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From Lisbon to Copenhagen to Maastricht

At the Ministerial Conference in Maastricht on 15 – 16 December, Mrs van der Hoeven, Dutch Minister of Education, Culture and Science, and Jan Figel, EU Commissioner responsible for Education, will present the new Maastricht Communiqué – a follow-up of the Copenhagen Declaration.

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New ETUCE Projects: "Social Dialogue"

ETUCE launches two new projects in order to place great emphasis on the need for social dialogue.

[>>> Read more](#)

Calendar 2004

18-20 November
EU conference on Citizenship in Den Haag

22 - 23 November
1st European eLearning Forum for Education (ELFE)

29 - 30 November
Training Seminar: "Social Dialogue in Education"

1 December
ETUC Executive Board Meeting in Brussels

6 December
EI Pan-European Committee / ETUCE Executive Board

7 December
ETUCE Advisory Panel on Quality

14-16 December
EU Conference on VET in Maastricht

ETUCE Secretariat closed between 22 December 2004 and 3 January 2005. (Both dates included)

Wim Kok report released: “Facing the challenge”

On 3 November, the long-awaited report “Facing the challenge – The Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Employment” was presented to the Commission. ETUCE supports many of the recommendations in the report but regrets that social cohesion and sustainability are neglected in the report, which focuses only on employment and growth.



The report – drawn up by former Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok – states that new life needs to be breathed into the Lisbon Strategy in order to increase growths and jobs in Europe and to bridge the gap between the EU and the US and Asia.

Halfway to 2010: Slow progress

Under Mr. Kok’s recommendations, governments should be “named and shamed” if they slow the progress towards making the EU the most competitive economy in the World by 2010. The report stresses how important progress is on the Lisbon strategy, “*Governments and especially their leaders must not duck their crucial responsibilities. Nothing less than the future prosperity of the European model is at a stake*”, says the conclusion of the 54 page report.

The slow progress towards meeting the Lisbon targets is blamed on political inertia of EU governments, overloaded agendas, poor co-operation and conflicting priorities. “*Halfway to 2010, the overall picture is very mixed and much needs to be done to prevent Lisbon from becoming a synonym for missed objectives and failed promises*”, cautions Mr. Kok.

The key recommendations in the report include: establishing a committee in the European Parliament to monitor progress on the Lisbon strategy, reshaping the EU budget improving communication to citizens and speeding up the time it takes member States to enact EU law in National legislation.

Mr. Kok emphasises that the target of 2010 needs to be kept.

Focus on innovation, lifelong learning and research

The report strongly emphasizes that EU must do everything possible to draw high-level researchers and

scientists from all around the World to Europe. At the Spring European Council Meeting, an action plan will be submitted in order to reduce the remaining obstacles, notably regarding visa procedures and mutual recognition of professional qualifications. Mr. Kok also proposes to coordinate research at European level by creating a European Research Council.

Social Europe as a driving for economic growth

ETUCE believes that European social dialogue and social partnership are indeed the key to achieve the Lisbon targets. Nonetheless, the report focuses only on employment and growth whereas the Lisbon strategy should give equal weight to social cohesion and sustainable development. In order to guarantee success these four elements have to work together.

The report – a contribution to the Mid-Term Review of the Lisbon Strategy, which will be conducted under Luxembourg's EU Presidency – was handed to EU leaders at The Education, Youth and Culture Council meeting on 15 - 16 November in Brussels where it was discussed.

ETUCE will remain watchful, with a view to ensure that the Lisbon Strategy is respected in its totality.

[Read the 54 page report Pdf.file](#)

Lifelong learning, citizenship and Kok report discussed at Council meeting

Under the Presidency of the Netherlands, the 2616th session of the Council of the European Union (Education, Youth and Culture) took place on 15 -16 November in Brussels. In the field of education, the new generation of programmes, education and citizenship and the conclusions on the future priorities of enhanced European cooperation in vocational education were discussed. Furthermore, there was a public debate concerning the Wim Kok report from the High-level Group advising the European Commission in its preparations for the mid-term review of the Lisbon Strategy in March 2005.



82 European universities launch Erasmus Mundus programme

The European Commission has selected the first 19 Erasmus Mundus masters courses which will be launched this autumn in 17 different European countries. From this academic year onwards, the EU will award grants to the best students and professors from all over the world to come and study in the EU.

“Erasmus Mundus aims to restore Europe to a leading position on the international university scene”, said Viviane Reding, European Commissioner for Education and Culture, at a press conference. “Despite the very short deadlines for selecting the first Erasmus Mundus masters programmes, the Commission has met its commitments, and the first students and researchers from almost 80 countries will arrive in Europe in the course of this academic year.”

European cooperation and international ties

Adopted at the beginning of 2004, the Erasmus Mundus programme supports high-quality Masters courses and encourage exchanges between students and academics from all over the world and the EU. The aim of the programme is to strengthen European cooperation and international ties in higher education. A total of 230 million euro will be spent on the programme in the period 2004 – 2008, 90 % of the budget on the mobility of students and researchers. The budget for the launch year is €8 million.

128 applications for master courses

Adopted in the beginning of 2004, the Erasmus Mundus programme issued a call for proposals, which prompted 128 applications for masters courses, involving hundreds of European universities. The applications were assessed by independent experts, and a list of the 19 best courses was produced by a Selection Board consisting of 12 leading figures from European academia. The Master courses selected cover a wide variety of disciplines ranging from law to mathematics.

Action 3 of the programme will enable European students and researchers to go to non-EU countries to enrich their studies is planned to be launched in 2005.

Enhance the attractiveness of European higher education

The European higher education community see the programme as a useful means to respond to the challenges European higher education faces today, in particular the need to stimulate the process of convergence of degree structures that is an important theme to the Bologna Process and to national reform in higher education in Member States.

Erasmus Mundus is a new global scheme, providing a distinctly «European» offer in higher education. It seeks, primarily, to enhance the quality and attractiveness of European higher education world-wide. Secondly, Erasmus Mundus Masters Courses and scholarships will provide a framework to promote valuable exchange and dialogue between cultures. Erasmus Mundus intends to prepare its European and non-European participants for life in a global, knowledge-based society.

[Read the legal text of the adopted programme Pdf.file](#)

[See list of the 19 masters courses selected Pdf.file](#)

New ETUCE Projects: “Social Dialogue”

The European Social model reinforces the need for social dialogue and it is widely recognised that successful economies in the 21st century will not be possible without a modern system of labour relations and efficient strategies for managing changes proactively. ETUCE launches two new projects for member organisations in Central and Eastern Europe in order to place great emphasis on the need for social dialogue.

“Social dialogue in Education”

A project called “Social dialogue in Education: training seminars” will be held in Brussels on 29 – 30 November aiming to train new member States’ Teacher’s Unions in EU social dialogue matters. Concretely, the project intends to:

- Contribute to the development of national social dialogue in all participant countries
- Improve skills and abilities for Teachers' Unions to participate in social dialogue
- Improve knowledge about European social dialogue among teacher unions

The seminar will be developed in two stages – *the Lisbon strategy* and *Collective bargaining and social dialogue* – and will focus mainly on three topics:

- The Lisbon strategy in the education sector and its objectives:
 - Increasing the quality and effectiveness of education and training systems in the European Union
 - Facilitating the access of all to education and training systems
 - Opening up education and training systems to the wider world

Explaining the Lisbon objectives in the education sector, its importance as a central pillar of the development of future society and evaluation of how national social dialogue can contribute to the Lisbon process.

- Sectoral collective bargaining (education) in candidate countries: strengthening actions aimed at developing articulated collective bargaining systems in Europe.
- The role of social dialogue in Europe: national level and European level

“How to engage effectively in Social Dialogue”

On 14 – 16 November, ETUCE, in cooperation with the European Trade Union College, organised a seminar in Slovenia on the topic “How to engage effectively in Social Dialogue”.

The project – financially supported by the European Union – enabled the participants to examine the development in the Social Dialogue for teacher organisations in Central – and Eastern Europe and to contribute to the development of an ETUCE policy concerning Social Dialogue. Furthermore, the participants exchanged information about the policy of ETUCE member organisations on this issue.

Enhance and improve Social Dialogue

The projects will provide an opportunity for unions to share experiences and to consider how to strengthen the Social Dialogue. By means of these projects, ETUCE hopes to contribute to the development of the Social Dialogue in Central and Eastern Europe.

[Read the project description: “Social dialogue in Education: training seminars”](#)

Public hearing on Directive on services in the internal market

On 11 November, a public hearing on the proposal for a Directive on services in the internal market was held in the European Parliament where Unions and business associations discussed consequences of the proposal. ETUCE is very much concerned about the directive as it may threaten the European social model.

The Directive on services – also known as the Bolkenstein Directive, after the Commissioner who drafted it – aims at the “liberalisation and deregulation of all service activity in Europe”. The proposal is far-reaching and ETUCE is apprehensive of workers’ rights and protection.

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) contributed to the debate in the Parliament. Catelene Passchier, confederal secretary, underlined that ETUC cannot support the Directive: *The ETUC is of the opinion, that the Draft Directive on Services as it currently stands is an open invitation to abuse and manipulation (...) Instead of harmonising upwards, it stimulates regime-competition between Member States, and a race to the bottom, to the detriment of workers, consumers, and the environment.*

[Read the contribution of ETUC](#)

EU leaders signed constitutional treaty

On 29 September, EU leaders from the 25 member states met in Rome for the formal signature of the new European Constitution – herewith officially starting the two-years ratification period. Symbolically, the ceremony took place in the same room as the signing of the original Treaty of Rome by the then six member states - France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxemburg - in 1957.



The Heads of State and Government and the EU Foreign Ministers signed the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe on 29 October in Rome.

"This Constitution gives us greater capacity for making Europe more secure, more prosperous and more just. We must work together to make full use of this capacity. Our task is not yet done", stated the President of the Council, Dutch Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende, speaking at the ceremony

However, there is still an important final step to be made: ratification. The treaty cannot come into effect until all 25 Member states have ratified it by referendum or via their national Parliaments. So far, 11 Member states are planning to hold a referendum – with Spain set to be the first in February 2005.

ETUCE prepares to inform member organisations about the content of the new Treaty relevant for the work of teacher trade unions.

[Read the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe pdf.file](#)

From Lisbon to Copenhagen to Maastricht

At the Ministerial Conference in Maastricht on 15 – 16 December, Mrs van der Hoeven, Dutch Minister of Education, Culture and Science, and Jan Figel, EU Commissioner responsible for Education, will present the new Maastricht Communiqué – a followup of the Copenhagen Declaration.

600 participants will look at how Leonardo da Vinci and other relevant initiatives will contribute to the implementation of the new Maastricht Communiqué and identify gaps in VET policies and practices.

Integrated approach at national, regional and local levels

On 3 June 2004, the Copenhagen Coordination Group (CCG) submitted a discussion paper to the Commission on the status report on the implementation of the Copenhagen priorities. The CCG proposed that a more integrated approach at European level should be met at national, regional and local levels. Countries should develop strategies, bringing together ministries responsible for VET with other relevant partners, including the social partners. The Maastricht Communiqué should specifically address this issue.

New priorities and strategies

The Maastricht Communiqué will update the Copenhagen Declaration and set new priorities and strategies for the coming two years. At the conference, most of the day will be devoted to workshops focusing mainly on four topics:

- Readiness of national VET systems to meet the challenges of Lisbon
- Development of a European labour market
- Education for entrepreneurship
- New pedagogies in VET

The workshops will be based on the major background study “*Achieving the Lisbon goal: The contribution of VET*”

[Read the Maastricht Communiqué](#)

[Read the major background study “Achieving the Lisbon goal: The contribution of VET”](#)

Highlights of the Conference of Central and Eastern European Teachers' Trade Unions

Financing public education, employment of teachers and wage systems were among other issues discussed during the 3rd coordination conference of Central and Eastern European Teachers' Trade Unions, held in Budapest 23-26 September

At the conference, it was concluded that in most of the countries of the region, financing of education measured as a percentage of GDP does not achieve the average level of the EU countries.

Better social reputation of teachers

The conference emphasised the need for governments to increase wages and improve career opportunities and improve the social reputation of teachers. Wages of teachers are below the average of the EU and in a majority of cases they are below the average of those other employees in the country who possess a higher education qualification. It is essential to make the teachers' profession more attractive for young people.

System of relevant standards of infrastructure

Participants at the conference pointed out that a system of relevant standards of infrastructure in the field of education is necessary. Relevant national development plan must be developed to meet EU requirements of human resources developments and to improve existing education systems. EU funds are available for such projects and participants asked ETUCE to support their efforts to lobby in EU.

Working group integrated in ETUCE's "Social dialogue" projects

As a follow-up of the conference, the EI / ETUCE Bureau has considered a proposal to the Pan-European Committee / ETUCE Executive Board, meeting on 6 December, to set up a small working group in order to analyse in particular working time for teachers. The working group should be integrated in ETUCE's social dialogue projects.

New Publications

- [Facing the challenge, Report from the High Level Group chaired by Wim Kok](#)
- [Eurydice : integrating Immigrants Children into Schools of Europe](#)