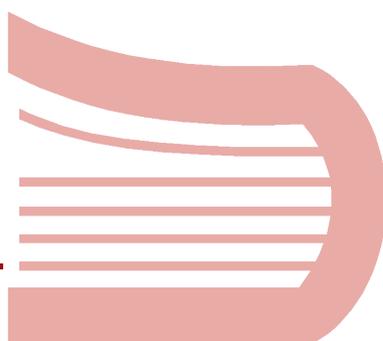# SIDOC

Comunicación

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PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION ON EDUCATION IN THE AUSTRIAN FEDERAL MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Elfriede Tajalli

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Resumen

Los trabajos en las áreas de información y documentación educativa realizados en el Ministerio de Educación Austríaca"

En un país pequeño como Austria es necesario recibir estímulo del exterior a nivel europeo respectivamente internacional para que los responsables vean lo útil que son las iniciativas nacionales en el campo de documentación educativa. Trabajar de manera comparativa en un contexto europeo ayuda a comprender mejor su propia posición y sirve de base para tomar decisiones y para desarrollar nuevos proyectos en el futuro. Ha crecido el interés en utilizar la información y documentación educativa durante las últimas décadas. Actualmente los ministros de educación ya no pueden seguir su trabajo sin recurrir a todos aquellos datos que han sido recopilados en los respectivos países y presentados a través de las redes europeas como EURYDICE, la red europea de información en educación (htttp://www.eurydice.org).

El Tesauro Europeo Educativo (EET) existe en las siguientes 20 lenguas (algunas de las versiones no contienen los cambios de la última edición de 1998 mientras que otras llevan incluso descriptores nacionales): vasco, danés, neerlandés, catalán, croata, checo, inglés, finlandés, francés, gallego, alemán, griego, húngaro, italiano, polaco, portugués, esloveno, sueco, español, turco. El Tesauro de Sistemas Educativos en Europa (TESE) ya ha sido publicado en inglés y se está elaborando en alemán, checo, danés, neerlandés, inglés, estonio, finlandés, francés, griego, italiano, letón, polaco, portugués, español (en conjunto 15 versiones).

Abstract

A small country like Austria needs the impetus coming from a European respectively international level in order to persuade decision makers of the value of national initiatives in the field of education information and documentation. Only if this work is done on a comparative basis in a European context countries can understand the position which they hold among the others and use that information as a basis for decisions and further

developments. Interest in educational information and documentation in a European context has grown within the last decades. Education ministers today cannot work without this kind of data which is collected nationally and presented in a European context by networks like EURYDICE, the European Education network for education (http://www.eurydice.org)

The European Education Thesaurus - EET exists in the following 20 language versions (though some of them do not include the changes of the last edition of 1998 while others include even national descriptors): Basque, Danish, Dutch, Catalan, Croatian, Czech, English, Finnish, French, Galician, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Slovene, Swedish, Spanish, Turkish. The Thesaurus for Education Systems in Europe - TESE exists already in English and is being developed in German, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, Greek, Italian, Latvian, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish (altogether 15 language versions).

lnformation and documentation on educational research – EUDISED

In the year 1978 the Austrian Ministry of Education started to collect data on educational research in Austria. This activity was born as a consequence of Austria's participation in the Council of Europe initiative to create the European EUDISED - network (European Documentation and Information System on Education) and to collect in this framework data on educational research projects. Since that time, the Austrian Ministry of Education has been publishing the document "Bildungsforschung in Österreich" as a service for the Austrian research community. The annually collected data was at the same time the Austrian contribution to EUDISED. The Council of Europe discontinued EUDISED work in 1997/98.

For some time there was no international link for the Austrian Ministry of Education in this field. On the other hand, the collection and paper-based publication of Austrian educational research data was continued and from the year 2000 onwards the service was improved, as the data on Austrian research in education is provided online on the server of the Austrian National Library **http://opac.bibvb.ac.at/2bflb;** pdf-versions are available at **http://www.bmbwk.gv.at/schulen/bw/leb/bildungsforschungsdok.xml**

Information and documentation on education systems – EURYDICE
http://www.eurydice.org/portal/page/portal/Eurydice

With Austria's access to the European Union in 1995, the same unit which is responsible for information on educational research took over responsibility for the national EURYDICE information unit. EURYDICE is the information network on education of the European Commission and is part of SOCRATES II. From 2007 onwards it is part of the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission. EURYDICE tasks comprise work on databases, comparative surveys and studies on educational topics, indicators, synthesis reports, glossaries and the new "Thesaurus on Education Systems in Europe" (TESE). EURYDICE work covers the full range of education from pre-school education (ISCED level 0) to higher education (ISCED level 6) and adult education, in one word "lifelong learning".

The 27 EU member states cooperate in the EURYDICE network, but as some member states have more than one education system in their country, there is a national unit for each of the education systems: Belgium is represented by the national units in the Dutch speaking community, the French speaking community and the German speaking community, the United Kingdom has one education system for England, Wales and Northern Ireland and another one for Scotland. Moreover the EFTA/EEA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway are partners in the network, as well as Turkey. The network comprises 34 national units altogether.

Which are the products of EURYDICE?

1. **Databases**

    EURYBASE – the information database on education in Europe

    Teacher and school head salaries in primary and general secondary education

    Time taught in compulsory education

2. **Key Data**

    Key data on education in Europe

    Key data on teaching languages at schools in Europe

    Key data on information and communication technology in schools in Europe

    Key data on higher education

3. **Terminological resources**

    European glossary on education

    Volume 1: Examinations, qualifications and titles

    Volume 2: Educational institutions

    Volume 3: Teaching staff

    Volume 4: Management, monitoring and support staff

4. **Publications on specific education topics**

In 2006 the following documents were published:

> Content and language integrated learning at schools in Europe (CLIL)
>
> Quality Assurance in Teacher Education in Europe
>
> Pointers to active citizenship in education policies
>
> Science teaching in schools in Europe. Policies and research
>
> Specific educational measures to promote all forms of giftedness in Europe

In addition to the full-length descriptions of educations systems (each document about 200 pages) there is a shorter description in the document "Structures of education, vocational training and adult education systems in Europe" (each education system is covered by about 30-40 pages) which is electronically available, as well as in the brief "National summary sheets on education systems in Europe and ongoing reforms", in which each education system is described on about 10 pages.

The EURYBASE database and the summary sheets are updated each year, the structures document is a joint activity of EURYDICE and CEDEFOP. It is updated at lengthier intervals.

EERA European Educational Research Association

PERINE Pedagogical and Educational Research Information Network for Europe

In the year 1998 the Austrian Ministry of Education started its participation in EERA and became a member of its network 12 "Information Centres and Libraries in Educational Research". This was a new and welcomed possibility for Austria to cooperate again in a European network on educational research. Austria belongs to the group of the eight founding member countries (Austria, Denmark, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Switzerland) of PERINE (Pedagogical and Educational Research Information Network for Europe - **http://www.dipf.de/perine/**). Via the PERINE database Austrian researchers have again gained access to data on educational research on a European level.

Spreading information in Austria about the activities of EERA, the EERJ and the ECER conferences on a very broad basis is another activity of the Austrian information and documentation unit. Its aim is a better inclusion of Austrian researchers in the European Research Area provided by EERA.

Management of education information and documentation in the Austrian Ministry of Education

Which role now does the information and documentation unit in the Austrian Ministry of Education play in this context?

On the one hand, it is our duty to fulfil the whole yearly EURYDICE working programme and to provide the PERINE database with new input on educational research activities in Austria. For the compilation of the yearly document on ongoing and completed educational research projects in Austria we must stay in continuous contact with the Austrian educational research community.

It is our responsibility to collect data and statistics, to find the sources from which the respective information can be obtained. Not only the Ministry of Education is involved in these investigations but also other ministries like the Ministry of Health which is responsible for the educational institutions training nurses, health personnel and midwives, the Ministry for Economic Affairs which is responsible for the training of apprentices in the dual system. Regional school boards, teacher training institutions and institutes for education sciences at Austrian universities are involved as well. It is the responsibility of the information and documentation unit to collect data, to check whether these data is represented correctly in the EURYDICE studies. Data is sent to the European EURYDICE unit but it remains the responsibility of each national unit to see to it that in the overall analyses the national data is not misunderstood or misinterpreted. This might happen as education systems are in some aspects fundamentally different from one another. It takes many discussions, checking of descriptions, alterations and further investigations until a comparative study can be published.

The input is one side of the coin, the other – not less important - is "public relations" in order to place the products of EURYDICE, PERINE and "Bildungsforschung in Österreich - BIFODOK" in the focus of interest of education experts, administrators, researchers and the scientific community.

Moreover in the context of Austria's cooperation with UNESCO the book "Development of Education in Austria" is published at regular intervals (3-4 years); online-versions are available in English and German at the Internet-addresses
http://www.ibe.unesco.org/International/ICE47/English/Natreps/Nrep_main.htm
http://www.bmbwk.gv.at/medienpool/11759/bildungsentw_de.pdf

Spreading information within the ministry of education on how to benefit from the wealth of information on education produced by the EURYDICE – network, the European Commission, the PERINE database, by EERA, the ECER conferences and national and international databases and publications is a relatively easy task, the same holds true for the regional school boards and other ministries.

The task is a more difficult one when we want to publicize all these activities not only at the level of the education administration but to bring it to the attention of journalists, politicians, education research institutions, teacher training institutions, academies, universities, universities of applied sciences, university professors, students and the interested public.

Of course there is the homepage of the ministry of education where one can find the information on EURYDICE, PERINE, BIFODOK and a link to their homepages, one may find links from the Socrates homepage as well as from other homepages. But this proved to be insufficient.

A steady contact between the co-producer of the information (the national unit) and the potential users in the education field had to be established.

Former work and contacts with researchers in the collection of educational research data formed the basis for a lengthy e-mail dissemination list which allows to approach the potentially interested public each time when there are important news or new publications or the launch of databases etc. to communicate. This list comprises about 800 e-mail addresses, it has to be kept updated all the time. Its success can be illustrated by the fact that more and more individuals are contacting the documentation unit of the ministry of education in order to ask for inclusion of their e-mail address in this list. They understand that from there they can expect a real service. Relevant information on activities in the field of education in the European Communities, in other countries and on the national level, invitations for tenders, launches of databases in the national, the European but also in the international context are being brought to their attention.

Experience has shown that the information activities of the past years have had an impact on the education community in Austria. We are contacted by universities, teacher training institutions, researchers, students, colleagues in the ministries. The knowledge that relevant information on national and European/international topics in education can be gained is developing and is being used more widely from year to year.

For the information officers working in this field that development is of course a proof of their successful work. On the other hand the stimulated public interest in these topics creates more work inside the information and documentation unit and would call for more human resources. It is under these constraints that our work has to be done presently.

Summing up

Experience has shown that in a small country like Austria the impetus coming from a European or international level makes all the difference. It is easier to persuade decision-makers of the value of national initiatives in the field of education information and documentation if this is done in a European context as part of a European project or a European network. Even large countries would never collect data on so many different topics as it is done for instance in the EURYDICE network. Country descriptions without cross-referencing between the different realities and analyses on the basis of comparable data would gain very limited attention. It is only in a European/international context that countries can understand the position which they hold compared to the others and use that information as a basis for further steps.

Interest in educational information and documentation in a European context has grown within the last decades. Education ministers today cannot work without this kind of data which is collected nationally and presented in a European approach by European wide networks.

Since the 1970s, Austria has gained added value and it is one of the very pleasant and appreciated tasks of the Austrian information and documentation unit in the Ministry of Education to make available this wealth to the education community. These information and documentation activities comprise and interlink the Austrian and European activities in educational research as well as information on education systems.

Development of thesauri in the field of documentation and information in education

EUDISED Thesaurus (1973 – 1991)

In 1973 the first edition of the "EUDISED Multilingual Thesaurus" was published by the Documentation Centre for Education in Europe of the Council of Europe (Mouton publishers).

Mr. Jean Viet, a well known thesaurus specialist of the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme in Paris, had been charged with the coordination of the thesaurus work. Lists of descriptors in English, French and German which had been established by experts in 1972 were the basis of the EUDISED thesaurus in these three languages. Jean Viet was supported in this work by a working group in the Council of Europe which examined the drafts and made corrections.

The thesaurus was structured by facets such as teaching profession, teaching method, teaching aids, curriculum etc. One volume contained only one language version. The equivalents in the two other languages were not included.

The building of the EUDISED thesaurus as a terminological tool had become vital for the activities in the field of information and documentation on education which the Council of Europe had decided to realize on a broad basis, coordinating the work of the EUDISED national units which had been set up in all the member countries of the Council of Europe.

The purpose was the collection of national data in the field of educational research. Educational research projects were identified on national level (bibliographical data, abstracts), indexed with the descriptors of the EUDISED thesaurus and sent to Strasbourg, where the data was published in the quarterly EUDISED R&D Bulletin. The entries in the bulletin were in English, French or German, which meant that most countries had also to provide a translation of the abstract in their national language into one of the three languages (English, French or German). In 1975 a Spanish version was published, in 1977 a Dutch version.

The EUDISED thesaurus was developed on a regular basis. In 1979 all new descriptors and non-descriptors were published in an addendum to the first editions.

In 1981 the thesaurus management became a joint activity of the Council of Europe and the EURYDICE information education network of the European Communities. Four other language versions were finalized with the help of the two international organizations: Danish, Greek, Italian and Portuguese.

In 1982 an update of the EUDISED thesaurus including new descriptors and non-descriptors and necessary alterations was published but only as an alphabetical list for economic reasons. This time the thesaurus was published by the Publications Section of the Council of Europe. At the time there were already nine language versions: Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish. However the versions did not contain the equivalents of the descriptors in the other thesaurus languages.

In 1984 a re-structured EUDISED thesaurus was published by Mouton publishers under the responsibility of the Council of Europe and the Commission of the European Communities. Instead by numerous facets the descriptors were grouped in 42 large terminographs (e.g education and training; learning, principles of education etc.). Each volume (in horizontal format) contained

1. The alphabetically structured list of descriptors; each descriptor in this list was followed by its equivalents in eight other languages;

2. The descriptors of each of the 42 terminographs were displayed in a graph on one page (together 42 pages) showing at a glance the relations between the descriptors (broader term, narrower term, related term);

3. Permuted alphabetical display (each descriptor and non-descriptor could figure in this part several times as each part of a compound word has its own entry. This approach was of great significance particularly for languages like German which contains a high number of compound words.

EET - European Education Thesaurus (1991 -   )

The next visible step in the development of the EUDISED thesaurus was in 1991 when it was published under the new name "European Education Thesaurus" by the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities in Luxembourg. The old name "EUDISED" was abolished. The Council of Europe and the European Commission were jointly responsible for the management and the publication. The thesaurus structure and the number of languages remained the same (9), the volume increased from 300 pages to 460: the 1984 edition contains

2479 descriptors, the 1991 edition 2760 descriptors. The thesaurus management group had not only identified a number of new descriptors necessary for indexing the documents in the field of education and educational research but also its equivalents in the other eight languages. Proposals could come from any of the languages present in the thesaurus. Each proposal had to contain a definition and a proposed term in English, as English was the language which was shared by all representatives in the Thesaurus Management Group. On this common basis the ongoing update work got along.

1998 was the next date when the additions and alterations with respect to the descriptors but also with respect to the structure which had been carried out since 1991 led to the publication of the next edition, this time comprising 11 languages (the Finnish and the Swedish version had been compiled in the meantime) and 550 pages - http://www.eurydice.org/portal/page/portal/Eurydice/TEE. The number of descriptors had been increased since 1991 by 193 to 2953.

With the financial support of the Council of Europe other countries as well developed their own EET-language versions:

On the basis of the 1991 edition the Czech EUDISED unit developed a Czech version (bilingual in Czech and English) enriched by national terms. The Czech version of the EET was published in 1993 by the Institute for Information on Education. New descriptors were included regularly and the printed version published in 2002.

A Turkish –English version was published in 1995 by the Scientific and Technical Research Council of Turkey (Tübitak) with amendments of 1994.

In 1996 a Slovene version still on the basis of the 1991 EET version was published by the National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia. It contains the English equivalents and is supplemented by EET descriptors added in 1994.

A Croatian version of the EET was published by the Ministry of Culture of the Croatian Republic in 1996. Each Croatian descriptor is followed in the alphabetical list by its English, French and German equivalents.

The first Polish version was published in 1995 by the Institute of Educational Research, the second one in 1998 which was prepared in 1996/97. It contained all the three parts (alphabetic, systematic and rotated displays). The language equivalents were limited to the three languages English, French and German.

The Hungarian version of the EET was published by the National Educational Library and Museum in 1996 in the form of a bilingual list of descriptors in English and Hungarian.

The French "Centre national de documentation pédagogique" published in 1992 a French version supplemented with national French descriptors (Thésaurus européen de l'éducation - augmenté des descripteurs nationaux).

Only a few years ago in 2003 Spain published a new version of the "Tesauro Europeo de la Educación" – Redinet. The Council of Europe and the European Commission are identified as responsible bodies. From this edition one may learn that versions of the European Education Thesaurus exist as well in Basque, in Catalan and in Galician.
Other language versions and updates may exist which I am not aware of.

In 1999 the Council of Europe discontinued first the activities in the field of educational research, though the data was electronically searchable in the EUDI – database on the server of the Biblioteca di Documentazione Pedagogica in Florence. In a further step the Council of Europe withdrew also from the joint activity with EURYDICE concerning the thesaurus management work. Eventually, even the Documentation Centre for Education in Europe was abandoned.
That meant that there was a new edition of the European Education Thesaurus (1998) but no update work was carried out after 1999.

TESE – Thesaurus for Education Systems in Europe (2006 -…)

It was only in 2004 that EURYDICE, the European information network for education, decided to resume thesaurus work. As Eurydice's focal point concerns education systems and policies, glossaries and indicators, there was no need for the descriptors of the old European Education Thesaurus covering the field of educational research.
It was decided to build a new thesaurus covering the working fields of EURYDICE on the basis of the old thesaurus including new terms which had entered the education discussion since 1999 but leaving out the whole field of educational research. The English version of the TESE (Thesaurus for Education Systems in Europe) was published in 2006 (http://www.eurydice.org/portal/page/portal/Eurydice/showPresentation?pubid=051DE), the German and French versions are ready and will be put on the Internet in 2007. Other language

versions (Czech, Danish, Dutch, Estonian, Finnish, Greek, Italian, Latvian, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish) will follow.

EURYDICE was supported in the compilation of the TESE by its partners, the CEDEFOP and European Schoolnet, and by the external expert Marisa Trigari, an expert in thesaurus compilation from INDIRE – L'Istituto Nazionale di Documentazione per l'Innovazione e la Ricerca Educativa in Florence.

EURYDICE describes the TESE compilation work in the preface of the TESE in the following way:

„The intra-network cooperation required to compile this thesaurus relied on a semi-centralised structure, with the Eurydice European Unit (EEU) responsible for the development of all conceptual, terminological and organisational aspects. The EEU proposed the descriptors, non-descriptors and scope notes for the English language version and established the corresponding thesaural relationships. A TESE Management Group of representatives from selected Eurydice National Units acted as the final arbiter in all intellectual and editorial matters. A Group for Linguistic Equivalents, consisting of one language specialist for each of the TESE languages, was given the responsibility of finding the most suitable language equivalents plus the necessary non-descriptors in each. During initial preparation of TESE, the Eurydice network and in particular the EEU received very helpful support from an external expert, Marisa Trigari, to whom we are indebted for her contribution to the design and development of TESE. This first edition of TESE is the outcome of two years of intensive work within the Eurydice network, with over 30 experts in education, thesaurus development, knowledge management, languages, information and computer science, and terminology".

The TESE is structured according to six fundamental facets (general concepts; entities and systems; processes; agents; tools; context). Each fundamental facet may contain from one to six micro-thesauri, altogether 17 micro-thesauri are contained. The micro-thesauri follow the pattern of the terminographs of the old European Education Thesaurus, but they are not displayed graphically.

The first part of the TESE is the alphabetic display, the second part the systematic display (containing the 17 micro-thesauri), the third part the rotated display (as in the EET).

There are separate lists without hierarchical relationships (contained in the systematic display) for auxiliary descriptors, geographical entities, proper names, information sources).

That means that after some years of uncertainty (there was no updating activity for the EET since 1999, though the EET was used for indexing) EURYDICE developed from 2004 to 2006 the TESE which answers its specific needs.

In the past, however, the European Education Thesaurus was not only used by the Council of Europe and by EURYDICE. Many national bodies indexing documentation in the field of education and specifically in educational research and documentation relied and still rely on the EET as it is the only European education thesaurus covering the whole field of education. The PERINE network used it for indexing documents for its database, it is widely used in the REDINET context in Spain as one understands from the fact that there is a 2003 update version of the EET in Spanish, in Catalan, in Basque and in Galician.

Obviously REDINET in Spain has done necessary management work and maintains an updated versions of the EET in its four main languages Basque, Catalan, Galician and Spanish, which respond to the needs in the field of educational documentation and information. The alphabetical display of the Spanish 2003 EET version includes the equivalents of descriptors not only in the three other languages spoken in Spain but also in English, French, German, Italian and Portuguese, altogether nine European languages. The European approach is alive.

Documentation and information on education in European countries and the activities in this field at the EU level need a broader approach, namely a tool which allows speakers of other European languages to index documents in their language for input in databases and to search for information in their own language. The 1998 EET edition contained eleven languages. Already for the indexation of documents for the PERINE database the lack of current terminology in the1998 EET proved to be a shortcoming. A large number of free descriptors were used in the languages of the countries which participated in PERINE (Austria, Denmark, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Switzerland). That means that the terminology used in this context should also be used as a basis for a further update of the EET on a European basis and as an important tool in creating a European Documentation and Research Area in Education. Other languages in which EURYDICE's TESE thesaurus is being developed will very probably show interest in such a European project.

Summing up

The EET exists in the following 20 language versions (though some of them do not include the changes of the last edition of 1998 while others include even national descriptors):

Basque, Danish, Dutch, Catalan, Croatian, Czech, English, Finnish, French, Galician, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Slovene, Swedish, Spanish, Turkish.

TESE exists already in English and is being developed in German, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, Greek, Italian, Latvian, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish (altogether 15 language versions).

Estonian and Latvian are the two TESE - languages which were not present in the EET.

How can this wealth of education terminology be used for an update version of a new European Education Thesaurus keeping in mind the great importance of the compatibility between all those thesauri?