

Education

What do I need to know before I start?

Although it was only following the entry into force of the Treaty of Maastricht in 1993 that the Community acquired an explicit competence in the field of education, various actions in this field were initiated in earlier times, resulting in some cases in legally binding directives and regulations. The basis for early actions in this field was the EC competence in relation to the freedom of movement for workers. Indeed, this freedom could only be guaranteed if there were rules providing proper access to education for children of European migrants. The general aims of educational policy are: to prevent school failure and social exclusion of pupils with special needs; to promote equal opportunities for girls and boys; to foster integration of migrants; to make access to education easier for all; to improve the quality of and attractiveness of education; and to raise the level of literacy and numeracy. The Community seeks to contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between member states and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their actions.

Languages: Please be aware that although most documents available in our Archives are in French, English or German, some may be in other EU languages. In order to check the languages used in a fond, please refer to our holdings page. Additionally, some fonds may contain a few files in a language other than the ones listed in the description.

Please bear in mind that archival sources are subject to the 30-year accessibility rules. Some files may therefore currently be listed as closed but will progressively become available as they reach the required period of accessibility (check the "Closed until" field in description).

What can I find at the HAEU?

Related specifically to European education polity-building and policy-making, the fonds available at the HAEU are:

1) ***EU institutions***

Council of Ministers

Education is part of a broader social policy discussed at the European level. Linked to European universities, about the Council of Ministers CEE and EURATOM, you might take a look into the section 'Activités de la CEEA: Recherche et enseignement' from 1958 to 1960 ([example](#) for the year 1960). The fonds of the Council of Ministers being organized by years, you need to browse the sub-fonds of each separate year to access the specific section on education. For the years after 1960, discussions related to education are closely linked to the free movements of workers; you might therefore look into the section 'Activités de la CEE : Politique sociale', organized again by years([example](#) for the year 1962), and from 1969, in the section 'Questions sociales' ([example](#) for the year 1969). And you can find a specific

section dedicated to education in the inventory of the [Council of Ministers 1971](#) or/and [Council of Ministers 1972](#). You should also look through the legal acts where some decisions are related to education or general documents (example: [1](#), [2](#)) or through the Committees such as for example [here](#).

European Commission

Education was not established as a distinct area of European policy during the early years of European integration. Researchers should therefore not expect to find a dedicated education section in the European Commission's fonds. Relevant material can nevertheless be found in several fonds. In particular, consult the section relating to the DG for Social Affairs - [Emploi, affaires sociales et éducation \(CEUE EASE\)](#) . Education-related files may also be found in the fonds of the Commission Cabinets, see for example in the [Cabinet Jenkins](#) concerning the Science and technology policy, education or in the [Cabinet Thorn](#), or also in the [Cabinet Delors 1](#) . And also, in the registry of the working documents of the Secretariat General (example: [1](#), [2](#)).

European Parliament

The Parliament's fonds include two sections '[Commission de la jeunesse, de la culture, de l'éducation, de l'information et des sports](#)' and '[Commission de la culture, de la jeunesse, de l'éducation, et des médias](#)' that include respectively the proceedings and the reports of the parliamentary committee for youth, culture, education, information and sports, during the Parliament's first legislature (1979-1984) to fourth legislature (1992-1999) (ex: see [the Commission de la fourth legislature](#)).

In the collection of Press Cuttings (CPPE), you will find a specific section related to "[Jeunesse, culture, Education, Information et Sports](#)" with a selection of articles regarding this topic.

[Court of Justice of the European Union](#)

According to the nature of the ECJ, these fonds include documents dealing with judicial affairs, namely [procédure dossiers](#) and [sentences](#). You might find it interesting to consult some of the procedure files dealing with education measures such as the famous *Gravier v City of Liège* ([Case 293/83](#), 2 volumes), a landmark judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Communities (CJEC) concerning access to vocational education under European Community law. It established that charging higher fees to nationals of other member states constitutes discrimination prohibited by the Treaty of Rome. Or the case-law *Forcheri v Belgium* ([Case 152/82](#)) regarding access to education and training for children of migrant workers could be interesting. Indeed, the 1983 judgment of the CJEC reinforced the broad interpretation of equality provisions for migrant workers' families, extending them beyond employment to educational benefits. The ruling strengthened the social dimension of free movement rights within the EEC (art. 12 EEC Regulation N. 1612/68) and served as a key precedent for later cases on student support and family rights under EU law.

European Court of Auditors

You might find it interesting to consult the sub-fonds '[reports](#)' including annual reports (1977-1997), special reports (1978-1996), opinions (1977-1997), where you can find documents such as the '[Rapport sur les comptes des Écoles européennes](#)' from 1976 to 2003.

Economic and Social Committee

As mentioned above, education is linked to the broader social affairs discussed at the European level. Similarly to the fonds of the Council of Ministers, the inventory of the Committee is organized by years; you therefore need to browse the inventory year by year, each including a sub-section on social affairs ([example](#) for the year 1962, or the following [serie](#) later).

European Committee of the Regions

The European Committee of the Regions issued some of its first opinions touching on education and training, mainly linked to broader EU initiatives. So, you should find it interesting to check some opinions such as on the European year of Lifelong Learning, that aimed at raising awareness about the importance of lifelong learning across Europe (see: [Opinion 244/94](#)). Or see also this [Opinion 298/95](#) in 1995 emphasizing equal access for regions and the importance of including smaller or less-developed areas. Additionally, the Committee highlighted in its early opinions that education policies should respect cultural and linguistic diversity, reinforcing the subsidiarity principle established after the Maastricht Treaty. Other Opinions such as on [European Commission Green paper on Education, training and Research](#), or on [Intercultural Education](#).

European Investment Bank

You might find it interesting to consult the '[projets](#)', '[Aides, dons et subsides exceptionnels](#)' and [publications 'sub-fonds'](#)', where you can find documents dealing with funding devoted to [education and health](#) sectors.

2) ***The Agencies of the EU:***

Centre européen pour le développement de la formation professionnelle

The European centre for the development of vocational training was established in 1975 to support the Commission in promoting the development of education and vocational training at the European level. In the [CEDEFOP's fonds](#), you can find numerous documents related to education and the development of related programmes and policies.

European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

The European Foundation for the improvement of Living and Working Conditions was established in 1976. Its activities would include the exchange of information and experience, facilitation of contact between universities and research centres, economic and social administrations and it should encourage concerted action, setting up working groups, concluding study contracts, participating in studies, promoting and providing assistance for

pilot projects and carrying out certain studies itself.

3) **Corporate bodies**

[European University Institute](#)

The EUI was founded in 1972 by the Community's Member States as an independent institution, with the main objective of providing advanced academic training to PhD students and promote research in Europe. You might therefore want to take a look into the [EUI's fonds](#) to learn more about initiatives taken at the European level in the field of education beyond the realm of EU institutions.

[European Science Foundation](#)

The European Science Foundation was created on 18-19/11/1974 in Strasbourg as a scientific body aiming to coordinate the work of Europe's main research funding and performing organisations. It is independent from intergovernmental collaboration. The ESF contributed to the advancement of education by fostering interdisciplinary research, promoting academic collaboration across countries, and supporting evidence-based policy development. Through networking programs and expert platforms, it enhances knowledge exchange and helps shape a more cohesive and forward-looking European education landscape. You should find interesting, for example, the [serie](#) relating to the European Cooperation in Science and Technology COST fostering cooperation between nationally funded research activities or the Network programme "[Transitions in Youth](#)" developed in the 90's.

[European Space Agency](#) and [European Space Research Organisation](#)

The fonds of European Space Agency and European Space Research Organisation, useful, even if often indirect archival material on education in the context of European space activities. Some files are particularly relevant on education, mainly in relation to scientific training and stronger capacity rather than formal education policy. The ESRO records are particularly interesting for tracing early European efforts to develop expertise in space science through fellowships, training programmes, and cooperation with universities and research institutes (see example: [1](#), [2](#), [3](#)) while the ESA fonds continues this perspective with interesting files on education (see example [1](#), [2](#)) and public outreach initiatives (see example: [1](#), [2](#)).

[Conférence permanente des recteurs](#)

The fonds of the Conférence permanente des recteurs (CRE) officially founded as an association in Göttingen in 1964, offers extensive sources on higher education. Indeed, the CRE leads conferences, programs and projects promoting discussions between European Universities' leaders and ensuring the creation of solid cooperation between scholars in Europe as well as abroad. The records address key issues such as university governance, academic [activities](#) and mobility, mutual recognition of diplomas, curriculum development, and [collaboration across European institutions](#), providing valuable insight into the evolution of higher education systems, the internationalisation of universities, and the early development

of European-level initiatives aimed at fostering cooperation and harmonisation in the academic sector.

[University Association for Contemporary European Studies](#)

The UACES was established in 1967 with the objective, among others, of promoting teaching and research in European Studies within the field of social sciences, as well as fostering coordination of teaching and research between universities and related institutions in European countries. In the [UACES' fonds](#), you can find documents elaborated by the administration of the Association, including mainly the minutes of Committees and Officers' meetings as well as reports on the UACES' annual general meetings.

[Centre international de formation européenne \(CIFE\) and Association européenne des enseignants \(AEDE\)](#)

The CIFE was founded in Paris in 1954 and concerned itself with education and research on European and world unification, federalism, regionalism and more. The project of establishing AEDE was elaborated during a training course of the CIFE and the AEDE was then formally established in 1956, with the aim of bringing together teachers willing to collaborate in the creation of a European federation and to learn more about European issues. You might want to look into the CIFE's and the AEDE's fonds, to know more about the initiatives they took in the field of education at the European level. See also the private fonds of [Henri Cartan](#), mathematician that operated to the creation of the AEDE and has been his president for a long period.

[European Cultural Foundation](#)

The ECF fonds was recently deposited at the HAEU and is currently undergoing inventory and description with a first series of dossiers opened for consultation in June 2026. As a result, the available archival information may be subject to change as processing progresses. The ECF is a relevant source for research on education and European cooperation, as its activities extend beyond cultural policy to include initiatives concerning education, youth, and European exchange. Researchers should consider the fonds when investigating the development of European educational and cultural cooperation, particularly where these subjects intersect with European identity, youth, and transnational exchange.

[European Youth Forum](#)

[Bureau Européen de Coordination des Organisations Internationales de Jeunesse](#) [Council of European National Youth Committees](#)
[Jeunesse européenne fédéraliste](#)
[Youth Forum of the European Communities](#)

Beyond the bodies mentioned earlier, other corporate bodies – listed above – aimed at promoting and representing the interests of young people in general throughout Europe and towards European institutions. As education occupied an important place in the youth's interests, it might provide important insights to look into the fonds of such associations or bodies as well.

Femmes d'Europe

The Femmes d'Europe fonds contains a range of materials relevant to education, though not organized as a distinct series. Education-related content appears within broader documentation collected by the "Information Femmes" service for its publications, including studies, reports, press clippings, and institutional publications from European and international bodies. These sources (see this [serie](#)) address issues such as women's access to education and vocational training, the role of education in advancing gender equality, and initiatives discussed in conferences and policy frameworks. As such, the fonds offers valuable insight into how education was framed within wider debates on women's rights, social policy, and European integration

Political Groups of the European Parliament

The fonds of EPP Group (PPE) include a section for the Standing working group on Culture and education. You will find Minutes of the committee's meetings and Plenary notes for 1999 to 2004.

4) *Individuals*

Emile Noël

In his private fonds, you can find documents specifically related to education policy in the section '[Environnement, régions, industrie/technol., santé, éducation, citoyen 1970-1988](#)', but also in the section '[Service juridique 1974-1987 et directions générales 1968](#)'.

Jacques Delors

The fonds of Jacques Delors contains significant archival material on education within the broader context of European integration and social policy. The documents, such as [speeches](#), [policy papers](#), correspondence, and European Commission records (see also [Cabinet Delors](#)) reflect Delors' support for strengthening education and training as key components of economic development and social cohesion. Education appears in relation to initiatives on vocational training, [youth mobility, and the development of European programmes](#) (Comett and Erasmus), as well as in discussions on building a "Europe of knowledge."

Peter Sutherland

Appointed to the first Delors Commission, Sutherland was, among others, responsible for the Social Affairs Portfolio, including education and training, and was instrumental in the establishment of the ERASMUS programme. In this context, the fonds [Peter Sutherland's Commission Papers](#) includes a specific section '[Competition, Social Affairs, Education and Training](#)' related to the role he played in the first Delors Commission.

5) **Oral History**

In addition, take a look at the [oral history holdings](#), which comprise of numerous interviews of European politicians and officials, including important figures and officials active in the development of education policy and training at the European level. Below, you can find a list of persons interviewed who addressed the topic of education policy at the European level.

[Brusasco-Mackenzie, Margaret](#)

[Burke, Richard](#)

[Delors, Jacques](#)

[Deshormes La Valle, Fausta](#)

[Mansholt, Sicco](#)

[Marín González, Manuel](#)

[Marquant, Robert](#)

[Mennicken, Jan-Baldem](#)

[Moreau, Jean-Charles](#)

[O'Sullivan, David](#)

[Pérez Llorca Rodrigo, José Pedro](#)

[Ripert, Jean](#)

[Ruberti, Antonio](#)

[Wilson, Barrie](#)

[Hywel Ceri Jones](#)

[Van der Pas, Nikolaus](#)

[Rens, Johan van](#)

[Verli, Angeliki](#)

[Mitsos, Achilleas](#)