

Education & Training 2020

ETUCE Circular 2/2009

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Important information concerning the EU ‘Education & Training 2010’ process:

- **The new strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training 2020 – adopted on 12 May 2009**
- **Council conclusions on enhancing partnerships between education institutions and employers – 12 May 2009**
- **The Knowledge System for Lifelong Learning (KSLLL) – the new EU website on the outputs of the Education and Training 2010 work programme**
- **Priorities of the Swedish EU Presidency on Education and training and calendar of meetings and events**

The new strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training (E&T 2020)

1. Strategic objectives

At its meeting of the 12 May 2009, the Education, Youth and Culture Council adopted the new strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (E&T 2020)¹. This document provides the framework that will guide the work in the field of education and training until 2020 and establishes four new strategic objectives for cooperation at EU level. Although the Council maintains one of the three strategic objectives of the E&T 2010 Programme – improving the quality and efficiency of education and training systems in the EU – three new objectives have been included.

Concerning the new “*making lifelong learning and mobility a reality*” objective, a particularly important feature includes the need for further progress on ongoing initiatives in E&T 2010 such as the implementation of coherent and comprehensive national lifelong learning strategies.

When it comes to the objective on “*improving the quality and efficiency of education and training*”, the major challenge of the acquisition of key competences is underlined. An important place under this strategic objective also finds the quality of teaching and the need for adequate initial teacher education and CPD for teachers.

¹ The full text of the Council Conclusions can be accessed [here](#).

The new objective on “*promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship*” is close to ETUCE’s approach to education aiming primarily to *educate for life*. It aims at fostering inclusive education systems across Europe and ensuring that *all* learners complete their education and engage in LLL.

As far as the fourth strategic objective is concerned –“*enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training*” –, the frequently used term of entrepreneurship has found its way into the new framework objectives.

The table below provides an overview of the objectives of the E&T 2010 programme, as well as those of the E&T 2020. The column in the middle presents the principles and challenges the ETUCE underlined in its statement on the updated strategic framework before its adoption:

Education and Training 2010 Programme (February 2001)	ETUCE statement on the Commission Communication on the updated strategic framework (February 2009)	Council conclusions adopting a new strategic framework E&T 2020 (May 2009)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the quality and effectiveness of education and training systems in the European Union • Facilitating the access of all to the education and training systems • Opening up education and training systems to the wider world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educating for life and emphasising learner mobility • Ensuring high quality education and training • Promoting equal opportunities for all in education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality • Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training • Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship • Enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training

2. Working methods and new work cycles

Following the E&T 2010 work programme and methods; the new framework adopted by the Education Ministers is based on the Open Method for Coordination, including peer learning, exchange of good practices, fora or expert groups, panels, studies, etc. as *methods for mutual learning*.

The period up to 2020 is divided into *series of cycles*, with the first cycle covering the 3 years from 2009 to 2011. Each *work cycle will see its policy priorities* adopted by the Council on the basis of a proposal by the European Commission. This new and more “flexible” way of organizing work – using the words of the Council document – indeed leaves room for an updated and relevant focus of the policy priorities regarding cooperation in education and training at EU level. However, the adoption of new priority areas under each strategic objective for each cycle will be closely monitored by the ETUCE to ensure fair allocation of

topics throughout the 10 year period, in particular fair distribution according to progress made in terms of the framework objectives.

Cooperation with stakeholders on the implementation of the E&T 2020 framework has been underlined as important for the well-functioning and visibility of the programme. The contribution of stakeholders has thus been provided for in relation not only to their contribution on policy development, implementation and evaluation, but also in relation to mutual learning activities. The ETUCE has been repeatedly calling for a more systematic consultation and cooperation with relevant stakeholders in the education field, mainly teacher unions, and will closely follow developments in this direction.

In terms of *monitoring of progress*, the submission of regular national progress reports is foreseen, based on national statistical data and information. These reports are going to fill in the joint Council-Commission report – at the end of each cycle – evaluating the overall progress in achieving the objectives under the framework. The Council is also given the opportunity to adopt a particular thematic area for progress reporting.

3. New benchmarks for monitoring progress and identifying challenges

Concerning the monitoring of progress achieved under the E&T 2020 programme, a set of new European benchmarks (reference levels of European average performance) has been adopted. Although these build on the existing benchmarks approved for E&T 2010 in 2003 by the Council, the scope and range of the new ones is fairly different. The new benchmarks have been set up to cover the whole spectrum of education and training in a life-long perspective, from early childhood education to adult participation in LLL. The ETUCE has several times expressed its reserves towards the establishment of new benchmarks having regard on the limited progress towards the achievement of the current ones.

The 5 new benchmarks are the following:

Adult participation in lifelong learning	By 2020, an average of at least 15 % of adults should participate in lifelong learning
Low achievers in basic skills	By 2020, the share of low-achieving 15-years olds in reading, mathematics and science should be less than 15%
Tertiary level of attainment	By 2020, the share of 30-34 year olds with tertiary educational attainment should be at least 40%
Early leavers from education and training	By 2020, the share of early leavers from education and training should be less than 10%
Early childhood education	By 2020, at least 95% of children between 4 years old and the age for starting compulsory primary education should participate in early childhood education

The new framework for cooperation E&T 2020 explicitly mentions that the benchmarks are not to be considered as targets for member states. EU countries are rather invited to contribute to the collective achievement of the benchmarks at EU level, according to their specific needs and priorities at national level. As far as the *current indicators and benchmarks adopted in*

2007², the Commission has been asked to examine the extent to which they are adjusted to the new 2020 framework and its objectives. A particular place is reserved for the indicator on early leavers from education and training and how it can be improved.

In addition, *three more areas* have been underlined as requiring further work from the Commission in order to propose a benchmark: mobility, employability and language learning.

In the case of *mobility*, the Commission was invited to first consider physical mobility in higher education, covering quantitative and qualitative features, and to study the extendibility of such a benchmark to cover VET apprentice mobility as well as teacher mobility. Such a possible benchmark has to be proposed before the end of 2010.

The field of *employability* has seen its importance rising the last years, following EU initiatives such as new skills for new jobs and various CEDEFOP forecasts. The Commission is thus invited to study the possibility and propose a benchmark in this area before the end of 2010 taking mainly into account how education and training are responding to current labour market needs.

Before the end of 2012, the Commission is also invited to propose a possible new benchmark on *language learning*.

4. Objectives for the 1st work cycle of E&T 2020 covering the period 2009-2011

As previously explained the 1st work cycle under E&T 2020 covers the period from 2009 till 2011. A set of priority areas have been set up for each of the 4 new strategic objectives as described above. The Commission is invited to continue its work on some of the areas where challenges still remain, in cooperation with member states, while on other areas considered as particularly important for the work cycle it is invited to develop cooperation. It is worth mentioning that Member states are given the opportunity to choose from the set of priority areas for further work or of particular importance for their implication in the Commissions' work.

- a) Under the 1st strategic objective *making lifelong learning and mobility a reality*, the work cycle 2009-2011 underlines further work on the implementation of national lifelong learning strategies as important. Linking the national qualification systems to EQF by 2010 is the other area where work has to be pursued by the Commission in cooperation with national authorities.
- b) Within the second strategic objective *improving the quality and efficiency of education and training*, the Commission has been invited to pursue work on professional development of teachers and trainers, focusing on initial education and early support for new teachers. In relation to the area of governance and funding of education and training focusing on the modernisation of higher education and VET, the issue of private investment in education – this has been heavily criticised by ETUCE – will certainly be explored. The ETUCE will be closely following all development in this

² Council Conclusions of 25 May 2007 on a coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks for monitoring progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training.

area. Cooperation in the field of future skill requirements and demand by the labour market is again underlined as a priority for work by the Commission.

- c) As far as the *promotion of equity, social cohesion and active citizenship objective*, the main area for continuous work by the Commission underlined is the prevention of early leavers from education and training. Pre-primary education, quality insurance and teacher support are underlined as areas for future development of cooperation with member states by the Commission.
- d) Within the fourth objective of E&T 2020 *enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship at all levels of education and training*, the EU initiative on strengthening partnerships between education institutions and employers has been underlined as a new area where cooperation should be developed. This initiative has been strongly defended by the Czech Presidency of the EU. The idea of new partnerships between education and business has been extended to the world of culture and research in view of reinforcing the knowledge triangle. The Commission has to further work on the full inclusion of transversal key competences in curricula, assessment and qualifications.

5. Evaluation of the E&T 2010 process

During 2010, the European Commission is also invited to proceed with an evaluation of the Education and Training 2010 Programme and particularly the extent to which the benchmarks covering this process have been achieved.

Council Conclusions on enhancing partnerships between education institutions and employers – Education Council meeting of 12 May 2009

At their meeting of the 12 May 2009, EU Education Ministers also adopted their conclusions on enhancing partnerships between education and training institutions and social partners, in particular employers, in the context of lifelong learning³. This initiative, launched under the Czech Presidency of the EU, deals with an issue that has been particularly prominent at various meetings, conferences and initiatives launched at EU level on how to better match skill supply and skill demand of the labour market.

This initiative is broadly based on proposals from the recently published Commission Communication on “New Skills for New Jobs”. Its main aims appear to be the development by Member States of *platforms for mutual dialogue between education and training institutions and employers* at national and regional levels. Education institutions from all levels – from schools through vocational, adult and higher education institutions – are concerned. These platforms are aimed at helping to consider the needs of the labour market and enhancing the provision of a practical component adapted to the needs of the labour market, alongside with the theoretical component of education. It also aspires to encourage employers and professionals to contribute to the development and delivery of education and

³ The full text of the Council Conclusions on enhancing partnerships between education institutions and employers can be accessed [here](#).

training programmes and to provide more opportunities for students and teaching staff to make workplace visits and placements.

Again according to the text of the conclusions, improved economic and labour forecasts and enhanced recognition of learning outcomes are key factors in achieving a success in increasing students' motivation by providing a clear context for learning.

The ETUCE has for several years been stating that a flexible, highly qualified and adaptable workforce in Europe is better developed in an education system with a broad purpose than in one that answers specific labour market demands. Additionally, the ETUCE regrets the lack of a clear and coherent link between such initiatives and the existing national lifelong learning strategies. In particular, the ETUCE regrets the fact that the Council and Member States have not been considering and working on the full establishment of Education and Training 2010 follow-up structures at national level. These follow-up structures were aimed at serving most of the objectives the *platforms for mutual dialogue between education and training institutions and employers* seem to be designed for.

The Knowledge System for Lifelong Learning (KSLLL) – the new EU website on the outputs of the Education and Training 2010 work programme

A new website called Knowledge System for Lifelong Learning (KSLLL) has been recently released by the European Commission. The website builds mainly on the work of peer learning clusters and contains the following five categories of information:

1. A brief introduction on Education and Training 2010 work programme
2. Outputs from peer learning clusters and other groups
3. Summaries, conclusions and participants of PLAs (Peer learning activities) which have already taken place
4. Compendia of good practice developed by the peer learning clusters or other groups, which additionally offers an interactive functionality allowing external contributors to register and provide examples of good practice to the Compendia of good practice section in the fields covered by the Education and Training 2010 work programme
5. Country information developed as part of the Education and Training 2010 process as well as links to Eurydice country sheets

This new website is part of the Commission strategy to provide greater visibility to outputs and findings from various activities under the E&T 2010 programme and particularly its mutual learning component. This new tool is expected to be fully used and regularly updated with information on work under the new E&T 2020 work programme.

You are invited to access the KSLLL website it by clicking on this link: <http://www.kslll.net/>

Calendar of meetings of the Swedish EU Presidency on education and training

The calendar of events under the Swedish Presidency of the EU, starting the 1st of July and running until the end of this year has been revealed. The following events are planned to take place:

- 31 August - 2 September 2009 – The Knowledge Triangle Shaping the Future of Europe
- 12 - 14 September 2009 – Conference on future youth policy cooperation in the EU
- 23 - 24 September 2009 – Informal meeting of Education Ministers
- 5 - 6 October 2009 – Erasmus – the way forward and the Green paper on mobility of young people
- 12 -13 November 2009 – The role of vocational education and training (VET) in meeting the challenges of today and tomorrow
- 17 - 18 November 2009 – Conference on Gender Differences in Educational Achievement
- 26 - 27 November 2009 – Education, Youth and Culture Council meeting
- 30 November - 2 December 2009 – Conference on evidence from secondary analysis of international studies
- 2 December 2009 – Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks meeting
- 16 - 17 December 2009 – Closing Conference of the European Year of Creativity and Innovation

For more information on the events please visit the Swedish Presidency website:

http://www.se2009.eu/en/the_presidency/about_the_eu/education_youth_and_culture