



Activity report 2020

Introduction: Topic of the Year

According to the strategic plan 2018-2020 discussed at the GA in Tallin in November 2017, the topic of the year for 2020 will be

"Parenting in the Digital Age"

and we'll deal with this broad topic at two GAs and conferences. We'll try to cover as many aspects as possible from the advantages in communication and democratic access to knowledge to the possible dangers and pitfalls. The Family Institute on Online Safety has conducted a research on how parents weigh the potential benefits but also harms of their child's using electronic devices and being online, which aspects of their child's online behavior concern them the most, and how confident they feel in their ability to oversee their child's use of technology. The report provides a great deal of detail on parents' feelings about and monitoring of their children's use of technology, which can vary with the age of their child and other factors. It is clear that parents recognize both benefits and harms of technology, and parenting in the digital age involves careful navigation of these elements.

For information, please consult: <https://www.fosi.org/policy-research/parenting-digital-age/>

Unfortunately, due to **the COVID-19 crisis**, most of the events and meetings planned for the beginning of 2020 by EPA, its partners and other associations were cancelled. This has restricted the activity of the Board and of EPA members. From EPA we have tried to support our members in this difficult situation by sharing useful information for parents and successful experiences started by our members in their countries. In addition, in the Board we have done our best to assist to different online events and to be in continuous contact with our partners.

Also as the first step for the definition of the **EPA Strategic Plan 2021-2025**, the Board has sent an online survey to all the members in order that they can give feedback about their view of EPA, their priorities and interests. Some preliminary results will be shared with the members during our first 2020 GA. After it, a draft document of the Strategic Plan will be prepared to work on it in cooperation with our members until its presentation during the second 2020 GA for its approval.

Main topics for 2020

- improving our website to make it a tool for communication between our members: uploading members' events, links to good practices and exchange of ideas

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- reactivating the Alcuin Award for outstanding members' projects
- promoting the European Day of Parents and School following the example of our Slovak member SRRZ
- fostering cooperation among members, especially for applications for European projects
- enhancing cooperation with current and new partners: ECML (European Center for Modern Languages, Graz), Foundation L4WB (Foundation Learning for Wellbeing), Cedefop (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training), MMM (Make Mothers Matter), ERNAPE (European Research Network on Parents in Education), ESHA (European Schoolhead Association), COFACE, European SchoolNet, EPNoSL, EUROCHILD, ISSA,...
- engaging actively in the platforms and networks that we're a member of: LLL Platform, Alliance for Childhood, Sirius Network, EAfA (European Alliance for Apprenticeship), Alliance for Investing in Children and Social Platform
- working with the new European Commission: especially Innovation, Research, Culture, Education, Youth and Sport (Formerly Education, culture and sport): Marija Gabriel (Bulgaria), Jobs (formerly Employment, Social affairs and Inclusion) Nicolas Schmit (Luxembourg), but also Health, Justice and Equality. Please find a list of the commissioners-delegate and their portfolios as well as their mission letters by Ursula von der Leyen here: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/interim/commissioners-designate_en
- engaging with the different committees of the European Parliament
- being active within the INGO conference of the CoE (Council of Europe)

EPA's events

The Board and cooperation with PUC (Parents' Union of Chania) and the Sirius Network worked hard on the organization of the **First 2020 GA & Conference** for the end of April 2020 in Greece. The Joint Conference titled **Digitalization and Migration: Today's Challenges** was organized with PUC and the Sirius Network of which EPA is a member. Unfortunately, due to the COVID19 crisis, the Conference was postponed. We expect that EPA will visit Chania for a future GA soon.

As Belgian law requires approving the Accounts 2019 and giving Discharge of the Board during the first semester of 2020, we are required to hold a GA before June 30th. To ensure none of us takes any unnecessary health risks; the EPA Board has decided to hold the **General Assembly online**. In fact, the majority of the AISBL in Belgium is adopting this solution. The meeting agenda will include only the referred points as required by the Belgian law and some other additional point with only informative purpose. We postpone to the second GA of 2020 the other points that require making or voting decisions.

In addition, the **Extraordinary General Assembly** planned for March 16 has been postponed too. This eoGA is necessary to adopt the amendments to the articles of association statutes



made during our last GA in Vienna. Because EPA is registered in Brussels, Belgium, we are subject to the Belgian law which states that a notary has to be present at the amendments of the statute, which ultimately endorses the change. We will hold this eoGA as soon as the conditions are safe for all the members to meet in Brussels. We will keep you informed during the summer.

The venue for the **Second 2020 GA & Conference** is yet to be decided and depends highly on the evolution of the COVID19 crisis. One alternative is to hold it in Chania as most of the preparations have been already made for April 2020. In this respect, we are also waiting for the result of the negotiations of the Sirius Network with the EC regarding their Policy Conference. Another alternative would be to hold it in Madrid.

As even after the elections at the GA in Vienna there will still be a **free position on the board**, please consider nominating a candidate for the elections at the GA in autumn 2020 taking into account that EPA has no full-fledged secretariat and therefore needs a working board. The applications received for the planned GA in Chania remain valid for the next f2f GA unless different notice from the applicant.

Finally, **3 Board meetings** have been held in first semester of the year 2020:

- January 24 in Brussels (only Valerie and Victor) to explore with Johanna Schima (president of MMM Europe) future collaborations with MMM and to complete some formalities at the bank.
- February 14-16 in Lyon hosted by Valerie.
- May 19 (online BM).

Representation of parents on European level

In January the **EU Working Group on ECEC** (Early Childhood Education and Care) held a meeting in Brussels to which EPA and Coface Families Europe were invited as essential



stakeholders to give their view on the outputs of the WG which are currently being prepared. The WG deals with two main topics:

- strengthening social inclusion in ECEC
- professionalization of ECEC staff

Its outputs will be:

- a report of the working group's findings including conclusions from PLAs (Peer Learning Activities)
- an ECEC competence profile: Which competences ECEC staff should possess and how to develop them
- Policy and practice recommendations on efficient strategies to raise the attractiveness of the profession
- A toolbox for inclusion in ECEC

Arja Krauchenberg presented EPA to the participants of the WG and asked for a rethink of the term "settings from birth" as parents have been fighting for a long time for maternal/parental leave and don't want anyone to go back behind the four month now prescribed by the EU but rather expand that period as in Austria or Germany and find good child care solutions afterwards which don't necessarily have to be formal settings.

The **EAFa (European Alliance for Apprenticeship)** meeting in February was attended by Claudio Masotti who gave an introductory presentation and held a workshop on promoting VET (Vocational Education and Training) and especially apprenticeships among parents as a valid first choice for their youngsters.

He also participated in their webinars organized in March on *Representation of apprentices in vocational education and training* and in April on *Pedagogical support for teachers and trainers* as well as the *Live-discussion on Remote Learning – How technology is empowering new forms of work-based learning*.

They have been webstreamed and can be found on the EAFa website (at the end of the page): <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1147&langId=en>

Later in February Arja Krauchenberg took part in the **Child Guarantee final conference** organized by DG EMPL (Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion) held in Brussels to present the findings of their feasibility study including the results from their four workshops which had



taken place in 2019 to collect good practices but also find out about the challenges in the following sectors targeting the most vulnerable groups:

- children living in precarious family situations,
- children residing in institutions,
- children of recent migrants and refugees and
- children with disabilities and other children with special needs.

For more information, please consult

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1428&langId=en>

In April **EADTU-EU held their summit** on *Digital transformation and Innovation in Education* very appropriately online. Victor Petuya and Arja Krauchenberg attended this summit. Leading experts discussed the following topics:

- Microcredentials; embracing a new qualification; implementing CMF in (MOOC-Based) Short Learning programmes
- The concept and role of online Short Learning Programmes in European Higher Education
- Empowering education by artificial intelligence
- EMBED; the European Maturity Model for Blended Education; launch of the EMBED MOOC

Pan-EU Hackaton on April 24-26th which was attended by Víctor Petuya on behalf of EPA.

Social Platform held its statutory GA online on May 5th which was attended by Víctor Petuya on behalf of EPA. During the meeting the new mission and vision of SP was adopted which you can find here: <https://www.socialplatform.org/who-we-are/>

The following day **OBESSU (Organizing Bureau of School Students' Unions)** held a webinar on the transition from secondary school to higher education – an extremely tricky subject in times of COVID-19 with exams being held online, deadlines changed and validation submitted to new criteria. You can find more information here: <https://www.obessu.org/resources/news/webinar-on-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-the-transition-from-secondary-to-higher-education/>

On May 8th the **Alliance for Investing in Children** organized a virtual meeting with the social attachées of the EU member states in Brussels to discuss the possibilities and willingness of the MS to ensure child and family protection in the long term through a proposal for a Council recommendation on the Child Guarantee Scheme and a proposal for a comprehensible and sustainable 2030 strategy. The reactions were very positive but the further actions by the MS governments remain to be seen.

On May 21th, Victor Petuya attended the **EMIE annual meeting**. EMIE is a European network, gathering all organizations and players from civil society concerned with non-state



(independent, private) education. Victor was invited to speak about the priorities and problems of the families during the COVID crisis.

EPA at members' events

Coface Families Europe together with our **Croatian member Korak-po-korak** (Step-By-Step) have organized a series of eight webinars on *Digital Citizenship* tackling issues like cyber-bullying, video-games, hate speech and critical thinking. You can find more information on their respective websites (see below) and the different “breakfast bytes” will be available on YouTube by the end of May.

<https://www.udrugaroditeljapkg.hr/78-novosti/598-medunarodna-suradnja-18-svibnja-urkpk-odrzava-medunarodni-webinar-na-temu-stvaranja-bullyfree-okruzenja-za-djecu-i-mlade-u-okviru-konferencije-digital-citizenship-breakfast-bytes>

<http://www.coface-eu.org/digitalisation/save-the-date-coface-study-sessions-on-digital-citizenship-myth-or-reality-in-zagreb-12-may-2020/>

Update on projects

Finished projects

No projects finished during the first part of 2020.

Ongoing projects

IntegratED: The project which started at the end of 2017 aims at *Promoting Meaningful Integration of 3rd Country National Children to Education* and focuses on strengthening the successful participation of newly arrived third-country national children in education. In the framework of the project, a peer-mentoring program and an online homework club for TCN children as well as information material about the school systems and access to basic provisions have been developed in different languages for migrant families in Greece, Italy and Spain. EPA has contributed guidelines for schools to implement the project outcomes and a policy brief to promote the dissemination of the project. The project got an extension as there was supposed to be a stakeholder meeting in Brussels in March 2020 as well as a final conference to be held in Athens. Some partners also still need to implement parts in schools. Due to the pandemic, none of these events could take place and it is not yet clear whether the consortium will ask for another extension. In the meantime, please check out the projects' website with interesting materials and tips also fit for distance learning as well as the video:

<https://www.integrated-project.eu>

Sirius 2.0 Policy Network on Migrant Education: aims to promote co-operation between different stakeholders, support inclusive policy development and implementation at different governance level and facilitate the integration of children and young people with a migrant



background in education. Among others through peer-learning activities and national and regional workshops for inclusive policy making.

The GA and international conference in Chania at the end of April had been planned in cooperation but had to be cancelled due to COVID-19 as. The situation regarding the foreseen PLAs (Peer Learning Activities) in June and the fall are not yet clear.

Media Literacy for Parents:

This Erasmus+ project started in November 2019 with a Kick-off meeting in Krakow, Poland attended by Boštjan Bobič. It's foreseen to last until 31.10.2021. The leading partner is Fundacija Mapa pasji and the consortium is composed of 7 partners representing 6 EU countries: Poland, Italy, Greece, Cyprus, Bulgaria, and Belgium.

Media Literacy education has failed in many cases as no proper education for parents was provided. Parents are the most important role models for their children regarding media usage. The present project aims to bridge this gap and develop media literacy skills and competencies for parents.

The expected impact on parents will be to enhance their skills on the topic of media literacy and improve their confidence and knowledge as guides and role models for their children in today's media scene. They will connect with adult trainers/ experts in the field as well as with other parents and through this community will work together in combating the problems we face as users of the media.

A survey has been conducted in the participating countries - thank you to those among you who have participated and disseminated the information. National reports have been drawn up on its results and a synthesis report has been established. The first newsletter was sent out recently and an fb page has been created where you can follow the progress. An online meeting took place in April and the training curriculum is currently under development. EPA is responsible for creating a guide on Media Literacy for Parents and we would love to hear your suggestions regarding the questions that you would like to see dealt with in this guide.

Empowering the School Boards and Management: An Erasmus+ project developed by our member EstPA.

In order to participate in developing the school environment, the parent must take responsibility by participating in decision-making processes. Parents as decision makers must be educated and competent. Society needs a national and international education programs for parents, the keywords of which are communication skills (management of development and conflicts, building up and holding relationships) and cooperation (collegial management).

Estonian Parents' Association (EstPA) has been actively and systematically trained school boards since 2006 and practically all Estonian schools have been visited and altogether about 10,000 school community members have been trained. There have been met many school boards who are ready to take on more responsibility, as well as heads of schools and members



of the local governments who would be willing to grant more rights to school board if they only knew how to do it correctly in terms of the laws and sustainability. Impact foreseen:

1. project will give the active parents and students an entirely new potential to be involved in the management of an educational institution and systematically improve their competence;
2. project involves more than thousand families and creates the prerequisites for the rapid growth of their communication skills and ability to cooperate - it will benefit the improvement of relations between two or even three generations;
3. collegial management enables the inclusion of a larger number of competent people in the school life cycle; instead of power struggle, energy will go towards cooperation;
4. school board will become a trusted partner for local government; entrepreneurial parents make financial contributions of significant amounts to their children's learning environment, without there being any obligations for the local government;
5. at the national level, we dare to predict that the described process will create the necessary prerequisites for a formation of new generation of politicians who have contributed voluntarily to the community for many years and who understand local and educational life and are therefore able to establish and maintain productive relationships in a community-based way.

Redesign and modernize EBBD portfolio and curriculum The European Business Baccalaureate Diploma (EBBD) is an educational pathway in VET that offers a wide range of nowadays-crucial competences in a sophisticated package deal. The studies focus on soft skills, life-long learning and other transversal skills, foreign language and intercultural competences as well as work-based learning in a digitalized business world. It strives to equip students in upper secondary education with competences crucial for their employability in the future. The curriculum is organized in modular learning units based on the new frameworks and designed according to ECVET criteria. This will make the diploma more easily transferable to other institutions and European countries.

To adjust EBBD to recent developments in the world of work and the competences required for future employability the new Erasmus+ Key Action 2 project will in particular incorporate the recently published European Frameworks on competences into the qualification, i.e. The Digital Competence Framework for Citizens, The Digital Competence Framework for Consumers, The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework and The Council Recommendations for Lifelong Learning.

However, they also want to crosscheck these recommendations with competence requirements of the world-of work on a local, regional and wherever possible national level, by creating links to companies and chambers and EPA has been invited as an associate partner.

The project held a meeting in Vienna as well as a conference just on the day the lockdown was announced in Austria so several partners were no longer able to attend; some had to leave prematurely fearing that they would not make it home on time before the borders were closed. You can find more information here: <https://eurobacdiploma.eu/ebbd-prime/>



New projects:

Allinteract (starting in October 2020). The overall objective of this project is twofold:

- 1) to create new knowledge about how to transform potential citizen participation in science into actual engagement in scientific research with social impact;
- 2) to discover new ways to engage societal actors in research, including young citizens (15-29 years old) and vulnerable groups that have traditionally been marginalized from science (e.g., low socioeconomic background, ethnic and religious minorities, women, LGBTQI).

In order to achieve this twofold overall objective, the following six specific objectives (each one with a specific work package) have been established to:

- O1. identify in both, face to face interactions and social media interactions, how societal actors, including young citizens and vulnerable groups, benefit from the social impact of scientific research in gender and education;
- O2. explore the initiatives that are already making societal actors aware of the connection between the solutions they appreciate and the scientific research that led to them;
- O3. identify the actions through which this awareness is encouraging an active engagement of societal actors in direct participation in science;
- O4. analyse the actions which succeed in fostering the recruitment of new talent for science, including their participation in the co-creation of knowledge;
- O5. study the replicability of those actions with different societal actors, including young citizens, and the most vulnerable groups;
- O6. Inform policy by providing evidence to scale-up and replicate this active engagement within new social groups.

Participant No. *	Participant organisation name	Country
1 (Coordinator)	UNIVERSITAT DE BARCELONA (CREA-UB)	Spain
2	HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO (HY)	Finland
3	RIJKSUNIVERSITEIT GRONINGEN (RUG)	Netherlands
4	UNIVERSITA' DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA (UNIMIB)	Italy
5	INSTITUTO SUPERIOR DE CIENCIAS SOCIAIS E POLITICAS (ISCSP-ULisboa)	Portugal
6	THE CHANCELLOR, MASTERS AND SCHOLARS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD (UOXF)	UK
7	EUROPEAN PARENTS ASSOCIATION (EPA)	Belgium



Additionally, the Board informs that **EPA has been invited to a number of projects** – almost 20 between 2019 and 2020 - and that we are waiting for the results of which projects will be chosen for EU financing. Most of them are then scheduled to start in autumn – in which way will largely depend on the development of the pandemic and the according measures.

The criteria for the acceptance of being involved in the consortium of these proposals have been: alignment with EPA objectives, potential interest for their members, visibility of EPA, expertise of EPA, quality of the consortium and networking.

Upcoming events

Most f2f meetings have been cancelled at least until the end of this school year. Some conferences scheduled for this period have been postponed to a later date in 2020 and some to 2021 as for example the European Development Days: <https://eudevdays.eu/>

We would like to draw your attention to events that have changed into online meetings often allowing a much bigger number of participants than might have attended offline. We encourage you to use these opportunities and take part as well as your members.

May 27th

LLLp webinar instead of the Annual Conference in Zagreb that had to be cancelled: <http://lllplatform.eu/events/event/lllp-webinar-lifelong-learning-for-sustainable-societies/>

May 28th:

EAFa webinar: **Career guidance and awareness raising on apprenticeships as the first choice**. More info and registration can be found at this link: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1147&eventsId=1647&furtherEvents=yes>

EUCEN 2020 seminar: The European University for Continuing Education Network offers a seminar presenting examples and experiences from Estonia, Spain and the US that might be useful to you. Program and registration here: <http://www.eucen.eu/post/keynote-speakers-for-the-eucen-2020-seminar-across-the-atlantic>

June 22-24:

EDEN Annual conference 2020 online: The European Distance and E-Learning Network will hold its annual conference online on **Human and artificial intelligence for the society of the future – Inspiring digital education for the next student STE(A)M generation** which might be interesting to all who are wondering on how future teaching can/will look like and are



interested in more information especially on AI. Here are the links to the program and the registration: https://www.eden-online.org/2020_timisoara/

July 20-24

2getherLAND online: The Act2gether community has decided to change their meeting from the f2f to an online event so that even more people can participate. You can have a look at their program and register here: <https://act2gether.com/>

October 22-24

ESHA – The European School heads Association plans to hold their biannual conference in Limasol, Cyprus

