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**CEDEFOP**

European Centre for the Development  
of Vocational Training

**European summer University for Research and Innovations in Lifelong Learning**

## **REGIONAL COOPERATION: do regional and European policies match?**

Thessaloniki, Greece  
September 22-24 2008  
in partnership with the CEDEFOP

**VET European Policy**

**Reference documents for the Workshops**



**RhôneAlpes** Région

The European Council in Lisbon (2000) attributed a key role to the « Lifelong Learning ». FREREF is a main actor in the area. Since 2003, **the European summer University for Research and Innovations in Lifelong Learning** has become a place of exchange where Lifelong Learning researchers, professionals and policy makers meet, in order to reflect on specific thematic.

FREREF 6th European University thematic is the linkage between regional and European policies. Since the Lisbon strategy, the European Commission and the member States have elaborated and updated Lifelong Learning global policies (through the Copenhagen, Maastricht and Helsinki processes) in order to complete the objectives previously set. These policies define the expectations and requirements in the field of Lifelong Learning.

### **Do regional and European policies match?**

In which ways are the European policies implemented at the regional level? How do regional policies complete the Lisbon strategy objectives?

Do the Regions contribute to the objectives previously defined by the European Commission in the field of Lifelong Learning? What are the main innovations in the Regions?

The session will be built on plenary meetings, workshops and moments of information and consultation with the participation of CEDEFOP experts.

This session will present the conclusions of REGIO-LLL Workshop on **the role of Region in the mobility of apprentices and young**. Interregional cooperation and actions planned for the end of 2008 will also be presented.

Besides, the four workshops will present their ongoing works and will analyse how the European orientations are taken into account:

- **School Failure and the question of school drop out**
- **The transition between school and active life**
- **The transition between university and active life**
- **Lifelong Guidance in a context of flexicurity**

**This document is a collection of the key European documents for each workshop.** It aims to give to the participants a clearer view on initiatives, projects, tools or European financing programmes that refer to the thematic of each workshop. An Internet address is placed at the end of each document for further details.

Other documents exist, such as the survey (2008) of the main policy initiatives and outputs resulting from the work of the European Commission in the field of education and training since the Lisbon European Council in March 2000<sup>1</sup>.

However, the present document is less generalist and tries to select the most important and useful texts for the European University's works.

We hope it'll help you make things a little clearer.

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1 [http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/compendium05\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/compendium05_en.pdf)

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# General Policy

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## “The Copenhagen Declaration”

*Declaration of the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training,  
and the European Commission,  
convened in Copenhagen on 29 and 30 November 2002,  
on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training*

Over the years co-operation at European level within education and training has come to play a decisive role in creating the future European society. Economic and social developments in Europe over the last decade have increasingly underlined the need for a European dimension to education and training. Furthermore, the transition towards a knowledge based economy capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion brings new challenges to the development of human resources.

The enlargement of the European Union adds a new dimension and a number of challenges, opportunities and requirements to the work in the field of education and training. It is particularly important that acceding member states should be integrated as partners in future cooperation on education and training initiatives at European level from the very beginning.

The successive development of the European education and training programmes has been a key factor for improving cooperation at European level. The Bologna declaration on higher education in June 1999 marked the introduction of a new enhanced European cooperation in this area.

The Lisbon European Council in March 2000 recognised the important role of education as an integral part of economic and social policies, as an instrument for strengthening Europe's competitive power worldwide, and as a guarantee for ensuring the cohesion of our societies and the full development of its citizens. The European Council set the strategic objective for the European Union to become the world's most dynamic knowledgebased economy. The development of high quality vocational education and training is a crucial and integral part of this strategy, notably in terms of promoting social inclusion, cohesion, mobility, employability and competitiveness.

The report on the 'Concrete Future Objectives of Education and Training Systems', endorsed by the Stockholm European Council in March 2001, identified new areas for joint actions at European level in order to achieve the goals set at the Lisbon European Council. These areas are based on the three strategic objectives of the report; i.e. improving the quality and effectiveness of education and training systems in the European Union, facilitating access for all to education and training systems, and opening up education and training systems to the wider world.

In Barcelona, in March 2002 the European Council endorsed the Work Programme on the follow-up of the Objectives Report calling for European education and training to become a world quality reference by 2010. Furthermore, it called for further action to introduce instruments to ensure the transparency of diplomas and qualifications, including promoting

action similar to the Bologna-process, but adapted to the field of vocational education and training.

In response to the Barcelona mandate, the Council of the European Union (Education, Youth and Culture) adopted on 12 November 2002 a Resolution on enhanced cooperation in vocational education and training. This resolution invites the Member States, and the Commission, within the framework of their responsibilities, to involve the candidate countries and the EFTA-EEA countries, as well as the social partners, in promoting an increased cooperation in vocational education and training.

Strategies for lifelong learning and mobility are essential to promote employability, active citizenship, social inclusion and personal development<sup>1</sup>. Developing a knowledge based Europe and ensuring that the European labour market is open to all is a major challenge to the vocational educational and training systems in Europe and to all actors involved. The same is true of the need for these systems to continuously adapt to new developments and changing demands of society. An enhanced cooperation in vocational education and training will be an important contribution towards ensuring a successful enlargement of the European Union and fulfilling the objectives identified by the European Council in Lisbon. Cedefop and the European Training Foundation are important bodies for supporting this cooperation.

The vital role of the social partners in the socio-economic development is reflected both in the context of the European social dialogue and the European Social Partners framework of actions for the lifelong development of competences and qualifications, agreed in March 2002. The social partners play an indispensable role in the development, validation and recognition of vocational competences and qualifications at all levels and are partners in the promotion of an enhanced cooperation in this area.

### **The following main priorities will be pursued through enhanced cooperation in vocational education and training:**

On the basis of these priorities we aim to increase voluntary cooperation in vocational education and training, in order to promote mutual trust, transparency and recognition of competences and qualifications, and thereby establishing a basis for increasing mobility and facilitating access to lifelong learning.

#### *European dimension*

- Strengthening the European dimension in vocational education and training with the aim of improving closer cooperation in order to facilitate and promote mobility and the development of inter-institutional cooperation, partnerships and other transnational initiatives, all in order to raise the profile of the European education and training area in an international context so that Europe will be recognised as a world-wide reference for learners.

#### *Transparency, information and guidance*

- Increasing transparency in vocational education and training through the implementation and rationalization of information tools and networks, including the integration of existing instruments such as the European CV, certificate and diploma supplements, the Common European framework of reference for languages and the EUROPASS into one single framework.

- Strengthening policies, systems and practices that support information, guidance and counselling in the Member States, at all levels of education, training and employment,

particularly on issues concerning access to learning, vocational education and training, and the transferability and recognition of competences and qualifications, in order to support occupational and geographical mobility of citizens in Europe.

#### *Recognition of competences and qualifications*

- Investigating how transparency, comparability, transferability and recognition of competences and/or qualifications, between different countries and at different levels, could be promoted by developing reference levels, common principles for certification, and common measures, including a credit transfer system for vocational education and training
- Increasing support to the development of competences and qualifications at sectoral level, by reinforcing cooperation and co-ordination especially involving the social partners. Several initiatives on a Community, bilateral and multilateral basis, including those already identified in various sectors aiming at mutually recognised qualifications, illustrate this approach.
- Developing a set of common principles regarding validation of non-formal and informal learning with the aim of ensuring greater compatibility between approaches in different countries and at different levels.

#### *Quality assurance*

- Promoting cooperation in quality assurance with particular focus on exchange of models and methods, as well as common criteria and principles for quality in vocational education and training.
- Giving attention to the learning needs of teachers and trainers within all forms of vocational education and training.

#### **The following principles will underpin enhanced cooperation in vocational education and training:**

- Cooperation should be based on the target of 2010, set by the European Council in accordance with the detailed work programme and the follow-up of the Objectives report in order to ensure coherence with the objectives set by the Council of the European Union (Education, Youth and Culture).
- Measures should be voluntary and principally developed through bottom-up cooperation.
- Initiatives must be focused on the needs of citizens and user organisations.
- Cooperation should be inclusive and involve Member States, the Commission, candidate countries, EFTA-EEA countries and the social partners.

#### **The follow-up of this declaration should be pursued as follows to ensure an effective and successful implementation of an enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training:**

1. Implementation of the enhanced cooperation in vocational education and training shall be a gradually integrated part of the follow-up of the objectives report. The Commission will reflect this integrated approach in its reporting to the Council of the European Union (Education, Youth and Culture) within the timetable already decided

for the work of the objectives report. The ambition is to fully integrate the follow-up work of the enhanced co-operation in vocational education and training in the follow-up of the objectives report.

2. The existing Commission working group, which will be given a similar status to that of the working groups within the follow-up of the objectives report, in future including Member States, EFTA-EEA countries, candidate countries and the European social partners, will continue to work in order to ensure effective implementation and coordination of the enhanced cooperation in vocational education and training. The informal meetings of the Directors General for Vocational Training, which contributed to launching this initiative in Bruges 2001, will play an important role in focusing and animating the followup work.

3. Within this framework the initial focus between now and 2004 will be on concrete areas where work is already in progress, i.e. development of a single transparency framework, credit transfer in vocational education and training and development of quality tools. Other areas, which will be immediately included as a fully integrated part of the work of the follow-up of the objectives report organised in eight working groups and an indicator group, will be lifelong guidance, non-formal learning and training of teachers and trainers in vocational education and training. The Commission will include progress on these actions in its report mentioned in paragraph 1.

The ministers responsible for vocational education and training and the European Commission have confirmed the necessity to undertake the objectives and priorities for actions set out in this declaration and to participate in the framework for an enhanced cooperation in vocational education and training, including the social partners. A meeting in two years time will be held to review progress and give advice on priorities and strategies.

*[http://ec.europa.eu/education/copenhagen/copenahagen\\_declaration\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/copenhagen/copenahagen_declaration_en.pdf)*

## Maastricht Communiqué on the Future Priorities of Enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training (VET)

*(Review of the Copenhagen Declaration of 30 November 2002)*

- On 14 December 2004, in Maastricht, the Ministers responsible for Vocational Education and Training of 32 European countries, the European Social Partners and the European Commission agreed to strengthen their cooperation with a view to
- modernising their vocational education and training systems in order for Europe to become the most competitive economy, and
- offering all Europeans, whether they are young people, older workers, unemployed or disadvantaged, the qualifications and competences they need to be fully integrated into the emerging knowledge based society, contributing to more and better jobs.

### POLITICAL CONTEXT AND PROGRESS

The Council (Education, Youth and Culture) agreed on 12 November 2002 a Resolution on the promotion of enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training. This was then endorsed by the Ministers of Vocational Education and Training of the EU Member States, the EFTA/EEA and candidate countries (the participating countries), the Commission and the European Social Partners at their meeting in Copenhagen on 29-30 November 2002, as the strategy for improving the performance, quality and attractiveness of VET (Copenhagen Declaration). The Council and Commission Joint Interim Report *'Education and Training 2010'* to the Spring 2004 European Council summarises the first concrete results of the Copenhagen process, and recognises its role in encouraging reform, supporting lifelong learning and developing mutual trust between key players and between countries.

The Interim Report calls for the development of European common references and principles as a matter of priority, and their implementation at national level, taking account of national situations and respecting national competences. Since November 2002, the Council has reached political agreement on a number of concrete results emanating from enhanced cooperation in VET and lifelong learning, in particular in relation to human capital for social cohesion and competitiveness, guidance throughout life, principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning, quality assurance in VET and the Europass single framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences.

In February 2002, the European social partners launched a cooperation process by adopting a Framework of actions for the lifelong development of competences and qualifications. Through the annual follow-up reports, employers and trade unions make a concrete contribution to the Lisbon strategy.

In two years the Copenhagen process has succeeded in raising the visibility and profile of VET at the European level and in the Lisbon strategy. Participating countries and stakeholders have come to a common understanding of the specific challenges at stake, have agreed on strategies to address these challenges, and have developed concrete means to support their implementation.

## CHALLENGES IN ORDER TO MEET THE LISBON OBJECTIVES

The Copenhagen process will continue to set political priorities for achieving the Lisbon objectives in the field of VET, within the context of the *Education and Training 2010* work programme. The strengthening of VET at the European and national levels, through voluntary and bottom up cooperation, should be an essential component for the achievement of a genuine European labour market and a competitive economy, alongside the legislative regime for the recognition of professional qualifications and the European Employment Strategy. However, greater emphasis should be placed on action to implement agreed objectives at national level, taking into account common European references and principles. In reviewing the focus of the Copenhagen process for 2005-6, full consideration has also been given to the challenges highlighted by the study commissioned by the European Commission to assess progress of VET systems and by the Kok reports 2003ix and 2004.

These challenges include adequately reflecting changes in the labour market which have an impact on the nature of developments in the field of VET. The Joint Interim Report identifies a number of levers and priorities for reform in key areas, to make European education and training systems a world quality reference by 2010 and lifelong learning a concrete reality for all. These include the need to mobilise the necessary investments effectively and to focus on the development of key competences of citizens throughout life, for example learning to learn, innovate and develop a spirit of enterprise.

The necessary reforms and investment should be focused particularly on:

- the image and attractiveness of the vocational route for employers and individuals, in order to increase participation in VET.
- achieving high levels of quality and innovation in VET systems in order to benefit all learners and make European VET globally competitive.
- linking VET with the labour market requirements of the knowledge economy for a highly skilled workforce, and especially, due to the strong impact of demographic change, the upgrading and competence development of older workers.
- the needs of low-skilled (about 80 million persons aged between 25-64 years in the EU) and disadvantaged groups for the purpose of achieving social cohesion and increasing labour market participation.

VET is increasingly taking place at all educational levels and, therefore, the parity of esteem and links between VET and general education, in particular with higher education, need to be fostered by innovative strategies and instruments at the national and European levels. This should include designing VET systems which attract more students to higher qualifications. This will contribute to innovation and competitiveness.

## THE NATIONAL LEVEL: STRENGTHENING THE CONTRIBUTION OF VET SYSTEMS, INSTITUTIONS, ENTERPRISES AND SOCIAL PARTNERS TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE LISBON GOALS PRIORITY SHOULD BE GIVEN TO:

- i) the use of common instruments, references and principles to support the reform and development of VET systems and practices, for example regarding transparency (Europass),

guidance throughout life, quality assurance and identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning. This should include the strengthening of mutual links between these instruments and the raising of stakeholders' awareness at national, regional and local levels in Member States to enhance visibility and mutual understanding;

ii) improving public and/or private investment in VET, including by public–private partnerships and, where appropriate, by the "training incentive effects of tax and benefit systems" as recommended by the Lisbon European Council;

iii) the use of the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund to support the development of VET. Subject to an agreement on the future EU structural funds, and in accordance with the policy orientations of those funds during 2007-2013, they should support the key role of education and training in promoting economic development and social cohesion, as well as the "Education and Training 2010" objectives, in particular the needs of small and medium sized enterprises, the innovative reform of VET systems and the related challenges of, on the one hand, equipping young people with the key competences they will require throughout life and, on the other, renewing and updating the skills of an ageing population.

iv) the further development of VET systems to meet the needs of people or groups at risk of labour market and social exclusion, in particular early school leavers, low skilled, migrants, persons with disabilities and the unemployed. This should be based on a combination of targeted investment, assessment of prior learning and tailored training and learning provision.

v) the development and implementation of open learning approaches, enabling people to define individual pathways, supported by appropriate guidance and counselling. This should be complemented by the establishment of flexible and open frameworks for VET in order to reduce barriers between VET and general education, and increase progression between initial and continuing training and higher education. In addition, action should be taken to integrate mobility into initial and continuing training

vi) the increased relevance and quality of VET through the systematic involvement of all key partners in developments at national, regional and local level, particularly regarding quality assurance. To that effect, VET institutions should be enabled and encouraged to participate in relevant partnerships. More emphasis on the early identification of skills needs and planning of VET provision is particularly important and key partners, including the social partners, will play a major role in this.

vii) the further development of learning-conducive environments in training institutions and at the workplace. This entails enhancement and implementation of pedagogical approaches which support self-organised learning and utilise the potential provided by ICT and elearning, thus improving the quality of training.

viii) continuing competence development of teachers and trainers in VET, reflecting their specific learning needs and changing role as a consequence of the development of VET

## **THE EUROPEAN LEVEL: DEVELOPING TRANSPARENCY, QUALITY AND MUTUAL TRUST TO FACILITATE A GENUINE EUROPEAN LABOUR MARKET PRIORITY SHOULD BE GIVEN TO:**

- i) the consolidation of priorities of the Copenhagen process and facilitating the implementation of the concrete results.
- ii) the development of an open and flexible European qualifications framework, founded on transparency and mutual trust. The framework will provide a common reference to facilitate the recognition and transferability of qualifications covering both VET and general (secondary and higher) education, based mainly on competences and learning outcomes. It will improve permeability within education and training systems, provide a reference for the validation of informally acquired competences and support the smooth and effective functioning of the European, national and sectoral labour markets. The framework should be underpinned by a set of common reference levels. It should be supported by instruments agreed at European level, particularly quality assurance mechanisms to create the necessary mutual trust. The framework should facilitate the voluntary development of competence based solutions at the European level enabling sectors to address the new education and training challenges caused by the internationalisation of trade and technology.
- iii) the development and implementation of the European credit transfer system for VET (ECVET) in order to allow learners to build upon the achievements resulting from their learning pathways when moving between learning systems. ECVET will be based on competences and learning outcomes, taking account of their definition at national or sectoral levels. It will take into account the experience of the ECTS in the field of higher education and the Europass framework. The practical implementation should include the development of voluntary agreements between VET providers throughout Europe. The system will be broadbased and flexible to enable its progressive implementation at the national level, with priority given initially to the formal learning system.
- iv) the examination of the specific learning needs and changing role of vocational teachers and trainers and of the possibilities of making their profession more attractive including continuous updating of their professional skills. Teachers and trainers should be supported in their essential role as innovators and facilitators in the learning environment. A coherent framework should be envisaged to support the improvement of the quality of vocational teaching and training.
- v) the improvement of the scope, precision and reliability of VET statistics in order to enable evaluation of progress in making VET efficient, effective and attractive. Adequate data and indicators are the key to understanding what is happening in VET and what additional interventions and decision-making are required by all parties involved.

## **IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW UP**

- i) All actors in the field of VET - providers, employers, trade unions, branch organisations, chambers of commerce, industry or crafts, employment services, regional bodies and networks, etc. – are invited to take their responsibilities and to contribute to making effective the implementation of the Copenhagen process at all levels. National networks on which all

relevant stakeholders, especially ministries, social partners and regional authorities, are represented should be established.

ii) In accordance with the Joint Interim Report, the education and training processes should be rationalised and streamlined at European level by bringing the priorities of the above conclusions and the Copenhagen process groups within the framework of the Education and Training 2010 work programme. This should be based on the experience of working methods under the Copenhagen process.

iii) The Advisory Committee on Vocational Training will be fully involved in the implementation and follow up.

iv) Proposals for a European Qualifications Framework and European Credit Transfer System for VET should be prepared and examined.

v) A coherent approach and closer cooperation should be developed, both at national and European level, with:

- Higher Education, including developments under the Bologna process
- European Economic, Employment, Sustainable Development and Social Inclusion Policies (in terms of Guidelines and National Action Plans)
- Pre-accession instruments and funds
- and between research, practice and policy by networking and exchange of innovation and good examples of policy and practice.

vi) Information on progress made and future actions for development of VET, involving all relevant stakeholders at national level, should be provided as part of the integrated biennial report on Education and Training 2010 in the context of implementing national lifelong learning strategies. This should incorporate the above national level priorities and provide the basis for stimulating the exchange of experience not only between participating countries but also between social partners and other relevant stakeholders on a transnational basis.

vii) Closer links should be developed with the social partners at European, national, regional and sectoral levels, taking into account the work priorities defined in their framework of actions for the lifelong development of competences and qualifications.

viii) Effective and full use will be made of Leonardo da Vinci and the future integrated action programme in the field of lifelong learning to support the development, testing, and implementation of innovative actions to advance VET reform.

ix) Cedefop and ETF will continue to support the implementation of the Copenhagen process and use their networks (e.g. ReferNet, National Observatories) and electronic media, to assist with reporting, monitoring progress, and exchange of experience, in particular through:

- the dissemination of good policy and practice in lifelong learning
- the mapping of sectoral activities
- the use of the Leonardo da Vinci study visits to support mutual learning and peer review.

x) Another Ministerial meeting will be held in two years, to evaluate implementation and to review priorities and strategies for VET within the Education and Training 2010 work programme.

*[http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/eu/pub/commission/dgeac/2004\\_0018\\_en.pdf](http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/eu/pub/commission/dgeac/2004_0018_en.pdf)*

**Guidelines**

## **The Helsinki Communiqué on Enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training**

*Communiqué of the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training, the European Social partners and the European Commission, convened in Helsinki on 5 December 2006 to review the priorities and strategies of the Copenhagen Process*

### **I. EUROPE NEEDS INVESTMENTS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

#### ***Investment in human capital and skills needed***

Education and training have a central role in responding to the challenges we are facing in Europe: globalisation, an ageing population, emerging new technologies and skills needs. This is reflected in the European Union's agenda and in the revised Lisbon strategy and its integrated Guideline for growth and jobs 2005–2008. It calls for expansion and improved investment in human capital and for adaptation of education and training systems in response to the challenges.

#### ***VET constitutes a major part of Lifelong learning***

Lifelong learning covers learning in all forms and in all settings. Lifelong learning strategies should ensure a well functioning training market and a broad skills base. VET – Vocational Education and Training is an integral part of this. It plays a key role in human capital accumulation for the achievement of economic growth, employment and social objectives. VET is an essential tool in providing European citizens with the skills, knowledge and competences needed in the labour market and knowledge based society. The fact remains that VET caters for a major part of learners in Europe and a significant share of the future workforce will need vocational skills and competences.

#### ***Twin challenge: engaging young people and those in working life***

European VET policies should promote high quality initial VET and create conditions to improve the skills of those in the labour force through continuing VET. Policies should engage all young people in vocational training and/or higher education, ensuring at the same time that they acquire skills and competences relevant to the labour market and to their future lives.

Furthermore, policies should serve people already in working-life by ensuring possibilities for further development throughout their careers. VET systems should, as part of flexible educational pathways, increasingly enable progression to further education and training, especially from VET to higher education.

#### ***Delivering a skills base relevant to working life***

VET should provide a broad knowledge and skills base relevant to working life, highlighting at the same time excellence at all levels. Policies and practices should assess the relative impacts of investing in different levels of skills and competences. The supply of intermediary

and technical skills as well as high level skills should be increased to overcome skills shortages and to help sustain innovation and the growth of the knowledge society.

### *Contributing to competitiveness and social cohesion*

VET has a dual role in contributing to competitiveness and in enhancing social cohesion. VET policies should address all sections of the population, offering attractive and challenging pathways for those with high potential, while at the same time addressing those at risk of educational disadvantages and labour market exclusion – especially early school leavers, those with low qualifications or no qualifications at all, those with special needs, people with an immigrant background and older workers. In short, VET should be equitable and efficient.

### *European and national policies for enhancing VET*

*Basic education* should provide young people with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes necessary for further learning, entrepreneurship and employability and prepare students to follow a general education pathway or a VET pathway or a combination of both.

*Young people in VET* should acquire skills and competences relevant to labour market requirements, for employability and for lifelong learning. This calls for policies to reduce drop-out rates from VET and to better facilitate school-to-work transition, e.g. by combining education and training with work through apprenticeships and work-based learning.

The skills, competences and mobility of the *labour force* should be promoted by encouraging the recognition of prior learning gained through training and work experience. Training opportunities should be provided for those in working life. At the same time, learning opportunities should be available for disadvantaged individuals and groups, especially for the less educated.

Competitive business environments and strained national budgets pose challenges for ensuring necessary *investments in skills*. Public and private investment in VET should be improved through the further development of balanced and shared funding and investment mechanisms. Against this background, training systems should be efficient in providing the expected outcomes.

This calls for better governance of training systems and responsiveness to the changing skill requirements of the labour market – training should be more demand-driven.

## **II. MAKING IT HAPPEN – THE COPENHAGEN PROCESS DELIVERING REFORMS**

### *Diversity – an asset and a challenge*

The diversity of European VET systems is an asset which serves as a basis for mutual learning and inspiring reforms. At the same time, this diversity makes it important to increase transparency and common understanding on quality issues, and hence mutual trust between VET systems and practices. The aim should be to promote a European VET area in which qualifications and skills acquired in one country are recognised throughout Europe, thus supporting the mobility of young people and adults. This VET area should be cultivated through use of common frameworks, instruments and tools and supported by consistent use of comparable data enabling evidence-based policymaking.

### *A process to improve the performance, quality and attractiveness of VET*

The Copenhagen Process on Enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training was launched as a European strategy to improve the overall performance, quality and attractiveness of VET in Europe. Since 2002, the process has significantly contributed to raising the visibility and profile of VET in Europe. It has different dimensions:

*A political process.* The process plays an essential role in emphasising the importance of VET to political decision makers. It facilitates agreeing common European goals and objectives, discussing national models and initiatives, and exchanging good examples of practice at the European level. At national level, the process contributes to strengthening the focus on VET and has inspired national reforms.

*A process to develop common tools.* Another central role of the process is the development of common European frameworks and tools, aimed at enhancing transparency and quality of competences and qualifications, and facilitating mobility of learners and workers. The process paves the way towards a European labour market, and a European VET area complementary to the European area for higher education.

*A process that fosters mutual learning.* The process supports European cooperation. It allows the participating countries to consider their policies in light of experience from other countries and provides a framework for working together, learning from others, sharing ideas, experience and results.

*A process that takes the stakeholders on board.* The process strengthens the involvement of different stakeholders and enables their contribution to common goals.

### *Copenhagen – Maastricht – Helsinki*

The priorities of the process were first set in the Copenhagen Declaration, November 2002. In the Maastricht Communiqué, December 2004, they were further specified and expanded and, for the first time, national priorities were agreed. At the second follow-up meeting in Helsinki on 5 December 2006, the process was evaluated and its strategies and priorities were reviewed.

### *A more focused process*

The process is viewed as successful and necessary. Now, four years after Copenhagen, it is important to focus on continuing the work and completing and putting into practice initiatives already started. However, a more focused approach with a limited number of priority areas and clear targets should be ensured. Different initiatives and tools should be interlinked and mutually supportive, and VET should be developed at all levels as an essential part of lifelong learning with close links to general education. The measures initiated by the process are voluntary and are developed through bottom-up cooperation. Particular emphasis is placed on engaging social partners and sectoral organisations in all stages of the work and feeding national experiences back into the work at European level.

### *Reforms take time – consistency needed*

While the Copenhagen and Maastricht priorities remain valid, the process should be strengthened, and the work focused in the following priority areas: The image, status and attractiveness of VET. In this context, more emphasis should be placed on good governance of VET systems, institutions and/or providers.

Further development, testing and implementation of common European tools. The aim should be for the agreed tools to be in place by 2010. A more systematic approach to strengthen mutual learning. To support this, special attention should be given to improving the scope, comparability and reliability of VET statistics by 2008. Active involvement of all stakeholders in the work as the Copenhagen process moves towards an implementation phase.

#### *Next follow-up meeting*

The next Ministerial follow-up meeting will be held in two years, to evaluate progress, to reinforce priorities and strategies for VET within the 'Education and Training 2010' work programme and to reflect on the orientation of the process beyond 2010.

### **III. REVIEWED PRIORITIES**

#### *1. Policy focused on improving the attractiveness and quality of VET*

More attention should be paid by participating countries to the image, status and attractiveness of VET. This calls for:

- improved guidance throughout life to take better account of the opportunities and requirements of VET and of working life, including increased career guidance and advice in schools and for families, in order to ensure informed choice;
- open VET systems which offer access to flexible, individualised pathways and create better conditions for transition to working life, progression to further education and training, including higher education, and which support the skills development of adults in the labour market;
- close links with working life, both in initial and continuing VET, and increased opportunities to learn at the workplace;
- promoting the recognition of non-formal and informal learning to support career development and lifelong learning;
- measures to increase the interest and participation of men or women in those VET fields in which they remain under-represented, for instance women in the technology field;
- developing and highlighting excellence in skills, for example by applying world-class standards or organising skills competitions.
- In improving the attractiveness and quality of VET, more emphasis should be placed on good governance of VET systems and providers in delivering the VET agenda, through:
  - responsiveness to the needs of individuals and the labour market, including anticipation of skills needs. Particular attention should be paid to the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises;
  - highly qualified teachers and trainers who undertake continuous professional development;
  - national quality assurance and improvement in line with the Council Conclusions on Quality Assurance in VET;
  - improving public and private investment in VET through the development of balanced and shared funding and investment mechanisms;
  - increased transparency of VET systems;
  - stronger leadership of institutions and/or training providers within national strategies;
  - active partnership between different decision makers and stakeholders, in particular social partners and sectoral organisations, at national, regional and local levels.

## *2. Development and implementation of common tools for VET*

The development of common European tools should be continued in order to pave the way towards a European area of VET and to support the competitiveness of the European labour market. The aim should be for the agreed tools to be in place by 2010. Further development of common European tools specifically aimed at VET, by:

- developing and testing a European Credit System for VET (ECVET) as a tool for credit accumulation and transfer, taking into account the specificities of VET and the experience gained with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) in higher education;
- strengthening cooperation on quality improvement by using the European Network of Quality Assurance for VET (ENQA-VET) to support the creation of a common understanding on quality assurance and to foster mutual trust. Cooperation with higher education should be continued.

Further development of common European tools in which VET plays a major role, by:

- developing and testing a European Qualifications Framework (EQF) based on learning outcomes, providing greater parity and better links between the VET and HE sectors and taking account of international sectoral qualifications;
- further developing EUROPASS18 as the single European framework for transparency, and tools for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, in order to support and complement the introduction of EQF and ECVET.

Implementation of common European tools specifically aimed at VET, by:

- participating in the testing of ECVET and encouraging its implementation;
- drawing on the principles underlying a Common Quality Assurance Framework, as referred to in the May 2004 Council Conclusions on quality assurance in VET, in order to promote a culture of quality improvement and wider participation in the ENQA-VET network.

Implementation of common European tools in which VET plays a major role, by:

- linking national qualification systems or national qualifications frameworks to the EQF;
- supporting national qualifications systems in incorporating international sectoral qualifications, using the EQF as a reference point;
- promoting widespread use of EUROPASS.

## *3. Strengthening mutual learning*

A more systematic approach is needed to strengthen mutual learning, cooperative work and the sharing of experience and know-how. This should be facilitated by:

- common concepts and agreed definitions at European level in order to make national solutions, models and standards more easily understood;
- Commission funding for research and surveys on specific topics to deepen understanding of European VET systems and practices, and their links to the labour market and other education sectors;

- monitoring by the Commission of networks, the exchange of examples of good practice and the development of mechanisms which can be used to disseminate knowledge and expertise;
- a systematic and flexible framework to support peer learning activities in the field of VET. The framework should also support decentralised peer learning.

Adequate and consistent data and indicators are the key to understanding what is happening in VET, to strengthening mutual learning, to supporting research and to laying the foundations for evidence-based training policy. By the time of the next Ministerial followup Conference in 2008 the Commission should have:

- given special attention to improving the scope, comparability and reliability of VET statistics so that progress in developing VET can be evaluated;
- devoted attention to the development of the VET component within the coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks;
- paid particular attention to the development of statistical information on investment in and the financing of VET.

This would best be achieved by using and combining existing data to the best advantage, while ensuring adequate national/regional data on VET and consistency and comparability with other data on education and training.

#### ***4. Taking all stakeholders on board***

The success of the Copenhagen process relies on the active involvement of all stakeholders in the field of VET, including in particular the social partners at European and national level, sectoral organisations and VET providers. This calls for:

- concise and clear information on the process, its background, priorities and activities and the effective transfer of results;
- the active participation in all stages of the process of stakeholders at European, national, regional and local level;
- emphasis on involving VET providers, teachers and trainers in testing and implementing the outcomes of the process;
- the involvement of learners and their organisations at national and European level.

## **IV. IMPLEMENTATION AND REPORTING**

The implementation of the Copenhagen process and its priorities should be supported through:

- the effective use of structural funds to support VET reforms at national level;
- targeted use of the Lifelong Learning Programme (2007-2013) to support the process, particularly for innovation, testing, experimentation and implementation;
- the continued support of CEDEFOP and ETF and their networks. They will, in particular, monitor progress in the priority areas and report on the developments;
- the active participation of other relevant Community bodies and committees, such as the Directors General for Vocational Training (DGVT), the Advisory Committee for Vocational Training (ACVT), the Education and Training Coordination Group (ETCG);
- close cooperation on statistics, indicators and benchmarks with EUROSTAT, OECD, CEDEFOP, and ETF;

- the exchange of information, expertise and results with third countries, particularly those countries covered by the ‘enlargement’ policy and by the ‘wider Europe neighbourhood’ policy. Cooperation with high-performing countries and international organisations such as OECD should be strengthened.

The right of participation of all Member States in this work should be ensured.

In the annual reporting on the national Lisbon reform programmes special attention should be paid to progress in VET.

The integrated biennial report on the ‘Education and Training 2010’ work programme should include a specific part addressing VET, enabling monitoring of the progress and identifying key outcomes to be reported to the European Council.

The process is supported by the ‘Framework of actions for the lifelong development of competences and qualifications of the European social partners which is also subject to annual follow-up reporting.

*[http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/vet2006/pdf/Helsinki\\_Communique\\_en.pdf](http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/vet2006/pdf/Helsinki_Communique_en.pdf)*

## **The Lisbon Special European Council (March 2000): Towards a Europe of Innovation and Knowledge**

The aim of the Lisbon Special European Council of 23-24 March 2000 was to invigorate the Community's policies, against the backdrop of the most promising economic climate for a generation in the Member States. It was therefore fitting to take long-term measures on the basis of this outlook.

Two recent developments are profoundly changing the economy and society. Globalisation means that Europe must set the pace in all the sectors where competition is intensifying. The sudden arrival and growing importance of information and communication technologies (ICT) in professional and private life call for a radical overhaul of the education system in Europe and guaranteed lifelong learning opportunities

The Lisbon European Council therefore endeavoured to issue Guidelines for exploiting the potential offered by the new economy, in order to eradicate the scourge of unemployment, amongst other aims. As the Cardiff, Cologne and Luxembourg processes together provide a range of suitable instruments, no new processes were considered necessary in Lisbon. On the contrary, it is through the strategy of adapting and strengthening the existing processes that the potential for economic growth, job creation and social cohesion can best develop - for example by providing the European Union with reliable data to compare between the Member States, so that appropriate measures can be taken.

Thanks to a favourable economic outlook, full employment seemed tangible in 2000. However, owing to the economic slowdown and structural problems in the Member States, the European Union is still lagging behind as regards this objective. The weaknesses of the European labour market continue to create difficulties:

- the insufficient number of jobs being created in the services sector, even though this is by far the most important in terms of employment;
- significant regional imbalances, particularly since enlargement in 2004;
- a high rate of long-term unemployment;
- labour supply does not match demand, which is quite often the case in periods of economic recovery;
- a shortage of women participating in the labour market;
- European demographic trends, in particular an ageing population.

All these weaknesses can be rectified, as long as the resources are made available. Now that the economic recovery has provided more room for manoeuvre, it is time to prepare for the technological and social challenges ahead. Not only must these challenges be faced, but they must also serve as a springboard towards achieving the objective of full employment.

### **The technological challenge**

Information and communication technologies (ICT) represent both a major challenge and a significant opportunity for job creation. The Commission intends to improve the quality and

quantity of jobs in the European Union in the short and medium term through the impact of ICT. The communication of June 2005 entitled " i2010 - A European Information Society for growth and employment " sets out the overall policy Guideliness. In a more general context, it is important to make sure that this information society is accessible to all, regardless of social category, race, religion or gender. This digital economy, with the potential to improve quality of life, is an important factor in improving competitiveness and in job creation.

Even so, it is vital to ensure that this economic and social transition - however fast it occurs - does not leave certain categories of citizen behind and that the fruits of growth are distributed equitably. This is the aim of initiatives such as the Commission's " eEurope " initiative, which also puts the emphasis on increasing economic productivity and improving the quality and accessibility of services for the benefit of all European citizens, based on a fast infrastructure (broadband) with secure Internet access available to as many people as possible.

### **A knowledge-based society**

If people arriving on the labour market are to participate in the knowledge economy, their level of education must be sufficiently high. The inverse relationship between level of education and rate of unemployment is becoming more pronounced. Europe must raise the educational level of school-leavers.

Teaching and research should be better coordinated at European level. This can be achieved by creating networks of national and joint research programmes.

Only by making the resources available will Europe be able to develop the job creation opportunities offered by ICT. It has been estimated that, between 2000 and 2010, half of all new jobs in Europe will be related directly or indirectly to information technologies, like those jobs already created by the EU's comparative advantage in mobile telephony.

### **Making Europe more competitive**

If Europe is to become the world's most competitive economic area, it is also important to improve research conditions and create a more favourable climate for entrepreneurship, in particular by reducing the administrative costs associated with bureaucracy.

In addition to administrative simplification, the Commission also wishes to see a real spirit of entrepreneurship developing in Europe

The completion of the internal market is another priority arising from the Lisbon summit of 2000 and remains a priority in 2005. In its conclusions, the European Council called, inter alia, for the Member States, the Council and the Commission to do their utmost to achieve liberalisation in specific sectors (gas, electricity, postal services, transport, etc.). The Commission has also prepared a strategy for the internal market 2003-2006 , focusing on specific objectives. This forms part of the integrated Guideliness 2005-2008 .

### **Integration of the financial markets and coordination of macroeconomic policies**

The potential of the euro must provide an opportunity to integrate the European financial markets. As emphasised in the Commission communication " Risk capital: A key to job creation in the European Union ", the risk capital markets are vital for the development of

SMEs. The conclusions of the European Council demonstrate the need for a strict timetable so that a plan of action for the financial markets can be in operation by 2005.

With regard to economic policies, the priority is still macroeconomic stability, as defined in the Stability and Growth Pact , integrating the objectives of growth and employment. The transition to a knowledge economy calls for structural policies to play a more important role than before.

### **Modernising and strengthening the European social model**

In its contribution to the preparations for the Lisbon European Council, the Commission emphasised that the European social model includes resources to support the transition to a knowledge economy. Social integration will be promoted by encouraging work, guaranteeing viable pension schemes - at a time when the European population is described as "ageing" - and guaranteeing social stability.

The Commission, in promoting social inclusion, has accorded these objectives the utmost importance. It has been very active in combating racism and xenophobia , in promoting equality of opportunity between men and women and in its measures to help the disabled .

Five years after the launch of the Lisbon strategy, the Commission is taking stock of the progress achieved under this strategy. The communication entitled " Working together for growth and jobs - A new start for the Lisbon Strategy" proposes, in particular, a simplified coordination process accompanied by a concentration of efforts on the national action plans (NAPs).

*<http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/cha/c10241.htm>*

## **A new start for the Lisbon Strategy (2005)**

*Communication to the spring European Council of 02 February 2005, entitled "Working together for growth and jobs."*

**A mid-term look at the Lisbon strategy shows the outcomes to be somewhat disappointing, particularly with regard to employment. In order to give the strategy some fresh momentum the Commission proposes a simplified coordination procedure and a focus on the national action plans (NAP). The emphasis is no longer on targets, of which the only one to be retained is the figure of 3% of GDP to be devoted to research and development by 2010. There is a switch of emphasis in the Communication away from the medium and long term in favour of the urgent action needed in the Member States.**

Taking stock five years after the launch of the Lisbon strategy, the Commission finds the results to date somewhat disappointing and the European economy has failed to deliver the expected performance in terms of growth, productivity and employment. Job creation has slowed and there is still insufficient investment in research and development.

The Commission based its findings on the November 2004 report by the high-level group entitled "Rising to the challenge: the Lisbon strategy for growth and employment". Requested by the March 2004 European Council, this evaluation of progress achieved with the Lisbon strategy is extremely critical: lack of political resolve and inability to complete the internal market in goods and establish that for services. The report is also critical of a top-heavy agenda, poor coordination and irreconcilable priorities.

The Commission has therefore decided to focus attention on the action to be taken rather than targets to be attained. The date of 2010 and the objectives concerning the various rates of employment are thus no longer put forward as priorities. This Communication fits into this context as a signal for relaunching policy priorities, particularly with regard to growth and employment.

### **More growth**

The Member States, in order to achieve this progress, must focus their efforts on the reforms agreed as part of the strategy and pursue stability-orientated macroeconomic policies and sound budgetary policies. A new partnership for growth and employment is essential in order to give a fresh start to the Lisbon strategy. Accordingly, in order to stimulate growth, the Commission intends to:

- make the European Union (EU) more attractive to investors and workers by building up the internal market, improving the European and national regulations, by ensuring open and competitive markets within and outside Europe, and lastly by extending and improving European infrastructures;

- encourage knowledge and innovation, by promoting more investment in research and development, by facilitating innovation, the take-up of information and communication technologies (ICT) and the sustainable use of resources, and by helping to create a strong European industrial base.

### More and better jobs

The Commission intends to review the European employment strategy in 2005. The Commission's new proposal concerning the financial framework for the period 2007-2013 moreover reflects a switch of emphasis in favour of growth and employment. To create more and better jobs, the Commission intends to:

- attract more people to the employment market and modernise social protection systems. The Member States and the social partners must implement policies to encourage workers to remain active and dissuade them from leaving the world of work prematurely. They must also reform the social protection system in order to achieve a better balance between security and flexibility;
- improve the adaptability of the workforce and business sector, and increase the flexibility of the labour markets in order to help Europe adjust to restructuring and market changes. Simplifying the mutual recognition of qualifications will make the mobility of labour easier throughout Europe. The Member States should remove all restrictions in this area as quickly as possible;
- invest more in human capital by improving education and skills. The Commission intends to adopt a Community lifelong learning programme. The Member States will also submit national strategies in this area in 2006.

### Better governance

The Commission also stresses the need for responsibilities to be shared more clearly and more effectively. Overlapping, an excess of red tape and not enough political ownership are holding up progress. It will put forward a Lisbon action programme in order to clarify what needs to be done and who is responsible.

The Commission will propose simplified coordination with fewer and less complex reports. It is also proposed that the national programmes concerning the Lisbon strategy be presented in a format bringing together three coordination processes:

- labour market policies (the Luxembourg process)
- microeconomic and structural reforms (the Cardiff process)
- macroeconomic and budgetary measures (the Cologne process).

This will enable the European Council to put forward practical Guidelines every spring and make it easier for the Commission to monitor progress.

It is also planning to put forward integrated Guidelines for both employment and the broad economic policy Guidelines in a single document. These Guidelines will thus simultaneously cover macroeconomic policies, employment and structural reforms.

The Commission is also proposing that Member States should appoint a "Mr" or "Ms Lisbon" at government level to oversee the implementation of the reforms agreed on under the Lisbon strategy.

This new reporting process will provide a mechanism through which the European Council and the European Parliament can focus on key policy issues. There will henceforth be a single Lisbon report at EU and at national level on the progress made.

*<http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/cha/c11325.htm>*



## European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning

*Adoption of the Recommendation on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF), proposed by the Commission in September 2006.*

The EQF will act as a translation device between Member States' qualifications systems in order to help employers and individuals compare and better understand citizens' qualifications and thus support mobility and lifelong learning.

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is a translation grid for qualifications around Europe. It has two principal purposes: (1) to promote mobility between countries, and (2) to facilitate lifelong learning. Both are indispensable for achieving more and better jobs and growth, as Europe faces the challenges of becoming an advanced, knowledge-based economy. The European Parliament has today approved the Commission proposal for a Recommendation to set up the EQF.

Ján Figel', European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, explained its significance: *"People in Europe too often face obstacles when they try to move from one country to another to learn or work. They sometimes also face obstacles when they want to move from one part of their own country's education system to another, e.g. from vocational education and training to higher education. The EQF will make different qualifications more easily readable between different European countries, and so promote increased mobility for learning or working. Within countries, it has already encouraged the development of National Qualifications Frameworks. This will promote lifelong learning, for example by making it easier to gain credit for the learning people have already achieved."*

At the core of the EQF are its **eight reference levels**, covering basic to most advanced qualifications. These describe what a learner knows, understands and is able to do, regardless of the system in which the learner's qualification was acquired.

The EQF therefore shifts the focus away from learning inputs (such as the length of a learning experience, or the type of institution), to **learning outcomes**. Shifting the focus towards learning outcomes brings significant advantages:

- it supports a better match between education and training provisions and the needs of the labour market (for knowledge, skills and competences);
- it facilitates the validation of non-formal and informal learning; and
- it facilitates the transfer and use of qualifications across different countries and education and training systems.

As an instrument for promoting lifelong learning, the EQF encompasses general and adult education, vocational education and training, as well as higher education. **The eight EQF levels cover the entire span of qualifications** from those achieved at the end of compulsory education, up to those awarded at the highest level of academic and professional or vocational education and training.

The Recommendation approved by the European Parliament foresees that Member States relate their national qualifications systems to the EQF **by 2010**, and that **individual certificates or diplomas should bear an EQF reference by 2012**.

The political agreement reached in the European Parliament follows three years of intensive preparation, in close co-operation with Member States and stakeholders. The EQF is already influencing the development of National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) in many Member States, where NQFs are often themselves part of the wider national reform process. Most countries now are developing NQFs. The Commission is also supporting this process by funding projects bringing together groups of countries and sectors testing the implementation of the EQF.

It will therefore enable individuals and employers to use the EQF as a **reference tool** to compare the qualifications levels of different countries and different education and training systems.

Following the agreement between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, the EQF will be formally adopted by the Council in the coming weeks.

*<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/07/1601&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>*

## **"Delivering lifelong learning for knowledge, creativity and innovation"**

*Adoption of the Draft 2008 joint progress report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the 'Education & Training 2010' work programme*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Education and training are crucial to economic and social change. The flexibility and security needed to achieve more and better jobs depend on ensuring that all citizens acquire key competences and update their skills throughout their lives.<sup>1</sup> Lifelong learning supports creativity and innovation and enables full economic and social participation.

That is why the Council set itself ambitious objectives in the Education and Training 2010 work programme. In turn, these support the achievement of the Lisbon Guideliness for jobs and growth. These objectives can only be achieved by sustained long term effort. Inevitably, progress will be uneven. It is to identify achievements and to direct effort to areas that are proving more difficult that the Council and the Commission prepare a joint report every second year.

This contribution to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Joint Report<sup>2</sup> points to significant progress and challenges in education and training reforms. The following areas will need particular effort:

- Raising skill levels. People with low skill levels are at risk of economic and social exclusion. Continued high levels of early school leaving, low participation in lifelong learning by older workers and the low-skilled, and poor skill achievement among migrants cause concern in most countries. Further, future labour markets in a knowledge-based economy will demand ever higher skill levels from a shrinking work force. Low skills will become an ever greater challenge;
- Lifelong learning strategies. Most countries have made progress in defining unified and overarching strategies. Within such frameworks, progress is evident in pre-primary education, qualification frameworks and the validation of non-formal and informal learning. However, innovative learning partnerships and sustainable funding for high quality, efficient and equitable education and training still elude many countries, the more so as the growth of investment appears to have slowed. Ensuring that reforms are effectively implemented is an important challenge to all;
- The knowledge triangle (education, research and innovation). The knowledge triangle plays a key role in boosting jobs and growth. So it is so important to accelerate reform, to promote excellence in higher education and university-business partnerships and to ensure that all sectors of education and training play their full role in promoting creativity and innovation.

### **2. PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN A NUMBER OF AREAS**

Europe has registered progress in a number of areas. This does not mean that progress is uniform or that efforts can be relaxed. The pace of reform remains a major challenge. But in the following areas most countries have put reforms in place or are in the process of doing so.

### **2.1. Lifelong learning strategies and qualifications systems**

Explicit lifelong learning strategies,<sup>4</sup> which set out national policy priorities and how different sectors relate to each other, were developed by the majority of countries.<sup>5</sup> Most of these incorporate a comprehensive vision of lifelong learning, covering all types and levels of education and training. Some, however, focus on formal education and training systems or on developing specific stages of the lifelong learning continuum. There are signs that the evidence base of education and training policies is being strengthened. This is necessary for the overall coherence of systems and for an optimal allocation of resources. The priority given to the promotion of flexible learning pathways and transition between different parts of the system in some countries also strengthens coherence.

#### *Qualifications frameworks and validation of non-formal and informal learning*

National qualifications frameworks, which are linked to the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning, are being developed in most countries.<sup>8</sup> With them is coming a new focus on learning outcomes. Systems for the validation of non-formal and informal learning are also coming into place, albeit more slowly.<sup>9</sup> The challenge is now to move from experiment to full application in national qualifications systems, including access to higher education.

In Portugal, a nationwide network of Centres for the Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences (RVCC) was established in 2000. Currently nearly 58,000 adults are going through the validation process. The centres provide assessment and validation of competences for specific qualifications. The certification process includes an examination by an external jury and complementary training, if necessary.

### **2.2. Pre-primary education**

The importance of pre-primary education is increasingly recognised throughout Europe. Its capacity to contribute to both efficiency and equity is reflected in the development of new approaches and policies. Revision of teaching content, capacity building of teachers, extension of compulsory schooling to parts of the pre-primary level<sup>12</sup>, quality assessments<sup>13</sup> and increasing investment, for example through increased numbers of staff in pre-primary schools,<sup>14</sup> each find their place.

Successful pilot projects and schemes have been run in a number of countries. The challenge is now to move beyond pilot actions to generalised implementation, supported by investment, in particular in qualified staff.

Between 2000 and 2005 participation of 4-year-olds in education increased in EU 27 by about 3 percentage points to over 85 %. In 2005 in France, Belgium, Italy and Spain nearly all 4-year olds (over 99%) participated in education, while participation rates were below 50% in Ireland, Poland and Finland.

### **2.3. Higher Education: a clear place in the Lisbon agenda**

The modernisation of higher education is crucial to the knowledge triangle and to the Lisbon strategy. The issues of governance, funding and attractiveness have received increased attention at the European and national levels. These complement the Bologna reforms. Solid

progress has been registered in increasing university autonomy. This includes greater financial autonomy and new accountability mechanisms. New forms of stakeholder involvement are being tested, mostly as regards management of higher education institutions, but also in relation to curriculum development<sup>16</sup> or the definition of learning outcomes.

A compendium on best practice on the modernisation of universities is being developed by the higher education cluster, for policy makers and the wider public.

#### **2.4. Education and training in the broader EU policy context**

The large majority of Member States attach great importance to education, training and skills development in their Lisbon National Reform Programmes 2005-2008. This reflects their important contribution to implementing the integrated Guideliness for growth and jobs.

Broad progress has been achieved in linking operational programmes under the structural funds to the priorities of the Education and Training 2010 work programme. This has been particularly evident in addressing the agreed indicator and benchmark areas. Good progress has also been made in developing European reference tools to support reforms.

During 2006 and 2007, the European Parliament and Council adopted recommendations in the areas of key competences, quality of mobility, quality assurance in higher education, and are close to agreeing on the European Qualifications Framework.

### **3. AREAS WHERE PROGRESS REMAINS INSUFFICIENT**

#### **3.1. Implementation of lifelong learning**

Implementation is still the greatest challenge for lifelong learning strategies. It needs strong institutional commitment, coordination and partnership with all relevant stakeholders. Sustained effort can translate intentions into policies, which, in turn, deliver results. Appropriate dissemination arrangements and improved investment are vital. A lot remains to be done.

Positive trends in public spending on education between 2000 and 2003 seem to have come to a halt in 2004. Total public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP increased in the EU between 2000 (4.7%) and 2003 (5.2%), but then decreased to 5.1% in 2004. Levels of expenditure continue to show huge variations between countries (between 3.3% of GDP in Romania and 8.5% in Denmark). Private expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP has increased slightly since 2000 but progress slowed down in 2004.<sup>18</sup> While EU benchmark areas have found some reflection in national targets, still not all countries have set such targets.

#### **3.2. Basic skills for all**

Early school leavers, upper secondary attainment and key competences continue to be major problem areas. There has been some progress since 2000, but not enough to reach the EU benchmarks by 2010. In some countries performance has actually worsened between 2000 and 2006. Several countries still had very high levels of early school leavers, above 20%, in 2006.

Europe has far too many young people leaving education without the skills they need to participate in the knowledge society and to move smoothly into employment.<sup>20</sup> They face the risk of social exclusion. Further, they are effectively shut out of lifelong learning early in their lives.

Early school leavers: every sixth young person (15.3%) aged 18 to 24 in EU-27 still leaves school with no more than lower secondary education and does not participate in any kind of education or training after this. Progress must be faster to attain the EU benchmark of 10% by 2010.

In the case of upper secondary attainment, there has been slow but steady progress. It has picked up slightly in recent years, but is not sufficient to achieve the 2010 objective (at least 85% of 22-year-olds to complete at least upper secondary education). Available indicators show no progress in reducing the share of low achievers in reading.

Migrants and ethnic minority groups perform less well in the benchmark areas in most countries. They need particular attention. Their integration in pre-primary education would improve language learning and increase their prospects for successful schooling. Initiatives on early school leaving and socio-economic disadvantage need to be complemented. Extra-curricular activities (such as in culture or sports), local partnerships, better involvement of parents, addressing parents' learning needs, and improving well-being at school for both learners and teachers would help. Learning foreign languages is not a priority in any of the national reports.

### **3.3. Teacher education and training**

Teachers and trainers are challenged by a growing heterogeneity of classes, a demand for new competences, and the need to pay close attention to individual learning needs. Increasing school autonomy brings further tasks.

Large cohorts of older teachers will have to be replaced in the near future. The profession must be made more attractive.

No other in-school aspect influences student performance more than the quality of teacher education. However, current systems of teacher education and training often fail to give teachers the training they need. This is particularly so for continuing teacher training and professional development. In-service training for teachers is compulsory in only eleven Member States.

### **3.4. Higher education: excellence, partnership and funding**

Countries are paying more attention to strengthening the role of universities in research and innovation and university-business partnerships are becoming more common. While they remain strongest in the Nordic countries and the UK, many countries still have much to do in this respect.

Measures to achieve excellence in higher education institutions should focus on education, research and knowledge transfer alike. Currently, teaching is addressed less often. The proposed European Institute of Technology<sup>24</sup> will inspire change in education and research institutions by becoming a reference model for integrating education, research and innovation.

In Germany, the federal and state governments have launched an initiative for excellence that provides an extra €1.9 billion between 2006-11 to boost top level research at universities selected on a competitive basis. The initiative includes three action lines: graduate schools; clusters to link university research, extra-university research and enterprises; and comprehensive strategies for top research universities. Increasing investment, including from private sources, remains a challenge. Several governments have instruments to stimulate

private investments such as tax incentives, public-private partnership or sponsoring schemes, and some have introduced or increased tuition or registration fees.

Public spending on tertiary education institutions in the EU, including education and research, was 1.1% of GDP for EU-27 in 2004. This varied between 0.6% in Malta and 2.5% in Denmark. However, total spending remains far below the level in the United States. This is mainly because the level of private funding in the United States is more than seven times higher. Expenditure per tertiary student in the USA was more than twice the EU average.

While progress has been made in increasing the autonomy and accountability of universities, little evidence is available on the support provided to university staff and managers to handle this challenge.

### **3.5. Adult participation in lifelong learning**

Adult participation in lifelong learning is no longer on track to achieve the EU benchmark. Greater efforts are still required to raise skill levels in the population and to achieve flexibility and security across the labour market.

Progress towards the EU benchmark (12.5%) was broadly on track until 2005.<sup>29</sup> In 2006, however, an average of 9.6% of Europeans aged 25-64 were participating in education and training activities, which is slightly less than in 2005. The overall figure hides an important imbalance: adults with a high level of education are more than six times as likely to participate in lifelong learning as the low skilled.

Low participation in lifelong learning of older workers and the low-skilled is a particular problem where participation rates are already low for the overall population. Further, there is a particular concentration of low skills among migrants. Demographic and labour market trends will lead to increased demand for high skills and fewer opportunities for the lowskilled.

More attention will have to be given to training these groups.

### **3.6. Attractiveness and relevance of vocational education and training (VET)**

Further work must be done to improve the quality and attractiveness of VET. This is a key priority of the Copenhagen process.

Some countries have established advanced and comprehensive quality assurance systems, while others are still in a development phase. The greater use of approaches based on learning outcomes in training programmes and qualifications is increasing the relevance of VET to the labour market. Renewed emphasis on apprenticeship and work-based learning is a further plus. However, little progress can be reported on forecasting skills and qualification needs. VET sometimes suffers from being poorly integrated with the rest of the education system. It can contribute to retaining potential drop-outs in education and training where earlier levels of school provide the key competences needed to enter VET. Further progress must be made in reducing obstacles to progression between VET and further or higher education.

### **3.7. Transnational mobility**

There is good progress on the implementation and use of Europass.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, transnational mobility of learners is still mainly enabled by EU programmes. Most national measures concern higher education. Mobility in the field of VET is particularly difficult. Mobility is compulsory in the University of Luxembourg. All students in a Bachelors programme must spend part of their studies abroad.

## **4. THE WAY FORWARD**

### **4.1. Implementing lifelong learning to achieve efficiency and equity**

Important gaps in the coherence and comprehensiveness of lifelong learning strategies remain. Implementation is now the challenge. In many cases, this has just started. The credibility of the strategies depends on linking them to policy measures. It depends on the capacity of the authorities to target resources. It depends on their capacity to mobilise national institutions and stakeholders at all levels, through learning partnerships.

#### *Improving the knowledge base*

Knowledge of the economic and social impact of education and training policies must be strengthened. Concern for both efficiency and equity should underpin the development of the European and national research-base on the policy and practice of education and training. Peer learning and exchanges of experiences between policy-makers and stakeholders is an important source of know-how and should be supported. Monitoring of the development and implementation of lifelong learning strategies should continue, leading to an assessment of progress in the 2010 Joint Report.

#### *Sustainable funding*

The level, efficiency and sustainability of funding remain critical. Many countries are experimenting with new instruments and with incentives for private investment. This includes targeting individuals, households and employers. These efforts must be strengthened.

#### *Raising skills levels*

Increased investment in early education produces the highest returns to both efficiency and equity. The early acquisition of key competences is an effective means to establish the basis for further learning, increasing equity of outcomes and overall skills levels. Transition to the labour market will be made easier, skills shortages avoided. However, the image, status and attractiveness of VET needs to be strengthened. To facilitate entry into initial VET, mobility and return to the educational system, flexible and modular structures should be developed. Integrated lifelong guidance systems should be available to all citizens.

#### *Addressing socio-economic disadvantage*

Education and training can contribute to overcoming socio-economic disadvantage. But it may also perpetuate it. Inequity in education and training brings huge costs. These are often hidden, but are no less real. Ensuring equity of access, participation, treatment and outcomes must therefore remain a priority.

#### *Using the potential of migrants*

Migration increases classroom diversity, brings particular needs and raises problems of provision. Migrant performance levels, participation and attainment rates are typically lower than average. Although factors such as socio-economic background and language go some way to explain this, there is evidence that education and training policies and systems themselves contribute to the problem. This situation requires particular attention.

#### *High quality teaching*

Teachers need better professional preparation and continuing development. This will improve education and training outcomes. Involving teachers and trainers in innovation and reform is also very important. The Commission has set out the challenges. It is also carrying out a public consultation on schools. The work programme offers a suitable context for addressing the challenges.

#### **4.2. Innovation and creativity: education as a key element of the knowledge triangle**

Education is fundamental to the knowledge triangle, and so to boosting jobs and growth. Universities are at the heart of the triangle. Centres of excellence which focus on teaching, research and knowledge transfer are vital. Much more needs to be done to enable higher education and business to work in partnership. Research and innovation need a broad skills base in the population. Excellence, creativity and learning-to-learn skills must be developed in all systems and levels of education and training.

Both schools and VET have a major contribution to make to facilitating innovation. Highquality VET, for example, can contribute to innovation at the workplace.

#### **4.3. Improved governance: making best use of the results of Education & Training 2010**

The work programme is showing results at the European and the national level. The development of European reference tools and the work of the clusters and peer learning activities inform and support countries' reforms. Education and training challenges and the development of human resources figure prominently in the Lisbon National Reform Programmes of most Member States.

The effectiveness of the open method of coordination in education and training, its impact and political ownership can still be strengthened. Particular attention at both the national and European levels should be given to:

- joined-up education and training policy in a lifelong learning perspective with strategic priorities set across the whole system;
- improving the interfaces with relevant policy areas, such as innovation policy, employment and social policy, enterprise, research and structural funding;
- integration of policy developments in the areas of higher education, VET and adult learning within the overall work programme.
- strong links between the implementation and development of the Lisbon integrated Guideliness and of the Education and Training 2010 work programme;
- mutual monitoring of developments in each country, moving from peer-learning to peerreview;
- ensuring that the results of peer-learning activities reach policy makers and ministers;
- stronger participation of civil society;
- Further development of indicators and benchmarks in line with the Council conclusions of May 2007.
- making the most of Community funds and programmes, in particular the new Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013 and the EU cohesion policy instruments.

To ensure that the agreed priorities of the Education and Training 2010 work programme are fully reflected in national policy making, the specific actions identified in the 2006 Joint Report should be pursued.

Mechanisms for the implementation of the Education and Training 2010 work programme, and lifelong learning strategies, should be put in place. Close coordination is needed with those responsible for broader socio-economic policy, in particular Lisbon reforms and national strategies on social inclusion.

National targets and indicators should be further developed. They should take into account European objectives and benchmarks. Policy and practice should be informed by the use of knowledge and evaluation. The common principles, Guideliness and recommendations agreed at the European level offer reference points for the design of national reforms.

#### **4.4. Preparing for post-2010**

The Education and Training 2010 work programme provides practical support for Member States' education and training reforms. Significant progress has been achieved since the programme was launched in 2002. Yet education and training reforms need time to bear fruit. Major challenges persist, new challenges have emerged. This work, including cooperation in the framework of the Bologna and Copenhagen processes, needs to be continued and indeed reinforced well beyond 2010. Reflections on the main priorities of the work programme beyond 2010 should therefore start now. Given the crucial role of education and training to the Strategy for Jobs and Growth, they must be closely associated with the future development of the Lisbon process.

*[http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/natreport08/council\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/natreport08/council_en.pdf)*

**Article issued by CEDEFOP and written by Jens Bjornavold on  
learning outcomes :  
«Is it all just hot air? »**

*How learning outcomes are being used across Europe*

*Where did you study? For how long? How and what were you taught?* This 'location-duration-method' troika has long been the standard against which a person's learning was measured. Gradually, however, another idea gained ground in Europe, that of evaluating learning on the basis of its *outcomes*. What counts is what a learner knows and is able to do at the end of a learning process - nothing more, nothing less.

The learning outcomes perspective, latent for decades, has come to be the guiding principle for initiatives taken by the European Union, Member States and economic sectors alike. Many sectors have redefined their education and training objectives as learning outcomes; in the Member States, reforms in curriculum and assessment, policies on validation, and national qualifications frameworks take learning outcomes as their central idea; EU initiatives such as the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) are also based on this concept. But what exactly does it imply? How is it used in policy, how in practice? How does it affect education and training, the labour market, and personal development?

To explore these questions, Cedefop commissioned a comparative report across the 32 European countries that are participating in the Education and Training 2010 programme. The interim report was presented at a Cedefop conference of the same title held on October 15/16 in Thessaloniki. In his opening presentation, Cedefop Project Manager Jens Bjørnavold pointed out that most related initiatives were in an early state of implementation or planning; the aim of the conference was to clarify the concepts in order to help these initiatives succeed.

*A common language for education and training*

It would be no exaggeration to say that learning outcomes have allowed the emergence of a truly European dimension - that is, of a common and neutral reference point - for education and training areas that are the responsibility of national policy. What's exciting about this perspective is that it not only allows education systems to understand each other, but also affects the practice of teaching and learning *within* the systems, while encouraging a more equitable attitude to the learners themselves. It is no coincidence that the learning outcomes approach originated in the quest to recognise the untapped reservoir of non-formal and informal learning. Examining national and sectoral systems in terms of learning outcomes makes the 'black box' of education transparent to individuals and employers and reads to greater accountability of education and training providers towards all users, and all citizens.

The learning outcomes perspective has thus underpinned the creation of European tools in education and training. For this it was necessary to recognise that change cannot be imposed

on national systems; but also that it is meaningless to compare wildly different educational inputs. As a result - and despite the differences in how national systems use learning outcomes, outlined below - most European countries accept the need for such tools, a fact reflected in the European Parliament Resolution approving the EQF of 24.10.2007.

### *Learning outcomes in policy reform*

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) was both a result of and a contributing factor to the wider adoption of learning outcomes in national policies. By measuring how well pupils were able to use what they learned, PISA tests changed perceptions of how national systems were performing. The rankings served to alert countries to problems in their education system, leading to reflection and reform.

But the political interest in reforming and modernising education has deeper roots. Qualifications must be comparable in the European labour market; otherwise mobility within and between countries remains a dead letter. And in light of demographic situation, the rate of unemployment and the high proportion of low-skilled people, every kind of learning must be valued at all life stages if educational level of the European population is to improve. As a result of these converging preoccupations, learning outcomes came to be seen as the key to learning-related policies.

Policymakers aiming to modernise their education system must determine how to use learning outcomes as the organising concept for a lifelong learning strategy; how learning outcomes will affect reforms, policies and practices at all levels; how to reach an appropriate balance between outcomes, input and teaching quality; and how to address the concerns of all sub-sectors. The concept of learning outcomes by definition involves a multiplicity of partners - not just students, teachers and parents but also social partners and sectoral bodies, making consensus on related reforms hard to reach.

### *Learning outcomes in practice*

The attention given to learning outcomes is indicative of a new approach to learning and teaching. Influenced by the latest research on learning, there is a move away from cognitive and behaviourist approaches toward constructivist ideas, such as those of 'situated learning' in 'communities of practice' and 'active learning': people are seen as actors who build their own meanings within a community and reflect on their own learning. A system that disregards the real dynamics of learning is in danger of leading to excessive failure and dropout, a major charge against the present input-driven approach. Socially, too, equity is better served by focusing on learners' strengths, not weaknesses, and by giving everyone a chance to show what they know, regardless of how they know it.

Accordingly, the shift to learning outcomes can be observed everywhere: in the growing importance of individual training plans; in the tendency of general and vocational curricula away from detailed centralised prescriptions; even in the flatter hierarchies in the workplace and the attention to managing workers' learning needs. All this means that assessing learning must become more inclusive and creative, moving away from standardised testing. The point of student assessment is no longer to 'take a snapshot' of what they know at a given moment;

it should be in itself a formative experience for learners. Developing *assessment 'for', not just 'of', learning*, in turn leads to a new role, with and initiative, for teachers.

### *Challenges*

It becomes clear that an education system that is based on the logic of learning outcomes cannot simply add this concept on top of current curricula and assessment; reforming both is necessary. The greatest sticking point in changing educational practice is to be found at upper secondary level (offering access to tertiary) and, to a lesser extent, at the tertiary level itself.

Teachers and trainers at all levels have raised questions about how to implement learning outcomes in the classroom, such as at what stage learning outcomes should be assessed, how they should be assessed, and whether the learning outcomes approach really can work uniformly in all sub-sectors of education. In essence, as teachers point out, using a concept to shape policy is very different from using it to teach: schematisation is necessary for the former (e.g. EQF descriptors) but tends to break down when faced with individual learners. Could we be ignoring important differences in types of knowledge across sectors in order to fit them into pre-determined descriptors? Is this 'pragmatic' approach as meaningful to general education as it is to VET? The resistance on this issue is particularly strong from the higher education community, but it is eroding as the Bologna Process develops. Practitioners do not mistrust the concept of learning outcomes; rather, they fear that a reductive approach to learning outcomes will prevail. The point is surely to enable learners to progress further, to develop ever greater expertise - not to break learning outcomes into narrow targets. To get the approach right, it is necessary to focus on a person's future development, not present success or failure.

This however leads to a related problem: if a reductive approach is avoided, teachers will need to take more initiative in assessing learners. While this may make for more rewarding and creative classroom relationships, the danger is that a lack of standardisation will undermine public confidence in the education system. Standard testing is generally seen as more 'objective': will it be necessary to keep this trait of the 'input' system in order to retain public trust? How much of the learning outcomes perspective will thus be sacrificed?

### *Theme and variations: Learning outcomes in the Member States*

While learning outcomes are influencing policy and practice across the EU, this influence has taken many shapes and sizes. Thanks to the richness and diversity of education cultures across Europe, the use of learning outcomes ranges from an across-the-board sweep of all learning environments to a very restricted implementation in vocational training only. Some examples:

- France has used learning outcomes to establish a 'canon' for knowledge and skills in compulsory education, the *socle commun*. Similarly, Portugal specifies the profile of attitudes, skills and knowledge that pupils should have developed at the end of each cycle of compulsory education;
- Sweden is also using the approach to define the necessary learning and skills that should be acquired in compulsory education; but beyond that, it also defines 'goals to strive for' for all work undertaken at school. Learning outcomes thus become a means of '*steering learners toward goals*';

- Ireland, among the most enthusiastic in adopting learning outcomes, has been using the approach to break down the barriers between all forms, and formal set-ups of learning, extending it also to higher education;
- Slovenia can be said to be a pioneer of this new approach, yet does not advocate shifting entirely to outcomes: the teaching process, it insists, is as important as the act of learning;
- Italy has been slower to embrace the concept, but its ongoing education reforms are now shifting emphasis toward learning outcomes, via personalised study programmes and decentralisation;
- Finland, similarly to Slovenia, is poised halfway between the input-driven and learning outcomes approach. Preferring a more balanced approach, one which includes inputs and the teaching process itself, Finland - whose education system is seen as particularly successful in international comparisons - has so far resisted setting up a NQF.
- In the German system, which is heavily based on formal qualifications, learning outcomes are now gaining ground relative to input; but there is some resistance from the education community, which feels there is nothing really new in the concept.
- Greece continues to be heavily input-based. Learning outcomes have only been taken into account in VET. In addition, the higher education community has put up strong resistance to a learning outcomes approach, insisting that not all kinds of learning can be evaluated in the same way.

### *Can learning outcomes serve both market and citizen?*

So, rhetoric or reality? That the learning outcomes approach now represents a clearly identifiable new direction is beyond doubt. Driven originally by the labour market's need to know what qualifications represent, it is currently making it possible to devise common EU tools, such as the EQF, and acting as a catalyst for the reform of national systems. Continuing disparities between Member States and between sectors - even the continuing debate about how exactly to define a learning outcome - are testimony to the concept's usefulness rather than an indication of its limits. Too rigid a model could not have a lasting effect on the educational landscape any more than did past attempts at 'harmonisation' of education and training across Europe. The very flexibility of the learning outcomes approach is its greatest asset.

But what about practice? Will learning outcomes become the new touchstone for teaching, learning and assessment? The conference indicated some possibilities in this field; for instance, how learning outcomes may influence the setting of standards and the bridging of educational and occupational standards; how they can support the teacher/trainer in the classroom; how they can help reform assessment practices. But it is by no means certain that the approach will be properly used in practice. As the interim report notes, 'It remains to be seen whether learning outcomes will change educational systems radically or simply be absorbed by the processes they are intended to change'

Some of the education community's doubts about learning outcomes is due to the origin of this approach. The idea of making outcomes the criterion of learning was driven by the market's concerns, not by the educational community. Does this make it too limiting for the practitioner? Will all education, all learning, now become a handmaiden to market concerns?

This is not an unreasonable question. Education is not necessarily just a utilitarian goal, a means to get jobs for workers and employees for companies. But this utilitarian goal must be met if our societies and citizens are to prosper. Applying a coherent set of learning outcomes as an organising principle in all sub-sectors of education, training and lifelong learning is a way for Europe to improve the employability of its workers and the accountability of its educators. At the same time, this approach respects every kind of knowledge, skill and understanding, thus promoting equal opportunities. Provided learning outcomes are applied in an active, rather than restrictive sense - something that is by no means a foregone conclusion - they can only benefit the learner. In a European community that aims for equity between citizens, this can be no bad thing.

*[http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Upload/Information\\_resources/Bookshop/484/C37A8EN.html](http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Upload/Information_resources/Bookshop/484/C37A8EN.html)*

# **School Failure and the question of school drop out**

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## **European Youth Pact :**

*Commission Communication of 30 May 2005  
on European policies concerning youth:  
Addressing the concerns of young people in Europe -  
implementing the European Youth Pact and promoting active citizenship*

**This Communication shows how the Member States can put into operation the European Youth Pact, which was adopted by the European Council in March 2005, tying in with the European strategies for employment and social inclusion and the "Education and Training 2010" work programme. The main aim is to improve the education, training, mobility, vocational integration and social inclusion of young Europeans, while facilitating the reconciliation of family and working life. The Commission is also seeking to achieve consistency of initiatives in these different areas, and wants the Member States to consult young people in connection with developing and following up these initiatives.**

The Communication draws attention to the three strands of the Pact adopted by the European Council in March 2005:

- **employment, integration and social advancement;**
- **education, training and mobility;**
- **reconciliation of family life and working life.**

The measures to be taken in these three areas will have to be fully incorporated into the revised Lisbon Strategy , the European Employment Strategy , the Social Inclusion Strategy and the " Education and Training 2010 " work programme.

For the purpose of implementing the different measures, the Member States will draw on the "integrated Guideliness for growth and employment", within the framework of the Lisbon Strategy.

The Commission's text highlights the aspects of the integrated Guideliness and the Community Lisbon programme that are relevant to the Pact.

### **Measures for the employment, integration and social advancement of young people**

The following Guideliness have the most relevance for young people:

- promotion of a life-cycle approach to work (entailing, *inter alia*, renewed efforts to build employment pathways for young people and to reduce youth unemployment, in

tandem with resolute action to eliminate gender gaps in employment, unemployment and pay);

- creation of inclusive labour markets for job-seekers and disadvantaged people;
- improvement in the matching of labour market needs;
- expansion of investment in human capital;
- adjustment of education and training systems in response to new skills requirements.

The Member States will receive financial assistance from the European Social Fund and the European Investment Bank for implementing the necessary measures. The Commission wants the Member States to devise tailor-made action plans providing job search assistance, guidance services and training. The Communication also proposes that:

- the Commission and the Member States give priority to young people in the mutual learning programme on employment in 2005;
- the Commission and the Member States, through the Social Inclusion Strategy, improve the situation of the most vulnerable young people;
- the Commission launch a study on the social integration of highly disadvantaged young people in 2005.

### Measures for education, training and mobility

The priorities are:

- reducing the number of early school leavers;
- widening access to vocational, secondary and higher education, including apprenticeships and entrepreneurship training;
- defining common frameworks to make qualification systems more transparent;
- tackling the validation of non-formal and informal learning;
- implementing the Europass decision;
- developing a "Youthpass".

The Commission intends, during 2005 and 2006, to:

- adopt a Communication on entrepreneurship education;
- propose a European Qualifications Framework;
- adopt a Recommendation on key competences.

The Communication looks at ways of enhancing young people's mobility, highlighting a number of initiatives:

- in 2006, the European Year of Worker Mobility, specific initiatives will be taken for the benefit of young people entering the job market;
- from 2007, there will be follow-up to the 2002-05 action plan of the Commission and the Member States for skills and mobility ;
- the Member States will be asked to boost implementation of the Recommendation on the mobility of students , persons undergoing training, volunteers, teachers and trainers;
- the Commission will adapt tools such as EURES and PLOTEUS with a view to enhancing the opportunities for young people to work and study abroad;

- the Commission will, in 2005, make recommendations on a mobility card for young people in Europe;
- the Commission will think about extending the "Working holidays" initiative;
- the Commission and the Member States will, in 2007, implement new forms of European Voluntary Service .

### **Measures for reconciling family life and working life**

The Communication makes it clear that a better balance is needed between work and family life in order to tackle the problems associated with demographic ageing and a low birth rate. With a view to better reconciling family and working life, the Commission will encourage:

- the Member States to make provision for quality accessible and affordable childcare facilities and care for other dependants;
- the Member States, assisted by the Commission, to develop new forms of work organisation, such as flexitime, tele-working, maternity and parental leave.

Following on from the Green Paper on Europe's changing demographics, the Commission has launched a process of consultation with the aim of identifying policies to be pursued or reinforced at European and national levels.

### **THE ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP OF YOUNG PEOPLE**

The citizenship of young people is a focal point of the open method of coordination. With a view to improving participation, information , voluntary activities and knowledge of youth issues , the Council adopted 14 common objectives in 2003 and 2004. In its Communication of October 2004, the Commission gave a positive evaluation of the activities conducted at European level, while stressing the need for suitable measures at national level to consolidate the common objectives.

The Pact and associated actions ought to give rise to better understanding and greater knowledge of youth in the areas concerned, namely:

- employment;
- integration and inclusion;
- entrepreneurship;
- mobility;
- recognition of youth work.

### **THE YOUTH DIMENSION IN OTHER POLICIES**

The Communication draws attention to other policies which are relevant to young people:

- since 2005, the European campaign "For Diversity - Against Discrimination" has been extended to young people;
- a European initiative for the health of children and young people is planned for 2006;
- studies focusing specifically on youth will be undertaken as part of the Sixth Research Framework Programme;

- the Seventh Research Framework Programme will include youth-related research, which could focus on the impact of young people's participation in representative democracy and voluntary activities;
- the Commission will launch, in 2005, a public consultation on sport.

## SUPPORT PROGRAMME

Policy actions targeting young people should be accompanied by programmes supporting projects that encourage young people to become active citizens. Various European programmes support such projects:

- European Social Fund ;
- European Regional Development Fund ;
- Rural Development Fund ;
- " Youth " and "Youth in Action";
- Integrated Lifelong Learning Programme;
- " Citizens for Europe ";
- Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme ;
- Marie Curie Programme ;
- European Science Education Initiative.

## INVOLVEMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE

As far as the Pact itself is concerned, the European Council has emphasised the need to consult young people and their organisations both on the development of national reform programmes for the Lisbon Strategy and on follow-up action. National youth councils should, in any event, be among those consulted.

The Commission also intends to consult young people and the European Youth Forum on youth policy. This consultation process will culminate in the holding of a Youth Assembly in 2005. In addition, the Commission hopes that this assembly will be a precursor of "annual encounters" between young people and Commissioners.

*<http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/cha/c11081.htm>*

## Key competences for lifelong learning

*Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council, of 18 December 2006, on key competences for lifelong learning*

**Key competences in the shape of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to each context are fundamental for each individual in a knowledge-based society. They provide added value for the labour market, social cohesion and active citizenship by offering flexibility and adaptability, satisfaction and motivation. Because they should be acquired by everyone, this Recommendation proposes a reference tool for the Member States to ensure that these key competences are fully integrated into their strategies and infrastructures, particularly in the context of lifelong learning.**

### Key competences for lifelong learning

Key competences for lifelong learning are a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context. They are particularly necessary for personal fulfilment and development, social inclusion, active citizenship and employment.

Key competences are essential in a knowledge society and guarantee more flexibility in the labour force, allowing it to adapt more quickly to constant changes in an increasingly interconnected world.

They are also a major factor in innovation, productivity and competitiveness, and they contribute to the motivation and satisfaction of workers and the quality of work.

Key competences should be acquired by:

- young people at the end of their compulsory education and training equipping them for adult life, particularly for working life, whilst forming a basis for further learning;
- adults throughout their lives through a process of developing and updating skills.

The acquisition of key competences fits in with the principles of equality and access for all. This reference framework also applies in particular to disadvantaged groups whose educational potential requires support. Examples of such groups include people with low basic skills, early school leavers, the long-term unemployed, people with disabilities or migrants, etc.

### Eight key competences

This framework defines eight key competences and describes the essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to each of these. These key competences are:

- **communication in the mother tongue** which is the ability to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form

(listening, speaking, reading and writing), and to interact linguistically in an appropriate and creative way in a full range of societal and cultural contexts;

- **communication in foreign languages** which involves, in addition to the main skill dimensions of communication in the mother tongue, mediation and intercultural understanding. The level of proficiency depends on several factors and the capacity for listening, speaking, reading and writing;
- **mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology.** Mathematical competence is the ability to develop and apply mathematical thinking in order to solve a range of problems in everyday situations, with the emphasis being placed on process, activity and knowledge. Basic competences in science and technology refer to the mastery, use and application of knowledge and methodologies which explain the natural world. These involve an understanding of the changes caused by human activity and the responsibility of each individual as a citizen;
- **digital competence** involves the confident and critical use of information society technology (IST) and thus basic skills in information and communication technology (ICT);
- **learning to learn** is related to learning, the ability to pursue and organise one's own learning, either individually or in groups, in accordance with one's own needs, and awareness of methods and opportunities;
- **social and civic competences.** Social competence refers to personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence and all forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life. It is linked to personal and social well-being. An understanding of codes of conduct and customs in the different environments in which individuals operate is essential. Civic competence, and particularly knowledge of social and political concepts and structures (democracy, justice, equality, citizenship and civil rights) equips individuals to engage in active and democratic participation;
- **sense of initiative and entrepreneurship** is the ability to turn ideas into action. It involves creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. The individual is aware of the context of their work and is able to seize opportunities which arise. It is the foundation for acquiring more specific skills and knowledge needed by those establishing or contributing to social or commercial activity. This should include awareness of ethical values and promote good governance;
- **cultural awareness and expression** which involves appreciation of the importance of the creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media (music, performing arts, literature, and the visual arts).

These key competences are all interdependent, and the emphasis in each case is on critical thinking, creativity, initiative, problem solving, risk assessment, decision taking, and constructive management of feelings.

### **A European reference framework for the Member States and the Commission**

These key competences provide a reference framework to support national and European efforts to achieve the objectives they define. This framework is mainly intended for policy makers, education and training providers, employers and learners.

It is a reference tool for the Member States and their education and training policies. The Member States should try to ensure:

- that initial education and training offer all young people the means to develop the key competences to a level that equips them for adult and working life, thus also providing a basis for future learning;
- that appropriate provision is made for young people who are disadvantaged in their training so that they can fulfil their educational potential;
- that adults can develop and update key competences throughout their lives, particularly priority target groups such as persons who need to update their competences;
- that appropriate infrastructure is in place for continuing education and training of adults, that there are measures to ensure access to education and training and the labour market, and that there is support for learners depending on their specific needs and competences;
- the coherence of adult education and training provision through close links between the policies concerned.

It forms the basis for action at Community level, particularly within the Education and Training 2010 work programme and more generally within the Community education and training programmes. In this respect, the Commission should make a special effort to:

- help the Member States to develop their education and training systems, apply the reference framework so as to facilitate peer learning and the exchange of good practices, and follow up developments and report on progress through the progress reports on the Education and Training 2010 work programme;
- use the reference framework for the implementation of the Community education and training programmes whilst ensuring that these programmes promote the acquisition of key competences;
- use the reference framework to implement related Community policies (employment, youth, cultural and social policies) and to strengthen links with social partners and other organisations active in those fields;
- assess, by December 2010, the impact of the reference framework within the context of the Education and Training 2010 work programme as well as the experience gained and the implications for the future.

*<http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/cha/c11090.htm>*

**Guidelines****Recognition of non-formal and informal learning (in the field of youth)**

*Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council  
2006*

**Non-formal and informal learning activities constitute a special aspect of education and training because they complement formal learning. Greater recognition should be given to their importance in the field of youth because of the skills and qualifications with which they provide young people and the part they play in the learning process. For this reason, comparability and transparency are essential.**

**On the whole, we need to create reference frameworks in order to assess the skills acquired and promote mobility by building bridges between formal, non-formal and informal learning, as highlighted by the 2001 White Paper entitled " A new impetus for European youth ".**

**The value and visibility of non-formal and informal learning for young people should be enhanced by recognising the work and achievements of young people and those active in youth work and youth organisations.** They should therefore be given due consideration by employers, formal education and civil society in general.

These kinds of learning are important because they:

- are complementary to the formal education and training system;
- have a participative and learner-centred approach;
- are carried out on a voluntary basis and are therefore closely linked to young people's needs, aspirations and interests. By providing an additional source of learning and a possible route into formal education and training, such activities are particularly relevant to young people with fewer opportunities;
- take place in a wide and varied range of settings.

The field of youth is important because of the economic and social impact of public and private investment in this field at local, regional, national and European levels. Non-formal and informal learning activities can therefore provide significant added value for society, the economy and young people themselves.

Non-formal and informal learning are important elements in the learning process and are effective instruments for making learning attractive, developing lifelong learning and promoting the social integration of young people. They encourage the participation, active citizenship and social inclusion of young people, and are of practical relevance to the labour market by helping to acquire knowledge, qualifications and other key skills.

The Youth in Action programme for the period 2007-2013 and its predecessor, the Youth Programme make an important contribution to their European dimension.

The Council therefore **calls on the Member States and the Commission** to:

- ensure the comparability and transparency of the skills and competences acquired by young people through non-formal and informal learning, which involves developing a youth-specific element within Europass for identifying and recognising these skills and qualifications in the EU, especially in the labour market. To this end, the voluntary use by young people of Europass and similar national and European instruments should be encouraged;
- encourage public bodies and NGOs to use comparable and transparent instruments for recognising the competences of those active in youth work and youth organisations, in accordance with the European Portfolio for Youth Leaders and Youth Workers currently being developed within the Council of Europe ;
- recognise and support the contribution made by youth organisations and other NGOs to non-formal and informal learning;
- promote application of the common European principles for the identification and validation of non-formal learning to the specific needs of the youth field;
- encourage research into the socio-economic impact of non-formal and informal learning, including the contribution of youth organisations and other NGOs;
- encourage social partners to acknowledge the quality and diversity of non-formal and informal learning and to recognise its social and economic added value;
- encourage innovative partnerships between formal and non-formal learning providers, in order to develop educational approaches that could be attractive for different groups of learners.

*<http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/cha/c11096.htm>*

## **Identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning**

*Draft Conclusions  
of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States  
meeting within the Council on Common European Principles  
2004*

### **THE COUNCIL AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE MEMBER STATES MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL,**

#### **RECOGNISE THAT**

The Member States, the Commission, the EEA-EFTA and accession countries and the social partners at European level, in following-up the Copenhagen Declaration, the Council Resolution and the work programme on the Future Objectives, have made progress in developing common European principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning.

The identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning serves the needs of the individual learner. They support social integration, employability and the development and use of human resources in civic, social and economic contexts. They also meet the specific needs of those individuals who seek integration or re-integration into education and training, the labour market and society.

A diversity of approaches and practices of identification and validation exists and is emerging at European national, regional and local level. A diversity of stakeholders is also involved. They are, amongst others, providers and competent authorities in formal education and training, social partners in the workplace and non-governmental organisations in civil society. While identification is a matter for all stakeholders, as well as for the individual, in a certain number of Member States validation is only a matter for the competent authorities in accordance with national legislation.

#### **STRESS THAT**

Common European principles are necessary to encourage and guide the development of highquality, trustworthy approaches and systems for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning.

They are necessary to ensure the comparability and wide acceptance of different approaches and systems in the Member States. They also enable the transfer and acceptance of all learning outcomes across different settings. They take particular account of the needs and entitlements of individuals.

The following common European principles, are addressed to the Member States, the Commission and stakeholders who are engaged in the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning. They are, to be applied on a voluntary basis. They fully respect

the rights, responsibilities and competences of the Member States and stakeholders. They inform the development of systems and approaches to identification and validation and do not prescribe any particular approach or system.

### **INVITE, IN RELATION TO THE IDENTIFICATION AND VALIDATION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING, THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE COMPETENCIES**

- To disseminate and promote the use of the common European principles.
- To encourage the European social partners, in the context of social dialogue, to use and adapt the common European principles for the specific needs of the workplace.
- To encourage non-governmental organisations engaged in providing lifelong learning opportunities to use and adapt the common European principles as appropriate.
- To support the exchange of experiences and mutual learning including the development of a
- European Inventory on the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning.
- To strengthen co-operation with international organisations with a view to achieving synergies in this field.
- To develop and support coherent and comparable ways of presenting the results of the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning at European level, and consider how the existing instruments in the Europass framework for transparency of qualifications and competences can contribute to this.
- To consider how the common European principles could support ongoing work on credit transfer and accumulation, quality assurance and guidance and, in general, contribute to the development of a European Qualifications Framework which was called for in the Joint Interim Report of the Commission and Council, February 2004.
- To support the development of quality assurance mechanisms and, in particular, to consider how to promote the professional development of those who carry out assessment, for example, through support networks aimed at developing and disseminating good practice.

*[http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/validation2004\\_fr.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/validation2004_fr.pdf)*

# **Transition between school and active life**

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## **Inclusion Policy - Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion**

*Communication from the Commission of 27 January 2005*

**This report sets out the main challenges to be overcome in order to achieve the objectives set by the Lisbon strategy by 2010, in the areas of social protection, pension schemes and the fight against exclusion. The Member States are pulling together in these areas, using the open method of coordination (OMC) to coordinate their national policies. By means of their joint action they are contributing to economic growth, European social cohesion and the eradication of poverty.**

The Member States of the enlarged European Union (EU) are undergoing major demographic, economic and societal changes. The Lisbon strategy promotes a model of sustainable development in which economic policy, employment policy and social policy are interdependent. To this end, Community coordination mechanisms for social protection and inclusion are to be streamlined as of 2006.

### **SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION**

A high level of social protection should guarantee social cohesion and create a favourable environment for growth and employment. In order to carry out this role, social protection systems must be evolutionary, and most Member States have undertaken the modernisation process taking into account the reduction in the workforce and the possibility of some of the population being put at risk.

The modernisation of social protection systems must be supported by an increase in lifelong employment. This means that social inclusion policies should play a part in the general effort to increase labour supply. Maintaining the sums allocated by the Structural Funds, and in particular by the European Social Fund (ESF), will make an essential contribution to this objective and to the fight against poverty.

### **PROMOTING SOCIAL INCLUSION**

The risk of poverty remains very high in Europe, with 15% of the EU population at risk in 2002. It is feared that the recent economic slowdown may result in rising numbers of people at risk of poverty. In the new Member States it is however the restructuring process underpinning economic growth which may increase the risk of poverty.

Those groups of the population affected by poverty are often on the margins of the labour market and suffering from social exclusion. Public action must therefore be taken, linking the areas of social inclusion, employment and the fight against poverty.

Seven key priorities are reflected in the policies being adopted by the Member States. At EU level it is necessary to:

- increase labour market participation by expanding active policies and ensuring a better linkage between social protection, education and lifelong learning;
- modernise social protection systems to ensure they are sustainable, adequate and accessible to all;
- tackle disadvantages in education and training by investing more in human capital at all ages and focusing particularly on the most disadvantaged groups;
- eliminate child poverty by guaranteeing their education, increasing the assistance given to their families and ensuring that their rights are protected;
- ensure decent accommodation for vulnerable groups and develop integrated approaches to tackling homelessness;
- improve access to quality services in the fields of health, social services, transport and the new information and communication technologies;
- eliminate sex discrimination and increase the social integration of people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and immigrants.

These priorities are implemented by means of national strategies adapted to suit each situation. The development of National Action Plans Against Poverty and Social Exclusion (NAPS) clearly shows Member States' intention to strengthen the social inclusion process. These strategies are based on a broad partnership involving the national, regional and local authorities, the social partners and all stakeholders.

The open method of coordination (OMC) supported by the Community action programme to combat social exclusion provides a suitable basis for further action at national and Community levels to promote social inclusion.

The following have been identified as ways of increasing the effectiveness of strategies at national level:

- establishing stronger links with economic and employment policy, most notably by means of greater transparency regarding budgetary resources and the use of the Structural Funds;
- strengthening strategy implementation capacity by developing partnerships, increasing administrative and institutional capacity and ensuring coordination across different levels of government;
- focusing on key issues and setting more ambitious targets which are better quantified and adapted to suit each situation;
- strengthening monitoring and evaluation of policies.

In order to make further progress at EU level, the Council and Commission should:

- strengthen the mainstreaming of social inclusion objectives across all EU policies, from design to implementation. To this end the OMC should be extended to include health care and long-term care;

- make greater use of the OMC's potential to contribute to effective results in each Member State, by evaluating existing methods and using common indicators;
- ensure that Structural Funds continue to play a key role in promoting social inclusion;
- further develop common indicators and enhance data sources, taking account in particular of the multi-dimensional nature of social exclusion and poverty.

## **PENSIONS AND ACTIVE AGEING**

Pensions need to be modernised in order to meet the challenge posed by the ageing of the European population and in order to ensure they are financially sustainable and adapted to changes in society.

Reforms are thus primarily based on raising the effective retirement age, which involves strengthening the role of social security systems by means of measures to promote active ageing and prevent poverty.

Most Member States have already undertaken reforms in order to curb growth in public expenditure. However, guaranteeing adequate incomes generally requires additional public expenditure. Reforms often allow an increase in the savings directed towards private pension schemes and thus open up more opportunities for pensioners to generate income.

*<http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/cha/c10622.htm>*

# **Transition between university – active life**

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**Guidelines****Delivering on the modernisation agenda for universities:  
Education, Research and Innovation**

*Communication from the Commission to the  
Council and the European Parliament  
05/15/2006*

**PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR STRUCTURED PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE  
BUSINESS COMMUNITY**

While the public mission and overall social and cultural remit of European universities must be preserved, they should increasingly become significant players in the economy, able to respond better and faster to the demands of the market and to develop partnerships which harness scientific and technological knowledge. This implies **recognising that their relationship with the business community is of strategic importance** and forms part of their commitment to serving the public interest.

Structured partnerships with the business community (including SMEs) bring opportunities for universities to improve the sharing of research results, intellectual property rights, patents and licences (for example through on-campus start-ups or the creation of science parks). They can also increase the relevance of education and training programmes through placements of students and researchers in business, and can improve the career prospects of researchers at all stages of their career by adding entrepreneurial skills to scientific expertise. Links with business can bring additional funding, for example to expand research capacity or to provide retraining courses, and will enhance the impact of university-based research on SMEs and regional innovation.

To secure these benefits, most universities will need external support to make the necessary organisational changes and build up entrepreneurial attitudes and management skills. This can be achieved by creating local “clusters for knowledge creation and transfer” or business liaison, joint research or knowledge transfer offices serving as an interface with local/regional economic operators. This also implies that development of entrepreneurial, management and innovation skills should become an integral part of graduate education, research training and lifelong learning strategies for university staff.

**PROVIDE THE RIGHT MIX OF SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES FOR THE LABOUR  
MARKET**

Universities have the potential to play a vital role in the Lisbon objective to equip Europe with the skills and competences necessary to succeed in a globalised, knowledge-based economy. In order to overcome persistent mismatches between graduate qualifications and the needs of the labour market, university programmes should be **structured to enhance directly the employability of graduates** and to offer broad support to the workforce more generally. Universities should offer innovative curricula, teaching methods and

training/retraining programmes which include broader employment-related skills along with the more disciplinespecific skills. Credit-bearing internships in industry should be integrated into curricula. This applies to all levels of education, i.e. short cycle, Bachelor, Master and Doctorate programmes. It also entails offering non-degree courses for adults, e.g. retraining and bridging courses for students not coming through the traditional routes. This should extend beyond the needs of the labour market to the stimulation of an **entrepreneurial mindset** amongst students and researchers.

At doctoral level, it means that candidates aiming for a professional research career should acquire skills in research and IPR management, communication, networking, entrepreneurship and team-working in addition to training in research techniques.

More generally, universities need to grasp more directly the challenges and opportunities presented by the **lifelong learning agenda**. Lifelong learning presents a challenge, in that it will require universities to be more open to providing courses for students at later stages in the life cycle. It presents an opportunity for universities which might otherwise risk to see enrolments of students directly from school fall over coming years in view of coming demographic change.

In summary, while the integration of graduates in the labour market is a responsibility shared with employers, professional bodies and governments, labour market success should be used as one indicator (among others) of the quality of university performance, and acknowledged and rewarded in regulatory, funding and evaluation systems.

## **ACTIVATE KNOWLEDGE THROUGH INTERACTION WITH SOCIETY**

Society is becoming increasingly knowledge-based and knowledge is replacing physical resource as the main driver of economic growth. Universities therefore need to communicate the relevance of their activities, particularly those related to research, **by sharing knowledge with society and by reinforcing the dialogue with all stakeholders**. Communication between scientific specialists and non-specialists is much needed but often absent.

This requires a much clearer commitment by universities to lifelong learning opportunities, but also to a broad communication strategy based on conferences, open door operations, placements, discussion forums, structured dialogues with alumni and citizens in general and with local/regional players. Working together with earlier formal and non-formal education and with business (including SMEs and other small entities) will also play a role in this respect.

Such interaction with the outside world will gradually make universities' activities in general, and their education, training and research agendas in particular, more relevant to the needs of citizens and society at large. It will help universities to promote their different activities and to convince society, governments and the private sector that they are worth investing in.

**Universities are key players in Europe's future and for the successful transition to a knowledge-based economy and society.** However, this crucial sector of the economy

and of society needs in-depth restructuring and modernisation if Europe is not to lose out in the global competition in education, research and innovation.

Implementing this necessary restructuring and modernisation requires coordinated action from all parties involved:

- Member States when implementing the Integrated Guidelines for growth and jobs<sup>24</sup> and their National Reform Programmes need to take the necessary measures with respect to universities, including aspects such as management, granting real autonomy and accountability to universities, innovation capacities, access to higher education and adapting higher education systems to new competence requirements..
- Universities, for their part, need to make strategic choices and conduct internal reforms to extend their funding base, enhance their areas of excellence and develop their competitive position; structured partnerships with the business community and other potential partners will be indispensable for these transformations.
- The Commission can contribute through implementation of the Community Lisbon Programme<sup>25</sup>, through policy dialogue and mutual learning, in particular within the Education and training 2010 Work Programme, and through financial support to Member States and to universities in their modernisation activities.

The Commission invites the Council and the European Parliament to give a clear message about the EU's determination to achieve the necessary restructuring and modernisation of universities, and to invite all concerned to take immediate steps to take this agenda forward.

*[http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/comuniv2006\\_fr.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/comuniv2006_fr.pdf)*

## Guidelines

### The Bologna process: make higher education systems in Europe converge

*Bologna Declaration of 19 June 1999,  
adopted by 29 countries in order to make the higher education systems in Europe converge.*

**The Bologna process aims *inter alia* at making divergent higher education systems converge towards a more transparent system by 2010, based on three cycles: Degree/Bachelor - Master - Doctorate.**

#### Background

On 18 September 1988, to mark the 900 years since the founding of the University of Bologna, the university rectors signed the **Magna Charta Universitatum**. They considered that "at the approaching end of this millennium the future of mankind depends largely on cultural, scientific and technical development". Universities shape this knowledge.

To celebrate the 800 years of the University of Paris, the Ministers responsible for higher education in Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom adopted the **Sorbonne Declaration** report on 25 May 1998. This declaration aimed at harmonising the architecture of the European higher education system. The Ministers stressed "the Europe we are building is not only that of the euro, the banks and the economy, it must be a Europe of knowledge as well".

The **Bologna Declaration** of 19 June 1999 has been signed by 29 European countries, including the then 15 Member States of the European Union (EU) (Austria, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Greece, Spain, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, the United Kingdom) as well as the 10 States that joined the EU on 1 May 2004 (Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia). Cyprus, also a member of the EU since May 2004 commenced participation in the Bologna process following acceptance of its application for accession to the process by the ministers in Prague 2001. Iceland, Norway and the Swiss Confederation are also signatories to the Declaration, as are Bulgaria and Romania, who became members of the European Union on 1st January 2007.

Today, more than 40 countries participate in the Bologna process after having fulfilled the accession conditions and procedures. The countries subscribing to the European Cultural Convention, signed on 19 December 1954 under the aegis of the Council of Europe, are eligible for membership of the European Higher Education Area, provided that they declare their intention to incorporate the objectives of the Bologna process into their own higher education system. Their membership applications must include information on the way in which they will implement the principles and objectives.

The Bologna process is in line with the objectives of the Lisbon strategy .

The Bologna Declaration initiates the so-called Bologna process, which is designed to introduce a system of academic degrees that are easy to read and compare, to promote the mobility of students, teachers and researchers, to ensure quality in education and to take into account the European dimension of higher education. The process will end in 2010.

### **Making academic degrees comparable and promoting mobility**

The Bologna Declaration of 19 June 1999 involves six actions relating to:

- **a system of academic degrees which are easy to read and compare.** It includes the introduction of a diploma supplement in order to improve transparency;
- **a system based essentially on two cycles:** a first cycle geared to the employment market and lasting at least three years and a second cycle (Master) conditional upon the completion of the first cycle;
- **a system of accumulation and transfer of credits** of the ECTS type used in the Socrates-Erasmus exchange scheme;
- **mobility of students, teachers and researchers:** elimination of all obstacles to the freedom of movement;
- **cooperation** with regard to quality assurance;
- **the European dimension of higher education:** expand at all levels on modules, teaching and study areas where the content, guidance or organisation has a European dimension.

The **Prague Communiqué** of 19 May 2001 added the following actions to the Bologna process:

- **lifelong learning** is an essential element of the European Higher Education Area in order to address economic competitiveness;
- **the involvement of higher education institutions and students;** the Ministers underline the importance of the involvement of universities, of other higher education establishments and in particular of students in order to create a constructive European Higher Education Area;
- **promote the attractiveness** of the European Higher Education Area among students in Europe and in other parts of the world.

At the **2003 Berlin conference**, the Ministers responsible for higher education adopted a communiqué which includes doctorate studies and synergies between the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area (ERA) in the Bologna process. The Ministers underlined the importance of research, research training and the promotion of interdisciplinary research to maintain and improve the quality of higher education and strengthen its competitiveness. They called for increased mobility at doctorate and post-doctorate level and encouraged the establishments in question to enhance their cooperation in the spheres of doctorate studies and training young researchers.

The **Bergen communiqué** of 20 May 2005 noted that significant progress had been made concerning the objectives of the process, as illustrated in the 2003-2005 monitoring group's general report. By 2007, when the next meeting will be held, the Ministers would like to have made progress in the following areas in particular:

- implementing references and Guidelines to guarantee quality, as proposed in the ENQA report (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education);
- introducing national qualification frameworks ;
- awarding and recognising joint degrees, including at doctorate level;
- creating opportunities for flexible pathways for training in higher education, including the existence of provisions for the validation of experience.

The next meeting of Ministers will take place in May 2007 in London, United Kingdom. On this issue, the European Commission is publishing a document of 24 January 2006 called "From Bergen to London - the contribution of the European Union".

### **Reform of higher education systems in Europe**

The present declaration is a voluntary undertaking by each signatory country to reform its own education system: this reform is not imposed on the national governments or universities. As for the Member States of the EU, Article 149 of the Treaty establishing the European Community (EC Treaty) states that the Community "shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States". The Member States are still fully responsible for the content and the organisation of their education system. Community action is aimed at:

- developing the European dimension in education, particularly through the learning and dissemination of the languages of the Member States;
- encouraging mobility of students and teachers, *inter alia* by encouraging the academic recognition of diplomas and periods of study;
- promoting cooperation between educational establishments.

<http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/cha/c11088.htm>

# Lifelong Guidance

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## **Flexicurity : More and better jobs through flexibility and security**

*Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and social committee and the Committee of the Regions  
June 2007*

### **DEVELOPING COMMON PRINCIPLES OF FLEXICURITY**

While flexicurity policies and measures must reflect the very different national situations, all EU Member States face the same challenge of modernisation and adaptation to globalisation and change. Therefore, to facilitate national debates within the common objectives of the Growth and Jobs Strategy, it seems appropriate to reach a consensus at EU level on a series of "common principles of flexicurity".

These common principles could be a useful reference in achieving more open and responsive labour markets and more productive workplaces. They should help Member States in the establishment and implementation of flexicurity strategies which fully take into account their own respective specific challenges, opportunities and circumstances, with the active involvement of social partners.

The common principles could be:

- (1) Flexicurity involves flexible and reliable contractual arrangements (from the perspective of the employer and the employee, of insiders and outsiders); comprehensive lifelong learning strategies; effective active labour market policies; and modern social security systems. Its objective is to reinforce the implementation of the Growth and Jobs Strategy, create more and better jobs, and strengthen the European social models, by providing new forms of flexibility and security to increase adaptability, employment and social cohesion.
- (2) Flexicurity implies a balance between rights and responsibilities for employers, workers, job seekers and public authorities.
- (3) Flexicurity should be adapted to the specific circumstances, labour markets and industrial relations of the Member States. Flexicurity is not about one single labour market model or a single policy strategy.
- (4) Flexicurity should reduce the divide between insiders and outsiders on the labour market. Current insiders need support to be prepared for and protected during job to job transitions. Current outsiders - including those out of work, where women, the young and migrants are over-represented - need easy entry points to work and stepping-stones to enable progress into stable contractual arrangements.
- (5) Internal (within the enterprise) as well as external (from one enterprise to another) flexicurity should be promoted. Sufficient flexibility in recruitment and dismissal must be accompanied by secure transitions from job to job. Upward mobility needs to be facilitated, as

well as between unemployment or inactivity and work. High-quality workplaces with capable leadership, good organisation of work, and continuous upgrading of skills are part of the objectives of flexicurity. Social protection needs to support, not inhibit, mobility.

(6) Flexicurity should support gender equality by promoting equal access to quality employment for women and men, and by offering possibilities to reconcile work and family life as well as providing equal opportunities to migrants, young, disabled and older workers.

(7) Flexicurity requires a climate of trust and dialogue between public authorities and social partners, where all are prepared to take responsibility for change, and produce balanced policy packages.

(8) Flexicurity policies have budgetary costs and should be pursued also with a view to contribute to sound and financially sustainable budgetary policies.

They should also aim at a fair distribution of costs and benefits, especially between businesses, individuals and public budgets, with particular attention to the specific situation of SMEs. At the same time, effective flexicurity policies can contribute to such an overall objective.

## **NEXT STEPS: FLEXICURITY AND THE LISBON STRATEGY FOR GROWTH AND JOBS**

The purpose of this Communication is to facilitate a comprehensive debate between EU institutions, Member States, social partners and other stakeholders, so that the European Council may adopt, by the end of 2007, a set of common principles of flexicurity. These common principles should then inspire and contribute to the implementation of the Integrated Guideliness for Growth and Jobs, and in particular the Employment Guideliness.

The next Joint Employment Report of 2007/2008 should focus its analysis on the extent to which Member States are developing comprehensive policy strategies covering the four components of flexicurity. In its analysis of this year's Lisbon National Reform Programmes, the Commission will provide initial comments on the way Member States might benefit from common principles and pathways of flexicurity to design their own specific policies. Throughout the next cycle of the Integrated Guideliness, Member States will be invited to use their National Reform Programmes to report explicitly on their flexicurity strategies. The Commission will monitor these strategies in the Annual Progress Reports, and report on progress made in flexicurity strategies at the end of the Lisbon cycle. The Commission will propose a strengthened and more focused mutual learning programme, to ensure that Member States benefit from flexicurity policies that work.

Given the role of social dialogue in the establishment and implementation of successful flexicurity strategies, the Commission invites the European social partners to engage in a dialogue at Community level, on the basis of the common principles of flexicurity approved by the European Council. This debate would complement, and feed into, the core role of social partners in their respective national contexts.

The 2008 Tripartite Social Summit could thus focus its discussion on flexicurity.

*<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2007:0359:FIN:EN:PDF>*

## **Promoting young people's full participation in education, employment and society**

*Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, The Council, the European Economic and Social Committee And the Committee of the Regions  
Septembre 2007*

### **YOUTH AND EMPLOYMENT: A CHALLENGE FOR EUROPE**

Using the full potential of youth is a requisite for future economic growth and social cohesion in the EU. Labour markets need to urgently respond to these challenges in order to fulfil the potential of the youth population.

#### ***3.1. Youth unemployment: a wasted resource***

Youth unemployment (ages 15-24) is a key concern for Europe: it stands at 17.4%. This constitutes a waste of human capital. Over the last 25 years, no real breakthrough has been achieved in reducing it despite a general rise in educational attainment. In the current economic upswing with an estimated 7 million more persons moving into employment during the 2005-2008 Lisbon cycle, labour market performance continues to develop less favourably for young people. They are more than twice as likely to be unemployed than prime-age adults.

Young adults' unemployment often turns into long-term unemployment (over 50% of the unemployed aged 25-29) or inactivity. Young women are overrepresented among the inactive and unemployed, and the gap to men increases with age.

Youth unemployment has long been regarded as a temporary phenomenon in the transition from education to the labour market. However, the causes of youth employment problems and the risks they entail have to be reconsidered in the changing demographic and economic context. Skills and education (or their lack) is one key explanation, but difficult transitions and labour market segmentation are also parts of the problem. Regional disparities in some Member States reinforce such problems.

As a consequence of educational shortcomings a quarter of all youngsters arrive at the threshold of the labour market without sufficient qualifications. Half of all new jobs created in the EU today require high level qualifications, and most of the rest at least medium level. Unsurprisingly the unemployment rate of low qualified youth is significantly higher than for more educated peers. Changes in labour demand have increased the disadvantage of low qualified young people. Knowledge and service-based economies still create jobs not requiring a high formal qualification, but they demand more varied skills and competences than needed in the past. In some countries even highly educated young people have difficulties finding a job due to macro-economic or labour market institutions unfavourable to the entry of newcomers, and to a mismatch between qualifications and labour market demands.

High rates of youth inactivity (other than participation in education and training) are another phenomenon of failed labour market integration and typically coincide with overall high unemployment rates. Inactivity has negative repercussions on the readiness and economic capacity of young adults to raise families. Unemployment and inactivity of parents are strong risk factors for child poverty.

### *3.2. Improving young people's transitions: flexicurity*

Settling into the labour market is often a gradual process, but becomes a problem if nonemployment spells are not filled with meaningful activity; this detracts from the individuals' employability. In many Member States, one in three young people remain jobless one year after leaving education. Despite Member States' reiterated commitment the vast majority of the 4.6 million young unemployed in the EU do not get the opportunity to make a new start within 6 months.

Education and labour market institutions should step up efforts in providing all young people with tailored guidance and counselling for choosing a suitable education pathway leading to labour market qualification hence reducing the mismatch between education outcomes and labour market requirements. Young people should receive more support through tailored job search including seizing job opportunities abroad. The EU will step up its support to Member States cooperation for promoting mobility (e.g. EURES "Your First Job Abroad" initiative).

Establishing early links between education and the labour market is essential to familiarise young people with the world of work. Internships, when linked to the training or study curriculum, are an important instrument in this respect. However, internships with little or no pay and limited educational added-value should be avoided. Member States should ensure that internships are properly defined.

Young people need appropriate employment opportunities, but having had little or no way to show their capabilities, they suffer heavily from not being taken into jobs. They are particularly affected by the dualism of the labour market. They can be trapped in jobs with poor conditions or prospects: for instance 4 in 10 are currently in temporary employment; around a quarter works part time and even more have low paid jobs. Such employment can serve as a stepping stone, helping young people to establish a track record of employment, but for some it can lead to a cycle of permanent low quality jobs.

Despite the fact that Member States make great efforts in tackling youth unemployment, evaluations of active labour market policies for youth have shown that results could still be improved. Member States should address more systematically and more broadly causes of youth unemployment within the Lisbon Strategy, including the European Youth Pact. The 2006/2007 Lisbon exercise made a number of recommendations relevant to youth employment problems.

The common principles for flexicurity provide a part of the framework to address the main causes of youth employment problems and feeling of insecurity<sup>17</sup>. They address at the same time the issues of security and flexibility. In the next Lisbon cycle, starting in 2008, Member States are invited to establish, based on their respective specific challenges and with active involvement of social partners, flexicurity strategies integrating the four policy components (flexible and reliable contractual arrangements, effective lifelong learning systems, active

labour market policies, modern social security systems). Policy interventions and employment measures should be reviewed and tailored to the national circumstances and preferences.

Member States should use the European Social Fund to provide young people with transition pathways from education to work, in particular where vocational training systems are less developed, and put a stronger focus on youth in structural policies aiming at the reduction of regional disparities.

*<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2007:0359:FIN:EN:PDF>*

## **Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Guidance throughout life in Europe**

*Draft Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments  
of the Member States meeting within the Council  
May 2004*

### **THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE MEMBER STATES MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL**

#### **REAFFIRM AS PRIORITIES**

- Their commitment to the development of high quality guidance provision for all European citizens, accessible at all stages of their lives to enable them to manage their learning and work pathways and the transitions therein.
- The need for further co-operation in the area of guidance through actions and policies developed primarily in the context of the follow-up to the Lisbon Strategy in the field of education and training, Education and Training 2010 and also taking into account the European Employment Strategy, the Framework Strategy and Gender Equality and European policies for Social Inclusion, Mobility, and Services of General Interest.
- The importance of refocusing guidance provision, where appropriate, in order to develop citizens' lifelong and lifewide learning and management skills as an integral part of education and training programmes.
- The development at national, regional and local levels, where appropriate, of better quality assurance mechanisms for guidance services, information and products (including on-line services), particularly from a citizen/consumer perspective.
- The need to strengthen structures for policy and systems development at national and regional levels by involving the appropriate key players (such as ministries, social partners, employment services, service providers, guidance practitioners, education and training institutions, consumers, parents and youth).
- The need to follow-up guidance policy issues within the Education and Training 2010 work programme.

#### **INVITE THE COMMISSION**

- To enhance co-operation at international level with relevant organisations, for example the OECD, ILO, UNESCO, in the development of policies and concrete actions for guidance throughout life;

## INVITE THE MEMBER STATES

- To examine, where appropriate, existing national guidance provision in the education and training and the employment sectors, in the context of the findings of the Commission, OECD and World Bank reviews of policies for guidance;
- To seek to ensure effective co-operation and co-ordination between providers of guidance at national, regional and local levels in the provision of guidance services, in order to widen access and to ensure the coherence of provision, especially to groups at risk;
- To encourage schools, institutes of further and higher education, training providers to promote reflective learning techniques and autonomous learning, in order to enable young people and adults to self-manage their learning and career paths effectively;

## INVITE THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE COMPETENCIES

- To build on and adapt existing European structures and activities (networks, work groups, programmes) related to the implementation of the above priorities.
- To identify, together with all relevant actors, including the social partners, areas where cooperation and support at European level can enhance national developments in the area of guidance;
- To ensure maximum return in terms of impact on policies, systems and practices at Community and national levels from collaborative activities with the Member States in the field of guidance throughout life, funded by existing and future education and training instruments and the European Social Fund;
- To ensure the integration of a gender perspective in all policies and practice relating to guidance provision;
- To encourage and support providers of initial and continuing education of guidance practitioners to reflect current best practice across the Union in their training programmes;
- To cooperate in the improvement of the quality of information relating to international and national best practice available to policy makers;
- To include a consideration of guidance policies, as appropriate, in future reports on the followup of the Education and Training 2010 programme.

*[http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/resolution2004\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/resolution2004_en.pdf)*

**Guidelines****New skills for new jobs**

*Council Resolution,  
of 15 November 2007*

**THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, RECALLING in particular:**

- (1) The Lisbon European Council in March 2000 which launched a strategy aimed at sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, with long term employment targets.
- (2) The Integrated Guideliness for growth and jobs (2005-2008), in particular those addressing the need to improve matching of labour market needs, to expand and improve investment in human capital, to adapt education and training systems in response to new competence requirements, and to ensure adequate human resources for Research & Development (R&D) and innovation.
- (3) The Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Member States meeting within the Council of 14-15 November 2005 on the role of the development of skills and competences in taking forward the Lisbon goals.
- (4) The Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning.
- (5) The proposed Recommendation establishing the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning which is close to being adopted by the European Parliament and the Council.
- (6) The Commission Communication 'E-Skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> century: fostering competitiveness, growth and jobs' of 7 September 2007.

**AWARE that:**

- (1) Education and training, in the context of a lifelong learning perspective, are an indispensable means for promoting adaptability and employability, active citizenship, personal and professional fulfilment. They facilitate free mobility for European citizens and contribute to the achievement of the goals and aspirations of the European Union, as it seeks to respond to the challenges posed by globalisation and an ageing population. They should enable all citizens to acquire the necessary knowledge to take an active part in the knowledge society and the labour market.
- (2) The objectives of full employment, job quality, labour productivity and social cohesion can better be reached if they are reflected in clear priorities: to attract and retain more people in employment, to increase labour supply; to improve the adaptability of workers and enterprises; and to increase investment in human capital through better education, and the development of skills and competences.

**STRESSES the need:**

- (1) To provide all European citizens with new opportunities to improve their knowledge, skills and competence levels, to adapt to new requirements and to move to new and better jobs, by combining the instruments which already exist at European and national level.
- (2) To anticipate the skills needs — and also the skills gaps — which are emerging in the European labour markets.
- (3) To improve the matching of knowledge, skills and competences with the needs of society and the economy as a means to increased competitiveness and growth, as well as to greater social cohesion, in Europe.

**THEREFORE INVITES THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION TO:****(1) Equip people for new jobs within the knowledge society, in particular through:**

- (a) the raising of overall skills levels, giving priority to the education and training of those with low skills and other people most at risk of economic and social exclusion including early school leavers and young people with low levels of educational attainment, older workers, long term unemployed, women trying to return to the labour market, migrants and people with disabilities;
- (b) providing and encouraging initial and continuing education and training for skills and competences of the highest quality, even excellence, in order to maintain and strengthen their capacity for innovation and utilisation of research, which is required for greater competitiveness, growth and employment;
- (c) the promotion of excellence as regards skills in R&D and innovation, through inter alia the development of innovation clusters, involving enterprises as well as education and training and research institutions, and the Euroskills 2008 initiative;
- (d) the implementation of measures which aim at matching identified skills needs and filling potential gaps;
- (e) supporting jobseekers by providing them with vocational guidance and a personal training plan, which should identify the competence modules required to move to new jobs where there are skills gaps;
- (f) disseminating information on the skills and competences needed for new jobs through EURES, the national employment services and the European and national networks on guidance.

**(2) Continue work on the validation of learning outcomes and the transparency of qualifications, in particular by:**

- (a) developing the validation of learning outcomes acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning at the national level in line with the Council conclusions of May 2004, the

implementation of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the existing or future European systems for credit transfer and accumulation in higher education and vocational education and training;

(b) further developing Europass as an instrument for the implementation of the EQF and taking into account progress made in the setting up of national systems for the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

**(3) Address funding and quality issues through:**

(a) the use of structural funds in support of this initiative, as well the Lifelong Learning Programme, the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme and the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development;

(b) the improvement of the quality and relevance of vocational education and training at all levels through the implementation of the quality assurance principles set out in European reference tools and the involvement of social partners.

**THEREFORE INVITES THE COMMISSION TO:**

(1) Analyse, in the context of the Copenhagen process and cooperation in higher education, the need for added-value advisory mechanisms to strengthen the identification of new types of jobs and skill needs at the European level, making use of existing sectoral skills activities and projects under lifelong learning, enterprise and social dialogue policies.

These mechanisms should aim to develop regular foresight of medium-term skills needs and identify short term skills gaps, defined in terms of occupational functions, reference levels (EQF) and key competences.

The mechanisms should build on:

- expertise from *inter alia* enterprises, education and training institutions, employment services and researchers, and
- existing labour market forecasts and the results of sectoral skills strategies at regional, national and European level, as well as of major studies launched on future skills needs at the national and European level;

(2) Strengthen the European network for the early identification and forecast of skills needs (Cedefop's Skillsnet) and the European forecasting system on employment trends.

(3) Report on the follow-up to this Resolution at the European and national levels in the framework of the Education and Training Work Programme, taking into account Member States' biennial national reports.

*<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2007:290:0001:0003:EN:PDF>*

## Career Guidance – A Handbook for Policy Makers

*Publication of the OECD and the Commission -  
Executive summary 2004*

Well planned and well organised career guidance services are increasingly important. Countries in the

OECD and the European Union are implementing lifelong learning strategies, as well as policies to encourage the development of their citizens' employability. To be successfully implemented, such strategies and policies require citizens to have the skills to manage their own education and employment.

They require all citizens to have access to high quality information and advice about education, training and work. Yet often the gap between how career guidance services are delivered and the goals of public policy is wide. The aim of this handbook is to help policy makers within OECD countries and the European Union to develop effective policies for career guidance: in education, training and employment. It has been developed by the European Commission and the OECD in response to on-going changes in education, training and employment policies. In Europe these changes are expressed in the Lisbon (2000) goals of making Europe the most competitive knowledge-based economy and society in the world by 2010, marked by social cohesion. The handbook is based on international reviews of policies for career guidance undertaken by the OECD, by the European Centre for the Development of

Vocational Training, by the European Training Foundation, and by the World Bank. In clear and simple language it sets out for policy makers in education, training and employment settings:

- Challenges that they face in making sure that career guidance services can meet public policy goals;
- Questions that they need to ask themselves in responding to these challenges;
- Some of the options that are open to them for the delivery of career guidance within a lifelong learning and active employability framework; and
- Some examples of effective responses, drawn from OECD and European Union countries.

The handbook covers four broad policy themes:

Improving career guidance for young people;

Improving career guidance for adults;

Improving access to career guidance;

Improving the systems that support career guidance.

### *Improving Career Guidance for Young People*

To improve career guidance for young people, policy makers must address challenges in compulsory schooling, in upper secondary schooling, in tertiary education, and for young people at risk. There are challenges in meeting gaps in access, and in improving the nature, level and quality of services. In schools, the principal challenges are: to provide sufficient human and capital resources of the right type, both within the school and within its

surrounding community; to ensure that these resources are dedicated to career guidance; and to make the best use of the resources that are available. Gaps in access are particularly evident in primary schools and in the vocational tracks of upper secondary school. Policy options include formally strengthening collaboration between all relevant stakeholders, making the acquisition of career management skills by students the focus of career education programmes, and improved accountability mechanisms.

A significant number of young people leave school early, without qualifications. They need programmes in the community to help them make transitions to the working world and to re-engage with further learning, and career guidance needs to be part of such programmes. Career guidance also needs to be a stronger part of programmes within the school designed to prevent early leaving.

There is generally a lack of career guidance provision for students in tertiary education, despite the significant cost of such studies to both participants and taxpayers. The range of career services that are offered within tertiary education needs to be broadened. Policy levers to ensure that a broader range of services is provided need to be strengthened. Options available to policy makers include the specification of goals for tertiary career services, and more explicitly linking public funding arrangements for tertiary education to the level and quality of career services.

### *Improving Career Guidance for Adults*

The heterogeneous nature of the adult population presents a range of challenges to policymakers who are trying to improve career guidance services. Few easily accessible services are available for employed adults; few enterprises cater for the career development needs of their employees; fee-for-service provision that people can purchase privately is very limited; employers and trade unions have shown limited interest to date in providing career guidance even though they often recognise in principle the need for workforce development in order to improve competitiveness and equity. Despite these problems, new partnerships between employer organisations, education and training institutions, public employment services and other relevant organisations can lead to workplace and workforce career guidance provision, and career guidance should be an integral part of adult learning programmes.

Career guidance is seen as having a key role in preventing inflows into unemployment, particularly longterm unemployment. Public employment services (PES) in most countries have a lead role in such prevention. Yet career guidance services within the PES are undeveloped. Strong collaboration strategies, between the PES and private and community-based guidance services, and with local education and training institutions, can enable unemployed persons to make transitions to employment and to re-engage with learning.

Ageing populations and pension funding problems in many countries will require both later retirement ages and more flexible transitions to retirement. To date policymakers have been slow to mobilise career guidance services to support active ageing. Employers and worker representatives can promote and take initiatives in service delivery of third age guidance, using combinations of public and private partnerships.

### *Improving Access to Career Guidance Services*

The demand for career guidance services exceeds its supply. More flexible delivery methods, including the use of ICT and of call centres, have great potential for extending access. If all

citizens are to have access to career guidance, there is often a need to target career guidance services to at-risk groups.

Actively involving vulnerable groups in designing, planning, implementing and monitoring career guidance policies and services for them greatly enhances the development of services that are relevant to their needs.

Improving the quality and relevance of career information materials to support universal access is an ongoing challenge. There is often a lack of collaboration between different government ministries, agencies, and between national and regional levels of government in providing and sharing career information. Materials developed by the private sector are not subject to any agreed standards. In order to develop a coherent policy and strategy for the delivery of quality career information to citizens, national, regional and local mapping exercises of career guidance information provided through a range of media (such as newspapers and television) to a range of target groups (youth, employed, unemployed) is an essential starting point.

### *Improving the Systems that Support Career Guidance*

Significant differences occur in the quality and types of career guidance services that are provided to citizens, both within and between countries, as the result of significant variations in the training of career guidance practitioners. The length of their initial training varies from three weeks to five years.

Governments are very inactive in defining the content and process of initial training for career guidance practitioners, and in relating training content to the outcomes sought for public policy goals for education, training and employment. Stronger signals from ministries are required in order to bridge this gap. There is little regular and systematic evaluation of the quality of career guidance provision in most countries. Service standards for provision do not exist or are present in some sectors but not in others. Quality frameworks, where they exist, tend to be voluntary rather than mandatory, and to operate as Guidelines. Users of career guidance services have a key role to play in the design and evaluation of services.

The evidence base for policymaking for career guidance service provision is very weak. At present, few governments have in hand the data needed to provide an overall picture of career guidance provision, or of its effectiveness in meeting public policy objectives. Few government ministries are able to state precisely how much public money is being spent on career guidance services and how it is being spent. Information about private investment and expenditure in this field is not available. Collaboration among stakeholders (such as users, administrators, social partners and practitioners) at national level will help to identify relevant and useful data types and procedures for evaluating inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes for career guidance provision.

Career guidance objectives are weakly reflected in policies for education, training and employment in most countries. Given the inadequate evidence base for career guidance, this is not surprising. Furthermore career guidance provision is often a collection of disparate sub-systems within education, training, employment, community and private sectors, each with its own history, rationale and driving forces, rather than a coherent and integrated set of arrangements. The establishment of a national forum for guidance policy and systems development, which includes both government and key stakeholder representatives such as employers and trade unions, as well as the key organisations that deliver services, is an

important step that governments can take to help to focus and develop policy agendas and to strengthen policy making. Most of the cost of providing career guidance services is borne by taxpayers. The expansion in the extent, reach and variety of provision necessitated by a lifelong learning perspective signals new financial demands on and commitments from governments in an area that has tended to attract little individual and private investment. This demand on public resources may be moderated if more private investment can be stimulated.

*<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/53/53/34060761.pdf>*



## PLOTEUS

PLOTEUS aims to help **students, job seekers, workers, parents, guidance counsellors and teachers** to find out information about **studying in Europe**.

On PLOTEUS you can find all relevant information about **life-long learning in Europe**:

- Learning opportunities and training possibilities available throughout the European Union. This section contains a lot of links to web sites of **universities and higher education** institutions, databases of **schools and vocational training and adult education courses**.
- Education and training systems: descriptions and explanations about the different education systems of European countries.
- Exchange programmes and grants (**Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, Socrates, Tempus**) available in European countries. Who to contact, how to apply for grants, etc.
- Everything you need to know when moving abroad to another European country: cost of living, tuition fees, finding accommodation, legal framework and other general information for European countries.

<http://www.europa.eu.int/ploteus/portal/home.jsp>

**PLOTEUS**

Commission européenne > Portail Ploteus > Accueil

Accueil | Recherche | FAQ | À propos de ce site | Votre réaction | Liens utiles

**Bienvenue sur le portail PLOTEUS** (Portail sur les opportunités d'études et de formation en Europe)

PLOTEUS a pour objectif d'aider les **étudiants, les demandeurs d'emplois, les travailleurs, les parents, les conseillers d'orientation et les enseignants** à trouver des informations sur les **études en Europe**.

Dans PLOTEUS, vous trouverez des informations pertinentes sur la **formation tout au long de la vie en Europe**:

- **Les opportunités d'études et de formation accessibles dans l'Union européenne**. Cette partie contient de nombreux liens vers les sites Internet d'universités ou d'établissements d'enseignement supérieur, vers des bases de données d'écoles, d'établissements de formation professionnelle, de formation continue pour les adultes.
- **Les systèmes d'éducation et de formation**: description et explication des différents systèmes éducatifs des pays d'Europe.
- **Les programmes d'échanges et les bourses (Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, Socrates, Tempus)** existant dans les différents pays européens. Qui contacter? Comment postuler pour obtenir une bourse, etc.
- **Tout ce que vous avez besoin de savoir pour vous installer dans un autre pays européen**: coût de la vie, frais d'inscription, recherche d'un logement, cadre légal et autres informations d'ordre général pour les pays européens.

Vidéo PLOTEUS: Pour visionner les fichiers vidéo, vous devez installer le plug-in Real Player sur votre ordinateur. (Vous pouvez télécharger la version gratuite de ce plug-in à l'adresse suivante: <http://www.real.com>). Choisissez la **haute résolution** ou la **basse résolution** (Quick-9).

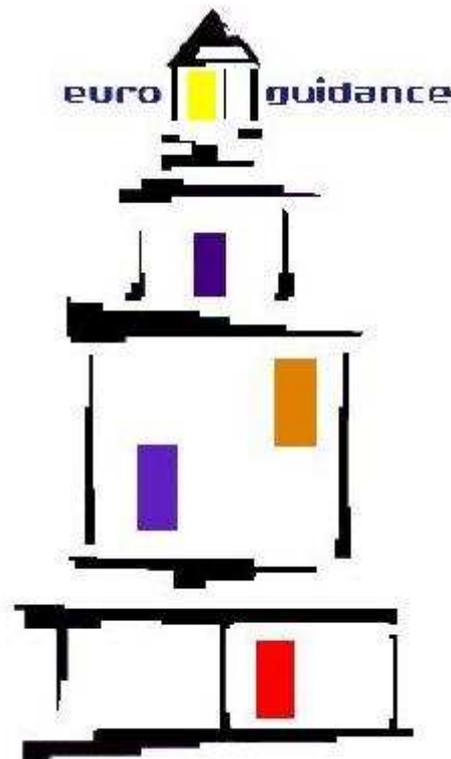
PLOTEUS est géré par la Direction Générale "Éducation et Culture" de la **Commission Européenne** avec la collaboration des Centres Nationaux de Ressources Pour l'Orientation Professionnelle (**Euroguidance**).

## Euroguidance

The Euroguidance network is a network of centres across Europe linking together the Careers Guidance systems in Europe.

Euroguidance promotes mobility, helping guidance counsellors and individuals to better understand the opportunities available to European citizens throughout Europe.

<http://www.euroguidance.net/index.htm>



## Développement des réseaux de l'orientation active - DROA

Partis du constat que le public avait du mal à repérer les services proposés par les différentes structures d'orientation et ne pouvait donc pas connaître celui qui répondait le mieux à ses besoins, la Région Rhône-Alpes et les 4 Moteurs ont décidé de concevoir une action cherchant à répondre à ce problème.

C'est ainsi que le projet **DROA** a été accepté comme projet européen Leonardo da Vinci. Il a démarré en octobre 2003 et s'est achevé en décembre 2006. Les quatre moteurs pour l'Europe (4 régions pilotes), Bade Wurtemberg, Catalogne, Lombardie et Rhône-Alpes qui en était le leader s'y sont investis alors que la mise en œuvre du projet était confiée au PRAO.

### Objectifs

Les objectifs du projet visaient globalement à **améliorer l'orientation et le conseil comme facteurs facilitant la formation tout au long de la vie et l'emploi**, en mettant en place un réseau à double niveau et en le pérennisant : réseau infra régional des acteurs locaux de l'orientation sur un ou deux territoires pour chacune des régions concernées et réseau inter régional des quatre moteurs pour l'Europe.

### Mise en oeuvre

Après avoir choisi et constitué les deux réseaux expérimentaux (Loire Sud et bassin Annécien pour Rhône-Alpes), un **état des lieux** des systèmes d'orientation de ces deux territoires a été réalisé. Un travail d'**observation et d'échange sur les pratiques professionnelles** en orientation a abouti à un séminaire régional le 13 novembre 2005.

Les réseaux ont travaillé à l'**élaboration de critères de qualité en matière d'orientation active** qui a débouché sur la création d'un « référentiel qualité de l'orientation ».

La dernière étape était dédiée au **transfert des observations et résultats** du projet qui s'est effectuée dans un premier temps dans le cadre d'un **séminaire transnational les 11 et 12 décembre 2006** et se poursuit par des séances d'information et de formation de membres de réseaux de l'AIO (accueil, information et orientation).

<http://www.droa-eu.org>



# Mobility

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## **EUROPASS - Serving citizen mobility**

*Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2004 on a single Community framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences (Europass)*

**The Europass is a single portfolio enabling citizens to provide proof of their qualifications and skills clearly and easily anywhere in Europe. It comprises five documents designed at European level to improve the transparency of qualifications. Its aim is to facilitate mobility for all those wishing to work or receive training anywhere in Europe.**

The Europass is one of the EU's three main instruments to support mobility. A portfolio of five documents, it enables citizens to provide proof of their qualifications and skills clearly and easily in the Member States of the EU, the candidate countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Turkey) and Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. It thus complements the Ploteus site, launched in 2002, which contains information on education and vocational training opportunities throughout Europe, as well as the European vocational training framework which is currently being implemented.

### **EUROPASS comprises the following elements:**

#### *Europass - Curriculum vitae (Europass-CV)*

This is an improved version of the European CV created by the Commission in 2002. The model Europass-CV, the central element of the portfolio, was designed to illustrate people's skills.

#### *Europass - Mobility*

Using a common European format, the Europass - Mobility records all periods of transnational mobility for learning purposes, at whatever level: company placement, semester studying at a university or any other training experience. It replaces, with a much wider scope, the Europass-Training.

#### *Europass - Diploma supplement*

The diploma supplement contains information on the holder's higher education pathway. It describes the nature, level, context, content and status of any courses successfully completed. However, it does not replace the original diploma. Developed jointly with the Council of Europe and UNESCO, it is completed by the issuing body and presented at the same time as the diploma.

The diploma supplement comprises eight parts providing information on the holder, the diploma, the level of the qualification, the content and results obtained, the function of the qualification, the certification of the supplement and the national higher education system.

### *Europass - Certificate supplement*

The certificate supplement describes the vocational qualifications of any person holding the vocational training or education certificate to which it refers. To this end, it provides, *inter alia*, information on the skills acquired, the range of vocational activities available, the certifying bodies, the level of the certificate, the entry qualifications required and opportunities for gaining access to the next level of training. It does not replace the original certificate or constitute an automatic recognition system. It is issued by the competent national authorities.

### *Europass - Language portfolio*

The language portfolio enables citizens to present their linguistic and cultural skills. It provides specific information on the holder's language abilities, in accordance with Europe-wide standards, his or her experience in each language and a file of personal work to illustrate the level reached.

The Europass initiative is supported by an Internet portal administered at Community level. This site allows citizens to draw up their own Europass CVs and language portfolios and to find out about the other Europass documents.

Cofunding is planned for the creation of a network of national Europass centres responsible for implementation at national level, particularly coordination and promotion.



The Commission will be presenting an evaluation report on the implementation of the Directive to the European Parliament by 1 January 2008 at the latest and every four years after that.

For descriptions of the standard Europass documents, please consult the Annex to the Decision.

The Decision highlights the importance of cohesion and complementarity with the other instruments that promote

European and international mobility, in particular:

- the European Employment Network ( EURES );
- the European network of national information centres on recognition and university mobility ( ENIC-NARIC ) established by the Council of Europe and UNESCO.

<http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/cha/c11077.htm>

## European Quality Charter for Mobility

*Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of  
18 December 2006  
on transnational mobility within the Community for education and training purposes*

**Focusing on the quality aspects of mobility, the European Quality Charter for Mobility constitutes a reference document for stays abroad in order to ensure that participants, both young people and adults, have a positive experience. Its scope covers stays by young people and adults for the purposes of both formal and non-formal learning and hence for their personal and professional development. It offers guidance designed to respond to participants' expectations and the legitimate requirements of education bodies and institutions. The Charter thus provides a better framework for free movement of persons in the field of education and training, so as to consolidate the creation of a true European area of education and training and enhance economic, social and regional cohesion.**

The European Quality Charter for Mobility constitutes the quality reference document for education and training stays abroad. It complements, from the quality point of view, the 2001 Recommendation on mobility for students, persons undergoing training, volunteers, teachers and trainers and has the same scope.

The Charter is addressed to the Member States, particularly their organisations responsible for stays abroad, and provides guidance on mobility arrangements for learning or other purposes, such as professional betterment, to both young and adult participants. This is in order to enhance personal and professional development. By involving the stakeholders more, it also aims to improve the quality and efficiency of education and training systems.

It should help to ensure that mobility participants always have a positive experience both in the host country and in their country of origin on their return, and that the number and depth of education and training exchanges are stepped up. It offers guidance designed to respond to:

- participants' expectations as regards pre-departure information, suitable infrastructure in the host country and the exploitation of acquired knowledge following their return to their country of origin;
- the legitimate requirements of education bodies and institutions, mainly in the host country, which expect that mobility participants will not arrive without being properly prepared and that their mobility period will be positive both for themselves and for the host body, institution or company.

This guidance consists of **ten principles** implemented on a voluntary and flexible basis, being adaptable to the nature and peculiarities of each stay. These principles are:

- **information and guidance:** every candidate should have access to clear and reliable sources of information and guidance on mobility and the conditions in which it can be

taken up, including details of the Charter itself and the roles of sending and hosting organisations;

- **learning plan:** a plan is drawn up and signed by the sending and hosting organisations and participants before every stay for education or training purposes. It must describe the objectives and expected outcomes, the means of achieving them, and evaluation, and must also take account of reintegration issues;
- **personalisation:** mobility must fit in with personal learning pathways, skills and motivation of participants, and should develop or supplement them;
- **general preparation:** before departure, participants should receive general preparation tailored to their specific needs and covering linguistic, pedagogical, legal, cultural or financial aspects;
- **linguistic aspects:** language skills make for more effective learning, intercultural communication and a better understanding of the host country's culture. Arrangements should therefore include a pre-departure assessment of language skills, the possibility of attending courses in the language of the host country and/or language learning and linguistic support and advice in the host country;
- **logistical support:** this could include providing participants with information and assistance concerning travel arrangements, insurance, the portability of government grants and loans, residence or work permits, social security and any other practical aspects;
- **mentoring:** the hosting organisation should provide mentoring to advise and help participants throughout their stay, also to ensure their integration;
- **recognition:** if periods of study or training abroad are an integral part of a formal study or training programme, the learning plan must mention this, and participants should be provided with assistance regarding recognition and certification. For other types of mobility, and particularly those in the context of non-formal education and training, certification by an appropriate document, such as the Europass, is necessary;
- **reintegration and evaluation:** on returning to their country of origin, participants should receive guidance on how to make use of the competences acquired during their stay and, following a long stay, any necessary help with reintegration. Evaluation of the experience acquired should make it possible to assess whether the aims of the learning plan have been achieved;
- **commitments and responsibilities:** the responsibilities arising from these quality criteria must be agreed and, in particular, confirmed in writing by all sides (sending and hosting organisations and participants).

Implementation of the Charter includes the elimination by the Member States of mobility obstacles and the provision of support and infrastructures to help raise education and training levels in the European Union (EU). It also includes measures to promote mobility by providing easily accessible information.

The Commission is called upon to encourage application of the Charter in the Member States, to continue to cooperate with the Member States and social partners, particularly with regard to the exchange of information and experience relating to the implementation of measures, and to develop statistical data on mobility.

Implementation of the Charter and its evaluation are part of the Education and Training 2010 work programme.

**Guidelines****Mobility for students, persons undergoing training, young volunteers, teachers and trainers**

*Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council  
of 10 July 2001*

**Free movement for students, persons undergoing training, young volunteers, teachers and trainers in the Community is still impeded by numerous administrative, regulatory and cultural obstacles. The European Parliament and Council wish to encourage Member States to remove all such obstacles to mobility so that the groups concerned benefit in full from the provisions of the Community *acquis* in the field of free movement.**

***Background***

Free movement of persons, which is one of the basic principles of the EC Treaty, is not confined to workers and, as the idea of European citizenship gains credence within the Union, arrangements need to be made to ensure that people who do not yet work can take advantage of it. Despite the existence of a broad legislative framework concerning freedom of movement for workers and recognition of vocational qualifications, and the existence of numerous Community exchange programmes, obstacles still exist to the mobility of students, persons undergoing training, young volunteers, teachers and trainers.

On 23 and 24 March 2000 the Lisbon European Council called on the Member States, the Council and the Commission to develop a common European format for curricula vitae to encourage mobility by helping education and training establishments and employers improve their assessment of knowledge acquired.

***Obstacles to be overcome***

The remaining obstacles to freedom of movement must be removed in order to ensure that educational and vocational training programmes have a European dimension. To do so, mobility must be extended to both the beneficiaries (students and persons undergoing training) and providers (teachers and trainers) of the services under these programmes.

With due regard to the principle of subsidiarity, the Recommendation indicates a series of conditions that need to be fulfilled by the Member States in order to ensure effective freedom of movement for their citizens. These include:

- recognition of vocational qualifications and experience acquired in the host Member State;
- harmonisation of the status accorded by Member States to students, persons undergoing training, teachers and trainers, particularly with regard to right of residence, employment law, social security and taxation;
- effective elimination of double taxation.

### *Measures recommended*

Appropriate measures to encourage the mobility of persons covered by the Recommendation should complement measures already implemented in the Community programmes in the fields of education, training and youth, such as Socrates , Leonardo da Vinci and Youth . There should also be measures to facilitate the mobility, within the context of the Community programmes, of nationals of the European Free Trade Association countries, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, Cyprus, Malta and Turkey.

Member States are called on to take the measures they consider appropriate in order to:

- remove the legal and administrative obstacles to the mobility of persons;
- reduce linguistic and cultural obstacles, notably by encouraging the learning of at least two Community languages and encouraging linguistic and cultural preparation before any mobility measure;
- promote the development of the various forms of financial support for mobility, facilitate the portability of scholarships, national aids and other support arrangements;
- extend to persons participating in mobility schemes the benefits (other than social security benefits) available to the same categories of persons in the host State, such as fare reductions for public transport, financial assistance with accommodation and meals, etc.;
- encourage the creation of a European qualification area;
- facilitate access to all useful information.

Measures proposed by the Recommendation which specifically concern **students** include:

- facilitate the recognition in the home Member State of the period of study undertaken in the host Member State. To this end, use of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), which guarantees the recognition of academic experience as a result of a contract drawn up in advance between the student and the home and host establishments, should be encouraged;
- ensure that the decisions of the competent authorities responsible for academic recognition are made within reasonable timescales, are justified and are open to administrative and/or legal appeal;
- encourage educational establishments to issue a European supplement as an administrative annexe to the diploma, describing the studies undertaken, in order to facilitate their recognition;
- take appropriate measures to make it easier for students on mobility schemes to prove that they have the health cover or insurance needed in order to obtain a residence permit.

Measures proposed by the Recommendation which specifically concern **persons undergoing training** include:

- facilitate the recognition of the training undertaken in another country. To this end, the use of the " Europass Training " document, designed to promote European pathways in work-linked training, should be encouraged;
- encourage the use of more transparent models for vocational training certificates. For example, official national certificates should be accompanied by a translation of the certificate and/or a European certificate supplement;

- take appropriate measures to make it easier for persons undergoing training to prove that they have the financial resources needed in order to obtain a residence permit.

Measures proposed by the Recommendation which specifically concern **young volunteers** include:

- ensure that the specific nature of voluntary activity is taken into account in national legal and administrative measures;
- promote the introduction of a certificate of participation for persons who have taken part in voluntary activity projects, with a view to bringing about a common European format for curricula vitae;
- ensure that volunteers on transnational mobility schemes are not discriminated against in terms of entitlement to social protection measures.

Measures proposed by the Recommendation which specifically concern **teachers and trainers** include:

- promote the European mobility of teachers and trainers by making arrangements for the temporary replacement of teachers and introducing European training periods;
- encourage the introduction of a European dimension in training programmes for teachers and trainers by encouraging contacts between establishments within Europe which train teachers and trainers;
- promote inclusion of European mobility experience as a component of the careers of teachers and trainers.

The Commission is called on to:

- set up a group of experts in order to permit exchanges of information and experience concerning the implementation of the Recommendation and of the Action Plan for Mobility ;
- continue to cooperate with the Member States within the European Forum on the transparency of professional qualifications;
- submit no later than two years and six months after the adoption of the Recommendation, and thereafter every two years, an analytical summary of the national reports on the implementation of the Recommendation;
- study the procedures for introducing a pass for schoolchildren/students/trainees/volunteers within the Community, giving holders entitlement to various concessions during their period of mobility;
- draw up proposals designed to promote the transparency of professional qualifications and the exchange of information on opportunities for studying, performing voluntary work or teaching in other Member States.

Member States are called on to submit to the Commission every two years a report on the implementation of the proposals made in the Recommendation.

*<http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/cha/c11015.htm>*

## **Action plan for mobility**

*Resolution of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 14 December 2000*

**The key objective of this resolution is to define a European strategy to foster the mobility of young people, students, teachers and training and research staff within the Union, with a view to constructing a genuine European area of knowledge.**

The construction of a genuine European area of knowledge is a priority for the Community both for cultural and economic reasons. The mobility of citizens, notably as regards education and training, encourages the sharing of cultures and promotes the concept of European citizenship as well as that of a political Europe. Besides, in an internationalised economy, the ability to educate oneself and work in a multilingual environment is essential to the competitiveness of the European economy.

The Community's Socrates , Leonardo da Vinci and Youth programmes represent appreciable progress, which must however be taken further via the joint efforts of the Community and the Member States. These efforts should lead to an increase in the number of people choosing mobility and remove the remaining obstacles.

### *Three major objectives:*

The plan has three major objectives:

- define and democratise mobility in Europe;
- promote appropriate forms of funding;
- increase mobility and improve the conditions for it.

### *Accompanying measures*

The Resolution is conceived as a "toolbox" of 42 measures divided into four chapters designed to identify and deal with the remaining obstacles to mobility. The measures are classified under specific objectives within each chapter.

### *Measures relating to the general objective*

These consist of two measures to support the general objective of adopting a European mobility strategy:

- establish a common definition of the concept of mobility and the target groups concerned: age, circuit, geographical scope, length of stay;
- democratise access to mobility measures.

## Chapter I: Promote mobility through measures in the field of training and information

Train "human resources" for mobility:

- prepare those involved in implementing mobility: teachers, the administrative staff concerned, etc. (the "mobility organisers");
- develop exchanges and mobility between the mobility organisers;
- encourage educational establishments to devote more resources to mobility.

### *Develop multilingualism:*

Promote training in the relevant foreign language and culture, before and during the mobility periods;

- give language teachers the opportunity to go on long-term training placements abroad;
- ensure exchange of good language teaching practice;
- adopt common indicators to evaluate the language skills of trainees;
- make a commitment on the quality of language teaching following up the Council Resolution of 31 March 1995 on improving and diversifying language learning and teaching.

### *Make it easier to find information on mobility:*

- create a mobility portal site providing access to the various European sources of information;
- put in place *ad hoc* forums in educational establishments to ensure exchanges between mobility organisers and potential beneficiaries.

### *Draw up a mobility chart:*

- define a methodology enabling the various players to compile reliable statistics on mobility and make as full as possible an inventory of the exchanges;
- improve awareness of the different mobility programmes (bilateral and multilateral) by assembling them in a database;
- ensure better advertising of posts by using networks such as EURES .

## Chapter II: Measures promoting the financing of mobility

Look into the financing of mobility: towards financial partnerships

- strengthen coordination between the various players, for example by means of a framework for partnerships, and make best use of financing;
- study possible ways of making better use or increasing mobility budgets;
- encourage public sector participation by examining for example the possibility of loans at preferential rates for those intending to take a period of mobility;
- encourage multiple partnerships, e.g. with the private sector, social partners, etc. to become involved in financing mobility;
- look ahead and study ways of redeploying the mobility appropriations at national level and within future Community programmes.

*Democratise mobility by making it financially and socially accessible for all:*

- launch an information campaign on the mobility assistance available and how to apply for it and on the social conditions of mobility at the time of going abroad and during the period spent there;
- ensure retention of social benefits for people who take mobility and regularly review any problems that persist;
- study the possibility of offering young people opting for mobility the same preferential tariffs as young people in the host country, regularly review any problems that persist and take suitable steps to remedy them.

**Chapter III: Increasing and improving mobility***Introduce new forms of mobility:*

- organise more mobility circuits, for example more European universities for all citizens receiving training, including the mobility organisers;
- encourage virtual mobility by making academic and vocational training modules available on the Internet;
- develop bilateral or multilateral exchange circuits, in particular mobility partnerships between universities.

*Improve reception facilities for people opting for mobility:*

- adopt a quality charter covering reception facilities for trainees who are foreign nationals providing in particular for equal reception facilities;
- provide on-line information on the reception facilities for people opting for mobility.

*Simplify the mobility calendar:*

- ensure wide dissemination of information on university calendars and school years;
- draft a "European academic calendar" showing the core periods of term time and in appropriate cases concentrate mobility training modules in those periods;
- study the possibility of dividing the university year into semesters and of enrolling and paying fees by semester.

*Proper status for people opting for mobility:*

- declare that mobility is a priority at all levels and an important component of instruction;
- create a European card for young people opting for mobility;
- give teachers the opportunity to take all or part of their initial or continuing training in another Member State;
- examine the possibility of extending the current higher education post of associate member to other levels.

**Chapter IV: Gaining more from periods of mobility***Increase cross-over opportunities by developing the system of recognition and equivalence of diplomas and training:*

- encourage all universities to generalise systems of diploma equivalence such as the ECTS ;
- generalise academic and vocational diploma supplements to make them recognisable in all Member States;

#### *Recognise the experience gained:*

- certify skills acquired during the period of mobility in the field of languages, for example by issuing a certificate;
- generalise Europass-training ;
- take into account voluntary work in the Member State of origin.

#### *Gain more from periods of mobility:*

- examine the desirability and possibility of providing professional incentives for mobility for teaching staff;
- devise a methodology for measuring the professional impact of periods of mobility.

#### *Priority activities*

The resolution emphasises certain priority actions:

- developing multilingualism;
- establishment of a portal giving access to the different European sources of information on mobility;
- recognition of periods of mobility in diploma courses;
- training the teachers and administrative staff involved to become true mobility organisers able to provide advice and guidance and draft mobility projects;
- definition and adoption of a quality charter on reception facilities for foreign nationals on training courses;
- drawing up of an inventory of existing mobility circuits and good practices, exchanges of students, trainees and trainers;
- creating linkage between mobility funding from the different players involved.

#### *Implementation and evaluation*

This plan will be implemented by the Commission and the Member States within the limits of their respective powers. With a view to creating a Europe of innovation and knowledge, the Social Agenda approved by the Nice European Council confirmed this commitment by inviting Member States to reinforce their internal coordination to implement the 42 concrete measures and to examine progress achieved every two years.

With an eye to economy and efficiency, this evaluation of progress in the field of mobility will be integrated in the follow-up mechanism provided for in the " Recommendation on mobility within the Community for students, persons undergoing training, young volunteers, teachers and trainers".

<http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/cha/c11048.htm>



## **The European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)**

*The EU Member States and the Commission are developing a system to facilitate the recognition of knowledge, skills and competences gained by individuals through periods of vocational education and training abroad. The European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) will give people greater control over their individual learning experiences and make it easier to move between different countries and different learning environments.*

Lifelong learning and mobility for learning are taking place increasingly in different countries and in a wide variety of contexts; formal, non-formal and informal. However, one of the main obstacles to attracting more interest in trans-national mobility for vocational training and education (VET) is the difficulty in identifying, validating and recognising learning outcomes acquired during a stay in another country.

ECVET aims for better comparability and compatibility between different national VET and qualification systems, not harmonisation. The system, which should be implemented by Member States by 2012, is a voluntary framework to describe qualifications in terms of units of learning outcomes. Each of these units will be associated with a certain number of ECVET points developed on the basis of common European standards. The learning outcomes achieved in a year of full time VET should correspond to 60 points.

### **FLEXIBILITY**

An individual's learning outcomes are assessed and validated in order to transfer credits from one qualifications system to another, or from one learning "pathway" to another.

This approach supports individual learning pathways, where learners can accumulate required units of learning outcomes for a given qualification over time, in different countries, and in different learning situations. The flexibility of the system facilitates mobility experiences for VET learners, while preserving the overall coherence and integrity of each qualification and avoiding excessive fragmentation. The system also allows the possibility to develop common references for VET qualifications.

Partnerships and networks are being developed at European, national, regional, local and sectoral level, to ensure the quality and overall coherence of ECVET. The Commission is developing an ECVET users' guide and tools, and establishing a pilot ECVET users' group. Meanwhile, Member States need to ensure that all relevant qualifications and related "Europass" documents issued by national or regional authorities contain clear information related to the use of ECVET.

ECVET belongs to a series of European initiatives to recognise learning experiences across different countries and different types of institutions, including the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) in higher education, Europass, the European Quality Charter for Mobility (EQCM), the European principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning and the European Qualification Framework for lifelong learning (EQF).

## **BACKGROUND**

The development of ECVET began in 2002 after the Copenhagen Process emphasized the need for a credit transfer system for VET. Several studies were carried out in the following years and the Commission conducted a public consultation from November 2006 to March 2007, the results of which were discussed in a conference in Munich in June 2007. The Commission released its final proposal for ECVET in April 2008 for approval from national governments and the European Parliament, the last stage in the EU decision-making process.

*[http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/ecvet/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/ecvet/index_en.html)*

# European Programmes

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**Programme****Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013**

*Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council  
15 November 2006*

**The European Union (EU) is reaching a significant number of its citizens directly through its education and training programmes. The general objective of the lifelong learning programme is to contribute towards the development of the Community as an advanced knowledge society in accordance with the objectives of the Lisbon strategy. By supporting and supplementing action by the Member States, it aims to foster interchange, cooperation and mobility between education and training systems within the Community so that they become a world quality reference.**

The **objective** of the action programme in the field of lifelong learning 2007-2013 is to develop and foster interchange, cooperation and mobility so that education and training systems become a world quality reference in accordance with the Lisbon strategy. It thus contributes to the development of the Community as an advanced knowledge-based society, with sustainable economic development, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.

To flesh out this general objective, the programme pursues specific objectives concerning lifelong learning in the EU which aim to:

- contribute to the development of quality lifelong learning, and to promote high performance, innovation and the European dimension in systems and practices;
- support the realisation of a European area of lifelong learning ;
- help improve the quality, attractiveness and accessibility of the opportunities for lifelong learning;
- reinforce their contribution to social cohesion, active citizenship, intercultural dialogue, gender equality and personal fulfilment;
- help promote creativity, competitiveness, employability and the growth of an entrepreneurial spirit;
- contribute to increased participation in lifelong learning by people of all ages, including those with special needs and disadvantaged groups;
- promote language learning and linguistic diversity;
- support the development of ICT-based resources;
- reinforce their role in creating a sense of European citizenship based on respect for European values and tolerance and respect for other peoples and cultures;
- promote co-operation in quality assurance in all sectors of education and training;
- improve their quality by encouraging the best use of results, innovative products and processes and the exchange of good practice.

In this respect, consistency and complementarity with EU policies condition the implementation of the action programme. It should thus help achieve the EU's horizontal

policies by making provision for learners with special needs and helping to promote their integration into mainstream education and training. It should also promote equality between men and women and awareness of cultural and linguistic diversity and multiculturalism, as a means of combating racism, prejudice and xenophobia.

Implementation of the programme should ensure consistency and complementarity with the Education and Training 2010 Work Programme, the integrated Guidelines for jobs and growth under the partnership for growth and employment and other policies such as those in the field of culture, youth or enterprise. The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training ( Cedefop ), the European Training Foundation ( ETF ) and the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training may also be involved and/or informed according to their respective areas of competence.

In order to achieve these objectives, the programme supports the following actions:

- the mobility of people in lifelong learning;
- bilateral and multilateral partnerships;
- unilateral, national or multinational projects, including those which are designed to promote quality in education and training systems through the transnational transfer of innovation;
- multilateral networks;
- studies and reviews of policies and systems in the field of lifelong learning and their components;
- operating grants to support certain operational and administrative costs borne by institutions or associations;
- accompanying measures, i.e. other initiatives to promote the objectives of the programme;
- preparatory activities for these actions;
- the organisation of events (seminars, colloquia, meetings) to facilitate implementation of the programme, information, publication and dissemination actions and actions to increase awareness of the programme, as well as programme monitoring and evaluation.

**Participation** in the programme is open not just to the Member States but also to the EFTA (European Free Trade Association) countries which are members of the European Economic Area (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway), to the Swiss Confederation and to the EU candidate and potential candidate countries of the Western Balkans in accordance with the rules and agreements governing their participation in Community programmes.

In addition, the Commission may also organise cooperation with third countries and international organisations such as the Council of Europe or the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation ( Unesco ).

The beneficiaries of the programme are:

- pupils, students, trainees and adult learners;
- all categories of education personnel;
- people in the labour market;
- institutions and organisations providing learning opportunities within the programme;

- the persons and bodies responsible for systems and policies at local, regional and national level;
- enterprises, social partners and their organisations at all levels, including trade organisations and chambers of commerce and industry;
- bodies providing guidance, counselling and information services;
- participants', parents' and teachers' associations;
- research centres and bodies;
- non profit making organisations, voluntary bodies, NGOs.

**Management** of the programme is shared between the Commission and the national agencies. In this respect, the national agencies may be responsible for selecting certain types of projects, the mobility of individuals, bilateral and multilateral partnerships or unilateral and national projects.

For the implementation of the programme, the Commission is assisted by a Committee made up of representatives from the EU Member States. In the context of the social dialogue at Community level and involving the social partners more closely in the implementation of the action programme, the latter may participate in the work of the Committee as observers on matters relating to vocational education and training.

The indicative financial envelope for the programme is set at EUR 6.97 billion for its duration. The minimum amounts to be allocated to the sectoral programmes (see below) are 13% to Comenius, 40% to Erasmus, 25% to Leonardo da Vinci and 4% to Grundtvig.

The Commission shall regularly monitor and assess the Integrated Programme in cooperation with the Member States. The latter shall submit reports to the Commission: one on the implementation of the programme by 30 June 2010 at the latest, and another on its effects by 30 June 2015.

The Commission, for its part, will present an interim evaluation report on the results achieved and on the qualitative and quantitative aspects of implementation by 31 March 2011 at the latest, a communication on the continuation of the programme by 31 December 2011 and an ex post evaluation report by 31 March 2016.

## SECTORAL PROGRAMMES

The action programme is divided up into six sub-programmes, four of which are sectoral. They are all structured in the same way and address the teaching and learning needs of all participants as well as of the institutions and organisations providing or facilitating education and training in each respective sector. All the actions incorporate mobility, language and new technology.

### COMENIUS

The programme covers pre-school and school education up to the end of upper secondary education, and the institutions and organisations providing such education.

Its two specific objectives are to:

- develop understanding among young people and educational staff of the diversity of European cultures and its value;
- help young people acquire the basic life-skills and competences necessary for their personal development, for future employment and for active European citizenship;

In this context, the programme pursues the following operational objectives:

- better mobility, especially quality and volume;
- better partnerships between schools in different Member States, especially the quality and volume, so as to involve at least 3 million pupils during the period of the programme;
- encouragement for learning foreign languages;
- the development of innovative ICT-based content, services, pedagogies and practices;
- better teacher training in terms of quality and the European dimension;
- support in improving pedagogical approaches and school management.

The following actions may be supported by the Comenius programme:

- mobility such as exchanges of pupils and staff, school mobility, training courses for teachers, etc.;
- partnerships, such as "Comenius school partnerships" of schools for joint learning projects or "Comenius-Regio partnerships" of organisations responsible for school education, with a view to fostering inter-regional - and particularly border region - cooperation;
- multilateral projects on disseminating and promoting best practices, exchanging experience or developing new courses or course content;
- multilateral networks aimed at developing education, disseminating good practice and innovation, supporting partnerships and projects, and developing needs analysis;
- accompanying measures.

The mobility and partnership actions account for at least 80% of the Comenius budget.

For further information, please check the website of the Directorate-General for Education and Culture: Comenius Programme

## ERASMUS

The Erasmus programme addresses formal higher education and vocational education and training at tertiary level, whatever the length of the course or qualification may be and including doctoral studies. Unlike the previous programmes, vocational education and training at tertiary level comes under Erasmus now and not Leonardo da Vinci.

The two specific objectives are to:

- support the achievement of a European Area of Higher Education;
- reinforce the contribution of higher education and advanced vocational education to the process of innovation.

To this end, the programme pursues operational objectives which should endeavour to improve, strengthen and develop:

- mobility (including quality). It should reach 3 million individuals by 2012;
- the volume of cooperation (including quality) between higher education institutions and between higher education institutions and enterprises;
- the transparency and compatibility of qualifications gained;
- innovative practices and their transfer between countries;
- the development of innovative ICT-based content, services, pedagogies and practices.

The following actions may be supported by the Erasmus programme:

- the mobility of students (studies, training, placements), teaching staff, other staff in higher education institutions and staff of enterprises for the purposes of training or teaching, Erasmus intensive programmes organised on a multilateral basis, as well as support to the home and host institutions to ensure the quality of the mobility arrangements. Mobility actions account for at least 80% of the budget for this programme;
- multilateral projects focusing on innovation, experimentation and the exchange of good practices;
- multilateral networks such as "Erasmus thematic networks" run by consortia of higher education institutions and representing a discipline or a cross-disciplinary field;
- accompanying measures.

For further information, please check the website of the Directorate-General for Education and Culture: Erasmus programme

## LEONARDO DA VINCI

The Leonardo da Vinci programme addresses vocational education and training, other than at tertiary level.

Its specific objectives are to:

- support participants in training in the acquisition and the use of knowledge, skills and qualifications to facilitate personal development, employability and participation in the European labour market;
- support improvements in quality and innovation;
- enhance the attractiveness of vocational education and training and mobility.

To this end, the programme pursues operational objectives which seek to develop and strengthen:

- mobility (including quality) in this field and that of continuing training, including placements in enterprises numbering 80 000 per year by the end of the programme;
- the volume of cooperation (including quality) between the different actors;
- the development of innovative practices and their transfer between countries;
- the transparency and recognition of qualifications and competences, including those acquired through non-formal and informal learning;
- language learning;
- the development of innovative ICT-based content, services, pedagogies and practices.

The following actions may be supported by the Leonardo da Vinci programme:

- mobility, including the preparation thereof;
- partnerships focusing on themes of mutual interest;
- multilateral projects, in particular those aimed at improving training systems through the transfer of innovation in order to adapt to national needs or through the development of innovation and good practice;
- thematic networks of experts and organisations working on specific issues related to vocational education and training;
- accompanying measures.

The mobility and partnership actions account for at least 60% of the budget for this programme.

For further information, please check the website of the Directorate-General for Education and Culture: Leonardo da Vinci programme

## GRUNDTVIG

The Grundtvig programme addresses all forms of adult education.

It aims to:

- respond to the educational challenge of an ageing population in Europe;
- help provide adults with pathways to improving their knowledge and competences.

Its operational objectives are as follows:

- improve the quality and accessibility of mobility with a view to supporting 7 000 individuals per year by the end of the programme;
- improve cooperation (quality and volume);
- support and find alternatives for underprivileged and vulnerable persons, such as older people and those who have left education without basic qualifications;
- support the development of innovative practices and their transfer between countries;
- support the development of innovative ICT-based content, services, pedagogies and practices;
- improve pedagogical approaches and the management of adult education organisations.

The following actions may be supported by the Grundtvig programme:

- the mobility of individuals, including adequate preparation, supervision and support;
- the "Grundtvig learning partnerships" focusing on themes of mutual interest;
- multilateral projects aimed at improving adult education systems through the development and transfer of innovation and good practice;
- the "Grundtvig networks", thematic networks of experts and organisations;
- accompanying measures.

The mobility and partnership actions account for at least 55% of the budget for the Grundtvig programme.

For further information, please check the website of the Directorate-General for Education and Culture: Grundtvig programme

## THE TRANSVERSAL PROGRAMME

The transversal programme mainly addresses activities which extend beyond the limits of the sectoral programmes.

It covers four key activities in the field of lifelong learning, i.e.:

- policy cooperation and innovation;
- the promotion of language learning;
- the development of innovative ICT-based content, services, pedagogies and practices;
- the dissemination and exploitation of results of actions supported under the programme or previous programmes, and exchange of good practice.

The specific objectives are to:

- promote European cooperation in fields covering two or more sectoral programmes;
- promote the quality and transparency of Member States' education and training systems;

Its operational objectives are to:

- support policy development and cooperation at European level in lifelong learning in the context of the Lisbon process, the Education and Training 2010 Work Programme, the Bologna and Copenhagen processes and their successors;
- ensure a supply of comparable data, statistics and analyses to underpin policy development, as well as to monitor progress towards objectives and targets, and to identify areas for particular attention;
- promote language learning and support linguistic diversity in the Member States;
- support the development of innovative ICT-based content, services, pedagogies and practices;
- ensure that the results of the programme are advertised, disseminated and taken into consideration.

The programme actions apply to the key activities in the transversal programme. For example, under the key activity entitled "policy cooperation and innovation", the actions may deal in particular with supporting the observation and analysis of policies and systems such as the Eurydice network or supporting the transparency of qualifications and competences, information and guidance for mobility purposes and cooperation in quality assurance such as Euroguidance, and National Academic Recognition Information Centres ( NARIC ), Ploteus or the Europass initiative.

## THE JEAN MONNET PROGRAMME

The Jean Monnet Programme targets specific issues of European integration in the academic world and the support needed for institutions and associations active in education and training at European level.

This programme covers three key activities:

- the Jean Monnet action, in which institutions from third countries can also participate, accounts for at least 16% of the budget for this programme;
- operating grants to designated institutions which pursue objectives of European interest. These institutions are the College of Europe , the European University Institute in Florence, the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA) in Maastricht, the Academy of European Law (ERA) in Trier, the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education in Middelfart, and the International Centre for European Training (CIFE) in Nice. These grants account for at least 65% of the budget;
- operating subsidies to other European institutions and associations in the field of education and training which account for at least 19% of the budget.

The specific objectives are to:

- stimulate teaching, research and reflection activities in the field of European integration studies;
- support the existence of an appropriate range of institutions and associations focusing on issues relating to European integration and on education and training in a European perspective.

Its operational objectives are therefore to stimulate excellence, enhance knowledge and awareness of European integration, support European institutions working on European integration and the existence of high-quality European institutions and associations.

The actions cover unilateral and national projects such as Jean Monnet chairs, centres of excellence and teaching modules or support for young researchers as well as multilateral projects and networks.

For further information, please check the website of the Directorate-General for Education and Culture: Jean Monnet programme

*<http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/cha/c11082.htm>*

## **Erasmus mundus (2004 - 2008)**

*Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 December 2003 establishing a programme for the enhancement of quality in higher education and the promotion of intercultural understanding through cooperation with third countries*

### **AIMS**

Erasmus Mundus aims to enhance the quality of European higher education by fostering cooperation with third countries in order to improve the development of human resources and promote dialogue and understanding between peoples and cultures. More specifically, the programme seeks to:

- promote a quality offer in higher education, with a distinctly European added value;
- encourage and enable highly qualified graduates and scholars from all over the world to obtain qualifications and/or acquire experience in the European Union;
- develop better-structured cooperation between European Union and third-country institutions and increase outgoing mobility from the European Union;
- make European higher education more accessible and enhance its visibility throughout the world.

In pursuing the programme's objectives, the Commission will adhere to the Community's general policy on equal opportunities for men and women. It will also ensure that no group of citizens or third-country nationals is excluded or disadvantaged.

### **ACTIONS**

The Erasmus Mundus programme is being implemented by means of the following five actions:

**Erasmus Mundus masters courses.** These are advanced-level European diploma courses which are selected by the Commission on the basis of the quality of the proposed training and which:

- involve a minimum of three higher education institutions in three different Member States;
- consist of a study programme including a period of study in at least two of the three institutions;
- have built-in mechanisms for the recognition of periods of study at partner institutions;
- result in the awarding of joint, double or multiple degrees by the participating institutions which are recognised or approved by the Member States;
- reserve a minimum number of places for third-country students;
- establish transparent admission conditions which pay due regard, among other things, to gender issues and equity issues;
- respect the rules applicable to the procedure for selecting grant recipients (students and scholars);

- put in place adequate arrangements to facilitate access for, and hosting of, third-country students (information facilities, accommodation, etc.);
- provide for the use of at least two European languages spoken in the Member States where the higher education institutions involved in the Erasmus Mundus masters course are situated. However, there is no obligation to use two languages of instruction.

Erasmus Mundus masters courses are selected for a five-year period, subject to an annual renewal procedure.

**Scholarships.** Scholarships consist of financial support for third-country graduate students and scholars attending Erasmus Mundus masters courses. A "third-country graduate student" means a national of a third country who has already obtained a first higher education degree, is not a resident of a Member State or participating country, has not carried out his or her main activity for more than a total of 12 months of the last five years in a Member State or participating country, and has been accepted to register or is registered for an Erasmus Mundus masters course. A "third-country scholar" means a national of a third country who is not a resident of a Member State or participating country, has not carried out his or her main activity for more than a total of 12 months of the last five years in a Member State or participating country, and can offer outstanding academic and/or professional experience.

**Partnerships with third-country higher education institutions.** Partnerships (maximum duration of three years) involve an Erasmus Mundus masters course and at least one higher education institution in a third country, so as to create a framework for outgoing mobility towards third countries. Recognition of study periods at the host (non-European) institution must be guaranteed. Students and scholars from a Member State and third-country nationals who have been legally resident in the European Union for at least three years before the start of the mobility programme (for purposes other than study) are eligible for mobility grants. Partnership projects may also include:

- teaching assignments at a partner institution with a view to developing the project curriculum,
- exchanges of teachers, trainers, administrators, and other relevant specialists,
- development and dissemination of new methods for use in higher education, including information and communication technologies, e-learning, and open and distance learning,
- development of cooperation schemes with third-country higher education institutions with a view to offering a course in the country in question.

**Promotional activities.** Erasmus Mundus supports measures enhancing the attractiveness of Europe as a venue for study. Such measures aim to enhance the profile and visibility of, and accessibility to, European education. They seek to establish links between higher education and research, through networks involving at least three public or private organisations in three different Member States which are active in higher education at national or international level. Networks may also involve third-country organisations. These activities (seminars, conferences, workshops, development of ICT tools, production of material for publication, etc.) may take place in Member States or third countries.

**Technical support measures.** In implementing the programme, the Commission may make use of experts, an executive agency, existing competent agencies in Member States and, if necessary, other forms of technical assistance.

## Beneficiaries

Erasmus Mundus is aimed in particular at:

- higher education institutions;
- students having obtained a first degree from a higher education institution;
- scholars or professionals who teach or conduct research;
- staff directly involved in higher education;
- other public or private bodies active in the field of higher education.

## Participating countries

The programme is open to the 25 Member States of the Community, the EEA-EFTA countries, and candidate countries for accession to the European Union.

## Implementation of the programme

The Commission is responsible for the practical implementation of the programme. A selection board, composed of high standing personalities from the academic world who are representative of the diversity of higher education in the European Union, selects the Erasmus Mundus masters courses and partnerships of higher education institutions. Erasmus Mundus masters courses are allocated a specific number of grants. Third-country students are selected by the institutions participating in Erasmus Mundus masters courses. Promotional activities, on the other hand, are selected by the Commission.

Selection procedures provide for a clearing mechanism at European level, in order to prevent serious imbalances across fields of study, students' and scholars' regions of provenance and Member States of destination; The Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, ensures overall consistency and complementarity with other relevant Community policies, instruments and actions, in particular with the sixth framework research programme and with external cooperation programmes in the field of higher education.

The Member States must take the necessary steps to ensure the efficient running of the programme at national level (including the designation of appropriate structures to cooperate closely with the Commission), involving all the parties concerned in education. They must endeavour to adopt any measures deemed appropriate to remove legal and administrative barriers.

## Budget

The financial framework for the period from 1 January 2004 to 31 December 2008 is set at EUR 230 million. The annual appropriations are authorised by the budgetary authority within the limits of the financial perspective.

## Monitoring and evaluation

The Commission must regularly monitor the programme in cooperation with the Member States. The programme will be evaluated regularly by the Commission, having regard to the

objectives, the programme's impact as a whole, and complementarity between the programme and other relevant Community policies, instruments and actions.

The Commission must submit to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions:

- on the accession of a new Member State: a report on the financial repercussions of such an accession on the programme, and proposals to deal with these repercussions;
- by 30 June 2007: an interim evaluation report on the results achieved and on the qualitative aspects of programme implementation;
- by 31 December 2007: a communication on the continuation of the programme;
- by 31 December 2009: an ex-post evaluation report.

*[http://ec.europa.eu/education/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/index_en.html)*

## **Community programme for employment and solidarity - PROGRESS (2007-2013)**

*Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 establishing a Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity*

**The aim of the future PROGRESS programme is to provide financial support for the implementation of the European Union's objectives in the field of employment and social affairs. It will thus contribute to the achievement of the Lisbon Strategy objectives. PROGRESS, the budget for which is 743 million, will finance analysis, mutual learning, awareness-raising and dissemination activities, as well as assistance for the main players over the period 2007-2013. The programme will be divided into five sections corresponding to five main fields of activity: employment, social protection and inclusion, working conditions, diversity and combating discrimination, and equality between women and men.**

Up to now, Community activities in the fields of employment, social inclusion and protection, promoting gender equality and the principle of non-discrimination have been supported by separate action programmes.

With a view to improving coherence and efficiency, the European Commission has proposed to group these subjects together in a single framework programme known as PROGRESS.

### **GENERAL OBJECTIVES**

The programme has six objectives:

- to improve knowledge and understanding of the situation in the Member States through analysis, evaluation and close monitoring of policies;
- to support the development of statistical tools and methods and common indicators;
- to support and monitor the implementation of legislation and policy objectives;
- to promote networking, mutual learning, and the identification and dissemination of good practice at EU level;
- to make stakeholders and the general public aware of EU policies in the fields of employment, social protection and inclusion, working conditions, diversity and non-discrimination, and equality between men and women;
- to boost the capacity of the key EU networks to promote and support EU policies.

### **STRUCTURE: FIELDS OF ACTIVITY AND TYPES OF ACTION**

The programme is divided into the following five sections:

- employment;
- social protection and inclusion ;
- working conditions ;
- diversity and combating discrimination ;

- equality between women and men .

The programme will finance the following types of action:

- analyses;
- mutual learning, awareness-raising and dissemination activities;
- support for the main players; i.e. contributing to the operating costs of the main networks in the Union, the formation of working groups, funding training seminars, creating networks of specialist bodies and observatories at EU level, staff exchanges between national administrations and cooperation with international institutions.

The programme has a list of operational objectives for each of the sections.

### **Employment**

The objective of this section is to support implementation of the European Employment Strategy by:

- improving understanding of the employment situation, in particular through analyses and studies and the development of statistics and indicators;
- monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the European Employment Guidelines and Recommendations and analysing the interaction between the EES and other policy areas;
- organising exchanges on policies and processes and promoting mutual learning in the context of the EES;
- reinforcing awareness-raising, disseminating information and promoting debate, in particular among regional and local players and the social partners.

### **Social protection and inclusion**

This section will support the implementation of the Open Method of Coordination in the field of social protection and inclusion by:

- improving understanding of poverty issues and social protection and inclusion policies, in particular through analyses and studies and the development of statistics and indicators;
- monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Open Method of Coordination in the field of social protection and inclusion and analysing the interaction between this method and other policy areas;
- organising exchanges on policies and processes and promoting mutual learning in the context of the social protection and inclusion strategy;
- raising awareness, disseminating information and promoting debate, in particular among NGOs and regional and local players;
- developing the ability of the main EU networks (e.g. of national experts or NGOs) to pursue the Union's policy objectives.

### **Working conditions**

This section will support the improvement of the working environment and conditions, including health and safety at work, by:

- improving the understanding of the situation in relation to working conditions, in particular through analyses and studies and the development of statistics and

indicators, as well as assessing the impact of existing legislation, policies and practices;

- supporting the implementation of EU labour law through reinforced monitoring, training of practitioners, development of guides and networking amongst specialised bodies;
- initiating preventive actions and fostering the prevention culture in the field of health and safety at work;
- raising awareness, disseminating information and promoting the debate about the main challenges and policy issues relating to working conditions.

### **Diversity and combating discrimination**

This section will support the effective implementation of the principle of non-discrimination and promote its mainstreaming in EU policies by:

- improving understanding of the discrimination situation, in particular through analyses and studies and the development of statistics and indicators, as well as assessing the impact of existing legislation, policies and practices;
- supporting the implementation of EU anti-discrimination legislation through reinforced monitoring, training of practitioners and networking amongst specialised bodies dealing with combating discrimination;
- raising awareness, disseminating information and promoting the debate about the main challenges and policy issues in relation to discrimination and the mainstreaming of anti-discrimination in EU policies;
- developing the ability of the main EU networks (e.g. of national experts or NGOs) to pursue the Union's policy objectives.

### **Gender equality**

This section will support the effective implementation of the principle of gender equality and promote gender mainstreaming in EU policies by:

- improving the understanding of the situation in relation to gender equality issues and gender mainstreaming, in particular through analyses and studies and the development of statistics and indicators, as well as assessing the impact of existing legislation, policies and practices;
- supporting the implementation of EU gender equality legislation through reinforced monitoring, training of practitioners and networking amongst specialised equality bodies;
- raising awareness, disseminating information and promoting debate about the main challenges and policy issues in relation to gender equality and gender mainstreaming;
- developing the ability of the main EU networks (e.g. of national experts or NGOs) to pursue the Union's policy objectives.

*[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/employment\\_social/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/employment_social/index_en.htm)*

## Youth in Action 2007-2013

*Decision of the European Parliament of 15 November 2006 establishing the "Youth in Action" programme for the period 2007 to 2013.*

**The "Youth in Action" programme for the period 2007 to 2013 aims to develop and support cooperation in the field of youth in the European Union (EU). It is designed to encourage young people, especially the most disadvantaged and the disabled, to participate in public life, and also to promote their sense of initiative, entrepreneurial spirit and creativity. To this end, "Youth in Action" defines general and specific objectives which are implemented through five actions. It has a budget of EUR 885 million and its operation is largely decentralised. It is accessible to young people aged from 13 to 30 in the Member States and in third countries.**

The "Youth in Action" programme for the period 2007 to 2013 aims to pursue and strengthen EU action and cooperation under the "Youth" programme for the period 2000-2006 and the 2004-2006 programme to promote bodies active at European level in the field of youth. With a view to involving young people in society as active citizens, the programme is intended to strengthen their sense of belonging to Europe.

It should also contribute to the objectives of quality education and training in the broader sense and help young people develop a sense of solidarity and mutual understanding. The programme thus also forms part of the ongoing Lisbon process objectives.

### OBJECTIVES

The programme has five general objectives which complement EU activities (training, culture, sport or employment) and also contribute to the development of EU policies (cultural diversity, social cohesion, combating all forms of discrimination or sustainable development). Each of these general objectives contains specific objectives.

The general **objective to promote young people's active citizenship**, which also involves promoting their European citizenship, is made up of ten specific objectives:

- giving young people, and the organisations that represent them, the opportunity to take part in the development of society and of the European Union;
- developing a sense of belonging to the EU;
- encouraging the participation of young people in the democratic life of Europe;
- fostering their mobility in Europe;
- developing intercultural learning;
- promoting the fundamental values of the EU;
- encouraging initiative, enterprise and creativity;

- facilitating participation in the programme by young people with fewer opportunities, including young people with disabilities;
- ensuring that the principle of equality between men and women is respected in participation in the programme and that gender equality is fostered in the actions;
- providing non-formal and informal learning opportunities with a European dimension and opening up innovative opportunities in connection with active citizenship.

The general objective **to develop solidarity among young people** aims to promote tolerance in young people; it thus helps reinforce social cohesion by means of two specific objectives:

- giving young people the opportunity to express their personal commitment through voluntary activities at European and international level;
- involving young people in the EU's solidarity actions.

The general objective **to foster mutual understanding between young people in different countries** includes three specific objectives:

- developing exchanges and intercultural dialogue between young people in the EU and in neighbouring countries;
- promoting the quality of national support structures for young people and the role of persons and organisations active in youth work;
- transnational thematic cooperation projects involving young people and those active in youth work.

The general objective **to develop the quality of support systems for youth activities and the capabilities of civil society organisations in the youth field** aims to:

- contribute to the networking of organisations;
- develop the training of, and collaboration between, those active in youth work;
- promote innovation in the development of activities for young people;
- improve information for young people, including the access of young people with disabilities to this information;
- support long-term youth projects and initiatives of regional and local bodies;
- facilitate the recognition of young people's learning and skills acquired;
- promote the exchange of good practices.

The general objective **to promote European cooperation in the youth field** deals with European cooperation in the youth field, taking due account of local and regional aspects, and is made up of four specific objectives, i.e.:

- encouraging the exchange of good practices and cooperation between administrations and policymakers;
- encouraging structured dialogue between policymakers and young people;
- improving knowledge and understanding of youth;
- contributing to the cooperation between various national and international youth voluntary activities.

## ACTIONS

The five actions contained in the programme aim to implement its general and specific objectives. These actions support small-scale projects promoting the active participation of young people, while ensuring the European visibility and impact of projects. These projects are local, regional, national or international, including the networking of similar projects in different participating countries.

The "**Youth for Europe**" **action** mainly seeks to strengthen exchanges between young people with a view to fostering their mobility whilst reinforcing their feeling of being European citizens. The emphasis is placed on participation by young people, whether this be in projects to develop awareness of social and cultural diversity and mutual understanding or the preparation and follow-up to reinforcing their participation, in particular at a linguistic and intercultural level. These exchanges are based on transnational partnerships.

This action also aims to support young people's initiatives which encourage their initiative, enterprise and creativity on projects of their own devising and in which they participate actively.

The participative democracy projects promoting citizenship and mutual understanding also fall within the scope of this action. They support the involvement of young people in the life of their local, regional or national community or at international level, as well as projects and activities based on international partnerships for the exchange of ideas, experiences and good practices at European level on projects at local and regional level.

The "European Voluntary Service" **action** aims to strengthen young people's participation in various forms of voluntary activities, both within and outside the EU, with a view to developing solidarity and promoting active citizenship and mutual understanding among young people.

This action supports:

- the young volunteer who takes part in a non-profit-making unpaid activity to the benefit of the general public in any country other than his or her country of residence for a period of two to twelve months;
- volunteer projects involving groups of young people who take part collectively in local, regional, national, European or international-level activities in certain fields such as culture, sport, civil protection, the environment and development aid;
- activities for the training and tutoring of young volunteers and coordination activities for the various partners, as well as initiatives which aim to build on experience gained by young people during European Voluntary Service.

It covers the volunteer's expenses, insurance, subsistence and travel, plus an additional allowance for young people with fewer opportunities where appropriate.

The Member States and the Commission ensure compliance with quality standards including a non-formal education dimension (activities to prepare young people at a personal, intercultural and technical level, and ongoing personal support), the substance of the partnership and risk prevention.

The "Youth of the world" action contributes to developing young people's mutual understanding and active engagement through an open-minded approach to the world. The

aim of this action is to support projects conducted with third countries that have signed agreements with the EU relevant to the youth field, such as exchanges of young people and persons and organisations active in youth work. It also supports initiatives that reinforce young people's mutual understanding, sense of solidarity and tolerance, as well as cooperation in the field of youth and civil society in these countries.

In terms of third countries, the programme distinguishes projects conducted with the neighbouring countries (those in the EU's European neighbourhood policy [ENP], Russia, and the Western Balkan countries) from those conducted with other third countries. Preference is therefore given to the exchange of ideas and good practices, the development of partnerships and networks and the development of civil society.

The "**Youth support systems**" action supports:

- bodies active at European level, NGOs pursuing a goal of general European interest and involved in the active participation of young people in public life and society and in the implementation of European cooperation activities in this field;
- the European Youth Forum and its activities in representing youth organisations vis-à-vis the EU, its function as an information relay to young people or its contribution to the new cooperation framework in the youth field. The annual resources allocated to the Forum shall not be less than EUR 2 million even though at least 20% of its budget must be covered by non-Community sources;
- training and networking of those active in youth work such as project leaders and youth advisers. The support may cover, for example, the exchange of experiences and good practices, or the activities of long-lasting, high quality partnerships and networks;
- projects encouraging innovation and quality, innovative approaches in this field;
- information activities for young people and persons and organisations active in youth work such as those improving their access to relevant information and communication services. These may be European, national, regional and local youth portals or measures which promote the involvement by young people in the preparation and dissemination of understandable, user-friendly and targeted information products and advice;
- partnerships with regional or local bodies whose funding focuses on projects and coordination activities;
- support for the structures implementing the programme: the National Agencies or assimilated bodies (national coordinators, Eurodesk network , Euro-Mediterranean Youth Platform and associations of young European volunteers , etc.);
- adding value to the programme and its implementation by the Commission through the organisation of events (seminars, colloquia, etc.) or information actions.

The "**Support for European cooperation in the youth field**" action aims to organise a structured dialogue between the various actors in the field of youth, i.e. young people themselves, persons and organisations active in this sector and policymakers. The activities may cover:

- promoting cooperation and the exchange of ideas and good practices and the development of the networks necessary to a better understanding and knowledge of youth;

- the organisation of conferences by the EU Presidencies and of the European Youth Week, and support for objectives in the field of youth through the Open Method of Coordination and the European Pact for Youth ;
- cooperation between national and international youth voluntary activities;
- seminars on social, cultural and political issues for young people;
- the development of political cooperation and cooperation by the EU with other international organisations (the Council of Europe , the United Nations , etc.).

*[http://ec.europa.eu/education/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/index_en.html)*

## The European Social Fund from 2007

*Proposal of 14 July 2004  
for a European Parliament and Council Regulation on the European Social Fund*

**The European Commission is proposing that ESF resources be concentrated on four areas in the 2007-13 period: adaptability among workers and businesses, access to employment, reducing social exclusion, and promoting partnerships for reform. These measures will come under two of the three new objectives: "Convergence" and "Regional competitiveness and employment".**

As part of the reform of regional policy, in July 2004 the Commission presented a package of proposals for the Structural Funds (ERDF and ESF) and the Cohesion Fund. The basic reference document for the general parts of these proposals is COM(2004) 492.

The new Regulation should enter into force on 1 January 2007, the planned date for the abrogation of the current ESF Regulation ( Regulation (EC) 1784/1999 ). However, the proposal does not apply to any measures approved before that date. The new Regulation must be reviewed by 31 December 2013 at the latest.

### Goals

The ESF is designed to foster balanced economic and social development in order to support national policies promoting full employment, improved quality and productivity at work and reduced social exclusion and regional employment disparities.

### Priorities

ESF funding is disbursed under two Structural Funds objectives: "Convergence", for less developed regions, and "Regional competitiveness and employment", which seeks to meet the challenges of the modern world by both anticipating and promoting economic change.

The priorities of these two objectives are:

- increasing **adaptability** among workers and businesses. Proposals include greater investment in human resources through lifelong learning schemes, making qualifications and skills more accessible and fostering enterprise and innovation. Proactive steps must also be taken to anticipate and manage economic change;
- improving **access to employment** for jobseekers, the economically inactive, women and migrants. Institutions in this field, in particular employment services, need to be modernised and strengthened, and active and preventive steps taken to identify needs early. Specific measures must be taken to boost female participation in the labour market and help migrants integrate better into society;

- **reduce social exclusion** for the economically disadvantaged, and combat discrimination;
- create partnerships to **manage reforms** in employment and to combat social exclusion.

Under the "Convergence" objective, the ESF also supports the following priorities:

- greater investment in human capital, with reforms of education and training systems, greater participation in education and lifelong learning and developing human potential through research and innovation;
- boosting institutional capacity and effectiveness in order to improve governance.

Granted via public tendering procedures, **ESF funding takes the form** of individual or block grants, loans, interest rate subsidies, micro loans or the purchase of goods and services.

### **Financing rate**

The ESF will finance up to 75% of public spending in areas covered by the "Convergence" objective and 50% in those covered by "Regional competitiveness and employment".

### **Funding priorities**

Generally speaking, ESF funding will concentrate on innovation, cooperation between regions and across borders, equal opportunities and promoting integration and employment for immigrants and minorities. Accordingly, annual and final implementation reports must contain a summary account of measures implemented in these fields.

### **Eligible expenditure**

Although decided at national level, the following expenditure is not eligible for ESF financing:

- recoverable VAT;
- interest owed;
- purchases of equipment, depreciable movables, real estate or land.

The following expenditure is eligible, notwithstanding national legislation:

- allowances or salaries paid by a third party whenever these constitute national public matching funds;
- indirect costs incurred by an activity, at a fixed maximum rate of 20% of the declared direct costs.

### **Good governance and partnership**

These are two further priorities for the ESF. The Fund will be required to focus particularly on specific regional and local institutional arrangements in each Member State. Unions and employers must be encouraged to participate and 2% of ESF resources under the "Convergence" objective will be earmarked for developing administrative capacity and supporting action by business jointly involving employers and employees. The Member States

must also ensure that non-governmental bodies at the appropriate local level are properly consulted. Technical assistance will also be encouraged by the Commission.

### **Consistency and concentration**

The proposal also aims to keep the ESF consistent with the objectives and priorities of the European Employment Strategy and target its resources on the most important needs of the operational programmes and those policy fields where they can genuinely help objectives to be achieved. These programmes must take into consideration areas with serious problems such as deprived urban areas, under-developed rural areas and those dependent on the fishing industry where this is in decline.

*[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/employment\\_social/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/employment_social/index_en.htm)*