



# EFECOT

## Policy and planning: 2000 - 2007

**EFECOT:**  
**A European Federation working**  
**for the education of Traveller Communities.**

With the co-operation of the Commission of the European Union



DG XXII Socrates/Comenius Programme

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# Foreword

by President Raf De Zutter

EFECOT was set up in 1989. The target was to improve educational provision for children and youngsters from the families of Occupational Travellers. This objective was formulated based on two important documents: the basic research of Ludo Knaepkens in the Member States of the then European Union, and Resolution 89/C.153.01.1989 of the European Council of Ministers regarding the education of Occupational Travellers.

EFECOT has systematically and dynamically developed a network of regional, national and international partners. Ever since its foundation, EFECOT has contributed to the implementation of the Resolution of 1989, via projects and in collaboration with the European Institutions.

In 1999 there was a short interval for looking back upon “ten years of work and growth”. The special publication “Travelling on Together” recorded some fascinating stories illustrating progress, but the book concluded with fundamental questions: “What are the new challenges and how will we tackle them?” EFECOT therefore decided to develop a policy plan for the period 2000-2007.

This policy plan has taken into account the findings of a thorough evaluation of the past and the outcomes of a widespread consultation of all those who are in one way or another related to our international network. This work was backed up by independent expertise from the University of Gent and the University of Sheffield.

Past experience has proven to be a reliable guide, but newly identified needs and the extension of the target groups are also determining factors in the policy plan.

The resulting decisions will have a major impact on the working of EFECOT: structures will be adapted, the Central Co-ordination Team will get new tasks, the relation with the partners will become multiform!

EFECOT will remain loyal to its initial goal: the improvement of educational possibilities for Occupationally Travelling families. However, the field of action is broadening: geographically speaking the Europe of nine became the Europe of fifteen and will soon become the Europe of twenty. Also the target group will be extended: from child to adult, from Occupational Travellers to all Traveller Communities! This expansion reinforces the need for us to work in a dynamic and flexible way, focusing on adaptation and application of new educational forms and techniques.

In 1989 EFECOT started off with enthusiasm. In 2000 we travel on together, with as much enthusiasm, but equipped with experience and expertise.

Raf De Zutter  
President

# Executive summary and recommendations

## (I) An introduction to the work of EFECOT

The European Federation for the Education of the Children of Occupational Travellers (EFECOT) was set up in 1988, as part of a response to the needs of travelling children following an initiative by the European Parliament. **The remit of EFECOT was focused specifically on Occupational Travellers, defined as Bargee, Circus and Fairground communities across Europe, seasonal workers and others who travel as a direct consequence of their trade or profession.** . Indicative estimates suggest that these are significant minority groupings, although their lifestyle means that they are all too easily overlooked. Effective access to education is a major concern across all these communities. The children are disadvantaged because their lifestyles and cultures do not fit readily within a schooling structure developed for sedentary populations; a mismatch which can all too easily lead to forms of institutional discrimination, and which can be exacerbated by a lack of intercultural sensitivity and prejudice

Over the years **EFECOT has sought to work with the communities to develop an understanding of their changing circumstances, their priorities and expectations, and their educational needs.** This process started with a study of the (then) nine Member States, which was commissioned by the European Commission and carried out by Ludo Knaepkens in the late 1980s. It has continued through both formal and informal consultation with Occupational Travellers, and with organizations which represent their interests. The dialogue confirms the commitment of Traveller communities to education; with a particular focus on basic skills, relevant vocational education and a broader, but sensitive, curriculum which will prepare their children for life in an increasingly multicultural society. It also highlights the frustrations of parents as they try to accommodate to traditional schooling provision within, and as they travel between, Member States.

On the basis of a developing understanding, EFECOT has therefore worked with the institutions of the European Union, and of Member States, to implement the 1989 resolution of the Council of Ministers (89/C153/01), which focuses on the learning needs of these particular children. With this framework as a starting point, it has **set out to organize and facilitate a number of project-**

**based initiatives which have explored different approaches, models and methods, in order to identify effective ways of improving educational provision.** These initiatives have been developed within the framework of European actions<sup>1</sup>, and have included projects to develop appropriate materials and record-keeping systems, projects to develop supported distance learning for children and to utilize the potential of new technologies, and projects to raise the intercultural awareness of teachers. The project programme has also responded to the voices of the communities by beginning to explore **adult education** as well as the original focus on school-age provision.

The other major strand of the work of EFECOT has been the encouragement of **actions to promote the sharing and dissemination of experience, in order to effect change across Member States and partner countries.** This has centred on the development of a network of partners, and a broader network of contacts. Dissemination has been facilitated by newsletters, a documentation centre, seminars, conferences and other events.

## **(II) The context of the review**

The work of EFECOT has evolved over a ten year period, and, as noted above, has been guided to date by resolution (89/C153/01). With the approach of the new millenium, the Board of Directors felt it important to undertake a fundamental review of progress, and to build upon the achievements of the past decade by re-examining strategic objectives, processes and structures. A sub group was set up to oversee this process, and asked to draw on the results of an independent evaluation exercise (see below) as well as taking soundings from the communities, from agencies working with the children, and from policy makers across Member States.

## **(III) The review process**

The process followed by the sub group is described in detail in the full report which follows. It has involved a careful review of the historical development of EFECOT, a fresh look at the original terms of reference, an examination of current educational priorities within the European Commission, UNESCO and the OECD, and a major consultation exercise.

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<sup>1</sup> Initially through the 'Ad Hoc Group for Intercultural Education', and then through the Socrates framework, supplemented by projects within other programmes including Leonardo da Vinci, the Telematics Applications Programme, Youth for Europe and the Multimedia Task Force project.

The sub group was also able to draw on important insights from an independent evaluation exercise being undertaken by the Centre for Intercultural Education (University of Ghent, Belgium). These raised a number of points about the scope and effectiveness of the work of the organization, its objectives, and current ways of working. The process was supplemented by a specially commissioned consultative survey, developed with support from the University of Sheffield (UK), followed by focused discussion sessions within the programme of the annual EFECOT conference held in Paris in October, 1999.

In particular the survey was used to check the relevance of current EFECOT priorities, to sound out some new proposals, and to give respondents the opportunity to make their own recommendations for future EFECOT priorities. There were over 400 responses from parents, practitioners and policy makers within 14 countries. The conference sessions then enabled further discussion of recommendations emerging from both the survey and the evaluation exercise.

The final part of the process has been the codification of the results of the review, which form the basis for the final chapter of this document, and are summarized in the sections which follow.

#### **(IV) Priorities and objectives for the future**

The review process has led to a series of recommendations, which, in spite of the progress which has been made in some countries since 1989, continue to acknowledge the urgency of responding to fundamental problems faced by the majority of Traveller parents as they seek to access educational opportunities for their children and themselves. As the circumstances of Traveller communities change over time, the recommendations which follow also need to be understood in the spirit of a renewed **mission statement**, which is intended to allow detailed decisions about priorities to be made flexibly, but within a clear and focused rationale.

*EFECOT has a mission to improve educational provision for Travellers so that they can have access to educational opportunities at all levels. Traveller communities form significant minority groupings across Europe and face social exclusion, discrimination and the practical challenges posed by sedentary and 'traditional' education systems.*

*EFECOT will continue to work with the communities, and with practitioners and policy makers within the field of education, to identify responsive*

*methods and approaches, which create positive opportunities for access, which are sensitive to the lifestyles of Travellers, and which encourage the celebration of cultural diversity.*

*EFECOT will also seek to strengthen its network of contacts with all relevant actors, including policy makers, across the European Union and partner countries, in order to raise awareness, to stimulate the sharing and dissemination of good practice, and to press for the implementation of clear policies and structures to support effective education for Travellers. It will, where necessary, challenge institutional discrimination and prejudice. One immediate priority will be the development and consolidation of networks within Southern and Eastern Europe.*

Specific priorities and objectives will be pursued in collaboration with the institutions of the European Union and Member States, and can be summarized and grouped as follows:

*(i) The scope of the work of EFECOT*

EFECOT will maintain its central focus on the needs of the **children of families who are mobile as a consequence of their trade or profession**. However, as a response to a reappraisal of identified needs, its remit will be broadened to include **educational provision for adults**, the **sharing of relevant experience with all Traveller communities**, and the encouragement of **parental involvement in decision-making processes**.

*(ii) Grounding the work of EFECOT*

EFECOT will continue to ground its work in an understanding of the changing needs of Traveller communities. It will consolidate structures which enable dialogue with parents and representative organizations, and will seek to commission appropriate research. EFECOT will similarly ground its work in an understanding of the needs and concerns of schools and agencies which support Traveller learners, and will also encourage the exchange of information and ideas between the communities, practitioners and policy makers.

*(iii) An effective and assessable work programme*

EFECOT will seek to develop a **holistic work programme model**, balancing longer-term thematic '**Research and Development**' actions with '**Application**' initiatives that build on proven practice and respond to the more immediate concerns of Traveller communities. *Initiatives will involve testing out and/or contextualizing models, methods and materials which can help to improve structures, learning and recording processes, and relevant competencies. Supported open and distance learning, and the use of new technologies, will continue to be central developmental themes.* The holistic programme will also include projects aimed at strengthening **the role of EFECOT networks** (see *(iv)*), and synergy across the programme will seek to ensure effective implementation of good practice across Member States and partner countries.

Developmental work for **Pre-school and Primary-age children** will be consolidated, and linked with **initiatives to involve parents**. However, following widespread and deep concerns confirmed within the 1999 consultative survey exercise, there will be a particular focus on the challenges posed by **schooling for the Secondary age group**. The vocational dimension of these challenges will also be linked to the development of opportunities for adult Travellers within the ethos of **life long learning**.

The programme, and all projects within the programme, will have terms of reference which include the careful planning of dissemination, and systematic evaluation so that EFECOT can be accountable to the communities.

*(iv) Other activity: challenge and change*

EFECOT has always sought to share its expertise through dissemination and consultancy activity. It will now seek to supplement this important dimension of its work by **proactive efforts to encourage specific service improvements for individual communities and within individual regions and countries**. This will involve strengthening community and national networks, linking these more firmly with the central EFECOT structure, and actively supporting initiatives within individual Member States and partner countries.

*(v) The transnational focus*

International travel poses acute problems for the education of children of a large, and increasing, number of Traveller families, and there is a pressing need to identify appropriate European

measures, which can alleviate this problem and enhance continuity of learning. EFECOT will continue to encourage both **formal and informal cooperation and coordination between policy makers and practitioners across Member States, and partner countries**, in order to address this challenge, and to provide a forum for other transnational issues.

*(vi) Resourcing*

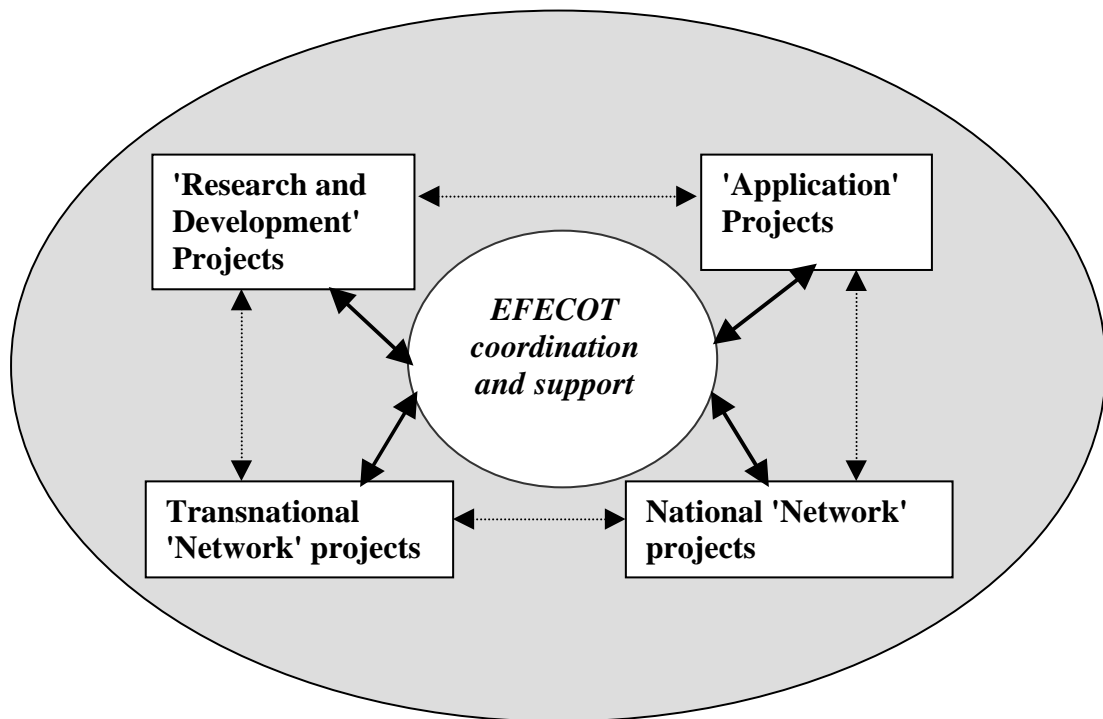
EFECOT will be active in identifying sources of funding which can further the improvement of education for Traveller learners. This information will be sought at national, European and international levels, and will be shared with partners in order to promote activity within a coordinated and supportive framework.

## **(V) A framework for the future (EFECOT procedures)**

As well as reviewing priorities, the strategic planning exercise has provided an important opportunity for EFECOT to step back and look at the procedures through which its policies are implemented. This reassessment played an important part in identifying the need for the holistic approach to workplan development which was described in the previous section. The approach involves a classification of initiatives into three types:

- **Research and Development projects** intended to pursue both formal and informal research processes to strengthen understanding, and pursue longer term development themes related to new ways of providing services and promoting change. These projects would normally be initiated and directly supported by EFECOT.
- **Application projects** which will set out to explore the application of successful outcomes and proven practices in new and specific contexts. This includes the adaptation of established methods and approaches to fit the needs of particular countries and/or communities, and also the sharing of successful experience with practitioners, and through teacher training. Such projects would normally be initiated by EFECOT partners, with basic servicing from the central team.
- **Network projects** intended to establish, consolidate, and improve the effectiveness of networks of partners within and across Member States and partner countries, as they seek to have an impact on educational provision for Traveller learners. Projects with an international dimension would normally be coordinated by EFECOT, whilst national projects would normally be coordinated by partners, with the support of the EFECOT Central Team.

Within this classification, the current EFECOT programme can be seen as a mixture of developmental and, to a lesser extent, application projects. The new balance is essentially about grounding the work of EFECOT, and its partners, in an evolving knowledge base, as well as strengthening the role of networks in influencing decision-making processes. The new emphases on grounding and networking will complement the traditional focus of the work programme, and the new approach is designed to enhance effectiveness by allow synergy and creative sharing across different types of project. The new structure is illustrated in the following figure.



*A new work programme structure, with linkages for support and synergy.*

As well as highlighting the need for a systematic and integrated approach to work programme coordination, the examination of processes also identified ways in which the planning and execution of individual projects could be strengthened. In particular, **planning and evaluation processes will be integrated within a new set of guidelines**, produced for individual project managers. These will include criteria for developing objectives, and for assessing both progress

and outcomes. They will also introduce procedures which allow for **an 'external' dimension to planning and review** (see below).

Project planning will also include establishing a dissemination plan. **Dissemination** has been taking an increasingly prominent place within projects and within EFECOT as a whole. Sharing good practice is a fundamental role for the organisation and, for the future, the emphasis needs to be on building upon the best aspects of existing mechanisms, and broadening the scope of dissemination to reach an ever-increasing audience.

It is recommended that current practice is consolidated within a clear structure and becomes part of the core work of the Central Team (see below). It is further recommended that the work is elaborated:

- to improve the organization of the documentation centre with a clear and transparent classification system.
- to supplement the current pattern of publications with targeted dissemination of experience and good practice (a) in particular countries, (b) within publications produced by the Traveller communities themselves, and (c) within publications produced for teachers and practitioners.
- to optimise the dissemination of information through new technologies (on line newsletters, enhanced use of the EFECOT Website, etc.)
- to promote 'EDULINA'<sup>2</sup> products and services by publicizing and targeting within a broad audience, including all those concerned with provision for Traveller communities, and for those affected by interrupted learning

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<sup>2</sup> EDULINA is a newly formed, independent and non profit-making, agency which will promote products, and publications and services relating to products, which are outcomes of EFECOT projects and actions.

## (VI) A framework for the future (EFECOT structures)

The final part of the strategic planning process has been related to EFECOT as an organization, and the changes necessary to carry through the new strategic objectives and implementation processes described in the previous sections.

At one level this will involve changes to overall EFECOT management and membership, and, at another, there are implications for 'rooting' the day-to-day 'core' work of the organization if it is to be both effective and efficient.

### (i) *Membership and management*

At this level, the major implications of the changes recommended from this review are:

- (i) continuing **efforts to increase formal EFECOT membership**, with the emphasis on a proactive approach to organizations representing communities, and/or within countries, where membership is currently relatively sparse. This includes the countries of Southern and Eastern Europe.
- (ii) the establishment of a '**European Consultative Group**', open to all Member States and partner countries, which will form the basis of a structure linking EFECOT to developments within individual countries, and will also act as a forum for identifying and pursuing transnational issues.
- (iii) the establishment of a **A Standing Committee** (by the Board of Directors), with a remit **which focuses on policy implementation, review and development**, and which can draw on independent (external) expertise.

The first two of these recommendations are focused on **network development** and are intended to strengthen communication, informed supportive activity, and targeted development. They are a direct response to the concerns which emerged from the consultation exercises. The third recommendation is an acknowledgement of the importance of monitoring implementation.

The 'European Consultative group' and the Standing Committee will also play an important role in the planning and evaluation of individual projects. Representatives of these bodies will be involved in initial contracting meetings, and in both formative and summative reviews. This is

intended to enhance synergy and to add an important ('external') overview dimension to individual project implementation.

*(ii) Effective work programme coordination and support*

The proposals for a holistic approach to work programme development, to expanding the network of EFECOT members, partners and contacts across Europe, and to creating synergy, are all part of efforts to improve the effectiveness of the organization as it seeks to have a real and lasting impact on provision for Traveller learners.

However, the review exercise also highlighted weaknesses in the current **operational support structure**, which will need to be resolved if EFECOT is to realize its strategic goals. These weaknesses reflect the incremental development of EFECOT over the past ten years. Funding has been overly-dependent on income from a series of individual projects and initiatives. The result is that 'core' organizational activity, *such as work programme coordination, central dissemination services, financial management, translation and network support*, has not had the secure base necessary for balanced longer-term planning, and that levels of service have varied from year to year.

It is therefore recommended that **EFECOT should establish a firmer financial basis for its core activities, which should be separated from a dependency on project income, and should give the organization the independent 'roots' necessary to carry through the new strategic goals in a balanced and efficient manner.**

## **(VII) Immediate implications**

The previous three sections of this summary have focused, respectively, on policy, process and structure. The sub group which has been responsible for the review will now look to the newly established 'Standing Committee for Policy, Review and Development' to pursue the implementation of the various recommendations within the spirit of the new mission statement.

In completing their task the sub group does, however, wish to draw attention to two particular concerns.

First, there is a concern about the continuing adequacy of the original, 1989, resolution (89/C153/01). This has provided a valuable framework for improving the accessibility and quality

of schooling and education for Traveller communities in Europe. However, much has changed over the past ten years. **The sub group therefore suggests the need for a new resolution, based on updated information and, where relevant, taking account of recommendations contained in this EFECOT report.**

Second, there is the fundamental concern about funding which was noted in the previous section. EFECOT's ability to carry through the strategic policies outlined in this report in a systematic and balanced manner are clearly dependent on actions **to secure a more appropriate funding base for the core supportive activities of the organization.**

# Chapter 1: an introduction

The European Federation for the Education of the Children of Occupational Travellers (EFECOT) was set up in 1988, as part of a response to the needs of travelling children following an initiative by the European Parliament. The remit of EFECOT was focused specifically on Occupational Travellers, defined as Bargee, Circus and Fairground communities across Europe, seasonal workers and others who travel as a direct consequence of their trade or profession. These children are disadvantaged because their lifestyles and cultures do not fit well within a schooling structure developed for sedentary populations; a mismatch which can all too easily lead to forms of institutional discrimination, and social exclusion which can be exacerbated by a lack of intercultural sensitivity and prejudice.

The role of EFECOT is all the more important because these communities can be relatively small within individual countries, and their needs can be overlooked in the face of more pressing priorities. Aggregated figures show that there are, in fact, significant numbers of European families who travel as part of their work, and whose children are directly affected.

<i>Community/Grouping</i>	<i>Number of businesses</i>	<i>Total population</i>
<i>Bargees</i>	<i>10,300</i>	<i>28,300</i>
<i>Circus</i>	<i>700</i>	<i>16,000</i>
<i>Fairground</i>	<i>42,100</i>	<i>134,300</i>
<i>Seasonal workers</i>	<i>Not recorded</i>	<i>267,900</i>
<b><i>TOTAL</i></b>	<b><i>(53,000)</i></b>	<b><i>446,400</i></b>

*Figure 1.1: Indicative figures for the main groupings of Occupational Travellers<sup>3</sup>*

This then is the context for the current document which looks briefly at the progress which has been made since 1988, and then focuses on the future as an exercise in forward planning. . The exercise was overseen by a sub group of the management committee, as part of the process of developing a policy plan to serve EFECOT at the start of the new millenium. The process was supplemented by input from an externally led evaluation initiative, a specially commissioned

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<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that these figures are drawn from EU and Member State statistics, but are indicative estimates rather than exact as mobility has made data collection problematic.

consultative survey and focused discussion within the programme of the annual EFECOT seminar/conference held in Paris in October, 1999.

Forward planning needs to be based on an understanding of strengths and weaknesses, and *Chapter 2* of this report contains a review of the development of EFECOT since its inception in 1988. As the chapter demonstrates, the success of EFECOT has been grounded on a series of transnational projects that have allowed for fieldwork innovation and the sharing of experience. The recent CERI/OECD report 'Innovating schools' (1999) notes the importance of such "bottom up" initiatives in promoting real and lasting change, and EFECOT would endorse this sentiment.

At the same time, over a ten year period, the scope of EFECOT's work has increased to embrace new challenges like lifelong learning, and the evaluation exercise has highlighted the pressures on the current organizational structure, as well as the need to consider changes to underpin future developments. Chapter 2 therefore ends on a cautionary note, and also gives a timely reminder that EFECOT has been much more effective in supporting development in some countries than in others. These are important issues which were incorporated in the survey (the scope of EFECOT's work) and the programme of the annual seminar (scope and effectiveness across Member States). Structural implications are considered in chapter 5.

Forward planning also needs to be based on a sense of vision, and *Chapter 3* looks at the main themes from recent reports produced by UNESCO, the European Commission and the OECD, particularly as they apply to the realities of a travelling lifestyle. This helped to identify some of the key issues which underpin the new policy statement: **access, continuity, improving achievement, promoting awareness and combating prejudice, effective support measures, parental partnership and life long learning.**

*Chapter 4* reports on the consultative part of the process, and draws together responses from the survey and the conference. The starting points for consultation included both history and vision, combined with insights from the evaluation initiative, and the discussion therefore complements that of earlier chapters. In particular there can be seen to be strong support for the view that EFECOT should seek to be more effective in encouraging and supporting systematic development within individual Member States. Equally there is firm support for the need to embrace life long learning, and to share EFECOT experience gained from working with Occupational communities with others whose learning is interrupted, including other travelling

communities.<sup>4</sup> Similarly the consultative process endorsed the importance of drawing parents into decision-making partnerships with schools and agencies, and the other major finding of the survey was a deep concern about secondary level education. The conference enabled more detailed discussion of a number of issues, and, in particular, led to a number of important additional recommendations about processes and structures.

*The final chapter of the report* builds on the threads which run through the earlier chapters and uses these to establish an agreed policy statement for the period 2000 - 2007. It then outlines the implications of this statement for key processes within EFECOT, workplan and network development, ongoing evaluation, dissemination, and the provision and support of direct services. A separate section then outlines recommendations for an amended structure which will help to ensure that EFECOT is both effective and efficient as it works within its new remit. The chapter concludes with a mission statement, a call to renew the original resolution which has acted as a framework for development, and a commitment to review progress as EFECOT seeks to implement the proposals contained in this document.

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<sup>4</sup> These developments are not currently part of the official EFECOT remit, even though some initiatives have been taken

# Chapter 2: history, development and current structures

## 2.1) The origins of EFECOT

In a sense the birth of EFECOT can be traced back to 1982, when Members of the European Parliament, including Magdalena Hoff as rapporteur, expressed their concern about the education of Circus and Fairground children by proposing a resolution. This initiative led to the adoption of a broader resolution in 1984 (doc 1-1522/83), which covered all children whose parents had no fixed abode.

This first important step highlighted the need for a better understanding of itinerant situations, and one consequence of the resolution was the first systematic study of the problems faced by Bargee, Circus and Fairground families as they responded to the requirements of a static compulsory schooling system. This study concerned the then nine Member States, and was carried out by Ludo Knaepkens on behalf of the Commission of the European Union (European Communities), and two reports were published. The first became available in 1987 and focused on Bargee and Circus children. The second followed shortly afterwards, early in 1988, and was concerned with the Fairground community. Publication was followed by an important period of consultation with travelling populations and organisations working in this area; a discussion which included the possibility of creating a representative European platform for 'Occupational Travellers'.

This suggestion from the Commission was welcomed, and EFECOT was formally founded on the 8<sup>th</sup> December, 1988, with Ludo Knaepkens seconded to be its first Director. Its statutes included a section (Article 4) summarising the key aims of the new organisation:

*"Considering the specific work and life environments of Bargees, Circus and Fairground people, and travelling merchants within the E.E.C. countries and the specific call for assistance by concerned parents, the Federation has as Aims and Objects the timely and adequate profiling*

*of the educational progress of their children and youth  
to recognise through consultation the development  
and setting up of various projects.*

*The Federation accepts as a basic principle the achievement  
of such Aims and Objects on behalf of children and parents  
of concerned groups in ways which preclude discrimination,  
whether political, religious or national."*

## 2.2) Early developments

Whilst this process was taking place there were parallel initiatives in the European Institutions, and on 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 1989, the Council, and Ministers of Education meeting within the Council, adopted two resolutions for the children of Travellers including one covering the specific needs of Occupational Travellers (89/C153/01). This resolution, which was to form a backcloth to the work of EFECOT, focused on removing barriers to effective schooling, with objectives centred on:

- Promoting innovative initiatives
- Proposing and supporting positive and appropriate measures
- Inter-relating achievements
- Widely disseminating the lessons learned.<sup>5</sup>

From the outset EFECOT planned in terms of actions and projects within annual work programmes supported by the 'Ad-Hoc Group for Intercultural Education'. This was a group composed of representatives from 12 Member States,<sup>6</sup> which had been set up to ensure the implementation of the 1989 resolutions, and to co-ordinate thinking about migrant populations within Europe.

These programmes were based on an analysis of needs and, as one part of this process, EFECOT set up European Congresses in 1989 and 1993 to help to establish a dialogue between the communities and policy makers as well as teacher organisations.

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<sup>5</sup> The full text of the resolution is included as Appendix I

<sup>6</sup> Portugal, Spain and Greece had recently joined and the original survey reports were supplemented by extra information for these countries.

Initially activities tended to focus on separate travelling communities, with thinking focused on the particular needs of Bargee families, or Circus communities, or the children of 'Showmen'. However as the EFECOT network grew, and as experience was shared, it also became apparent that it was important to address some of the common problems faced by all travelling families.

It is instructive to look at the main targets of the early work programmes as these give a picture of developmental priorities. They included:

Establishing international networks for the education of Circus and Fairground children, and for the pre-school education of Bargee children.

Looking at adapted curricula for Circus and Fairground children (both for schooling and for vocational training)

Stimulating literacy skills and language development, including the development of contextualised learning materials for travelling communities.

Supporting and stimulating parents in relation to education and schooling for their children.

Learning support for Traveller children who were boarding.

The development of follow-up systems (for recording progress as children moved from school to school).

An early interest in exploring and strengthening supported distance learning for travelling children (including basic skills and vocational options).

Actions to explore some of the issues related to the education of children of seasonal workers.

From the outset, targets were carried forward by project groups, drawing together practitioners and relevant experts across national boundaries to share ideas and experiences, and this sharing has been one of the notable and successful features of work programmes.

The early period of EFECOT work was also characterised by the building up of contacts, and the establishment of basic structures for dissemination, such as an open documentation centre, the 'Newslines' magazine and a newsletter. Other important developments included the introduction of annual European Seminars (mainly aimed at teachers and other practitioners), to share experience from projects and to plan future activity.

### **2.3) The period post-1995**

Following the Maastricht Treaty, the main programme threads have been organised in the frame of the Socrates programme, and both EFECOT and its many partners have also been increasingly involved with initiatives from other E.U. programmes. These include Leonardo da Vinci, the Telematics Applications Programme, Youth for Europe and the Multimedia Task Force project..

However, these changes did not affect the continuity of work related to the main targets which had already been established. Rather targets have been modified, and added to, in the light of changing needs and circumstances, including input from a third European Congress in 1997. There were also new priorities within the expanded European Union,<sup>7</sup> and a dramatic increase in the number and variety of EFECOT partners. Additional developments have included:

Projects to explore the use of new technologies to enhance supported distance learning for travelling children, and to improve follow up.

Actions for the Bargee and Fairground communities, and for seasonal workers, aimed at support during the transition from school to work.

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<sup>7</sup> During this period Sweden, Finland and Austria also became Member States, and it became possible to begin to include associate Member States (Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway) within the network, as well as several former Eastern Block countries.

Actions to encourage the improvement of the accessibility and quality of boarding facilities for Traveller children.

Life long learning initiatives for adults within travelling communities.

Development of materials for teacher training (to make teachers aware of the needs of travelling children, and of their cultures).

As would be expected, the increase in project activity, and in the size and scope of the EFECOT contact base over this period, was accompanied by a significant increase in the dissemination of experience, through publications,<sup>8</sup> presentations and other events. This activity is also to be augmented by a new and separate initiative, 'EDULINA', which will operate in parallel with the main work programme in order to provide direct services to Traveller communities, and to professionals working with them, building on the successful outcomes of EFECOT projects.

As the work programme grew, it was also felt necessary to pay particular attention to the co-ordination of the whole programme, and this led to two further important developments. The first was a focused work package to explore the (ongoing) evaluation of the programme, and the second was a similarly focused work package to ensure effective and cost-effective dissemination.

## **2.4) The current situation**

The extended list of targets includes 13 fieldwork headings, and EFECOT has also acted as a partner within other projects, as well as offering guidance and support to a variety of organisations working in this field. At the same time, as noted above, the EFECOT contact base has spread and grown and now involves teachers, representatives of parents and Traveller organisations, civil servants and politicians. A recent exercise identified approximately 2,500 contacts across 14 countries. Just over 500 of these were working at a policy level (public authorities, and organisations seeking to influence policy). Just over 1,000 were agencies or services which supported the field, or linked policy and fieldwork, and a similar number were directly concerned with providing services to travelling learners. These figures include a number

of active partner organizations which are directly involved through one or more projects or through policy level activity.

Country	Policy level	Meso level	Micro level	Totals
Austria	(--)	1	(--)	1
Belgium	6	10	17	24
Denmark	1	1	4	4
France	10	20	10	37
Germany	21	14	16	48
Greece	(--)	(--)	1	1
(Hungary)	1	2	(--)	3
Ireland	2	3	2	6
Italy	4	2	(--)	6
The Netherlands	2	13	19	27
Portugal	1	2	1	4
Spain	4	1	(--)	(--)
Sweden	(--)	(--)	1	4
The U.K.	7	26	51	51
International Orgs.	1	10	(--)	11
(Australia)	(--)	1	(--)	1
<b>TOTALS<sup>9</sup></b>	60	105	122	228

*Table 2.1: The active EFECOT network*

Table 2.1 gives an overview of this active network. Organisations working at the meso level are supporting the field and linking fieldwork with attempts to develop or influence policy. Organisations listed as working at a micro level are involved in providing direct services for Traveller communities. Currently there are 168 partners directly involved with specific projects; 164 of these spread across 14 Member States, three in Hungary and an associate partner in Australia.

<sup>8</sup> There are now almost 200 published items available, including learning materials, reports, other documents and AVA materials.

<sup>9</sup> As some organizations work at more than one level, the overall total is less than the sum of the individual column totals.

As the table demonstrates, there are considerable variations in the number and type of links across the Member States, and much needs to be done to strengthen contact and supportive involvement in some countries. However, looking back to the original aims and objectives of EFECOT, and the remit set by the European Council in 1989, a great deal has clearly been achieved. This is reflected by the very positive national reports from ten countries which are contained in the report 'Travelling on Together', published to celebrate the 10th anniversary of EFECOT in 1998. EFECOT initiatives have clearly had a valuable and supportive impact on the work of partners in many Member States. The report also confirms the vital role of co-ordinating actions across countries. This is seen as important to reflect increasing mobility, and for cost-effectiveness in exploring new approaches and sharing experiences. Transnational links have also been important in raising awareness about the, sometimes 'hidden', needs of (what can be at national level) relatively small numbers of learners within mobile Occupational communities.

The acknowledgement of progress in co-ordinating innovation and supportive measures is also reflected through continuing positive feedback from the European Commission, both in its formal evaluation document 'School provision for children of Occupational Travellers', published in 1997, and in a variety of other publications including the influential White paper 'Teaching and Learning: Towards the Learning Society'.

## **2.5) Current structures**

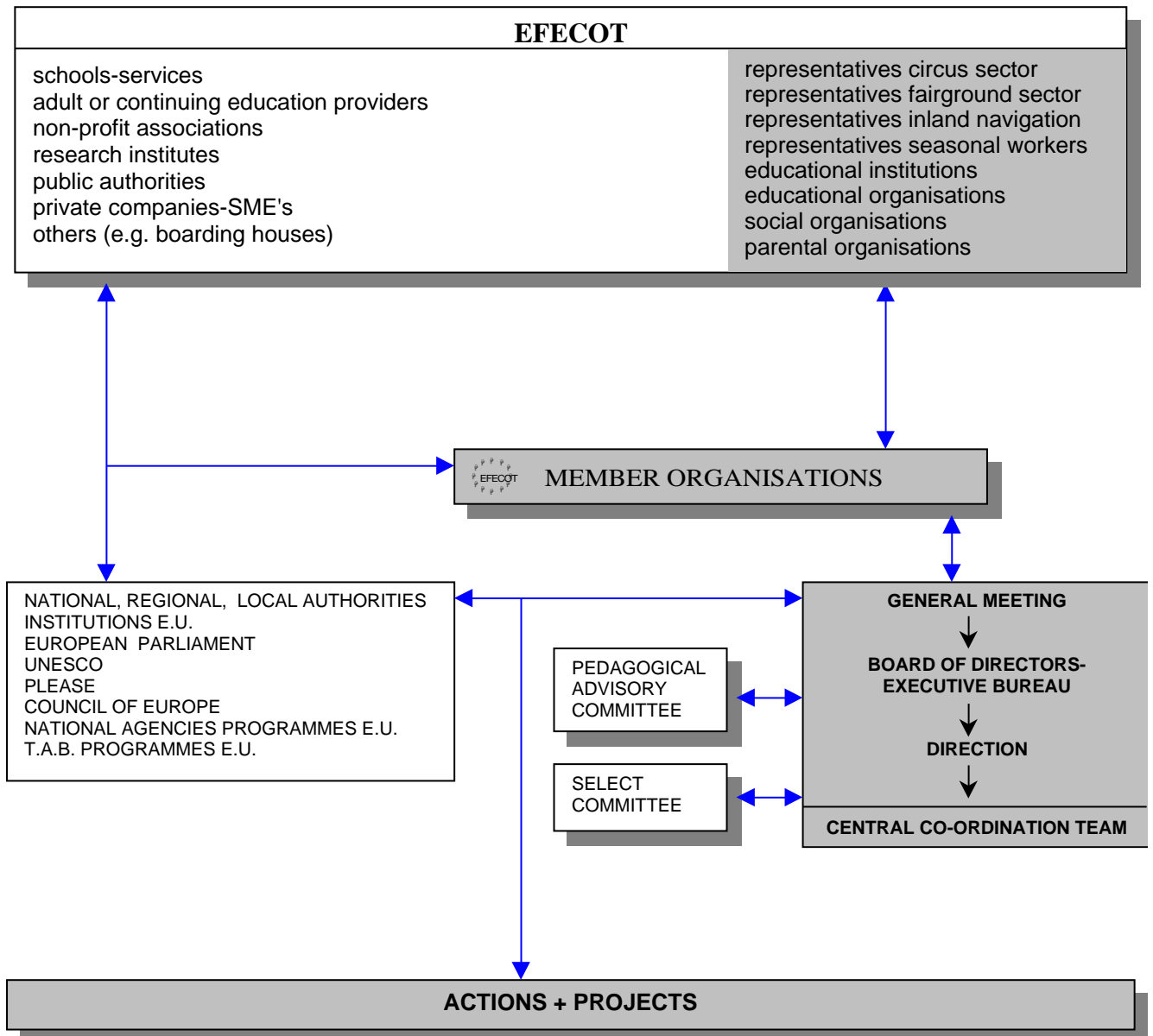
One of the major challenges which EFECOT now faces is to build on 10 successful years, and to find cost-effective ways of structuring management and activity which take account of the increased size, complexity and scope of its task.

The current EFECOT framework has evolved over a period of time and operates at a variety of levels. In one sense the broadest level incorporates the whole base of 2,500 contacts across Member States and other countries. At another level it includes the active network of partners which forms the core of actions and initiatives. Finally there is a more formal membership and management structure, serviced by a small central team which also has day to day responsibility for supporting the whole work programme.

Membership is drawn from organisations representing travelling communities and educational services, and there are currently 27 full members, drawn from six Member States. As the

following diagram (*Figure 2.1*) illustrates, the EFECOT Board can also draw on the expertise of a 'Pedagogical Advisory Committee' and a newly formed 'Select Committee' which currently consists of MEPs drawn from five countries. The Pedagogical Advisory Committee is concerned with praxis; in particular exploring theoretical insights and how they can be applied to work with travelling learners. The Select Committee is an important forum for dialogue through which the European Parliament can be kept informed about changing needs and circumstances.

## ORGANISATION OF THE ACTIVE NETWORK



*Figure 2.1*

## 2.6) A cautionary note

The strengths of this structure reflect the need **to maintain and develop a network** of partners and contacts, and **to support project-based activity** across Member States. However, it is appropriate to end this historical chapter on a cautionary note. As success has led to expansion, with new ideas and initiatives being taken on board, growth has tended to be action-orientated, incremental and over-dependent on funding for individual projects. This has meant incremental (de facto) changes to the original EFECOT objectives, and has led to a number of concerns about the balance of activities and about weaknesses within the structure; concerns which have been reinforced by the external evaluation exercise referred to in Chapter 1.

In particular, the policy sub group recognized the importance of balancing longer-term and broad-based developmental work, with initiatives which can be seen to respond to the more immediate and specific (sometimes nationally or even regionally coloured) needs and expectations of individual groups. In parallel with this the group recognized that EFECOT has been much more effective in supporting initiatives in some countries than in others.

The sub group also recognized that the current structure is no longer adequate, particularly at the executive level, and needs to be changed if the organization is to be both effective and efficient in addressing the needs of travelling learners.

These are all important issues which informed the decision to conduct the consultative survey exercise and to set aside time within the 1999 annual seminar to explore questions of effectiveness and scope (see Chapter 4), to work towards a new policy plan, and to build on the results of the evaluation exercise in order to consider the future role and structure of EFECOT as an organization (see Chapter 5).

# Chapter 3: the educational vision

Chapter 2 reflects on the historical development of EFECOT, as a prelude to discussion of the future. This chapter also sets a context for that discussion by outlining the vision that will inform future developments. The first part of the chapter is concerned with current priorities identified at a broad (European and global) level. This is effectively a backcloth for the second part, which is focused on the world of travelling learners.

## 3.1) A broad vision

Throughout the history of mankind, the emergence of new ideas has always influenced the way we live together. New perspectives have altered the way we look at things, profoundly affecting the provision and organisation of social structures, and have in recent times, more specifically, brought about far-reaching developments in our educational systems. In looking forward EFECOT has therefore set out to draw on recent thinking from both UNESCO and the European Commission. This brief overview is a necessary foundation for a vision based on shared goals and priorities, and is complemented by reference to another major educational theme which has become more central over the past decade, the role of parents.

In particular this document draws on relevant themes from three reports. The first is '**Learning: The Treasure Within**', published by UNESCO in 1996. The second is the European Commission publication '**Accomplishing Europe through education and training**' (1997). The final report, from the OECD, is entitled '**Parents as partners in schooling**' and was, again, published in 1997.

**The UNESCO report** looks forward to the new millenium and centres on the need for an approach which would enable every individual to realise the value and potential of life long learning. It also stresses that education is a common good and must be available to one and all, which is seen as another way of reaffirming that *equal opportunities must be ensured as regards all choices to be made*. The document advocates an approach that would draw together cognitive and applied themes and relate both to the development of society as a whole. From this perspective it argues for four pillars: *learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning*

*to live together*. Initial schooling is seen as having a vital role to play in broadcasting such positive shared values, and in encouraging creativity in a changing world.

From an EFECOT point of view, the UNESCO report is important for its humanitarian perspective. In particular it stresses the need to combat marginalisation and persistent inequality and to find new and more flexible routes into education, as well as putting more emphasis on schooling for disadvantaged groups and on developing non-formal training for young people who have left school too early.

The authors of the report also emphasise the socialising function of schooling, which must prepare children for an active role in society in a way which helps them grasp their own rights and responsibilities; balancing their own freedom with a respect for that of others. There must be a positive stance towards respecting the cultures and spiritual values of others, and a special effort made to support and affirm minority groups. To this end schools should be working actively with families and all those who make up their communities. Adult education and training should reinforce this ethos and should recognise the need for individuals to participate in flexible ways, which also allow for realistic access and for alternation between work and the classroom.

**The European Commission report** has a complementary emphasis, and is articulated around three main goals for education and training. These are (i) *developing individual autonomy*, (ii) *upholding students' potential to integrate into society* and (iii) *furthering their professional skills*. The study group which drew up the report was working within a European remit and also felt that changes to education and training ought to focus on four specific objectives: making European citizenship a reality, strengthening the competitiveness of Europe's firms in order to protect jobs, upholding social cohesion in Europe and making full use of the opportunities offered by the information society.

Again there are important themes for EFECOT as it develops a vision across the Member States. The concerns with citizenship echo UNESCO priorities about rights and responsibilities, the struggle against marginalisation and prejudice, and a positive appreciation of inter-cultural diversity in a world of rich differences. Similarly the discussion of social cohesion reflects the UNESCO concern with achieving truly accessible education systems, which take full account of the need for equality of opportunity. The study group argues for active affirmation and efforts

to stimulate young people to take their role as citizens more seriously and to learn the value of cultural differences as positive opportunities.

They also argue for a range of measures to respond to, and alleviate, inequalities, including those caused by marginalisation. Pre-school education should become standardised. There should be more flexibility within schools where children are not making satisfactory progress. Special measures need to be devised to encourage more adults into education and training for a "second bite of the cherry" where, for whatever reason, initial schooling has failed to meet their needs. These opportunities should be set within accessible life long learning structures. The report also argues for a solid start for young Europeans in terms of a range of key skills, and for extra targeted action to combat marginalisation; including pre-school and primary support methods outside school, and informal adult education systems.

The concern with European competitiveness also raises some interesting points for EFECOT in that it stresses the need to prepare children and students for a world of innovation and change. There needs to be a balance between generic skills and specific vocational training. This raises important questions about initial preparation for the (current) world of work, and the need for an emphasis on updating skills throughout life.

Finally, the report highlights the opportunities and challenges offered by new technologies (the information society), a theme which UNESCO has discussed in other publications. The study group notes far-reaching potential changes at a variety of levels, and there are two which are of perhaps most immediate relevance in the EFECOT context. The first is the potential to develop new models for formal education and training which complement traditional classroom-based approaches with computer-based 'virtual' options; options like on-line classrooms, libraries and conferencing spaces. The second is a potential shift in teaching/learning paradigms. Here the suggestion is that the focus will move away from imparting a body of knowledge, and towards more emphasis on individual and group learning using active skills for seeking out information (as required) and communicating with teachers, peers and experts as part of this process.

It is interesting to note that the values, ideas and priorities expressed in both reports are very similar to those which originally informed the creation of EFECOT as an organisation; although the opportunities created by new technologies, and the more central place given to life long

learning are new factors which these reports suggest need to be taken into account when formulating future policy.

In summary these two broad reports are a reminder of the vital role of education in a changing society, and continue to confirm the central importance of taking positive actions, and promoting flexibility, to combat educational disadvantage, including the disadvantage which has characterised travelling lifestyles. They continue to stress intercultural themes and the need to challenge prejudice. They continue to encourage full and responsible participation in society, and they endorse the right to opportunities to access all levels and types of education. The new emphasis on pre-school and adult learning is to be welcomed, and is already beginning to be reflected in EFECOT initiatives. Similarly developments in information and communication technology are already being explored and have implications for the future mission of EFECOT as an organisation.

Turning now to the OECD report '**Parents as partners in schooling**' (1997), it is important to note the increasing emergence of the parental role as an educational theme. The report suggests that this reflects three inter-related influences. First, parents increasingly want to be involved with their children's education; the European Parents' Association (EPA), for example, was formed in 1985 and now represents over 100 million parents. Second, there are concerns at national, governmental, levels with stimulating parental participation to improve democratic accountability and to raise standards; with a range of new statutory obligations in many countries. Finally, there is a growing recognition, based on evaluation and research, that the right kind of home, school and community partnerships have the potential to make education more effective.

The authors of the report base their discussion on a study of nine countries, as well as information from a broader survey, and identify the concept of *partnership* as a critical central issue. At a localised level they argue that partnership should be seen as a dynamic process, built on mutual respect between schools, teachers and parents, as they work together, share and learn from each other. At a wider level parental representation on, for example, regional or national bodies concerned with education must, again, be within a dynamic partnership ethos, with a common understanding of both rights and responsibilities. After considering a range of successful 'good practice', they note the importance of clear and systematic action to effect change; action which should include aspects of training for teachers and for parents.

From the EFECOT perspective, some of the key pointers in the report are concerned with parental support for learning at home and in the classroom, parental involvement with services providing schooling for (their own) children, and parental representation in decision making structures. In terms of support for learning, the report notes successful schemes which have not only broken down barriers between parents and schools, but have equipped parents with skills to enable them to become active partners by reinforcing learning in the home. Some of these schemes have also included aspects of life long learning for the parents themselves; including very successful 'Family Literacy' schemes. In terms of involvement and representation, the report acknowledges the particular problems faced by groups which are marginalised by the school system, and highlights the need for positive measures to encourage and support participation at both local and appropriate regional/national levels.

### **3.2) A vision for Traveller communities**

The Traveller communities with whom EFECOT is concerned have experienced social exclusion and marginalisation from mainstream society over generations as a result of the traditions, values, lifestyles, mobility, economic patterns and structures of their communities. With urbanization came compulsory mass schooling; the product of an era concerned with both philanthropy and the need to prepare children for roles in an increasingly industrialized society. This development, conceived for static populations, could only reinforce the sense of separateness for travelling communities as they faced the challenge of accomodating to legislation requiring their children to attend first elementary, and later secondary, schools on a regular basis.

As policy makers latterly came to understand more of the specific characteristics of a mobile lifestyle, and the general impact of marginalisation, there were some important localized initiatives for Occupational Travellers across Europe. In a sense the creation of, and continuing support for, EFECOT signalled a desire to consolidate, and build on, the progress which had been made. What is important **now** is the way in which changes at social, economic and legislative levels in the European Union are conspiring creatively with educational thinking to promote a new and positive emphasis. This is reflected in the defining documents discussed in the previous section, and is concerned with flexibility and effective inclusion. From this perspective it is important to reiterate the main educational challenges that travelling communities currently face, and to relate the future EFECOT mission to these specific challenges.

Most of the work of EFECOT has to date, focused on three main groupings; the Bargee, Circus and Fairground communities. However there have also been some developments involving seasonal workers and an overlap with other travelling communities. **The Bargee community** has very specific needs because children normally use boarding facilities, or stay with relatives, from the age of six; seeing parents at weekends and in the holidays. The major parental concerns are to prepare their toddlers for schooling, to be able to afford boarding fees, and to ensure that schools are sensitive to the needs of their children. In terms of preparation the most supportive structures have been berth schools along the main waterways, supplemented by visiting tutors. However, the decline in the industry, and the increased competition for work, has caused those families who have some employment to exploit the work that is available to the maximum. This often means families have to travel longer routes for longer periods. This results in intermittent attendance by toddlers at the berth schools. The declining numbers of families on the waterways is also generally reflected by the fast reducing number of toddlers. This is making the viability of some berth schools questionable, and new solutions are required to meet the need for effective support for the toddler group.

**The Fairground and Circus communities** face a different, and in some ways far greater, challenge because the vast majority of parents prefer their children to travel with the family throughout their schooling years. As the results of the recent survey confirm, parents value education (see Chapter 4). However access and continuity are major concerns in most European countries. Both communities travel for most, or all, of the year, moving from event to event. In some countries there is successful support from mobile schools, mobile classrooms or specialist tutors who visit sites, and this provision is at its best at the primary level. However, this support can be variable even within countries, and **most** European families face the difficult task of trying to link with a variety of ordinary local schools along their routes. Where families overwinter (typically from mid to late November through to the end of February or early March) children have the opportunity to attend a local 'base' school, which can give some continuity but cannot normally compensate fully for work missed during the long travelling season. These schools sometimes provide curriculum packs for the season, and self-study material is the other major response to the needs of the children. However tutor support for such distance learning activity is problematic, and even the most committed parents can find it difficult to provide assistance at the secondary level. Some parents also express concerns about the relevance of the secondary

curriculum, and the need to link this with 'Circus Arts', or vocational pathways that are relevant to the Fairground community (see, again, Chapter 4).

As noted above, some EFECOT initiatives have also concerned **seasonal workers** and there has also been some overlap with **other Travellers**, and it these groupings bring their own challenges.

For seasonal workers access to education and continuity are, again, difficult issues. The whole family often constitute a single mobile labour force which raises issues of child employment as well as their unmet rights to education. Families can also experience child care problems where all adults are expected to be engaged in seasonal work. Although there is some mobile or structured educational provision, and other voluntary or ad hoc arrangements are sometimes in evidence, there are often no schooling facilities at all for this group of children. The families have low status and little influence in attracting educational resources. For many families there is no expectation of educational opportunity for their children and much needs to be done to encourage them, as well as to provide more widespread and effective learning opportunities.

Other families which travel regularly for work purposes include groupings, like Gypsies, who are part of a travelling culture. Such groups are often part of the informal economy, and may be involved with, for example, reclamation work or trading in labour, services or goods. Where they don't have a recognized, or legal, place to stay they are frequently 'moved on' by public authorities or the police, and are particularly prone to prejudice and discrimination. This enforced movement means that children do not get the opportunity to attend school in a regular and systematic way even where parents value education (see Chapter 4). Providing for continuity of education can be complex in this atmosphere but essential for this most vulnerable group of youngsters. Where families are more settled they still experience hostility and social exclusion and their rejection is widespread. This means that they often require special measures, for example support from trusted outreach teachers in order to foster purposeful links between home and school.

Although each of these communities has its own culture and particular mobility patterns, they all share problems which can be seen to be related to **access, effective support and continuity**, so that where children continue to travel with their families they can all too easily become marginalised from ordinary schooling. They also face problems which range from **a lack of awareness and sensitivity to their lifestyles, through to open prejudice**. It is no surprise that

the available evidence across Europe shows continuing **low achievement and low qualification rates**. Mobile lifestyles have also restricted **learning opportunities for adults**, and this is another common source of concern for travelling communities, as it compounds earlier schooling experiences and means that adults cannot update skills or gain relevant vocational qualifications. These are some of the common threads which, together with **parental partnership** need to inform a policy based on the principles of flexibility and inclusion, and which need to build on experience and give a sense of urgency to EFECOT's future mission.

The other main building block, again based on experience, is an aspect of 'vision' which is more directly concerned with **learning as a process**. As noted in Chapter 2, EFECOT has a Pedagogical Advisory Committee and here the concern has been to encourage an active exploration of models and approaches which have direct relevance to travelling learners; for example to interrupted and distance learning and to intercultural themes.

Some of the key process issues which have been explored relate to motivation, learning styles, (creating and maintaining) active orientations to learning, transactional distance,<sup>10</sup> using contextualized experiences, ways of celebrating the strengths and skills of travelling learners,<sup>11</sup> creating supportive mechanisms and environments, raising intercultural awareness and promoting change.

The defining documents discussed in this chapter are a reminder of the continuing and pressing need for developmental activity to build on successful experience and expertise from the current EFECOT work programme, and to explore other ways of providing effective and cost-effective services for travelling learners. Initiatives are, for example, needed

- to test out the potential of new models of distance learning and new uses of technology
- to encourage partnership between parents, schools and decision makers
- to explore further ways of promoting mutual awareness and the celebration of cultural diversity
- to explore workable approaches to life long learning
- to inform and improve teacher competences

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<sup>10</sup> A key concept within distance education which focuses on the psychological/communication space between teacher and learner rather than physical separation.

<sup>11</sup> For example, the practical problem-solving orientation characteristic of traveller children.

At the same time there should be a concern to complement this activity by encouraging and speeding the transfer of existing models and elements of good practice in the provision and management of education for travelling learners at all levels. This must involve effective dissemination, but also raises questions about other ways in which EFECOT could use its expertise, and linkages, in order to support progress.

# Chapter 4: responses from the consultative exercise

As well as reviewing history, and considering a broad vision, members of the management sub-group felt it important to set up a two-phase consultation exercise, in order to test out their own thinking and its relationship to concerns and priorities within the EFECOT network, and to draw on insights from the special evaluation project that was part of the current EFECOT programme. This project, co-ordinated by The Centre for Intercultural Education (a unit within the University of Ghent, Belgium), was itself based on a consultative exercise with partners and had raised some important general issues about the scope and emphasis of the work of EFECOT which were parallel to some of the concerns of the sub-group.

The first phase of the consultative exercise was based on a survey intended:

- a) to help to assess current educational concerns within Traveller communities, and current priorities for those who are responsible for schooling provision
- b) to seek reactions to ideas for four specific new policy emphases (see below)
- c) to give respondents the opportunity to make their own suggestions about future objectives.

The survey was developed with support from the University of Sheffield (UK), and responses form the basis of the first part of this chapter (Sections 4.1 to 4.3).

The second phase of consultation centred on an international seminar/conference held in Paris, in October, 1999. This event was designed to enable participants to explore a number of more detailed issues related to policy and planning which had been raised by the evaluation project, to discuss the results of the survey, and to make final recommendations for the new EFECOT policy document. A brief resume of feedback from the conference is given in Section 4.4

## 4.1) A short introduction to the survey

The survey exercise was based on two separate questionnaires, each with some variations to take account of the different perspectives of those responding. The first was aimed at parents, individual members of Traveller communities and related trade organizations. The second was designed for teachers/schools, professional educational organizations which are in a position to influence policy, and ministries. As indicated above, the question areas were determined after discussion within the management sub-group and took account of issues raised within the evaluation project.

The exercise developed for the communities asked about current problems and issues in schooling, and about priorities for education, including the perceived importance of qualifications. The exercise for teachers, and those involved at a policy level, asked respondents to score priorities from a list which included the main current work programme headings; i.e. to comment on their relevance to individual respondents.

Both questionnaires then went on to explore key policy issues. These included broadening the scope of EFECOT objectives to make **'life long learning' more central**, and to cater for **other travelling groups together with other learners whose schooling is interrupted**. They also included the possibility of a **stronger structural focus on young (travelling) people**, and a policy strand which would **encourage more parental involvement in decision making**. Both questionnaires also gave scope to respondents to **make other suggestions** which should be considered as EFECOT reviewed its objectives.

The questionnaires were sent out through approximately 2,100 known contacts, and is not therefore a scientific survey. Altogether there were 171 community responses from nine countries, 146 school/teacher responses from ten countries and 81 organizational/ministry responses from fourteen countries.<sup>12</sup> Although this is not a random sample, trends appear to be fairly common across countries and categories, and are useful indicators. They are also consistent with other recent feedback from individual countries, including brief reports from Spain and Portugal. However, it does need to be born in mind that this is a glimpse of opinion which is very

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<sup>12</sup> There were over 50 responses which had followed group discussion, so the total number of views represented is over 400. (Another 40 responses were also received after the deadline for database entry. These were checked and found to be generally consistent with those which were analysed.)

dependent on the strengths of EFECOT linkages, and is therefore weighted towards countries where EFECOT has been most involved.

## 4.2) Policy issues

Section 4.2 uses feedback from the questionnaires to summarize issues raised by the responses.<sup>13</sup> There are seven subsections, covering community schooling concerns, reactions to the main headings of the current work programme, the four specific policy questions noted in Section 4.1, and new issues and ideas raised by respondents.

### 4.2.1 The communities and schooling (current concerns)

The survey of communities was sent out via schools and services which support Travellers. Responses came from the traditional Occupational groupings, but also from 'other' travelling communities because many schools and services support a variety of travelling learners. The majority of 'other' Travellers were Gypsy families from the UK.

Traveller community	Parental responses	Responses from organisations
<b>Bargee</b>	11	7
<b>Circus</b>	15	4
<b>Fairground</b>	71	14
<b>'Other'</b>	45	
<b>TOTAL</b>	142*	25**

*Table 4.1: Community Responses*

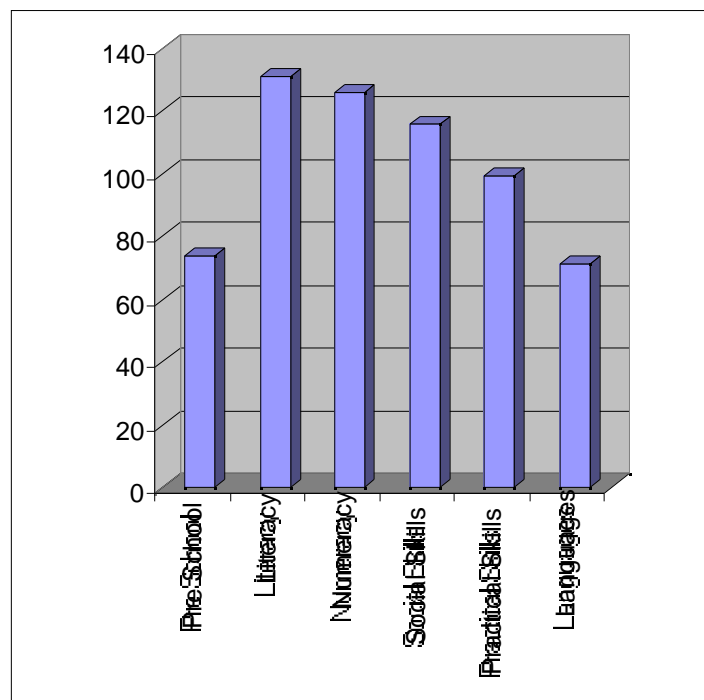
*\*6 respondents did not indicate their community*

*\*\*2 organisations represent both Circus and Fairground interests in their respective countries.*

The responses indicate that there are good and 'aware' localized or mobile **primary** facilities in some countries. However in **most countries there is continuing evidence of worrying deficiencies at this level**, particularly when families are travelling; with a lack of provision, a lack of sensitivity to lifestyles, inadequate follow up and too much variability. Where boarding provision is used there are concerns about cost, and increasing problems with maintaining contact at weekends.

**At secondary level the majority of families who don't use boarding facilities clearly face a dilemma.** They value qualifications. However, it is difficult to motivate secondary pupils who see their place in the community as 'young adults' rather than at school. It can also be equally difficult to find sensitive school environments. This problem is felt by some to be exacerbated by the lack of appropriate vocational opportunities at secondary level. Where children travel with their families their lifestyle is a further significant factor, as it doesn't normally allow sufficient face-to-face supportive contact and feedback to cover the specialized requirements of the secondary curriculum.

The survey also asked parents about priorities for schooling, and *Figure 4.1* shows an aggregated pattern of relative priorities. These indicate a strong commitment to literacy and numeracy across all communities, but with a balanced commitment to other areas. There are indications of some variations between countries and communities, and of mixed feelings about languages (particularly in the UK), and about pre-school opportunities. Parents were asked to list other priorities for their children, and 'Computing', 'broadening inter-cultural knowledge/horizons' and appropriate vocational options were also common themes.



*Figure 4.1: Parental priorities*

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<sup>13</sup> The full report of the survey exercise is available as a separate document from EFECOT

Looking back to the original surveys carried out on behalf of the European Union (1987/1988) the issues and patterns are very similar, and also reflect the discussion in Chapter 3 of this document. The main difference is that there is now a wealth of good practice to draw on at primary level. However secondary education remains a challenge, and this survey suggests that further developmental work could usefully be targeted in this area.<sup>14</sup>

#### **4.2.2 Views on the current work programme**

The surveys of teachers/schools, organizations with potential to be involved at a policy level, and ministries was sent out via the EFECOT network and the number of responses is shown in Table 4.2.

<b>Organizational level</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>
<b>Schools and Services</b>	146
<b>Policy influence/formation</b>	63
<b>Ministries</b>	18 (+1)*
<b>TOTAL</b>	227 (+1)*

*Table 4.2: Organizational responses*

*\*Finland sent a note explaining that they had no Travellers "in the sense that other countries do", and therefore did not complete the questionnaire*

The questionnaire sought feedback about the relevance of the main themes of the current EFECOT work programme. It listed seven types of initiative which have featured within recent years and asked respondents to give them a score between '0' (not at all useful to the respondent's institution) and '5' (very useful indeed). The seven were:

- Producing learning materials
- Developing progress and follow up records
- Involving and supporting parents in the learning process
- Improving tutor support for guided distance learning
- Making use of New Technology

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<sup>14</sup> See also the views of practitioners in the following section.

- Improving and supporting boarding school provision
- Raising teacher awareness of Traveller needs.

The following figure (Figure 4.2) shows practitioner (school/service) responses. It indicates the number of top scores (score '5'), supplemented by the number of respondents choosing positively ('3' or '4').

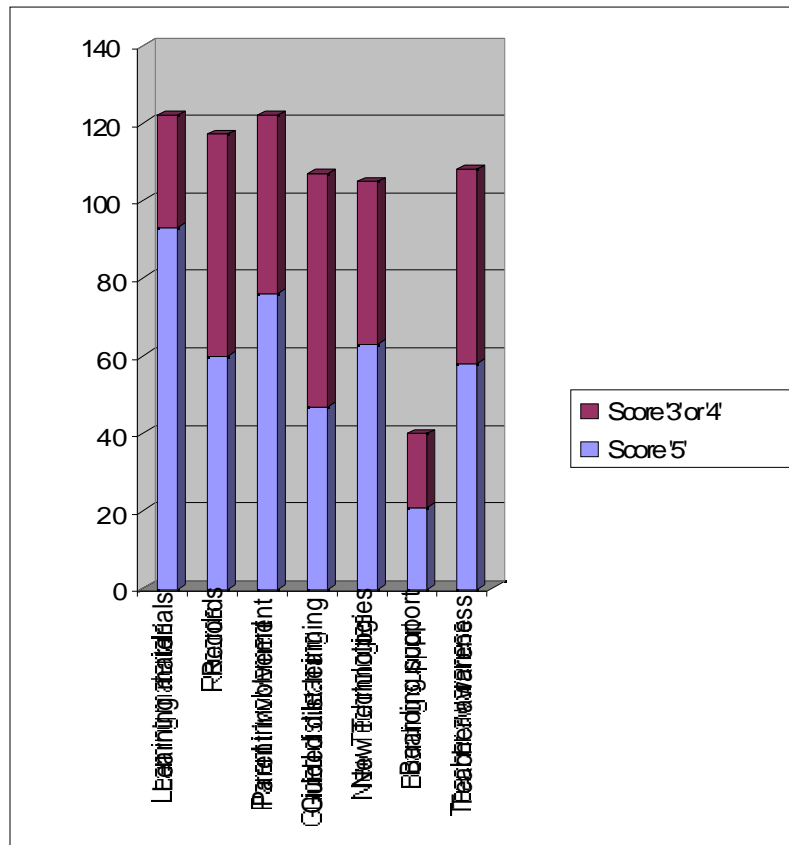


Figure 4.2: Positive relevance scores (146 school/service respondents).

There was a great deal of variability in individual scoring. However, the aggregated results are clearly positive in that they show a high perceived relevance for all types of initiative across most institutions, except boarding support where prioritization was much more country specific with most positive responses coming from Germany and the Netherlands, as well as Hungary. Results from organizations involved at a policy level, and ministries, showed a similar and strong pattern.

Suggestions for other developmental areas included a number of individual ideas which were variations of the current work programme, but also some new themes and emphases:

- Secondary education: initiatives to improve participation and pupil support, and to explore alternative models for the curriculum (including the whole area of relevant vocational qualifications and apprenticeship models).
- More emphasis on family-based approaches (family literacy and the joint pursuit of practical skills were suggested).
- Community development initiatives (related to education) to strengthen the skills of individuals and groups.
- A new dimension to 'teacher awareness' including the possibilities offered by guided distance learning, and new technologies, in supporting travelling learners. (There was a related suggestion that EFECOT should deliver specific training to groups of teachers, as well as bringing them together to share experience in these areas)

#### ***4.2.3 Life long learning***

Similar proportions of Traveller respondents, approximately 75% from each community, felt that there should be more opportunities for adult education, although respondents from the Circus community were much more likely to comment that, in reality, they had little time to pursue courses. Over 80% of the representative trade organisations also supported this objective.

There was an amazing variety of suggestions for courses but 'Computing' and 'Business studies'/'Book-keeping' came out as common favourites, followed by 'Welding'. Adult literacy provision was also a popular demand in the UK, and 'Foreign languages' amongst the Netherlands Fairground population.

The suggestion that EFECOT should give more priority to adult education was also made to practitioners, policy organizations and ministries, and approximately 80% of the responses from each survey were positive, with 8% negative (the rest were neutral). However it was interesting to note there were several cautionary notes about the need for adequate additional resourcing. Positive remarks echo the discussion of Chapter 3 and focused on the importance of second chances for adults to "combat earlier disadvantage", and to meet their personal and business needs. They also highlighted the knock-on effect of engaging parents in education. "Encourage adults and they will support children better".

The small number of negative comments were mainly concerned with a dilution of the EFECOT focus; the organization should "stick to children", and should "get this right first".

#### ***4.2.4 Working with other travelling learners and children whose schooling is interrupted***

The vast majority (92%) of responses from Occupational Traveller communities were very supportive of the suggestion that EFECOT should **share its expertise with other groups**.<sup>15</sup>

Where they had benefited they felt it was right to share. The small number of exceptions were concerned about a loss of focus on work with Occupational Travellers (with still a long way to go to get things right), and a corresponding loss of resources. However, one parent noted that such a move could raise the profile of EFECOT and draw in more resources.

Responses from the practitioner/policy perspective also show a positive response, with some 75% in favour. However approximately 10% were negative. Most comment was focused on the inclusion of Gypsies and other travelling learners. Positive remarks again emphasized the importance of sharing experience where it would help other, similarly disadvantaged children, and the importance of promoting integration as well as combating all forms of exclusion. Co-ordinated activity could also create "more voice for the target group in our society", and help to establish a "commercial 'critical mass' for developments". However, some respondents added cautionary provisos about resourcing and, although supportive in principle, didn't want to see the work of EFECOT "spread too thin".

Negative comments raised some important points. There were "risks of overshadowing the interests of ...(EFECOT's original)...target group", and of "watering down the EFECOT profile". It would be "difficult for the travelling communities to work together", and this move could affect credibility in "working with Circus and Fairground families".

#### ***4.2.5 Parental involvement in decision making***

Approximately two thirds of parents across all communities indicated that they would like to have 'more say' in their children's education, with a rather lower figure (44%) in the Netherlands. Dutch parents were more likely to make statements indicating that they felt they were adequately represented, or that services were satisfactory. However, it should be noted that these positive comments referred to primary, rather than secondary, schooling. Parents who wanted more of a

voice, and representative organizations, mainly made comments along the lines of wanting providers to be more aware of their particular needs, cultures and circumstances, or about improving provision.

Practitioners also generally welcomed this emphasis (83% of responses were positive), as did policy level organizations (82%) and ministries (71%). There were just 7 negative responses across all three surveys.

Positive responses welcomed a move towards what several respondents referred to as "partnership" (c.f. the discussion in Chapter 3). "Working in real partnership (=power sharing) with parents is the most effective way", and would also "improve self-esteem" as well as "raising the profile of education within travelling families". There were also suggestions for parents' councils and conferences. Other comments were more cautious seeing this as a positive but challenging area. As one respondent put it, "not all parents would be at ease", or another, "there are cultural and linguistic barriers". Some advocated building on a developmental approach similar to the emphasis within EFECOT's current programme; involving parents in their own children's education first, and then linking this to an adult education focus on "understanding and supporting your child".

Negative comments highlighted the limited nature of the communities in terms of size, particularly in a school context. It was difficult for individual schools to give special recognition to what were often very small numbers of itinerant families, and this was exacerbated by the practical problems of involving parents who were only in touch with school for a part of the year. Two responses also questioned the need for (any) parents to be involved in "active decision making".

#### ***4.2.6 Involving young Travellers (18 Plus)***

Community-based respondents were asked about ways of involving young people, with a focus on their needs and issues which were important to them. Ideas were generally imaginative and included making good use of trade organisations, social/discussion events when young people or communities were together (e.g. in the winter, or for special events). There was also a forward looking strand which involved having a WWW site with a 'chat' space, or more general use of

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<sup>15</sup> There were 83 responses from the 97 returns from these communities

the internet. However, there was also a cautionary note. This age group had their own particular interests, and young parents might be more likely to come together in constructive and focused ways.

Practitioners, policy organisations and ministries were asked a more specific question about the perceived value of involving more young people in EFECOT structures and initiatives. 85% of practitioner responses, 80% of policy level responses and 69% of ministry responses were positive. Suggestions included practical ideas like "a forum for 18+ youngsters to speak to teachers about their experiences", creating something with a "youth/social club emphasis" and events such as new technology workshops. However there was a fairly common view that this was a difficult area and a challenging age group (c.f. comments from the community)

Negative responses questioned the necessity of such a structure, and remarked that the EFECOT focus should be firmly on schooling and education.

#### ***4.2.7 Other pointers from the survey***

Respondents to both questionnaires were also asked if there were other considerations which EFECOT should take into account in reviewing policy. There were a number of individual suggestions that were mainly variations of current EFECOT priorities, but by far the most common response involved a new dimension to activity.

More help was needed to raise awareness within individual countries, and allied to this there is thought to be an important role for EFECOT in supporting regional and national efforts to improve resourcing and establish effective services. (This important effectiveness issue had also been picked up independently within the evaluation initiative, but was not included as a specific area for comment within the questionnaire.) Some respondents also felt that there was a possible role for EFECOT in helping to assess regional/national needs and provision, and in monitoring progress, as well as a unique role in focusing on transnational co-ordination. Another related suggestion was that EFECOT should be able to commission "research regarding needs".

### 4.3) A summary of key findings

The survey exercise was a confirmation of the understanding that EFECOT has built up over the years about the issues and concerns facing travelling learners. It was also a confirmation of the continuing relevance of the current work programme. This was an important foundation on which to build, and respondents generally endorsed the four changes in scope/emphasis that could be part of future building blocks. On the whole reservations about changes in scope were about adequate resourcing, and about the loss of a clear and distinctive image related to children and to the Occupational communities.

Another major practical concern expressed by respondents was that it would be difficult to motivate young adults into a more structured involvement. This was accompanied by an interesting suggestion which changed the involvement focus to young parents. The move towards 'partnership' was also seen as challenging, and there were interesting overlaps with suggestions that focused on (a) family-based approaches and (b) more community development (in order to strengthen the skills of individuals and groups) within the work programme.

The strongest new themes to emerge (in terms of commonality) were **concerns for secondary level education** and **calls for a focus on EFECOT support to promote more effective and systematic progress within countries**. The first suggested a possible new emphasis within the work programme. However, the second was more radical and has potential implications for the future role of EFECOT, as did the suggestions relating to the direct servicing of teacher training initiatives.

### 4.4) Feedback from the conference

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, the questionnaire exercise was followed by a special international conference designed to allow participants to respond to the results of the survey, but also to explore a number of more detailed themes identified within the evaluation project. These included a more detailed look at priorities and objectives, the structure of EFECOT as an organisation, and linkage between EFECOT and its broader network of communities, practitioners and those involved at a policy level.

A full report of conference proceedings is available from EFECOT. For the purposes of this document it is important to record that, in broad terms, the conference response to the survey was to endorse suggested changes of scope and emphasis and to confirm the focus on *young parents* rather than *young adults per se*. The new emphases can be summarized as:

- *work with adults within a life long learning rationale*
- *sharing successful experience with other Traveller communities*
- *a focus on parents as partners, and parental involvement at all levels.*

There was also a confirmation of the need for a renewed focus on *secondary education*, but other developmental ideas, such as family-based approaches and community development, received a mixed welcome from participants, with some concerns that more clarification and exploratory work were needed.

Finally, suggestions that *EFECOT should offer targeted support within individual countries received clear and strong endorsement, as did the recommendation that EFECOT should focus particular attention on transnational matters which impacted on travelling learners.*

The conference also gave scope to discuss a number of issues in more detail, through an interactive exercise designed and led by the evaluation project. Again in broad terms, the session identified the need for EFECOT *to continue to update its information/research base, and to develop specific objectives, and a work programme, based on such grounded knowledge.* It was also felt to be important *to tailor dissemination and supportive involvement within individual countries; with one particular emphasis being the needs of Southern and Eastern Europe, and another being teacher training.*

The session also highlighted concerns about aspects of co-ordination and balance within the current work programme, and led to suggestions that EFECOT *should focus attention on fewer (broad, long-term) projects, and should support partners in developing initiatives to respond to the more immediate needs of Traveller communities.* The discussion also confirmed what were seen as inherent weaknesses within EFECOT as it has evolved as an organisation, as well as the importance of developing a structure to strengthen links across Member States. EFECOT *needed*

*a firmer base for its activities, and a more transparent presence within individual countries where it should encourage national initiatives to exchange ideas and information and, as necessary, to challenge both governmental policies and schooling practices.* These are all issues which can be seen as central to future planning, and the recommendations made from the conference played an important part in the final proposals as outlined in the following chapter.

# Chapter 5: Policy and practice

This final chapter of the EFECOT planning document is the outcome of a process which has involved a historical review (Chapter 2), a discussion of the underlying vision which will inform the continuing work of EFECOT (Chapter 3), and the consultative exercises undertaken with support from the University of Sheffield and the Centre for Intercultural Education (University of Ghent).

The sub group of the management committee responsible for the new policy plan would wish to begin by setting out four basic principles which will inform EFECOT development for the new millenium:

- *The work of EFECOT must remain firmly grounded in understanding and responding to the changing needs of individual Traveller communities across Member States and partner countries.*

- *The work programme and other EFECOT activities, developed as a response to such needs, must be seen to be effective in improving services for Traveller learners. Effectiveness must be checked by systematic evaluation so that EFECOT can be accountable to the communities.*

- *Processes and structures within EFECOT must provide both effective and efficient means for supporting its activities.*

*The work of EFECOT will continue to be inclusive, and will at all times uphold the rights of Traveller learners to access education. It will, where necessary, challenge institutional discrimination and prejudice.*

With these four basic principles as a backcloth, the remainder of the chapter is divided into four sections. The first sets out strategic objectives and priorities for the period 2000-2007. The second looks at the processes necessary to translate these objectives and priorities into effective and assessable actions. The third focuses on necessary structures within EFECOT, and the final section summarizes the main themes of this chapter by defining a new mission statement. It also stresses the need to review priorities over time, and to be flexible in the light of changing needs and circumstances.

## 5.1) Strategic priorities and objectives 2000-2007

This section is divided into six subsections, each covering a dimension of strategic planning.

### *5.1.1 The scope of the work of EFECOT*

EFECOT will maintain its central focus on the needs of the **children of families who are mobile as a consequence of their trade or profession**. However, new initiatives will be introduced which recognize the importance of **promoting flexible learning opportunities for adults**, of **sharing experience with all Traveller communities**, and of **parental involvement in decision-making processes**.

### *5.1.2 Grounding the work of EFECOT*

In recognizing that it is essential to anchor the work of EFECOT in an understanding of real and changing needs:

- a) EFECOT will continue to seek to strengthen its links with Traveller communities across individual Member States and partner countries. This implies developing increasingly effective structures and approaches (including appropriate research) in order to 'listen and learn', and to strengthen dialogue with parents and representative organizations.
- b) EFECOT will, similarly, seek to strengthen its network of links with schools, teachers, other professionals who support Traveller learners, teacher training institutions and education ministries. Again this implies the need for suitable structures so that EFECOT can be fully aware of the needs and concerns of providers.

c) EFECOT will also continue and strengthen encouragement and support for active national and international dialogue between the communities, practitioners and policy makers at all levels; believing that this synthesis is an essential part of identifying and stimulating effective action for change.

### ***5.1.3 An effective and assessable work programme***

EFECOT will build on the successful outcomes of previous projects, and will also develop and/or encourage new thematic actions which relate directly to an understanding of changing needs and opportunities. All projects will have clear objectives, and terms of reference which include the systematic planning of dissemination and evaluation (see Section 5.2).

Thematic actions will include initiatives aimed at deepening understanding of the changing needs of Travellers. They will continue to centre on the testing out of models, methods and materials which can help to improve structures, learning and recording processes, and relevant competencies. They will also seek to strengthen the role and impact of national and international networks (see next subsection). They will draw on appropriate research and practitioner expertise, and will be developed in a context which emphasizes intercultural awareness, is inclusive, and, where necessary, challenges discrimination and prejudice.

Evolving work programmes as a whole will also be open to systematic evaluation (again see Section 5.2). They will be designed to balance broad, longer-term, developments directly co-ordinated by EFECOT, with initiatives responding to the more immediate needs of specific communities, which may be co-ordinated by partners with appropriate EFECOT support (See Section 5.3). The programme will, as noted above, include a focus on strengthening network activity.

The initial work programme for the year 2000 will take account of the need for coordination and balance, and will build on previous outcomes of a programme<sup>16</sup> which has been confirmed by the consultative exercise to be covering what continue to be important priorities. It will also take particular account of themes specifically identified and endorsed within the consultative exercises, namely:

*Secondary education*

*Adult learning opportunities*

*Parental involvement (including involvement in decision making)*

*Sharing experience with other Traveller communities*

#### **5.1.4 Other activity: challenge and change**

EFECOT will continue and strengthen its central role in dissemination, in sharing expertise, and in the provision of services to support Traveller learners. However, the consultation exercise reported in Chapter 4 also identified a clear call that EFECOT should be making full use of its expertise to encourage specific service improvement for individual communities and within individual regions and countries. EFECOT will therefore:

- a) Seek to strengthen its network and linkages in a systematic way, which takes account of this community/geographical requirement, and includes projects aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of both national and international networks.
- b) Explore ways of encouraging and actively supporting initiatives within individual Member States, and partner countries, that are aimed at improvements in policy or practice
- c) Ensure that this role (which may, for example, include consultancy or advocacy) is reflected as a distinctive but integral part of EFECOT processes and structures (see Sections 5.2 and 5.3)

#### **5.1.5 The transnational focus**

Another recommendation from the consultative exercise was that EFECOT should be proactive in strengthening its transnational role. EFECOT will therefore seek to encourage both formal and informal cooperation and coordination between policy makers and practitioners across Member States, and partner countries, to take account of increasing cross-border mobility and the need for European measures.

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<sup>16</sup> Current thematic headings are detailed in Chapter 2

### **5.1.6 Resourcing**

EFECOT has a responsibility to be active in identifying opportunities provided by the European Union's education programmes, and those of other national, European or international bodies, to further the improvement of education for Traveller learners. In particular

- a) EFECOT will at all times seek purposeful liaison, communication and action with such bodies
  
- b) EFECOT will seek to utilize those opportunities within its remit and objectives, and will disseminate appropriate information to organizations within its network so that they can also explore and use opportunities within a coordinated and supportive framework.

## **5.2) Strategic implementation processes**

As well as reviewing priorities, the strategic planning exercise has provided an important opportunity for EFECOT to step back and look at the procedures through which its policies are implemented. This section focuses on **process** and draws particularly on the evaluative consultations co-ordinated by the Centre for Intercultural Education (University of Ghent). These have drawn attention to strengths and weaknesses within the practices which have evolved over the past ten years, and have highlighted the need for a movement towards clearer, and more structured, approaches and methods within the organisation. Improved processes are recommended to underpin the **systematic development of work programmes, systematic planning within projects, evaluation, dissemination, and actions to bring about effective changes within and across countries by consolidating and supporting both national and transnational networks.**

The underlying principles involve:

*The design and implementation of coherent work programmes, which avoid unnecessary overlap but enhance synergy between projects and make creative cross links.*

*The incorporation of evaluation and dissemination processes as an integral and ongoing part of project planning and related EFECOT working practices.*

*The development and maintenance of effective national and transnational networks..*

The following subsections centre, respectively, on overall workplan development, project planning, evaluation and, finally, dissemination.

### ***5.2.1 A balanced work programme***

The current EFECOT work programme consists of a series of projects pursuing a variety of initiatives to develop materials, methods, models and approaches, which have the potential to improve services for Traveller learners. The survey exercise confirmed the continuing relevance of the current themes within the programme, and, indeed, added some new priorities for consideration. Clearly choices will need to be made, and priorities set over a period of time. Such choices will need to avoid unnecessary overlap whilst enhancing synergy between different themes and actions.

In this sense, the challenge of developing a coherent work programme is unchanged. However, the consultation exercises have also suggested radical changes, and a new definition of ‘balance’, by identifying the requirement for new types of project aimed at (a) consolidating the foundation of knowledge and understanding upon which EFECOT should build, (b) applying successful and proven EFECOT experience to targeted contexts, and (c) exploring the effective use of networks to promote and implement service improvements.

Taking account of these important new ideas, which are all concerned to improve effectiveness, the following classification of projects is recommended.

- **Research and Development (R&D) projects** intended to pursue both formal and informal research processes to strengthen understanding, and pursue longer term development themes related to new ways of providing services and promoting change.
- **Application (Ap) projects** which will set out to explore the application of successful outcomes and proven practices in new and specific contexts. This includes the adaptation of established methods and approaches to fit the needs of particular countries and/or communities, and also the sharing of successful experience with practitioners, and through teacher training.
- **Network (N) projects** intended to establish, consolidate, and improve the effectiveness of networks of partners within and across Member States and partner countries, as they seek to have an impact on educational provision for Traveller learners.

Within this classification, the current EFECOT programme is a mixture of ‘Development’ and, to a lesser extent, ‘Application’ projects, and the new balance is essentially about grounding the work of EFECOT, and its partners, in an evolving knowledge base, as well as strengthening the role of networks in influencing decision-making processes.

The importance of grounding is self-evident. EFECOT will seek to strengthen activities aimed at establishing an accurate profile of the changing needs of Traveller communities, and, where appropriate, activities designed to draw on relevant pedagogical and intercultural theory. Such grounding can inform systematic choices within strategic objectives, and will also help to identify causal hypotheses (see below).

The new emphasis on networking is, of course, a different kind of challenge, which will allow EFECOT to target efforts to promote support within individual countries, and strengthen its role across Europe. The scope and nature of support will vary from country to country; but with a particular emphasis on Southern and Eastern European countries. The other dimension of this work will be the creation of clear linkages between EFECOT and national networks, and the formal establishment of a ‘European Consultative Group’ which can share experience between countries and provide a forum for transnational issues affecting Traveller learners (see Section 5.3).

The new emphases on grounding and networking will complement the traditional focus of the work programme, and the new balance in the overall approach is designed to allow synergy and creative sharing across different types of project.

### ***5.2.2 Project planning and evaluation***

The previous section centered on the development of a balanced work programme. This section focuses on planning **within individual projects**, and builds on current practices within EFECOT, which ensure that each project has an identified ‘manager’ who is required to work within an agreed set of guidelines.<sup>17</sup>

Within the new, strengthened, proposals the partners for each project will work within the vision and aims of the initiative, to identify hypotheses. These hypotheses will centre on the ‘causes’ of the problem they are addressing (which will relate to the needs of the target groups), and to the ‘intervention’ they will explore and implement. This approach is intended to facilitate and incorporate systematic evaluation, and partners will be asked to use their hypotheses to develop appropriate detailed objectives and evaluation criteria which also take account of the any guidance from funding bodies. Objectives will be required to be within the ‘SMART’ rationale; Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-constrained. Evaluation criteria are illustrated in Figure 5.1. They will be related to actions and outcomes within a clear (pre-designed) framework, and will be, as appropriate, both qualitative and quantitative. Descriptive recording will also be part of the evaluation process

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<sup>17</sup> The document is available from EFECOT and is entitled ‘EFECOT Guidelines for Project Management’

## **PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA**

### **For content**

- Were the desired outcomes attained and attributable to the project?
- Was this action an efficient alternative?
- Which parts of the programme worked well and which needed improvement?
- How effective was the programme with respect to organizational goals and to the needs of the target group(s)?
- How did the different stakeholders (including users from the target group(s)) experience the programme?
- Did the programme challenge structural inequities?

### **For process**

- Did the project establish a collaborative relationship with all (potential) partners?
- How were user groups involved in the project?
- Was it possible to plan and solve problems using valid information?
- Did the participants establish lasting solutions to the problems encountered?
- Did the project address the human dimension of the challenge of change (and not just the technical objectives)?
- Did the programme generate sufficient commitment to underpin future implementation?
- Did participants produce a suitable summary report, with transferable findings and recommendations on process and content?

## **EVALUATION METHODS**

**How did the project set about obtaining valid data?** (*Interviewing, questionnaires, organizational analysis, observation, participant observation, data analysis,.....*)

*Figure 5.1: Evaluation criteria and methodology*

As can be seen from the brief overview given in the previous paragraph, planning and evaluation are part of an integrated approach. Each project will begin the necessary processes through a kick-off meeting, which will also agree timing, determine tasks and roles, establish a dissemination plan, and undertake a risk analysis. Subsequent review meetings will give the opportunity to update and modify planning within the parameters of the original workplan.

The new recommendations are a sharpening of processes which have recently become established within EFECOT. However a new dimension of evaluative accountability has also been established, which will involve perspectives external to individual projects. Each project will be required to have a contracting meeting, which follows an agreed protocol, with representatives of the new 'Standing Committee for Policy, Review and Development' (See Section 5.3) and/or the 'European Consultative Group'. Representation will depend on the nature of the project, and projects will also be expected to provide intermediate feedback as well as coming together for a final project meeting at which there will be a thorough analysis of results and outcomes, again

within an agreed protocol. The new processes described in this paragraph will be set out and amplified in an updated version of the project management guidelines.

### **5.2.3 Dissemination**

Dissemination has been taking an increasingly prominent place within projects and within EFECOT as a whole. Sharing good practice is a fundamental role for the organisation and, for the future, the emphasis needs to be on building upon the best aspects of existing mechanisms, and broadening the scope of dissemination to reach an ever-increasing audience.

As noted in the previous sub-section, dissemination is now built into project planning. Central EFECOT services also support a documentation centre, 'Newslines' and 'Newsflash', use of the federation Website, and the new 'EDULINA' initiative<sup>18</sup> which will promote product outcomes, and publications and services relating to product outcomes, from EFECOT projects and actions.

It is recommended that current practice is consolidated within a clear structure and becomes part of the core work of the Central Team (See Section 5.3). It is further recommended that the work is elaborated to:

- improve the organisation of the documentation centre with a clear and transparent classification system
- supplement 'Newslines' and 'Newsflash' with targeted dissemination of experience and good practice (a) in particular countries, (b) within publications produced by the Traveller communities themselves, and (c) within publications produced for teachers and practitioners.
- optimise the dissemination of information through new technologies (on line newsletters, enhanced use of the EFECOT Website, etc.)
- promote 'EDULINA' products and services by publicising and targeting to a broad audience, including all those concerned with provision for Traveller communities, and for those affected by interrupted learning

It is also recommended that dissemination is targeted and tailored for different types of project. Research and development projects need additional efforts to share results via scientific and

pedagogical journals, as well as at in-depth thematic conferences and events. Application projects need appropriate dissemination targeted to particular communities and countries; again including events as well as written materials. Network projects need forums for discussion which can share experience within and between countries, and which encourage the value of networking as a means of putting the needs of Travellers more firmly on the agenda of all Member States.

### 5.3) EFECOT structures

The structural changes needed to help facilitate the new strategic objectives, and implementation processes, form the basis of this third section of the final chapter. The section is divided into three parts. The first centres on the committee/management level. The second focuses on the EFECOT network, and the third is concerned with the EFECOT central team, which is at the hub of supportive activity, and on a recommended new model for work programme development.

#### *5.3.1 Management and membership*

At this level, the major implications of the changes described earlier in this chapter are seen by the sub group as follows:

- (i) There is a need for continuing **efforts to increase formal EFECOT membership**, with the emphasis on a proactive approach to organizations representing communities, and/or within countries, where membership is currently relatively sparse. This includes the countries of Southern and Eastern Europe.
- (ii) A '**European Consultative Group**' should be established, open to all Member States and partner countries, which will form the basis of a structure linking EFECOT to developments within individual countries, and will also act as a forum for identifying and pursuing transnational issues.
- (iii) A **Standing Committee** should be established by the Board of Directors, with a remit **which focuses on policy implementation, review and development**, and which can draw on independent (external) expertise.

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<sup>18</sup> This is an independent, non profit-making, organisation founded in September, 1999.

The first two of these recommendations are intended to strengthen communication, informed supportive activity, and targeted development. They are a direct response to the concerns which emerged from the consultation exercises. The third recommendation is an acknowledgement of the importance of monitoring implementation.

### **5.3.2 The EFECOT network**

The focus on new membership will be complemented by **efforts to increase the number of partner organizations**; with priority again given to communities and/or countries which are currently under-represented, including new Member States and the countries of Southern and Eastern Europe.

The other challenge identified by the consultation exercise is **to develop structures within individual countries**, in order to encourage co-ordinated efforts, effective targeting of resources and shared dissemination of experience at national level. This is a new development for EFECOT, which will explore current good practice in some Member States, and draw on expertise from (the newly established) 'European Consultative Forum' in order to encourage suitable structures to match the needs and realities of different countries. The new organizational recommendations, as described in subsections *5.3.1 and 5.3.2*, are illustrated in *Figure 5.2*

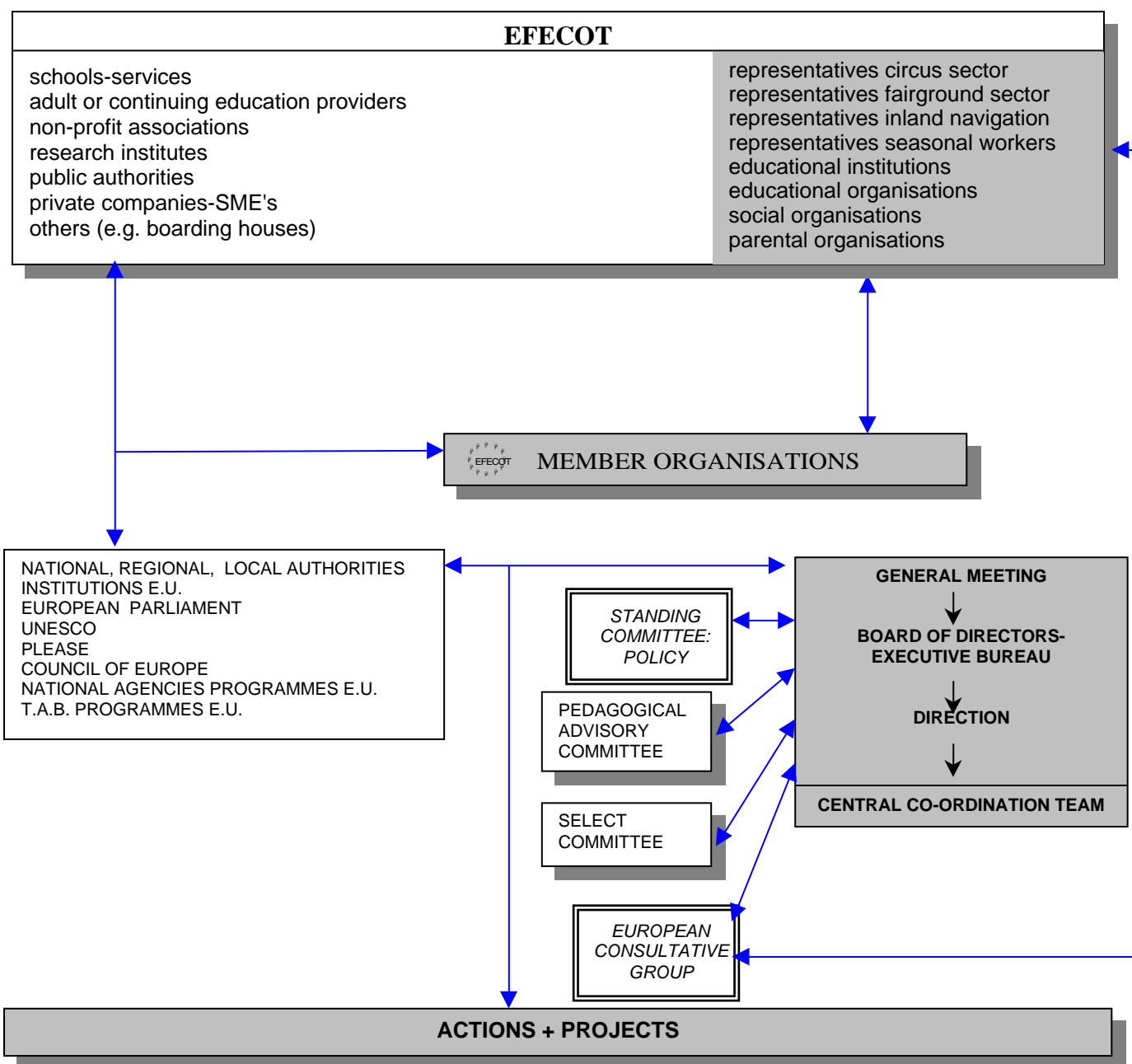


Figure 5.2: A new organizational structure

### 5.3.3 EFECOT work programme co-ordination

As well as focusing attention on processes, the evaluation exercise helped to identify weaknesses in the structures supporting the work programme, which are, as noted in Chapter 2, the result of growth which has been action-orientated, incremental and over-dependent on funding for individual projects. The current situation is illustrated in Figure 5.3, which shows a shallow

foundation supporting a large number of projects (P1, P2,.....), and drawing almost all its funding, including funding for core activities, from these individual projects.

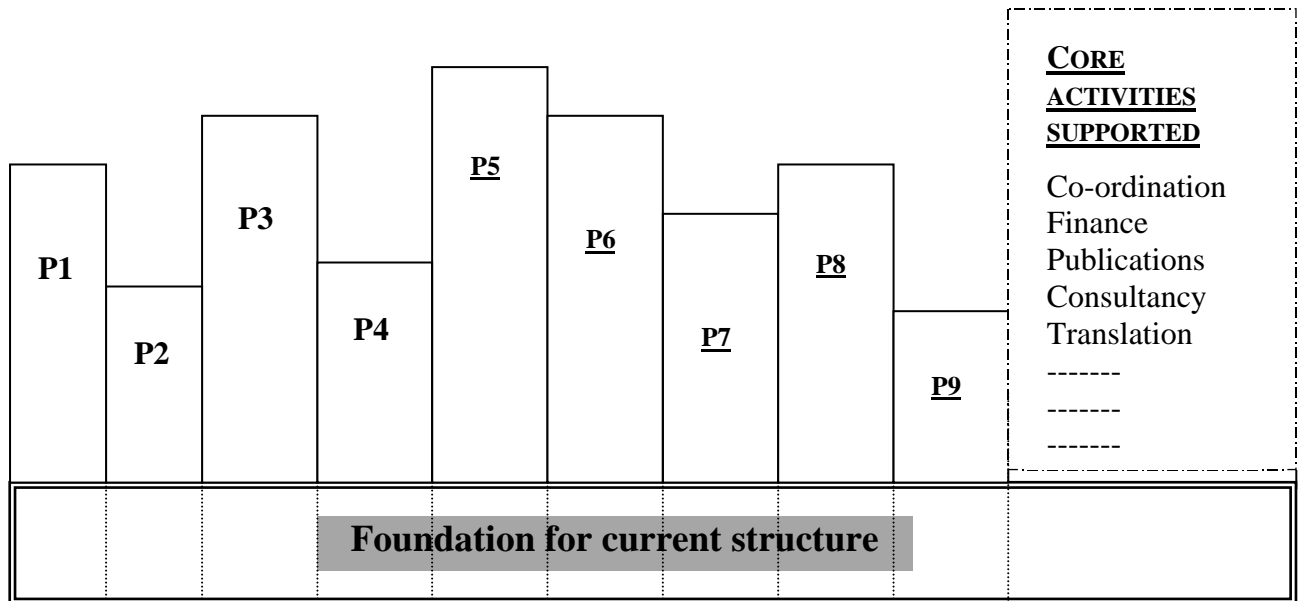


Figure 5.3: The current situation (A shallow foundation with project funding supporting all activities)

One problem is that the foundation has had to support **all** the work of EFECOT, and not just the individual projects from which funding is drawn. Another is pressure to secure income, which can lead to a bias in project proposals, unnecessary overlap and a lack of balance across the programme.

Discussion at the Paris conference acknowledged this structural weakness, and also endorsed the need to enhance effectiveness by moving to a more holistic programme, which, as noted in the previous section, is now seen as consisting of different types of initiative; 'Research and Development', 'Application' and 'Network' projects. This development adds to pressures **to establish a firmer financial basis for EFECOT core activities, which should be separated from a dependency on project income and give the organization independent 'roots'**. The implication is that, although EFECOT would still draw limited income from individual project activity, part of its funding would be distinct and would support a deepened foundation covering both core activity and co-ordinated project support. *Figure 5.4* shows the proposed new structure, and also illustrates the division of projects into three types.

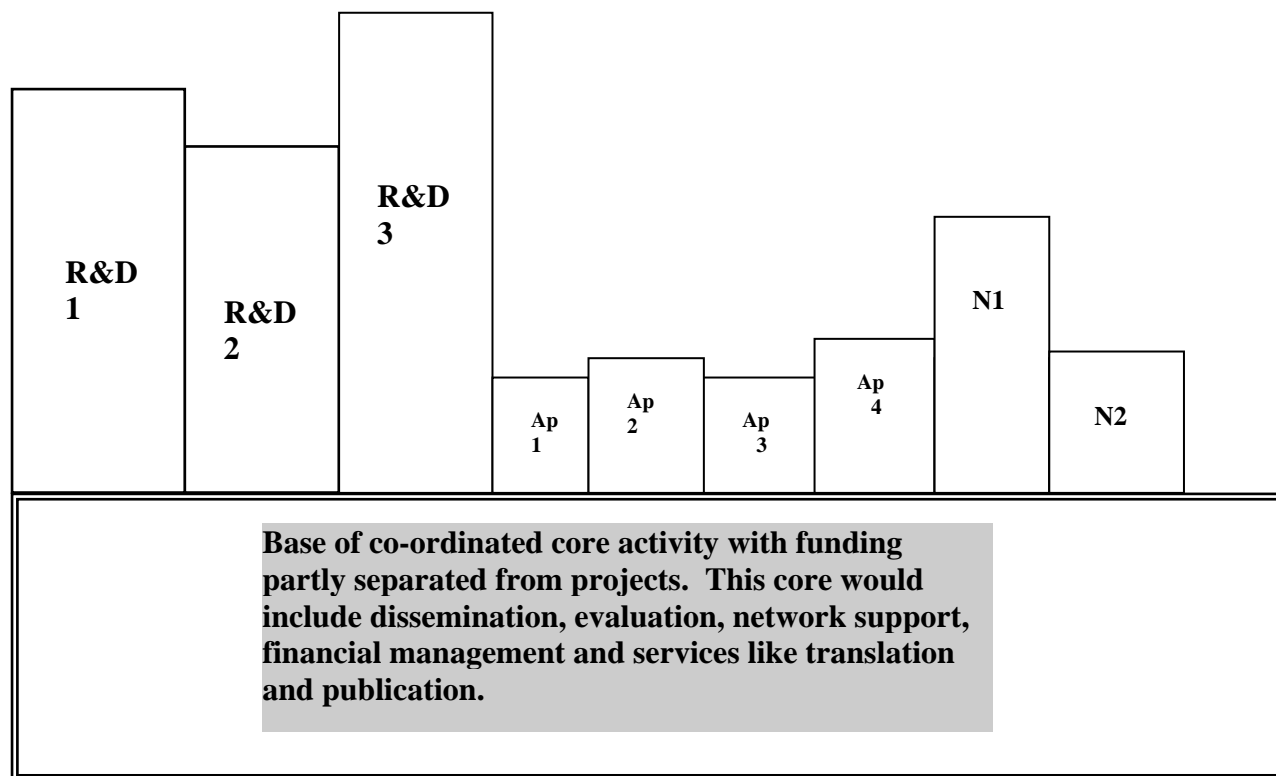


Figure 5.4: A deepened foundation, supporting different types of project  
(R&D= Research and Development, Ap= Application, N= Network)

The move to such a model needs to maintain the dynamic flexibility which has been characteristic of EFECOT, whilst facilitating the co-ordinated development of roles and tasks necessary for efficient management and administration.

Within this strengthened structure, there would be a limited number of broad longer-term 'Research and Development' projects/themes, normally initiated and directly supported by EFECOT staff. These would be complemented by smaller 'Application projects' concerned with implementation and dissemination, and developed as a response to more immediate needs. These latter projects would normally be proposed, and, if agreed, co-ordinated **by EFECOT partners**, with basic servicing from the Central Team.<sup>19</sup> They would remain part of the overall

<sup>19</sup> EFECOT will also continue to classify projects as 'Type A' which are directly initiated by the federation, and 'Type B' which are led by other organizations with EFECOT as a contributing partner.

work programme, and would be subject to standard project guidelines and normal evaluation criteria. The final group of projects would focus on strengthening and exploring the value of networks as a means of securing better provision within and across countries. Those with an international dimension would normally be co-ordinated by EFECOT, whilst national initiatives would normally be co-ordinated by partners, again with the support of the Central Team.

In making these final recommendations, conference participants urged a cautious implementation. There were felt to be implications for partner workloads, and it would be important to encourage a fair distribution of project activity between and across countries and communities in the light of a variety of pressures and priorities. This suggests the need for a phased and exploratory approach which is subject to careful review.

It also needs to be appreciated that EFECOT can only work towards a 'rooted' supportive structure as it becomes possible to secure appropriate funding. However, there are clear benefits in terms of releasing staff time and expertise from short-term pressures to enable a more flexible, balanced and effective approach to programme development. The necessary 'redistribution' of funding will therefore be a key objective as the federation moves into the new millennium.

#### **5.4) Immediate implications**

In the previous three sections of this chapter the focus moved from policy to process and structure. A number of themes were developed which will remain central to planning for the next seven years. In particular EFECOT has broadened its remit to include a sharing of experience with all Travellers, and to include work with adults. It has also built on the experience of 10 years in order to draw out and clarify a series of priorities and objectives.

The immediate implications of this process include the need for an adequate mission statement (see below), and a new resolution of the Council of Ministers (based on updated information about the needs of Traveller communities, as well as the recommendations outlined in this report) which can act as a framework for the future.

They also include the need to explore the funding-base of the organization, and the implementation of recommended processes and structures which will both improve efficiency and lead to more effective initiatives to improve educational services for Travellers.

The sub group which has been responsible for developing the new planning document has recommended the formation of a Standing Committee of the Board of Directors which will oversee this process. The underlying starting point for this committee will be the following mission statement, which draws on the principles identified in this chapter:

*EFECOT has a mission to improve educational provision for Travellers so that they can have access to educational opportunities at all levels. Traveller communities form significant minority groupings across Europe and face social exclusion, discrimination and the practical challenges posed by sedentary and 'traditional' education systems.*

*EFECOT will continue to work with the communities, and with practitioners and policy makers within the field of education, to identify responsive methods and approaches, which create positive opportunities for access, sensitive to the lifestyles of Travellers, and which encourage the celebration of cultural diversity.*

*EFECOT will also seek to strengthen its network of contacts with all relevant actors, including policy makers, across the European Union and partner countries, in order to raise awareness, to stimulate the sharing and dissemination of good practice, and to press for the implementation of clear policies and structures to support effective education for Travellers. It will, where necessary, challenge institutional discrimination and prejudice. One immediate priority will be the development and consolidation of networks within Southern and Eastern Europe.*

The Standing Committee will be expected to use the detailed recommendations of this chapter as their initial framework. However, they will also be expected to evaluate performance, review progress, and to be sensitive to changing needs and changing circumstances over time. This will require a degree of flexibility within the spirit of the mission statement, and it is recommended that the committee should report back to the the policy bodies of EFECOT on a regular basis.

# Appendix: the Resolution of 1989

## RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL AND THE MINISTERS OF EDUCATION MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL

of 22 May 1989

### on school provision for children of occupational travellers (89/C I 53/0 1 )

THE COUNCIL AND THE MINISTERS FOR EDUCATION, MEETING WITHIN THE  
COUNCIL,

Having regard to the resolution of the Council and of the Ministers for Education, meeting within the Council, of 9 February 1976 comprising in action programme in the field of education,

Considering that on 16 March 1984 the European Parliament adopted a resolution on education for children whose parents have no fixed abode in which it urged the Commission, in co-operation with the Member States, and in consultation with the organisations representing the parents of these children, to take steps to ensure that these children receive in appropriate education, regardless of the Community country in which they happen to be,

Considering that itinerant occupations currently account for a population group of approximately 200 000 persons in the Community,

Considering that the present situation is rather disturbing in general, and in particular with regard to schooling, that quite considerable number of children do not regularly attend school and some have never been to school, that a very small percentage attend secondary school and beyond, that the level of educational skills bears little relationship to the presumed length of schooling,

Considering that schooling, in particular by providing the means of adapting to a changing environment and achieving personal and professional autonomy, is a key factor in the cultural,

social and economic future of itinerant occupations, that parents are aware of this fact and their desire for schooling for their children is increasing,

Noting the results and recommendations of studies carried out on behalf of the Commission on the schooling of children of occupational travellers in the 11 Member States of the Community and the guidelines emerging from the summary report, consultations of gypsy and traveller representatives and discussions between experts and representatives of the Ministries of Education,

HEREBY ADOPT THIS RESOLUTION:

The Council and the Ministers for Education, meeting within the Council, will make every effort to promote a set of measures concerning school provision for children of occupational travellers aiming, without prejudice to the action already being undertaken by the Member States in the light of the particular situations they are experiencing in this area, at developing a global and structural approach helping to overcome the major obstacles to the access of those children to schooling.

After consulting the professional circles concerned, these measures will aim at:

- promoting innovatory initiatives,
- proposing and supporting positive and appropriate measures,
- inter-relating achievements,
- widely dissemination the lessons learning.

### **1. At Member State level**

within the constitutional and financial limits of their own specific educational policies and structures the .Member States will make every effort to:

1.1. Improve information for travelling families (river craft, circus and fairground people) regarding educational arrangements, types of education and specific aid made available by the public authorities or private initiative to enable parents to take a responsible attitude towards the education of their children.

1.2. Where possible, improve access to nursery and primary school for the children of occupational travellers ( river craft, circus and fairground people) in the following ways, for example:

a. by promoting, where appropriate and viable arrangements can be made, mobile education units for occupational travellers' children to accompany or follow circuses or fairs in their travels;

b by encouraging nursery and primary schools:

-located near mooring areas to develop teaching adapted to the needs and lifestyle of river craft children,

-to receive circus and fairground children in the winter break and develop appropriate teaching methods in co-operation with the mobile education units where they exist;

c. by promoting, where appropriate, the appointment of travelling advisers to assist parents with the pre-school education of their children or help them to supervise distance learning when they have opted for this formula;

d. by introducing, if appropriate, school record cards to demonstrate the frequency of attendance and the results achieved.

1.3. Take steps to make available full secondary education and appropriate vocational training to the three categories of children, by promoting for example:

-sandwich courses which seem best adapted to the needs (practical on-the-job training during the active season and theoretical training during the winter break),

-the establishment, where appropriate, where numbers make such provisions viable, of circus secondary schools for circus children and adolescents who wish to train for a career as a circus

performer.

1.4. Encourage the provision of accommodation in boarding schools or in lodgings for the three categories of pupils in appropriate cases.

1.5. Encourage if necessary appropriate agencies to inform teachers at the various educational levels during their initial and in-service training of the specific circumstances and needs of occupational travellers' children.

1.6. Promote support, in accordance with the procedures of their respective education systems, for teachers, educators, heads of schools and boarding schools and mobile teaching units.

## **2. At Community level**

2.1. Community involvement in this field is useful for encouraging national initiatives as regards the exchange of experience and to take advantage of innovative pilot projects.

2.2. Carrying out pilot schemes with a view to an exchange of views and experience between those concerned.

2.3. The Commission will ensure that these measures fit in with the other Community measures already planned in the field of education

It will also ensure that the fit in with Community measures concerning the education of other itinerant people such as gypsies and travellers.

It will also ensure that these activities such as those of the European Social Fund.

2.4. A report on the implementation of the measures provided for this resolution will be submitted by the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament as well as to the Education Committee before 31 December 1993.

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