



# Education & Training 2010

ETUCE Circular 5/2007

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## Important information concerning the EU 'Education & Training 2010' process:

- **Education Council Meeting, 24-25 May 2007**
  - **Council Conclusions on indicators and benchmarks**
  - **Evidence-based policy making in the field of education**
- **Work in progress in the Peer Learning Clusters**
- **Conference Conclusions – Building a European VET Area**
- **Presidency Conference “Realising the European Learning Area”**

## Education Council Meeting, 24-25 May 2007

At the Education Council Meeting on 24-25 May 2007, the Ministers adopted their conclusions on a '*Coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks for monitoring progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training*'. The Commission had proposed a framework of 20 indicators, but only 16 of the indicators were supported by the Council. The 4 indicators that were rejected are: 'school management', 'schools as multi-purpose local learning centers', 'stratification of education and training systems' and 'returns to education and training'. The 16 indicators adopted by the Council are as follows:

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| 1) Participation in pre-school education               | 10) <u>Professional development of teachers and trainers</u> |
| 2) <u>Special needs education</u>                      | 11) Higher education graduates                               |
| 3) Early school leavers                                | 12) Cross-national mobility of students in higher education  |
| 4) <u>Literacy in reading, mathematics and science</u> | 13) Participation of adults in lifelong learning             |
| 5) <u>Language skills</u>                              | 14) <u>Adults' skills</u>                                    |
| 6) <u>ICT skills</u>                                   | 15) Educational attainment of the population                 |
| 7) <u>Civic skills</u>                                 | 16) Investment in education and training                     |
| 8) <u>Learning to learn skills</u>                     |  |
| 9) Upper secondary completion rates of young people    |  |

Eight of the adopted indicators already exist and have been used in monitoring the follow-up of the Lisbon objectives in education and training while the other eight indicators refer to areas where developmental work is ongoing (underlined in the list)

above); these are mainly the skill-related indicators. The EU is cooperating with the OECD to pursue the development of indicators on civic skills, adult skills, and professional development of teachers and trainers through respectively the PIAAC<sup>1</sup> survey and the TALIS<sup>2</sup> survey. The other indicators will be developed through existing data (i.e. for the indicators on special needs education, ICT skills, investment in education and training) or through new EU surveys (i.e. for language skills, learning to learn skills). Before proceeding with any new surveys relating to the indicators to be developed, the Commission shall submit the relevant reports to the Council for consideration.

At the Education Council meeting, the Ministers of Education in addition held an exchange of views on the issue of evidence-based policy-making in the field of education. The work programme of the EU Education Ministers during the German Presidency has attached considerable significance to the trend of evidence-based policy-making in education, and the German Presidency has encouraged all Member States to develop a culture of evaluation and use well-founded, empirical education research in the realisation of central aims in the area of education. To further explore and discuss this issue, the German Presidency organised a conference on ‘Knowledge for Action. Research Strategies for an Evidence-based Education Policy’ in March 2007, where ETUCE participated.

The exchange of views at the Council meeting was structured around the following two questions:

- What action could be taken by Member States:
  - to further develop capacity in relevant and useful educational research?
  - to reinforce the use of such research and other evidence in educational policy and practice?
- How could such action be supported at EU level?

This exchange of views was the first debate on the issue and was held in general terms. The debate will provide input to the forthcoming Commission Communication on the subject, expected in July.

### **Work in progress in the Peer Learning Clusters**

The Commission’s eight ‘Clusters’ dedicated to conducting Peer Learning Activities among Member States have organised several activities during the spring of 2007. ETUCE is represented in the three clusters which focus on respectively: *Teachers and Trainers*, *Key Competences*, and *Higher Education*.

On 4-8 March 2007, the cluster ‘*Teachers and Trainers*’ organised a peer learning activity (PLA) on ‘VET partnerships between schools and companies – the role of teachers and trainers’ in Vienna, Austria. The key issues that emerged at the PLA were the implications for the education of VET trainers and teachers. In late May, the cluster

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<sup>1</sup> Programme for the International Assessment for Adult Competencies

<sup>2</sup> Teaching and Learning International survey

held a PLA in Norway on the topic of 'Preparing teachers to deal with diversity', in which the norwegian ETUCE affiliate, *Union of Education*, contributed with a presentation. The next PLA in this cluster will be on the theme 'Effective relationships between schools and Teacher Education institutions', and will be organised jointly by Denmark and Sweden in October 2007.

At the last cluster meeting, 30 March 2007, the cluster was informed about the current work of the Commission in the area of teachers and trainers. The Commission expects to present the draft *'Recommendation on the Quality in Teacher Education'* during the summer of 2007 and the public consultation on *'Modernizing the School'* is expected to be launched any time soon. The main issues in the latter consultation will be the school curriculum, lifelong learning, economy and management of the schools, social inclusion, citizenships and democracy, teachers and school staff.

The cluster *'Modernisation of Higher Education'* has held meetings on 13 April and 25 June 2007. A template for a compendium of 'best practices' in modernising universities, elaborated by an internal working group since last cluster meeting (November 2006), was presented at the first meeting, and a first collection of practices were discussed at the second meeting. The aim of the compendium is to help policy-makers with proposals for reforms by providing 'best practice' examples of policies and their implementation, accompanied by evidence as to their results and impact. The final compendium will be presented to the Education Council meeting in November 2007.

On 7-9 March 2007, the cluster organised a Peer Learning Activity in the Hague, the Netherlands, on 'Steering on system performance'. This PLA focused on the pros and cons of different higher education governance approaches and how to avoid potential disadvantages within each of those. The next PLA in the cluster will be on 'Implementation of the European Qualifications Framework/National Qualifications Frameworks for higher education' in Bulgaria in October 2007.

The recent work of the *'Key Competences'* cluster has mainly been centred on the preparation and evaluation of the cluster's first PLA. The latest PLA on 'Cross-curricular objectives' in Flanders, Belgium kick-started a discussion within the cluster on the implementation of cross-curricular objectives in European schools. One of the dimensions in this discussion is the ability of teacher education to ensure that teachers can deliver cross-curricular learning objectives and teach the eight key competences. At the up-coming PLA in Hungary on 'Curricular reform', some of these issues will be further examined. The aim of the PLA is to introduce the results and experiences gained in the supporting system of curriculum reform in Hungary focussing on central themes such as teacher education, in-service teacher training, and educational policy development.

Up-coming Peer Learning Activities for the second half of 2007:

Cluster	PLAs planned
Modernisation of Higher Education	Implementation of the European Qualifications Framework/National Qualifications Frameworks for higher education, Bulgaria, October 2007
Teachers and trainers	Effective relationships between schools and Teacher Education institutions, Denmark/Sweden, October 2007
Making best use of resources	Resources in pre-school education in Belgium, November 2007.
Maths, Science and Technology:	Science and partnerships with industry in France, October 2007
Access and Social inclusion in lifelong learning	Inclusive education policies in France, October 2007
Key Competences	Curriculum reform in Hungary/Support for schools, Hungary, September 2007  Learning materials/cross-curricular competences in Greece, December 2007
ICT	Leadership and parental involvement in ICT in education, the UK, September 2007.
Recognition of learning outcomes	Validation of non-formal learning in France” July 2007  National Qualification Frameworks in Hungary, October 2007

*The Commission recommends host countries to invite national social partners to the PLAs. ETUCE encourages all member organisations from countries in which PLAs are organised to contact their education ministries to seek participation in the PLAs. Other Member States participating in a PLA are allowed to send two delegates, one governmental and one non-governmental representative. ETUCE equally encourages member organisations to inquire to their education ministries about possibilities for being part of the national delegation as non-governmental representative in PLAs organised in other countries.*

## **Conference Conclusions – Building a European VET Area**

On 26-27 April 2007, Cedefop and the German Presidency hosted the conference “Building a European VET area” as Cedefop’s follow-up event to the Helsinki Communiqué. The aim of the conference was to assess the progress made in implementing the Copenhagen-Maastricht priorities and consider further actions for vocational education and training.

The conference noted the progress achieved within the Copenhagen process at EU level, where several instruments to promote a European VET area have been established, such as the Europass and the EQF, or are in the process of being developed, e.g. the ECVET system, and the Common Quality Assurance Framework etc. At national level, many countries continue to modernise their VET systems to raise their image, attractiveness, and quality. Establishing national qualifications frameworks and quality assurance systems, improving the access to VET and the validation of non-formal and informal learning, and integrating learning with working are some of the measures undertaken at national levels.

However, the conference stressed that despite progress made, much remains to be done – and the countries need to stay focused and build on the work done so far to achieve the Copenhagen objectives. 6 policy areas requiring particular attention for the future work were identified:

- Invest more in human resources
- Combine efficiency and equity in the national VET systems
- Make better use of people’s potential
- Identify labour market skills needs
- Improve governance of the VET systems
- Develop evidence-based priorities for the future VET

[More information about the conference](#)

## **Presidency Conference “Realising the European Learning Area”**

On 4-5 June 2007, ETUCE participated together with roughly 400 participants representing Member States, associations, industry, trade unions and education and higher education institutions across Europe in the Presidency Conference “Realising the European Learning Area” in Munich.

One of the main topics of the conference was the European Credit Transfer System for VET (ECVET). The Commission presented their first analysis of the responses received to the Commission’s Consultation on the ECVET, conducted from November 2006 to March 2007. In the Consultation process, the Commission received approximately 90 responses from 32 European countries and civil society organisations. Most responses are the result of national or Europe-wide consultation processes.

At the Conference, the Commission highlighted that the majority of responses acknowledged the importance and relevance of the objectives of ECVET, but also that this support had been made conditional on the further development and refinement of the technical provisions of the ECVET. In general, the responses pointed out that the key elements which form the basis of the ECVET need to be further developed:

- Units of learning outcomes
- Credit points
- The definition of the competent bodies providing the credit points
- The relation between ECVET and Europass
- The link between ECVET and the EQF

Based on the input from the consultation process, and the outcomes of the discussions at the conference in Munich, the Commission will now embark on further developing the technical design of the ECVET. ETUCE continues to monitor the development of the ECVET closely.

The official Commission report on the results of the ECVET Consultation will be made available on the ETUCE website as soon as it is published.