Fourth Stakeholders' Forum on EU Cooperation in Education and Training
"Priority areas for the 2012-14 work cycle of the Strategic Framework ET 2020"
26th-27th September 2011, Brussels

FOURTH STAKEHOLDERS' FORUM
"ET2020" 2ND CYCLE

The 2011 Stakeholders' Forum was organised by the DG EAC and the EUCIS-LLL Platform (European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning) with the aim of consulting European stakeholders on the priority areas of the second cycle of the ET2020 which covers the period 2012-2014[1]. Key messages from this Stakeholders' Forum will be used by the European Commission in drafting its proposal for the 2012 Joint Progress Report on the implementation of ET2020, which will be adopted by the Council and the Commission in February 2012.

More than 80 participants were invited to exchange ideas on the priorities and objectives of the upcoming cycle as well as to address possible ways to improve the current implementation of the ET2020 and stakeholders' participation and involvement. This event was also an opportunity to discuss the contribution of the ET2020 to the accomplishment and implementation of the strategic challenges identified in "Europe 2020" and more particularly their flagship initiative "Youth on the Move" and "An Agenda for new skills and jobs".

During the first day of the Forum, participants took stock of the progress made under the 1st cycle of the ET2020, identifying its main achievements, persisting challenges and making concrete proposals on each of these priority areas:

- Making lifelong learning and learner mobility a reality

- Quality and Efficiency of provision and outcomes

- Improving equity and active citizenship

- Enhancing innovation and creativity, including entrepreneurship

In general, stakeholders did not express the need to change the strategic objectives nor their respective priorities. However they expressed some clear concerns about the way the Education and Training work programme has been implemented up to now and how the economic situation can lead to changes that can be contra-productive for successful strategies.

During the second day, participants took part in a World Café discussion on how to improve the impact of the ET2020 and its governance and stakeholders' participation, analysing more specifically what do we want to achieve in 2020. There was a general plea for greater stakeholders' involvement and transparency in policy dialogue. Other statements were about emphasising lifelong learning (LLL) policy, strategy and equity and complementing current benchmarks with qualitative indicators in order to propose short-term and long-term solutions.

This document proposes a synthesis of the discussions that took place and presents the main conclusions. Participants do hope that decision-makers will seriously take on board their views.

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[1] European cooperation in education and training for the period up to 2020 is established in the context of a strategic framework spanning education and training systems as a whole in a lifelong learning perspective (ET2020). The period up to 2020 is divided into three year cycles of short-term priorities for the implementation of ET2020

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OPENING SESSION

Gina Ebner, President of EUCIS-LLL

Pierre Mairesse, Director of Directorate A, DG EAC (see PowerPoint Presentation)

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I. KEY MESSAGES

Stakeholders are aware that the **current economic and social crisis** can have a **serious impact** on the next cycle, but they ask for **wise and effective reactions** from the decision-makers involved. In general the stakeholders do not express the need to change the strategic objectives nor their respective priorities. Three years is a far too short to reach the targets and to measure all effects in a quantitative and qualitative way. However they express some clear concerns about the way the Education and Training work programme has been implemented up to now and how the economic situation can lead to changes that can be contra-productive for successful strategies.

CONCERNS ABOUT THE CURRENT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE **ET2020**

There was a general concern about:

- The **lack of effective communication** between key players but also competitors on the European level: the stakeholders, the experts and the official representatives of the EU countries/Ministries of Education/Higher education (and Culture).

- The **lack of stakeholders' involvement** and contribution at the local, regional and national level and the need to enhance the opportunities for **stakeholders to meet the representatives** of the educational systems and the decision-makers in the countries in order to increase the required **system impact**.

- The **strong focus on employability as a priority** for the next cycle. There is a wish to understand the objectives for lifelong learning as much broader. In the current context it is crucial to develop employability but also social inclusion ($\uparrow$inequalities) and civic participation ($\uparrow$ of xenophobic behaviours, euroscepticism, etc.).

- The **decrease of interest and emphasis on the substance of the lifelong learning (LLL) policy and strategy** in a growing number of countries: we need to create a new momentum on lifelong learning (2012 is the LLL communication 10th anniversary).

- Benchmarks are articulated in numbers: we need to complement them with **qualitative indicators** to compare and assess the situation at European and national level in order to propose short-term and long-term solutions.

- To enhance **cross-sectoral partnerships and cooperation** (at least through regular dialogue) and a better articulation between research-practice-policy.

HOW TO IMPROVE PARTICIPATION AND GOVERNANCE?

Priority 1 - Stronger involvement of stakeholders to bring EU policies closer to citizens and vice-versa by:

1. At EU level: set up a structured dialogue for stakeholders' participation including social partners and civil society representatives: going beyond an annual Forum by including their representatives in the various experts/working groups within the open method of coordination 'ET2020';
2. At national level: compulsory consultation of stakeholders (i.e. in the preparation and follow-up of national reform programmes for each European Semester);

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3. Setting up national platforms of stakeholders (i.e. EUCIS-LLL platform but at national level) and national Forums of consultations (i.e. DG EAC Stakeholders' Forum).

Priority 2 - Greater transparency and dialogue:

1. Ensure transparency about the composition of expert groups, working groups, high level group, etc. and the relations between them;
2. Better coordination between policies/programmes/DGs to ensure greater efficiency and coherence;
3. Map relevant stakeholders' at all levels and from all sectors to ensure broader involvement and ownership;
4. Structured dialogue on the implementation of EU programmes (selection, reportage, evaluation of projects) involving the Executive Agencies and project coordinators in order to insure more effective implementation of EU funding programmes.

Priority 3 - Dissemination and transfer of information:

1. Ensuring a broader access to information in a centralised and user-friendly way;
2. Shifting the role of national agencies / info points: to have a multi-way information flow;
3. Nominate champions and set up concrete tools to translate the message.

Priority 4 – Improving the impact and measurement of progress

Participants recognise the importance of benchmarks to ensure a greater commitment of Member States and visibility of EU objectives and policies, however they invite the EU to complement 'traditional indicators' with more qualitative benchmarks (long-term and short-term / macro and micro indicators). The results can be a good starting point for national debates on lifelong learning, involving national stakeholders. By:

1. Involving stakeholders in defining indicators and in their interactive follow-up;
2. Harmonising existing indicators (social, education…) and increasing the information flow;
3. Capacity-building: how to use the indicators and what are the available indicators;
4. Use indicators to evaluate projects and identify best practice examples.

PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT CYCLE

There is a **general request for the concrete implementation** of tools and instruments, for the **involvement of stakeholders** (in a bottom-up approach) at all levels and the creation of national stakeholders' platforms to encourage **best practice sharing and peer learning**. In each working group, participants mentioned the **validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning** as a top priority. It is a recognised element of the national lifelong learning systems and their underlying structure to be used as a regular instrument for people who are creating an effective 'learning pathway'. These systems should be based on a learning outcomes approach and learner-centred systems that recognise **different ways of learning** be it formal, non-formal and informal and an effective and efficient combinations of them.

Strategic objective 1: Make lifelong learning and learner mobility a reality

Lifelong learning strategies need to be reviewed in order to provide easier and updated guidelines to Member states. More focus should be given on the **key competences framework** implementation with also special attention to transversal competences such as responsibility, creativity,

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communication, decision-making, openness, leadership, but also motivation and dedication. In all surveys for the needs in businesses, organisations and society these more general competences are mentioned as the basis for more long-term acceptance for jobs, voluntary work, community involvement et cetera.

EQF/NQF remains little understood, known and used in the countries: the EU/Member States need to translate the challenges especially for linking non-formal and informal education (diplomas, certificates, portfolio's and other proofs) by **simplifying the communication** around the process and trying to **create ownership** by involving stakeholders in the reflection and implementation at all levels.

Concerning **learning mobility** ('moving from 4% to 100%?') we need a better access to information; data on different types of mobility; develop mutual recognition and validation of learning outcomes; recognise the individual and collective dimension of mobility; develop peer-learning activities; introduce compulsory mobility where sensible (mobility windows) and develop consistent policy on the national level to stimulate mobility in all sectors and for all users. Indeed we should consider mobility in higher education but also in VET (including HVET, linked to SCHE), schools and non-formal education. It should be for learners but also for educators/teachers/trainers which means tackling financial and administrative but also cultural barriers (i.e. teacher leave).

Strategic objective 2: Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training

- **Learning of languages** is important for mobility and social cohesion. Non-EU languages should be better recognized (i.e. migrant languages);

- The **professional development of trainers/teachers/educators and other staff members** is key for quality of education. However, there is an enormous challenge for professionals to get leave (i.e. to participate in EU seminars/projects). We need concrete and flexible measures to empower and professionalize these professions, as part of their contracts;

- It is crucial to **include learners perspectives** and to promote **participatory governance at** organisational and institutional level and in all sectors;

- **Basic skills** in reading, mathematics and science are seen by employers as very important (demand and offer mismatch) but we also have to **go beyond** the 'basics' emphasizing **transversal competences**. Today there is a strong focus on skills while competences also include values, attitudes and knowledge;

- We need to **stimulate learners of all ages to be pro-active**, adaptable, reflective and critical ('lifelong learners');

- We need to create better **learning environments** by looking more carefully at well-being and health in education and training.

Strategic objective 3: Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship

- Give more consideration to **active citizenship as a qualitative indicator** when measuring progress, etc.;

- Recognise that education and training and more particularly **non-formal education plays an important role** in developing equity, social cohesion and active citizenship;

- Better **coordination of policies** (i.e. employment, job creation, health) to include socially disadvantaged groups (i.e. migrants) with a **consolidated way of using funding mechanisms and programmes**;

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- Attention should be paid to **transitions between learning, work and life responsibilities**;

- **Improve literacy in a life-long perspective** as well as **'soft' and vocational skills** to develop employability but also social inclusion and civic participation;

- Pay more attention to **financial barriers in the access to and success in higher education** to reach the target of having higher educated people, having in mind the personal need and the developments on the labour market, now and in the future.

Strategic objective 4: Enhancing innovation and creativity, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training

- **Broaden the definition of employability** to personal development in a combination of work, study, social and civic involvement, personal affairs and formal and non-formal economic activities;

- Emphasize the need to have citizens with creative competences by better using opportunities offered by **non-formal and informal learning**;

- **A bottom up approach and the involvement of stakeholders** is needed in order to support innovation and creativity: institutions/governments have to give the opportunity to learners/educators to think in another way (i.e. innovative pedagogy, partnerships, participatory governance);

- Encourage **innovative partnerships** by developing cross-sectoral and cross-border cooperation and peer learning – using good practices and recognised networks and platforms for the organisation;

- Adapt funding mechanisms to allow innovation: i.e. specific EU Programme line that would create innovative approaches through partnerships.

The extensive report of each of the workshops is available p.11.

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE IN 2020?
Better Education for Better Europe: «A BEBE in 2020 or in 2030?»

- Full implementation of EU tools and policies – proven to be effective, in the eyes of the stakeholders;

- Better coherence at a European level to support the national lifelong learning holistic approach/paradigm shift;

- EU to be forward thinking/looking: proposing new subjects, perspectives, etc.

- Full and effective participation of stakeholders at all levels in the preparation, implementation and follow-up of policies, using the experts in the underlying networks and platforms.

Shift to a holistic approach to learning:

- Support the implementation of lifelong learning comprehensive and coherent strategies in all Member States;

- Recognise different ways of learning: formal, non-formal and informal and promote the use of effective combinations of those learning pathways;

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- Recognition and validation systems/solutions implemented in all countries as part of agreements with employers, employees and those who are involved in a personal career planning, in the short- and long-term.

Change of paradigm in education and training:

- Learner-centred systems: change in frameworks, assessments, learning culture, etc.

- Lifelong learners: personal and social skills for life, transversal skills (learning to learn…)

Equity/Access and Quality in education and training as a top priority:

- Equal access for all citizens i.e. to learning mobility;

- Possibility to move between/inside the formal and the non-formal systems: to enable greater continuity and progression to all;

- Capacity-building and peer-learning as a key element to reform systems in a inclusive and sustainable way;

- Enhance the quality of provision as a priority in all sectors, with the possibility to cooperate to develop good practices and guidelines.

WORLD CAFÉ SESSION
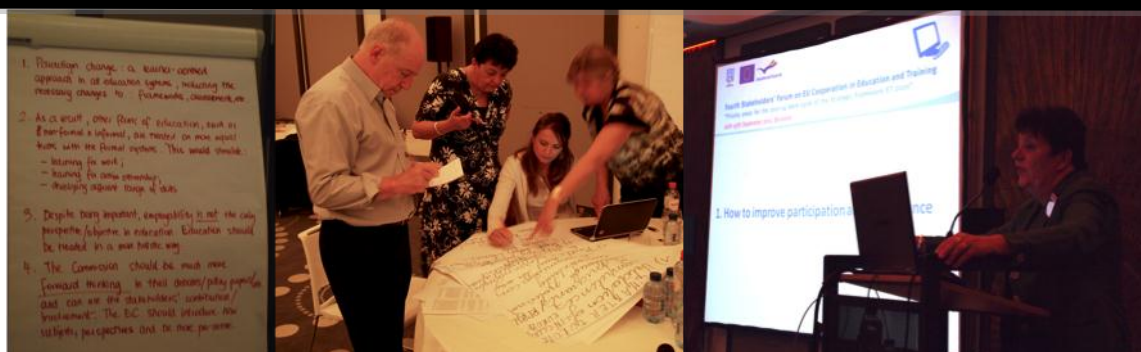
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II. PANEL DISCUSSION

FEEDBACK ON THE KEY MESSAGES AND NEXT STEPS BY MICHAEL TEUTSCH, HEAD OF UNIT A.1., DG EAC

Michael Teutsch started his intervention reminding participants of the current socio-economic context, where Europe is facing a tough crisis. Budgets in Member States (MS) are under pressure and governments are very strict when justifying their budget allocations. Therefore, we need to prioritise and be very concrete on showing how education and training can contribute to exit the crisis and further promote economic growth and employment, finding an appropriate balance between **personal development** and the current focus on **employability**.

Mr Teutsch outlined participants' focus on **equity** and **quality** and assured that there will be a stronger focus in these areas in the future lifelong learning programme (LLP). He also stressed the need to improve the cooperation and coordination of the LLP with the **European Social Fund**, in order to further promote their evidence-based results on education and training at the national level.

Concerning **stakeholders' involvement**, Mr Teutsch encouraged participants to make use of the current tools available, as the annual call for proposals to raise awareness on ET2020 to organise stakeholders' conferences at the national level, and to carry on working on dissemination of information at the national level. In this sense, he also noted the demand to increase the political mission of the **National agencies**, rather than just limiting their role to administrative project management.

Mr Teutsch recognised that improvements had to be made on **transparency** in policy dialogue and on coordination between several 'partner' DGs and ministries. He also noted stakeholders' proposal to take into account experts from underlying civil society networks and platforms to participate in working or expert groups.

Indicators and benchmarks are very important. They serve to monitor policy progress in MS, measuring achievements and identifying persisting challenges and are good communications tools. They are only a starting point in the policy debate, as they are powerful communication tools to put forward simple messages. **Quality and soft indicators** called for by the participants can be used in a broader discussion.

In order to reach all the strategic challenges indentified in the **ET2020**, the European Commission (EC), together with MS, has developed in the last years several successful **tools** that are or are in the process of being implemented (i.e. EQF, ECTS, key competences framework). However, linking and coordinating these initiatives and implementing **LLL strategies** remains a challenge in most of the MS. Work on concrete tools such as the EQF attracts a lot of attention and is a success.

Validation of non-formal and informal learning is nowadays a high topic in the EU political agenda. A Commission proposal for a Council recommendation is planned for the end of this year and further work will be pursued. Regarding **transversal skills** (i.e. key competences), for 2012 the EC is already working on digital learning and entrepreneurship, as pointed out in the last joint report in 2010.

Finally, Mr Teutsch thanked all participants for their input during the Forum, reminding them of the need to prioritise and encouraging them to work together with the European Commission when passing the messages to the national level, where decisions are taken.

The audience reacted to Mr Teutsch comments stressing the importance to shift to **learner-centred systems;** encouraging the EC to use the bridge of **European CSO** when transferring key issues to the

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national level; stating that current benchmarks and indicators should not narrow a **long-term vision**; and highlighting the increasing relevance of key **soft or transversal skills** and of the crucial role of **motivation.**

CLOSING REMARKS BY DOROTA LEWANDOWSKA, CHAIR OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE, POLISH PRESIDENCY

Dorota Lewandowska began her presentation outlining the importance of having stakeholders' view and proposals on board, as they highly enrich the EU policymaking process on implementing ET2020 strategic framework.

The Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union has two main priorities on E&T: education for **mobility** and the **modernisation of higher education**. The Polish Presidency's intention is to underline the role of developing of key competences, in particular language competences for enhancing the mobility. The goal is to move learning mobility further so that it becomes a common way of doing as well as to open mobility programmes to neighbourhood countries, especially to Eastern partners. The next EYCS Council meeting, which will take place in November, should adopt conclusions on:

- Language competences fostering mobility;

- Benchmark on learning mobility;

- EU Agenda on Adult Learning;

- Modernisation of Higher Education.

Conclusions on "**language competences fostering mobility**" aim at building a common home in Europe by learning more languages, in particular languages of neighbouring countries and less-widely used languages, with strong focus on the quality of language skills and language teaching in general as well as vocational education and training. In that sense, MS should pursue work on better reliable data compilation, notably by suppressing administrative barriers, and on monitoring the process to ensure quality. Special attention will be given to disadvantaged groups and to job-related language training.

The **benchmark on learning mobility** will focus on three main areas: higher education (HE), vocational education and training (VET) and youth, including formal and non-formal learning, taking into account all forms and aspects of organised learning mobility. Especially difficult is to set up a learning mobility benchmark on VET and youth, due to the specificities of these sectors and availability of reliable data. The aim is not only to promote   learning mobility in all mentioned areas, its quality, but also to develop and support institutions and peer-learning processes.

The council conclusions on a **European agenda on adult learning**, which will comprise the period 2012-2014, will divide its priorities according to ET2020 areas. It will pay special attention to weakest groups (i.e. implementing supporting measures for lower skills, fighting illiteracy, improving adult guidance, validation of non-formal and informal learning outcomes). The document contains also a broader vision of European activities in this area till 2020 where it is stressed that adult learning should also focus on bringing input to the competitive economy (i.e. new skills, creativity, entrepreneurship), shifting to a learner-centred approach that allows adults to take responsibility for their learning pathway/career. However, reliable data collection remains a challenge in the adult education sector.

Lastly, Mrs Lewandowska thanked all participants and encouraged further stakeholder's involvement and dialogue in the implementation of the ET2020.

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CLOSING REMARKS BY GINA EBNER, EUCIS-LLL PRESIDENT

Gina Ebner, EUCIS-LLL President, also thanked the audience for their active participation and commitment and looked forward to see how the concrete messages and proposals that came out from the Forum are taken on board in the 2012 Joint Progress Report on the implementation of ET2020. The key messages from the Forum will be shortly prepared and sent to EU institutions as well as to all the participants.

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ANNEX 1. WORKSHOP REPORTS

WORKSHOP 1: MAKE LIFELONG LEARNING AND LEARNER MOBILITY A REALITY

Chair: Stelios Mavromoustakos (EfVET)

Rapporteur: Karina Ufert (ESU)

Priority areas during the 1st cycle (2009-2011)

Pursue work on:

— *Lifelong learning strategies*: Complete the process of implementation of national lifelong learning strategies, paying particular attention to the validation of non-formal and informal learning and guidance.

— *European Qualifications Framework*: Ensure the development of national qualifications systems to the EQF by 2010, and support the use of an approach based on learning outcomes for standards and qualifications, assessment and validation procedures, credit transfer, curricula and quality assurance.

Develop cooperation on:

— *Expanding learning mobility*: Work together to gradually eliminate barriers and to expand opportunities for learning mobility within Europe and worldwide, both for higher and other levels of education, including new objectives and financing instruments, and whilst taking into consideration the particular needs of disadvantaged persons.

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1. Taking stock on lifelong learning (recommendations based on previous cycle):

⇒ **Lifelong learning strategies need to be reviewed** in order to provide easier and updated guidelines to Member states;

⇒ Shifting from teacher-centred to **learner-centred systems has to be endorsed and advanced via curricula reforms**;

⇒ Proper emphasis should be given to **social recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning**;

⇒ More focus should be given on the implementation of **key competences framework, underscoring transversal competences** such as responsibility, creativity, communication, decision-making, openness, leadership, next to enhancing motivation and dedication. The competences listed above are they key once, mentioned by the employers and society in more general as a basis for more long-term acceptance for jobs, internships, voluntary work, etc;

⇒ Implementation of **peer-learning activities** and **promotion of good practices exchanges should be fostered** as serves as a capacity building measure;

⇒ Setting **national expert groups** (like Bologna experts groups) can help to reach the grassroots level (users) in order to explain the complexity of LLL framework;

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⇒ Fostering **interregional partnerships** by setting platforms and encouraging communication between different actors and sectors (VET, school education) as it allows to have a system impact with all key actors involved;

⇒ **Matching-up EU funds with other sources** (structural funds, private contributions, national contributions) should be encouraged. The implementation of LLL strategies has also to be reflected in national priorities when programming structural funds;

⇒ Engaging in **consultations with all the stakeholders** on the national level remains the key to ensure successful implementation of LLL strategies.

2. Taking stock on the EQF (recommendations based on the previous cycle):

⇒ **EQF/NQF remains little understood, known and used** in the countries: the EU/Member States need to address the outstanding challenges especially for linking non-formal and informal education (diplomas, certificates, portfolio's and other proofs) by **simplifying the communication** around the process and trying to **create ownership** by involving stakeholders in the reflection and implementation at all levels.

3. Taking stock on learning mobility – moving from 4% to 100%?

⇒ Better **access to information and data** on different types of mobility is needed;

⇒ **Mutual recognition and validation of learning outcomes has to be pursued** further by using the existing tools, such as learning agreements and other;

⇒ **Individual and societal benefits of mobility have to be further explored and recognized**;

⇒ **Compulsory mobility** has to be introduced where sensible (i.e. in a form of mobility windows).

⇒ Consistent policy on the national level to stimulate **mobility in all sectors and for all users has to be developed**. It should consider mobility in higher education, but also in VET (including HVET, linked to SCHE), schools and non-formal education. It covers both learners and educators/teachers/trainers and **tackles financial, administrative** but also **cultural barriers** (i.e. teacher leave).

Final remark: Keep it SIMPLE and INCLUSIVE!

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WORKSHOP 2: QUALITY AND EFFICIENCY OF PROVISION AND OUTCOMES

Chair: Peter Wärner (ABF/SOLIDAR)

Rapporteur: Steven Stegers (EUROCLIO)

Priority areas during the 1ˢᵗ cycle (2009-2011)

Pursue work on:

— *Language learning*: To enable citizens to communicate in two languages in addition to their mother tongue, promote language teaching, where relevant, in VET and for adult learners, and provide migrants with opportunities to learn the language of the host country.

— *Professional development of teachers and trainers*: Focus on the quality of initial education and early career support for new teachers and on raising the quality of continuing professional development opportunities for teachers, trainers and other educational staff (e.g. those involved in leadership or guidance activities).

— *Governance and funding*: Promote the modernisation agenda for higher education (including curricula) and the quality assurance framework for VET, and develop the quality of provision, including staffing, in the adult learning sector. Promote evidence-based policy and practice, placing particular emphasis on establishing the case for sustainability of public and, where appropriate, private investment.

Develop cooperation on:

— *Basic skills in reading, mathematics and science*: Investigate and disseminate existing good practice and research findings on reading performance among school pupils and draw conclusions on ways of improving literacy levels across the EU. Intensify existing cooperation to improve the take-up of maths and science at higher levels of education and training, and to strengthen science teaching. Concrete action is needed to improve the level of basic skills, including those of adults.

— *'New Skills for New Jobs'*: Ensure that the assessment of future skill requirements and the matching of labour market needs are adequately taken on board in education and training planning processes.

PRIORITY AREAS

The participants discussed what had been achieved already and what still needs to be done in relation to the priority areas for Quality and Efficiency of Education and Training of the 1ˢᵗ cycle of ET2020.

1. Language Learning

The learning of languages was recognized as important, especially for mobility and social cohesion. Non-EU languages should be recognized considering the amount of European citizens with mother tongues in non-EU languages and the fact that some learning (such as learning abstract concepts) goes better in ones native language.

2. Professional development of teachers and trainers

The professional development of trainers is key for quality of education. However, it remains very difficult for educators to get leave in order to participate in training. It was mentioned that it should

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be easier for professionals with potential to become a good teacher to get the qualifications needed. All efforts should be made to ensure that the best people become teachers.

3. Governance and funding

For governance and funding it was considered important to include learner's perspectives and to promote participatory governance in order to improve the quality and efficiency of education. The participation of students in deciding what they learn can empower, engage and inspire them.

4. Basic skills in reading, math and science

It was stressed by the employers that there is a mismatch between demand and offer on the labour market for skills in Science, Technology and Math. This is not only the case for higher education, but also for secondary education. Other participants stressed that it is important to go beyond the 'basics' and stressed the potential of other subject areas, such as humanities, to increase the level of achievement of transversal competences for students.

5. New Skills for New Jobs

For 'New Skills for New Jobs' the importance to stress transversal competences was emphasized. It was felt that due to the financial crisis the emphasis has been put too much on employability as outcome of learning. The use of life-skills was proposed as broader concept that does lead to employability, but also enrich life experiences, including coping mechanisms and citizens that are active and able to adapt to a rapidly changing social, political and economic environment. It was also stressed that whereas it is clear in the policy documents that competences include values, attitudes and knowledge, this is often left out in the broader discussion, which leads to a very narrow definition of competences. In terms of new jobs, the added value of non-formal learning (including traineeships and volunteering) lacks recognition, which is especially problematic in a time when an increasing amount of students with a lot of learning potential, will not get a tertiary degree because they simply cannot afford to.

KEY QUESTIONS

1. What is the impact of EU level cooperation (ET2020 and Europe 2020) on the national/regional/local education and training systems? What are the main challenges?

Challenges that were mentioned for the implementation of ET2020 and Europe 2020 are the fact that:

⇒ Few countries are equipped to educate the level of students that they should have/want to have (benchmark 40% participation in tertiary education).

⇒ Educators have limited opportunities for the necessary training to constantly update their professional skills, resulting in a lower quality of education and training overall.

⇒ National/regional/local policy makers do not always implement the policies that they agreed on in European or international level.

In addition, the participants noted that:

⇒ The focus on numbers that are approximate is considered problematic, as they often do not give the whole picture. Qualitative measures are left out of the policies. This could lead to the fact that an increased participation of people in higher education could be considered a success, even in the case that the quality of higher education has dropped.

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2. Do you feel the focus of Europe 2020 (reduction of early school leaving, raising tertiary attainment, new skills for new jobs, etc.) is appropriately reflected in the education and policy debate at national/regional level?

⇒ Early school leavers were seen as extremely important because they have difficulties to 'catch up' with learning later on in their lives. Improving the quality of education and promoting engaging and learner-centred teaching practices were seen as the solution.

⇒ Language learning and skills mismatch were being recognized as important.

⇒ The focus on employability was seen as problematic as it leaves out many of the skills that are important for people to become an active citizen and also for their general life. Practices that empower teachers and students should be promoted.

*Taking into account the **current financial restrictions**, what could constitute efficient solutions to implement the key objectives of ET 2020?*

⇒ The participants recognized the financial difficulties.

⇒ A solution to implement the key objectives of ET 2020 could be to support follow actions of the most successful projects that have already proven to work and to stimulate peer-learning between the various projects that are supported, especially in the field of dissemination and visibility.

3. Regarding future work, what should be improved or reviewed in relation to working methods and their impact on national systems?

In order to improve, it was suggest to:

⇒ Develop a system of recognition for **non-formal and informal** learning.

⇒ Pay more attention to the voice of **learners** themselves in practice and for policies.

⇒ Clarify that competences also **include values, attitudes and knowledge.**

⇒ Better streamline EU policies in education and training targeting **Lifelong Learning counties and non-lifelong learning** countries. For example, the EU neighbourhood policy also deals with education, but there is almost no support to exchange practices between-, and implement projects involving professionals from both LLL and the non-LLL countries (from in this case the Eastern Partnership area).

⇒ **Look for allies** to include policy makers on national, regional and local levels in lifelong learning strategies (including researchers, media, and NGOs).

⇒ Take into account that numbers are **approximate**.

⇒ Take measures to create better awareness of policy makers on the **teaching practices.**

⇒ Increase **transparency** about the selection of projects.

4. On this basis what should be the priority areas of the 2nd cycle?

The priority areas for the 2nd cycle would be to:

⇒ Promote **learner-centred approaches and peer-learning** (to inquire, challenge, inspire and engage learners)

⇒ Stimulate learners to be **pro-active, adaptable, reflective and critical**.

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⇒ Include measures to **empower and professionalize teachers** (get the best!).

⇒ Research and create the best **environment** for learning.

⇒ Maintain the notion of **Lifelong Learning** (from cradle to grave) including informal, and adult education amongst others. (Learning Europe?).

⇒ **Promote active citizenship**, life skills and value education (as a broader concept of learning).

⇒ Enable **exchange with non-EU countries** (to create synergies with other EU policies and as part of friendly relations with others).

⇒ Recognize the importance of **humanities** as well as languages, maths and technology.

WORKSHOP 3: IMPROVING EQUITY AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

Chair: Viviana Galli (OBESSU)

Rapporteur: Susan Waddington (EAEA)

Priority areas during the 1ˢᵗ cycle (2009-2011)

Pursue work on:

— *Early leavers from education and training*: Strengthen preventive approaches, build closer cooperation between general and vocational education sectors and remove barriers for dropouts to return to education and training.

Develop cooperation on:

— *Pre-primary education*: Promote generalised equitable access and reinforce the quality of provision and teacher support.

— *Migrants*: Develop mutual learning on best practices for the education of learners from migrant backgrounds.

— *Learners with special needs*: Promote inclusive education and personalised learning through timely support, the early identification of special needs and well-coordinated services. Integrate services within mainstream schooling and ensure pathways to further education and training.

SUMMARY

If needed to make a priority list of the objectives of ET 2020, the stakeholders would place the strategic objective 3 "Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship" on the top of the list since this objective is the one that relates education and training to the broader society. Education and training should not be a closed environment: it is broadly influenced by the rest of societal developments and needs to equip learners with important skills and competences for their life in the society.

Lifelong learning can make a significant contribution to the Europe 2020 and ET 2020 goals in respect of equity, social cohesion and active citizenship. The education stakeholders welcome the set benchmarks and the commitment of Member States to achieve them.

However, the achievements reached so far are not very visible to the stakeholders both at European and at national level and **better communication and more transparency** is needed regarding the impact of the adopted measures.

The stakeholders call, therefore, for improvements in consultation processes, communication, dissemination measures and transparency on how the inputs are translated into policies, priorities and benchmarks.

A much more structured and capillary **stakeholders' involvement** is required at European, national and local levels with more grassroots participation to increase representativeness and visibility.

At the level of the European Commission, **more coordination is required between DGs and other bodies** so that the political goals for equity, social cohesion and active citizenship in Europe 2020 and ET 2020 can be pursued in a consolidated way **using funding mechanisms and programmes beyond those available in the LLL programme**.

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For example reducing early school leaving cannot simply be tackled by education systems and stakeholders alone: the socio-economic context and influence should be recognised both at policy and programme level and the interrelation between policy areas should be fostered at all levels.

In the next phase the existing goals should continue to be addressed as **long-term priorities**. These should be developed to include the **validation of non-formal learning, literacy, soft skills and the barriers to access higher education**.

Finally education and training should not be simply seen as tools for labour market inclusion and economic growth: the importance of **personal and social skills** should be valued and promoted as the main aims of education and training and its related policies. It should be **recognised** that **education, including non-formal education and informal learning**, plays an important role in developing equity, social cohesion and active citizenship in the first place.

KEY QUESTIONS

The workshop developed around four main issues discussed by the participants through the world café method.

1. Impact of EU level cooperation: main achievements and challenges

The stakeholders find it difficult to identify achievements related to the objective in question. One reason is that the impact of policies in the field of equity, social inclusion and active citizenship is difficult to measure and includes more long-term effects. At the same time stakeholders feel there is not enough communication and the achievements are not given visibility.

One identified positive achievement was related to the inclusion of the benchmarks and goals in the national agenda of Member States.

One of the challenges, thus, is to improve communication to make the benchmarks and impact more visible. This needs more effective stakeholders' consultation at European, national and local levels.

2. Working methods: improvements and proposals

There is a strong demand for more structured and capillary stakeholders' consultation.

Suggestions include:

⇒   More than one stakeholders' forum each year, each with a very specific thematic focus.

⇒   A more structured and capillary stakeholders' consultation process on the example of the Structural Dialogue in the field of Youth.

⇒   The so-called best practices should be defined with clearer criteria.

⇒   Consultation processes should be improved and more time is needed for responses, in order to leave organisation the possibility to internally consult at all level and provide a throughout contribution. This requires also greater clarity about who is involved in consultation processes and how responses are evaluated (the response from a single individual has not the same weight as the response from an organisation representing the interest of a group at different levels). The grassroots level is currently not involved in such processes and should be better informed and involved.

⇒   Stakeholders could be better involved in peer learning and working groups at national and European level.

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⇒ The process of identifying and involving stakeholders should be more transparent.

⇒ Better cooperation among DGs and similar institutional bodies.

3. Cost-efficient solutions to implement key objectives

Suggestions include:

⇒ More opportunities for stakeholders to exchange good practices and for peer learning.

⇒ Better dissemination of the results from pilot actions.

⇒ Stronger link between the political priorities and funding programmes.

⇒ Cross-sectoral cooperation should be developed for example between education and the social dialogue.

⇒ Attention should be paid to transitions between learning, work and life responsibilities.

Moreover, the stakeholders underline how investments in education cannot always have measurable outcomes, but are fundamental for all aspects of societal development, including economic growth. Very often the impact of education policies is hardly measurable in the short-term.

4. Priorities for the second cycle

Suggestions include more focus on:

⇒ Active citizenship, which is not included in the benchmarks;

⇒ Soft, personal and societal skills;

⇒ Financial barriers to access education at all levels;

⇒ Migrants, going deeper into the debate about a common definition of the term and examining the possibility of setting up a benchmark in this matter.

In addition, participants suggested:

⇒ Less emphasis on employability: finding a job is not just a matter of having the right skills; the lack of employment is an economic and social problem going beyond education and training.

⇒ Treat literacy throughout the entire LLL cycle.

⇒ Adopt a bottom-up approach at both EU and national level, encouraging and promoting good practices exchange.

WORKSHOP 4: ENHANCING INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY, INCLUDING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Chair: Claudio Dondi (EDEN)

Rapporteur: Hans Daale (EURASHE)

Priority areas during the 1st cycle (2009-2011)

Pursue work on:

— ***Transversal key competences***: In accordance with the December 2006 Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council, take greater account of transversal key competences in curricula, assessment and qualifications.

Develop cooperation on:

— ***Innovation-friendly institutions***: Promote creativity and innovation by developing specific teaching and learning methods (including the use of new ICT tools and teacher training).

— ***Partnership***: Develop partnerships between education and training providers and businesses, research institutions, cultural actors and creative industries, and promote a well-functioning knowledge triangle.

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1. Transversal key competences

- At the moment the focus on key competences in the formal study programmes is in most of the countries on 'controllable' competences. This is the case for Mathematics and Languages. But it also important and relevant, in a lifetime setting, to learn more about 'soft' skills and competences like:

  ⇒ Culture: about the cultural aspects of life in your own region, country and in the rest of the world;

  ⇒ Society: how to make a contribution to the society, with respect for your own situation and possibilities, and the way the society is organised;

  ⇒ Creativity: entrepreneurship starts with 'creative curiosity', with young people discovering their own possibilities to contribute to society and to the economy and giving the possibility to adult learners to act like an 'intrapreneur' within businesses in favor of the aims and targets of the company.

- In some countries there are real and effective possibilities for youngsters to follow a 'dual learning pathway'. This means that the learner is combining work and study, in such a way that the workplace is complementary to the school. Hence, learning outcomes obtained during the formal study outcomes can be applied and developed into 'practical' skills and competences, providing the learner a 'powerful learning & working place' within a company. Those skills and competences are part of a set of transversal key competences for someone's 'personal development plan' and career. In that situation informal learning (work experience) and study through non-formal and formal learning in a part-time setting can be combined.

Therefore, participants suggested that:

- It is necessary to broaden the approach for stimulating the economy through education and training, especially when it comes to the formal education sector and its focus on employability;

- Lifelong learning should be seen as a process of people's involvement in society, emphasising the role of non-formal and informal learning. This also gives people a better control on personal developments, as basis for personal and general prosperity;

- Combining work and study (alternating learning) is possible at all levels and in all sectors of education and training. In companies there are enough possibilities to require the necessary competences for a formal diploma and should be part of a study programme.

- It is also important to focus on transversal key competences like creativity, independent thinking, communication, being social, cultural behavior, etc.

2. Innovative friendly institutions

- Governments, national education associations and other education and training organisations involved in the education strategies should develop specific creative measures at all levels (management, teaching staff, students, parents, community).

- Creativity combined with freedom to handle (within a certain framework for regulations, evaluation procedures, accountability and quality assurance) can lead to significant change in the own institution, coming up with innovative 'answers' to the dynamics within the community, the society and the economic environment.

- An effective tool to promote innovative and friendly institutions is implementing a 'planning circle' within schools and institutions management. This tool requires stakeholders' involvement and provides a framework for internal evaluation and accountability. Some measures of such planning include:

    ⇒ Consulting Stakeholders (learners, teachers, staff members, parents, etc.);

    ⇒ Setting up commitments and creating expectations;

    ⇒ Focusing on results according to an 'Internal Quality Circle';

    ⇒ Implementing 'External Quality' audits;

    ⇒ Providing an 'Output report' to stakeholders – and starting again with a consultation round…

    In this way, the learning institution faces two external evaluations, which improves its accountability: a vertical one coming from the Ministry and a horizontal one coming from the stakeholders' community.

- Learners' involvement on the institution management is crucial, as no one better knows what is happening in the school community and society as them. Their proposals and ideas can stimulate the discussions needed for maintaining the innovative education structure and for the contacts with 'the outside world'.

- Supporting local/regional/national and European/International exchange of best practices between learning institutions is needed in order to promote innovation and creativity.

- National and European/International LLL networks bringing up together several stakeholders in education and training play a key role in promoting and expanding innovation and creativity. The

outcomes of their activities should be taken into account in LLL policy-making, as they provide a bottom-up approach.

- Schools and institutions must have the possibility to include non-formal and informal learning activities in formal study programmes. In this way, formal education becomes more 'learner-centered', as it focuses more on learners' experiences outside the formal education setting (work, voluntary activities, training, short courses).

On this basis, participants stressed that:

- Institutional 'openness' is the key word when dealing with innovative friendly institutions. Stakeholders' involvement is crucial in order to assure a successful long-term strategy, especially when it comes to learners' participation.

- Stakeholders' involvement not only rends better accountability to education institutions' performance, but it also keeps its organisational structure updated.

- Institutions have their own unique selling points in formal, non-formal and informal learning. They are willing and able to share their experiences with 'colleague-institutions', in other regions and countries and also in other sectors of the education system. The possibilities for the dissemination of good practices must be keeping alive, also in a sort of competitive setting – using seminars, conferences, networks and where possible ICT.

3. Partnerships

- Partnerships are still necessary between education and training providers at one side and businesses, research institutions, cultural actors and creative industries at the other side – as already mentioned in the ET2020 framework.

- Those partnerships are needed in all kinds of settings, regional, national and transnational – crossing all borders. When it comes to the LLL programme, priority should be given to recognised networks and platforms that have already proved their efficiency managing projects and disseminating outcomes.

- Fostering transectoral partnerships have been proved to be very effective when it comes to afford innovative solutions. Linking the sectoral developments and strategies in a 'horizontal and vertical way' makes arrangements, projects and dissemination of creative and innovative practices stronger.

- The way dissemination is taking place is very important. Partnerships are based on learning from good practices, allowing partners to find their own way when implementing new ideas and actualising current strategies. Education and training providers can be 'spiders' in the 'knowledge web'.

In order to improve, participants noted that:

- We need more partnerships on a less competitive basis in the member states, in order to promote further cooperation between different sectors and use each other's experiences and expertise. The European Commission and the National Agencies should support national projects that apply such transectoral approach. Indeed, the European Commission should introduce a line / sub-programme in the next LLP that would support 'partnerships for innovation'.

- Every six months we have a new member state holding the Presidency of the European Council. As every country has its own preferences and strategies concerning education and training, we

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think that it could be useful organising a Stakeholders' Forum in the country holding the Presidency in order to can support the necessary discussions on lifelong learning policies. This can keep the pressure on member states' developments in lifelong learning policy, pointing out new relevant issues to be discussed and tackling concerns from member states.

- Cooperative and innovative partnerships can be linked to the 'knowledge triangle (education / research / innovation). National and international cooperation, within LLL projects for 'education', is still necessary to keep the spirit alive in institutions, networks and platforms.

- Mobility of teachers, researchers and programme managers can be one of the pillars of bringing inspiration into organisations. Involving educational institutions as stakeholders in the dissemination and exploitation of results, can foster formal, non-formal and informal learning pathways and provide updated methods for the programmes.

4. Proposal for National Civil Society Platforms on LLL

In the last years, the European Commission has developed, together with Member States, several tools that need to be implemented at the national level (i.e. EQF and NQF). This brings discussions on key common issues (i.e. learning outcomes, mobility, quality assurance, etc.) to the national level.

As EUCIS-LLL, which brings together 25 European networks covering all sectors in education and training, national associations and stakeholders should have the opportunity to participate in such interesting debates affecting lifelong learning policies at the national level, working in partnership with national authorities.

EUCIS-LLL can play a coordinating role between the different national civil society platforms, linking the current debates on LLL policies at the European level and national level.

We propose to launch some pilot projects during 2012 and 2013. In the Netherlands a similar initiative is already envisaged.

ANNEX 2. PROGRAMME OF THE CONFERENCE

DAY 1 – Monday 26th September

13:00 – 13:50   **Registration**

14:00 – 15:00   **Opening Session**

- Pierre Mairesse, Director of Directorate A, DG Education Culture
- Gina Ebner, President of EUCIS-LLL
- Questions

15:00 – 17:00   **Workshops: taking stock of progress made under the current Cycle (2009-2011)**

- Workshop 1: Make lifelong learning and learner mobility a reality
- Workshop 2: Quality and efficiency of provision and outcomes
- Workshop 3: Improve equity and active citizenship
- Workshop 4: Enhance innovation and creativity, including entrepreneurship

17:00 – 18:00   **Coming back to the plenary session**

- Presentation of workshops' key messages by "rapporteurs" (20 minutes)
- Open debate with the participants
- Closing words by Gina Ebner, President of EUCIS-LLL

DAY 2 – Tuesday 27 September

9:30   **Opening Session**

9:35 – 11:30   **World café discussions**

- Summary of key messages by Joke Van Der Leeuw-Roord, Vice-President of EUCIS-LLL
- World Café session, David Lopez, Vice-President of EUCIS-LLL

11:30 – 13:00   **Plenary session**

- Feedback on the key messages and next steps by Michael Teutsch, Head of Unit A.1, DG Education Culture
- Closing remarks by Dorota Lewandowska, Chair of the Education Committee, Polish Presidency
- Open discussion