

Expert Group on Financial Education

6 November 2009

Brussels, Conference centre Albert Borschette (CCAB), Room 2C

Minutes

Introductory session

Mr Martin Merlin, Head of Unit and Mr Daniel Kosicki, DG MARKT, Unit G1

MM and DK welcomed the EGFE members and the agenda of the meeting was adopted. In his introductory remarks, MM explained that we are soon to have a new Commissioner for DG Markt and that the group's recommendations on how to move the issue of Financial Education forward will be put to the new Commissioner once appointed.

Progress in the Member States

Tour de table

The German representative stated that financial education is a state responsibility and that the various Consumer Protection Ministries are working on developing this issue.

The Danish representative stated that in Denmark they are debating the need for a National Strategy. They are currently looking to define and measure this issue to see if there is a problem that needs to be addressed.

In Italy legislation on financial education is currently before the Senate. Five bills on financial education have recently been presented envisaging the setting up of a ministerial committee tasked with developing national financial education programs. The National Bank and the Italian Banking Association, which is acting through PattiChiari Consortium, are running separate financial education programs targeted to secondary schools the former and primary, junior and high schools the latter. In October 2009 PattiChiari Consortium has launched a teachers website (up to date more than 400 teachers have subscribed their participation) that provides tools for teaching financial education..

The Czech representative outlined a range of initiatives they are working on including their implementation strategy making financial education compulsory in high schools. They are also working with the OECD looking at how to measure financial literacy (pilot programme).

In Hungary, financial education has been in the curriculum since 2007 but there is no requirement on any specific format or content on how to teach it in schools. The National Bank has initiated a forum with financial regulator, relevant government organizations and the public sector on developing a national strategy for financial education, however, events in the last two years have resulted in a delay of starting the actual work as focus was more on stabilizing the economy. The National Bank and the Financial Regulator are running separate programs targeted to financial education in secondary schools, including teacher training on financial education.

In France there is no National strategy nor political will to develop one.

In the UK it is expected that financial education will become compulsory in schools shortly with funding now available for teacher training.

In The Netherlands, a vision for schools based on age groups has been developed and they are now running a pilot programme which will come forward with proposals for financial education in schools shortly.

In Poland there is currently no National Strategy but there has been significant financial education activities involving 100,000+ students, they are now looking to coordinate these initiatives and develop a plan to implement compulsory financial education in schools.

In Austria financial education was recently mentioned in a Ministerial speech which is a positive step forward.

In Spain on 14 September an agreement was signed among the Bank of Spain, the Stock Exchanges Supervisor (CNMV) and the Ministry of Education to introduce financial education in schools for 2010/2011, which will include teacher training. Besides, one of the bigger Spanish banks recently announced to have a 3 year plan with a budget of €26m over the 3 years whose main objective is to spread financial education at schools, reaching 200.000 pupils during the next year in the world areas where the bank operates.

In Sweden they are moving forward by including a financial education in the school curriculum but there is currently no National Strategy.

Following the tour de table, the Commission reported that all of these initiatives show that in many cases real progress has been made. Following the discussion it was agreed that it was useful for the Commission to continue to encourage Member States to develop National Strategies on financial education and that this should include adding financial education to school curriculums, to which the new DOLCETA module should assist with (to be launched in early 2010).

Dolceta 'Financial literacy – Tools for teachers'

Ms Jelisaveta Stankovic-Banka – DG SANCO, Unit B4, and Ms O'Donoghue and Ms Davies from EUCEN

JSB provided an overview of the new Dolceta module that will be launched in early 2010. This was followed by a demonstration of the Irish website that has been develop as an example of the new module and the value it can provide to teachers and other users.

DISCUSSION

The key issue raised following these presentations was how best can the existence and availability of the Dolceta module be promoted in each Member State? JSB has asked for any suggestion on how this can be done to be sent to DG SANCO.

The UK representative questioned the value of Dolceta as the UK is not a part of this module but has spent substantial resources developing their own financial education materials which are available online. The Swedish representative asked about expert input in the development of the module. Ms Davies explained that both focus and teacher groups were used both to evaluate and develop the lesson plans for each Member State.

JSB stated that the Dolceta module would be launched in early 2010 with a conference – to which members of the EGFE will be notified of once the date has been set.

Results of the Working groups

Group 1 – Financial Education in Schools

Group 2 – Future actions

Group 1 discussed financial education in schools and included presentations by the UK, Italy, Czech Republic and the OECD on the work they have done to date in schools. This discussion illustrated the broad range of activities that different Member States have done to address this issue. In essence

there was a view that greater evidence was needed to convince policy-makers of the value of financial education in schools.

The OECD noted that their 2012 exercise will have a financial component which may go some way to addressing this issue. Several key issues were raised during the workshop including: What needs to be provided, the role of teachers, the involvement of partners, the need for attractive and easy to use resource materials for teachers, the role of parents and the need to share best practice and international experiences.

Group 2 discussed future activities for promoting financial education. The key outcome and message of this working group was the support for a 'financial education day' to concentrate efforts in this area across the EU and increase the visibility and importance of the issue. This idea would enable individual Member States to take up specific issues at National level under the EU banner.

DISCUSSION

Group 1

MM questioned the burden of introducing financial education in schools. Several suggestions were raised including making financial literacy part of existing subjects such as maths, history, etc, and the creation of complementary materials for teachers to use. The Spanish representative mentioned that extra-curricula activities have worked well to engage students in Spain. In Hungary they have an activity where students run microenterprises which have worked well to date (also in The Netherlands).

MM asked how the Commission can assist in this area. The view was that the Commission can further actively promote the topic and remove any obstacles for Member States to adopt these initiatives. It was seen that the Commission needed to clearly explain and communicate to Member States the need and importance of financial literacy education in schools.

Group 2

Following the discussion MM agreed that the Commission can promote and market the issue across the EU and that we should look in greater detail at the possibility of a 'Financial Education Day'.

Conclusion

Mr Martin Merlin, Head of Unit, DG MARKT, Unit G1

MM thanked all representatives for their input and summarised the various discussions.

The next meeting, to be confirmed, will be held on 3 May 2010. At this meeting MM will outline the position of the Commission on Financial Education and will discuss the value and functioning of this group going forward.

DETAILED AGENDA (10:00-16:45)

INTRODUCTION (10:00-10:10)

- Welcome and order of the day. Update on recent developments in the Commission (D. Kosicki)

PROGRESS IN THE MEMBER STATES (10:10-10:45)

- Update on the developments in the Member States, in particular as regards national strategies (Experts – *tour de table*)

WORK IN GROUPS (10:45-12:45)

- Group 1: *Attracting youth to financial education: in school and beyond. Innovative education techniques.* (Contact person: F. Hudig.)
- Group 2: *Financial education in the formal school system – programme design and effectiveness measurement. Possibility for a dedicated OECD Pisa study.* (Contact person: A. Laboul)
- Group 3: *European Day of Financial Education and other possible initiatives at the EU level – elaboration of proposals for the next Commission.* (Contact person: A. Papke)

LUNCH BREAK (12:45-14:00)**DOLCETA "FINANCIAL LITERACY – TOOLS FOR TEACHERS" (14:00-15:00)**

- Introduction and the context (DG SANCO)
- Presentation of the new module based on the draft Irish national version by EUCEN (M. O'Donoghue, P. Davies)
- Questions and comments (Experts)

RESULTS OF THE WORK IN GROUPS AND GENERAL DISCUSSION (15:00-16:30)

- Work Group 1: presentation of results (Expert from WG 3)
- Discussion (Experts)
- Work Group 2: presentation of results (Expert from WG2)
- Discussion (Experts)

- Work Group 3: presentation of results (Expert from WG3)
- Discussion (Experts)

CONCLUSION (16:30-16:45)

- Summary of the discussions and follow-up to the meeting. Date and topic for the next meeting (M. Merlin)