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Main policy lines of international organisations, relevant for education councils

June - September 2010

I. The EU

1. Institutional context: The Belgian Presidency of the EU.

1.1 Programme of the Belgian Presidency of the EU Council

Under the Belgian Presidency, the Council will adopt guidelines with a view to setting up a new work programme on the education and training of professionals until 2020. At the Informal Meeting of Ministers in Bruges, the candidate countries and countries of the European Economic Area will be invited to join this work programme. Draft conclusions will be submitted to the Council.

Within the framework of the Europe 2020 Strategy, and the need for a green, sustainable and skills-based economy, the Council will adopt conclusions on education in the field of sustainable development.

The Presidency will continue the work embarked upon by previous Presidencies concerning the strengthening of European cooperation in the domain of school education. In line with the conclusions of the European Council, the Presidency will pay particular attention to the problems associated with the failure to complete schooling, and to core skills, as well as to the role of education and training in social inclusion.

Depending on the presentation by the Commission of its flagship initiative 'Youth on the move', under the Belgian Presidency, the Council will adopt the recommendation on the promotion of mobility for young people.

Finally, the Belgian Presidency will work towards modernising higher education in Europe and on the interaction between higher education, research and innovation.

Read the full programme on

http://www.eutrio.be/files/bveu/media/documents/Programme_EN.pdf

1.2 Speech by Yves Leterme, Prime Minister of Belgium at the European Parliament on 7 July 2010

http://www.eutrio.be/files/bveu/media/source1856/documents/2010-07-07_Y.Leterme_Original.pdf

2. The Lisbon Strategy – Europe 2020

2.1 European Council of 17-18 June 2010.

The European Council meeting in June has finalised the EU's new strategy for jobs and smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The European Council confirms the five EU headline targets which will constitute shared objectives guiding the action of Member States and the Union.

Main headlines:

- Aiming to raise to 75 % the employment rate for women and men aged 20-64
- Improving the conditions for research and development (investment raised to 3% of the GDP)
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 20% compared to 1990 levels, increasing the share of renewable in final energy consumption to 20% and moving towards a 20% increase in energy efficiency
- Improving education levels, in particular by aiming to reduce school drop-out rates to less than 10% and by increasing the share of 30-34 years old having completed tertiary or equivalent education to at least 40%.
- Promoting social inclusion, in particular through the reduction of poverty, by aiming to lift at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty and exclusion.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/115346.pdf

2.2 Economic and Financial Affairs Council Conclusions on European 2020 Strategy

Luxembourg, 8 June 2010

'The EU target on social inclusion should include the labour market dimension': 'increases in employment, for example for groups that are currently socially excluded, should contribute the lion's share of progress'

'The Council encourages the Commission to continue the work with national authorities leading to the setting of realistic and ambitious national targets (..)

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ecofin/115006.pdf

Brussels, 13 July 2010

The Council adopted a recommendation on new [broad guidelines for the economic policies of the Member States and of the EU](#). It thus took an important step in the implementation of the new Europe 2020 strategy for jobs and growth.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ecofin/115806.pdf

3. Education and Training 2020

3.1.1 High Level Group Meeting

25 June 2010

- Update on the state of affairs regarding the implementation of the strategic framework for European cooperation in Education and Training
- Presentation of the new Commission Communication on VET
- The Youth on the Move initiative

<http://www.eutrio.be/high-level-group-meeting>

3.1.2 Meeting of Directors General of compulsory education

8 July 2010

Topics addressed are

- Skills evaluation
- Policies to support teachers entering the profession

<http://www.eutrio.be/meeting-directors-general-compulsory-education>

3.1.3 Seminar of the Ministers for Compulsory Education

9 July 2010

The seminar dealt with two themes essential for the future of European pupils:

- The acquisition of basic skills

European Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou proposed that two high-level groups be set up; one devoted to literacy and the other to maths and science.

- Early School Leaving

Ms Vassiliou announced the forthcoming recommendation on early school leaving in line with the adoption of an objective of reducing the drop-out rate to 10% in the next ten years.

<http://www.eutrio.be/pressrelease/ministers-education-cooperate-progress>

4. Specific policy lines within Education and Training

4.1 A new impetus for European cooperation in Vocational Education and Training to support the Europe 2020 Strategy

9 June 2010, communication from the European Commission

VET needs to be modernised to make it a more attractive and high-quality option, so that it provides

- young people with the right skills to find a suitable job
- adults with an opportunity to update skills throughout their working life.

The Commission's plan builds on the objectives of the Education and Training 2020 Strategy.

Objective 1 : Lifelong learning and mobility

Key actions should focus on:

- flexible concepts to maximise the access to continuing VET delivered by employers, traditional training providers and higher education institutions and coupled with appropriate financial incentives;
- open pathways from VET to HE and development of tertiary VET programmes;
- high degree of validation of non-formal and informal learning;

- integrated guidance and counselling services
- by 2020, systematic use of EQF, ECVET and Europass aimed at transparency of qualifications and portability of learning outcomes;
- transnational mobility strategies at the level of VET providers facilitated by appropriate mobility support structures.

Objective 2: **Quality and efficiency**

Key actions should aim at

- implementing quality assurance systems at national level (EQAVET framework);
- developing a competence framework for teachers and trainers in initial and continuing VET;
- providing the workforce with high quality labour market relevant vocational skills by increased use of different forms of work-based learning;
- strengthening the development of key competences to ensure the adaptability and flexibility of learners and workers;
- making VET provision more responsive to evolving labour market needs based on forward planning tools in cooperation with social partners and public employment services.

Objective 3: **Equity and active citizenship**

Initial VET can contribute to combat drop outs, improve educational equity and promote upward social mobility of groups at risk by

- providing high quality training focused on work-based learning adapted to individual need;
- pathways from VET to HE accessible to groups at risk;
- appropriate tracer systems to monitor the employment rates of VET students, in particular of those belonging to groups at risk.

Continuing VET is well placed to increase the labour market participation of groups at risk through

- flexible and modularised individual learning pathways;
- work-based learning focused on the acquisition of key competences;
- guidance services and validation of prior learning, particularly for migrants

Partnerships between VET providers, local communities, civil society organisations, parents and learners should be strengthened with a view to development of the key competences for active citizenship.

Objective 4: **Innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship**

VET can support creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship of learners by:

- providing experience-based and active learning to promote the acquisition of e-skills, a risk-taking culture, initiative, curiosity, intrinsic motivation and the critical thinking of individuals;
- including entrepreneurship in the competence framework of VET teachers and trainers.

Next steps:

- Link with the upcoming 'Youth on the Move' initiative
- This communication constitutes the Commission's contribution to a new 10-year programme of reforms under the Copenhagen Process on enhanced European cooperation in VET. In December, Commissioner Vassiliou and EU Ministers in charge of VET will meet with representatives of employers and trade unions in Bruges to set an ambitious modernisation agenda for the coming 10 years.

Full text of the communication:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0296:FIN:EN:PDF>

Citizens' summary:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/vocational-education/doc/cs_en.pdf

4.2 Gender equality

The official launch of the European Institute for Gender Equality took place on 21 June 2010. Based in Lithuania, the Institute will act as a knowledge centre and networking body, providing professional support to EU and Member States.

The Institute is currently developing an EU Gender Equality Index, which aims to assess equality between men and women in different areas of life.

<http://www.eige.europa.eu/>

4.3 European Qualifications Framework

The European Commission has published the second issue of the EQF Newsletter.

Register to the EQF newsletter by sending an email to the following e mail address: eac-eqf-newsletter@ec.europa.eu.

5. Background: the European years

5.1 Evaluation of the 2008 European Year of Intercultural Dialogue

6 July 2010; report from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.

The report constitutes the findings of the external evaluation of the Year and the Commission's response to those findings. The evaluation can be consulted at

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/evalreports/index_en.htm#cultureHeader

The evaluators addressed eleven recommendations to the Commission and six to the Member States. These will be followed up in discussion with Member States during the second semester of 2010 on the definition of the next Work plan for Culture, to run from 2011.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0361:FIN:EN:PDF>

5.2 European Year 2010 for combating poverty and social exclusion.

Conference on Child Poverty
Marche-en-Famenne, 2-3 September 2010

The principal themes refer to the guarantee of adequate resources in order for the essential requirements of all children to be met. The event aims to bring new dimensions to the European debate on the adoption of a Recommendation on child poverty.

Other events and more information about the year on <http://www.2010againstopoverty.eu>.

6. European Programmes in the areas of LLL, Culture, Youth and Citizenship

Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the impact of the European Parliament and Council decisions modifying the legal bases of the European Programmes in the areas of Lifelong Learning, Culture, Youth and Citizenship
Brussels, 30 July 2010

The report concludes that the substantial shortening of the delays has increased the efficiency of the programmes by enabling the applicants to be informed on the selection decisions further in advance, with positive effects on the sustainability of the partnerships implementing the projects, and therefore on the quality of the projects.

In the annex: information on grants awarded, days needed for selection procedure in 2007-2008-2009.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0411:FIN:EN:PDF>

7. Public consultation on the future European programme on education and training (Lifelong Learning Programme).

On 15 September 2010, the European Commission started a public consultation on EU funding programmes in education, training and youth. Anyone can take part in the online consultations, before 30 November 2010. Participants are asked for views on the development and design of the programmes and how they can contribute to the Europe 2020 Strategy and in particular the flagship initiatives 'Youth on the move' and 'Agenda for new skills and jobs'.

There are 3 separate consultations

- One on the future education and training programme (to replace the current LLL Programme that will run until 31 December 2013)
- One on the future youth programme
- One on an international higher education programme (to replace the current Erasmus Mundus programme)

http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/news2538_en.htm

8. Studies and Conferences

8.1 Gender Differences in Educational Outcomes: Study on the Measures Taken and the Current Situation in Europe

Eurydice, June 2010

The study covers 29 countries. The study examines how gender inequality in education is addressed in European countries. It shows that gender differences persist, in both choice of study and outcomes.

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/120EN.pdf

8.2 Study on Youth Access to Culture in Europe

July 2010

The study was carried out by Interarts Foundation. The study illustrates the need for building bridges between school, family, youth workers and community, as well as the administrations in charge of youth, culture, education, family and social affairs and other involved actors. To that aim, it suggests strategies to be developed at all levels of governance.

http://ec.europa.eu/youth/pdf/doc1790_en.pdf

9. Developments in other policy domains

9.1 Youth

9.1.1 Youth on the move

On 15 September the Commission launched 'Youth on the move' (with a press conference with Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou).

The Commission's proposal is a contribution to Europe 2020. The Europe 2020 goal is to develop an economy that is based on knowledge and innovation. Young people have an important role to play in this but they need more support in order to unleash their full potential. 'Youth on the move' provides this support by contributing to better education, training and access to labour market. All young people should benefit, whether they are in education, training, work or looking for a job.

Youth on the move conference on 5-6 October 2010

<http://www.education2010.be/en/calendar/learning-mobility/>

[Communication from the Commission: 'Youth on the move. An initiative to unleash the potential of young people to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the EU', 15 September 2010](#)

9.1.2 First European Conference on the history of youth work and policy

5-7 July 2010

It is the ambition to create a forum where European policy makers, scientists and intermediaries can meet each other. They will be able to focus on the historical dimension of youth work and policy, without losing sight of the current youth policy.

<http://www.youth-eutrio.be/Welkom/ConferenceHistoryofYouthWork/tabid/100/Default.aspx>

9.1.3 First Youth Work Convention

7-10 July 2010

The official declaration of the first youth work convention underlines the great importance of cooperation and knowledge sharing for the youth work sector.

The declaration is addressed to the European Commission, national ministers with jurisdiction in the youth field, the Council of Europe and youth workers and policy makers in general.

Read the declaration at <http://www.youth-eutrio.be/Welkom/ArticleDetail/tabid/97/ArticleId/5/language/en-US/1st-European-Youth-Work-Convention.aspx>

9.2 Social Affairs

9.2.1 Draft Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion

15 February 2010

'Both spending and participation in active labour market measures, including lifelong learning, have improved. However, more needs to be done to ensure that all are reached, including the low skilled, the young and the elderly, lone parents and those returning from caring breaks, migrants and ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities. (...)'

http://www.eu2010.es/export/sites/presidencia/comun/descargas/agendas_coreper/23febcoreper1.pdf

9.2.2 Informal meeting of EPSCO Council on social security and social inclusion.

8-9 July 2010

The day before this meeting, the ministers of the Troika (Belgium, Hungary, Poland) met the European social partners and Social Platform.

<http://www.socialsecurity.fgov.be/eu/docs/news/100707-cp-epsco-en.pdf>

Debates were split up in two working sessions:

- The social dimension of EU2020 strategy.
- Pensions and social inclusion.

<http://www.eutrio.be/pressrelease/informal-meeting-epsco-council-social-security-and-social-inclusion>