



## European Stakeholders Forum on Future EU Cooperation in Education and Training, 20 May 2008

### Key message from European Stakeholders

DG Education Culture, in partnership with the European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning (EUCIS-LLL), organised a Stakeholders' Forum for broad consultation of the European Stakeholders representing Civil Society on 20 May 2008 in Brussels. Around sixty stakeholders representing various organisations in education and training participated in the Forum.

This document presents the key messages of Civil Society Stakeholders that took part in this Forum to the Member States and European Institutions.

#### 1. Strategic goals

A balanced approach to lifelong learning should be promoted (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.

#### 2. Global approach & basic principles

- Integrated lifelong learning systems should be implemented:
  - flexible learning pathways should be promoted;
  - exchange of information between stakeholders should be developed;
  - barriers between sectors should be suppressed.
- A long-term investment in education and training is needed.
- Education and training systems should be learner centred.

- Global plea to go from concepts and ideas to implementation.
- Better communication and promotion of lifelong learning at all levels should be supported (LLL days, LLL weeks, etc.)

### **3. Actors' responsibilities and involvement**

To reach the objectives, it is essential to involve the different actors. We recommend that:

- A global consultation strategy be implemented at local, national and EU levels. At EU level, the Stakeholders' Forum could become a regular event parallel to specific consultations.
- More cooperation between policy makers, social partners and civil society organisations is needed on a regular and structured basis.
- More transparency and a clear identification of policy makers at all levels is required.
- The role of the learning community should be recognised: involving and supporting parents, role of associations and other co-educators.

### **4. Areas of focus for EU cooperation**

- Early childhood education (and not "pre-primary")
- Removing obstacles to equity
- Removing barriers to mobility
- Removing assessment instruments that lead to learning for the test
- Teacher education: initial and continuing education, social status, attractiveness of the profession
- Development and evaluation of competences
- Safe and attractive learning environments
- Funding and resources
- Quality and governance
- Guidance and counselling as a tool for lifelong learning
- Validating/recognising non-formal/informal learning

- Using and sharing innovation and creativity
- Addressing demography and migration
- Implementing evidence based policies
- Translating research and EU publications / tools into “general public” language
- Consolidation, implementation and evaluation of existing European tools before proposing new ones. More coherence between the instruments is needed.

## **5. Benchmarks and objectives**

There is a general approval on the need for continuity. But:

- The goals behind the benchmarks should be more explicit and better linked to the objectives.
- New benchmarks could be implemented on:
  - early childhood education
  - resources / financial dimension
  - equity / equality
- Benchmarks should be considered as tools for action and not for ranking.
- Benchmarks could be brought back to reachable steps for countries that are farther away from the target.
- Links should be established with other policies’ benchmarks.

## **6. Links with Lisbon**

- The E&T programme serves the Lisbon goals but also a number of other goals.
- More coherence is needed between different policy areas in order to reach the Lisbon goals.
- A balanced approach to lifelong learning should be promoted in the Lisbon strategy (civic, social and economic dimensions).