

JOINT DECLARATION

of

Mr Ján Figel'

Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth
European Commission

and

Shri Arjun Singh

Minister for Human Resource Development
Government of India

ON EDUCATION

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ON EDUCATION

The European Commission and the Government of India wish to reinforce co-operation and dialogue in the fields of education and training.

European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, Mr. Ján Figel', and Minister for Human Resource Development, Government of India, Shri Arjun Singh, declare their wish to strengthen co-operation and dialogue between the European Commission and the Government of India in the fields of education and training.

The European Commission and the Government of India acknowledge the crucial contribution of education and training to the development of knowledge-based societies and economies and the key role they play in boosting growth and employment.

Both sides furthermore recognise the long-standing context of their cooperation in education and training in line with:

- the Cooperation Agreement signed on 20 December 1993, in particular its provisions regarding human resource development and the promotion of cooperation between EU and Indian Higher education institutions (article 18),
- the EU-India Joint Declaration on Cultural Relations adopted on 3 November 2004 at the India-EU summit in The Hague,
- the 2005 EU-India Joint Action Plan supporting the Strategic Partnership,
- the Joint Statement issued at the EU-India Summit in New Delhi on 30 November 2007.

In this context, Commissioner Ján Figel' and Minister Arjun Singh recognise the positive outcome of the 2008 EU-India Summit in Marseille, and in particular the decision to develop a policy dialogue between the parties in the field of education.

Commissioner Ján Figel' and Minister Arjun Singh stress the importance of promoting the use of existing instruments in order to foster academic mobility and to develop links between higher education institutions. They especially welcomed the success of a large number of Indian students and scholars who have received scholarships under the Erasmus Mundus programme and express their expectation that academic exchanges will be further reinforced through the newly-launched Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window (India Strand) and the second phase of Erasmus Mundus programme. They also look forward to the results of the India-EU Study Centres initiative. Both sides also expressed satisfaction with the EU's support to India's flagship programme for the universalisation of elementary education.

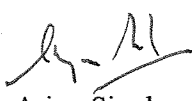
Taking into account these positive developments, Commissioner Ján Figel' and Minister Arjun Singh express their intent to take the following further actions:

- The European Commission and the Government of India, represented for this purpose by the Directorate General for Education and Culture on the one side, and by the Ministry of Human Resource Development on the other side, will set up a sectoral policy dialogue on education and training that may cover the following thematic areas:
 - the reforms agenda for higher education in order to respond to changes in society and to labour market needs at global level;
 - quality and equity in education, quality assurance mechanisms at all levels of education, and the participation of the stakeholders concerned including teachers and students;
 - academic excellence and cooperation with institutes such as the Indian Institutes of Technology and the European Institute of Innovation and Technology;
 - faculty and student mobility including mechanisms to promote it;
 - initial and continuing teacher education;
 - vocational education and training;
 - tools for the recognition of qualifications and periods of study, the transfer of learning outcomes at all levels of education including European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), promoting the transparency and transferability of qualifications;
 - lifelong learning policies, particularly the acquisition of basic and new skills, e-learning policies, use of ICT in schools, second chance education for adults and inclusive education for the disadvantaged groups.
- The sectoral policy dialogue will consist of regular exchanges of best practices, sharing information on policy developments and challenges, and the promotion of knowledge-building and sharing in relation to the commonly identified issues. It will also include discussions on existing and future co-operation. Specific events such as seminars, workshops or expert meetings will be jointly organised for the purpose of those exchanges and discussions, with the participation of relevant stakeholders. These events could be held annually, alternately in Brussels and in New Delhi or in any other venue agreed by both sides.
- Both sides will jointly set up a rolling work programme for conducting this sectoral policy dialogue. They will regularly review its implementation and discuss avenues for future co-operation. To this end, senior officials from both sides led by the Director General (Education & Culture) of the European Commission and the Secretary, Department of Higher Education, of the Government of India, will meet in principle once a year at alternating venues. Other occasional meetings may be held as necessary.
- Both sides will bear their own delegation's costs of participation in such events and meetings. All other costs linked to the organisation of these seminars, workshops and meetings will be borne by the side hosting the event, except if agreed otherwise.

The provisions of this Joint Declaration express the intent and are not designed to create legal rights or obligations under international law.

Done in New Delhi on the 12th of November 2008.


 Jan Figel
 European Commissioner for Education,
 Training, Culture and Youth


 Arjun Singh
 Minister for Human Resource Development
 Republic of India