

OBESSU Position on the Review of the European Framework of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning

After more than 10 years, the European Framework of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning needs to be reviewed and updated, especially considering new challenges European society is facing nowadays. This process has been launched by the European Commission in early 2017, and OBESSU is happy to contribute with key points reflecting secondary school students' concerns.

Regarding the 8 Key Competences of the Framework, OBESSU believes that:

- Communication in the mother tongue and Communication in foreign languages competences should be modernised. In light of the progress achieved so far in the European integration it is more coherent to speak about "mother tongues", "other languages" and "other ways of communication". Special attention needs to be given to the right of communication in "mother tongues" for language minorities.
- Digital competences should not just include new skills and knowledge resulting from the technological development of the contemporary society, but also the new "values" that this development requires: new phenomena like cyber bullying and online harassment need to be addressed, as well as critical engagement skills for online networks and media, for example through integrating fact checking and source verification¹.
- Learning to learn should be fostered especially in the formal education setting, where the learner-centred approach is still seen as an exception, and not as common practice. Such an approach gives learners a greater ownership of their learning process, empowering them and promoting inclusion in all aspects of society.
- In order to allow the full development of Social and Civic Competences there is the need to ensure adequate standards of personal, physical, economical and social well-being² of each learner, especially the marginalised. These preconditions for acquiring the competences need to be reflected more in the framework.
- It is also important to emphasise that democracy has to be learnt through experience: this highlights the need for official frameworks for active participation of students through school student councils and school student organisations. Such practical approaches and ways of

¹ OBESSU Policy Paper on ICT Education: https://obessu.org/site/assets/files/1300/2016_-_policy_paper_on_ict_education_and_obessu.pdf

² OBESSU Policy Paper on Student Welfare: https://obessu.org/site/assets/files/1299/2016_-_policy_paper_on_student_welfare.pdf

implementation of the competences have to be more explicit in the framework.

- Understanding “*codes of conduct and manners generally accepted in different societies and environments*” should be followed by approaches that encourage a critical reflection, as omitting this step can lead to the acceptance of common hateful attitudes based on ‘social conventions’ that might contradict Human Rights.
- Cultural awareness and expression competences should address the related knowledge also in a “critical” way, not only entailing a simple “awareness of local, national and European cultural heritage and their place in the world”, but also an in-depth, informed reflection on them.

In the revision process, OBESSU furthermore looks to advocate for a clearer link between the Key Competences Framework and the European Qualification Framework, aiming at recognising that those competences are also acquired in a non-formal education setting. In this sense, great importance should be given to the work done by the youth sector and the youth organisations in this field, promoting the Key Competences Framework at European level.

We believe that in a broader lifelong learning perspective not only focused on formal education, and not only focusing on their “economic” benefits, PISA results should not have a primary role in influencing the reviewing process of the Key Competences framework³. Applying the approach based on PISA results to the review process narrows down its potential application to the target group of tests – learners at particular stage of their formal education. We highlight the need for listening to learners through dialogue and active participation.

Finally, OBESSU stresses the importance of having the commitment of Members States in implementation of the revised framework. Together with our Member, Candidate and Affiliate Organisations we will engage in its promotion and monitoring. The representation of school student representatives in processes of monitoring is crucial to ensure a high quality key competences framework.

³ OBESSU Reaction to PISA Test 2015: <https://www.obessu.org/resources/news/obessu-calls-for-caution-with-pisa-results-more-dialogue-less-testing/>