

**ENHANCED COOPERATION IN
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**STOCKTAKING REPORT OF THE
COPENHAGEN COORDINATION GROUP
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1. INTRODUCTION

In November 2002 the Ministers for vocational education and training (VET) of the EU and EEA-EFTA Member States, the candidate countries, and the European Commission, adopted the ‘Copenhagen declaration’ on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and trainingⁱ. The declaration was also endorsed by the Social Partners’ representatives at European level.

The Copenhagen declaration sets out a strategy for improving the overall performance, quality and attractiveness of VET in Europe. It is a vital contribution towards ensuring the successful enlargement of the European Union, and meeting the target set at the Lisbon European Council in March 2000, of becoming by 2010 the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.

This report takes stock of the follow-up of the Copenhagen declaration. Part II recalls the political background leading to the adoption of the declaration. Part III describes how the implementation of the priorities set by Ministers has been organised, and part IV sets out what progress has been made. Finally, in part V the report looks forward to next steps under the Copenhagen process, suggesting certain policy recommendations for possible adoption at the political level.

2. POLITICAL BACKGROUNDⁱⁱ

The Lisbon conclusions gave a major political impetus to enhanced cooperation in VET by making education, training and lifelong learning key elements of the EU’s strategy for competitiveness and social cohesion. Lisbon called for the application of an open method of coordination in this area, and specifically requested that the Council and the Commission report jointly on the concrete future objectives of education systems. Lisbon therefore laid the ground for the development of a coherent framework for cooperation at European level, thus enhancing support at EU-level for the necessary reforms of education and training systems by Member States.

The Barcelona European Council in March 2002 agreed that the concrete objectives of education and training systems should be quality, access and opening up to the wider world, and welcomed the detailed work programme presented by the Council and the Commission on the follow-up of these objectivesⁱⁱⁱ. Furthermore, Barcelona set the target of making Europe’s education and training systems a world quality reference by 2010. The Barcelona conclusions also requested that further action be taken in the area of vocational training, particularly with reference to the transparency of qualifications and closer European cooperation^{iv}.

The significance of the Barcelona European Council is that it brought to the political level a process which had begun with the Directors General for vocational training (DGVT) at their meeting in Bruges, October 2001. The ‘Bruges initiative’ aimed at creating a shared vision of how VET in Europe needs to be adapted and improved, if the Lisbon goals are to be achieved. Focusing on the principles of transparency and mutual trust, the Directors General agreed on the need for reinforced voluntary and ‘bottom-up’ cooperation, working closely with the social partners.

The Bruges initiative was informed by the Commission's consultation process on the memorandum on lifelong learning, which led to the Communication from the Commission on 'Making a European area of lifelong learning a reality' (November 2001), and the Council (Education) resolution on lifelong learning (June 2002)^v. The concept of a European area of lifelong learning emphasises the need for individuals to be able to move freely between countries, sectors, jobs and institutions, using their qualifications and competences as a kind of 'common currency'. The quality of provision and the need for effective information, guidance and counselling are also stressed as essential elements of a lifelong learning strategy. The European Employment Strategy also calls upon Member States to implement coherent and comprehensive strategies for lifelong learning, emphasising the need to improve the quality and efficiency of education and training systems, and to improve public and private investment in human resources^{vi}.

Following the mandate of the Barcelona European Council, the Council (Education) adopted in November 2002 a resolution on the Promotion of Enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training^{vii}. This resolution invited the Member States and the Commission to take the appropriate steps necessary to implement the priorities developed under the Bruges initiative, building on and adapting relevant structures and instruments, and involving the social partners, the EEA-EFTA countries and the candidate countries.

The Copenhagen declaration responds to this invitation from the Council. It takes up the same principles and priorities of the resolution, but goes further in terms of specifying the means for implementation. It is stated, for example, that the working group set up by the DGVT under the Bruges initiative should coordinate the implementation of the priorities of the declaration. Accordingly, the Copenhagen Coordination Group (CCG) has been established, chaired by the Commission, and composed of representatives of all Member States, candidate and EFTA-EEA countries and European Social Partners. Following the Copenhagen declaration, the 'Bruges initiative' became the Copenhagen process.

The declaration also anticipates the gradual integration of the Copenhagen process into the follow-up to the objectives of education and training systems (the 'Objectives process'). In view of this integrated approach, it is stated that progress against the priorities of the declaration will be included in the 2004 interim report from the Council and the Commission to the Spring European Council. The present report should therefore be seen as a contribution to the 2004 interim report.

3. FOLLOW-UP OF THE COPENHAGEN DECLARATION: A FLEXIBLE AND COORDINATED APPROACH

The follow-up to the declaration has been organised in a flexible way, in order to take account of the specific needs of VET, and its rich diversity of systems and stakeholders. The need to respond rapidly to labour market requirements in terms of rapidly changing competence needs and new technologies, for example, distinguishes VET from general education. Cooperation in this field must address this specificity.

Accordingly, certain priorities that concern the specific needs of VET, and which foresee concrete outputs, are for the time being taken forward outside the framework of the Objectives process. As stated in the declaration, the initial focus is on the development of a single transparency framework, credit transfer in VET and quality assurance. The

further development of these elements should of course be linked to other levels and types of learning.

At the same time, it is becoming increasingly important to develop an integrated approach to education and training policies at European level, in order to ensure their coherence and to make best use of resources. Crucially, such an approach helps to ensure that a lifelong learning perspective is applied, in terms of linking different types and levels of education, training and learning.

Validation of non-formal and informal learning, lifelong guidance and the learning needs of teachers and trainers in VET, are all issues which by their very nature span across general education and VET. These issues should not be dealt with uniquely from a VET perspective and so are being followed up from the outset within the framework of the Objectives process. This work is, however, actively coordinated with the follow-up of the other priorities of the Copenhagen process in order to ensure that VET specific aspects are concretely addressed.

It is also crucial to ensure that the EU education and training policy framework is coordinated effectively with other strands of the Lisbon strategy, notably in the Bologna process, and in the areas of employment and social policy, internal market, research and enterprise. Synergy with the follow-up to the Social Partners' framework of actions for the lifelong development of competencies and qualifications is also essential, as many of the priorities of the Copenhagen declaration are also key issues in this agreement.

Equally, in view of the target of making Europe's education and training systems a world quality reference, it is important to take into account the global relevance of many of the priorities of the Copenhagen, and parallel work underway in bodies such as the OECD, the ILO and UNESCO. Attention is drawn in this report to areas where this international perspective is relevant.

3.1. Coordination: The Copenhagen Coordination Group, the Advisory Committee for Vocational Training and the Directors General for Vocational Training

The work of the Copenhagen Coordination Group (CCG) is closely coordinated with that of the Directors General for vocational training (DGVT) (these two groups are closely related, the CCG being based on a working group originally set up by the DGVT), and the Advisory Committee for Vocational Training (ACVT). The ACVT is the formal tripartite body on which social partners at national level are represented, along with Government representatives. Given its statutory role, the ACVT is asked for its formal opinion on substantive initiatives from the Commission. The ACVT is also kept fully informed of, and invited to discuss, policy developments. The DGVT has a more informal and prospective role, and is able to give advice on forthcoming initiatives as well as strategic matters. A joint website has been set up on the CEDEFOP virtual community platform (see below) for the members of these three key groups in order better to promote the sharing and exchange of information [<http://cedefop.communityzero.com/acvt-ccg>].

The CCG has met twice, on 20 February and 18 June 2003. The first priority of the group was to establish an overview of the work underway in the follow-up to the Copenhagen declaration, and relevant work in other areas, notably the Objectives process. The CCG is maintaining this overview, particularly in order to identify where coordination issues arise, and in order to ensure that VET is properly represented in the Objectives process.

This role is balanced however with that of focusing on the substantive policy issues at stake in the Copenhagen process. To date the CCG has concentrated on quality assurance and credit transfer in VET. The CCG is charged with coordinating and steering the work of the technical working groups.

The CCG has also given attention to the need to develop effective coordination arrangements at national level. Coordination at the national level between the main actors responsible for VET is essential if the Copenhagen declaration is to be implemented in a coherent way. Several countries have, for example, set up coordination groups bringing together education and labour ministries, social partners and other actors.

The CCG also notes that in the context of the development of indicators and benchmarks under the Objectives process, important quantitative data are missing in the field of initial vocational education and training. There is therefore a need for a harmonised data collection on VET combining statistical information and qualitative information, to make it possible to assess the effectiveness and attractiveness of VET, and to monitor the links between education and training, and working life.

3.2. CEDEFOP virtual communities

The CEDEFOP virtual communities (VCs) [<http://cedefop.communityzero.com/>] have been set up to support the implementation process. They are inter-active electronic platforms designed to facilitate communication and exchange between actors responsible for taking forward the priorities of the declaration. VCs enable members to post and share information, and take part in online discussions. The VCs enable existing groups to work efficiently between meetings, and also provide a forum for disparate actors where no working group has been set up. The VCs are now being opened up to wider circles of experts, networks, practitioners, promoters and users, in order to encourage ‘bottom-up’ participation in the Copenhagen process, and to help ensure the quality and relevance of proposals.

4. STOCK-TAKE OF PROGRESS MADE IN THE FOLLOW-UP TO THE COPENHAGEN DECLARATION JANUARY – JULY 2003

4.1. Developing a single framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences

The declaration gives priority to

Increasing transparency in vocational education and training through the implementation and rationalisation of information tools and networks, including the integration of existing instruments such as the European CV, certificate and diploma supplements, the Common European framework of reference for languages and the Europass into one single framework

In December 2002 the European Commission set up, following the agreement of the ACVT, a technical working group (TWG) to take forward this priority. The TWG is chaired by the Commission and composed of representatives of the Member States, EEA-EFTA countries, candidate countries, Social Partners, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) and the European Training Foundation (ETF).

The TWG has taken over the work of the European Forum on Transparency, established in 1999 by the European Commission and CEDEFOP to support the development and implementation of solutions to transparency of qualifications. The Transparency Forum was instrumental in promoting closer co-operation in European vocational education and training. The Bruges initiative of the DGVT was very much based on the positive experiences from the Transparency Forum, as well as the Quality Forum (see 4.2), not least thanks to the mutual trust developed through practical cooperation.

The TWG presented to the Commission a report on a single European framework for transparency of qualifications in June 2003. The Commission has prepared a proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and Council. The opinion of the ACVT has been sought by written procedure in October. Adoption by the Commission is planned for November 2003.

4.1.1. Report from the transparency TWG

The TWG recommends that the single framework should be created by linking together the transparency instruments referred to in the Copenhagen declaration, around the European CV, by means of a common graphic layout and consistent terminology. The framework should be given the title Europass. Thus, a person should be able, on a voluntary basis, to draft his or her personal CV, either electronically or on paper, establish links to the other transparency documents he or she may hold, and then attach relevant additional documents in order to add evidence, detail and substance on particular aspects.

A website should be available where users can get a clear overview of the instruments contained within the framework, and how these are linked to services and institutions at different levels. In particular, users will find a (both technically and content-wise) improved version of the European CV-format^{viii}. The TWG suggests that the development of the web-solution, including a common Europass logo, be carried out and coordinated by CEDEFOP in cooperation with the Commission and the national authorities.

The single framework for transparency should be based on the principle of an *open architecture*. This means that new instruments may be added in the future and new relationships may be established between elements so that a greater diversity and complexity of user needs can be addressed. Links to the EURES, the European Job Mobility Portal, must also be ensured.

In implementing the Europass framework, Member States and participating countries will provide a new public service that offers to users a seamless interface, giving visibility and access to a range of existing services. These services are currently provided by different government departments and agencies, which issue the different tools that the framework will combine, and which will play a crucial role in implementing, promoting, monitoring, co-ordinating and developing the Europass framework.

The success of the Europass framework – its credibility, sustainability and quality – depends on having appropriate implementation and support structures at national and at Community level. The following functions are required if the framework is to be operated effectively at national level: 1) providing service to individual users; 2) information and promotion; 3) networking on national level; 4) networking at European level.

The TWG recommends that Member States and participating countries nominate a single agency or institution as a co-ordinating body, and that they actively support the creation of networks between existing agencies/bodies. It is suggested by the TWG that there is a good level of both strategic and operational “fit” between the functions outlined above and the emerging role of the National Reference Points (NRPs).

Although national authorities will work out arrangements for implementation according to their own situations, there are common success criteria to be taken into account. The organisation of structures, bodies, services etc. in support of transparency need to be inclusive, involving employers, employees and national authorities.

Information campaigns should be undertaken at national level to highlight the benefits of the transparency tools. Campaigns should draw attention to the relevance of the framework to both national and international contexts, but should also be targeted at an “inter-institutional” level in order to raise awareness of the instruments and the roles of the different partners in the network.

4.1.2. The proposal for a decision on a Europass single framework

The keywords of the draft proposal from the Commission are rationalisation and coordination, of both the transparency documents and the related bodies and networks.

The proposal can be summarised as follows:

- a single transparency framework is established, under the name ‘Europass’ and with a common logo. For the time being includes the European CV, the Diploma Supplement, the Mobilipass (replacing the current Europass-Training), the European Language Portfolio, the Certificate Supplement. It is made clear that new documents can be added in future;
- all Europass documents should be in electronic and paper form, and coordinated with the Europass information system;
- provisions are made for the implementation:
 - in each country one single body will coordinate the activities related to the implementation of the Decision. The choice of the body and any organisational arrangements is a national competence.
 - the need for promotion, information and guidance is stressed;
- Community financial support is provided for the development phase (2005-06). For the subsequent years, the Commission’s proposal is that the Europass should be implemented in the context of the new framework programme in the field of lifelong learning (the new generation of programmes that should enter into force in 2007).

Each of the five documents in question are dealt with in a specific article and in an annex which indicates for each the general model agreed at European level. In practice, for certain existing documents like the Diploma or Certificate Supplements the only real change would be to add the Europass logo on the documents. Some exchange of information will also be required with the body coordinating the Europass framework. They would be delivered by the same issuing bodies as now, according to the established procedures.

Real changes will concern in particular the Europass-Training. Taking into account the conclusions of the evaluation study and opinions expressed by a number of stakeholders, it is proposed to remove the condition that the European pathway should be work-linked. This amounts to widening its scope to include all periods of learning in another country: the proposed document should record all mobility experiences for learning purposes that respect some quality criteria. To reflect this fact, the name of the document is 'Mobilipass'. The structure will also be changed to allow for a more detailed description of the mobility experience.

The general responsibilities of the Europass National Agencies are indicated, but all choices concerning the actual organisation (new rather than existing body, centralised rather than decentralised etc.) remain a national competence.

4.1.3. Preparing for a pilot stage

A pilot version of the Europass single framework should be up and running in early 2004. 2004 should be used to gain experience on the functionality of the solutions, to outline possible improvements of the individual instruments and to broaden the range of instruments/services included (in particular at sector and branch level). Inter-operability should be ensured with existing national and regional online CV systems. In this context the TWG is working with the Belgian (Fl) labour market authorities during the pilot stage. Europass should be launched at the end of 2004 and a fully operational version should be prepared for early 2005.

For more information, join the virtual community on transparency of qualifications and competences [<http://cedefop.communityzero.com/transparency>].

4.2. Quality assurance

The declaration gives priority to

Promoting cooperation in quality assurance with particular focus on exchange of models and methods, as well as common criteria and principles for quality in vocational education and training.

In January 2003 the European Commission set up, following the agreement of the ACVT, a technical working group (TWG) to take forward this priority. The TWG is chaired by the Commission and composed of representatives of the Member States, EEA-EFTA countries, candidate countries, Social Partners, the European Training Foundation (ETF) and CEDEFOP, which provides technical and scientific support to the group. The TWG acts as a first level platform of cooperation, engaging inclusive national networks and forums.

The TWG has taken over the work of the European Forum on Quality in VET which was established in December 2000 as the first structured cooperation platform between the Commission, the national authorities and the Social Partners. The Bruges initiative of the DGVT was very much based on the positive experiences from the Quality Forum, as well as the Transparency Forum (see 4.1), not least thanks to the mutual trust that was developed through practical cooperation.

The approach taken by the TWG, and the Quality Forum before it, is that of building consensus, through a 'bottom-up' approach (taking stock of existing experience), on common quality principles, methods, criteria and indicators that could guide the

implementation, on a voluntary basis, of quality assurance and management systems in VET, in the European Union. A strong focus is placed on the improvement and evaluation of the ‘outputs’ and ‘outcomes’ of VET in terms of increasing employability, improving the match between demand and supply, and better access to lifelong training, in particular for disadvantaged people.

The work programme for 2003 was primarily focused on the points of the mandate for which concrete results were expected. A new work programme must be set up for 2004, in order to consolidate the outline proposals for the operational approach and co-operative framework set out in the October progress report of the TWG. As regards point 1: ‘examine existing national and international standards and norms, their application, strengths and weaknesses’, a background paper has been finalised^{ix}. For points 2: ‘identify a common core of criteria for quality development at European level’^x and 3: ‘develop a limited set of coherent quality indicators for VET at systems level, on the basis of good practice’^{xi}, concrete proposals have been made by the TWG.

The development of an ‘operational approach’ (point 4) progressed well and is the subject of a wide consensus in the group. It led to the development of a Common Quality Assurance Framework for VET, which includes the ‘common core of criteria’ and the ‘set of indicators’ as well as a practical tool: an European guide to self-assessment^{xii}. The ‘outline proposal for a co-operation framework’ (point 6) gives possible directions for future work.

The following sections set out in summary form the main elements of the work of the TWG so far.

4.2.1. The examination of existing national and international standards and norms, their application, strengths and weaknesses

According to the mandate of the TWG, the work on standards and norms should focus on the analysis of the experiences of their use in different countries and at different levels. These experiences cover international, national, regional and sectoral standards and norms. Rather than representing a systematic data collection, contributions from Member States refer to experiences that can be considered as ‘good practices’. This led to a report based on the analysis of the contributions from the members of the TWG, which should be considered as a background paper aiming at deepening insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the application of standards in different settings.

4.2.2. The identification of a common core of criteria for quality development at European level

In accordance with its mandate the TWG work identified a common core of criteria and a set of indicators for quality development at European level. Given that a systematic approach is necessary to guarantee effective quality management, the core criteria were identified in relation to a structured framework. This led to the drawing up of a proposal on a Common Quality Assurance Framework, which can be applied at both the system- and VET provider-levels and can therefore be used to assess the effectiveness of policy initiatives and VET provision.

It associates four interrelated elements:

a) a *model* which applies both to systems and providers and allows for the identification of best practice of current provision across Member States. The model includes the following steps:

- *Planning* (i.e. setting goals)
- *Implementation*
- *Evaluation* of programme provision by objectives including learners; *Assessment* of learners' achievement of outcomes
- *Review* (i.e. feedback and procedures for change)

b) a *methodology*, as a transversal dimension which is present throughout all the steps of the model, but which constitutes nonetheless a full element of the model in its own right. The TWG considers that self-assessment is a relevant methodology for quality assurance at systems and providers level, and it has devised sample self-assessment guidelines.

c) a *monitoring system*, which Member States need to put in place at systems and provider levels, where relevant stakeholders, and namely the social partners, are associated. This needs to be based on common core principles including external monitoring and feedback. This monitoring activity will complement the self-assessment evaluations done by providers and can incorporate the findings of evaluation reports.

d) a *measurement tool*, in order to contrast, compare and benchmark Member States' systems, a common measurement system could be adopted. This can be done by application of common reference indicators, as devised by the Technical Working Group. These indicators can also be used as 'spot lights' that draw attention to the VET process at national level, and as a basis for exchanges of experiences and good practices.

The logic of the Common Quality Assurance Framework builds on the key principles of the most relevant existing quality assurance models. Therefore, it must not be considered as a new model, but as a cross reading instrument which can help policy makers and practitioners to get a better insight of how the existing models work, and how to improve them, on the basis of commonly agreed core of criteria and set of indicators at European level. It allows also for the identification of the weak and strong points of the different models and their implementation, and can thereby provide the basis for the identification and exchanges of good practices.

4.2.3. *Developing a limited set of coherent quality indicators for VET, on the basis of good practice*

The TWG has proposed a set of 8 coherent indicators^{xiii}, which can be applied at system or provider levels, and most of which can already at this stage be based on quantified data. They are 1) share of VET providers applying quality management systems respecting the Common Quality Assurance Framework by type of approach used (e.g. ISO, EFQM); 2) Investment in training of trainers; 3) Unemployment according to groups; 4) Prevalence of vulnerable groups; 5) Participation in initial vocational training and lifelong learning; 6) Successful completion of training; 7) Destination of trainees six months after training: further training; employed (in a job related to training); unemployed etc.; 8) Utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace. Two soft indicators (descriptors) have also been proposed, to collect additional qualitative information

relating to the achievement of the policy objectives: 9) Mechanisms for forecasting skills development; 10) Schemes to promote better access (guidance, support).

For five of the chosen indicators existing data sources at European level can be exploited. Additional data collection and / or pilot studies will be necessary for three indicators (share of VET-providers use of QM-systems respecting the Common Quality Assurance Framework for quality in VET; investment in training of trainers; utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace from the perspective of both the employer and the employee).

There are different ways of linking the set of indicators to the Common Quality Assurance Framework. In principle the subject of indicators is important in each of the for steps of the framework. Another understanding of the linkage between the set of indicators and the common quality assurance framework is to see the indicators as objectives for the improvement of quality. In this case they primarily will belong to the planning process and to the assessment phase. In the first step quantified objectives would be formulated for each of the indicators, whereas during assessment and evaluation the achievements would be measured and compared to those previously set.

4.2.4. A European guide on self-assessment

As part of the TWG's mandate, an European guide to self-assessment was developed, based on a cross analysis of cases of 'good practices' in Member States. Self-assessment can be performed at VET provider and systems levels. It helps providers to analyse their responses to economic and social challenges, and to provide adequate feedback on areas needing change. It helps systems to improve good governance which is necessary to provide adequate statutory provisions, to allocate the necessary resources, to check on results, etc. in due time, and for the VET-providers to respond and carry out the necessary changes. The European guide for self-assessment is primarily addressed to VET providers and gives guidance on the ways of performing self-assessment, with concrete quality criteria and explanatory statements, illustrated by examples from different VET systems. It contains also a guide for performing self-assessment at system level and gives an overview of different existing frameworks for self-assessment.

4.2.5. The Identification of Quality Assurance Institutions

A mapping of bodies responsible for quality assurance of VET systems (initial and continuing training) in the Member States has been launched, utilising 'grids' for data collection. The aim is to get a better insight of "who is doing what" in this field and thereby to foster the exchange of experience and cooperation between institutions with similar functions and agendas. Several Member States already filled these grids in, allowing for a first evaluation of this tool. This has been supplemented by a list of bodies operating in the field of accreditation and standardisation at European and International levels in various sectors including education. Each accreditation body is presented by name, acronym, internet address, availability of on-line directory and publication of journals or of on-line information notes. Special reference is made to the existence of standards that are available electronically.

4.2.6. Learning needs of teachers and trainers in VET

The declaration also gives priority under quality assurance to :

the learning needs of teachers and trainers within all forms of vocational education and training

The follow-up to this priority has been organised through working group (WG) A of the Objectives process, on 'Improving education and training for teachers and trainers'.

The WG focused in a first stage of its work on two key issues: i) Identification of the skills needs of teachers and trainers in the knowledge society and ii) supporting them to respond to these needs. The work on these key issues provides a baseline for addressing the learning needs of teachers and trainers in VET, which must be given detailed attention in the next phase of the group's work. To date in depth analysis, e.g. study visits, has concentrated only on teachers in the formal systems.

While not primarily focused on the 'quality assurance' of teachers' and trainers' learning and training, the Common Quality Assurance Framework gives attention to the qualification of teachers and trainers which is undoubtedly a key element in any VET quality system. In this context, teacher/trainer qualifications and competences are considered as an important input and process standard for the quality of VET systems and providers. Furthermore, the development of a European guide on self-assessment will include tools, which may also contribute to the identification of the learning needs of teachers and trainers in VET. Finally, investment on training of trainers has been identified as one of the core quality indicators at system and provider levels.

The work carried out within both the Copenhagen and Objectives processes therefore contributes to the improvement of teachers' and trainers' competences and qualifications and allows for 'cross fertilisation' between priorities in the perspective of an integrated approach.

For more information, join the virtual community on quality assurance in VET [<http://cedefop.communityzero.com/quality>].

4.3. Developing a European credit transfer system for VET

The declaration gives priority to

Investigating how transparency, comparability, transferability and recognition of competences and/or qualifications, between different countries and at different levels, could be promoted by developing reference levels, common principles for certification, and common measures, including a credit transfer system for vocational education and training

In November 2002 the European Commission set up, following the agreement of the ACVT, a technical working group (TWG) to take forward this priority. The TWG is chaired by the Commission and composed of representatives of the Member States, EEA-EFTA countries, candidate countries, Social Partners, and CEDEFOP.

The TWG is working in a medium and long-term perspective on strategy development, and on a short-term perspective on the design of small, practical steps, which can easily be monitored and evaluated. A progress report has been presented by the TWG (October 2003). Studies have also been launched (September 2003) by CEDEFOP on the issues of credit systems and qualifications frameworks in order to inform the work of the TWG. They are expected to report in Spring 2004.

4.3.1. *The purpose of a European Credit System in VET (ECVET)*

The purpose and functions of ECVET are defined from a bottom-up perspective, i.e. according to the needs of stakeholders. These can be split between those who directly benefit from ECVET, and those who are involved in building and delivering policy. Individuals (and families/households) are at the heart of a credit system for VET. Enterprises working transnationally are also primary stakeholders. Following on from this, the social partners also have a strong interest in the development of ECVET, and themselves address questions of transfer within their own strategies for competence and qualifications development. VET providers (incl. teachers, workplace instructors) are also central to the system as they organise, offer and assess the study modules. The development of mutual trust (in reference levels, units or modules and certification etc.) between institutions participating in a mobility experience is a crucial variable.

A credit system in VET should fulfil the following functions:

- Facilitating the transfer of learning outputs/outcomes within and between various national VET systems and between formal, non-formal and informal and VET systems;
- Facilitating the accumulation of training/education/learning activities (modules), or qualification units/programmes towards a partial or a complete qualification, by contributing to the definition, assessment and certification of parts;
- Facilitating the transparency of learning processes and outcomes;
- Facilitating mobility within training/education/learning processes and professional mobility by improving the description of complete qualifications.

ECVET should build on the existing diversity of VET systems, and should respect Member States' responsibility for the organisation of these systems. In view of the need to develop a European area of lifelong learning, ECVET should, in the medium-term, also be made compatible with the existing European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) in higher education.

4.3.2. *Definition of credits, study units and modules for VET*

Credits can be considered first as a measurement allocated to qualification units and/or modules and/or to part or full qualifications. Secondly, credits can be considered as a basis for certification of (part) qualifications, or whole qualifications, linked to corresponding reference levels and sub-levels which should as far as possible be organised within a coherent qualifications framework (see below).

Credits in VET could be defined and awarded according, for example to type/areas of learning (theoretical, practical, transversal/basic skills, general education); learning location (in class, in apprenticeship, in an enterprise, at home); learning context (formal/non-formal/informal); learning duration (years, months, semesters). The measurement basis is part of the on-going discussion. The TWG is examining different bases for measurement using the concepts of 'notional learning time', of 'learning density', of workload, or a balance of these concepts. The most important aspect, whatever the approach, is that the objectives of provisions are set up in terms of acquired competences. As such, *learning outcomes* have been identified as the most important factor. It is therefore essential to develop ECVET in such a way that it allows for flexible

validation, certification and assessment of learning outcomes (thereby going beyond a strictly quantitative approach).

The introduction of a credit system may be facilitated by the structuring of an educational course / qualification programme into a large number of modules, which can be assessed individually, whereby the overall assessment of a partial or full qualification is cumulative. The existence of modular systems is not a prerequisite, but would substantially promote the validation of learning and the identification and allocation of credits at European level^{xiv}.

One central element within the development of ECVET is the establishment of trust between (the stakeholders of) different national VET systems. The TWG is working on with the notion of ‘zones of mutual trust’ or ‘qualitative zones’ which determine the acceptance of differences between national systems at different levels. These zones have a vertical (between levels) and a horizontal (between study programmes) dimension.

4.3.3. Common reference levels or qualification frameworks for VET

National systems vary according to the criteria by which qualifications levels are defined, and the extent to which qualifications frameworks are coherent and comprehensive. Few Member States have so far introduced single frameworks combining initial, further and higher education as well as lifelong learning^{xv}. Frameworks tend to be adapted to the specificities of national situations, and are linked to patterns of education, training and lifelong learning^{xvi}.

There are four international classifications developed for statistical or recognition/comparability purposes (EU-levels from 1985, ISCO from 1988, ISCED from 1997 and EU-levels from the 2002 draft directive on professional recognition) each having different functions, whilst only ISCO and ISCED are in use and widely recognised. The TWG considers that existing international classifications do not adequately reflect the amount and level of knowledge, skills and competences acquired during a VET programme, through work experience and/or on-the-job learning. These classifications should be further refined and complemented in terms of acquired knowledge, skills and competences, differentiated according to level.

The TWG has also addressed the issue of reference levels from the perspective of sectoral developments, for example in relation to curriculum guidelines for ICT skills training^{xvii}. This approach is based on the common definition of different kinds (levels) of modules, e.g. core general modules, core occupation specific modules, task specific modules, as well as common definitions of competences, vocational or professional profiles. Such ‘commonality’ should make it possible to identify credit points in relation to company based training on an equal footing with formal education or training.

4.3.4. A medium-term strategy for the development and implementation of ECVET

The TWG recommends the development, by 2010, of a coherent European credits and qualifications meta-framework, specified according to a ‘typology’ of knowledge, skills/tasks and competences, in order to facilitate the assessment and recognition of learning outcomes across national and sectoral borders, and contribute to the achievement of the Lisbon goals. The development of such a framework at European level would be the cornerstone of a European area of lifelong learning and a true

European labour market. This should now be set as an overarching objective for European cooperation in education and training.

The TWG stresses nonetheless that the development of ECVET is still in its early stages. A clear vision of the medium term aim must be accompanied by a coherent strategy of how to get there. The following steps are proposed as a means of taking forward the development and implementation of ECVET:

- (1) Continue to build up the conceptual basis of ECVET, including by forging appropriate synergies with other groups set up under the Copenhagen process, such as those on transparency, quality, non-formal learning and guidance.
- (2) Develop a set of principles, in order to guide the development of a coherent European credit and qualifications meta-framework, and to support the acceptance and trust of such a framework in participating countries.
- (3) Test (in parallel) different approaches to credit transfer in initial (ISCED levels 3 and 4) VET, including apprenticeships, with the aim of promoting transnational mobility. An experimental phase should be supported by the Leonardo da Vinci programme. Credit transfer in VET should be prioritised under the next call for proposals (2004-6). Projects could focus on the further development of the draft 'operational scheme' for ECVET presented in the TWG report.
- (4) Promote enhanced institutional cooperation at European level, with the objective of initiating a systematic exchange of experience regarding credit systems and qualifications frameworks, and in order to prepare the development of a European typology of knowledge, skills and competences, within a suitable structure of levels for VET.

For more information, join the virtual community on credit transfer in VET: [<http://cedefop.communityzero.com/credittransfer>].

4.4. The European dimension

The declaration gives priority to

Strengthening the European dimension in vocational education and training with the aim of improving closer cooperation in order to facilitate and promote mobility and the development of inter-institutional cooperation, partnerships and other transnational initiatives, all in order to raise the profile of the European education and training area in an international context so that Europe will be recognised as a world-wide reference for learners.

The specific modalities for follow-up of this priority have not yet been decided. On the one hand it is transversal, calling for closer cooperation in order to raise the profile of VET. On the other hand, it is a mandate specifically to promote European cooperation between institutions and other types of transnational partnerships. In this sense this priority reflects the need to develop the bottom-up dimension of the Copenhagen process, in terms of initiatives being led from the national level.

At its meeting on 20 February 2003, the CCG advised that cooperation could be promoted between bodies responsible for quality assurance and/or qualifications

authorities, for example by developing networks, possibly to be combined with peer review arrangements. Initiatives could be developed on a voluntary basis around specific issues by those countries who are interested in taking part, with a view to promoting *inter alia* mutual learning and the exchange of good practice. Where such cooperation initiatives are shown to be successful, participation can be widened and similar approaches adopted in other areas.

This priority should be taken forward by future presidencies, and should also be taken into account in the future development of the Leonardo da Vinci programme and in the next generation of education and training programmes 2007-13.

4.5. Validation of non-formal and informal learning

The declaration gives priority to

developing a set of common principles regarding validation of non-formal and informal learning with the aim of ensuring greater compatibility between approaches in different countries and at different levels.

The follow-up of this priority has been organised through the Objectives process. A Commission Expert Group on non-formal and informal learning supports ‘Group H’ (Making learning more attractive and strengthening links with working life and society).

Validation of non-formal and informal learning goes straight to the heart of the question of lifelong learning. As such, the mandate to develop common principles may be seen as an element in a strategy supporting ‘lifewide’ learning, allowing individuals to combine learning outcomes from different settings of life and society, irrespective of the formal status of the learning context in question.

Methodologies and systems for the identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal and informal learning may serve a number of purposes. In formal education and training validation is increasingly used to open systems up to new groups of learners, allowing for combinations of formal and non-formal learning outcomes. In the world of work, validation plays a vital role in strategies for human resource development. Recent developments in the International Labour Organisation illustrate this point. ILO Member States are currently working on a revision of existing international agreements on human resource development practice. Validation is one of the main new elements now introduced into this framework.

The same emphasis is reflected in the European social partners’ framework agreement for the lifelong development of competencies and qualifications (March 2002). This framework agreement gives priority to validation in the context of competence management at individual and at company level, as well as in terms of increasing the efficiency of labour markets by facilitating mobility. The follow-up to the framework agreement (February 2003) emphasises the need to build bridges between the world of formal education and the world of work, and in this respect to hold in-depth discussions with public authorities. The work on common principles forms an essential part of this dialogue.

The main motivation for developing common European principles is to bring an added value, in the form of increased *comparability* of methods and strengthened overall quality, to the rich diversity of solutions currently evolving at national, regional, sectoral

and local level. The aim is not to narrow down and limit the methodological and institutional options but to add a common core, enhancing flexible combinations.

A main challenge for the formulation of the common principles for validation is therefore to take on board the multiple perspectives of actors concerned and to account for the variety of different needs. The discussions of the expert group have, for example, drawn attention to the different needs and motivations of the social partners in the development of validation approaches, compared to those of actors within the formal education and training systems.

A set of common principles must provide recommendations on how to strengthen the *quality* of methods and systems for validation. Without narrowing down the methodological and institutional options, a range of common quality requirements supporting mutual trust and comparability can be introduced and ensured. This can be exemplified by the need for transparency of procedures and standards: those being validated must have a right to know about all procedures involved, the criteria for assessment and the right to appeal. All systems, of whichever kind, must allow for the training of assessors. To ensure the credibility of validations (aiming at a ‘strong currency’) all relevant stakeholders must be involved.

Common principles must, secondly, address the issue of *individual rights*, that is, of ensuring that citizens have access to validation. This question can be addressed in different ways, depending on the validation context (public education systems, private enterprise settings etc.), the main point is to ensure that the conditions and infrastructure for validation are in place, allowing as many citizens as possible to have their full range of competences valued in an appropriate way. Some countries have established a legal right to assessment and this is a question currently being debated inside as well as outside the Expert Group.

A common approach towards the issues of quality and individual rights should in itself provide a basis for comparability between validation approaches in different countries, at different levels and in different contexts. The European inventory on non-formal and informal learning now being set up will be a crucial instrument in monitoring how the common principles, once agreed, are followed up. A crucial question for the expert group is to what extent the common principles and European inventory can form the basis of a European framework for validation, contributing to the development of high quality, compatible approaches at all levels. Such a framework will need to support and extend arrangements for credit transfer, existing within the ECTS and being developed for VET under the Copenhagen process (see 4.3 above).

For more information, join the virtual community on non-formal and informal learning [<http://cedefop.communityzero.com/nfl>].

4.6. Lifelong guidance: strengthening policies, systems and practices

The declaration gives priority to

Strengthening policies, systems and practices that support information, guidance and counselling in the Member States, at all levels of education, training and employment, particularly on issues concerning access to learning, vocational education and training, and the transferability and recognition of competences and qualifications, in order to support occupational and geographical mobility of citizens in Europe

The follow-up of this priority has been organised through the Objectives process. A Commission Expert Group on Lifelong Guidance works to support the Objectives follow-up, especially Group G (access, social inclusion, active citizenship) and Group H (making learning attractive, education, work and society). To date this has entailed developing policy recommendations related to guidance for the Objectives groups and meeting with their coordinators. The policy recommendations have centred on four themes:

- Access to guidance services, including workplace, ICT
- Quality assurance for guidance delivery, including ICT products and services
- The role of guidance in human resource development, including promoting the benefits of learning, raising awareness of science and technology opportunities, improving the efficiency (completion rates) of education and training systems
- Guidance for mobility and flexibility in education, training and employment in Europe

In terms of vocational education and training, the reflections of the Expert Group have been strongly influenced by recent research findings (OECD, CEDEFOP, ETF, World Bank) on policies for career guidance in Europe. Consistent findings across the four studies are :

- Policy objectives for guidance are poorly defined, poorly articulated, and poorly communicated in most countries
- Forums in which government and non-government stakeholders can communicate and debate policy issues are ill-developed in most countries at national level
- Major gaps exist in policies and systems for guidance provision in Europe, in particular for VET participants and for employed people.

In response to these findings the Expert Group has identified some key factors for the development of career guidance policies in Europe :

i) Increased synergy with education and training programmes for the potential development of a European network of stakeholders (policymakers, social partners and other relevant associations) which could be established to *strengthen policies and systems for guidance* in the EU.

ii) The role of Governments and social partners, in association with career guidance services, in promoting the *attractiveness of VET* learning and career opportunities in order to support workforce development and the needs of businesses.

iii) The role of Governments and social partners in supporting the *career progression* of the workforce through the development of learning and qualifications pathways for VET participants and graduates over the lifespan.

iv) The role of Governments and social partners in supporting the development of career guidance provision at the workplace in order to develop the *career management skills of workers*.

The Expert Group with the Commission and in cooperation with the Technical Working Group on Transparency will undertake a study of existing information and guidance networks in Europe, their current and potential role in promoting transparency and recognition of qualifications and competences, in particular the implementation of proposed 'Europass' framework for transparency.

To address the deficits in guidance policy development identified by the research, the Expert Group will develop a handbook for policy makers and explore the use of EU Programmes to stimulate the development of a European network of national forums for guidance to increase stakeholder participation in such development. For more information, join the virtual community on lifelong guidance [http://cedefop.communityzero.com/lifelong_guidance].

The occupational and geographic mobility of citizens is also supported by the new PLOTEUS (Portal on Learning Opportunities Throughout the European Space – www.ploteus.net). Responding to a request of the Lisbon European Council in March 2000, PLOTEUS enables users to easily find information concerning study or training opportunities in the Members States, candidate countries and EEA countries.

4.7. Increasing support to the development of sectoral qualifications and competences

The declaration gives priority to

Increasing support to the development of competences and qualifications at sectoral level, by reinforcing cooperation and co-ordination especially involving the social partners.

Actors at sector and branch level are directly confronted with the practical challenges associated with internationalisation of trade and technology, and are active in developing education and training solutions going beyond the scope of national qualifications. This has led to a broad range of initiatives aiming, for example, at the development of international training modules, assessment standards, assessment methods, curricula and certificates/diplomas. However, initiatives are characterised by a lack of co-ordination, strategic overview and long-term follow up, which impedes their impact and survival.

At the Community level, numerous Commission Directorates General (DG Education, Enterprise, Employment, Internal Market and Transport) support, in one way or another, the development of qualifications and competences at sector and branch level. Sectoral projects constitute, for example, an important part of the Leonardo da Vinci programme. This sectoral profile, however, is not explicit in the organisation and categorisation of funding. This means that the experiences and effects of several hundred innovative projects have not been exploited and promoted in a systematic way.

Equally, autonomous initiatives by social partner organisations, chambers of commerce, multinational companies and private enterprises, suffer from the absence of an overall framework in terms of making mutual learning and effective follow-up possible.

The June 2003 meeting of the ACVT discussed a four-point strategy for the development of qualifications and competences at the level of sectors and branches.

Firstly, the systematic *mapping exercise* currently being undertaken by CEDEFOP will help to increase the visibility of initiatives at sector and branch level, in terms of profile,

institutional/political context, etc. The increased transparency provided by this overview will provide a strong basis for networking between relevant actors (social partner, ministries, Commission, training provider etc). The mapping exercise should be the basis of a database or inventory of initiatives enabling users to communicate and develop links with each other according to their needs, for example in relation to skill shortages, employability and transfer of qualifications and competences. An inventory would also make it possible to see from a policy perspective how independent initiatives relate to, for example, the sectoral social dialogue, the planned 'common platforms' foreseen in the draft directive on professional recognition^{xviii}, the Leonardo da Vinci programme and relevant projects.

Secondly, there is a need to make better use of the *Leonardo da Vinci programme* in support of developments of qualifications and competences at the level of sectors. A substantial proportion of the procedure B-budget could be reserved for projects with a clear sectoral dimension. The systematic use of Leonardo would make it possible to address some of the problems linked to a sectoral approach, notably the role of transversal qualifications and the need to establish links to other levels and contexts of education, training and learning. This approach still needs to be approved by the Leonardo da Vinci Committee^{xix}.

Thirdly, an ad-hoc working group has been established within the ACVT to prepare the discussions on the follow-up to this issue and to give advice on how best to link existing structures and initiatives^{xx}. The ACVT should not duplicate work already taking place in the sectoral social dialogue or through the common platforms but bring added value by making it possible for different actors and structures to work together in a more efficient way, making mutual learning possible, avoiding double work and making it possible to consider questions of overall impact, transparency and quality. The CEDEFOP database, or inventory on sectoral initiatives, together with the increased financial strength provided by Leonardo da Vinci would give this ad-hoc group considerable influence on developments in this field.

Finally, agreement could be reached on a *provisional list of sectors and branches* to be given immediate attention under this strategy. The selection of sectors and branches could initially be based on a combination of criteria. The general exposure of a sector to international trade and technology, the link to the sectoral social dialogue, and the level of mobility are all important factors.

For more information, join the virtual community on sectoral qualifications [<http://cedefop.communityzero.com/sq>].

5. CONCLUSION: NEXT STEPS UNDER THE COPENHAGEN PROCESS

5.1. Policy recommendations

The implementation of the Copenhagen declaration is still in its early stages. Progress is, however, already being made, and concrete outputs are expected in 2003. As noted, the Commission will adopt in November 2003 a proposal for a decision on the Europass single framework for transparency, and the technical working group on transparency of qualifications, the Commission and CEDEFOP have started working on a concrete pilot phase.

In addition, the present report, as a contribution towards the 2004 interim report to the European Council, is an opportunity to present a limited number of policy recommendations, aimed at supporting the implementation of the Copenhagen priorities. It is suggested that the following recommendations be put forward for inclusion in the interim report.

5.1.1. Transparency, information and guidance

- (1) a) Member States and participating countries should actively prepare the ground at national level for the introduction at European level of a coordinated framework for transparency of qualifications and competences, in view of the proposal (November 2003) from the Commission for a Decision of the Council and the European Parliament for a new Europass, particularly by reviewing and rationalising their organisational framework.

b) Relevant actors, including social partners, should be actively involved in developing and implementing the Europass framework.
- (2) Member States and participating countries, in cooperation with relevant actors, including the social partners, are encouraged to support the development of career guidance provision at the workplace in order to develop the career management skills of workers.

5.1.2. Quality assurance

- (3) Member States and participating countries should develop pilot actions in order to prepare the voluntary implementation of the operational and cooperative framework for quality management. Such actions could be aimed at creating inclusive networks with the objective of translating on an experimental basis the European reference model for quality management in VET into specific objectives at different levels, or of promoting the exchange of best practice among countries/institutions. European cooperation between these networks should also be encouraged, making best use of Community policy instruments. Where appropriate, the proposed limited set of quantitative and qualitative indicators could be used as a means to help countries compare progress and monitor quality development.

5.1.3. Recognition of qualifications and competences

- (4) In order to facilitate individual learning pathways, and the development of a European credit system for VET, Member States and participating countries are encouraged, in cooperation with the social partners, to modularise / unitise VET programmes, curricula and courses^{xxi}, and to further develop or establish national qualifications frameworks in accordance with labour market needs and the demand for lifelong learning.
- (5) The Commission, in consultation with Member States, participating countries and social partners, should identify a suitable structure of levels, primarily based on learning outcomes, that will enable qualifications and competences achieved in vocational education and training to be compared, and that could form the basis of a European credit system in VET. Such a levels structure should be linked with emerging developments in the Bologna process concerning qualifications and credit transfer.

- (6) Member States and participating countries, working with relevant actors, including the social partners and the Commission, are encouraged to introduce at European level a set of common principles for validation of non-formal and informal learning, based on best practice in the member states, outlining (a) how best to enable individuals to have their competences validated in a fair and transparent way and (b) recommendations for the development of high quality, comparable validation methodologies and accreditation systems at European level^{xxii}.
- (7) Member States and participating countries, social partners, and other relevant actors are encouraged to actively contribute to the ongoing mapping exercise of initiatives at sector and branch level, currently being undertaken by CEDEFOP to support the development of qualifications and competences at sectoral level.

5.1.4. The European dimension

- (8) Institutional cooperation should be promoted by targeting the priorities of the Leonardo da Vinci programme, and the future generation of programmes to offer means for the development of trans-national projects or institutional networks, possibly combined with voluntary peer review arrangements, around concrete topics such as quality and credit transfer^{xxiii}. A main aim of such cooperation should be to facilitate and promote mobility.

5.2. Towards an integrated approach

In drawing up the priorities for enhanced cooperation in VET, Ministers had their sights on the long-term. The declaration outlines the contribution of VET policies towards the EU strategic agenda for 2010. As outlined in section 3, a more coherent approach to policy development is needed at European level (including with policies for employment and social policy, internal market, research and enterprise) in order to ensure the maximum contribution of education and training policies to the Lisbon goals. On the other hand it is also clear that the organisation of policy processes at European level in view of these goals, must be able to accommodate the specificity and diversity of VET in Europe.

The strategic objectives agreed by the European Council of access and effectiveness, quality, and openness to the wider world, underpin the goals set out at Lisbon in the field of education and training. The work programme on the follow-up to the objectives of education and training systems constitutes the framework for the development of education and training policies at European level. The implementation of the Copenhagen declaration is highly relevant to achieving the three strategic objectives and therefore makes an essential contribution to the overall framework for education and training. While it would not be sensible, owing to the specificity of VET, to immediately and fully integrate the Copenhagen and Objectives processes, it is clear that over time a more unified approach to general education and VET should be developed at European level, matched by better coordination at national, regional and local levels. For this to be possible, however, the Objectives work programme will need to evolve, in order to accommodate some of the more specific features of the Copenhagen process. More flexible working methods should, for example, be put in place, that are capable of rapidly producing concrete results. The use of smaller technical working groups, working towards clear mandates, could in this respect be considered. In addition, the work

programme needs to be significantly strengthened as concerns VET, for example in relation to the learning needs of teachers and trainers in VET.

The Leonardo da Vinci programme will increasingly focus on supporting the Copenhagen process. The new call for proposal text for 2005-2006, to be adopted in the first semester of 2004, will emphasise this strategic priority.

The proposed Ministerial conference that should take place under the Dutch presidency during the second half of 2004 will also be an opportunity to reassess priorities under the Copenhagen process and to explore possibilities for improved coherence and integration both with existing arrangements, and with other areas, for example entrepreneurship. At this stage, the following three recommendations are made with a view to preparing the ground both national and European levels for a more coherent and integrated approach to education and training:

- (9) Member States and participating countries are encouraged to develop coordination arrangements at national level bringing together ministries responsible for VET (in particular education and labour ministries) with other relevant partners, including the social partners.
- (10) The Objectives process, which provides the strategic framework for cooperation at the European level, must be capable of producing concrete results, and therefore should use practical and flexible working methods, with working groups operating according to clear mandates and timetables. The results oriented approach of the Copenhagen process could be a model for the Objectives process as a whole.
- (11) Elements concerning initial VET, combining statistical (quantitative and qualitative) information, should be included in the overall UOE^{xxiv} annual data collection, in order to measure the effectiveness and attractiveness of VET and to monitor the links between initial education and training, lifelong learning and working life.

ⁱ “Declaration of the European Ministers of vocational education and training, and the European Commission, convened in Copenhagen on 29 and 30 November 2002, on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training”.

ⁱⁱ For a historical overview of the development of VET at European level see CEDEFOP (2003) Second Report on Vocational Education and Training Policy in Europe (executive summary).

ⁱⁱⁱ Official Journal C 142 , 14/06/2002

^{iv} See Presidency conclusions, Barcelona European Council, 15-16 March 2002, paras 43-45.

^v Commission Communication on Making a European area of lifelong learning a reality: COM (2001) 678 final; Council resolution on lifelong learning: Official Journal C 163 , 09/07/2002

^{vi} Proposal for a Council Decision on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States (April 2003).

^{vii} Official Journal C 013, 18/01/03

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- ^{viii} Find the existing European CV format at <http://www.cedefop.gr/transparency/cv.asp>.
- ^{ix} See 'Quality standards and norms in European VET', Working paper , September 2003, by Kim Faurschou
- ^x See 'The Common Reference Framework on Quality in VET', Working paper, September 2003, by Kim Faurschou
- ^{xi} See 'A limited set of coherent quality indicators', September 2003, by Erwin Seyfried
- ^{xii} See 'An European Guide on Self-assessment for VET providers', September 2003, by Lise-Lotte Ravnmark,
- ^{xiii} Based on a review by the Quality Forum of a mapping of indicators used by Member States for quality improvement and a review of the indicators which are in use at European and international levels, e.g. Eurostat, OECD, Unesco, Eurydice, Cedefop and other institutions which regularly publish relevant data serving different indicators in the VET sector. The work on indicators is being carried out in synergy with the standing group on indicators and benchmarks under the Objectives process.
- ^{xiv} A study launched by CEDEFOP in September 2003 is assessing the applicability of existing credit systems to the development of a European credit (transfer) system for vocational education and training.
- ^{xv} See CEDEFOP study on European structures of qualification levels (three volumes 2001/2002).
- ^{xvi} The future development of this work on qualifications levels/frameworks will take into account the ongoing work of the OECD on the role of qualifications frameworks in promoting lifelong learning.
- ^{xvii} See CEDEFOP (2001) brochure Career Space: curriculum development guidelines.
- ^{xviii} http://europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/en/qualifications/com02-119_en.pdf
- ^{xix} A formal proposal outlining this strategy was presented to the meeting of the Leonardo da Vinci committee of 23 May 2003.
- ^{xx} The sub-group met for the first time on 9 July 2003, and again on 27 October 2003.
- ^{xxi} This recommendation corresponds to a recommendation Group H of the Objectives process (Making learning more attractive, and strengthening links to working life, research and society at large), particularly in terms of promoting flexibility in formal education and training institutions and systems. See draft interim report on the activities of working group H (July 2003).
- ^{xxii} This recommendation corresponds to a recommendation Group H of the Objectives process (Making learning more attractive, and strengthening links to working life, research and society at large), particularly in terms of valuing learning: assessment and standards. See draft interim report on the activities of working group H (July 2003).
- ^{xxiii} Institutional cooperation at European level in the fields of quality and credit transfer in VET must be closely coordinated given the strong link between bodies operating in these fields at various levels.
- ^{xxiv} UNESCO-OECD-EUROSTAT