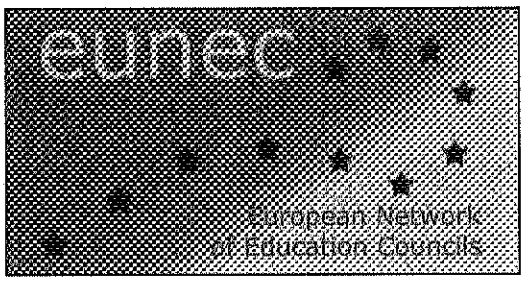

22 May 2012
EUN/EC/DOC/006

Main policy lines of international organisations, relevant for education councils
State of affairs December 2011 - May 2012

I. European Union

1. Institutional context

1.1 The management plan of DG Education and Culture

13 December 2011

This management plan includes the mission statement of DG Education and Culture as well as a personal message from Jan Truszczynski. It lists four general objectives together with impact indicators, as well as a set of specific objectives for operational activities.

- GENERAL OBJECTIVE 1:
  Raise the level and relevance of skills contributing to excellence and equity and make mobility a possibility for all young learners and researchers as contributions to an innovative, knowledge-base, smart and inclusive Europe.
- GENERAL OBJECTIVE 2:
  Foster creativity, promote intercultural dialogue and cultural and linguistic richness based on Europe's shared heritage and its diversity, while building the job-creating potential of the creative economy
- GENERAL OBJECTIVE 3:
  Reinforce participation , solidarity and exchanges between the people in Europe, focusing on young people and on people engaging in sport and physical activity, in view of their contribution to European citizenship
- GENERAL OBJECTIVE 4:
  Cooperate on all dimensions of the DG's policies with world partner countries or regions and with international organisations with a view to promoting European values, policy approaches and attractiveness worldwide, to integrating broader

global experiences into the internal EU policy dialogue and to strengthening people to people contacts.

http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/synthesis/amp/doc/eac_mp.pdf

2. Education and training 2020

2.1 The Councils of Education, Youth, Culture and Sport (Danish Presidency of the EU)

2.1.1 10 February 2012

The two most important outcomes of the Council are the adoption of the **joint report** on the implementation of ET 2020 (see point 2.2) and a public debate on the contribution of education and training to **reducing youth unemployment**, in the context of the European Semester and the 2012 Annual Growth Survey.

Ministers discussed the education aspects of the 2012 Annual Growth Survey and the Euro Plus Pact, focusing on the education and training sector's response to the current high rate of youth unemployment in many Member States (more than 20% of the 15-24 year olds in the EU = over 5 million young people). They were invited to indicate which policy initiatives in the field of education and training should be taken at national or European level in order to contribute to tackling this problem.
The debate was initiated by four presentations of relevant national initiatives.
It was agreed that, although there was not a single response to youth unemployment, any solution required a combination of policies involving different sectors. Stronger cooperation between education and training providers, social partners and relevant parties should be promoted.
Most ministers were of the opinion that the practical dimension of curricula should be enhanced ant that opportunities for pupils and students to acquire 'hands-on' experience should be increased.

Press release:
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/127945.pdf

2.1.2 11 May 2012

Main results of the Council:

- The Council reached a partial general approach on the proposal for a regulation establishing the **'Erasmus for All'** programme.
- The Council adopted conclusions on the **employability** of graduates from education and training.
- In the field of **youth,** the Council adopted conclusions on fostering the creative and innovative potential of young people. Furthermore, Ministers had a public debate on the theme: 'Engaging with young people to release their potential'.
- The **Cypriot** delegation informed regarding its programme for the second half of 2012.

In the field of **education**, the main priorities will be:

- Combating illiteracy
- Promoting excellence in education (in the framework of the Copenhagen process)
- Enhancing the link between training and higher education
- Promoting excellence in teaching and learning
- Monitoring the European semester in the education and training field.

In the field of **youth** the main priorities of the Presidency will be

- Foster youth participation and social incusion, in particular regarding young people from migrant backgrounds
- Promote integration of young people in society
- Organisation of the World Youth Council (11-13 September 2012)

Press release of the Council:
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/130177.pdf

For more information on each item see point 2.3

2.2 Joint Report 'Education and training in a smart, sustainable and inclusive Europe'.

30 January 2012

The report assesses actions and developments during the first cycle of implementing ET 2020 (2009-2011) and establishes priorities for European policy cooperation during the next cycle (2012-2014) which are aimed to a large extent at mobilizing education and training in support of the Europe 2020 strategy.
It identifies progress and challenges in five priority areas:

- ¬ Investment and reforms in education and training
- ¬ Early School Leaving
- ¬ Tertiary or equivalent education attainment
- ¬ Lifelong learning strategies
- ¬ Learning mobility

The accompanying staff working documents include interesting information with an overview of results of the past two years, listed linked to the strategic priorities and results per country.

The Joint Report contains an important new suggestion related to stakeholder involvement:
The Commission suggests to review the working arrangements under ET 2020 that were devised before Europe 2020 and European semester were agreed. ET 2020 should better be aligned with Europe 2020; it should be the mechanism to mobilize ET 2020 stakeholders, increase their ownership and harness their expertise in support of Europe 2020. (...)
To strengthen the link between Europe 2020 and ET 2020, the Commission could organise every year an exchange of views between stakeholders in the field of education and training.
This new Education and Training Forum could in early October discuss progress in

modernising education and training systems drawing on the discussion of education issues in the European Semester.

The joint report
http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/12/st05/st05600.en12.pdf
The accompanying documents and the communication from the Commission
http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc1532_en.htm

2.3 Specific policy lines in education and training

2.3.1 Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the 'Erasmus for All': the Union Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport

Council meeting, 10 May 2012

This proposal goes with an attached Presidency compromise text and refers to the Commission Communication from 25 November 2011.

The Commission has entered a general reservation on the whole text pending the opinion of the European Parliament and further developments on the MMF (the Multiannual Financial Framework).

The overall philosophy of the Commission proposal has been maintained. The transition from a sector-based approach to one based on three types of actions (learning mobility, cooperation for innovation and good practices, and support for policy reform) has been broadly welcomed by the Member States.

The key changes to the Commission proposal are summarised as follows:

- Youth-related issues

There will be a separate chapter on youth, with provision for a separate budget allocation, while access has been broadened to include non-organised youth.

- Programme management

Changes have been made in order to preserve the Member States' freedom to organise the management of the programme at national level. Member States will be entitled to designate more than one National Authority and more than one National Agency.

- Funding

A new paragraph has been included to ensure that the various education and training sectors will also receive minimum percentage allocations.

- Programme implementation

The compromise text provides a single Programme Committee, which may meet in specific configurations to deal with sectoral issues, if deemed necessary.

- Support for institutions under the Jean Monnet activities

Funding for all six institutions active in the field of European integration studies will be maintained.

- Access

The compromise text highlights the need to promote social inclusion, notably by ensuring the participation of people with special needs or with fewer opportunities.

During the press conference commissioner Vassiliuo considered that the important budget allocation proposed for the programme will send a clear signal to young people and also to adult learners that Europe is strongly committed and will have the means of tackling their problems.

Next steps:
The agreement reached on the basis of the Presidency compromise text consitutes a political manate for future Presidencies to engage in informal negotiations with the European Parliament during the second half of 2012 with a view to reaching overall agreement on the proposal early in 2013.

http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/12/st09/st09098.en12.pdf

2.3.2 Council Conclusions on a benchmark on employability

11 May 2012

The council adopted conclusions on the employability of graduates from education and training.
The newly adopted benchmark will measure the share of graduates entering employment within three years of graduating and will look at the match between educational attainment and the occupations pursued during the first years of employment.

By 2020, the share of employed graduates (20-34 year olds) having left education and training no more than three years before the reference year should be at least 82% (as compared to 76,5 % in 2010).

The following levels of graduates are considered: those with upper-secondary education attainment, those with post-secondary non tertiary attainment and those with tertiary attainment.
This benchmark is added to the six existing benchmarks (five from ET 2020 + the benchmark on mobility) and is related to the EU determination to tackle the education challenges highlighted within the Europe 2020 Strategy.

The Commission will make an assessment of the employability benchmark in 2014.

http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/12/st09/st09100.en12.pdf

2.3.3 Higher Education : The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report

25 April 2012

This report is the result of a joint effort by Eurostat, Eurostudent and Eurydice and has been overseen by the Bologna Follow-Up Group. It describes the state of implementation of the Bologna Process in 2012 from various perspectives using data collected in 2011. It provides statistical data and contextualized qualitative information.
It reveals that, while much progress has been made, countries face significant challenges in modernizing higher education.

The report covers a broad range of higher education issues:

- Demographic and funding context
- Degree structures and qualifications
- Quality assurance
- Social dimension
- Outcomes and employability
- Lifelong learning and mobility.

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/138EN.pdf

2.3.4 Early School Leaving

Brussels, 1-2 March 2012

The European Commission organized a conference on 'Reducing Early School Leaving'. EUNEC participated actively in this event.
The conference website is available and contains a very detailed conference report, summarizing the main elements and conclusions, as well as key notes and presentations from the workshops and the exhibitions.
http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/confesl_en.htm.

The conference is a follow up of the Council recommendation on policies to reduce early school leaving of June 2011
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2011:191:0001:0006:EN:PDF

3. Developments in other policy domains

3.1 Proposal for modernization of professional qualifications directive 2005/36/EC.

December 2011

The Professional Qualifications Directive is essential to enabling professionals to start a new business or to find a job in another Member State requiring a specific qualification for a specific professional activity.
The proposal aims at simplifying rules for the mobility of professionals within the EU by offering a European Professional Card to all interested professions which would allow easier and faster recognition of qualifications. It also clarifies the framework for consumers, by inviting Member States to review the scope of their regulated professions and by addressing public concerns about language skills and the lack of effective alerts about professional malpractice, notably in the health sector.

More information:
http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/policy_developments/index_en.htm

3.2 'We mean Business'

European Commission, 17 April 2012

The European Commission launches the "We Mean Business" campaign, which aims to encourage companies to create more trainee placements to boost young people's skills and employability. At the same time, traineeships can help young people make a smooth transition from education and training to a first good job. Placements can also bring benefits to companies, enabling them to identify potentially excellent future employees who could, with their fresh ideas, be key to future productivity and competitiveness.

As part of its "Youth Opportunities Initiative", unveiled in December 2011 (IP/11/1568), the European Commission undertook to increase by 30% the number of Leonardo da Vinci and Erasmus work placements for vocational and higher education students.

The campaign has a dedicated website, which contains information and links on how to organise or find a European placement. Awareness raising events will take place in Member States, targeted at chambers of commerce, regional development agencies, business support organisations and other 'multipliers' who can highlight the benefits of placements for companies.

In parallel to the "We Mean Business" campaign, the Commission adopted (18 April) a comprehensive package of new measures aimed at delivering a job-rich recovery. (see point 3.3 of this document)

Webpage of the campaign: http://we-mean-business.europa.eu

3.3 Towards a job-rich recovery

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions
18 April 2012

This Communication is part of the 'employment package', presented by Laszlo Andor, EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

Content of the employment package:

- It urges Member States to strengthen their national employment policies.
- It lays down key areas for reform so that labour markets become more dynamic and inclusive and therefore more resilient to economic change.
- It aims to create a genuine EU labour market
- It paves the way for reinforced coordination an monitoring of employment policies at ET level in line with EU economic governance

Next steps:
The package will be discussed at a high level employment conference on 6-7 September to further mobilise all partners to implement the measures announced.

The communication: http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=7619&langId=en

All documents including the Commission staff working documents http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1270&furtherNews=yes

4. Studies

4.1 Key data on education in Europe 2012

Eurydice, 10 February 2012

This is a publication tracing the main developments of European education systems over the last decade. The report combines statistical data (Eurostat) with qualitative information to describe the organisation, management and functioning of 37 European education systems.

Main conclusions:

- Longer participation in education
- Increased autonomy for schools and higher education institutions
- Quality assurance becomes more important in school education
- Teaching profession seems to lack attractiveness despite growing support for teachers
- Financing of education – a major challenge in times of crisis
- Tertiary education graduates find employment two times faster than people with lower qualifications

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/key_data_en.php

4.2 Vocational Education and Training

4.2.1 Exploring leadership in vocational education and training

CEDEFOP, November 2011

The success of reforms in VET depends largely on those that have to implement the policy. The last years, we have seen a lot of changes in the governance of VET institutions: decentralisation, new ways of financing, systems of quality insurance. These developments have an important impact on the role of the school leaders in VET, on the requirements for their competences.

http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/6113_en.pdf

4.2.2 Assuring quality in vocational education and training

CEDEFOP, November 2011

The role of accrediting VET providers.
This study is based on 12 in-depth inquiries (four related to economic sectors; eight related to specific countries). It shows that systems for accreditation in VET guarantee that minimum standards are respected. The challenge for the future is to reform accreditation so that it becomes a stimulance for more quality. The report suggests a multi step approach for accreditation; it includes recommendations for national, sectoral and European stakeholders.

http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications/19074.aspx

4.3 Adult education: Strategies for improving participation in and awareness of adult learning - European guide

CEDEFOP, March 2012

The objective of this study is to explore how to make adult learning more popular and more accessible for identified target groups, including potential adult learners, policy makers, education providers and social partners.
The study analyzes existing initiatives already carried out in terms of awareness raising in the field of adult education, primarily at Member State level and provides recommendations for future activities and propose which existing strategies should be used.

http://ec.europa.eu/education/more-information/doc/2012/adult_en.pdf

4.4 Entrepreneurship education

4.4.1 'Entrepreneurship Education at School in Europe: National Strategies, Curricula and Learning Outcomes'

Eurydice, March 27, 2012

The report consists of both a comparative overview and national descriptions. The short comparative overview, covering EU Member States, plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Turkey, shows that the great majority of European countries address entrepreneurship education through national strategies or initiatives. At primary education level, two thirds of European countries explicitly acknowledge entrepreneurship in central steering documents while in secondary education virtually all countries integrate entrepreneurship into the curriculum, either as part of the general objectives of the overall curriculum, or within subject curricula or through a combination of these approaches. Thus the importance of entrepreneurship education is widely recognised. Moreover, many European countries define specific learning outcomes for entrepreneurship education covering entrepreneurial attitudes, knowledge and skills. Finally, the report also presents those countries where concrete guidelines and teaching materials give support to teachers, as well as a picture of current initiatives and ongoing reforms.

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/135EN.pdf

4.4.2 Entrepreneurship education: Enabling teachers as a critical success factor

November 2011

This report was prepared for the European Commission, DG Enterprise and Industry

It presents information and good practice, for both policy makers and practitioners, on how to enable teachers to take on a new role in the classroom (as 'facilitators' of learning), use innovative and entrepreneurial methods of teaching, help young people to develop entrepreneurial mindsets and skills.

It is based on the contents of two Symposia (April – Budapest and July – Istanbul) bringing together practitioners and policy makers to determine how to develop effective teacher education systems for entrepreneurship.

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/promoting-entrepreneurship/files/education/teacher_education_for_entrepreneurship_final_report_en.pdf

4.5 Evaluation for improving student outcomes

CEDEFOP, November 2011
Messages for quality assurance policies

This publication highlights a number of key messages for policy and decision-makers responsible for setting the conditions for developing a culture of evaluation in schools and training institutions. They reflect the views of different stakeholders in education and vocational training.

http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/4107_en.pdf

4.6 Development of national qualifications frameworks in Europe

CEDEFOP, October 2011

This is the third review of the NQF's. By the end of 2011 13 Member States have linked their national Qualifications Framework tot the EQF. This shows that the Member States see the NQF as an instrument to support national reforms and a coherent lifelong learning policy.
This report pays particular attention to the links between NQF's and validation of non-formal and informal learning, a link which is becoming stronger in most countries.

http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/6112_en.pdf