Paper 3 - Early school Leaving in Portugal: an analysis of policies after the Lisbon Agenda (2000)

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In Portugal, in the last 20 years – and until the recent financial crisis –, there has been a growing investment in education. Since 2000, educational and social contexts have been through great deal of changes that have reshaped the field of education and paved the way for the concern about reducing ESL. Nationally and when compared with the EU average, ESL is a serious issue even if some progress may be registered. Since 2011, the impoverishment of the population due to unemployment and salary and pension cuts, together with the internal school competitiveness expressed by school rankings and the option for early tracking will have probably negative impact on young people possibility to stay in school. The tension between the normative prescription of compulsory schooling and the social and political capacity to ensure its effective universality became visible during this period, marked by social, economic and cultural changes. Political initiatives related to ESL have been informed by 3 different political periods with different emphasis. This paper will give a brief overview of the 3 periods to focus on the latter by identifying the main political policies to deal with ESL.