

**RECOMMENDATION No. 14**

**concerning**

**THE TEACHING OF CLASSICAL LANGUAGES**

(1938)

The International Conference on Public Education,

Convened at Geneva by the International Bureau of Education and being assembled on the 18th of July at its seventh session, adopts on the twenty-first of July, nineteen hundred and thirty-eight, the following recommendation:

The Conference,

Faithful to the spirit which last year inspired the recommendation in favour of the development of the teaching of modern languages,

Recalls the interest attached to this teaching, while at the same time,

Considering that the object of education is to secure not only the acquisition of useful practical knowledge, but also and especially, the formation of the moral, intellectual and artistic sense in the highest possible degree;

That the conditions of modern life render this formation more and more necessary in order to ensure a proper balance of our faculties and our tastes;

That the most certain way of assisting the self-development of the child both at school and in later life is doubtless to instil in him alongside of intellectual activity and the sense of reality, qualities of judgment and an inquiring mind as well as a refined taste, and that the ancient humanities possess a particular educative value in this respect;

That all peoples have a major interest in understanding the civilisations which have exercised an influence on their own, particularly those from which their own civilisation has actually emerged;

That this knowledge of former civilisations may be acquired by the study of their art and literature, and that the latter can only be intimately understood by direct contact, with the texts;

Submits to the Ministries of Public Instruction of the various countries the following recommendation:

1) So far as is consistent with the study of modern literature and civilisation on the one hand, and of scientific studies on the other, a sufficient place should be given to the study of the civilisations which have exercised a marked influence on the countries concerned. For all the countries which identify themselves entirely or partially with Western civilisation an important place should be given to the study of the ancient civilisations and, more particularly, of those of Greece and Rome;

2) This study should not confine itself to the art and civilisation as they are to be found expressed in monuments; it implies equally an understanding of the modes of feeling and thought which find expression in the written works; moreover, by their qualities of order and proportion as well as by the precise understanding of human nature which they afford us, the literatures of Greece and Rome remain incomparable instruments of education;

3) It is desirable that contact with the parent civilisations should be established in particular by direct reading of the texts, which alone permits of a complete comprehension of these. Accordingly an important place ought to be assured in countries of Western civilisation to the study of Greek and Latin;

4) On account of the special educative value of this study in the development of qualities of order, clarity, logic and analysis, it seems imperative that a prominent place should be assured to it in the training, not only of future teachers, but also to the greatest extent possible of the pupils of secondary schools, girls as well as boys;

5) The study of classical languages, particularly by exercises of a grammatical order, can contribute to the training of the mind; but the main concern should be the understanding of ancient thought and civilisation and the comparison with modern civilisations;

6) To allow of sufficient contact with those literatures, it is desirable to supplement the direct study of the text by the reading of translations, interlined or entirely in a modern language;

7) In the course of the study of the classical languages, it is highly desirable to take into account the activity methods which the teaching

## **R14**

of modern languages has so usefully brought into play. One would thus avoid too formal and abstract a teaching, and take count of such interests of the child as are manifested in the course of his mental development;

8) In determining the age at which it is useful to approach the study of classical languages, it is important to take account not only of the mental range of the child, but also of the necessary coordination with other branches of teaching;

9) It would be desirable that the pronunciation of Latin should as far as possible be unified according to modern linguistic discoveries.