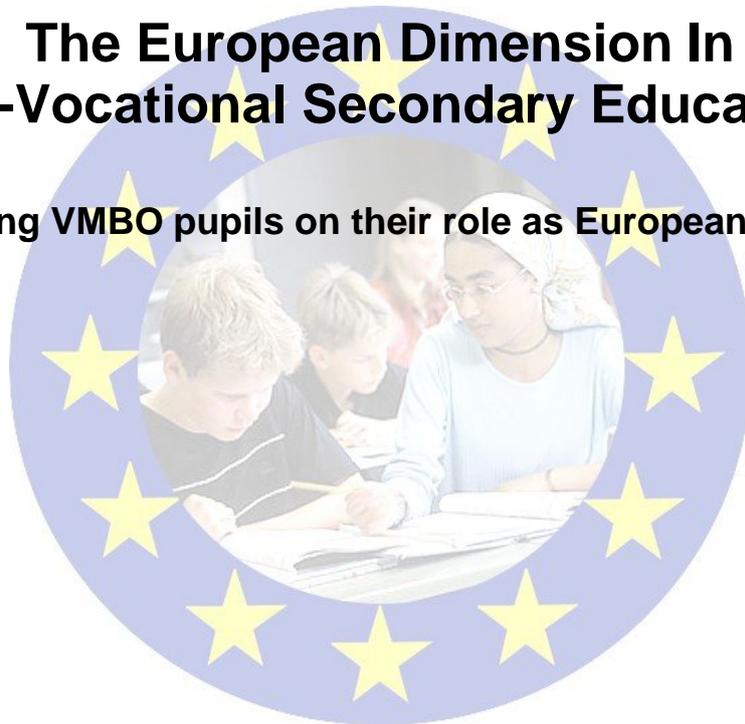


# The European Dimension In Pre-Vocational Secondary Education

Preparing VMBO pupils on their role as European citizens



**Bachelor Thesis**

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*“Tell me and I will forget,  
Show me and I may remember,  
Involve me and I will understand”*

*Chinese proverb*

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

We are living in a time of growing global political, economical, social and cultural interdependence and growing European cooperation. After the Second World War, the European integration process started with the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community, which formed the basis for the European Union as we know it today. Building bridges of cooperation reduced the chance of another war in Europe to a minimum and increased stability and welfare in the region. The Netherlands are more and more economically and politically affected by the EU membership: by now around 60 percent (NRC, 1 October 2004) of Dutch laws and regulations comes from Brussels and two thirds (Website Europe, 2007) of all Dutch trade is with other EU countries. Moreover, half of the national income is generated by export, which is facilitated by the large and integrated internal market.

Fifty years after its launch, the European project still has not succeeded in attracting the appropriate level of interest and the full support of EU citizens. Since the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992, we all are European citizens, but unfortunately citizens feel that Europe is still far away. Since the Dutch referendum on the European constitution in June 2005, the discussion about the attention Dutch politicians and the media pay to the European Union became livelier. According to the Eurobarometer 2006, in the Netherlands the European Union is widely supported: 72% of the Dutch think the EU membership is "a good thing". In Germany this is 58%, in France 50% and in the UK 34%. Only in Luxembourg and Ireland people are more positive about EU membership than the Dutch. On the contrary, the involvement in Europe of the Dutch is very small. By the end of 2006 not even one third of the Dutch felt attached to the EU (Eurobarometer, 2006). Political involvement means that people have knowledge and feelings about politics and participate in politics. Involvement is not the same as support; involvement is neutral, but can lead to positive or negative feelings about politics.

After the Dutch voted "no" in the referendum on the European constitution it became clear that these feelings are not all that positive. There is a lack of trust and interest in the European Union among Dutch citizens. As the Eurobarometer reveals, nowadays only 44 percent of the Dutch have faith in the EU, practically equal to the EU average (2006). This lack of trust and interest is partly caused by a lack of information. Only 21 percent of the Dutch feel informed about Europe (NederlandinEuropa.nl, 2006). Moreover, a lack of information is the main explanation for the "no" vote: 32 percent of the "no" voters indicated that this was the reason they voted against the European Constitution (European Commission, 2005b). Why is it so important that people are informed about and involved in the European Union? According to Van den Berg (2006) involved and informed citizens are more able to form substantiated and coherent opinions. And those are indispensable in the creation of a stable democracy and the prevention of political discontent and aversion to the EU.

Informing citizens about the European Union is a task of the government and the media, so that people gain knowledge and form an opinion about the EU. The European Parliament has therefore established offices in almost all EU member states with informing the citizens on developments in the European Union as their main task. However, informing people is first and foremost a task of the school. The educational systems should ensure that pupils have by the end of their secondary education the knowledge and competences they need to prepare them for their role as a future citizen in Europe. If pupils are to make educated choices about their roles in Europe, it is important that a European dimension be included within education. In September 2006, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs (BuZa) and Education Science & Culture (OCW) published a policy document on Europe in Dutch education. The government wants to contribute in such a way that "all Dutch pupils at the end of their school period possess sufficient knowledge and skills to be able to function as a citizen in Europe". A large majority of the Dutch public (79%) agrees there should be more education on the European



Union at schools (NederlandinEuropa.nl, 2006). Also the Councils of Education of the various EU member states united in the European Network of Education Councils are positive towards embedding the theme 'Europe' in the school curriculum (Onderwijsraad, 2004a). School has a fundamental role to play allowing everyone to be informed and understand the meaning of European integration.

"The general impression is that European developments are not being given the necessary attention in schools" (Oonk 2004, p385). The Office of the European Parliament in the Netherlands has identified that among all types of Dutch secondary education, VMBO pupils are the least informed about and involved in Europe and the European Union, whilst VMBO pupils make out 56%<sup>1</sup> of the total amount of secondary school pupils. The abbreviation VMBO stands for "Voorbereidend Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs" and can be best described as pre-vocational secondary education which is the lowest level of secondary education in the Netherlands. Only one out of five secondary school pupils that participate in activities of internationalisation is a VMBO pupil (Oonk 2004, p385). Especially at VMBO there is a gap in the knowledge and opinions about the EU. On top of that, one quarter of all people on the labour market only has lower education<sup>2</sup> (primary education or a VMBO diploma) which means that if VMBO doesn't pay attention to the European Union, a large group of citizens will remain uninformed.

On both sides of policy makers and executors of secondary education, a process of realisation of the importance of education on European citizenship is taking place, not only in the Netherlands, but in other EU countries as well. The Office of the European Parliament in the Netherlands thinks more attention should be paid to developments in the European Union in general and in pre-vocational secondary education in particular. After research on the current situation to establish the 'gaps', the Office EP would like to see which possibilities there are for a new project that can intensify the experience of Dutch VMBO pupils' European citizenship. The question is how the involvement in the European Union can be increased, starting at school at VMBO level. Existing European and national programmes, projects and teaching methods will have to be examined to find out what is already being done for VMBO in specific, before it can be determined what needs to be done to prepare the youth for being involved European citizens. This report is based on the following central research question:

**How can policy makers and -executors of secondary education in the Netherlands play a role in intensifying the experience of the Dutch VMBO pupils' European citizenship?**

To answer the central question, it has been split up into five research questions. Each question forms the basis for one chapter.

1.	What is the current policy regarding European citizenship in VMBO education?
2.	To what extent and in which formats have initiatives on European citizenship aimed at Dutch VMBO pupils already been developed and implemented?
3.	What is the opinion of policy makers and -executors on these initiatives regarding European citizenship?
4.	What are ideas for future projects that can intensify the experience of Dutch VMBO pupils' European citizenship?
5.	How can the European citizenship of secondary school pupils in other European countries be compared to Dutch VMBO pupils' "European Citizenship"?

<sup>1</sup> Academic year 2004-2005, Central Bureau of Statistics.

<sup>2</sup> 27.7 % of all intakes on the labour market between 2005 and 2010, Analysis of the Labour Market. Council for Work and Income, 2006.



In order to render this project feasible, the research is restricted to the VMBO theoretical track only. The reasons for this choice will be explained in chapter 2. Furthermore, the research is restricted to the viewpoint of policymakers and -executors only. The opinions, capabilities and interests of VMBO pupils are not taken into account. The thesis "The European dimension in pre-vocational secondary education - VMBO pupils experiencing their "European Citizenship" by Alet van der Voorn complements this thesis, because it focuses on the same subjects, but from the viewpoint of VMBO pupils.

## **1.2 PREVIEW**

In the next chapter it will be described how the research that will have to provide answers to the research question has been conducted. First of all it had to be established who is responsible for the educational policies and the European dimension in VMBO education. The framework in which schools operate is provided by EU guidelines and policy makers at national level - mainly the Ministry of Education. In chapter 3 it will be examined how the European dimension is reflected in the core aims and final terms set by the Ministry of Education and whether this policy framework offers enough chances for schools to intensify the European citizenship of their pupils. Besides the policymakers, there are other parties involved in the education about European citizenship. They think that the policies and the standard teaching methods don't always serve as handles for schools to prepare their pupils on their role as European citizens. In chapter 4 and 5 they explain what they think is necessary to teach VMBO pupils and which initiatives these teachers and policy executors have taken to that end within the policy framework. Descriptions of the parties involved and a clear exposition of the current European dimension in educational policies and extra curricular teaching methods can be found. The list of initiatives provides an overview of which stakeholders make which contribution to intensify the experience of European citizenship in VMBO education. In chapter 6 opinions about the policies and initiatives will be expounded, after which ideas are generated for new or existing initiatives that should be more widely spread. Afterwards a conclusion can be formulated regarding the actions that the various parties need to take in order to intensify the experience of VMBO pupils' European citizenship, in specific, what the main task of the Office of the European Parliament in the Netherlands will have to be in that respect.

## 2 RESEARCH METHODS

### 2.1 THE ORGANISATIONAL PROBLEM

The research has taken place at the same time as the internship for the Office of the European Parliament in the Netherlands (EP) that started September 1st 2006. The EP is the assignment provider for this research, which forms the basis for an advice report that will be handed to the office at the end of the internship in March 2007. One of the EP's main tasks is to provide the Dutch people with information about Europe, the European Union and its institutions and to stimulate involvement in European matters. The EP thinks that Dutch politicians, media and education don't do enough in that respect, as illustrated in the introduction of this report. A group that falls behind most are pupils that attend VMBO education, the lowest level of Dutch secondary education. The EP sees it as its task to involve this group in particular, but how?

### 2.2 THE RESEARCH STRATEGY

Since there is a practical problem, this research is practically-oriented. The general goal of practically-oriented research is not to develop or judge theories, but to develop, try out and evaluate solutions for practical problems. It is aimed at acquiring knowledge to take decisions ('t Hart et al., 1998). In this case: to decide about the best way in which the experience of VMBO pupils' European citizenship can be intensified. To answer the research questions, qualitative research has been chosen as the most logical research strategy, for gathering opinions and the situation of some schools and organisations is more important than the collection of numbers and statistical data. Qualitative research involves desk research and conducting interviews. Literature studies are used to form a framework and a point to start from. For gathering opinions and outlining initiatives and ideas of policy makers/executers, VMBO schools and relevant organisations, interviews are designed. The project started with a phase of orientation. Within three weeks a plan of action was drafted in which all research activities were planned; namely searching and studying literature, preparing, conducting and analysing interviews and questionnaire results and writing the report.

#### 2.2.1 Literature

To get an idea of who is involved in VMBO education and European citizenship, research has been done on the internet. Literature is used to create a policy framework and to support the findings of the outcome of interviews. The desk research mostly concerned basic information on Dutch secondary education policy, the VMBO school system and VMBO pupils and relevant organisations in the field of internationalisation and education. Background information and relevant documents were searched on the internet, articles have been read and overviews have been made, for example an overview of all relevant course materials. Additional information has been acquired at the VMBO manifestation, where several stakeholders were present and workshops were organised.

#### 2.2.2 Interviews

The most significant sources for this research were the interviews with key persons. These key persons are considered to represent VMBO teachers of the general subjects<sup>3</sup> and school heads and the main players in the field of secondary education and internationalisation. The interviews were semi-structured. A list with questions had been composed beforehand, taking the research questions as a starting point. The HEBO supervisor and EP colleagues gave their comments before a final set of

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<sup>3</sup> The general subjects are history, geography, economics and social studies I and II. A restriction is made to the teachers who teach those subjects, for "European Citizenship" is most likely to be discussed within these domains.



questions was composed (see appendix 7). In practice the structured list with questions was used more as a topic list, for each organisation required a slightly different approach. Also the interviewees frequently departed from the intended interview structure. Afterwards it was checked if every issued had been discussed.

The division of organisations that make or execute policies respectively schools is 50-50. All stakeholders of organisations that were considered relevant have been contacted by telephone and/or by e-mail. A list can be found below. They all agreed with an interview, except for the SLO with which a telephone interview could be conducted in a later phase. Semi-structured interviews were held with 12 respondents of organisations between October 16 and November 10 2006. VMBO schools were selected at random in urban and non-urban regions. A minimum of four and preferably 5 or 6 schools had to cooperate to ensure variation in answers to the interview questions. To that end letters in name of the Office of the European Parliament had been sent at random to 25 schools throughout the country. After a follow-up phone call it turned out that most schools were not able or not willing to cooperate. Another 25 schools were then approached by telephone first. If they were open to cooperate with this research, they were sent additional information by e-mail. Finally, appointments could be made with teachers and school heads of 5 VMBO schools. The schools are situated in Hengelo, Leiden, Purmerend, Sittard and Utrecht. Three of these VMBO schools make part of large comprehensive schools that comprise all three levels of secondary education VWO, HAVO and VMBO<sup>4</sup>. Notes were made during the interviews and they were recorded on tape. Of every interview conducted, a report has been written on the basis of the notes and the tapes. These reports have been processed in this report.

Four interviews have been conducted with so called policy makers of Dutch secondary education and VMBO in specific, namely with:

- **The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (OCW)** - *Ministerie voor Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap* - which is the most important policy maker of Dutch secondary education. This ministry determines the minimal educational requirements by establishing core aims and final terms.
- **The Education Council** - *Onderwijsraad* - which advises the Dutch government on educational policies. The government and the parliament then decide what to do with the advice.
- **The VMBO Group of Advice** - *VMBO Adviesgroep* - which is a council installed by the Minister of Education. Its task is to advice on the issuing of rules regarding VMBO education.
- **The Curriculum Development Foundation (SLO)** - *Stichting Leerplan Ontwikkeling* - which elaborates the final terms in learn lines. These guidelines form the basis for the school curriculum.<sup>5</sup>

Eight interviews have been conducted with so called policy executors who work for the following organisations:

- **European Platform for Dutch Education (hereafter European Platform)** - *Europees Platform voor het Nederlandse Onderwijs* - which is commissioned by the Ministry of Education and the European Commission with the responsibility to increase the European dimension and stimulate internationalisation of Dutch secondary education.

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<sup>4</sup> Explanation of the Dutch educational system can be found in Chapter 3.

<sup>5</sup> This interview has been conducted by telephone.



- **Podium bureau for educational communication**, which has experience with the development of school projects and course materials and has developed a “Europe” CD-Rom for VMBO, commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- **The Institute for Public and Politics (IPP)** - *Instituut voor Publiek en Politiek* - which is a national organisation without political affiliations that wants to increase political and social participation. IPP organises among others guest lectures about Europe at secondary schools. Two guest lecturers have been interviewed too, one of which is a youth representative European affairs for the National Youth Council.
- **Working group VMBO Euroschool** which task it is to find out how more attention can be paid to the theme "Europe" in VMBO education. Euroschool is a department of the European Platform and offers schools advice and courses regarding internationalisation. Euroschool supports schools that want to enrich their programmes with a European dimension. The interviewee is also coordinator internationalisation at a VMBO school.
- **Foundation BBS** - *Belangenbehartiging Brede Scholengemeenschappen* - which are advisors of education in a European perspective with the aim to promote education in a European perspective in secondary schools in the European Union. The ambition of BBS is to encourage European citizenship by developing a European curriculum. It consists of a group of six retired or still active school managers.
- **KPC Group** which is an organisation that offers advice for education and training. KPC develops programmes together with schools. KPC operates at policy or organisational level. KPC is among others engaged in citizenship projects, yet there is no focus on European citizenship.

Ten interviews have been conducted at schools with teachers and location managers:

**Teachers:**

1 Geography teacher  
2 History teachers  
2 Social studies teachers  
1 Economics teacher  
3 Location managers  
1 Coordinator exchange projects

**Schools:**

“De Grundel” in Hengelo  
“Bonavantura College” in Leiden  
“Jan van Egmond” in Purmerend  
“Dacapo College” in Sittard  
“Delta College” in Utrecht

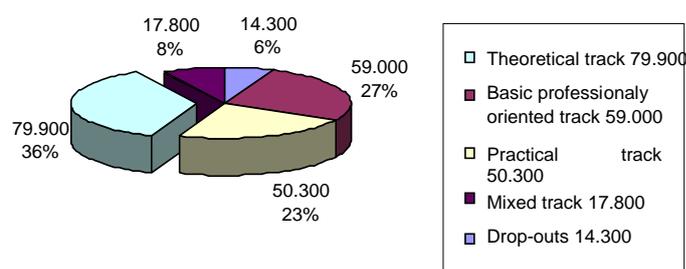
## 2.3 RESEARCH RESTRICTIONS

Constraints that should be kept in mind and that are an important reason for choices in the way the research has been conducted are most of all time and manpower. A project bigger than this research would take certainly more than half a year to accomplish or more persons would be needed to cooperate.

Furthermore, the research is restricted to the viewpoint of policymakers and -executors. The opinions, capabilities and interests of VMBO pupils are not taken into account, yet these are necessary to get a complete view on the current situation and to give an advice on how to intensify the experience of VMBO pupils' citizenship that will most probably be successful in practice. As the EU Ministers of Educations have put it in their last meeting, "the opinions and concerns of young people should be taken into account through both bottom-up and top-down dialogue processes, in order to ensure the inclusion of those aspects of young people's lives which they themselves consider relevant. Due account should be taken of this structured dialogue and its outcome in policy-making at the relevant levels" (2006, p42).

VMBO education is divided into four different tracks which differ in educational level. This research will be restricted to the VMBO theoretical track only, because the whole VMBO ‘population’ would be too large to research at this stage. This choice can be justified because firstly the largest part of VMBO pupils choose this theoretical track, as can be seen in the pie chart below. Secondly, this track constitutes the highest educational level within this type of Dutch secondary education. The VMBO pupils of this track have a better grounding in theory than the pupils of the other VMBO tracks and therefore this group is assumed to be more easily attainable and more open to information on European issues than the other VMBO tracks.

**Number of pupils per track in school year 3 and 4  
2005/2006**  
VMBO



Ministry of Education, Culture & Science 2005

### Box 3.4 VMBO tracks

Finally, the statements by teachers and location managers of the VMBO schools are not necessarily representative for all VMBO schools in the Netherlands, because the interviewees could not be selected fully at random. Schools get many requests by organisations and students that want to conduct a research. They have to make a selection. Maybe the schools that cooperated in this research are more interested in the theme “European Citizenship” than the schools that didn’t react to the request. More importantly, the teachers and location managers that cooperated with an interview maybe did so out of their own interest in the subject.

### 3 EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM & EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP

In this chapter the educational policies regarding European citizenship in VMBO education will be explained, so that an answer can be given to the research question *“What is the current policy regarding European citizenship” in VMBO education?* In order to understand who has which responsibilities, it will have to be clear first what is meant by European citizenship and what VMBO education actually comprehends within the Dutch educational system. After an outline of the policy framework is made, it can be examined till what extent these policies integrate and require a European dimension in VMBO education.

#### 3.1 CONCEPT EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP

The title of this report “preparing VMBO pupils on their future role as European citizens” suggests there must be a standard VMBO pupils need to live up to. That standard is called “European citizenship”, which needs some further explanation. A diversity of views on the concept exists, which makes the concept - of which content and goals are unclear - difficult to employ for schools.

##### 3.1.1 Formal citizenship

Since the Maastricht Treaty (1992) the concept European citizenship exists in a formal-legal sense. It includes the duties and the protection of the rights and interests of citizens of the European Union (Onderwijsraad 2004a). People that hold the nationality of a EU member state are next to national citizens, citizens of the European Union. In the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) it is stated that European citizenship is not meant to replace national citizenship but to complement it. The rights at European level include among other things the right to vote for the European Parliament, the right to file a petition at the European Parliament and the right to file a complaint at the European Ombudsman (See box 2.1). Formal citizenship does not apply to VMBO pupils though, since they haven’t reached the age of 18 yet.

<b>Rights of European Citizens</b>
<p><b>Article 39</b> Right to vote and to stand as a candidate at elections to the European Parliament</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Every citizen of the Union has the right to vote and to stand as a candidate at elections to the European Parliament in the Member State in which he or she resides, under the same conditions as Nationals of that State.</li><li>2. Members of the European Parliament shall be elected by direct universal suffrage in a free and secret ballot.</li></ol>
<p><b>Article 40</b> Right to vote and to stand as a candidate at municipal elections</p> <p>Every citizen of the Union has the right to vote and to stand as a candidate at municipal elections in the Member State in which he or she resides under the same conditions as nationals of that State.</p>
<p><b>Article 41</b> Right to good administration</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Every person has the right to have his or her affairs handled impartially, fairly and within a reasonable time by the institutions and bodies of the Union.</li><li>2. This right includes:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>. the right of every person to be heard, before any individual measure which would affect him or her adversely is taken;</li><li>. the right of every person to have access to his or her file, while respecting the legitimate interests of confidentiality and of professional and business secrecy;</li><li>. the obligation of the administration to give reasons for its decisions.</li></ul></li><li>3. Every person has the right to have the Community make good any damage caused by its institutions or by its servants in the performance of their duties, in accordance with the general principles common to the laws of the Member States.</li><li>4. Every person may write to the institutions of the Union in one of the languages of the Treaties and must have an answer in the same language.</li></ol>
<p><b>Article 42</b> Right of access to documents</p>

Any citizen of the Union, and any natural or legal person residing or having its registered office in a Member State, has a right of access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents.

**Article 43**

Ombudsman

Any citizen of the Union and any natural or legal person residing or having its registered office in a Member State has the right to refer to the Ombudsman of the Union cases of maladministration in the activities of the Community institutions or bodies, with the exception of the Court of Justice and the Court of First Instance acting in their judicial role.

**Article 44**

Right to petition

Any citizen of the Union and any natural or legal person residing or having its registered office in a Member State has the right to petition the European Parliament.

**Article 45**

Freedom of movement and of residence

1. Every citizen of the Union has the right to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States.
2. Freedom of movement and residence may be granted, in accordance with the Treaty establishing the European Community, to nationals of third countries legally resident in the territory of a Member State.

**Article 46**

Diplomatic and consular protection

Every citizen of the Union shall, in the territory of a third country in which the Member State of which he or she is a national is not represented, be entitled to protection by the diplomatic or consular authorities of any Member State, on the same conditions as the nationals of that Member State.

*Source: Official Journal of the European Communities, 2000*

Box 3.1 Rights of European Citizens

**3.1.2 Normative citizenship**

Besides formal citizenship, European citizenship includes normative or social citizenship, meaning knowledge and opinion about and participation and involvement in the close environment and the society as a whole. Knowledge of the social and political basic practices of the European community is required as well as the willingness and ability to contribute to it. Examples of participation at European level are participating in debates on European issues or voting for the European Parliament. For the ability to contribute to the European community, according to among others the Education Council, the command of a minimum of two foreign languages is indispensable (2004a). Not only skills and a profound knowledge are conditions for good citizenship, but also to have or be able to formulate a grounded opinion on, in this case, EU issues.

**3.1.3 European identity**

Moreover, when one fully wants to develop a meaningful European citizenship it is necessary that a sort of European identity arises. That European identity constitutes the third element of European citizenship. The common experience of a European identity could make citizens feel European. Several opinions on this concept exist. The European Union uses the expression "United in Diversity" to describe it. The EU consists of many different cultures, traditions and languages that are united to strive for a common goal: peace and welfare in Europe. Symbols like the European flag, the anthem, Europe Day and the euro try to intensify the 'together feeling'. According to Jacobs and Maier (1997), in the past years three strategies have been developed to create that European identity, namely the creation of a cultural dimension - among others historical myths about the joint Christian heritage, joint symbolism and secular rituals - a judicial dimension -specific rights for the citizens of the European Union- and the development of European citizenship. Nowadays, questions arise on whether the normative side of the Citizenship of the Union has positively developed itself or not. Are citizens and organisations really connected to the EU institutions and other EU nations and does the feeling of a European identity really exist? What does good citizenship actually mean in these globalizing times? Research by the BBS Foundation made clear that attention for identity, characteristics and differences in history and culture of other EU countries in education is no redundant luxury, seen all clichés that still seem to exist (Molenaar & Den Ouden 2005). "Should European citizenship actually be accepted



by the European citizens, then more attention should be paid to European identity and that common European heritage" (Blankert 2006). Also the European Commission expresses the need for the formation of a common European identity for active European citizenship: "Mutual understanding, solidarity and a feeling of belonging to Europe are indeed the building blocks for the involvement of citizens" (EC press release 7 Apr. 2005).

### 3.1.4 Role of education

Informing citizens about the European Union is indeed a task of the government and the media, but it is first and foremost a task of the school. In these busy globalizing times where an unlimited overflow of information is trying to reach the citizen, education in citizenship is still rather significant. The educational systems should ensure that pupils have by the end of their secondary education the knowledge and competences they need to prepare them for their role as future citizens in Europe. If pupils are to make educated choices about their roles in Europe, it is important that a European dimension is included in their education. One of the questions to which this report tries to find an answer is how to integrate the basic aspects of European citizenship in educational programmes, for which several educational policies have set the preconditions.

## 3.2 EDUCATIONAL POLICIES BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

In the Maastricht Treaty member states agreed that the European Union may not harmonize educational policies (see box 3.2). Education is first and foremost the concern of the member states. At European level, however, education ministers can coordinate their national policies in the Council of Ministers. This method is based on peer pressure on the basis of which Ministers of Education convert the EU objectives into national policies.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Official Treaty Text on Education</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Maastricht Treaty 1992</b> <b>EDUCATION, VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND YOUTH (Art. 126)</b></p> <p>1. The Community shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging co-operation between member states and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while <b>fully respecting the responsibility of the member states</b> for the content of teaching and the organization of educational systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity.</p> <p>2. Community action shall be aimed at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- developing the European dimension in education, particularly through the teaching and dissemination of the languages of the member states;</li><li>- encouraging mobility of students and teachers, inter alia by encouraging the academic recognition of diplomas and periods of study;</li><li>- promoting co-operation between educational establishments;</li><li>- developing exchanges of information and experience on issues common to the educational systems of the member states;</li><li>- encouraging the development of youth exchanges and of exchanges of socioeducational instructors;</li><li>- encouraging the development of distance education.</li></ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Source: <a href="http://www.eurotreaties.com/maastrichtec.pdf">http://www.eurotreaties.com/maastrichtec.pdf</a></i></p>
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Box 3.2 Official Treaty Text on Education

The stated aim of European education policy is to create more jobs and promote growth through strengthening basic and advanced education and training, and to help member states shape national policy through the exchange of experience at European level. Priority areas are the mobility of students and teachers, learning languages, cooperation between educational establishments, and initial and continuing vocational training. Subjects of discussion are also European identity and active citizenship (Onderwijsraad 2004b, Germany 2007).

### 3.3 THE DUTCH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND VMBO

As it was mentioned in the previous paragraph, member states are responsible for their own educational system. In the Netherlands, after primary education children go to secondary education, generally when they are 12 years old. Secondary education is divided into three different levels:

Pre-university education (VWO) - 6 years

Higher general secondary education (HAVO) - 5 years

Pre-vocational secondary education (VMBO) - 4 years

Type of Education	Number of Students - year '05/'06
Total Primary education	1,549.460
<b>Total Secondary education</b>	<b>940.450</b>
<i>Common first two years</i>	392.690
VWO 3,4,5,6	149.760
HAVO 3,4,5	137.440
<b>VMBO 3,4</b>	<b>226.790</b>
Total Vocational Education (MBO)	481.650
Total Higher Professional Education (HBO)	356.540
Total University (WO)	205.180

*Source: Central Bureau for Statistics, Feb. 2007*

Box 3.3 The Dutch educational system

The Ministry of Education stimulates the moving up in the so called “professional column” (see box 3.3). A VMBO diploma is not meant to be the final stage of education, but a preparation on a continuation course at MBO (lower professional education) level. The theoretical track<sup>6</sup> of VMBO should be seen as a preparation for MBO or HAVO (higher general secondary education) and HAVO prepares pupils for HBO (higher professional education). Only at the end of HAVO or MBO the VMBO pupils can get a European start qualification. In practice HAVO pupils continue their education at MBO, HBO or VWO. VWO in theory prepares for a university education, but those pupils can also choose for HBO. Also students with a HBO diploma can attend university education.

#### 3.3.1 VMBO – the first two years

VMBO makes out the largest part of Dutch secondary education, with 60 percent of all secondary school pupils attending this type of education (Hamstra, vd Ende, 2006). In the first two years of secondary education [onderbouw] the lessons are more or less equal for all pupils. In the core aims defined by OCW it is established what the pupils have to learn during these first two years. Teachers can elaborate those aims at every level as a consequence of the new laws and regulations that took effect in August 2006 (see paragraph 3.5). In these first two years it should become clear on what level the pupil eventually will continue their studies. The curriculum of the first two years exists out of two parts: a core part and a differentiation part. The core part affects all pupils and comprises 58 core aims which are divided among the various subjects and subject areas. The core part encloses at least 2/3 of the 1040 compulsory teaching hours. The remaining time should be used for extra lessons and activities supporting the core lessons. Together with a second language, these lessons and activities make out the differentiation part. Besides the freedom schools have to compose the differentiation part they are also free in deciding how to execute the core aims and educate their pupils. The division of contact hours as well as the school hours are again the school’s responsibility.

<sup>6</sup> Before the educational reform of 1999 the theoretical track of VMBO was called the MAVO (lower general secondary education).

### 3.3.2 VMBO – tracks & sectors

A VMBO pupil chooses a track out of four different tracks, of which two are practical (VMBO-bb and VMBO-kb), one is theoretical (VMBO-tl) and the other one is mixed (VMBO-gl). The tracks differ in level and the proportion theory/ practice. Within these four tracks, a choice should be made for a sector as well. The pupil's choice of sector should earliest be made at the end of the second year and determines the category of subjects followed from that period (Postbus51, 2006). In the two final years some subjects are compulsory, but social studies<sup>1</sup> is the only general subject that all VMBO pupils have to take. This means there is not just one type of VMBO pupil. The subject matters are presented in different ways, depending on the chosen track and sector. The four types of sectors one can choose from are: technique, care and health, economics and agriculture. The program can be divided into three parts. The first part is a common standard amount of subjects, namely Dutch, English, Social studies I, sports and one cultural/artistic subject. The type of subjects in the second part, also named sector part, depends on the chosen sector. The third part or free part contains two subjects from which at least one subject from another sector. During the fourth and final year the VMBO pupil faces a minimum of 700 contact hours. At the end of the fourth year VMBO pupils are examined according to the final terms (see paragraph 3.6).

## 3.4 RESPONSIBILITIES OF POLICY MAKERS

### 3.4.1 Ministry of Education Culture & Science (OCW)

In the Netherlands not only the cabinet, but secondary schools too have a large responsibility for the educational design. The Dutch government determines the minimal educational requirements by establishing core aims and final terms. The Dutch tradition of educational freedom makes it difficult for the Minister of Education to oblige schools to teach a specific content more than what is required by the core aims and final terms. Until recently, "the Dutch government has not pursued any explicit policy to stimulate the European citizenship of young people through education" (Visser and Dinjens). The note written by the ministers in 2006 has made clear that the government now sees the importance of embedding European citizenship in the curriculum. They want to embed "Europe" in secondary education by developing course material, especially for VMBO, also by stimulating the use of available material and by inspection seeing to the realisation of the core aims and final terms (Van der Hoeven and Bot 2006). The Inspection of Education checks the quality of schools in general. A school is checked every year on the basis of desk research or a visit of one day. A more in-depth investigation takes place once in four years. The inspection can for example check if the teaching methods used cover all essential elements of the core aims and if the theme "Europe" is sufficiently covered. In case a school performs insufficiently, another research will follow and if that proves the low quality, that school will be thoroughly checked again after two years. These obviously are long-term processes (Interdepartementaal Beleidsonderzoek [IBO], 2005).

The compulsory framework of the law and the core aims have been designed in such a way that 'Europe' and European citizenship are reflected in primary and secondary education at several moments and in different forms. The new core aims for the *onderbouw* of secondary schools state what all pupils in all schools have to learn during the first two years of secondary education and they are laid down in the law<sup>7</sup>. At the end of their school career, pupils have to have met the final terms; for several courses 'Europe' is part of those terms. The final terms for VMBO are adapted at the moment, taking effect 1 August 2007. Schools have to get the freedom to deliver goods made to measure, which can be offered in class or extra curricular. The school is obliged to offer a minimum, but free in the format and scope. Schools decide themselves on how they want to operate within the framework

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<sup>7</sup> Ratified by the Upper Chamber 23 May 2006. Forms a lawful basis from 1 August 2006.



of the law, core aims and final terms and which course material they want to use. During the first two years, they do have to spend a minimum of 1040 hours per year on lessons/ teaching, of which altogether 1425 hours have to be based on the core aims (Overheid.nl, 2007).

### **3.4.2 Curriculum Development Foundation (SLO)**

Before teachers can teach pupils something, the final terms and core aims have to be made more concrete. Therefore they have to be shaped into so called 'learn lines', which is mostly done by the Curriculum Development Foundation (SLO). These 'learn lines' are not compulsory but they show schools ways to design education and they show editors ways to develop course material. "SLO gives advice that will only take effect when that advice has been processed in the textbooks" (Interview European Platform). The formulated guidelines help schools give expression to the new core aims. "SLO and didactic centres will have to focus on those aims that will have to be made concrete specifically regarding the theme 'Europe', if schools indicate not to have sufficient materials for it" (Interview OCW). The SLO works on a memorandum on citizenship. The question is till what extent the recommendations made will have an influence on VMBO education. SLO receives orders from third parties, among others from the Ministry of Education, which ordered SLO to develop educational material for several subjects. Already three years ago SLO developed material for European citizenship, specifically about Europe and the European dimension in education. Presently SLO is active on a national level only: citizenship on a national level before the European citizenship is tackled. SLO does develop learning lines and information for schools, although as a concept only.

### **3.4.3 The Education Council (Onderwijsraad)**

The Education Council advises the Dutch government on educational policies. The government and the parliament then decide what to do with the advice. To some extent, the council evaluates the actions that have been undertaken. The advices haven't always been put into practice directly, since the execution can be done by several parties. The Education Council has published a report on the influence of the EU on Dutch education (Onderwijsraad, 2004b). The conclusion of the report is that there are no strict European measures for the member states of the European Union regarding education. There is only an indirect influence on the Dutch educational system by the European social-economic policies and agreements regarding the bachelor-master structure for example. In 2003 the council has investigated social coherence in Dutch society, which had to be intensified. The term 'Citizenship' has been launched. In 2004 the council published a report on European citizenship. It was established that only little attention was given to European citizenship at VMBO. In order to do something about this, the council thought a so called Europe competence should be developed. The Ministry of Education then asked the European Platform to do so.

### **3.4.4 VMBO Group of Advice (VMBO Adviesgroep)**

The VMBO Group of Advice is a council installed by the Minister of Education, which task it is to advice on the issuing of rules regarding VMBO education. It is a temporary organ which has been installed because changes and reorganisations in the field can better be achieved through such an organisation than by top-down communication.

## **3.5 CORE AIMS**

Article 23 of the Dutch constitution guarantees the freedom of schools. The former Minister of Education, Mrs. Maria van der Hoeven and parliament have decided to give schools even more freedom than they already had. From 1993 about 300 core aims existed for the first two years. In 2002 a taskforce 'Renewal Basic Education' developed a proposal for renewal, in cooperation with educational experts, the education field, SLO and other relevant organisations. The new core aims

have recently been adopted by the Second Chamber and were reduced from 280 to 58 aims<sup>8</sup>. Due to the new core aims schools can decide which subjects to offer during the first two years, within the domains described in the core aims. In the domain Human & Society the theme 'Europe' is explicitly mentioned. The core aims for all secondary school pupils in the first two years regarding Europe are explicitly 38 and 45, as can be seen in box 3.5. Moreover, 'Europe' is implicitly integrated in other core aims (47): the pupil learns to relate the events and developments of the 20th century and the contemporary developments and can most likely be integrated in the general subjects history, geography, economics and civics.

Core aims first two years of secondary education	
Core aim	Description
38	The pupil learns to use a contemporary image of the own environment, the Netherlands, Europe and the world in order to place phenomenons and developments in their environment
45	The pupil learns to understand the significance of European cooperation and the European Union for him- or herself, the Netherlands and the world.
47	The pupil learns to place current tensions and conflicts in the world against their background and learns to see how that influences individuals and society (national, European and international), the large mutual dependence in the world, the importance of human rights and the meaning of international cooperation.

Box 3.5. Core aims

Unfortunately the core aims have become less explicit and a lot is left to the imagination and interpretation of the school and its teachers. The core aims still concern only the first two years of secondary education, but in order to ensure that the freedom of schools eventually leads to equally set goals, the VMBO advise group does recommend to integrate the core aims in the final terms in the future (IBO, 2005).

### 3.6 FINAL TERMS

All final terms together constitute the exam programme. Exam requirements are determined by the Ministry of Education. The requirements concern both content and level of the exams. The final terms for the general subjects (social studies, geography, history and economics) are derived from the final terms for HAVO and VWO.

For VMBO the final terms have been grouped into exam units. These units each consist of a core part and for the theoretical track also of an extra part. The compulsory core part forms the basis of a subject. The extra part is an enrichment of the core part of some subjects and compulsory for all general subjects in the VMBO theoretical track. The Commission Exams Secondary Education [CEVO<sup>9</sup>] is responsible for the elaboration of the topics, which have been proposed by OCW. Starting from the schoolyear 2007/2008 the exam programmes will be generalized, meaning they will be adapted on a technical level only, on the basis of the current final terms.

The Minister of Education determines the main themes of the exam programmes and points out on which items the final exam should stretch out. CEVO gives a description and an explanation of the exam requirements and the exam units that make part of the national central exam in a syllabus. Which units make part of the exam will have to be made public three years in advance. The requirements for the exams of 2008 will almost entirely correspond to the current final terms

<sup>8</sup> The new core aims have taken effect as of 1 August 2006.

<sup>9</sup> Central Exam Commission Determination Assignments VWO, HAVO, VMBO. (*Centrale Examencommissie Vaststelling Opgaven VWO, HAVO, VMBO*)



(Eindexamen.nl, 2007). The syllabus is designed by CEVO and written by SLO and CITO. A syllabus is a tool for teachers and pupils to prepare for the exams and for producers of teaching methods it can be helpful as well (CEVO, 2007). CEVO also gives CITO<sup>10</sup> a specified assignment for the production of tasks and tests for the final exams. CITO then makes the exams.

Whether pupils learn about the European Union, is to a large extent dependent on the choice of subjects. Most schools pay attention to European citizenship within the subjects geography, history, social science and economics. Not all pupils have these subjects in their chosen set of courses. That depends on the chosen sector and electives. Some schools allow their pupils to choose two sectors, which makes it more probable for those pupils to have more than one of the subjects geography, history, economics or social studies. In the first two years of VMBO education, schools are free to offer whatever they want as long as it fits within the core aims. Since those are formulated in rather general terms, it is open to many interpretations. When we look at the final terms in box 3.6 below, only the ones for economics contain European issues in the core part and the final terms of history contain European issues in the extra part. The extra parts are complementary exam requirements that are linked to a core part for the exam in the mixed or theoretical track. For the subjects geography and history every two years two extra parts are chosen as exam topics out of a total of 6 extra topics. One of the topics is "The Netherlands and Europe". In the years 2006 and 2007 for example "The Netherlands and Europe" was part of the history exam and from 2008 it will even be a core part, according to a CITO staff member. Social Science I is the only subject in which every VMBO pupil has to take a school exam, but for this subject 'Europe' is never part of the final terms and therefore most apparently not a subject that is dealt with in that class. Although subjects like "European holiday destinations" or "Mainports" within the subject geography offer points of departure for education with a European perspective, it means that if a pupil hasn't chosen the sector economics or the electives economics or history, he or she is dependent on the willingness of teachers in the first two years to explain the facts and the meaning of the European Union.

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<sup>10</sup> CITO is the Institute for Educational Measurements in the Netherlands.



<b>Final terms VMBO</b>
<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>
Core: The EU and institutions are not explicitly mentioned. Extra: The EU and institutions are not explicitly mentioned.
<b>SOCIAL STUDIES</b>
Core: The EU and institutions are not explicitly mentioned. Extra: The EU and institutions are not explicitly mentioned.
<b>ECONOMICS</b>
Core: International developments; The candidate can, with a view on his or her role as citizen, describe the significance of the European (Monetary) Union, taking easy examples of the own daily life as a starting point. Including: - the member states of the European Union (EU) and the euro zone (EMU); - free movement of goods, services, persons and capital. He/she involves: 1. consumption, 2. export, 3. employment and 4. coordination of economic politics. the influence on the consumption by: free movement of goods and services within the EU; common import taxes; the increasing competition; the use of the euro in the euro zone. 2. the influence on export by: free movement of goods and services within the EU; the increasing competition; the use of the euro in the euro zone. 3. the influence on the employment by: free movement of goods and services within the EU; common import taxes; the increasing competition; the use of the euro in the euro zone 4. coordination of economic politics by: protection of the competitive position of companies in the EU countries promotion of a fair competition (level playing field) between companies within the EU; community agreements on the budgetary policies of the national authorities (limiting deficits, coordination of tax policies); environmental measures in a EU context; the role of the European Central Bank (bank-note dissemination, establishing interest rates, guarding the exchange value of the euro). Extra: The EU and institutions are not explicitly mentioned.
<b>HISTORY</b>
Core: The EU and institutions are not explicitly mentioned. Extra: (linked to Core part; Political System in the Netherlands) The Netherlands and Europe The candidate can: recognise authorities of the European Parliament, European Council and the European Commission and comparing these with the authorities of the Dutch Lower House and Government - controlling authorities - legislative authorities recognise political and economic motives to and examples of European cooperation since 1945, also on a local and regional level, and describe some consequences for civilians - prevent a new war / new conflict between Germany and France - enlarge market / improve competitive position with USA and Japan - ECCS, EEG, EU - labour / leisure / money recognise topics that Dutch people consider important in discussions on European integration with regard to the Dutch identity - language / educational system / welfare state / justice / tolerance Propose and elucidate ones own view on the subject whether, in which fields and under which conditions it is desirable to transfer Dutch national competences to the European Union.

### Box 3.6 Final terms



### 3.7 CONCLUSION

Dutch citizens in general and parents of secondary school pupils in specific think that schools have a larger responsibility for the quality of education than the government does (Wendte et al. 2006). As for the creation of a European dimension in secondary education in this case, it is true that the responsibilities don't lie with the policy makers of the European Union, the Ministry OCW, Education Council, VMBO Group of Advice and SLO only. Schools too have a large responsibility to offer VMBO pupils subjects in which 'Europe' is dealt with. The requirements by the European Union and by the national government for a European dimension in VMBO education are not even that high. Article 23 of the Dutch constitution guarantees the freedom of schools. The EU can neither oblige member states nor schools to pay attention to the EU anyway and the Dutch government decided to give schools more and more freedom to design their educational programmes. Consequently, schools decide themselves on how they want to operate within the framework of the law, core aims and final terms and which course material they want to use. The core aims for the first two years are formulated in very general terms, which leave a lot to the imagination of the teachers. The teacher is just obliged to offer a minimum and has a lot of freedom regarding the format and scope. Moreover, not all VMBO pupils have to learn the same things. It depends on the subjects they have chosen within their track and their sector. This can result in significant differences between pupils considering their knowledge about the EU. The final terms, where the EU explicitly has been included concerns only the subjects economics and history, which in fact are not compulsory. This means that when VMBO pupils have not been taught enough about the EU during the first two years and have not chosen to take economics and/or history they will probably be insufficiently prepared for their future role as citizens of the Union. In conclusion, the European dimension is not totally absent in VMBO education, but it doesn't constitute a substantial element in core aims and the exam programs either. Since the current citizens of the Union do not seem to be able to live up to the demands of informed European citizens, there is no guarantee yet that the VMBO pupils or citizens of the future one day will prove the opposite and become true European citizens.

## 4 INITIATIVES TO STIMULATE A EUROPEAN DIMENSION

The reason why so little attention is paid to EU themes can partly be explained by the freedom schools have as long as they comply with the core aims and by the fact that neither the EU nor national governments can prescribe the content of lessons. On the basis of the policies that have been described in chapter 3, several parties have taken initiatives to develop materials, projects and programmes for VMBO pupils in order to stimulate European citizenship. This chapter provides a rather complete overview of all initiatives that have been taken for that purpose. This chapter seeks to answer the following research question: *“to what extent and in which formats have initiatives on European citizenship aimed at Dutch VMBO pupils already been developed and implemented?”*

### 4.1 CONTENT OF VMBO TEXTBOOKS

The attention for "Europe" in the standard textbooks reflects the state of affairs as concluded in chapter 3. The publishers of these methods use the core aims, final terms and learn lines as



guidelines for their material, together with insights they have in the competences and interests of the target group, in this case VMBO-t pupils. Since the core aims are open to interpretation, the textbooks for the first two years don't contain the same information about the European Union. On top of that, chapters about the EU can be twelve pages in length or just one paragraph. Text writers have freedom of choice. This illustrates once more how much freedom the policies leave editors and schools. In the Netherlands there are a few large editors that are most often used by schools. The content of their books regarding 'Europe' for all school years and all tracks of VMBO have been analysed. As can be seen in

the tables in appendix 4, not every teaching method pays the same amount of attention to the EU. In the first two years much more topics are dealt with than in the final years. The textbooks for economics contain most topics on the European Union, for the EU is a compulsory part of the exam and writers of textbooks for the final years base their content on the exam requirements.

Teachers are not restricted to the textbooks though. Teachers can decide to stick to the method, or to leave parts out or add some, depending on the level of the class. It doesn't mean that if a topic is covered by a textbook, a teacher will pay attention to it in his lessons. The teachers are the ones that have to convey the information and start a discussion, because European citizenship does not consist of knowledge alone, as we will see in the next chapter. What is often mentioned in the interviews is that teachers like to use current affairs to explain things about the European Union. When the current affairs link to a part in the textbook, the topic will be dealt with. Most schools only buy textbooks once in five years. If the final terms are adapted, schools would have to use other materials (see the following paragraphs) to offer the compulsory lessons. Teachers encounter difficulties in delivering the European Union part of the curriculum and feel that resources are insufficiently available to assist them. For this matter, teachers may use the historical 'canon' for example, in which each subject refers to several sources with background information. According to Podium (2006), only five percent of the teachers takes such initiatives, because teachers don't have much time besides the compulsory subjects that prepare pupils for their exams. Also a teacher of the school 'De Grundel' says the standard teaching methods serve as a guiding principle for the lessons. Only sometimes enthusiastic teachers offer the information in a different way.

## 4.2 GOVERNMENTAL INITIATIVES

### 4.2.1 Initiatives by the Dutch government

The Commission First Two Years of Secondary Education (Onderbouw VO) supports schools with the realisation of the new core aims. It has distributed the new core aims with explanation to all schools. The Ministry attracts the attention for certain themes by publishing in education journals (12 till 18 for example) or through teacher platforms of the subjects concerned with the development of general knowledge. The civil servant of the Ministry of Education doesn't have insight in what VMBO-t schools do to give expression to the new core aims. It is a process of years. He thinks that schools try to give the core aims shape by using the teacher platforms, in which information and good practices can be exchanged. Teachers take ideas to the school and make sure they will become part of the programme. The only thing the Ministry of Education can do to bring the theme 'Europe' under the attention of VMBO schools, is to let them know that the Ministry thinks the subject is important and to stimulate schools to pay more attention to it. The ministry can name some areas that deserve special attention and communicate to schools so that they will hopefully put it higher on the agenda.

#### Websites EuropaEducatief and Unite-EU.nl

The websites [www.europaeducatief.nl](http://www.europaeducatief.nl) and [www.unite-eu.nl](http://www.unite-eu.nl) are initiatives by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The first project makes part of the governmental campaign Europe rather important, that aims to familiarize Dutch citizens with the European Union. The website EuropaEducatief is a collection of course materials for primary and secondary education on the European Union to support teachers. Various lesson suggestions can be found for every VMBO year and for each level. They are mostly paper based and match the standard textbooks. Each lesson indicates to which textbook it is a supplement. Podium bureau for educational communication develops educational projects and materials for various assignment providers. One of those is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who issued Podium to develop material about Europe for VMBO part of the project "Europe rather important". The final product is a CD-ROM for all VMBO tracks. This CD-ROM can be ordered from EuropaEducatief. The CD-ROM is suitable for all 16 VMBO types and it takes the sectors as a starting point. It is impossible to integrate all possible angles from which the theme 'Europe' can be approached. The content cannot be offered in too much detail and is not always covered by the words used, because it has to appeal to VMBO pupils. Umbrella organisations, trade organisations and educational managers worked together with Podium in the development of this CD-ROM. Podium also developed the website Unite-EU.nl. It is meant for young people until 14 years old. It contains information about the European Union, digital lessons for VMBO, the comic "History of the EU", a game "The big Europe trip", tips for papers and the possibility to make a paper online, a newsletter "European Educational News", brochures, etc.

### 4.2.2 Programmes by the European Commission

The need to pay more attention to European citizenship is not an issue in the Netherlands alone. In 2004 the European Commission established the development of European citizenship as a main priority for EU action. It developed programmes to promote active European citizenship among EU citizens in general and so did the Council of the European Union. In April 2005 the European Commission adopted the proposal for a new program 'Citizens for Europe' 2007-2013 to promote active European citizenship (Politeia, 2006) and it has also developed a number of internationalisation programmes for all educational sectors. These are examples of how the EU tries to influence education in the member states, without imposing any obligations. "The largest current EU education program Socrates was launched to develop the European dimension in studies at all levels as to strengthen the spirit of European citizenship, drawing on the cultural heritage of each member state" (Ollikainen, 2000, p2). More concrete, Socrates wants to promote life long learning, encourage access



to education for everybody, and help people acquire recognized qualifications and skills by promoting language learning, and encouraging mobility and innovation. National governments can refer to the recommendations that the European Commission drafted for "key competences for a life long learning" when designing their educational policies. Next to the Socrates programmes (Socrates Comenius and Socrates Arion) the European programmes Pluvo and Plato are relevant for VMBO level. The programmes focus on:

- teacher training colleges;
- teacher refresher courses;
- exchanges;
- school partnerships.

In the Netherlands the programmes are coordinated by the European Platform.

#### **4.2.3 Initiatives by the European Platform for Dutch Education**

The European Platform is commissioned by the Ministry of Education and the European Commission with the responsibility to increase the European dimension and stimulate internationalisation of Dutch secondary education. Partners of the European Platform are among others SLO and IPP. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs only communicates with the European Platform on project basis. The European Platform is responsible for the execution of the programmes by the European Union as mentioned above. Furthermore, it enables exchanges; it developed the "Europe competence", the concept "Europe as a Learning Environment at schools (ELOS) and course materials. The European Platform mails schools to become more widely known and to bring its programmes and course materials under the schools' attention. For a long time, the focus has been on HAVO and VWO schools. In the past months, the European Platform has realised something needs to happen to involve VMBO pupils as well. At a meeting in January 2007, the managing director of the European Platform contended that an inventory of the current state of affairs has to be made and has now taken the initiative to employ a "coordinator", who will start as soon as possible.

##### Exchanges

The European Platform provides subsidies for international projects, like the guest lectures of the Institute for Public and Politics and exchange programmes. Exchanges take place in HAVO and VWO more frequently than in VMBO. Only one fourth of all subsidies for exchange goes to VMBO. This is however a distorted image, since exchanges mostly take place in the fourth school year which is the exam year in VMBO education. If one compares the exchanges that take place in the second en third school year, VMBO pupils go on exchange more often (European Platform 2006). One out of ten VMBO pupils participate in international projects. Schools sometimes organise a trip to Brussels or to Straatsburg for the teachers, which can be subsidized by the European Platform. How many VMBO schools organise these kinds of activities is unknown.

##### Europe competence

The Education Council has given the Ministry of Education the advice to introduce a "Europe competence" that consists of knowledge, skills and attitudes/ opinion about Europe, meaning that pupils have to be able to write and speak about Europe with European know-how. The European Platform has been given the task to give this competence shape and content for all secondary school types. In appendix 2 the concrete result can be found. VMBO pupils should also be given the chance to graduate with a Europe certificate (see appendix 3 for a description) attached to their diploma which should be a feasible objective especially for the theoretical track, since subjects of VMBO-t/ HAVO and VWO are often similar. The European Platform tries to motivate schools to implement the Europe competence in their programs, because schools are responsible for offering their pupils this opportunity. Nonetheless, partners of the European Platform like SLO and CITO are necessary for the



proper introduction of this competence into all levels of secondary education. The European Platform cooperates with the Council Secondary Education (VO-Raad), BBS and the European School Heads Association (ESHA) to develop course materials for European use on the basis of the Europe competence.

### ELOS

The European Platform has introduced and coordinates ELOS schools in which the Europe competence gets shape and European citizenship is actively worked on. ELOS stands for "Europe as a learning environment at schools". They have a European and International Orientation (EIO). This orientation is also a basis for the bilingual education (tto-schools). Within ELOS schools teaching modern foreign languages and the history and present of the European Union are of high priority and international activities like exchanges, joint projects and e-mail contacts are taking place. Seventeen schools took part in the project in the school year 2005/2006. Within ELOS there is a separate working group VMBO consisting of 7 schools that research the possibilities for VMBO. The ELOS network consists of a limited number of Dutch schools and over hundred schools in other EU countries. ELOS schools develop their own material, which could be suitable for other schools as well. They developed among other things a 'Framework of Reference' for the specific key competences that are most relevant for European citizenship (see appendix 2).

### Course material

The European Platform has developed course materials for all school types ("Europa Actueel"/ "Europe Today"). The material is actively brought under the attention of schools. Just about 50 schools use it, but the material is often found too theoretical and too difficult for VMBO pupils. The EP has not contacted the large publishers to get more European issues in the course materials that are used most. The EP did take part in the discussion at a higher level: it had been asked for advice regarding the content of the core aims, which resulted in core aims in which Europe is explicitly mentioned.

## **4.3 INITIATIVES BY SCHOOLS**

Schools indicate in the interviews that the textbooks don't offer enough leads for further explanation of the European Union. External sources cannot always easily be found. Teachers wonder what course materials exist and where they can be obtained. Even if schools know, they don't always have the necessary financial means. Some schools make use of the initiatives of organisations like the European Platform or they develop their own projects and materials.

### **4.3.1 School Projects**

The interviewed teachers and location managers gave the following examples of projects they had undertaken in the past to make up for the deficit of the standard textbooks:

- The EU is sometimes given more attention in connection with current affairs, like projects around the implementation of the Euro at the time, which was a subject that appealed to both teachers and pupils. Teachers of one school used "Europe placemats" from McDonalds<sup>11</sup>. They stuck it on the tables and put up large posters that they had obtained from the European Platform. In such a way there always was the confrontation with the theme. One teacher also made a large sheet with the names of the currencies, on which she had done research beforehand on the Internet. It is best to explain something at the moment it is current, otherwise pupils think it is normal and they don't realise it had been different before.

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<sup>11</sup> This fast-food chain also paid attention to the introduction of the Euro.



- Another project that has been executed was a play in class in which the EU process was imitated: a meeting of the European Commission with a chairperson, public and an issue that was a topical event or an imitation of the European Parliament. After pupils had stated their preferences, the roles were divided.
- One of the schools once organised a theme week on the European Union, developed by the teachers themselves. The specific theme was the accession of new member states, in which role plays and language courses were integrated. The countries and the institutions were divided among the classrooms. In this way information was conveyed in a playful manner. Materials and information were gained at the representation of the European Commission and the Office of the European Parliament. The project was very successful.
- One of the teachers went to Brussels during the secondary teacher training to sample the atmosphere. This was very useful, because only then it appealed to her imagination.
- One of the history classes went to the Lower Chamber, in which they made a guided tour, attended a meeting and saw the members of Parliament. Usually politics are abstract and difficult, but this excursion appealed to their imagination.
- Drawing competitions or other competitions regarding European citizenship in which a result had to be sent were mentioned as one of the initiatives of the school in Hengelo.
- One interviewed geography teacher says he gives pupils in the second year extra notes on European issues and especially the European institutions, the pupils find this difficult though.

#### 4.3.2 Exchanges

Other ways to promote European citizenship are physical exchanges or exchanges via ICT such as E-Twinning. Two out of five schools that rendered their assistance to this research organise exchanges on voluntary basis with several schools in Europe (Denmark, Germany and Belgium). One of them is a member of the EuroKIS internationalisation network<sup>12</sup>, the VMBO network Euroschoon, and takes part in Comenius programmes. All interviewees of these two schools say it isn't always easy for VMBO pupils to participate seen their home situation with parents who do not always see the use of an exchange and are sometimes not being cooperative, especially for allochtone pupils. A week abroad is more than enough for them. The pupils from the schools abroad also come to the Netherlands. The exchanges are enabled by subsidies of the European Platform, although it doesn't cover the expenses. The European Platform also has a database with exchange partners. The goal of the exchanges is to improve language skills and to enrich the pupils' perception of their environment with know-how of the daily life in other European countries.

## 4.4 OTHER INITIATIVES

Next to the European Union, the national government and the schools, there are other organisations that see the importance of education as an instrument through which the experience of European citizenship can be intensified. A number of initiatives have been taken; most of which are listed below.

#### 4.4.1 Initiatives by the Council Secondary Education (*VO raad*)

The Council Secondary Education looks after the collective interests of secondary education and the employers' interests of its members, by representing them at the government, other educational sectors and social organisations. The Council wants to increase the attention for internationalisation. A plan of action has been developed with the elements:

- more attention for internationalisation in Dutch education

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<sup>12</sup> See: Initiatives by Euroschoon and the VMBO network



- influencing policies at national level
- influencing policies at European level
- play a larger role in the European School heads Association and the International Confederation of Principals. (VO-Raad, 2007)

The Commission Foreign Affairs exists since 1989. It treats matters important to school managers concerning internationalising Dutch education. The Commission Foreign Affairs wants to strengthen the international dimension, in all its variety. The Commission meets six times a year and advises the managing board of the VO-council about internationalising. On a number of fields it cooperates with the European Platform.

#### **4.4.2 Initiatives by Euroschool and the VMBO network**

Euroschool is now still a department of the European Platform. At the moment the European Platform is reorganising: the various additional departments will be integrated in the Platform itself. Euroschool offers schools advice and courses regarding internationalisation and it supports schools that want to enrich their programmes with a European dimension. Euroschool prepares teachers for exchanges and organises teacher refresher courses. There are no refresher courses available though that focus on the increase of knowledge or awareness about the European Union. Euroschool cooperates with the professional education for teachers to make the future teachers more aware of the importance of the European Union, yet there's only a small group of future (VMBO) teachers who participate in the days that are organised for this matter.

Euroschool initiated a "**Working group VMBO**". This is a network that consists of 12 VMBO schools and specifically focuses on VMBO education and is financed by the European Platform. The task of this working group is to find out how more attention can be paid to the theme "Europe" in VMBO education. This working group cooperates with the VMBO working group of ELOS. It has published a report on European citizenship at VMBO. The main goal is to strive for a larger European dimension in VMBO education by the development of continuing learning lines throughout every year of VMBO education. At the moment there is still a discussion on the concrete realisation. One thing the VMBO network of Euroschool has achieved so far is that the European Platform has put the promotion of the European dimension at VMBO education higher on its agenda. Another goal is to more widely spread the initiatives that strengthen the European dimension in VMBO; especially the course materials and experiences of ELOS schools. In order to achieve that, cooperation with ELOS and the European Platform would be desirable, but there is not enough manpower within these organisations to spread the good practices.

At least the **EuroKIS** schools should be using ELOS' materials and programs in the near future. EuroKIS is one of the projects of Euroschool. It is a network of about 80 schools that have internationalisation high on their agenda's and that want to continue their internationalisation activities by learning from each other. The schools that are part of EuroKIS want to embed internationalisation in the school curriculum. To achieve this, seminars, conferences and study trips are organised. During three different project weeks abroad, of which one aimed at VMBO, teachers sat down and talked about ideas for international projects with course material. With international projects is meant exchanges and ICT projects, in which there was not much specific attention for Europe.

#### **4.4.3 Initiatives by BBS**

The BBS-Foundation consists of a group of six retired or still active school managers. In 2004 BBS started a project to stimulate a European dimension in education all throughout Europe and is sponsored by the European Commission. The ambition of BBS is to encourage European citizenship



by developing a European curriculum. In 2004 they did a first inventory of the European dimension in preparatory vocational education. The most important concrete result of the project is a Basic Knowledge List (BKL) (see appendix 1). This list contains areas, topics and themes that are important to know for every young European student to become a European Citizen and is conducted and agreed on by 50 school directors from all over Europe. Universities have cooperated to ensure the quality of the content of the list. The project has been adopted by the European School heads Association. Together they want to create a basis for the use of the basic knowledge list throughout Europe.

#### **4.4.4 Initiatives by the Institute for Public and Politics (IPP)**

##### Guest lectures

The *Instituut voor Publiek en Politiek* is a national organisation without political affiliations that wants to increase political and social participation. IPP organises among others guest lectures at secondary schools. This year, the organisation has a budget for 150 lessons from September 2006 till March 2007 for all school types. The budget is provided by the European Platform and the Europe Fund from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The IPP recruits, trains and coordinates guest lecturers, which are young people that have a connection with or special interest in Europe. The IPP also makes the social studies journal. If the IPP publishes something, most social studies teachers will be informed. The Institute for Public and Politics thinks the 150 guest lectures could easily be expanded to 300 lectures, because there is enough interest. The lectures are offered for free and around 60 percent of the lectures take place at VMBO schools. The (mostly social studies) teachers are enthusiastic. Guest lectures are successful because of the young and "new" teachers. They can convey specific subjects face-to-face. The guest lecturers adapt the programme to each level and they fill the large demand there is at VMBO level. The biggest problem is to get the financing, which is time consuming and there is a risk that there are no more subsidies available. For the organisation of these guest lectures, IPP has cooperated with the National Youth Council and their working group 'Europe'. Some youth representatives have cooperated in the development of material and they give guest lectures. After the guest lectures flyers are distributed, to give pupils the chance to get further information on Europe and to make the National Youth Council more known. This is a nice example of how two organisations can profit from cooperation.

#### **4.4.5 Extra course materials**

The following initiatives have been taken by various organisations to make ICT-, paper based- or other materials about Europe for secondary education and for VMBO in specific to fill the gap caused by the limited coverage of the European Union in textbooks. The list is not complete, but it contains the most important materials aimed at VMBO pupils. Some other materials were found, but the target group thereof was mostly HAVO/ VWO. This research does unfortunately not reveal how many schools make use of the listed materials for VMBO pupils and which ones are found suitable.

##### "Click on Europe"

Alice O education in world perspective together with CiST, is developing new course material for the school year 2007/ 2008 named 'Click on Europe'. This project consists of a series of 120 guest lectures, workshops debating (Debatainment), television (debate), a website (min. 5000 visitors per month) and course material on the theme 'Europe'. This project will replace the current guest lectures organised by the IPP. AliceO is a foundation in Amsterdam that develops concepts and products with a focus on international themes in order to stimulate young people to acquire knowledge, attitudes and skills that enable them to live as world citizens. Bureau CiST is commissioned by the municipality Tilburg to stimulate cultural education. CiST is an intermediate between VMBO education and initiatives regarding cultural education and -participation.

### School TV

Some schools use videos by School TV. They appeal to teachers and pupils and fit into the lessons. Unfortunately, there is no video available about Europe for VMBO level.

### “Enjoy Europe School Tour” by the Young Democrats<sup>13</sup>

With this tour the Young Democrats want to stimulate the discussion about Europe among VMBO pupils. The target group is VMBO pupils in the third and fourth year. During two lessons an EU simulation game will be played with groups of 9 till 20 children to make the pupils experience the use of the European Union. A couple of Young Democrats guide the groups. The final part of the programme is a quiz or questionnaire to determine the knowledge level. The project has been made possible by the Europe Fund of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### “Europa laat je niet los!”

The Information of the European Parliament in the Netherlands developed a booklet with facts, comics and puzzles about the European Union. It is well illustrated and contains some educative tasks.

### Lessons about the European Union

*CED Group educational services* has developed paper based course material for thirteen geography and economics lessons in the second year of VMBO. The aim is to teach pupils what the European Union means for them and to increase their knowledge and understanding of the EU. The material can be found on [www.taalpleinrotterdam.nl](http://www.taalpleinrotterdam.nl).

### Kennisnet

The Foundation “*Kennisnet Ict op school*” developed the website [www.kennisnet.nl](http://www.kennisnet.nl). It contains course material about ‘Europe’, like the ‘lesson letter’ “PerExpresse” on the European Constitution. This material doesn’t make a distinction between the various levels of secondary education. Most other material is not suitable for VMBO. The website also contains links to information about Europe as well as links to other useful websites.



### Europe (experiment first two years of secondary education)

The Development Centre has developed course material for 30 hours of lessons for the domain “Human & Society.” It consists of two parts: Europe and Poor&Rich. The material is stored in a database, so that every school can adapt the material to its needs.

### Publishers

Large publishers offer schools a complete course package per course, based on the core aims. Next to the standard textbooks, they offer a website of the teaching method with tests and extra material. The material prepares the pupils for the exam. Publisher Nijgh Versluijs developed the booklet “Poland in the European Union” that gives an insight into the (enlargement of the) European Union.

### MyEurope

[MyEurope.eun.org](http://MyEurope.eun.org) is a Web-based project which aims to help teachers raise their pupils' awareness of what it means to be a young citizen in Europe. More than 6000 schools are involved in bringing the diversity of Europe into the classroom via the Internet. The website is in English and might not be suitable for VMBO pupils. This is however one of the few projects that explicitly focus on European citizenship.

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<sup>13</sup> The Young Democrats (*Jonge Democraten*) is the youth organisation of the Dutch political party “Democrats '66” (D66)



## 4.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter an answer is given to the question *“to what extent and in which formats initiatives on European citizenship aimed at Dutch VMBO pupils have already been developed and implemented.”*

The standard textbooks obviously don't offer the same content nor the same amount of information on the European Union. Even if they did, it would be no guarantee that teachers use all of it in their lessons, which makes it hard to establish to what extent the standard materials contribute to an intensification of European citizenship. Since the governmental policies leave schools and editors a lot of freedom, teachers and organisations who see the importance of teaching VMBO pupils about European citizenship have taken the opportunity to develop their own initiatives.

There is an extensive list of projects and course materials that is still small if compared to all initiatives that have been taken for HAVO and VWO. The teaching methods have been developed by various parties, but there is a lack of coordination. Teachers don't have one portal to turn to when they want to use extracurricular material. A form of coordination can be found on EU level by programmes of the institutions of the European Union, but their recommendations are not binding and don't impose any obligations. The initiatives that are taken in the Netherlands and are aimed at VMBO pupils are mostly individual projects that lack cooperation with parties who strive for the same goal. Even within schools the communication is not always optimal, let alone between schools or between schools and organisations.

There are some parties in the Netherlands who see the need to do something about this. BBS has taken the initiative to try to implement a European dimension in the curriculum of secondary schools throughout the EU, which should include VMBO education. And the Working group VMBO Euroschool wants to spread good practices among a larger group of VMBO schools in specific. In the past months, also the European Platform of Dutch Education has realised that this coordination is a problem and has now taken the initiative to employ a “coordinator”. These initiatives are still in the initial stage, but when they will be further extended and developed and coordinated by one party, they offer good chances for the stimulation of a European dimension in VMBO education.

## 5 OPINIONS ON TEACHING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP

In this chapter, it will be described “*what the opinion is of policy makers and -executors on the initiatives from chapter 4 regarding European citizenship*”. It will first of all be made clear what they think should be the content of education about Europe and what pupils should learn about European citizenship. Then it can be discussed whether the policies and teaching methods contain what they think is important.

### 5.1 WHAT VMBO PUPILS SHOULD LEARN

What do policy makers and -executors want to teach VMBO pupils about European citizenship? The European Parliament, BBS Foundation, teachers, guest lecturers and the Education Council state their opinion.

#### 5.1.1 European Parliament

The European Parliament emphasizes the importance of a European dimension in education throughout Europe in a resolution adopted in September 2006. In the resolution, the European Parliament stressed the importance of school curricula providing support measures for the European dimension.

"All educational systems in the EU should ensure that, by the end of their secondary education, their pupils have the knowledge and competences they need to prepare them for their role as EU citizens. The "European dimension" has two aspects: firstly, access to information about the EU, its institutions, methods and practices, and, secondly, the development of linguistic skills, with learning the languages of neighbouring peoples being especially important."

#### 5.1.2 BBS

The BBS Foundation thinks European citizenship education has to provide students with knowledge, skills, competences, attitudes and values they need to become an engaged European Citizen (BBS Foundation, 2006). BBS has done research among school heads in various European countries to find out what they think are essential elements of education about Europe. The basic knowledge for European citizenship is formulated:

- Learning at least one foreign language
- Knowledge of the own national background compared to other cultures
- Knowledge of the main aspects of European history (key persons, dates and events)
- Elementary notions relevant for the future profession and economics in general
- Being informed about current social and economical issues within the EU

(Molenaar & Den Ouden, 2005)

On that basis BBS has developed a Basic Knowledge List (BKL). This list contains areas, topics and themes that are important to know for every young European student to become a European Citizen and is conducted and agreed on by school directors from all over Europe. The five main themes are<sup>14</sup>:

- European heritage
- The European habitat
- Living in Europe
- Studying and working in Europe
- Europe a political and economic entity?

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<sup>14</sup> See appendix 1 for the complete list.



This list should be suitable for all levels of secondary education. The elaboration of the list in concrete projects can be adapted for each level and for each country. The projects have to be integrated in the standard courses. They shouldn't constitute a separate discipline, for the educational systems in the various EU countries differ too much.

### 5.1.3 Teachers

Teachers want to teach their pupils what suffices to attain the requirements set by the core aims and final terms. This is often what is prescribed by the teaching methods used. The teaching method is only a tool. Most teachers that have cooperated with an interview think European citizenship is important and deserves more attention in school. They think the most important aspects are:

- Awareness: VMBO pupils should realize they make part of a large European society that influences them and on which they can have an influence as well.
- Knowledge about the reasons why the European Union exists, what it is that influences their lives and how they can exercise influence on Europe.
- A critical attitude towards the European Union: what are the positive and negative aspects of the EU and where does it lead to.

Other aspects of European citizenship that have been mentioned are:

- The command of a minimum of two foreign languages
- Knowing that a large part of the regulations comes from Brussels (to be able to participate in society)
- Knowledge about the member states
- The different norms and values in Europe that have to be respected
- The history of the EU
- The institutions of the EU.

Nevertheless, the institutions and the different levels of decision making cannot be taken as a starting point in the discussion about the EU. Lessons about the EU have to be bottom-up oriented and formulated in broad terms. It has to start with the VMBO pupils' environment: why is this environment the way it is. What teachers want to teach is at least that pupils learn how to put their daily life in a large context and therefore current affairs are mentioned very often as a good tool to start the discussion about Europe. Discussing the EU institutions and regulations can only take place in the light of current affairs; otherwise it is too abstract and too difficult. Especially scandals appeal to the imagination. If there is no news, teachers have to come up with subjects themselves, in the build-up to the elections for example.

Besides inviting guest lecturers, the social studies teachers almost don't pay any attention to the European Union in their standard lessons, for it is too abstract and too difficult and the EU is no part of the exam. Conversely, one of them said it is important to teach VMBO pupils to use arguments when stating their opinion, since this group is sensitive to populism. That would for example have been desirable after the "no" to the European constitution when a large resistance against the EU could be noticed at school.

Examples of topics that can be dealt with in class, because they are understood and link to the daily life of the VMBO pupil, are:

- The euro
- Crossing borders without the need to change money
- Maintenance of traditions within the EU, like the European Championships football in which national feelings play a role



- The elimination of tariff barriers because of which foreign products become cheaper
- The fact that environmental issues don't stop at the border.

Some teachers think it's very disappointing that pupils learn so little about the European Union.

#### **5.1.4 Guest lecturers**

Teachers prefer to deal with a limited amount of topics and to repeat them. Pupils have to be able to at least put things in a broader perspective and understand that the European Union has evolved from the idea of peace in Europe: "never war again" and the EU as an economic cooperation. Since the pupils and their parents are often sceptic towards the EU and see the EU as a threat, the pros and cons of the EU should be discussed and then preferably on the basis of subjects that correspond with their interests. Debating has several advantages, namely the elimination of prejudices, the discussion of what the EU is all about and teachers can feel for VMBO pupils' fears. The prior knowledge and interest is limited. This has to be taken into account when teaching about the European Union. Teachers prefer to elaborate specific topics, depending on the reactions of the class and current affairs. Hot issues, like the accession of Turkey can more successfully be discussed in class than dry material. The latter has to be brought under the attention in an accessible manner. The concept of subsidiarity is understood, although pupils are suspicious.

According to the guest lecturers, not much more is possible than discussing democracy and the future possibility they have to vote for a party. One should come to realize that the EU influences one's life and that one can also influence the policies of the EU by participating in the discussion and voting. Therefore, first of all pupils have to learn why the EU is important. Secondly what the EU is about and thirdly where we are going to. The institutional framework is too abstract. The most important thing is that pupils have an opinion about the EU and that their interest is aroused.

More attention has to be paid to pupils' social skills and their identity. It should be discussed what pupils want in the future: do they want to live or work in another EU country? This is an option that has to be brought up, for example by explaining what a pupil could do in another EU country and how that works.

#### **5.1.5 Education Council (*Onderwijsraad*)**

The Education Council advises the Dutch government on educational policies. The government and the parliament then decide what to do with the advice. The Council of Education thinks education about Europe should involve knowledge, skills and opinion as aspects of European citizenship. What a pupil should learn exactly about European citizenship has been formulated by the Council in its advice report to OCW in 2004. It advised the Minister of Education to develop a "Europe competence" that would involve the capacity to use knowledge, skills and attitude for the appropriate fulfilment of concrete activities in a European context. The Minister has taken the advice to heart and asked the European Platform to elaborate it. See appendix 2 for a detailed description of this "Europe competence".

## **5.2 OPINIONS ON POLICIES AND TEACHING METHODS**

Now that it is clear what VMBO pupils are supposed to learn about their European citizenship, this paragraph gives an insight in the opinions of teachers and organisations in the field of VMBO education and European citizenship about the educational framework that sets the preconditions and about the initiatives that have been taken therein. These opinions can then be taken as a starting point for improvement of the current situation.

### **5.2.1 Opinion on freedom of schools**

According to BBS who spoke to many school managers all over Europe, "pupils learn those things that will be asked in the school exams, so if the exam questions don't contain European issues, pupils won't learn about them". The fact that schools get much freedom to decide on their educational programs, is however positively received by most interviewees. In this way schools can adapt to the needs of the environment and the region. Most VMBO pupils stay in the region and focus on skills that are needed in the region. The question is if this focus would shift when pupils would be better informed about the possibilities the European Union has to offer. There will always be minimal governmental regulation and inspection, yet it won't be possible to equally inform all schools about Europe, partly due to the individual teachers with their own methods. Schools will have to find a balance between cooperation and competition. The Education Council thinks that "on the basis of the current infrastructure, law and regulations and gained experience with European orientated programmes and projects, an expansion of the European dimension in Dutch education should be possible" (Onderwijsraad, 2004a, 41).

### **5.2.2 Opinion on the core aims and final terms**

A few policy executors think the theme 'Europe' is properly represented in the core aims, most others think it isn't. The latter say if schools have to be convinced to pay more attention to Europe, the core aims and final terms have to be more specific. That will be difficult though, since the Ministry of Education has asked the field of education to participate in the process of redesigning the core aims and one has to respect the outcome of it.

The European Platform is one of the three organisations that is rather positive about it: "Compared to other core aims, the ones in which Europe is mentioned are rather concrete. Other historical topics are more vaguely represented." Nevertheless, the old core aims were better, because the themes were described in more detail and therefore less free of obligations. Schools had to pay attention to the European Union and writers of textbooks had to take that into account. "The core aims and final terms shouldn't be more specific", says also the Education Council, "because Europe is already represented by them. It is up to the schools to execute that policy properly and up to policy makers to support them. The Education Inspection should monitor this and guarantee a proper execution." The Institute for Public and Politics thinks European citizenship is covered by the current core aims too. Although the concept European citizenship is rather vague for many schools, because of which it hasn't been given much shape yet.

The interviewed history teachers think it is unknown whether the VMBO pupils learn the things represented by core aim 38, but they do learn about the significance of the EU (45). The first core aim is difficult to measure, because to what extent did a pupil make progress regarding his or her European citizenship? This is a point of discussion, for one of the location managers argued it would be the other way around: "Of course attention is paid to what Europe is and what it means within several courses, but it isn't sure that the EU is explicitly dealt with as in core aim 45." These differences make clear that the core aims are open for interpretation. As long as there are no concrete suggestions and programmes available, schools find it hard to put European citizenship into practice in their programmes.

### **5.2.3 Opinion on the standard textbooks**

According to Podium, four large publishers have an 80 percent market share. Schools often choose for a certain publisher and remain loyal to that teaching method. There is no commercial reason to do things differently or to innovate. The European Platform argues that all pupils have a lack of factual knowledge, although the standard textbooks do contain a minimum of information on the EU. Most schools follow those textbooks, which limits the effect of extra course materials offered by external



forces like the European Platform. An economics teacher from the Bonaventura College in Leiden, however, says that "using only the textbook is too boring and too theoretical for this topic. Besides, the information about the EU in the textbook is insufficient. Conveying the information from a textbook alone does not work." The remark about the insufficient European dimension in the textbooks is heard more than once, although teachers emphasize the difficulty of the subject and especially the EU institutions. Therefore, even when this would be part of the textbook, it isn't sure a teacher would deal with the topic. Two of the interviewed teachers said there should be more focus on theory, because VMBO-t pupils are expected to have a basic knowledge level and they are in fact capable. Since the change of the system from the old MAVO to VMBO, they aren't used to that much theory anymore, because of which their level is lower than expected. Theory is required to be able to place the practical assignments in a framework. Therefore a combination of theory and practice would be optimal. Moreover, the political aspects of the EU (no more war) and the advantages of the EU are paid too little attention to in the textbooks, according to two teachers who use Wolters Noordhoff textbooks.

#### **5.2.4 Opinion on extra course materials**

As discussed in paragraph 5.1, some topics are better understood than others. Therefore it depends on the specific topics whether the extra course materials are found effective or not. Also the way they are presented is important. If something can be made concrete and be visualised, it comes nearby and it appeals to the imagination of the pupils. A balance should be found between material that on the one hand appeals to pupils and that on the other hand is workable for teachers. Some projects have been carefully thought-out, but don't work in practice. Pupils turn out to be different from what the makers thought out behind their desks. The work sheets "Europe Today" by the European Platform are a good example of it. They are found too abstract and too difficult for VMBO by more than one interviewee. The use of language is difficult and not interesting for this target group. The material is not found useful as ready to use, but the teacher has to give it an own interpretation. An interactive teaching method is preferred.

##### Material by the European Commission

The European Platform thinks that the free booklet for primary education by The European Commission is more suitable for VMBO than the material "Europe Today". And also the brochure "Ontdek Europa" (Discover Europe) is found useful for VMBO. These should thus be more widely spread, according to the European Platform.

##### E-twinning

The ICT project 'E-twinning' is an international contact programme that mostly takes place within the EU. It has among others a useful database and is easily accessible, but there are not many VMBO schools using it. Although the European Platform says it increases the factual knowledge and it helps pupils to get in touch and exchange experiences with other Europeans. This programme is more of a tool than a goal itself, although it is originally meant as such.

##### EuroKIS material

Course material that is developed by people from the field, preferably teachers is most useful. If the teachers sit down and talk in small project teams, there is optimal contact and exchange of ideas. Unfortunately, teaching methods cannot always be conceived in such a way due to a lack of time and money. Teachers generally do like to develop new material themselves. The material developed by the EuroKIS project is found useful by many schools, according to the interviewee of Euroschool, who is also coordinator internationalisation at a VMBO school. On the contrary, a spokesperson of a EuroKIS school said the material wasn't being used in the network he knew about. This means the material has to be tested at a representative number of schools in order to find out if this material should be more widely spread.

### Unite.eu.nl

This website is found too easy by the interviewee who used it. It cannot serve as a preparation for the exam, because it doesn't complement the standard lessons. This website could only serve as a starting point for a quiz or a discussion to determine the interests of the pupils. From this remark it can be derived that it is crucial to make extra curricular teaching methods correspond with the topics and level dealt with in class.

### The "lesson letter" Geokrant

Some teachers have said this is a good method and it can replace a lesson without teachers needing to prepare. In the booklet there are assignments arranged per theme. It would be nice to have the same format for a 'Europe' lesson.

### Drawing competitions

Both teachers and pupils don't really appreciate this form, partly because of the full schedule.

## **5.2.5 Opinion on exchanges**

The opinions on the effectiveness of exchanges are divided. Some are positive about exchanges, because they see many advantages. The interviewee of the European Platform argues that "an increase of the awareness and not the knowledge about European issues can be achieved best by projects and exchanges [..]. One has to take into account that factual knowledge is often forgotten unlike notions and awareness. Projects and exchanges make sure that pupils experience their European citizenship." Other advocates of exchanges think they stimulate tolerance and respect for other cultures as well as foreign language acquisition. The theory learned in class comes to life during an exchange, where pupils from different countries work together. According to Oonk (2004) the experiences in host families reveal an increase in European and international orientation, however, the VMBO pupils' attitude towards the EU has been proven to become more negative. Moreover, exchanges motivate teachers to get or to stay involved in activities of internationalisation. The advantages of exchanges are also:

- experiencing differences between countries, like differences in school systems,
- indirectly learning about Europe and raising the awareness,
- creating another perspective on the environment and norms and values, which can be important in VMBO pupils' future profession.

Other interviewees emphasize the disadvantages of exchanges. The schools who don't organise exchanges say it is time-consuming. The main reason why one of the schools who participate would decide not to organise exchanges anymore would be because of all the paperwork. A large school that doesn't organise exchanges thinks it would be too difficult to coordinate. Furthermore, the pupils should be well prepared before they go and an evaluation has to take place afterwards. The problem is that there is not much time for that, seen the amount of time that needs to be allocated to compulsory subjects. A couple of the teachers interviewed said that the will of VMBO pupils and their parents to go on exchange is sometimes underestimated. There are boys-girls problems, parents that don't want to let their children go, there can be financial obstacles, or problems with housing, fear of letting someone else in one's home, etc. These problems are more evident among allochtone pupils. Because of all these problems, at this educational level it would be better to organise a daytrip. There are even schools who wonder what the effect of those exchanges would be: would they really contribute to an increase of European citizenship? A former school director who works for BBS says exchanges only contribute to an insight in cultural differences between countries and how to deal with that, instead of intensifying European citizenship.

### **5.2.6 Opinion on guest lectures**

In comparison to exchanges, guest lecturers are positively received by all interviewees. The best way to teach pupils on the European Union is namely to do that face-to-face. This is a good method, because more in depth explanation is possible and it is interactive. The theme 'Europe' has to be practically taught. VMBO pupils have to experience things by e.g. quizzes, debates, current affairs and participation. A precondition is that the guest lectures must be an addition to the regular programme and no replacement and they will have to fit in the core aims.

Another positive aspect of guest lecturers teaching about Europe is that pupils are curious. Young guest lecturers can relate to the pupils and it will therefore be easier to convey information. Moreover, the young guest lecturers get a chance to know the mind of secondary school pupils, so that it works both ways. Furthermore, the problems of teachers that are not always enthusiastic about Europe and that aren't always aware of the current affairs regarding 'Europe' are solved. Teachers get a chance to lay back and listen, even though they sometimes like to get involved in the discussion.

The opinion of two guest lecturers of the IPP is that the material the IPP provided them with is not suitable enough for VMBO. The EU institutions for example cannot be given as much attention as at other educational levels. It would be best to focus on two issues that appeal to the imagination. The regular teachers have to explain the European Union in class and the guest lecturer can emphasise specific themes. More than one hour is necessary, because pupils cannot process too much information at the same time and pupils with a prejudice are difficult to convince within one hour, because the teachers and parents also have influence on the creation of the image. Basically, informing teachers and pupils has to be a continuing process.

## **5.3 CONCLUSION**

Schools find it hard to put the concept European citizenship as such into practice, for there is no clear definition of the concept and not many projects have the stimulation of European citizenship as the main aim. Still teachers and organisations have ideas about what education about the concept should include. They all agree that a basic theoretical framework is required. Not just knowledge should make part of that framework, but also skills and attitude. This can best be achieved by face-to-face and interactive lessons, that make pupils experience what the European Union is and what it means to them. Therefore a combination of theory and practice is preferred.

Teachers want to teach their pupils what suffices to attain the requirements set by the core aims and final terms. It is certain that more attention is paid to compulsory aspects of the educational programme that will be part of the exam. Nevertheless, the fact that schools get much freedom to decide on their educational programmes is positively received and teachers contend that education on European citizenship is important. They think that the European dimension is insufficiently present in the standard textbooks. Altogether they are open towards paying more attention to 'Europe' in their lessons via extra curricular activities.

It is hard to pass judgement on the quality of the extra course materials, for not all materials are known among all interviewees. The material they know has been commented on, but to find out which teaching methods are really found useful research should be conducted among a larger group of teachers and pupils. Based on the statements in the interviews, exchanges are surely not the most efficient method, for there are too many disadvantages. Whereas guest lectures are a welcome supplement to the standard lessons.

## 6 IDEAS FOR A NEW PROJECT

In order to establish what the best possible strategy is to intensify the experience of Dutch VMBO pupils' European citizenship, ideas for future projects have to be generated. Based on the opinions that organisations, teachers and location managers have about existing policies and teaching methods, this chapter shows their ideas for successful future projects and possible collaboration with new partners. First general notions that apply to all ideas and preconditions for the development of a possible new project will be discussed. Afterwards specific ideas will be elaborated, so that at the end of this chapter the research question *“what are ideas for future projects that can intensify the experience of Dutch VMBO pupils' European citizenship”* can be answered.

### 6.1 PRECONDITIONS

#### 6.1.1 In general

What is mentioned by every single interviewed teacher is that the project or course material that will be developed definitely has to fit within the programme. This is also emphasized by the Education Council (2004a). Podium has experience with the development of school projects and course materials, from which it can be concluded that the teachers must be willing to use the specific project or material, by making it easy, applicable and lesson-replacing (2006). It shouldn't take too much time and it has to correspond with the textbooks used. Moreover, European citizenship should be defined in concrete terms. The formulation has to appeal to VMBO pupils so that it makes it easier to develop something for them. According to KPC, VMBO pupils are practically oriented and therefore they must learn without effort in a way that isn't too abstract (2006). The topics should thus be linked to their environment and daily routines and to their future profession. In their future profession VMBO-ers may be bound to European regulations, because of which it is important that attention is paid to current affairs.

#### 6.1.2 Teachers are busy

In general teachers at secondary schools are very busy. They don't have much time besides the compulsory subjects that prepare pupils for their exams. The two reasons that are most often mentioned in Oonk's dissertation for not paying much attention to internationalisation are a lack of time and a low priority with regard to other tasks of the school (2004). The first reason is often an effect of the second one. Therefore an easy ready to use package with material that is suitable and appealing and that fits into the courses and the requirements of the final terms is preferred. According to teachers it should be a standard package to which they can always add something or leave something out. This takes less time than developing projects themselves. The VMBO Group of Advice adds that "schools and teachers have to be tempted to do what it takes to intensify VMBO pupils' European citizenship. An interviewee of a school in Utrecht confirms this, by mentioning that his school receives so many requests for various themes that he could fill the whole year with extra curricular activities.

#### 6.1.3 Start as young as possible

IPP and KPC think there should be a continuing process of informing the citizen and best as young as possible, preferably already in primary school, by stimulating social and global orientation. The older generation who is negative towards Europe hasn't been properly informed and is "lost" in that respect. Not only should one start as young as possible, also the greater part of the interviewees agrees that pupils need to have an understanding of Dutch politics and democracy first, before they are open to learn about European citizenship. If children already learn what democracy is and how politics function in primary school, this can be carried through in secondary education.

#### **6.1.4 Variations in VMBO**

The focus should not be on a project that will reach all VMBO pupils equally, since schools have so much freedom (European Platform, 2006). Besides, there are differences between regions and between the levels of abstraction. According to various teachers, in the development of a project for VMBO, one has to take the level of VMBO pupils into account: adapt the approach and the usage of language. In case of VMBO, something should be developed for all 16 different combinations: 4 tracks x 4 sectors. The practical and theoretical tracks can be merged, so that 8 variations remain necessary. Since this research is restricted to the theoretical track, this is not relevant yet, but it can be taken into account when good practices will be spread and adapted to all levels of VMBO in the future.

#### **6.1.5 Organisation within schools**

The internal organisation of a school is important. First of all schools have to be organised in accordance with the norms of citizenship in order to teach pupils about European citizenship. An autocratic school manager for example is fundamentally wrong, according to many school managers BBS has spoken with. A large research conducted among mostly 14 year old pupils in 23 European countries to gather their civic knowledge, attitudes and engagement, subscribes to this viewpoint: "Home environment and educational resources have a substantial impact on civic knowledge. Schools that model democratic practice are those schools most effective in promoting civic knowledge and engagement" (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, 2002). Secondly, several teachers said that the internal cooperation in schools should be improved. Teachers of the various disciplines have to communicate more and try to connect the information from the various disciplines. Only then a school can effectively pay extra attention to European citizenship.

#### **6.1.6 Contact LAKS**

Before one of the possible strategies will be carried out, it would be useful to contact LAKS, the national action committee for pupils in secondary education, in order to find out on which aspects VMBO pupils can most easily be approached. They have an image of the VMBO pupils' interests.

#### **6.1.7 Implementation**

A project should take place in the first two years or within the course social studies, since it is the only course that all VMBO pupils have to take, irrespective of their chosen subjects. KPC could be a possible new partner in the implementation phase of the final VMBO project. KPC could set a pilot project because of the many connections KPC has with schools. This organisation sits down and talks with all parties and guides processes from the start till the end.

#### **6.1.8 Obstacles**

It is hard to undertake activities at a more structural basis. The problem is that every teacher has his own opinion and they don't always agree with each other on till what extent choices made are pedagogically well-considered. Moreover, teachers can sometimes be self-opinionated: "That colleague can never be right." Sometimes different locations of one school all do their own thing and they don't think in terms of cooperating, networking and political lines. Schools will have to communicate with and learn from each other, also concerning themes like 'Europe'. For some schools another obstacle could be a lack of (ICT) facilities at their premises. According to a research conducted by OCW, computers are available at schools, leaving exceptions aside. Some schools have a lack of budget, means and ICT administrators. Obstacles can also be sceptic teachers, that see ICT as a threat or teachers that don't want to make the effort to move to a computer room.

## 6.2 IDEAS FOR FUTURE PROJECTS

In this paragraph twelve ideas are discussed on what concrete initiatives policy makers and -executors can take to intensify the experience of VMBO pupils' European citizenship. The notions from the previous paragraph will have to be considered before each idea shall be put into practice.

### 6.2.1 New partners ask schools to pay attention to Europe

An advice that is often heard in the interviews is to ask schools to put the theme 'Europe' on their agenda, by motivating schools to do something with the "Europe competence" for example. The Ministry of Education plays a crucial role, by asking schools to pay more attention to the European dimension and to make more budget available. Some interviewees are rather sceptic about this, because schools get so many requests from society, which causes them to be sceptic and busy. They will have to cooperate on a voluntary basis and external pressure has to motivate teachers to do something with it.

This external pressure has to be organised by cooperation between the Ministry of Education, the Office of the European Parliament (EP), the European Platform, Working Group VMBO Euroschool and the teachers of VMBO-t schools. Those are existing channels through which communication can best take place. It would be a good idea to talk to VMBO teachers and teachers of social studies in particular to convince them to pay more attention to Europe in class.

The EP could write to the platforms of the teachers of the subjects social studies, geography, history and economics and to the vocational advisors who are responsible for the selection of themes and who often also take care of the necessary materials. One of the parties above will have to take the initiative. The role the Ministry of Education could play would be to tell schools to do something with the information provided or to pay more attention to the subject. The Ministry of Education could give schools extra budget in the form of a subsidy and ask schools to pay attention to specific themes. The Ministry together with one or more other parties could also ask the Education Inspection to check the ways in which schools have given expression to those core aims concerned. The long-term processes, however, indicate how difficult it can be to improve the quality of a school on the basis of inspection.

Before the cooperation can start, the expectations from both sides will have to be clear. Also the Minister of Education will have to estimate the subject important and will need to have the will to make capacity and a budget available. In order to get the issue higher on the Minister's agenda, the various teacher platforms or subject divisions within schools could write the Minister of Education a letter in cooperation with the Office of the European Parliament and the European Platform for example. In this letter the Minister can be asked to make suggestions to schools to put the theme 'Europe' on the agenda, without telling them what they have to do and how they have to do it.

Besides the Minister, the Ministry, the teacher Platforms, the vocational advisors and the European Platform, the Council for Secondary Education (VO-raad) could ask VMBO schools to pay attention to the theme 'Europe'. Every four weeks this council spreads a press release, in which this theme could be an issue. Often the school managers who take part in this council operate in a European context when organising educational projects. Other parties that could be involved are the branch organisations, the school guidance service (*schoolbegeleidingsdienst*) and pedagogic centres.

### 6.2.2 Influencing policies

A much better way to exert influence on educational programmes is through adaptation of the core aims and final terms. The core aims should be more explicitly formulated with a norm attached to it



about the minimal knowledge pupils need to have. Moreover, for the subjects geography and social studies the exam topic 'Europe' should be determined. As mentioned before, external pressure is necessary, preferably in the form of compulsory parts of the programme that make part of the exam. Therefore a lobby could be started to exert influence on the determination of the exam topics by the Ministry of Education.

The government now holds the schools responsible for what is being offered. Schools decide if they want to pay more attention to a subject than strictly necessary. This doesn't have anything to do with the generalisation of the core aims and/ or final terms and it is an argument against making the core aims more concrete. Instead, schools will have to be tempted to do something with the suggestions provided to them. Existing networks have to be used to offer schools such suggestions. The elaboration of concrete projects based on the Basic Knowledge List has to be taken on by the Minister of Education by providing a budget. It would even be better if the Minister would incorporate the topics on the list in the core aims and final terms.

The Education Inspection will subsequently have to check more thoroughly whether 'Europe' is offered at VMBO schools and how it is offered. This will be a long-term process, so there will always be a "lost generation". Moreover, the European Commissioner for Education could be asked how EU member states pay attention to the European dimension and if there is inspection to see to it. If this is not or insufficiently the case, the ministers of education from the various EU member states should sit down and talk about how they can increase the attention.

A last idea that focuses on influencing policies comes from one of the interviewed teachers, who thinks the communication between the policy makers and the schools is not running smoothly: shorter lines of communication are required. To establish those, every municipality should have an education working group and the policy makers should go to schools and observe in order to develop a feeling with the daily practices at school.

### **6.2.3 Ideas for course material**

Two of the interviewees explicitly said they had never seen a really good lesson on what the European Union means to the pupils, which makes it a challenge to develop new material that is workable. If the new project on European citizenship will be in the form of course material, there are several options. It has to be easy for schools to pay attention to the European Union, by offering schools materials that are suitable for their pupils. Education should be geared to the pupils' perception of their environment. Therefore it is emphasized that more interaction with teachers and pupils takes place, for they know what works and what doesn't.

Firstly, information sheets with assignments are easy to use and to copy for all pupils. They can be used in combination with the textbook. Still most interviewees think a new teaching method shouldn't consist of printed material only, because of high costs, the risk of out-dated information and no possibility for variations. A website or interactive material works better than printed material. Pupils must like the material in order to be able to use it effectively. Teachers need to have more knowledge on the European Union than their pupils and they have to feel able to answer questions. Maybe the booklet "Europa antwoordt, 101 vragen over Europa" by the European Commission (2006) could be distributed to teachers for that matter, together with something they can offer that is ready for use.

Secondly, it is emphasized that course material has to be interactive, preferably an ICT application. Also a video is mentioned several times as a suitable teaching method. It would be best to use a film in combination with something interactive like a quiz, a debate or a board game. ICT can be used for information and communication and it can encourage contact between European schools. The best

option is a CD-ROM, because sound and vision can be integrated, interaction is possible and digital media is self-evident. Publishers go digital and use the internet for updates. It would be a good idea to cooperate with these publishers in the development of "European" course material. An example could be a CD-ROM with text in which some words are explained by means of footage. For example the word 'parliament' could be explained by a short film about the building and the work of the European Parliament. Another idea is to show three dimensional films of the European Parliament for example, like is done on the website [www.digischool.nl](http://www.digischool.nl) for the Dutch Lower Chamber. Several interviewees thought it was important to give Europe a face, by giving greater publicity to the members of the European Parliament [MP's] or by using course material in which the members of the European Parliament are represented by the use of their photographs and statements. Their work should be explained and it must fit in with the pupils' environment. MP's should also be allowed to strike a different note about the EU to stimulate discussion. Another idea is to link the material to the choice of the future profession, like economics or technique. When developing ICT material, some aspects have to be taken into account, like the amount of computers available at schools. It has to be taken into account as well that not only the teacher has authority, because there is a lot of group pressure. Some pupils are rather dominant; therefore it would be best to make small groups of pupils in which a task or a discussion can take place. Besides, pupils cannot stay focused too long, which makes independent work in groups more effective. The assignment should thus be offered in small steps; if pupils understand the first step, one can move on to the next.

Other ideas for course materials can be derived from existing ready to use course packages, like:

- "Crisis in the municipality" by publisher Zorn. This is an Internet game with a brochure and a manual in which the pupil plays the role of a civil servant. The game can be played at the Internet where feedback is continually given on the actions of the pupil as a civil servant. Before the game starts, the teacher explains the subject, so that theory and practice complete each other.
- "The European Parliament: What's that?" by the UK Office of the European Parliament. This teaching material has been developed for 11-16 year olds. It offers an introduction to the European Union and the European Parliament and encourages pupils to take part in discussion and to form their own views on the subjects. A DVD and CD Rom are included that contain nine short films and interactive activities.

If schools will be offered a concrete course package, one should bear in mind that only a small percentage of all schools is going to use it. The Ministry of Education's civil servant comes up with the example of a course package that has been developed by a company that knows a lot about this type of education and pupils and still this package isn't used by 80 percent of the schools. It is difficult to reach all VMBO pupils with a new project. The standard textbooks usually don't contain current affairs, since schools don't have a budget to buy new books every year. It has to be taken into account however, that schools are free to choose their textbooks and extra materials and which parts of it they deal with in class. It depends to a large extent on the willingness of schools how much attention is paid to the European Union.

#### **6.2.4 Projects and exchanges**

Interviewees had various ideas for projects that would be successful. The type of project depends on the region in which the school is situated. Schools in border regions would have to pay more attention to European citizenship by means of exchanges than schools in other regions, not only in order to increase the European attitude, but also to anticipate or stimulate future mobility of employment. IPP says that a good way to increase VMBO pupils' experience of European citizenship is to let them carry out a project, like the development of a "Europe cards game". A quiz could be a good mean to start a



lesson on Europe and to determine the starting point. KPC adds that role plays and discussions on the basis of these can be useful for which know-how about democracy and rules at class- or community level would be indispensable. An idea for a project can be a simplification of the Model European Parliament, which is an international project that is only suitable for HAVO/VWO, so that it will be suitable for VMBO and that it can take place in class. Another idea for a project is to make VMBO pupils cooperate with foreign pupils and make sure they need each other in the accomplishment of tasks. Ideas, norms and values of teachers and pupils can be compared. The willingness of teachers to invest time in a project is crucial to make it work. One teacher made the remark that it could be an idea to arrange four-yearly project weeks for the whole school, to which teachers will automatically adapt their programmes.

### **6.2.5 Media usage**

The usage of media by young people is fragmented, says Podium (2006); therefore it is hard to reach the target group through media. On top of that, by using commercials it is hard to target VMBO pupils in specific. Still there are some interviewees who reckon it is important that national politics and television pay more attention to the EU. VMBO pupils can picture Dutch politics better, partly because they know some faces of politicians. If there would be more media attention and attention in the Lower House, it would directly (via the media) or indirectly (through parents or teachers) affect VMBO pupils. It also works the other way around: once there is an interest and demand at the side of the citizens, the media will automatically pay more attention to it. Dutch newsreader Aldith Hunkar puts it in the following way: "Don't forget that European news is still rather static at the moment: men in suits at the steps. It only becomes interesting if Europe can be given a face" (Representation European Commission, 2007).

### **6.2.6 European touring car**

An idea that might intensify the experience of VMBO pupils' European citizenship is to design a "Europe bus" that visits VMBO schools throughout the country. In this bus, pupils can learn about the European Union in an interactive and playful way. A combination with theatre or a show could also be successful. Podium is not very enthusiastic about the idea, because it foresees several practical problems. Firstly, such a bus could cost around 20.000 euro: it has to be purchased and furnished, people have to be employed, traffic dispensations and gas have to be paid for, etc. Secondly, the touring car must have a strict planning, whilst schools want to be flexible in their programmes or a teacher may fall ill for example. Thirdly, only a small group can be reached, because only one school per day can be visited. Therefore, it needs to be possible to debit the investments and the bus needs to serve more than one goal.

### **6.2.7 Teacher training college**

Teachers are the bearers of each new educational development. There will have to be attention for their schooling and other facilitations. Students that are going to be secondary school teachers should already learn during their training how to incorporate 'Europe' in their lessons. Members of the European Parliament think teacher training colleges should be stimulated "to provide the necessary understanding of European issues so teachers can complement their teaching of national and local issues with European ones" (European Parliament, 2006). The student teachers have to be educated about Europe, so that they have more knowledge on the subject and hopefully more motivation to deal with the subject in class. The Education Council advocates a strengthening of the teacher training colleges in general, also regarding Europe. A research among student teachers in the UK revealed the following interesting outcome: "Those student teachers who spoke more than one foreign language and those who had travelled within Europe, displayed significantly more positive attitudes toward European cooperation and included work about Europe in their teaching" (Convery, 2005, p29). As

mentioned before, Euroschool has already taken the initiative to make the student teachers more aware of the importance of the European Union, yet there's only a small group of future (VMBO) teachers who participate in the days that are organised for this matter. Therefore, education on the EU for student teachers is preferably integrated in other subjects, where it is indirectly linked to other subjects or explicitly offered in either a special EU course or within the subjects social studies, geography, history or economics.

### **6.2.8 Refresher course or trip to Brussels for teachers**

Not all current teachers have had EU courses or learned about methods how to add a European dimension to their lessons. And when they did, after years they may have forgotten about it. In that case a refresher course on the European Union or a trip to Brussels that enthuses teachers could be a good idea. They will however have to be convinced of the reasons why they should use the gained experiences in class.

The opinion of teachers about a trip to Brussels differs. Some think it would be effective, others think it wouldn't. IPP says the effect of sending teachers to Brussels is unknown. It could be possible that such a trip will have a negative effect on teachers when they see that Brussels is a bureaucratic system. According to Euroschool, such a trip would be effective in combination with course material. When teachers are enthusiastic, they can take their pupils a next time. This is confirmed by a location manager of one of the schools who once went to Brussels with the teaching staff. He said that teachers still talk about it and when teachers are enthusiastic, they will convey this in their lessons. Moreover, such a trip is a form of team-building. Reasons why it would be effective are the fact that teachers of social studies, geography, history and economics would see that EU institutions are of general interest. In the interviews some teachers did mention however that it would not be easy to arrange a trip somewhere for the whole class. Subsidy should be available if one wants teachers to subscribe. The trip can best be organised for teachers, since they see the use instead of only the fun. If it is organised for VMBO pupils, then only for a selected group, like pupils in the fourth year who chose history and social studies for example, because for them such a trip fits best in their programme. The way this should be done is the same for pupils and teachers: by creating a theoretical framework and making them do and experience things.

The European Platform has a large network, which can be used in case the new project will be a refresher course for VMBO teachers. This course should not be longer than one day, since the European Platform expects not to be able to generate teachers' interest for a several days' course. There are several people who are sceptic about these ideas, owing to teachers' pressure of work. There are so many subjects about which teachers should be informed. Not only work pressure is mentioned as a reason why this wouldn't work, also the figurative distance of Brussels would hinder teachers' willingness. Such an excursion would only be effective to increase teachers' enthusiasm and not to increase their factual knowledge about the EU. Besides, the question is how long this enthusiasm will remain and if this trip to Brussels would therefore be effective enough.

### **6.2.9 Guest lectures**

An expansion of the guest lectures by the Institute for Public and Politics, that are in general very positively perceived, would be desirable for several reasons. The IPP could use support in the form of more money being put at its disposal, training courses that are offered for (new) guest lecturers and new materials, like a website with two portals (a part for the teacher and a part for the guest lecturer where manuals and tips can be offered), printed material or a video. The combination of a video with a discussion is mentioned several times as a successful method. The video can already be shown before the visit of the guest lecturer. The teachers should be encouraged to use these materials via the teachers' journals. New guest lecturers can among others be found among members of political



youth parties with an interest in Europe. The training for guest lecturers should contain information on the VMBO pupils' level, life and interest and what are good ways to teach them. Good preparation of the guest lecturers with practical tips and concrete material for VMBO level is important. It is essential that the material is tested beforehand, because now it seems most material is only suitable for the higher levels of secondary education. For VMBO the starting point in the development of supporting teaching methods needs to be 'experience'.

### **6.2.10 European and International Orientation (EIO)**

The concept of EIO was developed by Oonk in his dissertation (2004) to create a clear description of the activities that schools can undertake within the framework of internationalisation. Teachers would have to link Europe to all existing topics that are dealt with in class, so that the international dimension can be found all throughout the educational programme. If pupils can demonstrate their EIO competences at the end of high school, they get a "Europe certificate". The requirements have been drafted by the European Platform in the report "Europese en Internationale Orientatie (EIO) de basis voor Europees Burgerschap" (2006b). In this report it is emphasized that it is not just a theoretical concept, but a proposal that is supported by the field of education.

The pedagogical-didactical starting points for EIO are formulated as follows (Blankert 2006):

- Stimulate interest, build on matters already attended: aim for remaining knowledge of European matters which progressively expands, an indispensable condition to be able to talk and think about something with understanding;
- Make some room, therefore, each year for EIO, so that one can return to main issues;
- Use, if possible, current affairs as a starting point to raise European (and international) problems, for example, as a result of issues and events in Europe;
- Increase the European citizenship, the involvement with Europe, by making pupils and teachers aware of what the EU stands for (standards and values), letting them feel where Europe 'touches' them, forming their own opinions and involving their position, and by being aware of what Europe actually means for everyday life;
- Use the exchange activities to offer pupils a form of education that is attractive and meaningful.

So, EIO ought to receive attention:

- in the lessons, as fixed part of various subjects;
- in special activities, as pupil exchange, a project week, an ICT project.

In order to establish whether a pupil has laid the foundation for European citizenship, concrete material has to be gathered in a portfolio throughout the school period and by a test on European and International Orientation in the end. Successful pupils will then receive a 'Europe certificate'.

The Minister of Education and CITO should take the initiative to take up the proposal of the European Platform regarding a 'Europe certificate' and make schools implement a European dimension all throughout their programmes. To enable schools to carry out the ideas above, the Ministry of Education has to offer financial means and also organisations like the European Platform will have to support schools with subsidies and materials.

### **6.2.11 A European canon**

In the magazine of the Secondary Education Council Molenaar and Den Ouden argue for a European canon that could be a dynamic European project (2005). The design and elaboration of the canon could have the format of a sourcebook: for teachers in the preparation of their lessons and special projects, for pupils as information source for papers and presentations. The Basic Knowledge List by



BBS will form the basis for its content. There will have to be room for national canons, next to this European one. The emphasis should be on knowledge and skills to use that knowledge, but first it has to be established how pupils can best be approached and what their interests are. It will have to appeal to the personal interests of pupils and teachers and it will have to take differences in level into account. The sourcebook will have to be kept up-to-date, with information organised around themes like the history of Europe, the science in Europe, working in Europe, etc. The document will have to be web-based and interactive. Links to other information sources and examples of good practices will have to be included.

### **6.2.12 Good practices**

Some schools have experience with projects and materials that are effective, like ELOS schools for example. The practices of such schools should be spread to more schools throughout the country and maybe even throughout Europe. The European Parliament is also recommending an exchange of best practice between all member states with regard to language teaching and the inclusion of European content in education (2006).

Before the final VMBO project can be conceived, it is highly recommended to test all existing course materials and projects to see which ones work and which ones don't and why. The good practices can then further be developed and spread. An example of how this happens is that one teacher has a good practice, puts it on Kennisnet, where other schools can find the idea and practice it too. According to the Education Council a project or activity is a good practice if it clearly contributes to European citizenship and the formation of a European identity. It has to live up to the following criteria (Onderwijsraad, 2004a):

- Physical and cognitive/ affective meetings with other nationalities
- Communication in foreign languages
- Acquaintance with other cultures
- Transfer of knowledge regarding facts, events and developments in relation to Europe and or the EU institutions.

It should be thought of who is going to feel responsible for the collection of all materials and projects that are good practices. Who will therefore take the initiative, since there are several parties committed to the same cause. Good coordination and cooperation is indispensable. The European Platform with its large network and experience can play a major role in this. So can the BBS Foundation that already did some suggestions (see paragraph 6.2.11).

Taking the remarks of the interviewees as a starting point, the collected materials should preferably contain:

- A booklet with ideas for projects
- Concrete materials or a reference to where the material can be obtained
- Information on guest lectures
- A booklet with arguments for discussions as a manual for teachers

In this complete package the practical sides of the EU should be given most attention. The package should then be offered to all VMBO schools and be actively promoted.

## **6.3 CONCLUSION**

A dozen ideas have been suggested; some of which are already initiated and require further development. When a new project is going to be developed, two choices can be made. Either the



policy framework is accepted as it is - including the large freedom of schools and little attention for the European Union in the core aims and final terms – which means that other ways will have to be found to promote European citizenship on a more structural basis. Or the focus is not on the development or expansion of a specific teaching method, but on influencing the policy makers to include more 'Europe' in the curriculum. For the former, the project or course material that will be developed definitely has to fit within the programme and schools have to be tempted to use it by offering them a teaching method that makes teachers and pupils experience what the European Union is and what it means to them. For the latter, partners are needed that collaborate and start a lobby together. The Ministry of Education should ask schools to pay more attention to the European dimension in VMBO schools and teacher training colleges and make a budget available. The final aim of the lobby should be an augmentation of the European dimension in the exam requirements, for schools certainly pay more attention to subjects that are part of the exam.

## 7 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Netherlands are bound to the European Union by treaties, laws, regulations, jurisdiction, the euro and a common heritage. Every Dutch citizen should be able to exercise influence and to contribute to the EU and to understand what the European Union means for him or her. Knowledge, skills and attitudes to live as a European citizen are therefore indispensable. Pre-vocational secondary education is the type of Dutch secondary education that pays the least attention to European citizenship, which causes a lack of this knowledge, skills and attitudes among almost 60 percent of all secondary school pupils. This report has described how policy makers and -executors of secondary education in the Netherlands can play a role in intensifying the experience of the Dutch VMBO pupils' European citizenship.

It seems that the Dutch government is just starting to see the importance of education in preparing the VMBO pupils for their future role as Citizens of the Union. The responsibility for the creation of a European dimension in VMBO education is not restricted to policy makers like the Ministry of Education. Schools have a large responsibility to offer VMBO pupils subjects in which "Europe" is dealt with. There are minimal requirements by the European Union and by the national government for a European dimension in VMBO education. The EU can neither oblige member states nor schools to pay attention to the EU and the Dutch government decided to give schools more and more freedom to design their educational programmes. Consequently, schools decide themselves on how they want to operate within the framework of the law, core aims and final terms and which course material they want to use. The core aims for the first two years are formulated in very general terms, which leave a lot to the imagination of the teachers. What VMBO pupils learn in school is above all highly dependent on the subjects they have chosen within their track and their sector. Only if they choose economics, it is certain that the European Union will be dealt with. The curriculum is based on the core aims and final terms, in which the European dimension is not totally absent, but it doesn't constitute a substantial element either. The standard textbooks reflect that state of affairs. Some offer more information on the European Union than others and since schools are free to choose their course materials, not every VMBO pupil learns the same things. Even if all schools would use the same teaching methods, it would be no guarantee that teachers use all of it in their lessons.

Since the governmental policies leave schools and editors a lot of freedom, teachers and organisations who see the importance of teaching VMBO pupils about European citizenship have taken the opportunity to develop their own initiatives. There is an extensive list of projects and course materials that have been developed by various parties, but there is a lack of coordination. The initiatives that are aimed at VMBO pupils are mostly individual projects that lack cooperation with parties who strive for the same goal. Even within schools the communication is not always optimal, let alone between schools or between schools and organisations. There are some parties in the Netherlands who see the need to do something about this. BBS has taken the initiative to try to implement a European dimension in the curriculum of secondary schools throughout the EU, which should include VMBO education. And the Working group VMBO Euroschool wants to spread good practices among a larger group of VMBO schools in specific. In the past months, also the European Platform of Dutch Education has realised that this coordination is a problem and has now taken the initiative to employ a "coordinator". These initiatives are still in the initial stage, but when they will be further extended and developed and coordinated by one party, they offer good chances for the stimulation of a European dimension in VMBO education.

All organisations and teachers contend that education on European citizenship is important. They agree that for the stimulation of European citizenship a basic theoretical framework is required. Not



just knowledge should make part of that framework, but also skills and attitude. They think that the European dimension is insufficiently present in the standard textbooks and they are open towards paying more attention to 'Europe' in their lessons via extra curricular activities. This can best be achieved by face-to-face and interactive lessons, that make pupils experience what the European Union is and what it means to them. Therefore a combination of theory and practice is preferred. A dozen ideas have been suggested; some of which are already initiated and require further development.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

When a new project is going to be developed, two choices can be made. Either the policy framework is accepted as it is - including the large freedom of schools and little attention for the European Union in the core aims and final terms – which means that other ways will have to be found to promote European citizenship on a more structural basis. Or the focus is not on the development or expansion of a specific teaching method, but on influencing the policy makers to include more 'Europe' in the curriculum. For the former, the project or course material that will be developed definitely has to fit within the programme and schools have to be tempted to use it by offering them a teaching method that makes teachers and pupils experience what the European Union is and what it means to them. For the latter, partners are needed that collaborate and start a lobby together. If one truly wants to make education a foremost tool in European citizenship education, some changes in the final terms concerning VMBO subjects should have to be made. The theme should explicitly be integrated in common compulsory subjects like, for example social studies I. Then schools will focus more on VMBO pupils' education and preparation concerning their European Citizenship. The Ministry of Education should also ask VMBO schools and teacher training colleges to pay more attention to the European dimension and make a budget available. The final aim of the lobby should be an augmentation of the European dimension in the exam requirements, for schools certainly pay more attention to subjects that are part of the exam. According to a civil servant of the Ministry of Education, it is possible that the final terms will be adapted if there is enough discontent about the current exam programmes. Sometimes renewal of the programmes is initiated by the Ministry of OCW and sometimes by the platforms of teachers or other professionals in the field of education or interest groups. If the Ministry agrees that a renewal is necessary, a working group will be established in which people from the field, SLO, CEVO and Cito take place to establish a new programme. The Office of the European Parliament in the Netherlands should try to convince the Ministry of OCW of the importance of 'Europe' as a part of the exam of a subject that is compulsory for all VMBO pupils (social studies I). It has to be taken into account, however, that the exam programmes are already quite full and it therefore won't be an easy task.

Furthermore, a follow-up research is recommended. Within the scope of this research interviewees could only comment on the material they know, but to find out which teaching methods are found useful a survey should be conducted in which all initiatives will be examined on a large scale and into more detail, so that it can be established which materials, programmes and projects can be identified as 'good practices' and what their contributions are to European citizenship. If it then turns out that there is no course material or project available yet that can intensify the experience of the VMBO pupils' European citizenship, it did become clear within this research what kind of initiative the Office of the European Parliament in the Netherlands could take.

Recommendations can also be made for further elaboration of initiatives and ideas. Teachers wonder what course materials exist and where they can be obtained. To make it easy for teachers to find extra teaching methods, it is recommended that the Office of the European Parliament in the Netherlands



develops a complete course package European citizenship for VMBO including all its content that hasn't been developed yet by others. The package should be brought under the attention of all teachers of the general subjects via their platforms and by finding the right contact persons on all VMBO schools. The European Platform and the Institute for Public and Politics could facilitate this with their networks. The concrete content of the course package should be:

- A booklet with ideas for projects, including examples of good practice;
- All extra curricular materials that have been mentioned in chapter 6 or a reference to where the material can be obtained;
- Information on guest lectures and trips to Brussels and how they can be booked;
- A booklet with arguments for discussions as a manual for teachers.

Besides the recommendations above, some of the ideas from chapter 6 are recommendations at the same time. Especially the initiatives by BBS and Working group VMBO Euroschool require further attention.

This report looked at ways of how to intensify the experience of VMBO pupils' European Citizenship through education, but the gap in the knowledge of VMBO pupils is not caused by insufficient attention for the EU in schools alone. Politicians and the media play a large role in the gathering of knowledge and the formation of an attitude towards developments in the EU. If there would be more media attention and attention in the Dutch Lower House, it would directly -via the media- or indirectly - through parents or teachers- affect VMBO pupils' lives. And that is important for this subject that is perceived as being very difficult to teach VMBO pupils. Teachers say they use the current affairs a lot in their lessons, because this at least appeals to the pupils' imagination. Besides the education oriented recommendations, an important task of the Office of the European Parliament in the Netherlands is therefore to give the European Union more publicity. And the fact that as a result more people than VMBO pupils alone will be prepared to take up their role as European citizens is actually more than welcome.



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## **APPENDIX 1**

### ***Basic Knowledge List – BBS***

## **The key elements of a Basic Knowledge List for European citizenship**

The Basic Knowledge List (BKL) is a list of areas topics and themes that are important to know for every young European student to become an European Citizen. It is put together by school directors from all over Europe. The first concept was presented in 2005 to about thirty school directors from various member states of the EU. They were asked to comment this first concept. This year a larger group of school leaders took a close look at a second concept, resulting in the current BKL below. We have no intention to introduce a new school subject. The BKL can be used by teachers, school directors and students as a checklist. In this list they can find themes related to the European dimension in secondary education. Some of these themes can be found in the regular school curriculum as well; others have to be worked out to be added in the regular school programmes. The BKL will comprise facts and figures on Europe as well as skills and attitudes required to become a conscious European Citizen. The BKL is a living document to be discussed on the website [www.euro-discussion.eu](http://www.euro-discussion.eu). Colleagues will be invited regularly to comment the current state of the list and to propose additions and improvements. An international editing committee will work out these proposals. The list below marks the start of a process to be completed during the next few years.

### **I. European heritage**

The history of Europe  
An historic outline  
Cultural heritage  
Cultural heritage sites  
Lieux de mémoires  
Great Europeans in science and arts  
Great or influential Europeans  
The EU, a great vision and its consequences  
Cultural highlights of member states  
Common values and principles  
Human Rights  
Women' s Rights  
Prejudices  
Freedom of speech etc.  
Religious life  
Important religions in the world  
Separation of Church and State  
Christian Europe  
The Islam in Europe  
Secularisation  
Key issues in European political thought  
Liberal Democracy  
Tolerance

### **II The European habitat**

The geography of Europe  
Geographical notions member states  
Travelling through Europe  
Environmental awareness  
Energy, energy sources now and in the future  
Nature conservation, a common concern  
Pollution  
Food production  
New developments  
Genetic modification/manipulation  
Connections food - health  
Epidemic diseases

### **III. Living in Europe**

What makes us Europeans?  
Customs and traditions  
Living and eating habits  
Free time activities

My hobbies  
Family life  
Types of families  
Relationships in a family  
Role models  
Cultural activities  
Scientific achievements  
Sports  
International tournaments  
Minorities  
in Europe  
in my country  
Migrants  
Labour mobility

#### **IV. Studying and working in Europe**

School systems  
School life / My school career  
Vocational / professional training  
Mutual recognition of exams  
Mobility in school careers  
Studying abroad  
European educational projects  
Exchange programs  
Communication  
Knowing foreign languages  
Modern mass media  
Virtual networks  
The European market  
Workers unions  
Business cultures  
Labour mobility  
Equal treatment, equal pay  
Working in a European multinational  
Social security / Social regulations in the EU

#### **V Europe a political and economic entity?**

The European community  
Historical outline  
Main European institutions  
The European Parliament  
The European elections  
The European Commission  
The European Court of Justice  
Brussels, a strained relationship  
European bureaucracy  
The Council of Europe  
The European Court of Human Rights  
The common market  
Traffic (commercial and touristic) in Europe  
Different position of member-states  
Economic minorities  
The economic role of Europe in the world  
The expansion of the EU  
The position of Europe in a globalizing world  
Other peoples' views on Europe

## **APPENDIX 2**

### ***Framework for a Europe Competence***

## DRAFT Common Framework for Europe Competence

This draft is based on the framework for key competencies in a knowledge-based society (Education and Training 2010), especially 'Civic competences', on national guidelines from the Elos countries (regarding European and International Orientation / (European) citizenship education), and on the CEFR for Languages. Only European/international competency aspects have been included, not general (underlying) local/regional/national knowledge, skills and attitudes. The general can-do statements have been formulated for pupils age 12-19 in general secondary education. Categories 1 to 6 can indicate either progress over time (achievement levels), or the number of credits a pupils' activity in this category is "worth" (to be assessed in e.g. portfolios, certificates, 'Internationalism Award' in the UK etc.). This very first draft will be developed further by the Elos scientific committee, and tried out in Elos schools in 2006/2007. Pupils and teachers will indicate concrete activities (e.g. in the Elos student portfolio) that are relevant in their educational context to the can-do statements.

## Framework of 'Europe competence'

Credit level:	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am an informed European citizen who can access, process and evaluate knowledge relevant to Europe and the wider world, and act upon it.	I have basic knowledge of the topography in Europe and a general idea of European history.	I have an idea of the variation within Europe (per country: natural condition, size of population, language, affiliation to EU or other supranational institutions).	I understand shared concepts such as democracy, citizenship and the international declarations expressing them.	I have a sound understanding of structure and function of European and international institutions (EU, CoE, UN, Nato etc.; in relation to each other and to national/regional affairs).	I have well informed opinions on the whole process of European integration and the social / economic / environmental problems which arise from that, for Europe and the wider world.	I know in which fields European and international institutions exert an important influence, and can explain the consequences for citizens, giving concrete examples.
	I can collect and organize general information on Europe and the wider world.	I can collect and organize information on current European and international affairs.	I can give an outline of the history of European integration, and can relate European key figures to certain events.	I can access and process information from different foreign media about topics with a supranational / international dimension.	I can relate the values Europe stands for (such as: peace, democratic decision-making, separation of religion and state, economic prosperity) to what they mean to me personally (my rights and responsibilities).	I can defend my opinions on European affairs in discussions with others with well-informed arguments.
	I am aware of the principles of democracy in European countries.	I enjoy sharing knowledge with my classmates on my own country (politics, geography, economics, history, science and technology, culture / national heritage) in relation to Europe.	I enjoy sharing knowledge about a broad range of European countries with other pupils abroad.	I make sure I form my own opinion about critical European and international issues (such as enlargement, constitution, globalisation etc.) and their consequences for citizens.	I take an active role as a European citizen at school and in the school environment.	I have an idea of the importance of lifelong learning and which steps I myself can take towards personal fulfilment, active citizenship and employability in Europe.

Credit level:	1	2	3	4	5	6
I can collaborate constructively with peers from other countries on a common task or project.	I establish links with partners from another country and swap information on topics of personal and social interest.	I make plans and preparations for a visit to a partner school in another country.	I take part in a school projects with pupils from a partner school via the internet.	I carry out tasks together with pupils from other countries, in face-to-face meetings.	I plan and carry out an international survey on a European topic, together with partner pupils abroad.	I participate actively in public debates and simulations with persons from different countries on European and international themes.
	I can use e-mail to present myself and my interests and hobbies and request the same information from my partners in other countries	I am internationally computer literate, using the Internet for chats, forums, searches.	I know how to negotiate and act according to a 'code of conduct' during exchanges with partners abroad.	I have the organisation skills needed to plan and run face-to-face meetings with pupils from other countries (about mobility, programmes, etc).	I can participate actively in a new project with groups/teams of peers from other countries.	I can contribute actively to the project management and administration of international activities in a school setting
	I show interest and respect for others in Europe.	I am aware that how persons from other cultures act, might arise from different norms and values than my own.	I enjoy exchanging my opinions about European and international affairs with pupils from other countries, and am open to learning about different points of view.	I enjoy the challenge of coping with problems arising in collaboration with pupils and teachers from other countries.	I have positive attitudes towards organizing and taking part in an individual learning period (such as a course or internship) abroad.	I feel motivated and prepared for future study and work in a European setting.

Credit level:	1	2	3	4	5	6
I can communicate effectively in a European / international setting.	I can use a common language of communication at level A1 of the Common European Framework of Languages.	I can use a common language of communication at level A2 of the Common European Framework of Languages.	I can use a common language of communication at level B1 of the Common European Framework of Languages.	I can use a common language of communication at level B2 of the Common European Framework of Languages.	I can use a common language of communication at level C1 of the Common European Framework of Languages.	I can use a common language of communication at level C2 of the Common European Framework of Languages.
	I am aware of the diversity of languages in Europe and know basic aspects of at least two languages other than my mother tongue.	I try to learn the basics of a language other than my mother tongue (and other than the common language of communication) of a partner student.	I can express my own opinions, needs, feelings and communicate coherently about them in a common language of communication with my peers from other countries.	I can apply different communication styles in a common language of communication to different intercultural settings.	I can identify and interpret explicit or implicit values in my own or others' communication in a common language.	I can discuss controversial European issues with people from other national and cultural backgrounds in a common language, while voicing respect for differences in norms and values.
	I enjoy communicating with persons from Europe and other parts of the world.	I can show respect (verbally and nonverbally) for the opinion of persons from a different cultural background.	I can talk about how stereotypes and discrimination work, in a multicultural group.	I can adapt to other ways of communication during a stay abroad, without giving up my own identity.	I consider learning and using several languages as normal.	I am confident in my communication with others in a common language (even if I make mistakes) while I try to improve further.

## **APPENDIX 3**

***The description of a Europe Certificate  
by the European Platform***

## Europa-certificaat

Een leerling die aan het einde van het vmbo, het havo of het vwo kan aantonen dat zij/hij beschikt over de Europa-competentie, komt in aanmerking voor een Europa-Certificaat.

(De Europa-competentie is beschreven in het stuk van het Europees Platform: 'Europese en Internationale Oriëntatie als basis voor Europees burgerschap')

De leerling dient dit aan te tonen via:

- A. Een toets, bestaande uit een aantal open kennisvragen en enkele essay-vragen. Deze toets wordt vervaardigd in nauwe samenwerking met een toetsinstituut, bij voorbeeld het Cito. De helft van de vragen gaat over het proces van Europese eenwording van 1945 tot het jaar waarin de toets wordt afgelegd. De andere helft gaat over internationale culturele stromingen en internationale politieke en economische ontwikkelingen in de periode 1500 tot het jaar waarin de toets plaats vindt.

Deze toets wordt op twee niveaus aangeboden, één voor vmbo-theoretische leerweg en één voor havo/vwo.

Voor beide onderdelen en voor beide niveaus zal een nadere, globale, stofomschrijving verschijnen.

- B. De leerling dient te beschikken over een portfolio, met bewijsstukken van het volgende:

1. De havo-vwo leerling beheerst het Engels op B2 niveau (1), een tweede vreemde taal op B1 niveau (1). De beoordelingen van de school dienen terug te vinden zijn in het portfolio.  
De vmbo-leerling theoretische leerweg beheerst het Engels op B1-niveau (1), een tweede vreemde taal op A2 niveau (1). Uit het portfolio dient in dit verband te blijken dat de leerling op een zinvolle manier informatie in de vreemde taal inwint via Internet, voor gebruik bij verschillende vakken op school.
2. De leerling heeft deelgenomen aan een leerlingenuitwisseling van de school, van in principe een week (of langer) in het buitenland en een week (of langer) in Nederland. Op het vmbo-theoretische leerweg is een kortere uitwisseling toegestaan, mits in het portfolio daarvoor redenen zijn terug te vinden.
3. Het portfolio bevat voor het vmbo minimaal drie, voor havo minimaal vier en voor vwo minimaal vijf 'werkstukken' (zie hieronder), waaruit blijkt dat de leerling zich in zijn schoolloopbaan verdiept heeft in de Europese eenwording van 1945 tot het jaar waarin het portfolio is afgesloten, in internationale vraagstukken van 1945 tot het jaar waarin het portfolio is afgesloten en in internationale culturele stromingen en internationale politieke en economische ontwikkelingen in de periode 1500 tot het jaar waarin het portfolio is afgesloten.  
Deze 'werkstukken' dienen verspreid over de schoolloopbaan tot stand zijn gekomen, voor havo-vwo verspreid over minimaal drie leerjaren, voor vmbo-theoretische leerweg over minimaal twee leerjaren. Een 'werkstuk' hoeft niet een uitgebreide 'scriptie' te zijn, maar dient wel aan te tonen dat de leerling zich gedurende meerdere lessen met het onderwerp heeft beziggehouden, de vorm kan heel divers zijn (verslag, cd, serie uitgewerkte opdrachten etc.).
4. De leerling heeft deelgenomen aan verschillende internationale ict-projecten, voor vmbo-theoretische leerweg verspreid over ten minste twee leerjaren, voor havo over drie en voor vwo over vier leerjaren. Een e-mail correspondentie in een vreemde taal met een partner in het buitenland kan één van deze projecten zijn, bij de andere kan dit een onderdeel zijn maar moet het project als geheel meer omvatten. Voor het vwo

geldt dat bij één van deze projecten een andere communicatietaal gebruikt moet zijn dan het Engels of het Nederlands.

Bij de keuze van een variant moet bovendien voldaan zijn aan de eisen die binnen deze variant gelden. De inhoud van het portfolio moet hiervan de weerslag zijn.

**Voor vmbo gemengde en praktische leerweg geldt het volgende:**

De leerling kan aanspraak maken op een Europa-certificaat, als hij voldoet aan de volgende eisen:

De leerling vmbo-gemengde of praktische leerweg dient te beschikken over een portfolio, met bewijsstukken van het volgende:

1. De leerling beheerst het Engels op A2 niveau (1). Uit het portfolio dient in dit verband te blijken dat de leerling op een zinvolle manier informatie in de vreemde taal inwint via Internet, voor gebruik bij verschillende vakken op school.
2. De leerling heeft deelgenomen aan een leerlingenuitwisseling van de school van ten minste drie dagen of aan een buitenlandse stage van minimaal dezelfde duur.
3. Het portfolio bevat minimaal drie ‘werkstukken’ in brede zin (zie boven), waaruit blijkt dat de leerling zich in zijn schoolloopbaan verdiept heeft in de Europese eenwording van 1945 tot het jaar waarin het portfolio is afgesloten, in internationale vraagstukken van 1945 tot het jaar waarin het portfolio is afgesloten en in internationale culturele stromingen en internationale politieke en economische ontwikkelingen in de periode 1500 tot het jaar waarin het portfolio is afgesloten.  
Vanzelfsprekend is er bij dergelijke ‘werkstukken’ een grote diversiteit mogelijk, waarbij een of meer werkstuk(ken) gericht op de toekomstige beroepspraktijk voor de hand ligt. Deze werkstukken dienen zich uit te strekken over ten minste twee leerjaren.
4. De leerling vmbo-praktische of gemengde leerweg heeft deelgenomen aan een internationaal ict-project. Een e-mail correspondentie in een vreemde taal met een partner in het buitenland moet onderdeel zijn van dit project, maar het project als geheel omvat meer.

Bij de keuze van een variant moet bovendien voldaan zijn aan de eisen die binnen deze variant gelden. De inhoud van het portfolio moet hiervan de weerslag zijn.

Binnen het vmbo praktische leerweg betekent dit dat het portfolio aantoont dat voldaan is aan de eis van een beroepsoriëntatie over de grens.

(1). Wat de taalniveaus betreft: Bij benadering zijn de niveaus aangegeven die de verschillende schooltypen nastreven bij hun eindexamen voor alle leerlingen (dit is ten minste het uitgangspunt geweest). Deze niveaus worden evenwel niet gehaald met het cijfer 6. In overleg met het Cito zal vastgesteld worden welk cijfer het aangegeven niveau wel benadert, waarbij gedacht moet worden aan het cijfer 8.

N.B.

*De hierboven aangegeven niveaus zijn nog heel voorlopig, zodat er geen verwachtingen op gebaseerd kunnen worden.*

## **APPENDIX 4**

***EU topics in the various standard VMBO textbooks***

## Course books & offered EU topics/issues

### *First two years*

EU issue vs. course book	Euro	Single European Act	EU institutions*	EU policy/law	EU cooperation	EU & foreign affairs	EU Member states	Unification EU	History EU	EMU	Enlargement of EU
<b>Geography</b>											
Geo			x (project)				x		x (project)		
Atlantis	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x		x
Aarde in Kaart											
BuiteNLand	x	x	x	x				x	x		x
Wereldwijs	x	x			x		x	x	x		x
Terra				x		x	x	x			
<b>History</b>											
Bronnen	x			x	x						x
Sprekend verleden					x				x		
Sfinx											
Pharos											
MeMo							x				
Indigo											
Sporen											
<b>Sociology</b>											
ML 1											
MEGA	x	x			x		x		x		
Team	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Blikopener											
Impuls											
<b>Economics</b>											
Economie in balans	x								x		
Percent		x	x		x	x	x	x		x	
Index	x		x	x	x	x					
Economisch bekeken		x	x		x		x			x	
Praktische economie	x				x	x		x			
Pincode	x	x	x		x					x	

\* EU institutions include EP, EC & Council of EU

## Final two years

EU issue vs. course book	Euro	Single European Act	EU institutions*	EU policy/law	EU cooperation	EU & foreign affairs	EU Member states	Unification EU	History EU	EMU	Enlargement of EU
<b>Geography</b>											
Geo		x			x						x
Atlantis											
Aarde in Kaart											
BuiteNLand											
Wereldwijs											
Terra											
<b>History</b>											
Bronnen											
Sprekend verleden											
Stinx	x		x		x			x	x		x
Pharos											
MeMo	x				x						x
Indigo											
Sporen			x		x				x		
<b>Sociology</b>											
ML 1											
MEGA											
Team											
Blikopener					x						
Impuls											
<b>Economics</b>											
Economie in balans											
Percent											
Index											
Economisch bekeken											
Praktische economie	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x
Pincode	x	x	x		x					x	

\* EU institutions include EP, EC & Council of EU

## **APPENDIX 5**

### ***List of interviewees***

<b>School</b>	<b>Interviewee</b>
De Grundel, Hengelo	Locatiedirecteur: Dhr. Van der Schaft Docent NL/ Coördinator Internationalisering: Mw. J. Hoekstra Docent maatschappijleer: Mw. Ter Haar
Bonaventura College, Leiden	Docent aardrijkskunde: Dhr. Van Klinken Docent maatschappijleer: Mw. J. de Jong Docent economie: Mw. Sheom-Bar
PSG Jan van Egmond, Purmerend	Deelschoolleider Dhr. R. Kramer (VMBO $\frac{3}{4}$ )  Deelschoolleider Dhr. R. Visser (VMBO $\frac{1}{2}$ )
Delta College, Utrecht	Docent geschiedenis, maatschappijleer en Nederlands: Dhr. R. Groot Zwaaftink
DaCapo College, Sittard	Docent geschiedenis: Dhr. Bruijns

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Interviewee</b>
VMBO adviesgroep	Dirk van der Spoel
Podium	Roel Govers
Onderwijsraad	Adrie van der Rest
KPC Groep	Gijs vd Beek
Instituut voor Publiek en Politiek	Karel Ploeger
Europees Platform	Wolter Blankert
Ministerie van Onderwijs	Henry Geerlings Gerard de Rooter Mw. Van Hoidonk
Gastdocenten IPP	Mies Beljaars Rogier van Elshout
Vmbo-stuurgroep Euroschool	Rinke van der Valle
BBS	Bert Zweers
SLO	Lieke Meijs

***APPENDIX 6***

***Interview questions***

## Interviewvragen docenten

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### Hoofdvraag

Hoe kunnen beleidsmakers en beleidsuitvoerders van het Nederlandse voortgezet onderwijs een rol spelen bij het intensiveren van de ervaring van **Europees Burgerschap** door **VMBO** leerlingen?

---

- 1 a. Welke initiatieven\* zijn er genomen?
  - b. Wat is daarvan de inhoud?
  - c. Hoe zijn die initiatieven vormgegeven?
  - d. In hoeverre zijn deze initiatieven door VMBO leerlingen toegepast (op school, thuis, elders)?
  
- 2 a. Werkt uw school samen met anderen op dit terrein?
  - b. Waaruit bestaat die samenwerking?
  - c. Hoe verloopt die samenwerking?
  
- 3 a. Met wie zou u willen samenwerken om "Europees burgerschap" op het VMBO onder de aandacht te brengen?
  - b. Op welke manier zou u willen samenwerken?
  - c. Hoe staat u tegenover een eventuele samenwerking met het Europees Parlement?
  
- 4 a. Vindt u de nu vastgestelde leerdoelen "Europa" geschikt?

*Europa komt impliciet in andere kerndoelen naar voren en de 2 specifieke leerdoelen zijn voor de onderbouw:*

*38 De leerling leert een eigentijds beeld van de eigen omgeving, Nederland, Europa en de wereld te gebruiken om verschijnselen en ontwikkelingen in hun omgeving te plaatsen.*

*45 De leerling leert de betekenis van Europese samenwerking en de Europese Unie te begrijpen voor zichzelf, Nederland en de wereld.*

  - b. Als u het voor het zeggen had, wat zou u VMBO leerlingen dan willen leren over "Europees Burgerschap"?
  - c. Op welke manier zou de VMBO leerling dat dan aangeboden moeten krijgen?
  
- 5 a. Welke huidige lesmethoden gebruikt u, als het gaat om de Europese Unie en haar instellingen en wat dat voor de leerling betekent?

- b. Waarom gebruikt u deze methoden?
- c. Wat vindt u van andere methoden?
- d. Hoe ziet de ideale manier van lesgeven over de Europese Unie eruit?

Onder lesmethoden wordt verstaan:

- o *Leermiddelen (inhoud & vorm)*
- o *Manier van lesgeven*
- o *en de vrijheid die scholen daarin krijgen*

6 a. Met welke beleidsmakers of instellingen die het beleid uit moeten voeren communiceert u?

b. Hoe verloopt die communicatie (inhoud, vorm, waar & wanneer)?

7. Wat zou er volgens u moeten veranderen in het huidige beleid, zodat de VMBO leerling zijn of haar Europees burgerschap sterker zou gaan beleven, m.a.w. wat mist u/ wat moet er nog komen?

8. Hoe ziet u het VMBO onderwijs in vergelijking met soortgelijke opleidingen in andere Europese landen\*?

\* 1. U kunt hierbij denken aan initiatieven op het gebied van:

- o de Europese identiteit van de VMBO leerling
- o de betrokkenheid bij de Europese gemeenschap (wil en vermogen)
- o de actieve maatschappelijke/ politieke bijdrage van de VMBO leerling aan de Europese gemeenschap
- o de kennis van de sociale en politieke basis van de Europese Unie

\*8. U kunt hierbij denken aan verschillen en overeenkomsten op het gebied van:

- o Kennisniveau
- o Maatschappelijke participatie
- o Kansen op de arbeidsmarkt

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**Bedankt voor uw medewerking!**

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## Interviewvragen beleid

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### Hoofdvraag

Hoe kunnen beleidsmakers en beleidsuitvoerders van het Nederlandse voortgezet onderwijs een rol spelen bij het intensiveren van de ervaring van **Europees Burgerschap** door **VMBO** leerlingen?

---

- 1 a. Welke initiatieven\* zijn er door u genomen?
  - b. Wat is daarvan de inhoud?
  - c. Hoe zijn die initiatieven vormgegeven?
  - d. In hoeverre zijn deze initiatieven door VMBO leerlingen toegepast (op school, thuis, elders)?
  - e. Wanneer zijn deze initiatieven genomen/ gepland?
  
- 2 a. Werkt u samen met anderen op dit terrein?
  - b. Waaruit bestaat die samenwerking?
  - c. Hoe verloopt die samenwerking?
  
- 3 a. Met wie zou u willen samenwerken om "Europees burgerschap" op het VMBO onder de aandacht te brengen?
  - b. Op welke manier zou u willen samenwerken?
  - c. Hoe staat u tegenover een eventuele samenwerking met het Europees Parlement?
  
- 4 a. Vindt u de nu vastgestelde leerdoelen "Europa" geschikt?

*De twee specifieke leerdoelen zijn voor de onderbouw:*

*38 De leerling leert een eigentijds beeld van de eigen omgeving, Nederland, Europa en de wereld te gebruiken om verschijnselen en ontwikkelingen in hun omgeving te plaatsen.*

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  - b. Als u het voor het zeggen had, wat zou u VMBO leerlingen dan willen leren over "Europees Burgerschap"?
  - c. Op welke manier zou de VMBO leerling dat dan aangeboden moeten krijgen?
  
5. Wat vindt u van de huidige lesmethoden?

*Onder lesmethoden wordt verstaan:*

- o *Leermiddelen (inhoud & vorm)*
- o *Manier van lesgeven*
- o *en de vrijheid die scholen daarin krijgen*

**6 a.** Met welke beleidsmakers of instellingen die het beleid uit moeten voeren communiceert u?

b. Hoe verloopt die communicatie (inhoud, vorm, waar & wanneer)?

**7.** Wat zou er volgens u moeten veranderen in het huidige beleid, zodat de VMBO leerling zijn of haar Europees burgerschap sterker zou gaan beleven, m.a.w. wat mist u/ wat moet er nog komen?

**8.** Hoe ziet u het VMBO onderwijs in vergelijking met soortgelijke opleidingen in andere Europese landen\*?

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- o de betrokkenheid bij de Europese gemeenschap (wil en vermogen)
- o de actieve maatschappelijke/ politieke bijdrage van de VMBO leerling aan de Europese gemeenschap
- o de kennis van de sociale en politieke basis van de Europese Unie

\*8. U kunt hierbij denken aan verschillen en overeenkomsten op het gebied van:

- o Kennisniveau
- o Maatschappelijke participatie
- o Kansen op de arbeidsmarkt

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**Bedankt voor uw medewerking!**

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