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Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

1. Key competences for all

1.1. Description

The recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council on key competences for lifelong learning (2006) defined a framework combining knowledge, skills and attitudes which all individuals need for personal fulfilment, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment. It is a reference tool to support policy-makers, education and training providers, employers and learners.

Key competences are a priority for all age groups. Young people should acquire key competences by the end of initial education and training to a level that equips them for adult life and provides a basis for further learning and working life. Adults need to develop and update their key competences throughout their lives to adapt flexibly to a rapidly changing world.

Key competences are: communication in the mother tongue, communication in foreign languages, mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology, digital competence, learning to learn, social and civic competences, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, cultural awareness and expression.

Five of these competences (literacy in reading, mathematics and science, language skills, learning to learn skills, ICT skills and civic skills) were identified as part of the framework of indicators for monitoring progress towards the Lisbon goals.

Those attending study visits on this theme will get acquainted with measures taken by participating countries to develop key competences for young people and adults such as:

- (a) national, regional, local policies to increase the level of key competences;
- (b) national curricular reforms or regional and local developments of school curricula;
- (c) specific initiatives and projects which promote acquisition of key competences;
- (d) new approaches in organising learning and teaching;
- (e) innovative methods, learning materials or assessment techniques.

1.2. List of topics for study visits

- Increasing literacy and numeracy levels
- Language teaching and learning
- Use of ICT in learning
- Developing entrepreneurship
- Strengthening intercultural education
- Active citizenship
- Developing creativity in learning and teaching

1.3. Keywords

- communication in the mother tongue;
- communication in foreign languages;
- mathematical competence;
- competences in science and technology;
- digital competence;
- learning to learn;
- social and civic competences;
- cultural awareness and expression;
- curriculum;
- extra-curricular activities;
- adult learning;
- young people;
- personalised learning;
- student assessment.

1.4. Selected sources on policy at EU level

Key competences: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/objectives_en.html#basic

Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training – indicators and benchmarks (2007): http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progress06/report_en.pdf

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA): http://www.pisa.oecd.org/pages/0,2987,en_32252351_32235731_1_1_1_1_1,00.html

The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS): <http://nces.ed.gov/timss/>

The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS): <http://nces.ed.gov/Surveys/PIRLS>



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2. Improving access, equity, quality and efficiency in education and training.

2.1. Description

The Education and training 2010 work programme includes several measures and initiatives to achieve the three broad objectives to improve European education and training systems, agreed by the Stockholm European Council in 2001:

- improving the quality and effectiveness of European education and training systems;
- easing access of all to education and training systems; and,
- opening education and training systems up to the wider world.

These objectives are, in turn, an elaboration of the wider European goals established in the Lisbon strategy on sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, adopted in 2000. In spite of several positive developments in education and training in Member States most benchmarks adopted by the Council for 2010 will not be achieved. Consequently, the 2008 Spring European Council urged Member States to take action to reduce substantially the number of early school leavers and young people who cannot read properly. Action was also requested to attract more adults especially low-skilled and older workers to education and training, to improve achievement levels of learners with a migrant background or from disadvantaged groups as well as further ease geographic and occupational mobility. Therefore access, equity, quality and efficiency of education and training systems needed to improve.

Access, equity, quality and efficiency include the following:

Access to education and training: access to pre-primary education is essential for a good start in life as it promotes children' sociability and lays the basis for further learning. It is especially important for children from families with low income, ethnic minorities and migrants.

Member States have introduced alternative (more flexible) forms of education and training, second chance programmes, mechanisms for informing parents about absences and reduced costs by providing free course materials and transportation. Close cooperation between general education and vocational sectors and 'second chance' schools for adults is important. For children with special needs, access is increasingly considered as being given the possibility to attend general or special education based on what provides the best learning

possibilities for the individual child. At the higher education level, free education is key, as tuition fees may reduce access.

Member States should develop diverse pathways through VET to further learning and employment. They should also improve public training programmes for the unemployed and disadvantaged learners. The quality and relevance of such programmes can be improved by encouraging stakeholder partnerships at regional and local levels and by promoting private sector involvement.

Adult learning has a key role to play in responding to social exclusion. Member States should implement efficient adult learning systems that provide adults with key competences and increased labour market access. Education and training can contribute to overcoming socio-economic disadvantages, but it may also perpetuate it.

Equity: all students should have an equal chance to succeed; success should not be dependent on circumstances outside the control of the pupil or student, such as the financial position of the family, parental education, parental occupational status, geographic location, ethnic and racial identity, gender and disability. At compulsory school level, the possibility for pupils who drop out of school to get a ‘second chance’ to learn has also received considerable attention. The role of initial vocational training in equipping these pupils with skills, knowledge and qualifications is important for their integration into society. More initiatives are still needed in most Member States to reduce the number of early school leavers and fight inequity due to socioeconomic disadvantages.

Quality: ensuring high quality standards at all education and training levels is essential. *Building quality* includes capacity building of teachers, school leaders, trainers and training managers, policies to build bridges with parents, modernising curricula and broadening extra-curricular activities, improving infrastructure and establishing a respectful environment. *Quality assurance mechanisms* are important at all levels of education including assessing students’ competences, institutional self-assessments, external and internal evaluations, transparency and validating results. Involving, for example, social partners and actors from the labour market (‘learning communities’) in evaluations and validation of results is becoming more and more frequent.

Efficiency: Key measures to improve institutional efficiency and adaptability to shifting educational and training demands and labour market needs are: decentralisation (including reforms to allow room for institutions’ own educational initiatives); deregulation; monitoring achievements through indicators on educational efficiency; mapping skills gaps and anticipating skills needs. Building a culture of evaluation into education and training systems to explore how resources (investments from the public and private sectors) can be used (more) efficiently is also essential.

Study visits will present developments and measures on the following:

- (a) developing and implementing measures to improve access to education and training for disadvantaged groups;
- (b) designing and carrying out activities to achieve equity;

- (c) designing and implementing measures to increase quality of education and training provision;
- (d) evaluating and analysing education and training systems efficiency.

2.2. List of topics for study visits

- Early learning opportunities
- Personalised learning approaches
- Measures to prevent early school leaving
- Equal opportunities for disadvantaged groups
- Quality assurance mechanisms in schools and training institutions
- Measures to improve efficiency in education and training institutions

2.3. Keywords

- education and training attainment;
- drop-outs;
- special needs;
- gender equity;
- migrants and minorities;
- older workers;
- adult learning;
- social inclusion;
- evaluation (school or institution);
- financing.

2.4. Selected sources on policy at EU level

Efficiency and equity in European education and training systems:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/back_gen_en.html

Communication from the Commission, to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Improving competences for the 21st Century: An Agenda for European Cooperation on Schools:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/school21/com425_en.pdf

Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training – indicators and benchmarks (2007): http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progress06/report_en.pdf



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3. Keeping teaching and training attractive and improving leadership

3.1. Description

Raising the quality of teaching and training across Member States is an important goal of the Education and training 2010 work programme. Increasingly, teachers and trainers must develop new skills and competences, to face the challenges associated with increasing autonomy of education and training institutions and students. Use of new technologies and the necessity to pay attention to individual learning needs are other demands for teachers and trainers. In-service training for teachers is only compulsory in 11 Member States.

Demands faced by teachers are also increasing because of stress, and aggressive behaviour in the classroom, as cited in the Commission's working paper on 'Schools for the 21st Century', all of which have a negative impact on job performance and satisfaction and can lead to educators leaving their profession prematurely.

Many older teachers are expected to retire soon, which means that the teaching and lifelong learning profession must be made more attractive, with careful attention paid to recruiting new teachers and retaining existing ones. Member States face both a challenge – to replace the experience that is being lost, and an opportunity - to invest in the initial training of a new wave of teachers and improve the skills of existing teachers and teaching leaders.

Improving the quality of school leadership, and promoting cooperation between educational leaders, is also vital for raising the quality of education as a whole. In 2007, the European Council emphasised the importance of access to high quality training in school leadership and management. It is also hoped that educational leaders will be able to work together to address common challenges faced by European educational systems.

European cooperation is governed by a voluntary process known as the open method of coordination. Since 2004, common principles for teacher competences and qualifications have been agreed at European level, emphasising the importance of a highly qualified workforce, continuous professional development, teacher mobility and partnerships between teachers and other agencies, to Member State policy-makers. In 2007, the Council of Ministers reiterated the importance of improving the quality of teacher education, equipping teachers with leadership skills, and providing support to make teaching a more attractive career choice. Actors concerned by these developments include institutions responsible for teacher training and recruitment; leaders of schools and educational providers; bodies responsible for teacher registration, inspection and quality; social partners such as trade unions; as well as national and local policy-makers.

Study visits will present developments and measures making teaching and training more attractive, improving leadership and raising the quality by highlighting:

- (a) developing programmes designed to recruit and retain highly qualified staff in all educational and training professions;
- (b) increasing the quality and competences of leaders of education and training providers;
- (c) ongoing professional development of teachers and trainers;
- (d) initiatives easing the mobility of teachers and trainers.

3.2. List of topics for study visits

- Teachers' and trainers' initial training, recruitment and evaluation
- Teachers' and trainers' continuing professional development
- Leadership and management in schools and training providers

3.3. Keywords

- teachers' and trainers' retention;
- teachers' and trainers' competences;
- teachers' and trainers' qualifications;
- leadership and management;
- teachers' and trainers' mobility;
- status of teachers and trainers;
- quality assurance.

3.4. Selected sources on policy at EU level

Commission Staff Working Paper (SEC(2007)1009): Schools for the 21st Century
http://ec.europa.eu/education/school21/consultdoc_en.pdf

Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council of 15 November 2007, on improving the quality of teacher education: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2007:300:0006:0009:EN:PDF>

DG EAC: Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications:
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/principles_en.pdf

Professionalisation of VET teachers for the future (Cedefop, 2004):
http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_resources/Bookshop/publication_details.asp?pub_id=379

Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training – indicators and benchmarks (2007): http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progress06/report_en.pdf



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4. Education and training for employability

4.1. Description

To find and secure employment, people require skills that match labour market needs. Businesses need skills to compete, research, innovate and grow. Key European documents acknowledge the crucial role education and training plays.

However, low levels of educational attainment and insufficient skills exclude large numbers of young people from the labour market. Economic restructuring and changing skill needs are a risk to job security. People need the chance to upgrade and develop new knowledge, skills and competences at different stages in their lives. This is particularly important for people in precarious jobs, those who risk losing their jobs or are jobless, those who are older, the low qualified, those with migrant backgrounds or people with disabilities.

Although Europe has not yet reached its employment targets and economic trends are not particularly favourable, some countries already have skills shortages. In the near future, Europe, potentially, faces a major skills problem. Increased life expectancy and declining birth rates bring fewer young people into the labour market and longer working lives. In 2020, 50 % of all jobs are expected to require medium, around 31.5 % high level, whereas the demand for low qualifications will fall from a third in 1996 to around 18.5 %. The skills in many current jobs will change and require people to update them continuously, in other cases people will need to adapt to new jobs.

Initial education and training provides the skills-base to build on. The knowledge, skills and competences people acquire can help them move successfully into employment and also adjust to new requirements, working methods and jobs that are yet unknown.

Close cooperation with enterprises can make education and training more relevant to the world of work. Learning at the workplace can help encourage learners, who would otherwise leave prematurely, to continue their education and training. In a globalised and more mobile labour market, people also require linguistic and cultural skills to succeed. Lacking occupational language skills, for instance, might make it difficult for migrants to find (adequate) jobs or small and medium-sized enterprises to succeed internationally.

To choose adequate education and training programmes and jobs, information on the skills enterprises are looking for and guidance that considers an individual's competences and needs are prerequisites. To encourage people to (re)enter learning and to save time and costs, it is also important that education and training institutions and employers value the knowledge, skill and competences people have acquired at work, in voluntary activities or their family lives.

Ensuring skills development is also part and parcel of flexicurity. The idea is to ensure people stay in or easily find employment though they might need to move from one job to another or

take career breaks. This requires comprehensive lifelong learning strategies that cover all levels and sectors of education and link education and training, employment, economic and social policies. Such strategies are not yet in place in all countries.

Helping to ensure people's employability is at the heart of many joint initiatives between the European Commission and countries as well as the European social partners. The main policy initiatives at European level include:

Key competences for lifelong learning: the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament recommended Member States⁽¹⁾ to enable learners to acquire key competences that will help them adapt to changing labour market demands and contribute actively to society.

Vocational education and training (VET): signed in 2002 in the wake of the Lisbon strategy and cooperation in education and training, the **Copenhagen declaration** formed the starting point for closer cooperation of the Commission, Member States and European social partners in VET. VET plays a key role in ensuring lifelong learning and supplying a skilled workforce relevant to the labour market. The Copenhagen process aims to make lifelong learning more easily accessible and to promote educational, occupational and geographical mobility. It triggered significant innovations with a direct or indirect effect on improving employability such as: common principles to increase transparency of qualifications, quality assurance in VET, lifelong guidance and validation of non-formal and informal learning.

As follow up, the **Helsinki communiqué on improved European cooperation in VET** from 2006 further sets out that initial and continuous VET should provide a broad knowledge and skills base relevant to labour market requirements, to improve employability.

Higher education: the **Bologna process** aims to create a European higher education area by 2010, in which students can choose from a wide and transparent range of high quality courses and benefit from smooth recognition procedures. The **Bologna process** proposed adopting a system essentially based on three cycles (bachelor-master-doctorate). The degree awarded after the first cycle shall be relevant to the European labour market as an appropriate level of qualification. The second cycle should lead to the master and/or doctorate degree as in many European countries.

Adult learning: conclusions of the Council on adult learning (2008) stress it is vitally important both for employability and social inclusion that adults continue to learn and adapt to change: ongoing upskilling, reskilling and further development of competences are essential prerequisites for active participation in society.

Improving monitoring and **forecasting skill demand and supply** in Europe is part of the Council resolution on new skills for new jobs⁽²⁾. The European Commission will present a specific **communication on new skills for new jobs** in December 2008. Its purpose is to provide an assessment of future developments of labour and skills requirements, as well as

⁽¹⁾ Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on key competences for lifelong learning (2006/962/EC): <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:394:0010:0018:EN:PDF>

⁽²⁾ Council Resolution of 15 November 2007 on the new skills for new jobs. (2007/C 290/01): <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2007:290:0001:0003:EN:PDF>

labour supply up to 2020. The communication should recommend development of an EU capacity to anticipate and match labour market and skills needs.

Flexicurity strikes a balance between flexibility and security on the labour market and helps both employees and employers seize the opportunities globalisation offers. The common principles of flexicurity are: comprehensive lifelong learning strategies; effective active labour market policies; ease upward mobility and between unemployment or inactivity and work; continuous upgrading of skills.

To meet the challenge of employability, links between VET and higher education become increasingly important in a lifelong learning setting. The possibility to access tertiary education is a major motivational factor for the learner to engage in VET. Member States have started to engage in bringing higher education and VET systems closer to one another.

The **European social partners** have developed their own framework of actions for lifelong learning competence development and qualifications, but are also partners in the Commission's and countries' efforts to make VET in Europe better and more attractive.

Study visits will present developments and measures on education and training for employability:

- (a) education and training's contribution to improving knowledge, skills and competence for the labour market;
- (b) analysing emerging skills needs and gaps in EU Member States labour markets and developing policies to address these;
- (c) designing and implementing activities such as transition from education and training to work, occupational guidance and workplace learning to increase employability.

4.2. List of topics for study visits

- Transition from education and training to the world of work
- Workplace learning
- Integration of disadvantaged groups into the labour market
- Increasing attractiveness of VET
- Social partners contribution to meet the challenge of employability
- Skills analysis and mismatch
- Flexicurity in the labour market

4.3. Keywords

- lifelong guidance;
- language skills;
- validation of non formal and informal learning;
- apprenticeship;
- entrepreneurship;
- workplacement;
- key competences;
- older workers;
- adult learning.

4.4. Selected sources on policy at EU level

Implementing the Community Lisbon Programme: Fostering entrepreneurial mindsets through education and learning (2006):

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2006:0033:FIN:EN:PDF>

Entrepreneurship and SME policy projects:

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/entrepreneurship/support_measures/index.htm

Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European economic and social committee and the Committee of the regions, Action Plan on Adult learning ‘It is always a good time to learn’ (2007):

http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/adult/com558_en.pdf

Communication from the Commission ‘Adult learning: It is never too late to learn’ (2006):

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2006:0614:FIN:EN:PDF>

Career development at work - A review of career guidance to support people in employment (2008): http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Upload/Information_resources/Bookshop/504/5183_en.pdf

Communication from the commission to the spring European Council Integrated guidelines for growth and jobs (2008-2010): http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/pdf/european-dimension-200712-annual-progress-report/200712-annual-report-integrated-guidelines_en.pdf

Towards Common Principles of 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 (2007):

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/employment_strategy/flexicurity%20media/flexicuritypublication_2007_en.pdf

Helsinki Communiqué on Enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/helsinkicom_en.pdf

Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training, – indicators and benchmarks (2007): http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progress06/report_en.pdf



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5. Implementation of common European tools, principles and frameworks for lifelong learning

5.1. Description

To promote the mobility of European citizens as well as their qualifications and learning achievements, several common tools, principles and frameworks have been or are being developed at European level to reach the Lisbon goals⁽³⁾. They all aim to strengthen European cooperation and improve transparency, recognition and quality assurance in all sectors of education and training.

The European qualifications framework (EQF) is a common European reference framework which links countries' qualifications to make qualifications more readable and understandable across different countries and systems in Europe. It has two principal aims: to promote citizens' mobility between countries and lifelong learning. More and more European countries are developing and implementing national qualifications frameworks (NQF) which are closely – although not exclusively - related to EQF.

Governments are interested in developing overarching frameworks to incorporate qualifications that represent learning outcomes from different fields, for example school, work, higher education and adult learning. These new frameworks are often linked to lifelong learning strategies and intended to open up informal learning, or experience, that learners wish to have recognised. Common European principles and guidelines for validation of non-formal and informal learning⁽⁴⁾ were set in 2004 as a guide and common reference point for development and implementation of methods and systems for validation in the Member States.

The EQF also serves as a common European reference point for those international sector organisations that wish to develop their own qualifications across countries. This may also help to link the long-term skills demand of the labour market with education and training policies to adapt to change and restructuring brought about by globalisation.

Europass⁽⁵⁾ is a tool to make citizens' knowledge, skills and qualifications clearly and easily understood, and foster mobility in Europe. It consists of five documents: curriculum vitae, language passport, Europass mobility, certificate supplement and diploma supplement.

⁽³⁾ Education and training 2010 work programme (contribution to the Lisbon strategy): http://eur-lex.europa.eu/pri/en/oj/dat/2002/c_142/c_14220020614en00010022.pdf

⁽⁴⁾ Conclusions of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on common European principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning (May 2004) http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/validation2004_en.pdf

⁽⁵⁾ Visit the Europass website: <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu>

Transparency of qualifications and recognition of learning outcomes is further supported by tools that help learners transfer credits gained during learning periods in their own country or abroad. These are: the **European credit transfer and accumulation system** (ECTS) for higher education and the **European credit system for vocational education and training** (ECVET) ⁽⁶⁾ for vocational education and training (VET).

High quality of education and training systems in the EU is pivotal to the success of Europe's economy. European cooperation on quality assurance has led to the **European quality assurance reference framework** ⁽⁷⁾ for VET while common standards for higher education have already been developed.

Lifelong guidance is important to support citizens to formulate personal actions plans for further learning, career management and other life goals. There are common aims and principles as well as European instruments ⁽⁸⁾ for reviewing **lifelong guidance** provision.

Study visits will present European tools, principles and frameworks for lifelong learning such as:

- (a) developing and implementing qualifications frameworks with reference to the EQF;
- (b) promoting Europass and its use by education and training institutions, guidance and employment services and citizens;
- (c) designing and implementing quality assurance frameworks inspired by the European quality assurance reference framework;
- (d) tools for credit transfer to promote mobility of learners;
- (e) principles for recognising non-formal and informal learning;
- (f) providing lifelong guidance services.

5.2. List of topics for study visits

- National and sectoral qualifications frameworks linked to EQF
- Tools to promote transparency of qualifications and mobility of citizens
- Quality assurance systems, frameworks and approaches
- Credit transfer between different contexts
- Validation of non-formal and informal learning
- Lifelong guidance services

⁽⁶⁾ Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) [SEC(2008) 442, SEC(2008) 443] <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2008:0180:FIN:EN:PDF>

⁽⁷⁾ Proposal for a Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training [SEC(2008) 440] [SEC(2008) 441] <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2008:0179:FIN:EN:PDF>

⁽⁸⁾ 'Improving lifelong guidance policies and systems. Using common European reference tools' (Cedefop, 2005).

5.3. Keywords

- European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET);
- European credit transfer system (ECTS);
- Europass;
- workers' mobility;
- learners' mobility;
- teachers' and trainers' mobility;
- adult learning;
- young people;
- disadvantaged groups;
- learning outcomes.

5.4. Selected sources on policy at EU level

Supporting citizens' mobility and lifelong learning (EQF, Europass, ECTS, ECVET, lifelong guidance): http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc40_en.htm

European Qualifications Framework (EQF):

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:111:0001:0007:EN:PDF>

European Quality Assurance Reference Framework:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2008:0179:FIN:EN:PDF>

Quality Assurance in Higher Education:

<http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/documents/Standards-and-Guidelines-for-QA.pdf>

European network for quality assurance in VET: <http://www.engavet.eu>

Establishing and developing national lifelong guidance policy forums. A manual for policy-makers and stakeholders (Cedefop, 2008):

http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Upload/Information_resources/Bookshop/508/5188_en.pdf

From policy to practice. A systemic change to lifelong guidance in Europe (Cedefop, 2008):

http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Upload/Information_resources/Bookshop/505/5182_en.pdf

Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training – indicators and benchmarks (2007): http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progress06/report_en.pdf



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6. Trends and challenges in lifelong learning strategies

6.1. Description

Education and training are crucial for 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. Lifelong learning supports creativity and innovation and enables full economic and social participation. That is why EU Member States and the European Commission have in recent years greatly strengthened their political cooperation through the Education and training 2010 work programme, aimed at achieving the Lisbon goals and promoting lifelong learning. The programme integrates previous actions in education and training at European level, including vocational education and training under the Copenhagen process, and links to the Bologna process, which is crucial for developing an European higher education area.

The Education and training 2010 work programme uses the open method of coordination (OMC) as a strategic framework of cooperation between the Commission and Member States. The OMC is a way of spreading knowledge of best practice and achieving greater convergence towards the main EU goals by:

- identifying and defining jointly the objectives to be reached;
- commonly defining benchmarks and indicators enabling Member States to know where they stand and to assess progress towards the set objectives;
- ways to stimulate exchange and dissemination of good practice, such as peer learning activities.

Exchanging information on different policy options can help advance reforms in national education and training systems and, with other common learning activities, further progress towards the common objectives and benchmarks for lifelong learning.

Most countries have made progress in defining unified and overarching lifelong learning strategies. Within such frameworks, progress is evident in preprimary education, validation of non-formal and informal learning and most notably in national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) being developed by most EU Member States in response to the EQF based on learning outcomes.

Despite progress in the above areas, the following challenges need to be addressed to achieve overarching lifelong learning strategies.

Coherent and comprehensive lifelong learning strategies integrating education, higher education, adult learning and VET still need to be implemented. A holistic approach connecting lifelong learning and VET with other policy areas such as macroeconomics, employment, competition, enterprise, research and innovation, and social policies is crucial.

One of the most important challenges for NQFs is whether they will be able to operate as instruments for integration, making it possible to create learning pathways across education and training sectors and build on learning outcomes acquired in non-formal and informal settings, including at the workplace.

Adult participation in lifelong learning is still far from achieving the EU benchmark. Increased efforts are required to update their skills at various stages of their lives, broadening their access to education and training and have their learning valued, strengthening the quality of provisions and to achieve flexibility and security across the labour market.

Low levels of educational attainment and insufficient skills are major factors of social exclusion and poor labour market performance. This is especially true for older workers, low-skilled and other disadvantaged groups (such as migrants) who risk losing or cannot find a job. Demographic and labour market trends will lead to increased demand for high skills and fewer opportunities for the low skilled. To face this challenge, further investment in human and social capital is needed and increased participation in lifelong learning encouraged.

Study visits will present developments on:

- (a) reforms in education and training, policy measures for implementing integrated lifelong learning strategies;
- (b) policy measures to increase adult participation in lifelong learning;
- (c) implementation of flexible learning pathways and transition between different parts of national systems.

6.2. List of topics for study visits

- Reforms in national education and training systems
- Developing links between VET and higher education
- Implementation of flexible learning pathways
- Increasing adult participation in education and training

6.3. Keywords

- adult learning;
- older workers;
- low skilled;
- migrants;
- validation of non-formal and informal learning;
- learning outcomes;
- national qualifications frameworks;
- European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET);
- European credit transfer system (ECTS);
- European qualifications framework (EQF).

6.4. Selected sources on policy at EU level

European strategy and co-operation in education and training:
http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc28_en.htm

Draft 2008 joint progress report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the 'Education & Training 2010' work programme 'Delivering lifelong learning for knowledge, creativity and innovation':
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/natreport08/council_en.pdf

Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training – indicators and benchmarks (2007): http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progress06/report_en.pdf

Adult learning: It is never too late to learn, Commission Communication (October 2006):
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2006/com2006_0614en01.pdf

Education and training 2010 – diverse systems, shared goals:
http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc36_en.htm



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Lifelong Learning Programme

7. Development of learning communities, involving all actors in education and training

7.1. Description

European education and training fulfils several important roles in our society. In addition to providing learners with the knowledge, skills and competences they need to exercise a job or profession, it also helps develop competences important for people's family and social lives.

Opening up education and training systems to the wider world is one of the three strategic objectives of the work programme European Education Ministers agreed to help make Europe a knowledge-based society (Lisbon strategy). In its communication on *Improving competences for the 21st Century: an agenda for European cooperation on schools*, the European Commission stresses the importance of 'school communities' which include partnerships with agencies, organisations and other actors outside the 'classic' school environment.

This makes education and training institutions more accountable to partners and enables representatives of the labour market, families, civic and environmental organisations and learners to work together to decide on intended learning outcomes, content and suitable forms of learning. Parents' participation is also highly important, as it helps stimulate educational success and school improvements. Education and training institutions may contribute also to the prevention of, and the fight against, all forms of violence on children and young people and to attain a high level of health protection, well-being and social cohesion.

Study visits will present approaches and examples of good practice on:

- (a) incentives and initiatives developed at national and regional levels for education and training institutions to cooperate with external partners, including parents, municipalities, enterprises, social partners, NGOs, etc.;
- (b) national, regional and local examples of participative governance and evaluation of education and training institutions.
- (c) initiatives to prevent violence on children and young people.

7.2. List of topics for study visits

- Cooperation between education and training institutions and local communities;
- Parents and social partners roles in governance;
- Schools and communities roles to prevent violence.

7.3. Keywords

- evaluation (school or institution);
- autonomy (school or institution);
- parents involvement;
- bullying;
- social partners;
- school environment;
- financing.

7.4. Selected sources on policy at EU level

Communication from the Commission, to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Improving competences for the 21st Century: An Agenda for European Cooperation on Schools: http://ec.europa.eu/education/school21/com425_en.pdf

Commission Staff Working Paper (SEC(2007)1009): Schools for the 21st Century: http://ec.europa.eu/education/school21/consultdoc_en.pdf#

Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training – indicators and benchmarks(2007): http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progress06/report_en.pdf

Council of the European Union. Conclusions on the future priorities for enhanced European cooperation on Vocational Education and Training (VET). (Review of the Council conclusions of 15 November 2004) (2006/C 298/05). 8.12.2006: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/council13832_en.pdf

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. Brussels: European Commission, 2006: http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/vet2006/pdf/Helsinki_Communique_en.pdf



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Education and Culture DG
Lifelong Learning Programme

8. Promoting mobility in lifelong learning

8.1. Description

Constructing a genuine European area of education is a priority for the European Union, both for cultural and economic reasons. The mobility of citizens, especially as part of education and training, helps promote a feeling of belonging to Europe, developing European awareness and emergence of European citizenship. More practically, it allows young people to improve their personal skills and employability, and teachers and trainers to broaden their experience and improve their skills. Finally, in an international economy, the ability to educate oneself and work in a multilingual environment is essential for the competitiveness of the European economy.

Mobility is a key objective of the Education and training 2010 work programme as it helps create a European area of education and training and plays an essential part in achieving the Lisbon goals ⁽⁹⁾.

The 2006 **European quality charter for mobility** is the quality reference document for education and training stays abroad. It complements the 2001 recommendation on mobility for students, persons engaged in training, volunteers, teachers and trainers. The charter, agreed by Member States, provides guidance on mobility arrangements for learning or other purposes, such as professional improvement, to both young people and adults.

The European Commission launched in 2007 the new **lifelong learning programme**. It replaced previous education, vocational training and e-learning programmes, which ended in 2006 enabling the Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci and Grundtvig programmes to continue.

The programme supports exchanges and connections between people, institutions and countries. For example student exchanges, in-service training courses in school or adult education and participation in specific short internships for vocational students in companies in another country apply to individuals. Exchanges between institutions include developing partnerships between schools in different countries, joint projects run by universities to develop joint curricula, short-term intensive programmes or establish thematic networks in different disciplines. Connections between countries include study visits for regional and

⁽⁹⁾ Education and training 2010 work programme (contribution to the Lisbon strategy):
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/pri/en/oj/dat/2002/c_142/c_14220020614en00010022.pdf

national administrators in education, training and guidance, networks of national experts or publication of comparable statistics on education and training systems.

A high level expert forum on mobility was initiated by the European Commission and in July 2008 it recommended radically increasing mobility opportunities for young people in the mid-term.

By 2020 at least 50% of all young people should be able to engage in some form of cross-border mobility at some point.

This offer should be irrespective of their social background and cover a wide range of learning contexts including school, university and vocational training as well as other formal and informal learning environments.

The forum called for strategic action to eliminate barriers to mobility, ensure quality and exchange good practices. The Commission and Member States should work with regions, European networks of companies, foundations and European professional associations supporting development of learning mobility.

In addition to the above initiatives, common tools are being developed for transparency of qualifications and improve mobility across different countries and systems in Europe. These include the European qualifications framework for lifelong learning (EQF); the European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET); the European credit transfer and accumulation system (ECTS) and Europass.

Study visits will present developments and measures on implementing mobility in lifelong learning such as:

- (a) initiatives and projects which promote the widest access to mobility for individuals;
- (b) initiatives to make qualifications more readable and understandable across different countries and systems in Europe;
- (c) new approaches to simplify validation and recognition of knowledge, skills and competences acquired during mobility;
- (d) promoting Europass and its use by education and training institutions, employment services and citizens;
- (e) tools for transfer and recognition of learning outcomes to ease mobility of learners.

8.2. List of topics for study visits

- Cross-border mobility in education and vocational training
- Use of EU programmes to increase cross-border mobility

8.3. Keywords

- workers' mobility;
- learners' mobility;
- teachers' and trainers' mobility;
- lifelong learning programme;
- transparency of qualifications;
- Europass;
- European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET);
- European credit transfer system (ECTS);
- European qualifications framework (EQF);
- language skills;
- cultural awareness.

8.4. Selected sources on policy at EU level

The European quality charter for mobility:

<http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:394:0005:0009:EN:PDF>

Report of the high level expert forum on mobility 'Making learning mobility an opportunity for all': http://ec.europa.eu/education/doc/2008/mobilityreport_en.pdf

Supporting citizens' mobility and lifelong learning (EQF, Europass, ECTS, ECVET, lifelong guidance): http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc40_en.htm

The new lifelong learning programme (2007-2013) http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc78_en.htm

Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training – indicators and benchmarks (2007): http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progress06/report_en.pdf