



EUNEC conference

19-20 June 2006, Lisbon

Key competences and education for vulnerable groups

In November 2005, the European Commission launched a proposal for a **recommendation** of the European Parliament and the Council on **key competences for lifelong learning**.

<http://register.consilium.eu.int/pdf/en/05/st13/st13425.en05.pdf>

1 Background of the proposal

The **Lisbon European Council** in March 2000 recognised that Europe faces challenges in adapting to globalisation and the shift to knowledge-based economies. It stressed that **"Every citizen must be equipped with the skills needed to live and work in this new information society"** and that "a **European framework** should define **the new basic skills** to be provided through lifelong learning: IT skills, foreign languages, technological culture, entrepreneurship and social skills". The recognition that people are Europe's most important asset for growth and employment was clear in 2000, and has been regularly restated, most recently in the relaunched Lisbon Strategy and at the European Council of March 2005, which called for increased investment in education and skills.

The mandate was reiterated and developed in the **"Education and Training 2010" work programme (ET 2010)** adopted by the Barcelona Council in March 2002, which also called for further action to "improve the mastery of basic skills" and to strengthen the European dimension in education. This work was to focus on identifying the basic skills and how, together with traditional skills, they can be better integrated in the curricula, learned, and maintained through life. **Basic skills should be genuinely available for everyone, including for those with special needs, school drop-outs and adult learners.** Validation of basic skills should be promoted to support further learning and employability. The Commission Communication on lifelong learning (2001) and the subsequent Council Resolution (June 2002) further stressed the need to provide lifelong learning opportunities for all, particularly to acquire and update basic skills.

Based on this political mandate, a **Working Group on basic skills**, established in 2001 in the context of Education and Training 2010 work programme, has developed a framework of key competences needed in a knowledge society and prepared with a number of recommendations on ensuring that all citizens can acquire them.

The 2004 Joint Interim report of the Council and the Commission on the progress of the Education and Training 2010 work programme made the case for **common European**

references and principles to support national policies, facilitate and encourage reform, and gave priority to the key competences framework.

The Recommendation proposed here therefore presents a **European reference tool for key competences** and suggests how access to these competences can be ensured for all citizens through lifelong learning.

2 Objectives of the proposal

More concretely, the objectives of the proposal are to:

- 1) **Identify** and **define** the key competences necessary for personal fulfilment, social cohesion and employability in a knowledge society.
- 2) **Support** Member States' work on ensuring that by the end of initial education and training young people have developed the key competences to a level that equips them for adult life, and that adults are able to develop and update them throughout their lives.
- 3) Provide a European level **reference tool**, the annexed Key Competences for Lifelong Learning - a European Reference Framework for policy makers, education providers, employers, and learners themselves to facilitate national and European level effort towards commonly agreed objectives.
- 4) Provide **a framework for further action** at Community level both within the Education and Training 2010 work programme and within the Community Education and Training Programmes.

3 Key Competences for Lifelong Learning – A European Reference Framework

This Framework sets out the **eight** key competences

- 1) Communication in the mother tongue
- 2) Communication in the foreign languages
- 3) Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology
- 4) Digital competence
- 5) Learning to learn
- 6) Interpersonal, intercultural and social competences and civic competence
- 7) Entrepreneurship
- 8) Cultural expression

Mr. **Tapio Saavala** of the European Commission will introduce the Commission's proposal and clarify the European Reference Framework on key competences for Lifelong Learning.

4 State of Affairs of the proposal

The proposal is making its legal way through the European institutions. It was discussed on the European Council (Education, Youth and Culture) of 23 February 2006 and was on

the agenda of the Committee on Culture and Education of the European Parliament on 25 April 2006.

The Council also decided to consult the European Economic and Social Committee. The Section Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship is responsible for preparing the Committee's work on the subject. This section will adopt its opinion on 3 May 2006. On 17-18 May 2006 the plenary session of the EESC will adopt the final text. **Maria Herczog**, Hungarian senior researcher of the National Institute of Family and Social Policy in Budapest, is the rapporteur of the EESC study group on Key competences for lifelong learning and will present us the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on the Commission's proposal.

5 The EUNEC conference in Lisbon

During this conference we will try to get a global picture of the thinking on key competences related to **educational and societal chances of vulnerable groups**. This can be related to other discussions within the framework of 'Education and Training 2010' such as EQF, ECVET, lifelong learning and the other priorities put forward in this work programme.

Other possible discussion themes:

- What is the relevance of the core curriculum for compulsory education and adult learning?
- How does this reference curriculum interfere with equal opportunities and social cohesion in European societies?
- How to relate the reference curriculum to the efforts of mainstreaming pupils with special needs into the global education system.
- How to relate the reference curriculum to EQF and ECVET?
- How do the different members of EUNEC cope with this theme in their educational system? Examples of good practice.

EUNEC has the ambition to contribute in the European debate on key competences for lifelong learning. Therefore, EUNEC will try to formulate some common **statements** on this theme, which will be sent to the responsible authorities in the different countries and in Europe.

6 Programme

Monday June the 19th

- 9.00 h Opening session
Julio Pedrosa, president of CNE
Representatives of the Portuguese Ministry of Education
Chair of the EUNEC conference
Fons van Wieringen, EUNEC president
- 9.45 h Presentation of the proposal of the Commission: 'Key competences for lifelong learning'
Tapio Saavala, European Commission
- 10.30 h Coffee break
- 10.45 h The opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on the proposal on key competences
Maria Herczog, reporter of the EESC study group
- 11.30 h EUNEC remarks on the theme 'Key competences and vulnerable groups'
Roos Herpelinck, director of the Flemish Education Council
- 12.15 h Debate
- 13.30 h Lunch
- 14.30 h Key competencies, equal opportunities and social cohesion
Alexandra Figueiredo, General Director for Vocational Education - Ministry of Education Portugal
- 15.00 h Key competences and core curriculum
Céu Roldão, PhD in Curriculum Theory and Development
- 15.30 h Debate
- 15.50 h Coffee break
- 16.00 h Advices on key competences and vulnerable groups
Adrie van der Rest, director of the Netherlands Education Council
Manuel Miguéns, secretary-general of the CNE - Portugal
- 17.00 h End of the first day
- 18.00 h Guided visit to Lisbon
- 20.30 h Dinner

Tuesday June the 20th

- 9.30 h Key competences and education for vulnerable groups
Julio Pedrosa, president of CNE
- 10.00 h EUNEC statements on key competences: proposals and debate
- 11.30 h Coffee break
- 12.00 h General Assembly of EUNEC
- Adoption of the statements
- EUNEC annual report 2005
- EUNEC annual plan 2006
- Election of a new EUNEC president
- 13.30 h End of Conference

7 General information

Conference place:

Conselho Nacional de Educação

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