Study visits programme for education and vocational training specialists 2010/11

Categories of themes

1. Key competences for all, including creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship

1.1. Description

The recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council on key competences for lifelong learning (2006) defined a framework combining knowledge, skills and attitudes which all individuals need for personal fulfilment, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment. It is a reference tool to support policy-makers, education and training providers, employers and learners.

Key competences are a priority for all age groups. Young people should acquire key competences by the end of initial education and training to a level that equips them for adult life and provides a basis for further learning and working life. Adults need to develop and update their key competences throughout their lives to adapt flexibly to a rapidly changing world.

Key competences are: communication in the mother tongue, communication in foreign languages, mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology, digital competence, learning to learn, social and civic competences, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, cultural awareness and expression.

The strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020) ([1]) reinforced the need for everyone to acquire key competence, placing it as one of the strategic objectives to improve creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship at all levels of education and training.

([1])   Council of the European Union (2009). Council conclusions on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), 9845/09, Brussels, 13.5.2009. Available from Internet: http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/09/st09/st09845.en09.pdf

The European year of creativity and innovation (2009) aims to raise awareness of the importance of creativity and innovation for personal, social and economic development.

Those attending study visits on these themes will get acquainted with measures taken by participating countries to develop key competences for young people and adults and promote creative and innovative approaches in education and training, such as:

(a) national, regional, local policies to increase the level of key competences and support creativity and innovation;

(b) national curricular reforms or regional and local developments of school curricula;

(c) specific initiatives and projects which promote development of key competences, creativity and innovation;

(d) new approaches in organising learning and teaching;

(e) innovative methods, learning environments, learning materials or assessment techniques.

1.2. List of topics for study visits

- Increasing literacy and numeracy levels.

- Language teaching and learning.

- Learning mathematics and science.

- Use of ICT in learning.

- Developing entrepreneurship.

- Strengthening intercultural education.

- Education for active citizenship and sustainable development.

- Developing creativity in learning and teaching.

1.3. Keywords

- o Adult learning,
- o communication in foreign languages,
- o communication in the mother tongue,
- o competences in science and technology,
- o content and language integrated learning (CLIL),
- o cultural awareness and expression,
- o curriculum,
- o digital competence,
- o extra-curricular activities,
- o health education,
- o innovative approaches,

- learning to learn,
- mathematical competence,
- personalised learning,
- social and civic competences,
- social inclusion,
- student assessment,
- young people.

1.4. Selected sources on policy at EU level

Key competences. Available from Internet:
http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/lifelong_learning/c11090_en.htm

Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training: indicators and benchmarks (2007). Available from Internet:
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progress06/report_en.pdf

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). Available from Internet:
http://www.pisa.oecd.org/pages/0,2987,en_32252351_32235731_1_1_1_1_1,00.html

The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). Available from Internet: http://nces.ed.gov/timss/

The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). Available from Internet:
http://nces.ed.gov/Surveys/PIRLS

European year of creativity and innovation 2009. Available from Internet:
http://create2009.europa.eu/

Council of the European Union (2009). Council conclusions on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), 9845/09, Brussels, 13.5.2009. Available from Internet: http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/09/st09/st09845.en09.pdf

2. Improving access, equity, quality and efficiency in education and training.

2.1. Description

The Education and training 2010 work programme includes several measures and initiatives to achieve the three broad objectives to improve European education and training systems, agreed by the Stockholm European Council in 2001:

- improving the quality and effectiveness of European education and training systems;

- easing access of all to education and training systems;

- opening education and training systems up to the wider world.

These objectives are, in turn, an elaboration of the wider European goals established in the Lisbon strategy on sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, adopted in 2000. Despite several positive developments in education and training in Member States most benchmarks adopted by the Council for 2010 will not be achieved. Consequently, the 2008 Spring European Council urged Member States to take action to reduce substantially the number of early school leavers and young people who cannot read properly. Action was also requested to attract more adults especially low-skilled and older workers to education and training, to improve achievement levels of learners with a migrant background or from disadvantaged groups as well as further ease geographic and occupational mobility. Therefore access, equity, quality and efficiency of education and training systems needed to improve.

Improving quality and efficiency of education and training remains a strategic objective for European cooperation in education and training after 2010. The Council conclusions on a strategic framework for cooperation (Council of European Union, 2009) stressed the importance of improving the governance and leadership of education and training institutions and developing effective quality assurance systems ([2]).

The European year for combating poverty and social exclusion 2010 will aim to raise awareness of social exclusion and promote active inclusion. Among other priorities, this year's activities will also focus on eradicating disadvantages in education and training, by addressing the needs of disabled people, immigrants and ethnic minorities and groups or persons in vulnerable situations as well as gender and age dimensions (European Commission, 2008) ([3]).

([2]) Council of the European Union (2009). Council conclusions on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), 9845/09, Brussels, 13.5.2009. Available from Internet: http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/09/st09/st09845.en09.pdf

([3]) European Commission (2008). European year for combating poverty and social exclusion (2010) — Strategic framework document — Priorities and guidelines for 2010 European year activities. Brussels, 16/11/2008, D(2008). Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=637

Access, equity, quality and efficiency include the following:

Access to education and training: access to <u>pre-primary education</u> is essential for a good start in life as it promotes children's sociability and lays the basis for further learning. It is especially important for children from families with low income, ethnic minorities and migrants.

Member States have introduced <u>alternative (more flexible) forms</u> of education and training, second chance programmes, mechanisms for informing parents about absences and reduced costs by providing free course materials and transportation. Close cooperation between general education and vocational sectors and 'second chance' schools for adults is important. For children with <u>special needs</u>, access is increasingly considered as being given the possibility to attend general or special education based on what provides the best learning possibilities for the individual child. At <u>higher education level</u>, free education is key, as tuition fees may reduce access.

Member States should develop diverse pathways through VET to further learning and employment. They should also improve public training programmes for the unemployed and disadvantaged learners. The quality and relevance of such programmes can be improved by encouraging stakeholder partnerships at regional and local levels and by promoting private sector involvement.

<u>Adult learning</u> has a key role to play in responding to social exclusion. Member States should implement efficient adult learning systems that provide adults with key competences and increased labour market access. Education and training can contribute to overcoming socio-economic disadvantages, but it may also perpetuate it.

Equity: all students should have an equal chance to succeed; success should not be dependent on circumstances outside the control of the pupil or student, such as the financial position of the family, parental education, parental occupational status, geographic location, ethnic and racial identity, gender and disability. At compulsory school level, the possibility for pupils who drop out of school to get a 'second chance' to learn has also received considerable attention. The role of initial vocational training in equipping these pupils with skills, knowledge and qualifications is important for their integration into society. More initiatives are still needed in most Member States to reduce the number of early school leavers and fight inequity due to socioeconomic disadvantages.

Quality: ensuring high quality standards at all education and training levels is essential. *Building quality* includes capacity building of teachers, school leaders, trainers and training managers, policies to build bridges with parents, modernising curricula and broadening extra-curricular activities, improving infrastructure and establishing a respectful environment. *Quality assurance mechanisms* are important at all levels of education including assessing students' competences, institutional self-assessments, external and internal evaluations, transparency and validating results. Involving, for example, social partners and actors from the labour market ('learning communities') in evaluations and validation of results is becoming more and more frequent.

Efficiency: Key measures to improve institutional efficiency and adaptability to shifting educational and training demands and labour market needs are: decentralisation (including reforms to allow room for institutions' own educational initiatives); deregulation; monitoring achievements through indicators on educational efficiency; mapping skills gaps and anticipating skills needs. Building a culture of evaluation into education and training systems to explore how resources (investments from the public and private sectors) can be used (more) efficiently is also essential.

Study visits will present developments and measures on the following:

(a) developing and implementing measures to improve access to education and training for disadvantaged groups;

(b) designing and carrying out activities to achieve equity;

(c) designing and implementing measures to increase quality of education and training provision;

(d) evaluating and analysing education and training systems efficiency.

2.2. List of topics for study visits

- Early learning opportunities.
- Personalised learning approaches.
- Measures to prevent early school leaving.
- Equal opportunities for disadvantaged groups.
- Quality assurance mechanisms in schools and training institutions.
- Measures to improve efficiency in education and training institutions.

2.3. Keywords

  o Adult learning,
  o drop-outs,
  o Education and training attainment,
  o evaluation (school or institution),
  o financing,
  o gender equity,
  o lifelong guidance,
  o migrants and minorities,
  o older workers,
  o pre-primary learning,
  o social inclusion,
  o special needs.

2.4.   Selected sources on policy at EU level

Efficiency and equity in European education and training systems. Available from Internet: http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/general_framework/c11095_en.htm

Communication from the Commission, to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Improving competences for the 21st century: an agenda for European cooperation on schools. Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/education/school21/com425_en.pdf

Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training – indicators and benchmarks (2007). Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progress06/report_en.pdf

Council of the European Union (2009). Council conclusions on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), 9845/09, Brussels, 13.5.2009. Available from Internet: http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/09/st09/st09845.en09.pdf

Eurydice (2009). Integrating immigrant children into schools in Europe: measures to foster communication with immigrant families and heritage language teaching for immigrant children. Available from Internet: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/101EN.pdf

2010 European year for combating poverty and social exclusion. Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=637

Council of the European Union (2009). Council conclusions on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), 9845/09, Brussels, 13.5.2009. Available from Internet: http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/09/st09/st09845.en09.pdf

3.   Keeping teaching and training attractive and improving leadership

3.1.   Description

Raising the quality of teaching and training across Member States was an important goal of the Education and training 2010 work programme. The strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (Council of the European Union, 2009) ([4]) after 2010 reiterates the need for high quality teaching through adequate initial teacher education and continuous professional development and through making teaching an attractive career choice.

Increasingly, teachers and trainers must develop new skills and competences, to face the challenges associated with increasing autonomy of education and training institutions and students. Use of new technologies and the necessity to pay attention to individual learning needs are other demands for teachers and trainers. In-service training for teachers is only compulsory in 11 Member States.

Demands faced by teachers are also increasing because of stress, and aggressive behaviour in the classroom, as cited in the Commission's working paper on 'Schools for the 21st century', all of which have a negative impact on job performance and satisfaction and can lead to educators leaving their profession prematurely.

Many older teachers are expected to retire soon, which means that the teaching and lifelong learning profession must be made more attractive, with careful attention paid to recruiting new teachers and retaining existing ones. Member States face both a challenge – to replace the experience that is being lost, and an opportunity – to invest in the initial training of a new wave of teachers and improve the skills of existing teachers and teaching leaders.

Improving the quality of school leadership, and promoting cooperation between educational leaders, is also vital for raising the quality of education as a whole. In 2007, the European Council emphasised the importance of access to high quality training in school leadership and management. It is also hoped that educational leaders will be able to work together to address common challenges faced by European educational systems.

European cooperation is governed by a voluntary process known as the open method of coordination. Since 2004, common principles for teacher competences and qualifications have been agreed at European level, emphasising the importance of a highly qualified workforce, continuous professional development, teacher mobility and partnerships between teachers and other agencies, to Member State policy-makers. In 2007, the Council of Ministers reiterated

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([4])   Council of the European Union (2009). Council conclusions on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), 9845/09, Brussels, 13.5.2009. Available from Internet: http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/09/st09/st09845.en09.pdf

the importance of improving the quality of teacher education, equipping teachers with leadership skills, and providing support to make teaching a more attractive career choice. Actors concerned by these developments include institutions responsible for teacher training and recruitment; leaders of schools and educational providers; bodies responsible for teacher registration, inspection and quality; social partners such as trade unions; as well as national and local policy-makers.

Study visits will present developments and measures making teaching and training more attractive, improving leadership and raising the quality by highlighting:

(a) developing programmes designed to recruit and retain highly qualified staff in all educational and training professions;

(b) increasing the quality and competences of leaders of education and training providers;

(c) ongoing professional development of teachers and trainers;

(d) initiatives easing the mobility of teachers and trainers.

3.2. List of topics for study visits

- Teachers' and trainers' initial training, recruitment and evaluation.
- Teachers' and trainers' continuing professional development and career opportunities.
- Leadership and management in schools and training providers.

3.3. Keywords

- o Leadership and management,
- o quality assurance,
- o status of teachers and trainers,
- o Teachers' and trainers' competences,
- o teachers' and trainers' mobility,
- o teachers' and trainers' qualifications.

3.4. Selected sources on policy at EU level

Commission staff working paper (SEC(2007)1009): schools for the 21st century. Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/education/school21/consultdoc_en.pdf

Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council of 15 November 2007, on improving the quality of teacher education. Available from Internet: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2007:300:0006:0009:EN:PDF

DG EAC - Common European principles for teacher competences and qualifications. Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/principles_en.pdf

Professionalisation of VET teachers for the future (Cedefop, 2004). Available from Internet: http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_resources/Bookshop/publication_details.asp?pub_id=379

Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training – indicators and benchmarks (2007). Available from Internet:
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progress06/report_en.pdf

Council of the European Union (2009). Council conclusions on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), 9845/09, Brussels, 13.5.2009. Available from Internet: http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/09/st09/st09845.en09.pdf

4.   Education and training for employability

4.1.   Description

The current economic crisis facing Europe requires immediate and efficient measures that will aid long-term economic and social development, reinforce competitiveness, support employability and strengthen social cohesion. The European Commission in its communication for the Spring Council *Driving European recovery* (European Commission, 2009) ([5]) outlined several elements that should help Member States design and implement appropriate and effective employment policies. **Three key priorities** were defined: maintaining employment, creating jobs and promoting mobility; upgrading skills and matching labour market needs; increasing access to employment.

Low levels of educational attainment and insufficient skills exclude large numbers of young people from the labour market. Economic restructuring and changing skill needs are a risk to job security. People need the chance to upgrade and develop new knowledge, skills and competences at different stages in their lives. This is particularly important for people in precarious jobs, those who risk losing their jobs or are jobless, those who are older, the low qualified, those with migrant backgrounds or people with disabilities.

Although Europe has not yet reached its employment targets and economic trends are not particularly favourable, some countries already have skills shortages. In the near future, Europe, potentially, faces a major skills problem. Increased life expectancy and declining birth rates bring fewer young people into the labour market and longer working lives. In 2020, 50 % of all jobs are expected to require medium, around 31.5 % high level, whereas the demand for low qualifications will fall from a third in 1996 to around 18.5 %. The skills in many current jobs will change and require people to update them continuously, in other cases people will need to adapt to new jobs.

Initial education and training provides the skills-base to build on. The knowledge, skills and competences people acquire can help them move successfully into employment and also adjust to new requirements, working methods and jobs that are yet unknown.

Close cooperation with enterprises can make education and training more relevant to the world of work. Learning at the workplace can help encourage learners, who would otherwise leave prematurely, to continue their education and training. In a globalised and more mobile labour market, people also require linguistic and cultural skills to succeed. Lacking occupational language skills, for instance, might make it difficult for migrants to find (adequate) jobs or small and medium-sized enterprises to succeed internationally.

To choose adequate education and training programmes and jobs, information on the skills enterprises are looking for and guidance that considers an individual's competences and needs

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([5])   European Commission (2009). Driving European recovery. Communication for the Spring Council. Volume 1. Brussels, 4.3.2009. COM(2009) 114 final. Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/president/pdf/press_20090304_en.pdf

are prerequisites. To encourage people to (re)enter learning and to save time and costs, it is also important that education and training institutions and employers value the knowledge, skill and competences people have acquired at work, in voluntary activities or their family lives.

Ensuring skills development is also part and parcel of flexicurity. The idea is to ensure people stay in or easily find employment though they might need to move from one job to another or take career breaks. This requires comprehensive lifelong learning strategies that cover all levels and sectors of education and link education and training, employment, economic and social policies. Such strategies are not yet in place in all countries.

Helping to ensure people's employability is at the heart of many joint initiatives between the European Commission and countries as well as the European social partners. The main policy initiatives at European level include:

Key competences for lifelong learning: the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament recommended Member States ([6]) to enable learners to acquire key competences that will help them adapt to changing labour market demands and contribute actively to society.

Vocational education and training (VET): signed in 2002 in the wake of the Lisbon strategy and cooperation in education and training, the **Copenhagen declaration** formed the starting point for closer cooperation of the Commission, Member States and European social partners in VET. VET plays a key role in ensuring lifelong learning and supplying a skilled workforce relevant to the labour market. The Copenhagen process aims to make lifelong learning more easily accessible and to promote educational, occupational and geographical mobility. It triggered significant innovations with a direct or indirect effect on improving employability such as: common principles to increase transparency of qualifications, quality assurance in VET, lifelong guidance and validation of non-formal and informal learning.

The **Bordeaux communiqué** of the European Ministers for Vocational Education and Training of 2008 introduced a new objective of strengthening the links between VET and the labour market and linked it to the new skills for new jobs initiative on anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs ([7]).

Higher education: the **Bologna process** aims to create a European higher education area by 2010, in which students can choose from a wide and transparent range of high quality courses and benefit from smooth recognition procedures. The **Bologna process** proposed adopting a system essentially based on three cycles (bachelor-master-doctorate). The degree awarded

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([6])   Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on key competences for lifelong learning (2006/962/EC). Available from Internet**:** http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:394:0010:0018:EN:PDF

([7])   The Bordeaux Communiqué communiqué on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training Communiqué of the European Ministers for vocational Vocational education Education and trainingTraining, the European social partners and the European Commission, meeting in Bordeaux on 26 November 2008 to review the priorities and strategies of the Copenhagen process. Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/bordeaux_en.pdf

after the first cycle shall be relevant to the European labour market as an appropriate level of qualification. The second cycle should lead to the master and/or doctorate degree as in many European countries.

To meet the challenge of employability, links between VET and higher education become increasingly important in a lifelong learning setting. The possibility to access tertiary education is a major motivational factor for the learner to engage in VET. Member States have started to engage in bringing higher education and VET systems closer to one another.

Adult learning: conclusions of the Council on adult learning (2008) stress it is vitally important both for employability and social inclusion that adults continue to learn and adapt to change: ongoing upskilling, reskilling and further development of competences are essential prerequisites for active participation in society.

The Council conclusions on new skills for new jobs (Council of the European Union, 2009) state that the current economic crisis, global competition, technological changes towards the low carbon economy and an ageing population have made investing in skills at all levels and providing quality education for all critically important for Europe's short-term recovery and longer-term growth and competitiveness, as well as for equity and social cohesion. It is important to support Member States in anticipating future skills needs for workers and employers in the EU through regularly updated projections of labour market trends in local, regional, national and European labour markets and in analysing skills needs by sector ([8]).

Flexicurity strikes a balance between flexibility and security on the labour market and helps both employees and employers seize the opportunities globalisation offers. The common principles of flexicurity are: comprehensive lifelong learning strategies; effective active labour market policies; ease upward mobility and between unemployment or inactivity and work; continuous upgrading of skills.

The **European social partners** have developed their own framework of actions for lifelong learning competence development and qualifications, but are also partners in the Commission's and countries' efforts to make VET in Europe better and more attractive.

Study visits will present developments and measures on education and training for employability:

(e)   education and training's contribution to improving knowledge, skills and competence for the labour market;

(f)   analysing emerging skills needs and gaps in EU Member States labour markets and developing policies to address these;

([8])   Council of the European Union (2009). Council conclusions on new skills for new jobs. Anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs. 2930th Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council meeting. 6479/09. Brussels, 9.3.2009.
Available from Internet:
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/106549.pdf

(g) designing and implementing activities such as transition from education and training to work, occupational guidance and workplace learning to increase employability.

4.2.   List of topics for study visits

- Transition from education and training to the world of work.

- Workplace learning.

- Integration of disadvantaged groups into the labour market.

- Increasing attractiveness of VET.

- Social partners contribution to lifelong learning.

- New skills for new jobs.

4.3. Keywords

- o Adult learning,
- o apprenticeship,
- o entrepreneurship,
- o key competences,
- o language skills,
- o lifelong guidance,
- o older workers,
- o social inclusion,
- o validation of non formal and informal learning,
- o work placement.

4.4. Selected sources on policy at EU level

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Implementing the Community Lisbon programme: Fostering entrepreneurial mindsets through education and learning (2006). Available from Internet: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2006:0033:FIN:EN:PDF

European Commission. Entrepreneurship and SME policy projects. Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/entrepreneurship/support_measures/index.htm

Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Action plan on adult learning 'It is always a good time to learn' (2007). Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/adult/com558_en.pdf

Communication from the Commission. 'Adult learning: It is never too late to learn' (2006). Available from Internet: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2006:0614:FIN:EN:PDF

Cedefop (2008). Career development at work – A review of career guidance to support people in employment. Available from Internet: http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Upload/Information_resources/Bookshop/504/5183_en.pdf

Communication from the Commission to the Spring European Council. Integrated guidelines for growth and jobs (2008-2010). Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/pdf/european-dimension-200712-annual-progress-report/200712-annual-report-integrated-guidelines_en.pdf

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. New skills for new jobs. Anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs (2008). Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/com868_en.pdf

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Towards common principles of flexicurity: more and better jobs through flexibility and security (2007). Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=102&langId=en&pubId=188&type=2&furtherPubs=yes

The Bordeaux communiqué on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training of the European Ministers for Vocational Education and Training, the European social partners and the European Commission, meeting in Bordeaux on 26 November 2008 to review the priorities and strategies of the Copenhagen process. Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/bordeaux_en.pdf

Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training, indicators and benchmarks (2007). Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progress06/report_en.pdf

Skillsnet: Cedefop's network on early identification of skill needs. Available from Internet: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/projects_networks/skillsnet/

Cedefop (2009). Future skill supply in Europe: medium-term forecast up to 2020. Available from Internet: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Information_resources/Bookshop/publication_details.asp?pub_id=547

European Commission (2009). Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. A shared commitment for employment. Brussels, 3.6.2009. COM(2009) 257 final. Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=514&furtherNews=yes

European Commission (2009). Driving European recovery. Communication for the Spring Council. Volume 1. Brussels, 4.3.2009. COM(2009) 114 final. Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/president/pdf/press_20090304_en.pdf

Council of the European Union (2009). Council conclusions on new skills for new jobs. Anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs. 2930th Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council meeting. 6479/09. Brussels, 9.3.2009. Available from Internet: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/106549.pdf

Council of the European Union (2009). Council conclusions on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), 9845/09, Brussels, 13.5.2009. Available from Internet: http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/09/st09/st09845.en09.pdf

5. Implementing common European instruments and tools, principles and frameworks for lifelong learning

5.1. Description

To promote the mobility of European citizens as well as their qualifications and learning achievements, several common tools, principles and frameworks have been or are being developed at European level to reach the Lisbon goals ([9]). They all aim to strengthen European cooperation and improve transparency, recognition and quality assurance in all sectors of education and training.

The European qualifications framework (EQF) is a common European reference framework which links countries' qualifications to make qualifications more readable and understandable across different countries and systems in Europe. It has two principal aims: to promote citizens' mobility between countries and lifelong learning. More and more European countries are developing and implementing national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) which are closely – although not exclusively – related to EQF.

Governments are interested in developing overarching frameworks to incorporate qualifications that represent learning outcomes from different fields, for example school, work, higher education and adult learning. These new frameworks are often linked to lifelong learning strategies and intended to open up to informal learning, or experience, that learners wish to have recognised. Common European principles for validation of non-formal and informal learning were set in 2004. They were transformed into guidelines in 2009 as a practical tool for developing and implementing methods and systems for validation in the Member States ([10]).

The EQF also serves as a common European reference point for those international sector organisations that wish to develop their own qualifications across countries. This may also help to link the long-term skills demand of the labour market with education and training policies to adapt to change and restructuring brought about by globalisation. Most European countries are now engaged in the development of overarching national qualification frameworks (NQFs) which cover all subsystems. An NQF is a tool supporting coherence of policy development and lifelong learning aiming at improving access, progression and recognition of learning outcomes.

Europass ([11]) is a tool to make citizens' knowledge, skills and qualifications clearly and easily understood, and foster mobility in Europe. It consists of five documents: curriculum vitae, language passport, Europass mobility, certificate supplement and diploma supplement.

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[9] Education and training 2010 work programme (contribution to the Lisbon strategy). Available from Internet:
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/pri/en/oj/dat/2002/c_142/c_14220020614en00010022.pdf

[10] Cedefop (2009). European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Available from Internet
http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Upload/Information_resources/Bookshop/553/4054_en.pdf

[11] Europass website: http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu

Transparency of qualifications and recognition of learning outcomes is further supported by tools that help learners transfer credits gained during learning periods in their own country or abroad. These are: the **European credit system for vocational education and training** (ECVET) ([12]) for vocational education and training (VET) and the **European credit transfer and accumulation system** (ECTS) for higher education. In 2009, the European Parliament and Council adopted a recommendation on establishing a European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET).

In 2009, the European Parliament and Council adopted a recommendation on establishing a European quality assurance reference framework for vocational education and training (13) while common standards for higher education have already been developed. The recommendation includes a series of quality criteria and indicative descriptors as well as a reference set of quality indicators for VET.

High quality guidance and counselling services support citizens' lifelong learning, career management and achievement of personal goals. Lifelong guidance contributes to achieving wider goals of full employment, high educational attainment and economic growth. In 2008, the Council of the European Union adopted a resolution on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies ([14]) that reinforced the role of lifelong guidance in European education, training and employment policy development and implementation.

Study visits will present European tools, principles and frameworks for lifelong learning such as:

(a)   developing and implementing qualifications frameworks with reference to the EQF;

(b)   promoting Europass and its use by education and training institutions, guidance and employment services and citizens;

(c)   designing and implementing quality assurance frameworks inspired by the European quality assurance reference framework;

(d)   tools for credit transfer to promote mobility of learners;

(e)   principles for recognising non–formal and informal learning;

(f)   promoting policy action on lifelong guidance for developing national/regional guidance delivery structures.

([12])   Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a European credit system for vocational education and training, (ECVET). Brussels, 17.4.2009. 2008/0070 (COD), PE-CO_S 3747/08. Available from Internet:
http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/08/st03/st03747.en08.pdf

([13])   Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a European quality assurance reference framework for vocational education and training., Brussels, 2.4. April 2009, 2008/0069 (COD), PE-CONS3746/08. Available from Internet**:**
http://www.enqavet.eu/documents/EQARFtext02042009.pdf

([14])   Resolution on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies. Available from Internet**:**
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/educ/104236.pdf

5.2.   List of topics for study visits

- National and sectoral qualifications frameworks linked to EQF.

- Tools to promote transparency of qualifications and mobility of citizens.

- Quality assurance systems, frameworks and approaches.

- Credit transfer between different contexts.

- Validation of non-formal and informal learning.

- Guidance for lifelong learning and career management.

5.3.   Keywords

- Adult learning,
- Europass,
- European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET),
- European credit transfer system (ECTS),
- European qualifications framework (EQF),
- learners' mobility,
- learning outcomes,
- lifelong guidance,
- national qualifications frameworks,
- social partners,
- teachers' and trainers' mobility,
- workers' mobility.

5.4.   Selected sources on policy at EU level

Supporting citizens' mobility and lifelong learning (EQF, Europass, ECTS, ECVET, lifelong guidance). Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc40_en.htm

Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a European credit system for vocational education and training, (ECVET). Brussels, 17 April 2009. 2008/0070 (COD), PE-CO_S 3747/08. Available from Internet: http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/08/st03/st03747.en08.pdf

European qualifications framework (EQF). Available from Internet: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:111:0001:0007:EN:PDF

Cedefop (2009). European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Available from Internet: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Information_resources/Bookshop/publication_details.asp?pub_id=553

Cedefop (2009). The shift to learning outcomes. Policies and practices in Europe. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. Available from Internet: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Information_resources/Bookshop/publication_details.asp?pub_id=525

Quality assurance in higher education. Available from Internet: http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/documents/Standards-and-Guidelines-for-QA.pdf

European network for quality assurance in VET. Available from Internet: http://www.enqavet.eu

European quality assurance reference framework. Available from Internet: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2008:0179:FIN:EN:PDF

Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on establishing a European quality assurance reference framework for vocational education and training, Brussels, 2 April 2009, 2008/0069 (COD), PE-CONS3746/08. Available from Internet: http://www.enqavet.eu/documents/EQARFtext02042009.pdf

Cedefop (2008). Establishing and developing national lifelong guidance policy forums. A manual for policy-makers and stakeholders. Available from Internet: http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Upload/Information_resources/Bookshop/508/5188_en.pdf

Cedefop (2008). From policy to practice. A systemic change to lifelong guidance in Europe. Available from Internet: http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Upload/Information_resources/Bookshop/505/5182_en.pdf

Council resolution on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies (2008). Available from Internet: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/educ/104236.pdf

Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training – indicators and benchmarks (2007). Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progress06/report_en.pdf

6. Trends and challenges in lifelong learning strategies

6.1. Description

The current economic crisis facing Europe emphasises the importance of education and training as a lever to Europe's recovery. The flexibility and security needed to achieve more and better jobs depend on ensuring that all citizens acquire key competences and update their skills throughout their lives. Lifelong learning supports creativity and innovation and enables full economic and social participation. That is why EU Member States and the European Commission have in recent years greatly strengthened their political cooperation through the Education and training 2010 work programme, aimed at achieving the Lisbon goals and promoting lifelong learning. The lifelong programme 2007-13 integrates previous actions in education and training at European level, including vocational education and training under the Copenhagen process, and links to the Bologna process, which is crucial for developing an European higher education area.

The Education and training 2010 work programme uses the open method of coordination (OMC) as a strategic framework of cooperation between the Commission and Member States. The OMC is a way of spreading knowledge of best practice and achieving greater convergence towards the main EU goals by:

- identifying and defining jointly the objectives to be reached;
- commonly defining benchmarks and indicators enabling Member States to know where they stand and to assess progress towards the set objectives;
- ways to stimulate exchange and dissemination of good practice, such as peer learning activities.

Recently, the European Commission in consultation with Member States reviewed European cooperation in education and training and set strategic priorities for cooperation up to 2020:

- making lifelong learning and mobility a reality;
- improving the quality and efficiency of education and training;
- promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship;
- improving creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training.

Cooperation should address learning in all contexts – whether formal, non-formal or informal – and at all levels: from early childhood education and schools through to higher education,

vocational education and training and adult learning (Council of the European Union, 2009) (15).

Exchanging information on different policy options can help advance reforms in national education and training systems and, with other common learning activities, further progress towards the common objectives and benchmarks for lifelong learning.

Most countries have made progress in defining unified and overarching lifelong learning strategies. Within such frameworks, progress is evident in preprimary education, validation of non-formal and informal learning and most notably in national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) being developed by most EU Member States in response to the EQF based on learning outcomes.

Despite progress in the above areas, the following challenges need to be addressed to achieve overarching lifelong learning strategies.

Coherent and comprehensive lifelong learning strategies integrating education, higher education, adult learning and VET still need to be implemented. A holistic approach connecting lifelong learning and VET with other policy areas such as macroeconomics, employment, competition, enterprise, research and innovation, and social policies is crucial.

One of the most important challenges for NQFs is whether they will be able to operate as instruments for integration, making it possible to create learning pathways across education and training sectors and build on learning outcomes acquired in non-formal and informal settings, including at the workplace.

Adult participation in lifelong learning is still far from achieving the EU benchmark. Increased efforts are required to update their skills at various stages of their lives, broadening their access to education and training and have their learning valued, strengthening the quality of provisions and to achieve flexibility and security across the labour market.

Low levels of educational attainment and insufficient skills are major factors of social exclusion and poor labour market performance. This is especially true for older workers, low-skilled and other disadvantaged groups (such as migrants) who risk losing or cannot find a job. Demographic and labour market trends will lead to increased demand for high skills and fewer opportunities for the low skilled. To face this challenge, further investment in human and social capital is needed and increased participation in lifelong learning encouraged.

Study visits will present developments on:

(a) reforms in education and training, policy measures for implementing integrated lifelong learning strategies;

(b) policy measures to increase adult participation in lifelong learning;

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(15) Council of the European Union (2009). Council conclusions on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), 9845/09, Brussels, 13.5.2009. Available from Internet: http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/09/st09/st09845.en09.pdf

(c) implementation of flexible learning pathways and transition between different parts of national systems.

6.2.   List of topics for study visits

- Reforms in national education and training systems.

- Developing links between VET and higher education.

- Implementation of flexible learning pathways.

- Increasing adult participation in education and training.

6.3. Keywords

- o Adult learning,
- o European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET),
- o European credit transfer system (ECTS),
- o European qualifications framework (EQF),
- o innovative approaches,
- o learning outcomes,
- o lifelong learning programme,
- o low skilled,
- o migrants and minorities,
- o national qualifications frameworks,
- o older workers,
- o validation of non-formal and informal learning.

6.4. Selected sources on policy at EU level

European strategy and co-operation in education and training. Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc28_en.htm

Draft 2008 joint progress report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the 'Education and training 2010' work programme 'Delivering lifelong learning for knowledge, creativity and innovation'. Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/natreport08/council_en.pdf

Education and training 2010 – diverse systems, shared goals. Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc36_en.htm

Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training – indicators and benchmarks (2007). Available from Internet:
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progress06/report_en.pdf

Adult learning: It is never too late to learn, Commission communication (October 2006). Available from Internet: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2006/com2006_0614en01.pdf

Council of the European Union (2009). Council conclusions on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), 9845/09, Brussels, 13.5.2009. Available from Internet: http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/09/st09/st09845.en09.pdf

7.   Development of learning communities, involving all actors in education and training

7.1.   Description

European education and training fulfils several important roles in our society. In addition to providing learners with the knowledge, skills and competences they need to exercise a job or profession, it also helps develop competences important for people's family and social lives.

Opening up education and training systems to the wider world is one of the three strategic objectives of the work programme European education ministers agreed to help make Europe a knowledge-based society (Lisbon strategy). In its communication on *Improving competences for the 21st century: an agenda for European cooperation on schools,* the European Commission stresses the importance of 'school communities' which include partnerships with agencies, organisations and other actors outside the 'classic' school environment.

This makes education and training institutions more accountable to partners and enables representatives of the labour market, families, civic and environmental organisations and learners to work together to decide on intended learning outcomes, content and suitable forms of learning. Parents' participation is also highly important, as it helps stimulate educational success and school improvements. Education and training institutions may contribute also to the prevention of, and the fight against, all forms of violence on children and young people and to attain a high level of health protection, well-being and social cohesion.

In the updated strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training after 2010 (Council of the European Union, 2009) ([16]), it is important to develop partnerships between education and training providers ([17]) and businesses, research institutions, cultural actors and creative industries for acquiring the skills and competences required by the labour market and for fostering innovation.

Study visits will present approaches and examples of good practice on:

(a)   incentives and initiatives developed at national and regional levels for education and training institutions to cooperate with external partners, including parents, municipalities, enterprises, social partners, NGOs, etc.;

([16])   Council of the European Union (2009). Council conclusions on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), 9845/09, Brussels, 13.5.2009. Available from Internet: http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/09/st09/st09845.en09.pdf

([17])   Conclusions of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 12 May 2009 on enhancing partnerships between education and training institutions and social partners, in particular employers, in the context of lifelong learning. Available from Internet: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/107620.pdf

(b) national, regional and local examples of participative governance and evaluation of education and training institutions.

(c) initiatives to prevent violence on children and young people.

7.2. List of topics for study visits

- Cooperation between education and training institutions and local communities.

- Parents and social partners roles in governance.

- Schools and communities roles to prevent violence.

7.3. Keywords

- o Autonomy (school or institution),
- o bullying,
- o evaluation (school or institution),
- o financing,
- o leadership and management,
- o parents involvement,
- o school environment,
- o social inclusion,
- o social partners,
- o sustainable development.

7.4. Selected sources on policy at EU level

Communication from the Commission, to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Improving competences for the 21st century: an agenda for European cooperation on schools. Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/education/school21/com425_en.pdf

Commission staff working paper (SEC(2007)1009): Schools for the 21st century. Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/education/school21/consultdoc_en.pdf

Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training – indicators and benchmarks(2007). Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progress06/report_en.pdf

Council of the European Union. Conclusions on the future priorities for enhanced European cooperation on vocational education and training (VET). (Review of the Council conclusions of 15 November 2004) (2006/C 298/05). 8.12.2006. Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/council13832_en.pdf

The Helsinki communiqué on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training: communiqué of the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training, the European social partners and the European Commission convened in Helsinki on 5 December 2006 to review the priorities and strategies of the Copenhagen process. Brussels: European Commission, 2006. Available from Internet: http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/vet2006/pdf/Helsinki_Communique_en.pdf

Council of the European Union (2009). Council conclusions on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), 9845/09, Brussels, 13.5.2009. Available from Internet: http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/09/st09/st09845.en09.pdf

8. Promoting cross border mobility in lifelong learning

8.1. Description

Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality is one strategic objective for European cooperation in education and training after 2010 (Council of the European Union, 2009) ([18]).

Constructing a genuine European area of education is a priority for the European Union, both for cultural and economic reasons. The mobility of citizens, especially as part of education and training, helps promote a feeling of belonging to Europe, developing European awareness and emergence of European citizenship. More practically, it allows young people to improve their personal skills and employability, and teachers and trainers to broaden their experience and improve their skills. Finally, in an international economy, the ability to educate oneself and work in a multilingual environment is essential for the competitiveness of the European economy.

The 2006 **European quality charter for mobility** is the quality reference document for education and training stays abroad. It complements the 2001 recommendation on mobility for students, persons engaged in training, volunteers, teachers and trainers. The charter, agreed by Member States, provides guidance on mobility arrangements for learning or other purposes, such as professional improvement, to both young people and adults.

The European Commission launched in 2007 the new **lifelong learning programme.** It replaced previous education, vocational training and e-learning programmes, which ended in 2006 enabling the Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci and Grundtvig programmes to continue.

The programme supports exchanges and connections between people, institutions and countries. For example student exchanges, in-service training courses in school or adult education and participation in specific short internships for vocational students in companies in another country apply to individuals. Exchanges between institutions include developing partnerships between schools in different countries, joint projects run by universities to develop joint curricula, short-term intensive programmes or establish thematic networks in different disciplines. Connections between countries include study visits for regional and national administrators in education, training and guidance, networks of national experts or publication of comparable statistics on education and training systems.

A high level expert forum on mobility was initiated by the European Commission and in July 2008 it recommended radically increasing mobility opportunities for young people in the mid-

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([18]) Council of the European Union (2009). Council conclusions on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), 9845/09, Brussels, 13.5.2009. Available from Internet: http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/09/st09/st09845.en09.pdf

term. By 2020 at least 50 % of all young people should be able to engage in some form of cross-border mobility during their studies or training, in a work placement, or in voluntary activities. This offer should be irrespective of their social background and cover a wide range of learning contexts including school, university and vocational training as well as other formal and informal learning environments. The forum called for strategic action to eliminate barriers to mobility, ensure quality and exchange good practices.

In July 2009, the European Commission launched public consultation on the green paper on promoting the learning mobility of young people ([19]). The green paper deals with issues from preparation until the follow up of a mobility period. It also addresses the main barriers and obstacles to mobility, and asks for suggestions and examples of good practice to overcome them.

In addition to the above initiatives, common tools are being developed for transparency of qualifications and improve mobility across different countries and systems in Europe. These include the European qualifications framework for lifelong learning (EQF); the European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET); the European credit transfer and accumulation system (ECTS) and Europass.

Study visits will present developments and measures on implementing mobility in lifelong learning such as:

(a) initiatives and projects on learning mobility in different learning contexts;

(b) initiatives and projects which promote the widest access to mobility for individuals;

(c) initiatives to make qualifications more readable and understandable across different countries and systems in Europe;

(d) new approaches to simplify validation and recognition of knowledge, skills and competences acquired during mobility;

(e) promoting Europass and its use by education and training institutions, employment services and citizens;

(f) tools for transfer and recognition of learning outcomes to ease mobility of learners.

8.2. List of topics for study visits

- Learning mobility in education and training.

8.3. Keywords

  o Cultural awareness and expression,
  o disadvantaged groups,

([19]) Green paper. Promoting the learning mobility of young people. COM (2009) 329 final. Available from Internet**:** http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/mobility/com329_en.pdf

- o Europass,
- o European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET),
- o European credit transfer system (ECTS),
- o European qualifications framework (EQF),
- o language skills,
- o learners' mobility,
- o learning outcomes,
- o lifelong learning programme,
- o teachers' and trainers' mobility,
- o transparency of qualifications,
- o workers' mobility,

8.4.   Selected sources on policy at EU level

The European quality charter for mobility. Available from Internet:
http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:394:0005:0009:EN:PDF

Report of the high level expert forum on mobility 'Making learning mobility an opportunity for all'. Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/education/doc/2008/mobilityreport_en.pdf

Supporting citizens' mobility and lifelong learning (EQF, Europass, ECTS, ECVET, lifelong guidance). Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc40_en.htm

The new lifelong learning programme (2007-2013). Available from Internet:
http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc78_en.htm

Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training – indicators and benchmarks (2007). Available from Internet:
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progress06/report_en.pdf

Green paper. Promoting the learning mobility of young people. COM(2009) 329 final.
Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/mobility/com329_en.pdf

Council of the European Union (2009). Council conclusions on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), 9845/09, Brussels, 13.5.2009. Available from Internet: http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/09/st09/st09845.en09.pdf