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Dimensions and Functions of Educational Space of Modern Europe (with particular reference to the European Union)

Wymiary i funkcje przestrzeni edukacyjnej współczesnej Europy (ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem Unii Europejskiej)

Summary:

The article is an attempt of categorization and characterization of the educational space of modern Europe. At the beginning the author defined and determined its boundaries with particular reference to the European Union. The basic deliberations concentrate on the analysis of the dimensions and functions of educational space of modern Europe, underlying its multidimensionality and specificity of functioning, inter alia, in political, social, economic field. Three dimensions of the educational space have been considered: social-cultural, material, virtual-technological and its three functions: informational, axiological, and social ones. In the presented studies the author referred to a few scientific methods appropriate for social sciences: the method of system, comparative, and institutional- legal analysis. In these analyses both the sources of primary character and the literature on the subject were used. The official internet pages of the entities functioning in or studying the European educational space were widely used.

Keywords:

education, transformation, dimensions of educational space, functions of educational space

Streszczenie:

Artykuł jest próbą kategoryzacji i charakterystyki przestrzeni edukacyjnej współczesnej Europy. Na początek zdefiniowano oraz określono jej granice, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem Unii Europejskiej. Zasadnicze rozważania koncentrują się na analizie wymiarów i funkcji przestrzeni edukacyjnej współczesnej Europy, z naciskiem na jej wielowymiarowość i specyfikę funkcjonowania, m.in. w sferze społecznej, politycznej, gospodarczej. W rozważaniach uwzględniono trzy wymiary przestrzeni edukacyjnej: społeczno-kulturalny, materialny, wirtualno-technologiczny oraz trzy jej funkcje: informacyjną, aksjologiczną oraz społeczną. W prezentowanych badaniach odwołano się do kilku metod badawczych właściwych dla nauk społecznych: metody analizy systemowej, komparatystycznej i instytucjonalno – prawnej. W analizach wykorzystano tak źródła o charakterze pierwotnym jak i literaturę przedmiotu. Szeroko sięgnięto do oficjalnych stron internetowych podmiotów funkcjonujących lub badających europejską przestrzeń edukacyjną.

Słowa kluczowe:

edukacja, transformacja, wymiary przestrzeni edukacyjnej, funkcje przestrzeni edukacyjnej

1. Introductory remarks

Modern challenges facing a globalizing society concern, to a large extent, widely understood education. In the literature on the subject they are presented in the categories of so-called „educational space” where education is not only a process of a knowledge transfer but also an organized system of activities and a necessary element of the policy of every state. Therefore it is assumed that next to the political, informational, economic, cultural etc. space there exist an educational space which, together with them, influences the formation and development of society. It should be remarked here that in the classical dimension, this process concerns also the European Union where the integration processes are held not only on the economic and political level but also on social-cultural and educational ones. In these dimensions, the common educational space is treated as the basis for further development of both integration and society of member states in all fields which create the identity of the European Union.

It should be underlined that today, more and more actions concerning educational space, including inter alia educational policy cannot be implemented exclusively within the frames of competence of particular states. Hence the development of educational mobility, exchange of teaching staff, pupils, students, cooperation between educational institutions. At the same time, apart from their own priorities in education policy, the states try also to implement common aims; the European Union is a good example of these activities. Consequently, in all member states in the field of education, apart from national values, the Union i.e. European values are promoted.

It may be assumed that in connection with the migration processes and growing economic competitions, education becomes an important sphere of activity and the element of the process of exchange of ideas and people. It is, however, treated as one of effective ways of solutions of modern challenges and threats because it gives possibility of formation of defined values and of rapprochement of societies and states.

2. Uniqueness of Educational Space

The category „educational space” most frequently functions in similar contexts as other spaces: political, economic, informational, cultural etc.¹. For

¹ I. Surina, *Rozważania o przestrzeni edukacyjnej – od teorii do praktyki edukacyjnej*, [in:] *Przestrzeń edukacyjna wobec wyzwań i oczekiwań społecznych*, ed. I. Surina, Kraków 2012, 14.

the first time this name occurred in the 1970s in the works on social space of French sociologist P. Bourdieu². The category consists of two expressions: „space” and „education” as separate concepts. The second term is most frequently defined as an organized system of school and educational activities whose aim is teaching at all stages, although this is education mainly in terms of intellect³. Education is also presented as social-cultural gradual process of development and maturing of a man⁴. Category „space” has also many meanings. In a dictionary it is described as unlimited three-dimensional sphere in which all physical phenomena occur⁵. In the context that interests us, the educational space is a field of „happening” of education in which the educational and teaching processes take place. Here the activities undertaken by pupils and students to acquire knowledge are included⁶.

M Michalik defines the educational space as a condition and a property of existence and activity of a man⁷. According to him, this is a space in which the educational processes take place very quickly, at the same time it is a rational construction of straightening up the social life which is based on educational activity. For him, the perception of educational space depends on events that happen in it and also on values that are present in the society⁸.

Russian scientist, R. Ponomarev presents the educational space as a kind of a space or a place which comprises a man and an environment in the process of cooperation the result of which is to acquire knowledge by that man⁹. Other Russian scientists W. Kharytonova, O. Sannikova, I. Menshikova think that the educational space is a scope of cooperation of teachers, academic teachers, pupils, students, and the environment which accompanies them¹⁰.

² S. Kriwuch, Соотношение понятий „среда” и „пространство” в социокультурном образовательном аспектах, „Мир науки, культуры, образования” 2011 no. 2, 17. P. Bourdieu did not use exactly this term, he studied this kind of social space in which the relations students and lecturers took place.

³ A. Arnold, *Słownik języka polskiego*, Warszawa – Bielsko-Biała 2011, 103.

⁴ T. Tkacz, *Formalne i prywatne funkcje przestrzeni edukacyjnej*, [in:] *Nierówności społeczne a wzrost gospodarczy*, Rzeszów 2008, 320.

⁵ *Słownik języka polskiego*, <http://sjp.pwn.pl/slowniki>.

⁶ B. Dudel, *Kreowanie przestrzeni edukacyjnej w kształceniu matematycznym uczniów klas młodszych w opinii przyszłych nauczycieli. Wybrane aspekty*, [in:] *Edukacja dziecka – mity i fakty*, eds. E. Jaszczyszyn, J. Szada-Borzyszkowska, Białystok 2010., 552.

⁷ I. Surina, 14.

⁸ Ibidem, 14-15.

⁹ R. Попомарев, Образовательное пространство как основополагающее понятие теории образования, „Педагогическое образование и наука” 2003 no 1, 29-31.

¹⁰ L. Golubiewa, Образовательное пространство и образовательная среда начальной школы в свете требований Федерального государственного образовательного стандарта, <http://old.kipk.ru>.

The literature on the subject underlines that the educational space is characterized by its own properties. They are, inter alia: multi-dimensionality, heterogeneity (diversity), temporality, continuity, complexity, asymmetry, openness, sensitivity, non-linearity. This multidimensionality of the educational space is the result of the complexity of education itself and of various dimensions of its organization – from the group one, through individual to an institutional organization¹¹.

At the same time it should be added that in social sciences there appeared at least a few interpretations of educational space. We can speak about system-comprehensive, mental-emotional, personal-developmental, social-geographic, distance, or local interpretations¹². It is underlined that social changes or scientific-technical progress continuously entail changes in educational space and its development is implemented between state influence (formal education) and the needs of society (informal education)¹³. At the same time, in the literature there dominates a view that the educational space is a changeable and multidimensional area of implementations of educational processes. These processes have also a historical context because they consume the experiences of many epochs and cultures,

The above mentioned determinants and the specificity of educational space are reflected with reference to the European Union. In this case, the issues concerning education were not, for a long time, the subject of particular regulations. The Rome Treaties and the Single European Act of 1987 do not include any separate rulings on this subject. The formation of the European Union pursuant to the Maastricht Treaty created the basis for the separation of Union's educational space from its global dimension¹⁴.

According to some scientists this, the so-called Europeanization of educational space is regionally oriented version of the internationalization and globalization¹⁵. K. Dyson and K. Goetz say that the growing power of entities (actors) and institutions of the European Union is the essence of Europeanization¹⁶. The influence of the European Union on domestic political decisions of the member states is to be the essence of Europeanization; the Europeanization

¹¹ I. Surina, 18-20.

¹² W. Kastorowa, Некоторые подходы к определению образовательного пространства, <http://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/nekotorye-podhody-k-opredeleniyu-obrazovatel'nogo-prostranstva>

¹³ T. Tkacz, 320.

¹⁴ M. Mazińska, *Polityka edukacyjna Unii Europejskiej*, Warszawa 2004, 5.

¹⁵ Ibidem

¹⁶ K. Dyson, K.H. Goetz, *Living with Europe: Power, Constraint and Contestation*, [in:] *Germany, Europe and the Politics of Constraint*, eds. K. Dyson, K.H. Goetz, New York 2003, 15-16.

of education is manifested in the educational policy of the European Union, in the implementation of the Bologna Process, support of student exchange programs, creation of common frames in primary and secondary education, writing common textbooks, promotion of the concept of longlife learning.

It should be stressed that the influence of the educational space of the European Union exceeds its territorial boundaries. Within the present educational policy of the European Union in the field of education, trainings, the young people and sport Erasmus+ program is implemented. The participants are not only the member states of the European Union but also Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and the candidate countries (Turkey, the Republic of Macedonia)¹⁷. Also within the program Erasmus+ there is a partnership with associated countries or third countries neighboring with the member countries which can take part in some programs on defined basis. They are: Belarus, Ukraine, Russia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Egypt, Algeria, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Palestine, Tunisia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo.

The document „Education and Training 2020” [ET 2020] is a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training, including common strategical aims of the member states. The document underlines that „education and training have a crucial role to play in meeting the many socio-economic, demographic, environmental and technological challenges facing Europe and its citizens[...].”¹⁸. The document uses such expressions as „citizens cohesion”, „citizens”, „Europe” which can acknowledge that educational sphere is regarded as a coherent area in which all social actors act on equal rights.

Speaking about the process of Europeanization in the field of education and about the boundaries of educational space of the European Union we should draw attention to their institutional dimension. Europeanization in institutional meaning means the formation of „Common Europe”, the institution at the EU level. The following institutions and organs in the field of education have been created: Komisja Kultury i Edukacji [Commission of Education and Culture], Komisja Edukacji Młodzieży [Commission of Youth Education], Kultura i Badań Naukowych [Commission of Culture and Scientific Studies], Rada ds. Edukacji, Młodzieży, Kultury i Sportu. [Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council], Europejski Centrum Rozwoju Szkolenia Zawodowego [European Center for the Development of vocational Training], Europejska Fundacja

¹⁷ O programie Erasmus+, <http://erasmusplus.org.pl/o-programie>

¹⁸ Konkluzje Rady z dnia 12 maja 2009 r. w sprawie strategicznych ram Europejskiej współpracy w dziedzinie kształcenia i szkolenia („ET 2020”), <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/PL>

Kształcenia [European Foundation for Education], Agencja Wykonawcza ds. Edukacji, Kultury i Sektora Audiowizualnego [Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency], Europejski Instytut Innowacji i Technologi [European Institute of Innovation and Technology]¹⁹. The existence of these institutions at the EU level- not a domestic one, is a proof that educational space has a definite dimension, i.e. it comprises the area of the whole European Union.

The Treaty on European Union also defines the fields which are included in its educational space and not individual member countries. In the field of education the Union will aim at: developing the European dimension in education, particularly through the teaching and dissemination of the languages of the Member States, encouraging mobility of students and teachers, developing exchanges of information and experience, encouraging the development of distance education, encouraging the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe, encouraging the development of youth exchanges and of exchanges of socio-educational instructors, developing the European dimension in sport. As far as vocational education is concern the Union shall aim to: develop exchanges of information and experience on issues common to the training systems of the Member States. stimulate cooperation on training between educational or training establishments and firms, facilitate access to vocational training and encourage mobility of instructors and trainees and particularly young people, facilitate adaptation to industrial changes, in particular through vocational training and retraining, improve initial and continuing vocational training in order to facilitate vocational integration and reintegration into the labour market²⁰.

As you can see education did not ” undergo ” a deep „communitisation”; it is the field which remains, as a rule, in the competence of the member states. E. Januszewska writing about an European model of education emphasizes that educational policy of the European Union promotes longlife education based on four basic principles: to learn to know, act, live together, and exist, She underlines that the slogan of the educational policy of the European Union, implemented by educational programs is „Europa bez granic i barrier” [Europe without Borders and Barriers]²¹. Its aim is not the formation of a uniform educational system, it acknowledges that the society of each member state may be educated according to its own model. The European Union, taking into consid-

¹⁹ *Kształcenie, szkolenie, młodzież*, http://europa.eu/pol/educ/index_pl.htm.

²⁰ *Traktat o funkcjonowaniu Unii Europejskiej*, http://oide.sejm.gov.pl/oide/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=14804&Itemid=946.

²¹ E. Januszewska, *Europejski model edukacji*, <http://www.womkat.edu.pl/files/kwartalnik/12/januszewska.doc>

eration differences in traditions and values of its member states only supports the cooperation between them²².

3. Dimensions of Educational Space

Educational space, including also the European Union one, may be presented on many levels. The literature on the subject exposes social-cultural, material, and virtual-technological levels. The first one is of a basic character because it concerns the essence of the education.

According to A Toffler the education basing on the picture of the past and based on the present should form a vision of the future²³. P. Kennedy argues that the education is a key element in attempts which try to prepare society of the world to new challenges²⁴. S. Włoch underlines that the world forces the perception of the educational function as a necessary element which enables better understanding the civilization changes. According to him modern education is the most important determinant of the human capital which is connected with the economic and political progress²⁵.

It the literature, it is assumed that social-cultural dimension of European educational space is connected with the development and promotion of values of civil and European society and with the solution of social problems with the use of the sphere of education. Hence it is assumed that education may not be directed on didactic goals exclusively but also on educational ones, it should be oriented on the development of values and the formation of various skills. It is to help people understand that their own culture is not the only one and the goal of education should be the education of critical, creative people able to react to changing Europe²⁶.

Pointing to social-cultural dimension of a common educational space of the European Union it should be emphasized that the above mentioned Lisbon Strategy plays an important role in this field. In this strategy, it is presented that one of the directions of activity of the European Union is the development of the knowledge society which, inter alia, comprises education and human capital. The

²² K. Kondrat, *Programy edukacyjne Unii Europejskiej*, <http://www.konferencja.edu.pl/ref8/pdf/pl/KalinaKondrat-Elblag.pdf>.

²³ A. Toffler, *Szok przyszłości*, Poznań 2000, 402-403.

²⁴ P. Kennedy, *U progu XXI wieku (przymiarka do przyszłości)*, Warszawa 1994, 395.

²⁵ S. Włoch, *Wyzwania edukacji w zmieniającej się rzeczywistości społecznej*, [in:] *Edukacja w dobie integracji Europejskiej*, eds. E. Smak, D. Widelak, Opole 2006, 63-64.

²⁶ E. Smak, D. Widelak, 44-47.

goal of it is the adaptation of education to the knowledge society; dissemination of lifelong learning and the promotion of the mobility of people²⁷. The strategy „Euro 2020” which was published by the European Commission on 3 March 2010 and is the continuation of the Lisbon Strategy formulates 5 main goals. The fourth of them is education ; however it assumes the reduction the indicator of pupils finishing the primary education prematurely from 14,4% to 10% and the increase of the number of people with higher education from 32.3% to 40% (these indicators in the USA and Japan are 40% and 50% respectively)²⁸.

According to D. Dziewulak, in the social-cultural dimension the most important tasks are: equality of educational chances, integration of de-favored groups (particularly the integration of emigrants’ children and disabled people), and raising of the level of education to achieve goals in conformity with the needs and expectations of modern society²⁹. In this aspect T. Kowalski emphasizes the importance of the transfer of the same set of skills and knowledge to all persons who are learning. He perceives obstacles mainly in poor or dysfunctional families pointing to the need of levelling the lack of family or environmental education. It also means preventing illiteracy, all forms of gender discrimination, and promotion of health education. In this field the education of emigrants’ children (taking into consideration their religion, cultural, and language differences) is important³⁰.

The concept of interculturality occupies an important position in social-cultural dimension of the EU educational space³¹. R. Kaniuk-Jabłońska points, in this respect, to the need of connecting modern changes in the world with the development of democratic values and cultural pluralism³². Whereas P. Grzybowski underlines that this direction of activity should exhibit tolerance and should not promote European nationalism. He argues that so-called European education should not tend to form egoistic Europeanism³³.

²⁷ *Strategia Lizbońska a możliwości budowania gospodarki opartej na wiedzy w Polsce – wnioski i rekomendacje*, eds. E. Okoń-Horodyńska, K. Piecha, Warszawa 2005, 11.

²⁸ W. Stankiewicz, *Rozwój gospodarki Unii Europejskiej – Strategia Lizbońska, a nowy plan „Europa 2020”, „Rocznik integracji europejskiej” 2012 no. 6, 279.*

²⁹ D. Dziewulak, *Polityka oświatowa Wspólnoty Europejskiej*, http://mazowsze.hist.pl/33/Szkice_Podlaskie/697/1999/24580

³⁰ A. Włoch, 236.

³¹ A. Włoch, 234.

³² R. Kaniuk-Jabłońska, 64.

³³ P. Grzybowski, *Europejski wymiar edukacji – ideologiczny bubel czy kamień milowy edukacji międzykulturowej?*, <http://repozytorium.ukw.edu.pl/handle/item/225>.

Some scientists, inter alia, A. Włoch, and P. Grzybowski present social-cultural sphere of educational space within „European educational dimension”. According to them it means: strengthening of European consciousness and identity, development of democratic values, understanding civilizational values, encouraging the society to the development and promotion of European integration, expanding the knowledge in the field of history and culture of the EU member states, preparation for changes in united Europe, assurance of an easy access of representatives of cultural minorities and migrants to education, development of intercultural model of education³⁴. According to m. Abdallah-Preteille, the elements of European dimension of education are: knowledge, values, and awareness of being part of the European society. According to E. Walter European dimension means wide horizons of global and intercultural thinking³⁵. For J Sztumski education which adapts people to life in an intercultural society is the main aim³⁶.

Apart from social-cultural level a very important feature of educational space is its material dimension. Here an educational infrastructure i.e. everything which exists physically and what is needed for education is placed. The activities aimed at the improvement of educational conditions at all levels of education constitute its essence Here, for example, is situated the creation of new places for people who are learning, formation of proper educational institutions, the purchase of equipment and teaching materials, activities aiming at the improvement of educational conditions, purchase of new equipment and materials for education of people with special needs³⁷.

Within the European Union, in implementation of the above strategy „Europe 2020” the resources for educational infrastructure from the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund are used. The investment into educational infrastructure is also present in regional programs. Resources obtained from these sources may be designated for providing additional equipment for educational institutions to ensure better condition for learning, purchase of proper equipment, repairs and construction works of

³⁴ Ibidem

³⁵ E. Walterowa, A. Jezkova, *Žijeme v Evropě (Průvodce evropskou terminologií pro učitele a studenty učitelství)*, Praha 1999, 26.

³⁶ J. Sztumski, *Refleksje wokół wyzwań wobec edukacji przelomu XX i XXI wieku*, [w:] *Problemy edukacji wobec rozwoju społeczno-gospodarczego*, eds. A. Rączaszek, W. Koczur, Katowice 2013, 15-16.

³⁷ *Infrastruktura edukacyjna*, www.nowedotacjeunijne.eu/regionalne-programy-operacyjne/dolnoslaskie/os-priorytetowa-7-infrastruktura-edukacyjna-65-mln-euro.

educational institutions, co-financing educational structure including building or improvement of sports fields, gymnasiums etc.³⁸

Apart from the above mentioned funds in the material resources the education of the European Union is financed by the European Investment Bank. This institution, recognizing that high quality education is a sine qua non condition of economic and employment growth in modern society, invests in activities which improve the quality of educational institutions. The European Investment Bank, implementing its activities, supports strategic investments in these institutions in which teaching and learning are implemented. It prefers longlasting investments, which support knowledge based economy, improve competitiveness and fight with unemployment among young people³⁹.

Analyzing material dimension of common EU educational space it should be mentioned that the creation of proper conditions for pupils and students with special educational needs is also taken into consideration. According to the data of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 one sixth of citizens in the European Union cannot fully participate in social and economic life due to barriers. The Strategy puts an emphasis on removing those barriers, on guaranteeing logistic and hygienic conditions of teaching, didactic help and equipment for disabled people⁴⁰. In the EU educational space three attitudes to the education of these people are implemented. The first, the existence of special schools i.e. separate educational institutions where people with the same disability are taught. The second, an integration school with smaller classes and determined percentage of disabled pupils, the third –inclusive education i.e. widely available for all. The problem of the latter attitude is that in such schools there is very often a lack of proper equipment and teaching aids⁴¹.

Educational space has also of virtual-technological dimension which importance grows very much today. K. Abrosimova even says that education and technology are very closely connected with each other; she underlines that synergy is able to change the world in which we live⁴². She points that informational-communicational technologies more effectively help to solve complex problems in the field of education and facilitate the access to a wider knowledge

³⁸ *Fundusze europejskie dla placówek oświatowych*,

³⁹ *European Investment Bank*, <http://www.eib.org/projects/pipeline/index.htm>.

⁴⁰ *Edukacja włączająca uczniów niepełnosprawnych*, https://men.gov.pl/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/edukacja_wlaczajaca_uczniow_niepelnosprawnych1.pdf.

⁴¹ *Dostępna edukacja*, http://www.firr.org.pl/uploads/PUB/090608_Dostepna_edukacja.pdf.

⁴² K. Abrosimova, *5 ways virtual reality will change education*, www.hypergridbusiness.com/2014/09/5-ways-virtual-reality-will-change-education

and modern information. At the same time, technologies assure everyone the access to the possibilities of learning in the class and outside it⁴³. Previously, the scientists speak about the existence of the post-industrial society or the society of services today more and more researchers speak about information society⁴⁴.

Digital Agenda for Europe plays an important role in these activities. It determines the directions of development in the field of information society which allow us to make use of the IT and communication to the maximum, especially the Internet. The Agenda encourages the member states to include e-learning into their domestic policies to modernize the education and encourage professional development of employees of educational institutions⁴⁵.

The Communication on Rethinking Education is an important initiative in this dimension; its aim is the development of new ways of teaching in the European Union. It promotes investments in education and trainings in the field of the development of skills because they are of basic importance for stimulating the economic growth and competitiveness. In a longer perspective the development of these skills is to lead to the innovation and growth of production, formation of a future labor market⁴⁶.

4. The Functions of Educational Space

Modern education fulfills many functions inter alia: informational, axiological, and also a social one. In the European Union part of them is in the exclusive competences of the member states, part of them in the competences of the community. In this discussion the second part of the function is referred to because it favors the formation of common educational space of the European Union.

The first of these functions, the informational one, is to deliver knowledge on the European Union and Europe⁴⁷. In this field, the aim is the preparation of learners to live in a uniform Europe, providing knowledge on the European Union which will help them start learning in another member state and look-

⁴³ *ICT in education*, <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/ict-education>

⁴⁴ J. Zieliński, *Przemiany w edukacji konsekwencją wyzwań i oczekiwań wobec człowieka XXI wieku*, [w:] *Edukacja wobec wyzwań społeczeństwa informacyjnego*, red. D. Moranska, M. Jędrzejko, Dąbrowa Górnicza 2012, 38.

⁴⁵ *Europejska Agenda Cyfrowa*, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ftu/pdf/pl/FTU_5.9.3.pdf.

⁴⁶ *Communication from the Commission*, 9.

⁴⁷ A. Włoch, *Społeczny wymiar edukacji Europejskiej*, „Zeszyty Naukowe Małopolskiej Wyższej Szkoły Ekonomicznej w Tarnowie” 2011 no. 18, 229.

ing for job on the European market⁴⁸. I. Kość says that European education. i.e. "teaching about Europe" should consist in providing knowledge on the history of Europe, promotion of pan-European idea and culture which has its roots at the beginning of Christianity and Roman law, explanation of the processes of European integration in historical view, presenting the specificity of activity of European institutions⁴⁹.

T. Merta underlines that the function of providing knowledge about Europe and the European Union at school level can be implemented in various ways. The first ones are the programs and international exchanges. Subject classes and signature syllabuses are the second way. In some member states at school level and higher education level they may be independent subjects or they may be discussed during separate hours. Non-school and extracurricular classes whose aim is to increase knowledge on member states of the European Union are the third way. Organization of knowledge competitions on e.g. history of the member states, monuments in Europe, human right, ecology are good examples of non-school classes⁵⁰. The initiative of the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the European Cultural Foundation „Europe in School” is included in this trend; it consist in organization of youth meetings and seminars for the employees of educational institutions⁵¹.

Jean Monnet Programme is an important venture in the field of providing knowledge on the European Union and Europe; its aim is to stimulate teaching, studies, and debates on European integration at the level of higher education within and outside the European Union. Introduced in 1989 it is now implemented in several dozen countries all over the world⁵² and in 2014-2020 it is a part of the above mentioned Erasmus+ program. Within these frames the teaching and scientific studies in such fields as economy, history, law, politics and administration, intercultural dialogue, history, economy, communication and information, comparative regionalism, interdisciplinary studies, international relations and diplomacy are promoted⁵³. These activities are to support

⁴⁸ Ibidem

⁴⁹ I. Kość, *Europeizacja polskiej oświaty realizowana poprzez urzeczywistnianie europejskiego wymiaru edukacji*, [w]: *Kształ nie zawodowe w teorii i praktyce edukacyjnej*, eds. A. Kusztełak, A. Zduniak, Poznań 2006, 322.

⁵⁰ T. Merta, *Edukacja Europejska w Polsce. Pierwszy Rekonesans*, [in]: *Edukacja w polskiej szkole*, eds. D. Pieńkowska, K. Morawska, Warszawa 2001, 25.

⁵¹ P. Grzybowski, *Europejski wymiar edukacji – ideologiczny bubel czy kamień milowy edukacji międzykulturowej?*, <http://repozytorium.ukw.edu.pl/handle/item/225>.

⁵² *Jean Monnet Programme*, http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/jean_monnet/jean_monnet_en.php

⁵³ *Erasmus plus Programme Guide*, http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/sites/erasmusplus/files/files/resources/erasmus-plus-programme-guide_pl.pdf.

the dialogue between the academic world and politicians; it is also a possibility to enlarge the allocation of financial means on teaching and studies on the EU and to include good practices and new subjects on the EU to the syllabuses⁵⁴.

The axiological function is the next task of common educational space, including the EU educational space. According to Cz. Banach for the EU educational space it is important not only to provide knowledge about Europe (i.e. the described above informational function) but also the function aiming to educate, on the basis of common values, „learners as Europeans”⁵⁵. It should be added that pursuant to the Treaty on the European Union these basic values are: democracy, equality, respect of human dignity, freedom, human rights(including minorities) the state under the rule of law. Implementation of these values is a duty of all member states and the education is to favor the development of community based on pluralism, non-discrimination, solidarity, tolerance, justice, gender equality⁵⁶. Hence, the stress on education for democracy, peace, environmental protection, and tolerance towards others pursuant to Charter of Human Rights⁵⁷. A. Włoch emphasizes that the aim of the axiological function is the formation with the help of education in citizens of the EU the European identity, education of learners who profess the democratic values, providing knowledge necessary for integration of European society. I. Kość adds that „European thinking” and „European competencies” are important in this field.

„Civil education” is very important in this function. Hence now it is included in the syllabuses in all member states at all levels of education. Syllabuses of civil education refer to such subjects as basic norms of a democratic society, present problems of functioning of the society, issues of cultural diversity, sustainable development⁵⁸. The basic aims of civil educations are: civil knowledge (human rights, language differences, cultural heritage, civil, political, and social institutions); development of analytic and critical thinking; formation of civil basis (teaching about mutual respect and understanding, social responsibility, development of solidarity); support of active participation of learners in the life of society and their school ⁵⁹.

⁵⁴ *Jean Monnet Programme*, http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/jean_monnet/jean_monnet_en.php.

⁵⁵ Cz. Banach, *Strategia i zadania edukacji w integracji Polski z Europą*, „Zeszyty Naukowe Małopolskiej Wyższej Szkoły Ekonomicznej w Tarnowie” 1998-1999 no. 1, 12.

⁵⁶ *Główne wartości Unii*, <http://www.arslege.pl/glowne-wartosci-unii/k78/a11010>

⁵⁷ P. Grzybowski, *Europejski wymiar edukacji – ideologiczny bubel czy kamień milowy edukacji międzykulturowej?*, <http://repozytorium.ukw.edu.pl/handle/item/225>.

⁵⁸ *Edukacja europejska w Europie*, http://eurydice.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/citizen_PL.pdf

⁵⁹ *Edukacja Europejska w Europie* http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/Eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/139PL_HI.pdf.

European educational space also implements, apart from informational and axiological functions, a social function directed to the solution of social problems of the EU societies. According to the program Horizon 2020 of the European Commission social inequalities and exclusion are one of the most important ones. 80 million Europeans face poverty and 14 million of young people neither work nor study⁶⁰. Therefore, the EU educational policy is to solve this problem, to enable all citizens take advantage of high quality education. Its goals in this field are: longlife learning, providing skills and competences necessary to employ, social integration, development of civil activity and personal fulfillment, promotion of social mobility. In this context a particular attention is put to the needs of people with special educational needs, including people from migration milieus and the Romany community⁶¹.

Until 2020 the European Union sets itself such educational tasks as inter alia: at least 15% of adults should be included in the „longlife” program; at least 95% of children should participate in kindergarten education before they start learning at school; at least 40% of people at the age 30-40 should have higher education.

5. Final Remarks

Education is no doubt an important field of activity of states and an element of globalization and integration processes. In Europe it is treated as an effective way of solving modern challenges, it gives the opportunity of formation defined values and favors the integration of people from multicultural environments., including the immigration ones. As the result, common institutions and organs appear in Europe, especially within the European Union; an active exchange of learners and creation of common educational strategies take place.

The concepts and activities mentioned in the text together form and are the element of common European educational space. This space is implemented in the European Union in the most transparent and organized way where the standard educational functions are in the competence of member states. Therefore it is multidimensional because it functions in social-cultural dimension (education is oriented on the development of European society), material one (educational space is a physically present place) and virtual-technological dimension (it is based on modern information technologies).

⁶⁰ *Europe in a changing world - Inclusive, innovative and reflective societies*, <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/europe-changing-world-inclusive-innovative-and-reflective-societies>.

⁶¹ *Education and training for social inclusion*, http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/social-inclusion_en.htm.

European educational space is at the same time multilevel and implements a few basic functions. The most important are: informational function – is to provide learners the knowledge on Europe and the European Union, axiological – is to formulate common European values, and social – is to solve social problems in Europe and the European Union.

Today, the aims of the European educational space are implemented by the international cooperation and numerous educational programs. They are directed to the increasing of mobility of learners, cooperation between educational institutions, education which supports the integration of people, societies, and states. It is implemented within common space, constitutes an organized system of activities which influences the shape and development of societies in European and Union dimension

It cannot be forgotten that common educational space, also within the European Union, consists of educational systems of particular countries. These systems, depending on tradition, history, the stage of development and potential, are different. In the literature on the subject, for example, the Nordic model is distinguished (with particular reference to Finland). It is characterized by a strong engagement in organizing social life, high percentage of people employed in educational sphere, stress on civil rights, with special interest in the equality of educational chances. German educational system, in turn, is strongly de-centralized and extensive. It favors the acceleration of the globalization and Europeanization. Education in Poland, in turn, is regarded as one of the most developed ones and is marked by a well- educated teacher staff.

Hence, the opinion that common educational space is an important and even necessary condition of the improvement of the quality of human life, of the creation of equal developmental and educational chances, ways of creation of skills and competencies, social integration, civil activity, and personal fulfillment is justified. This space is also a very important determinant of human capital which determines the progress in all dimensions important for a man. And such is the policy of EU and its member states.

There is no doubt that the functioning of the European educational space is both a process and a challenge. This is achieved by the effective European integration, common experiences, successes resulting from its existence, Europeanization and globalization processes. There is also no doubt that particular European countries, including the ones that are the member states of the EU, notice in it the chance for peace, progress, and the increase of chances in rivalry in a global dimension.

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