



Education and Culture DG



EUCIS-LLL

**Second Stakeholders' Forum on EU Cooperation
in Education and Training**
Brussels - 9 February 2009

GENERAL REPORT

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AGENDA

- 09.30 – 10.10** **Welcome and keynote speech**
- Preparation of the updated strategic framework for European cooperation and of the European Year 2009 on Innovation and Creativity
- Odile QUINTIN**, Director General, DG Education and Culture
- 10.10 – 10.30** **Consultation of stakeholders, organisation of the Forum and follow-up**
- Jean-Marc ROIRANT**, President of EUCIS-LLL and **Gordon CLARK**, Head of unit, DG Education and Culture
- 10.30 – 12.30** **Workshops: the EC Updated strategic framework**
- *Workshop 1: "Strategic challenge 1: make learner mobility a reality"*
Moderator: Guy HAUG, EURASHE
Rapporteur: Michel FEUTRIE, EUCEN
 - *Workshop 2: "Strategic challenge 2: improve the quality and efficiency of provision and outcomes"*
Moderator: Stelios MAVROMOUSTAKOS, EFVET
Rapporteur: Christopher CLOUDER, ECSWE
 - *Workshop 3: "Strategic Challenge 3: promote equity and active citizenship"*
Moderator: David LOPEZ, FEEC
Rapporteur: Chris HARRISON, ESHA
 - *Workshop 4: "Working methods: actors' responsibilities and involvement"*
Moderator: Gina EBNER, EAEA
Rapporteur: Anita LIICE, ESU
- 12.30 – 13.30** **Lunch**
- 13.30 – 14.00** **Maruja GUTIERREZ DIAZ**, Adviser to the Director on: European Year of Creativity and Innovation, European Commission DG EAC.
- Presentation of the European Year of Innovation and Creativity
- 14.00 – 16.30** **Workshops on the European Year of Innovation and Creativity**



- 16.30 – 17.00** **Report by rapporteurs on the Updated strategic framework workshops**
- 17.00-17.15** Report by **Tommaso GRIMALDI**, General Secretary of EVTA, on the European Year on Creativity and Innovation workshops
- 17.15 – 17.30** Conclusions by **Leona ŠTEIGROVA**, Ministry of Education, Czech Republic and **Gordon CLARK**, Head of unit, DG Education and Culture



Speech of Odile QUINTIN

Mesdames, Messieurs,

C'est avec une grande joie que j'ouvre, aujourd'hui, notre deuxième Forum européen des parties prenantes sur les questions de coopération européenne en matière d'éducation et de formation.

Votre présence ici et votre soutien sont précieux. Je vous en remercie, et plus particulièrement Monsieur Jean Marc Roirant, et l'EUCIS-LLL qu'il représente¹.

Au **centre** de notre journée, s'inscrit le "**cadre stratégique actualisé pour la coopération européenne dans le domaine de l'éducation et de la formation**", adopté par la Commission le 16 décembre dernier, dans le contexte du paquet "Lisbonne". Je souhaiterais mettre l'accent sur quelques éléments de la Communication qui en font toute la portée et l'originalité.

Venons-en au cœur du sujet. **Pourquoi** cette Communication ?

Notre but à tous et notre mission à chacun sont ambitieux : accroître les connaissances, les savoir-faire et les compétences de chaque citoyen européen. Car c'est ainsi que l'on :

1. préparera chacun à entrer sur le marché du travail pour y trouver l'emploi qui lui convienne ;
2. aidera les entreprises à recruter les compétences nécessaires pour accroître leur compétitivité dans un contexte de concurrence globalisée;
3. assurera, dans notre "monde mobile", une inclusion sociale accrue, une citoyenneté active et un dialogue interculturel dynamique.

¹ *the European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning (EUCIS-LLL)*. Plateforme européenne de la société civile sur l'éducation tout au long de la vie.

Proposal to update our strategic framework



Mandate and consultations

- Build on achievements of Education & Training 2010
- More focused OMC
- More effective implementation
- Link to future Lisbon



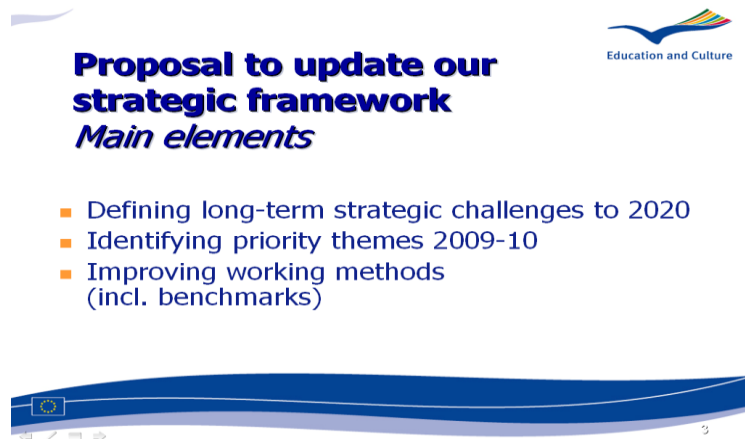
Quels sont **les moyens, dès à présent, à notre disposition** pour répondre à ces défis ?

Un large consensus s'est fait jour, fondé à la fois sur l'invitation du Conseil de l'Education, sur le rapport Conjoint de 2008 et sur la consultation des parties prenantes.

1. Nous sommes tous accord pour **valoriser au maximum les réussites obtenues** grâce à notre programme de travail "Education et Formation 2010". Les Etats-Membres ont tiré un grand profit des échanges de bonnes pratiques ainsi que du développement d'outils communs. Ceux-ci ont soutenu et aidé aux réformes nationales en matière d'éducation et de culture. Je citerai, notamment, le Cadre Européen de Certifications ou la Recommandation sur les Compétences clefs.
2. Sur ces fondations et dans cette lignée, la Commission suggère de **renouveler la Méthode Ouverte de Coordination (MOC)**, en la recentrant sur quelques grands thèmes et en assurant très concrètement sa mise en œuvre.
3. Enfin, les Ministres de l'Education des Etats-Membres ont demandé à ce que **les liens** entre la **MOC et la Stratégie de Lisbonne** soient



clairement établis. L'éducation et la formation doivent être plus directement articulées au contexte de politique générale.



Comment, plus précisément, la Communication répond-t-elle à ces défis ?

1. Elle définit, d'abord, **des axes stratégiques à long terme** encadrant la coopération en matière d'éducation et de formation jusque 2020 ;
2. Puis, elle propose d'établir **des priorités immédiates** pour la période 2009-2010 ;
3. Enfin, elle vise à **améliorer les méthodes de travail**, en ajoutant notamment de nouveaux critères de référence valables jusque 2020.

En somme, la Communication s'inscrit dans **le droit fil** des réflexions menées en commun **depuis 2008**. **Mais**, elle prend **une actualité toute particulière**, dans notre contexte dramatique de crise économique. A l'heure où l'Union européenne cherche à limiter les répercussions de la crise qui frappe chaque Etat-Membre et à tracer la voie d'une croissance renouvelée, il est crucial de **préserver l'élan** en faveur d'un investissement efficace et durable dans l'éducation et la formation. La définition de politiques de long



terme permettra à l'Union, à la fois, de sortir de la tourmente actuelle et d'établir des fondations solides pour demain.



Aussi, **à long terme**, et sur la base des larges consultations effectuées l'an dernier avec l'ensemble des Etats-Membres et des parties prenantes, nous proposons, d'ici 2020, de concentrer les efforts de la coopération européenne en matière d'éducation et de formation autour **quatre axes stratégiques** :

1. faire en sorte que l'éducation et la formation tout au long de la vie et la **mobilité** des apprenants deviennent une réalité ;
2. améliorer la **qualité et l'efficacité** de l'enseignement, de la formation et des acquis de l'éducation et de la formation ;
3. favoriser l'**équité** et une **citoyenneté** active ;
4. encourager, enfin, **l'innovation et la créativité** – y compris l'esprit d'entreprise – à tous les niveaux de l'éducation et de la formation.

Ce dernier axe marque nos perspectives à long terme du sceau de la **nouveauté et de l'originalité**. L'Année européenne **de l'Innovation et de la Créativité**, 2009, en est le point de départ.

Cette Année Européenne permettra de souligner le rôle crucial de l'éducation et de la formation à la fois pour accroître l'innovation et la



créativité, pour renforcer la dynamique qui les lie et pour en irriguer l'ensemble du tissu social.

Nous y reviendrons tout au long de cet après-midi. Mais, avant cela, dans un esprit créatif et imaginatif, changeons nos repères et de tempo... Parlons anglais !

Proposed priorities 2009-2010: 
Implementation

- LLL strategies
- EQF
- Languages
- Teachers and trainers
- Governance and funding
- Early school leavers
- Transversal key competences



Under each long-term challenge, we propose **short-term priorities** to guide the work during 2009/10. These could be a series of rolling priorities to be adapted over time.

Our proposals fall into three categories. Existing priorities:

- lifelong learning strategies,
- the EQF,
- languages,
- professional development of teachers and trainers,
- governance and funding of education institutions,
- early school leavers, and
- transversal key competences.



Proposed priorities 2009-2010: *Seek new solutions*



- Mobility
- Basic skills (reading, maths, science)
- Partnership



A second batch of priorities would include familiar themes, but where we need **new ways to tackle challenges** we have not fully solved:

- mobility,
- basic skills, and
- promoting partnership between education and training with business and civil society.

Proposed priorities 2009-2010: *New areas*



- skills assessment
- pre-primary
- migration
- special needs
- innovation-friendly institutions



And finally, we are proposing **areas which have not been explicitly addressed by the OMC so far** where we should step up good practice exchange -

- assessing skills needs,



- pre-primary education,
- migration,
- special needs education or
- developing innovation-friendly institutions.

Our approach combines general orientation and flexibility. The aim is to address long-term strategic challenges, and to focus on a limited number of issues by reviewing our priorities regularly.

Working methods: *a more effective OMC*



- Coordinating role for the HLG
- Broader involvement of stakeholders
- More flexible and "political" peer learning
- Better dissemination of results
- More focused reporting
- Updated set of benchmarks



Our third concern is to improve **working methods** for better implementation and better support of national reforms.

We propose four items:

First, on governance and partnership, we suggest that the **high-level group** should steer the OMC – coordinating and identifying education and training priorities; and ensuring that the discussions contribute to the wider Lisbon process. As the principal advisers to their national ministers, the high-level group would also be key in making our work more visible.

We also want to involve you, the European **stakeholders**, more systematically in policy cooperation and in peer learning. It is our view that education and training have much to gain by developing stronger links with



civil society. Our policymaking can likewise benefit. This year, for example, stakeholders can apply for two new calls under the Lifelong learning programme. We will also continue the annual Stakeholders' Forum, to get your input on priority topics.

We will also work on **visibility**, with a new website to disseminate peer-learning results and good practices.

Thirdly, we are proposing that **joint reports**, starting this year, should focus on priority issues. We also recommend including individual country assessments in the documents with the Commission's Draft Joint Report.

Fourth, the **benchmarks** which are a **crucial element** of our open method of coordination. They provide **orientation**; to show where we stand, and if we are moving in the right direction.

Benchmarks - their function

- Link to strategic challenges
- Monitoring instruments
- European benchmarks and national targets



Education and Culture

But, of course, benchmarks can also be a **sensitive** issue. This is why it is important to stress that they are an **instrument** – one of many. They are not to be confused with the objectives themselves.

We use the benchmarks to monitor performance at the European level. They are **different from national targets**.

In most areas, Member States have very different starting points. We don't expect all Member States to reach the same performance within a few years;



in other words, to agree to a uniform set of targets. What we do expect is that all Member States contribute to achieving the European benchmark. By setting **national targets** that take account of the national situation and contribute to the common objective.

Benchmarks: proposed approach



- Review existing benchmarks (early school leavers, low achievers basic skills, HE graduates, adult learning)
- Incorporate European Council targets (languages, pre-primary)
- New benchmarks on emerging themes (HE investment, mobility)
- Development work (employability, innovation & creativity)



The Commission is proposing to start a discussion on updating the benchmarks so that they reflect the updated objectives. This means that the existing benchmarks remain valid up to 2010. And as we all know, there are still considerable challenges to achieve four out of the five.

The Commission has proposed the following:

- review and, where necessary, adapt some existing benchmarks (early school leavers, low achievers' basic skills, higher education graduates, adult learning);
- incorporate framework targets that have already been set elsewhere, in particular by the European Council (languages and pre-primary);
- introduce a limited number of new benchmarks to reflect recent political priorities (investment in higher education, mobility);



- launch development work in politically important areas, but where we don't yet have any indicators or benchmarks (employability, innovation and creativity).

The way forward



- Council agreement on updated strategic framework
- Preparation of future Lisbon strategy
- 2009 Year of Creativity & Innovation



Where next?

In the immediate future, the Education Council plans to adopt conclusions in May based on the Commission's Communication. Today's outcomes will feed into preparing these conclusions, which will set the agenda for European cooperation in education and training for the coming years.

Next year, the current phase of the Lisbon Strategy comes to an end. The strategic framework is education and training's contribution to Lisbon, and so it will have to adapt to the 'post-2010' phase.

To finish, let me just underline the consensus that has emerged over the last decade: that education and training – skills and knowledge – are at the heart of European efforts to create an inclusive, knowledge-based society. In these difficult times, this message is more relevant than ever. I believe we can count on each other to keep making the case.

For the moment, you have an intense day of workshops ahead –I especially hope that you enjoy the innovative format for getting the European Year of



Creativity and Innovation off to a good start! I look forward to hearing the results.



Speech of Jean-Marc ROIRANT, president of EUCIS

First of all, as the representative of the European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning, I would like to thank the European Commission, in the name of Gordon CLARK and Odile QUINTIN, for having involved the platform in the preparation of this Second Stakeholders' Forum.

Some of you participated in the First Forum that was held in May 2008. This Forum was very important as it was the **first time that civil society organisations were consulted as such** in the preparation of the EU strategic framework on education and training. If efforts are still to be made in order to improve the dialogue between European institutions and civil society organisations, this Forum represents a positive step forward. Indeed, this Forum has **the particularity of being organised by and for European civil society organisations**. The diversity of the organisations represented today, with representatives of schools, adult education, parents, higher education, vocational training, non formal education, etc. gives all its specificity and richness to this Forum.

During the first Forum, **stakeholders from different sectors of education and training** exchanged ideas and proposals beyond their particular field of interest and agreed on key messages to Member States. Most of these messages were taken on board by the European Commission in its Updated Strategic Framework while others were not. Concerning the priorities, I would like to outline **three specific contributions from the stakeholders that do not appear in the final document and that are interesting to remind: the need to promote safe and attractive learning environments in Europe** (which is linked to other priorities set in the document), the need to improve guidance and counselling as a tool for lifelong learning and the need to give more coherence and visibility to the different European tools.



On the strategic goals underlying the strategy, most of the Stakeholders outlined that the **role of education in promoting social cohesion** should be reinforced. This could have been one of the strategic challenges in the Updated strategic framework which is not the case today. EUCIS shares this opinion and always tries to remind Member States not to forget this dimension. Indeed, its members joined their forces to watch that education is not subordinated to objectives only determined in terms of employability or economic growth but also as a framework for the intellectual and civic emancipation of all the European citizens.

Stakeholders also agreed on the **need to implement coherent lifelong learning strategies at local, national and European levels**. We thus agree with the European Commission when it says that despite a number of declarations, the implementation of reform in the field of education and training within Member states is too slow, and that this reform is still insufficiently integrated. Throughout Europe, access to lifelong learning continues to be unequal. Stakeholders thus supported the **need to move from discourse to implementation**. This is clearly the direction taken by the European Commission in its communication.

On several occasions, EUCIS proposed that actions be implemented in order to promote the concept of lifelong learning at national and local levels with, for example, the organisation of “**Lifelong Learning Weeks**”. It also proposed the creation of a **European Institute for lifelong learning** which would have the objective to promote the implementation of coordinated and responsible policies on lifelong learning at European level. This institute would need to be organised and administrated with the full cooperation between all partners concerned, including the representatives of civil society.

These tools could be useful in implementing lifelong learning strategies but **the main element for the successful implementation of the Education**



and Training Work programme will always remain political will and sustainable resources.

Civil society organisations also need to work together across the sectors and share their experiences and expertise more often. Together they are stronger to **make their voice heard** in decision making processes. During the first Forum, stakeholders asked for more cooperation between policy makers, social partners and civil society organisations. They also asked for the recognition of the role of the learning community (involving and supporting parents, the role of associations and other co-educators). **One cannot imagine to build the Europe of knowledge without the schools, teachers, educators, animators, heads of schools, associations, etc. that are its basis, its reality.**

The institutional and economic crises clearly show that **we cannot continue to take decisions without the participation of the citizens.** It is **time to implement a more structured and regular dialogue** between the institutions and civil society organisations. In its Joint Report of February 2008, the European Commission recognised that if progresses were made in the “Education and Training 2010” work programme, a lot remained to be done in terms of civil society involvement in the conception, implementation and dissemination of policies.

In a broader perspective, the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty could also be a step towards this stronger dialogue, but **this dialogue requires a structure.** EUCIS outlined on several occasions the need for the EU to adopt a **statute of European association as well as** the need to provide **sustainable funding for civil society organisations and proper consultation processes.** The platform is currently working with other important platforms within the European Economic and Social Committee Liaison Group and the Civil Society Contact Group in order to send common messages to the future EU deputies to address these issues that are crucial for EU



democracy. A specific event is planned on 14th April in Brussels and I would be happy to welcome you on this occasion. Education and training actors need also to make their voice heard on transversal issues such as civil dialogue.

The lessons we learned from the First Forum in May was the need for more continuity between the Forums and that a proper feed back be implemented on **the way our messages are taken on board or not** by the European institutions. We are thus very happy that the European Commission proposed to organise the Forums on an annual basis. We also got a **general request for more visibility** and discussed with the European Commission the opportunity to publish a specific webpage dedicated to the Forums on the DG EAC portal.

Let's the Year 2009 be also the year of innovation and creativity in the way the EU institutions manage to dialogue and input the expertise and experience of civil society organisations !

Let me conclude by saying that EUCIS encourages all the organizations represented today to work together and exchange ideas and proposals. The results of this collective work will be presented during the High Level Group of 16-17th February and then be presented during the June Summit. We will of course make sure that you receive some feedback from the European Commission on how the proposals that will be made today will be taken on board. We also suggest that a representative from the stakeholders be invited during the next the High level group in order to present the key messages from stakeholders.

In this period of evaluation and prospective for after 2010, it is essential that civil society organisations work together. Let's use this Forum to confront our ideas!



KEY MESSAGES from the workshops

Global orientation

- In the context of economic crisis, it is necessary to **propose greater ambitions for the EU educative and social agendas** than is the ones proposed in the Communication for an Updated strategic framework on EU cooperation in education and training.
- **A balanced approach to lifelong learning should be promoted (personal development as well as the civic, social and economic dimensions).**
 - Lifelong learning does not only serve economic goals and competitiveness but generally the quality of life. It should be both a tool and a goal in itself.
 - The role of education in promoting social cohesion should be recognised and reinforced.
- **More coherence is needed between different policy areas** (education, youth, social, etc.)
- **The cooperation between the different actors should be promoted** (social partners, civil society organisations, institutions).
- **Integrated lifelong learning systems should be implemented:**
 - Flexible learning pathways should be promoted (i.e. learning outcomes, learner centred systems).
 - Exchange of information between stakeholders should be developed.
 - Build stronger effective synergies and pathways between education sectors.
- **A sustainable investment in education and training is needed.**
- **Better communication and promotion of lifelong learning at all levels should be supported** (i.e. national contact points, LLL weeks).



General remarks on the benchmarks and objectives

- **The goals behind the benchmarks should be more explicit and better linked to the objectives in the future strategic framework.**
- **Benchmarks should be considered as tools for action and not for ranking.**

S1: Make learners' mobility a reality (Green Paper on Mobility)

- **Clarifying the concept of mobility** (for each public: objectives and benefits) to convince new categories of learners to take part in mobility.
- **Clarifying the objectives is a prerequisite to defining a benchmark** (qualitative or quantitative).
- **Suppressing obstacles to mobility:** supporting mobility (i.e. loans, grants), providing practical arrangements (i.e. social security, accommodation) and addressing administrative and legal barriers.
- **Coordination and cooperation between all the actors:** comprehensive information for the general public (i.e. national contact points), peer learning (i.e. between the regions), changing mentalities and focusing on a learning outcomes approach to facilitate mobility between sectors (i.e. VET, Adult education, HE...) across the borders and at national level.
- **Targeted public:** enlarge the target group in a lifelong learning perspective (not limited to young people).



S2: Improve the quality and efficiency of provision and outcomes

- **The vision needs to be more explicit.** A more balanced approach is needed between the personal development, economic, social and civic dimensions.
- **The well-being of the child and personal fulfilment through education need to be priority goals** (i.e. social and emotional indicators).
- **The voice of the learner (children, young people and adults) and of the practitioner should be heard and taken fully into account throughout the process of policy formation.**
- **Formal consultation with grass root level needs to be developed** (i.e. practitioners, inspectors, students, parents).
- **Commitment to provide excellence for all**, across the different sectors.
- **Higher quality and more accessible continuing training resources for teachers.**
- **Greater recognition and explicit support for pluralism and diversity** to support creativity and innovation.

S3: Promote equity and active citizenship

- **We should not only focus on children but on all citizens involved in education and training activities.**
- **Need to take into account the learners as well as the families and the educative community** (fellow learners, parents, schools, civil society organisations, public authorities...).
- **Some concepts need clarifying** (i.e. migrants and early childhood education and not “pre-primary”).



- **Importance of teachers' training** (initial and continuing) and empowerment to act to promote equity and active citizenship in education.
- **The importance of non formal education and the role played by civil society organisations in this field should be recognised.**
- **Developing benchmarks on non formal education** (i.e. links between formal and non formal education).

S4: Innovation and creativity (European Year 2009)

During the year, we expect:

- **Involvement of stakeholders in the preparation, implementation, follow-up and evaluation.**
- **Concrete follow-up of the activities developed during the Year.**
- **Ownership at the grass-root level.**

Governance and Partnerships:

- **Look at existing innovative and creative experiences** at local, national and European levels.
- **Partnerships:** connect schools, universities with society and employers.
- **Inform / raise awareness.**
- **Learn by sharing** (i.e. peer learning).

Learning and teaching methods:

- **Holistic person-centred approaches (children and adults empowered to take responsibility for their learning).**
- **Provide space for imagination** (i.e. risk taking).



- **Involve the learners in the learning process** (i.e. giving space to imagination, responsibility, self-confidence).
- **Combination of methods**, fostering interdisciplinary approaches.
- **Learning communities** (i.e. learners, parents, schools, associations, local authorities...) in a mutual learning process.
- **Rethink assessment**: new qualitative assessment methods.

On developing a benchmark:

Measuring innovation and creativity is very difficult. One needs:

- **Take into account the human dimension** (i.e.: learner well being and involvement).
- **A balance between quantitative and qualitative measurement.**

Actors' responsibilities and involvement

Challenges

- **Addressing the gap between national and European visions** (i.e. translating EU challenges and policies at national and local levels)
= **need to involve national key players.**
- **The successful implementation of reforms requires the involvement of the different stakeholders** in the definition, implementation and evaluation of policies (i.e. developing a sense of ownership).
- **Evaluation of previous reforms is a prerequisite before setting policy agendas.**

Proposal for action: stakeholders' involvement

- **Regular consultation and meeting place for the different stakeholders** (i.e. an annual Forum is not enough)



- **Ensuring stakeholders' ownership** of the reforms (i.e. having a proactive approach)
- **Mutual recognition** as a basis to identify problems and set common goals for actions (i.e. civil society organisations, social partners)
- **Importance to recognise and reinforce civil dialogue at local, national and European levels**

Proposal for action: stakeholders' views

- **Cooperation between different key players**, within and between institutions, civil society organisations and social partners.
- **Ensuring more coherence between the different policies** (i.e. social, economic, youth, education and training policies)
- **Looking at innovative ways of financing education and training** (i.e. peer learning).
- **A benchmark on public spending** should be set
- **Broadening the view on reforms** (i.e. setting goals and benchmarks)



MORNING WORKSHOPS

Context

Following a wide consultation with Member States and other actors during 2008, the updated strategic framework was adopted by the European Commission on 16 December 2008. This Communication suggests long-term strategic challenges to guide the policy cooperation for the period to 2020. The challenges reflect the contribution of education and training to the Lisbon Strategy and the renewed Social Agenda. The Communication also outlines the most urgent priorities which merit particular attention during the initial period ahead, for 2009 and 2010.

This, together with improved working methods, should strengthen the focus on implementation and make the new framework more flexible to address both certain long-identified weaknesses and to open policy cooperation on new challenges.

The objective of the Stakeholders' Forum is to get feed back from stakeholders mainly on the implementation of the priority themes proposed by the European Commission for the short term period for 2009 and 2010 and on the working methods.

Next steps

The Education Council is expected to adopt in February 2009 a set of key messages to the Spring European Council addressing a number of the issues mentioned in the Communication on *'An updated strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training'*.



In May 2009 the Education Council is expected to adopt an agreement on a new framework for EU cooperation in education and training. The output from the Stakeholders' Forum will feed into these negotiations.

Topics of the workshops

Workshop 1: “Strategic challenge 1: make learner mobility a reality”

Workshop 2: “Strategic challenge 2: improve the quality and efficiency of provision and outcomes”

Workshop 3: “Strategic challenge 3: promote equity and active citizenship”

Workshop 4: “Working methods: actors' responsibilities and involvement”



WORKSHOP 1

STRATEGIC CHALLENGE 1:

MAKE LEARNER MOBILITY A REALITY

Moderator

Guy HAUG, European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE)

Rapporteur

Michel FEUTRIE, European Universities Continuing Education Network (EUCEN)

A. Report

The discussions were based on the presentation made by Barbara Nolan, head of the Higher Education unit, on the future Green Paper on promoting cross boarder mobility of young people.

Five key points emerged from a lively and rich discussion. At this stage, they are more questions than answers.

1. Clarification of the concept of mobility

If we want “to sell” the idea of learning mobility to young people we must clarify what we mean by mobility.

The scope of the initiative includes students in formal education, but also the voluntary sector, young entrepreneurs and young people in the culture sector.



Are we sure that mobility means the same thing for each category? How to avoid confusion?

According to the participants, these questions are perceived as highly important if we want to be able to raise awareness, to convince and then to mobilise new categories of learners who are not necessarily prepared for mobility.

Hence, we need to clarify:

- the **objectives for each category**;
- the **benefits: what is the added value?** Are we promoting concrete added value through credits, qualifications, certificates? Or is it only a support for personal development? Or both?

2. Clarification of the benchmarks

Do we mean quality standards and/or targeted figures? Do we need European, national or regional benchmarks, or sectoral benchmarks?

The common perception is that the clearer the objectives are, the easier it will be to identify the relevant benchmarks.

3. Funding and practical arrangements

This is a crucial point. *How to build a system (or systems) which are not creating obstacles to the participation of learners in mobility, in particular from economically and socially disadvantaged groups?*

The **diversity of funding** is promoted in the Green paper but there is a risk that each organisation offering grants will try to impose its own views on mobility, its own objectives and its own criteria for choosing people, thus increasing confusion.

If there is a need to broaden funding, the question is *who is ready to pay for what?*

Three questions were raised by the participants:

- As public funding seems to be limited, will **systems of loans or support** from companies, for instance, guarantee equity and independency?
- Which type of **practical arrangements** (accommodation, social security, insurances,...) institutions or organisations receiving young people will be able to provide?
- How to **overcome administrative or legal limitations or barriers?**

Again, it is necessary to provide concrete answers to these questions if we want to establish “mobility as a rule”.

4. Co-ordination and cooperation

To convince young people to be mobile needs a strong commitment and a huge and convergent investment of the different categories of actors at institutional, regional, national, European and sectoral levels.

Coordination and cooperation are necessary:

- **To provide concrete, useful and decisive information:** there is a need for national contact points that are really efficient, where people can find all the relevant information and counsels and guidance.
- **To organise mobility.** It is clear, on this point, that the Regions currently play an important role. *But is the regional level the right level for coordination?* If yes, perhaps it would be necessary to create a space where the Regions could exchange and discuss, for instance by offering “peer learning” activities, or to develop experiments on mobility based on the cooperation between Regions geographically chosen.

- **To make possible continuity, especially between sectors.** To develop mobility in one sector is already difficult. It becomes more or less impossible between sectors. So how to increase the chances of pathways including mobility without rupture or dead-ends? EQF or NQF, ECTS and ECVET are presented as possible tools for flexibility with an approach based on learning outcomes. But what is needed is certainly a **deep change in mentalities.**

5. Enlarging the target group

Participants outlined the need to enlarge the target group.

Why is the Green Paper focusing on “young people”? Is it not contradictory with the lifelong learning perspectives?

Why concentrate on young people if the intention is to cover adult education as well as voluntary activities?



WORKSHOP 2

STRATEGIC CHALLENGE 2:

IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND EFFICIENCY OF PROVISION AND OUTCOMES

Moderator:

Stelios MAVROMOUSTAKOS, European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (EfVET)

Rapporteur:

Christopher CLOUDER, European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education (ECSWE)

A. Report

We found the more general terms in the December communications (*The Updated Strategic Framework for Cooperation in Education and Training* and *New Skills for New Jobs*) open to multiple interpretations so it was difficult to establish the vision behind them.

Some participants outlined the need to balance the prevailing utilitarian tone and was looking for more visionary elements. The emphasis on three key skills was disturbing in that there is **no mention of child well-being** or, for example, **social or emotional indicators**, such as personal fulfilment that should be the aims of any properly rounded educational system. We would look for a **more humane approach** that is less dominated by purely

economic considerations and we felt that the primary emphasis in the texts on the labour market was in fact limiting for the strategy.

We referred in our discussion to the visions in the Communications on *Improving Competences for the 21st Century* and *Opportunities, Access and Solidarity* both of which address the question: “*How can the well-being, quality of life and common values of Europe’s citizens be best advanced in today’s world?*” and emphasise the need to ensure that **every young person and adult can develop his or her full potential through improved access and opportunities. The usual assessment procedures are traditional and too narrow** for addressing the challenges of the 21st century and need to be broadened in particular in the perspective of focusing increasingly on key competencies in education. Also we would have expected some **reference to the quality of non-formal learning, adult education and early childhood provision.**

The top down approach is not likely to bring real change to grass-root practice and we doubt if many educators are at all aware of these European initiatives. This would be unfortunate as there are many worthwhile goals, such as the inclusion of innovative and creative aspects into strategic framework. We also felt the concept of ‘inclusion’ was used as only having bearing for ethnic and minority groups, rather than being seen as an all-embracing expression of diversity.

Although the open method of coordination is bringing substantial benefits it also has the **potential to bring about a standardizing mentality**, which we would deplore and therefore recommend there be more attention to the unique character of every education enterprise and institution. What do the



children and young people actually need and how far could we look to **cross-curricular competencies** as way of making education relevant and enjoyable?

The voice of the learner, children and young people and the practitioner should be heard and taken fully into account throughout the process of policy formation if the goal is truly community-wide engagement and involvement. Likewise the insights of the national bodies such as the inspectorates and the views of all stakeholders such as parental bodies would be of great benefit in ensuring well founded reforms and the formation of a consultative group, along the lines of NESSE and EENEE, which includes them, as well as practitioners and students, should be expedited.

The teaching profession needs a higher social and political status that could be supported by better personal professional and academic education as well as significant investment in access to high quality continual professional development (CPD).

It was felt that premature specialization of students would undermine diversity, which after all underlies the whole spirit of the European project. Excellence for all should be a strong motive and not become excellence for some, as every child has a quality of excellence that must be recognized and nurtured so they can realise their full and unique potential. Schools and other learning spaces and networks should be places of inspiration and values, as well as disseminators of knowledge and skills, so that children can enjoy their learning and it is this inspirational quality that we would like to see injected into the proposals.



In conclusion the following key points emerged :

- The vision behind the policy documents needs to be more explicit,
- The wellbeing of the child and personal fulfilment through education need to be priority goals,
- Greater formal consultation with grass-roots i.e. practitioners, inspectors, students and parents,
- Commitment to provide excellence for all, across every educational area.
- Higher quality and more accessible CPD resources,
- Greater recognition and explicit support for pluralism and diversity to develop the strategy of creativity and innovation.



WORKSHOP 3

STRATEGIC CHALLENGE 3: PROMOTE EQUITY AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

Moderator:

David LOPEZ, European Federation for Education and Culture (FEEC)

Rapporteur:

Chris HARISSON, European School Heads Association (ESHA)

A. Report

Context

The crisis and the economic downturn could have a negative impact on social cohesion.

Even before this situation, the diversity between persons having opportunities and those in a situation of exclusion, created growing social divisions. This concerns of course children's access to education. For numerous families, children's educational attainments depend on their postal code which of course has an impact in accessing quality education.

At the beginning of the workshop, participants outlined the need to propose a greater ambition to promote equity and active citizenship than the one in *The Updated Strategic Framework for Cooperation in Education and Training*, especially in this context of economic crisis. They proposed to use the numerous researches that look at the impact of education on social disintegration.



It was also noted that the focus should not only be on children but on all citizens, irrespective of age. To summarize, here are some clear objectives, of course limited, for a social and educative agenda targeted to the learners (children or adults) as well as to the families and to the educative community. The only reference to the learners is not enough.

Key messages

The participants did not want to reinvent the wheel. They outlined the need to develop collaborative networks to learn from each other about good/bad practices, existing resources and indicators and join forces in the field.

- **Education is central in addressing the challenge of social cohesion and promoting solidarity and non-discrimination in a diverse Europe.**
- **Education and training systems must instil values of respect, diversity and challenge prejudice. The systems themselves must be free of discrimination at all levels.**
- **Education and training systems must ensure access to quality education for all and adequately address underachievement and educational disadvantage.**
- **Three levels of actions and publics should be acknowledged, the learners (children or adults), the families and the educative community (fellow learners, parents, schools, civil society organisations, public authorities...). Existing European and international tools should be**



considered. The article 42² of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child could represent a transversal framework regarding children's education. It can act on the different parameters mentioned. Of course, it is necessary to implement it. Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities should also be considered.

- **Existing international tools should be considered.** The Updated strategic framework makes no reference to using the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** as a major vehicle to promoting “*intercultural skills, democratic values, the respect of fundamental rights and the fight against discrimination*” through education - despite the fact that the latter is a statutory obligation on all schools, local authorities, regions and governments. Similarly, the Commission could encourage Member States to sign up to the UNICEF's award scheme “**Rights Respecting School Awards**” as a positive means by which children can experience democracy in action and develop 'healthy minds' through developing their critical reasoning and power to discriminate positively in their choices. The lack of reference to these International laws and initiatives represents an urgent gap. Where we already have the tools in place, we must use them better.
- **Clarification : pre-primary education.** Participants did not like the term pre-primary education (“pre-primary, pre-employment, pre-retirement and pre-death...”) and **preferred the term “early years”**.
- **Clarification : migrants versus ethnic minorities.** It is important to clarify whom we refer to by migrants. Who is a migrant? According to

² Article 42: “States Parties undertake to make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike.”



national histories, the situations can be very different from one country to the other. Has each member state agreed on such a definition? The Commission has notably to be careful when referring to 'migrants' or to 'ethnic minorities' as they represent two different groups. An individual from an ethnic minority, from the second generation, should no longer be considered as a migrant but as a European citizen. Being classified as 'migrant' is a retrograde step for these individuals and can result in distinguishing who is a legitimate and full citizen and who is a second class citizen. This confusion can have a very negative impact on social cohesion.

Across Europe, there is a wide range of ethnic minorities and migrant groups. Some studies have shown that some ethnic minorities are generally more successful than others (i.e. the Chinese) while a same ethnic minority group can be more or less successful in different EU countries. **This complexity and diversity must be properly understood and addressed.**

- **Teachers' training and empowerment needs to be mentioned and developed in order to understand and act to promote equity and active citizenship.**
- **The recognition of non formal education and support actions and the role played by civil society organisations in this field.**
- **The benchmarks on non formal education need to be developed in order to reinforce the link between formal and non formal education.**
- **There is a huge gap of relevant actions on how the aim of *'promoting intercultural skills, democratic values, the respect of***



fundamental rights and the fight against discrimination' is to be **implemented**. The listed objectives do not cohere sufficiently with the strategic challenge and are insufficiently learner centred or outcome based. **We must also adopt an evidence based approach to assessing what the key challenges are for learners in relation to Promoting Equity & Active Citizenship and the priorities need to be defined accordingly.** There is a need for a clear definition of expected outcomes and critical success factors vis-a-vis promoting equity, active citizenship and promoting social cohesion.



WORKSHOP 4

WORKING METHODS:

ACTORS' RESPONSIBILITIES AND INVOLVEMENT

Moderator

Gina EBNER, European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA)

Rapporteur

Anita LIICE, European Students' Union (ESU)

A. Report from the workshop

General remarks

The workshop started with a common agreement, that **education should be viewed in a long-term perspective: as an asset**, which ensures a sustainable development and the economic strength of the region, which is an important tool to solve important economic and societal problems, for example, the financial crisis, and not vice versa: education should not be limited due to arising problems.

Learning and – **learning together** – both at the classroom and also at the discussion table of policy makers and the stakeholders is an essential part of any sustainable reform process.

It was acknowledged that if we are aiming at a learner centered approach; a way forward is to aim also to a **learner centered education governance**



and implementation process. In this process, all the social partners, stakeholders and education actors (learners and teachers) co-operate to achieve a common aim – **quality education for all.**

In this regard, a participant counted how frequently in the Communication *The Updated Strategic Framework for Cooperation in Education and Training* (2009) the words “learner” or “citizenship” were mentioned - and the result was surprisingly a very small number.

Challenges

The following challenges were identified for future co-operation in education and training:

- **Reducing the gap between European and national levels.** There are many different national contexts, “translating” European policies and reforms remain a difficult task. This could be facilitated by involving the national key players who understand and are aware of this context.
- **Relevant, synergetic and credible implementation of reforms.** To be successfully and fully implemented, reforms need to be understood and accepted by participants and practitioners in education and training. It is not possible if all the key actors do not feel a sense of ownership over the reforms, which cannot be achieved without their involvement in debating and developing policies.
- **Setting the basis for new reforms - evaluating the success of previous ones.** Stakeholder’s involvement and achieving a sense of ownership are having a good rationale for future political priorities, which is not possible without evaluating prior activities before setting up political agendas. Success and failures of previous reforms should be evaluated involving all relevant parties to ensure a truthful picture of realities.



Proposals for action: stakeholders' involvement

The following proposals for action to involve the stakeholders were made:

- **Once a year is not enough!** It is impossible to be involved only by meeting once a year. In this way the stakeholders take a reactive role and cannot be proactive, which is essential also for a sense of ownership over the reforms.
- **Ownership of the reforms.** Successful implementation of the reforms is not possible without it and without the society involved. Feeling ownership means to have a proactive approach and full engagement in the process. The stakeholders are the ones that are familiar with the educational field and are responsible for practical implementation of the reforms.
- **Mutual recognition.** Recognizing stakeholders and the social partners as the voice of participants in education and society and identifying problems and setting common aims for collective action. It implies also having a bottom-up approach as well as empowering the stakeholders.
- **Civil dialogue and stakeholders' involvement at the European and national levels, as well as in the national reporting process.**

Proposals for action: stakeholders' views

The following points were raised in relation to the stakeholders' involvement and the political context of educational reform:

- **Linking different key players:** different ministries, units and DG's. Educational reform process cannot stand alone as it is highly interlinked with many national and international processes. To get the best overview and the most effective results, educational development should be linked



to the economy, welfare system as well as sustainable development policy of the member states on all levels.

- **Financing lifelong learning, looking at innovative ways of financing education, including peer learning activities.** A financing benchmark on public spending on education, separate from private financing, should be set to guarantee minimal public responsibility. Peer learning activities should be supported on this topic.
- **Broader view on reforms should be reflected also in more a complex set of goals.** Any positive progress should be welcomed and facilitated by different mechanisms and by more complex set of goals and benchmarks. All policy goals should be translated into benchmarks, which also should be explained and motivated and set into the context of reforms.
- **Evaluation of policy that we have been implementing.**

Methods

Ideas for possible cooperation mechanisms:

- Civil society should be involved in all expert and working groups of DG EAC to ensure a better implementation and improved civil dialogue
- Reforms need to be contextualised according to national situation but also to target groups so that a good division of work is possible
- Success stories and peer learning.



Presentation of the Year, Maruja GUTIERREZ DIAZ

Maruja GUTIERREZ DIAZ, Adviser to the Director on the European Year of Creativity and Innovation, European Commission DG EAC presented the European Year of Innovation and Creativity.



Why a European Year ?

- To increase public awareness and interest
- To facilitate and stimulate policy debate
- To identify and disseminate good practices at all levels, European, national, regional and local
- To build a better basis for evidence-based policy-making



Why this European Year ?

- A celebration of Europe's creative and innovative past, present and future
- A call for a better understanding of innovation and how it can best be promoted for Europe's social and economic development
- An economic and social necessity for addressing crucial challenges such as resource scarcity, demographic developments or climate change

Main events of the Year

- Opening event, Prague January 7th
- Five major conferences on education, culture, regional dimension, research, and business
- A series of debates organized by different stakeholders and think-tanks
- A series of regional conferences and events on the promotion of innovation
- Closing event, Stockholm, December

All these should feed into a final Manifesto

Creativity and Innovation definitions

- **Creativity**

Imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are both original and of value. NACCCE* (UK), 1999

National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education

- **Innovation**

A new or significantly improved product (good or service), or process, a new marketing method, or a new organizational method, business practice, workplace organization or external relations” Oslo Manual, OECD 2006

Key drivers of the Year

- **Creativity and innovation**

In a wide sense, cultural, scientific, artistic and utilitarian aspects

- **Lifelong learning and personal development**

- lifelong and lifewide

- Key competences

- **Social and economic development**

- public and private sectors, growth and competitiveness, cultural dynamics, social inclusion (no talent should be lost)

In a nutshell

Promoting creativity and fostering the innovative capacity of individuals and organisations to meet their personal, economic and social objectives

Policy background

- Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning - 18 December 2006 (EP & Council)
- Council Resolution on lifelong learning - 27 June 2002
- Council Conclusions on a broad-based Innovation

- Strategy – 4 December 2006
- Council Resolution on a European agenda for culture – 16 November 2007
- Council Conclusions on Creativity and innovation through education and training - 22 May 2008

Key Competences for Lifelong Learning

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

1. Communication in the mother tongue;
2. Communication in foreign languages;
3. Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology;
4. Digital competence;
5. Learning to learn;
6. Social and civic competences;
7. Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship; and
8. Cultural awareness and expression.

A modest proposal

- Decision of European Parliament and Council, on a proposal of the Commission
- Use of existing programmes and budgets; both from DG EAC and of other DGs; no new calls for proposals
- A widely shared implementation strategy



Shared implementation strategy

- Interservice working group at the Commission
- National coordinators
- Strong cooperation with regions
- Involvement of public and private partners and stakeholders
- Distributed planning and execution: wide policy of branding

The key contribution of stakeholders

- Ensuring that the EYCI addresses the right problems and opportunities
- Ensuring that the EYCI messages get through to all possible interested users
- Ensuring that the EYCI objectives become endorsed in education and training policy

Beyond 2009

- The new Strategic Framework for policy cooperation in education and training
- Creativity and innovation as a fourth pillar
- Need to develop new monitoring and peer learning tools and methods
- The Lisbon Strategy and Recovery Plan
- Creativity and innovation as core social and economic drivers: the key role of education



Types of activity

- conferences, events and other communication initiatives
- information and promotion campaigns
- identification and promotion of good practices
- dissemination of existing studies and research
- identification of research and monitoring needs on a Community or national scale
- fostering a wide reflection, debate and exchange of experience on how can education help to promote creativity and innovation

Policy domains

- Lifelong learning
- Culture
- Innovation
- Enterprise
- Research
- Energy
- Regional policy
- Employment
- Social policies
- Environment
- Agriculture
-



Possible thematic strands

- Cultural and creative industries – where the aesthetic and the economic coincide (e.g. design)
- Regional and urban development strategies based on creativity and innovation
- Cultural diversity as a source of creativity and innovation
- Innovation for sustainable development
- ICTs as media for creative self-expression
- Mathematics, science and technology studies to promote an innovative mindset
- Improving understanding of the innovation process and entrepreneurship
- Innovation in public and private services



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AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS

Context

The overall objective of the European Year of Creativity and Innovation is to support the efforts of the Member States to promote creativity, through lifelong learning, as a driver for innovation and as a key factor for the development of personal, occupational, entrepreneurial and social competences and the well-being of all individuals in society.

The participants were invited to gather into small groups. Each group answered 5 different questions separately. The outcomes were then assembled and summarised into key points.

The five questions were:

1. What do we understand by creativity and innovation in lifelong learning? How do qualification systems / assessment systems / ... encourage creativity and innovation?
2. What do we, as LLL stakeholders, expect from this year? What is our role? What can we contribute? With whom can we cooperate?
3. What are your key messages as stakeholders to Member States and to EU institutions?
4. How to improve innovation and creativity into teaching and learning methods? Could you give us examples of good practices (examples of partnerships)? How to share them?
5. What do you think about the EC idea to develop indicators and a benchmark to address how education systems promote innovation and creativity, including entrepreneurship? Do you have suggestions?



WORKSHOP

INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY

General rapporteur

Tommaso GRIMALDI, European Association for Vocational Training (EVTA)

1. What do we understand by creativity and innovation in lifelong learning? How do qualification systems / assessment systems / ... encourage creativity and innovation?

	Creativity	Innovation
Approach	• Individual	• Collective
Working	• Collectively	• Individually
Process	• Discontinued, instantaneous	• Continued, long term
Impact	• Non measurable, uncertain	• Mesurable, certain
Changes	• Of the perception	• Of reality
• Keywords	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imagination • Support • Implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contextualization • Transferability • Implementation



- **Holistic person-centred approach** (i.e. people being able to take responsibility for their learning).
- **New qualitative, informative assessment approach for formal and non-formal learning** (i.e. peer review, external assessment, etc.)
- **Strong learning communities.**

2. What do we, as LLL stakeholders, expect from this year? What is our role? What can we contribute? With whom can we cooperate?

- **Real involvement of all stakeholders in the preparation of the years:**
 - Early stage consultation (before the decision on the topic of the year) in the future.
 - Transparency of the consultation and of the allocation and spending of the budget (when a budget is allocated).
- **Concrete follow-up with stakeholders, partnerships:**
 - One member state assuming the follow-up activities
 - Creating and sharing tools between stakeholders
 - Database of good practices
- **Ownership at the grassroots level:**
Government, local government and institutions

3. What are your key messages as stakeholders to Member States and to EU institutions?

- Look beyond schools and formal learning: rethink assessment
- Look around regional, national and cross border (use what has been done)



- Provide space for imagination (risk taking)
- Connect schools, universities with society and employers
- Ensure that messages get to European citizens (use the media)

4. How to improve innovation and creativity into teaching and learning methods?

- **Basic Considerations**

- Innovation for its own sake is not beneficial.
- It must be integrated into rules, objectives and cultures.
- Innovation only makes sense if in line with organisational effectiveness.

- **Challenges**

- Cultural mistrust and linguistic barriers.
- Territory rooted vision.

- **Focus on end users' and beneficiaries' needs**

- **Learning by sharing**

- **Involve the learner in the learning process**

- Giving space to imagination
- responsibility
- Self-confidence
- Creativity and innovation

- **Combination of methods** (i.e. interdisciplinary)

- **Teachers and trainers as facilitators**

- Partnerships



- Allow risks

5. What do you think about the EC idea to develop indicators and a benchmark to address how education systems promote innovation and creativity, including entrepreneurship? Do you have suggestions?

The design of an *innovation measurement system* for the field of education and training can be useful.

Three conditions seem important:

- **A permanent consultation space** where the community of LLL professionals can participate.
- **A creative and innovative specific measurement system** for the field of LLL keeping in mind the human aspect (i.e. to measure learner well being and involvement).
- **Balance between quantitative and qualitative measurement.**

This would give us a chance:

- To quantify the effects of creativity and innovation.
- To stimulate debate between members of the business, research and policy-making communities as well as to provide a starting point for policy improvement and mutual learning.



CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions by Gordon CLARK, Head of unit, DG EAC

Gordon Clark outlined some key messages that came out from the conclusions of the workshops.

- On mobility: the idea to have national information points that would be more user friendly.
- On quality and efficiency: the need to address the well-being of children and to have a clearer vision avoiding a purely utilitarian standpoint. Gordon Clark was very sensitive to the fears of standardization which is not the intention of the Commission or of EU cooperation in education and training. There is a need for a bottom up approach in order to take into account local specificities.
- Equity and Citizenship: the strategic framework should reinforce this dimension in reference to the economic crisis. Some participants mentioned the need to refer to “early childhood education” and not to “pre-primary”, this is also an issue debated within the European Commission and with Member States. The problem is that the second can be measured, not the first.
- Working methods: there is a need for ownership by stakeholders of the cooperation process and to fully engage them at all levels. There is also a request for a stronger follow-up between the Stakeholders' Forums and for a consultation process within Member States. The guidelines sent to the Member States on reporting address this issue. National stakeholder organizations should get actively involved in the national policy dialogue (including awareness-raising and implementation of LLL strategies) as multipliers.
- Importance of the partnership between the different actors, including between national ministries. The Annual Forum could develop into a strong



platform for stakeholders. It could have more influence at an earlier stages of agenda setting.

Conclusions by Leona STREIGROVA, Ministry of Education, Czech Republic

The strategic framework for Education and Training represents one of the three main priorities of the EU Czech presidency. There are four main issues to take into account in the definition of the future EU cooperation in education and training:

- The strategy should be broad and open enough in order to adapt to changing challenges. Today, it has to respond to the economic and financial crisis.
- Learners should be at the center of the strategy, Education & Training should represent a mean for their personal and professional fulfillment.
- Stakeholders should be involved at all stages, especially with regard to achieving the objectives set and to ensure a greater ownership for them.
- The focus should be on learning outcomes, their relevance and recognition. With respect to the second priority of the Czech Presidency – the cooperation with employers is crucial in this sense.

During the upcoming months the Czech Presidency will focus on discussions on the new strategic framework within the Education committee – in light of its adoption at May Council. Feed-back from stakeholders is very important in this process.

As it is also stated in the Communication of the European Commission on the Updated strategic Framework, the issue of partnership between education and training providers and business, research and other stakeholders is a priority and should be further developed during the

upcoming year as it is a prerequisite for achieving the objectives defined in the Lisbon strategy. The Year 2009 of creativity and innovation is very important also in the context of current economic crisis, which was emphasized also during the kick off conference in Prague.



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