

Abstract: In a previous work (Magalhães e Stoer, 2003), we tried to map out, on the basis of the objectives ‘preparation for work’ and ‘education of responsible citizens’, the outlines of a new mandate for European education policy that appears to be in the making in accord with recent socio-economic, political and educational developments. In this article, we centre our attention on the ‘development of individual capacities’ in an attempt to map out the effects of the simultaneous pressure, top-down and bottom-up, that has been increasingly brought to bear on the nation-state and on the education system.