



Bündnis für
HUMANE BILDUNG

Huge response to the Petition

Secure the availability of choice!

ELIANT and the Alliance for Humane Education complete their signature gathering.

96.294 people from across Europe are supporting the objectives of ELIANT and the Alliance for Humane Education which are:

To retain the right to choose screen-free kindergarten and primary school education.

Those responsible for education must be able to decide for themselves whether and for what purpose digital media aids should be used. This applies most particularly to the first twelve years when sensory-motor skills and fundamental steps towards social and emotional maturity are developing.

The Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027) emphasises the "Promotion of a high-performing digital education system" as well the "Enhancement of digital skills and competences in the population for digital transformation." The signatures have been collected in order to make clear to the EU Commission and members of the European Parliament that careful consideration needs to be given to the fact that children and young people need an education that is humane and based in the real world. The 96.294 signatures underline the importance of this request.

The background

Economic and political demands are driving forward the digital transformation of society at high speed. In schools this is occurring in the name of "digital education". The technology being used to make it happen currently includes smart phones, laptops and Wifi. This means that lessons, schools and learning is being increasingly defined by digital media. Die 96.294 signatories to this petition are campaigning for a 'humane education' throughout Europe which orientates itself around the lawfulness which underpins development on a physical, psychological and spiritual level. The signatories do of course accept that the teaching of digital competences is an important aspect of schooling. As well as providing for a basic understanding of the functions of digital technology the aim is also to become creative, responsible and discerning in how they are used.

But: Everything has its right time! Children have a right to develop at their own pace, to use all their senses and to engage with their real-world environment through movement and creative play (sensory-motor integration). It is this interplay between sensory and motor experiences in the environment that enables them to form a healthy relationship with time and space and develop mental capacities that accord with their age. It is precisely this inborn right to develop which the 96,294 signatories to our petition, are campaigning for.

Independent research studies¹ in developmental psychology and neurobiology convincingly show that digital technology introduced too early stunts development and reduces real-life experience to a swiping of the screen. Insufficient physical movement, a fixing of the eyes and passive, head-focused experiences, prevent healthy brain development. They endanger the development of children through a series of negative effects: over stimulation, addiction, alienation from nature as well as damaging the capacity for self-control and thoughtful reflection.

¹ Vgl. Teuchert-Noodt, Gertraud (2015): „Zu Risiken und Chancen fragen Sie das Gehirn“, in: Lembke, Gerald / Leipner, Ingo: „Die Lüge der digitalen Bildung“, 3. Auflage, Redline, München

The purpose of school and education is to enable pupils to become independent thinking adults who can make their own decisions. The digital transformation of society needs human beings capable of thinking for themselves and acting out of their own volition. Children learn this during social interactions in the classroom, through dialogue and by learning in a harmonious way using head, heart and hand. The brain is a relational organ which needs physical activity and direct experience in the environment.² IT Pioneers such as Steve Jobs, Bill Gates and Jeff Bezos have recognised that and have acted accordingly: They do not allow their own children to have smart phones and restrict their access to IT.³

Content of the petition

What 96.294 citizens of Europe are demanding

- Nurseries, kindergartens and primary schools must have the right and be free to work solely with non-digital media. Screen-free institutions must not be disadvantaged financially.
- Public funds should not only be made available for purchasing digital equipment but also to support further training which focuses on age-appropriate interaction and the understanding of child development as well as on media competency. Without this it will not be possible to meet the growing demand by families for professional advice regarding problematic media use.
- It must remain possible for parents and teachers to choose a form of media education that suits the needs of child development – for example non-digital approaches like “CS Unplugged” (a curriculum that introduces the essential elements of information technology without computers). The basics of information technology should be taught from the 12th year at the earliest. Later the engagement with the principle functions of information technology can be more complex with those interested being introduced to computer programming (AG o. ä.).
- Only in the upper school should hardware and software be comprehensively introduced (media studies – creating, using, analysing) and brought as part of a meaningful educational concept. As part of their psychological development young people are then helped not only to use but also understand how they work, their possibilities and the dangers they may hold. The emphasis should also be on actively using this media – editing videos, creating websites or writing online texts.
- Account should also be taken of research relating to the effects of the pulsing, polarised microwave radiation that is emitted by Wifi routers, smart phones and laptops. Current research regarding the health risks associated with Wifi electromagnetic fields (at 2450 MHz) is unequivocal. There is therefore no excuse for installing Wifi connections in kindergartens and schools and exposing growing children to this avoidable danger. Schools must continue having the choice of being able to access the internet using cable or VLC technology.⁴

² Vgl. Thomas Fuchs (2017): „Präsentation“, Tagung 'A healthy digital ecosystem', in: https://eliant.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Conference2017/Development_in_the_age_of_digital_media_01.pdf, Brüssel

³ Vgl. Bilton, Nick (2014): „Steve Jobs Was a Low-Tech Parent“, in: <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/11/fashion/steve-jobs-apple-was-a-low-tech-parent.html> vom 06.02.2018

⁴ Vgl. Wilke, Isabel (2018): „Biologische und pathologische Wirkungen der Strahlung von 2,45 GHz auf Zellen, Fruchtbarkeit, Gehirn und Verhalten“, in: umwelt-medizin-gesellschaft 1/2018. Wilke analysiert mehr als 100 Studien, die die Gesundheitsschädlichkeit von WLAN nachweisen.

The partners

Bündnis für humane Bildung (Alliance for Humane Education)

No human being learns digitally. There is no route without alternatives. We are convinced: Education cannot be digitalised, or at most only the content. That is why we founded the Alliance for Humane Education in 2017, in order to develop future alternatives to the “digitally driven learning factory 4.0.” <http://www.aufwach-s-en.de>

ELIANT

In 2006 ELIANT was founded in order to campaign not only for freedom of choice but also to maintain and continue developing those choices and the cultural diversity associated with them. ELIANT is the European Alliance for Applied Anthroposophy. <https://eliant.eu>

Recommended Literature

Edwin Hübner (2020): Menschlicher Geist und Künstliche Intelligenz, Freies Geistesleben

Michaela Glöckler, Ralf Lankau, Ingo Leipner, Gertraud Teuchert-Noodt (2020): Digitale Medien im Kreuzfeuer der Kritik, Bündnis für humane Bildung

Ingo Leipner (2020): Die Katastrophe der digitalen Bildung, Redline

Ralf Lankau (2020): Alternative IT-Infrastruktur für Schule und Unterricht / 2. GBW-Flugschrift, Gesellschaft Bildung und Wissenschaft

Manfred Spitzer (2020): Die Smartphone Epidemie: Gefahren für Gesundheit, Bildung und Gesellschaft, Klett Cotta

diagnose: media (2020): Gesund aufwachsen in der digitalen Medienwelt, 4. Auflage

Michaela Glöckler (2020): Kita, Kindergarten und Schule als Orte gesunder Entwicklung, edition waldorf

Gerald Lembke, Ingo Leipner (2018): Die Lüge der digitalen Bildung. Warum unsere Kinder das Lernen verlernen, Redline

Paula Bleckmann, Ingo Leipner (2018): Heute mal bildschirmfrei. Ein Alternativprogramm für ein entspanntes Familienleben, Knauer

Ralf Lankau (2017): Kein Mensch lernt digital. Über den sinnvollen Einsatz neuer Medien im Unterricht, Beltz

Jean M. Twenge (2017): iGen. Why Today's Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy — and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood—and What That Means for the Rest of Us, Atria Books

Nicholas Kardaras (2016): Glow Kids. How Screen Addiction Is Hijacking Our Kids - and How to Break the Trance Hardcover, St. Martin's Press.

Paula Bleckmann (2016): Medienmündig: Wie unsere Kinder selbstbestimmt mit dem Bildschirm umgehen lernen, Klett-Cotta

Bert te Wildt (2016): Digital Junkies. Internetabhängigkeit und ihre Folgen für uns und unsere Kinder, Droemer

Edwin Hübner (2015): Medien und Pädagogik: Gesichtspunkte zum Verständnis der Medien, Grundlagen einer anthroposophisch-anthropologischen Medienpädagogik, Pädagogische Forschungsstelle beim Bund der Freien Waldorfschulen (Hrsg.)

Christoph Möller (Hg.) (2015): Internet- und Computersucht. Ein Praxishandbuch für Therapeuten, Pädagogen und Eltern, Kohlhammer

Alexander Markowetz (2015): Digitaler Burnout. Warum unsere permanente Smartphone-Nutzung gefährlich ist, Droemer

Manfred Spitzer (2014): Digitale Demenz. Wie wir uns und unsere Kinder um den Verstand bringen, Droemer TB