

Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland

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ET2020 NATIONAL REPORT OF FINLAND

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A. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ET2020 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. Assessment and key suggestions for improvement of the ET2020 strategic objectives

According to the Communication from the European Commission on Rethinking Education (COM(2012)669 final), the proportion of jobs requiring tertiary level qualifications will increase from 29% to 34% in 2020, while the proportion of low-skilled jobs will fall in the same period from 23% to 18%. Yet, in many Member States the increase in education level has been slow. Even though some of the Member States, Finland included, have been able to reach the Education and Training 2020 targets, the development attained may not be sufficient from the global perspective. In other continents, the share of higher education graduates in the population is experiencing a notable increase. For example in Finland, the rise in the general education level of the population has come to a halt.

1. The ET2020 process may be an important tool for Member States, the Council of Education and activities taking place under its direction. For some cooperation themes, it might be necessary to observe the goals set from a broader, even global viewpoint, making use of cooperation with OECD. Finland thus suggests that in the future the proportion of 30- to 34-year-olds holding a tertiary education degree would also be examined in the global context: How is EU doing compared to the situation in other continents, what is our long term goal, and what is the long-term development trend on European level versus global level.

2. On the European scale, the Opening Up Education (COM(2013) final) Communication from the European Commission is an important initiative towards promoting digital skills in schooling and in universities. Finland finds that the ET2020 objectives should be updated based on the policies and goals of the communication, so that the new objectives would place particular emphasis on promoting the use of new learning methods, OER and open learning environments.

3. A reassessment and possible adjustment of the target for reducing the proportion of early school leavers could also be considered. The functionality of the target as a statistical indicator has proven good. Some ambiguities are however caused by the transfer of the responsibility for measures related to the target group to the DG Schools meeting in the renewed OMC cooperation. The directors responsible for general education do not necessarily have a clear impact on the outcome of the target. Also the link between the ESL and vocational education and training policies (VET) has remained unclear in this new model. In the intermediary evaluation, it would be useful to consider how the target could be brought closer to the policies and measures of the European youth guarantee, thus strengthening the educational targets of the European youth guarantee.

4. Finland also suggests a minor reassessment to the lifelong learning target so that the objective would make a clearer emphasis particularly on the opportunities for participation of ageing job-seekers. The ageing population causes significant changes related to skills and competences policies on the European level. It is essential to ensure that the employees' prerequisites for work remain at an adequate level throughout their work careers. New production methods and the development of information technology create new demands for citizens. From the viewpoint of Finland, the objective of lifelong learning should be specified so that it would encourage the Member States to take better account about the needs of different population groups in lifelong learning.

1 b. Finland does not make proposals on priority areas at this point.

2. Lifelong learning and mobility

In Finland, the strategic objectives of lifelong learning are included in the Development Plan for Education and Research approved by the government every four years covering education and learning from early childhood education all the way to higher education and adult education. The development plan is based on objectives set in the government programme and functions as an implementation plan for the government programme containing the qualitative, quantitative and structural framework for education and training. The current development plan covers the years 2011 to 2016. From the perspective of lifelong learning, particular attention is paid to the identification and recognition of prior learning and the development of lifelong learning and guidance counselling.

Competence-based assessment is strengthened through a reform of qualifications structure in vocational education and training

The Finnish VET qualification system is currently under reform. Strengthening of the competence-based nature of the qualifications has been a central aim in the development of the qualifications structure. Moreover, the qualifications structure has been clarified by placing a greater emphasis on learning modules. Competence points based on the ECVET system will be adopted as a basis for planning the scope of vocational upper secondary qualifications and the modules that they consist of. They will replace the current credit system based on the temporal duration of studies. A greater emphasis on competence-based assessment, modular qualification structures and the adoption of competence points promote the identification and recognition of learning acquired previously or in different learning and operating environments. They also enable the construction of individual and flexible study paths.

The government proposal on the development of the qualifications system in VET was submitted to the Parliament in March 2014 and the suggested changes should come into force on 1 August 2015.

Finland has established practices for the identification and recognition of prior learning

The identification and recognition of prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, has long traditions in Finland. The legislation is comprehensive. As a principle, the student is entitled to the identification and recognition of prior learning as part of their studies irrespective of how the competences were acquired.

In all levels of education, students have a statutory right to, upon application, obtain identification and recognition of prior studies or learning obtained through other means based on a decision by the education/qualification provider or the educational institution/higher education institution so that they can be used to compensate for elements of the qualification or studies thus expediting the completion of the studies.

In Finland, there are also qualifications of which the completion is not dependent on the way in which the competence was acquired. These *competence-based qualifications* are independent on the way in which the professional competence is obtained, and they are available for a selection of vocational upper secondary qualifications, further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications. A central role in the system of competence-based qualifications lies in the personalisation of applying for a competence-based qualification and preparatory training, of the completion of such qualifications and obtaining the professional skills. The starting point for this personalisation is the identification of prior learning. In the above-mentioned government proposal on the law on development of the qualifications system of VET, the proposed amendments to legislation strengthen and clarify the status of personalisation by compiling provisions concerning it into a single section and by specifying responsibilities associated with it.

Process descriptions and guidelines for the identification and recognition of prior learning in higher education institutions are largely up-to-date. A competence-based curriculum is a precondition for the identification and recognition of competence, and its significance is highlighted particularly in cases where the prior learning is obtained outside of formal education. The fact that the competence descriptions are sometimes of a highly general level has been perceived as a problem. The operating principles and practices of the identification and recognition of prior learning still vary greatly between higher education institutions and even within an individual higher education institution. The activities have been based on jointly-prepared recommendations, whose implementation in autonomic higher education institutions has varied. Central problems have included the identification and recognition of competencies obtained outside of formal education, transitions between different sectors of higher education, lack of flexibility and negative attitudes.

As concerns the identification and recognition of prior learning, the solutions applied in Finland are thus differentiated according to degree of education. From the viewpoint of Finland, it is justified that the arrangements are carried out while respecting the special characteristics of the different levels of education.

The uniform development of the practices of identifying and recognising prior learning in different levels of education has, however, posed a challenge. The development work is continued in an active manner.

Flexible transitions

Flexible transitions from one level of education to another is guaranteed in legislation. The objective is to avoid so-called dead ends in the educational system. In Finland, eligibility for higher education can be obtained both via general upper secondary education and VET. For example in 2011, 20% of students starting their studies in a polytechnic had completed a vocational qualification prior to beginning studies in a higher education institution. Further, in student selection procedures for studies leading to higher education degrees it is possible to admit a person who does not fulfil the basic educational requirements for higher education but who is considered, by the higher education institution, to otherwise possess sufficient knowledge and preparedness for the studies.

2. b Finland does not propose development projects of the European level. The formal implementation of the EQF recommendation remains as the main challenge for Finland. The Finnish government has submitted a proposal on the EQF recommendation to the Parliament in 2010 and 2012. The Parliament has not considered the proposals.

3. Quality and Efficiency in Education and Training

3a Several reforms of the funding systems of different levels of education have been implemented or are currently under preparation in Finland.

Performance-based funding based on overall efficiency and effectiveness was adopted in VET in 2006. A three-percent segment of the funding is determined based on factors such as completion rate, maintaining a low dropout rate, the situation of graduates in terms of employment and further studies and the percentage of qualified teachers and measures aimed at the development of personnel. The structural renewal of upper secondary education will be implemented in accordance with the government's structural policy programme. It is aimed to enhance the effectiveness of the functioning of the Finnish educational system and to strengthen the prerequisites of the providers of upper secondary education to respond to the changing needs of students, the world of work, the rest of society and regions through high-quality teaching and education and training. In the reform, the network of the providers of upper secondary education will be concentrated in an essential way, so that the operating conditions of the providers of general upper secondary education and VET are improved and the regional availability of education enabling further education and meeting the needs of commerce and industry can be secured.

The reform of the regulatory and funding system for general upper secondary education and for vocational upper secondary education and training and further VET as well as the renewal of the qualifications system for VET are associated with the entity of the structural reform of upper secondary education. The funding system for vocational upper secondary education and training and VET will be reformed to create a clear and uniform whole. After the renewal, the funding will be based primarily on performance and results, rather than the individuals' time spent on studies. The funding as a whole is reformed to better support the objectives of the qualifications, to shorten study times and to improve quality in education. Aim of the funding reform for general upper secondary education is to ensure that as the age groups get smaller, the funding however ensures the regional availability of general upper secondary education, supports the development of the network of general upper secondary providers and the overall efficiency of the education system. It should also encourage more efficient completion of studies.

In addition, a reform of the system of central government transfers to local government is currently under way, to be described in more detail in Section 4.a.

A university reform was conducted at the beginning of 2010. Besides, the funding model of universities has been developed and a new funding model highlighting quality, productivity, effectiveness and internationalisation primarily based on overall efficiency came into force at the start of 2013 (Annex: Universities Core Funding From 2013). The quality perspective on the funding model for universities is still being developed. A joint working group between the Ministry of Education and Culture, the universities and the Academy of Finland has suggested the incorporation of a level classification from a publication forum measuring the quality of student feedback and new publication activities as part of the funding as of the beginning of 2015.

In the current situation, polytechnics (also called Universities of Applied Sciences) are in the front line of the development of the higher education system. The objective of the ongoing reform of polytechnics is to strengthen the opportunities of polytechnics to be increasingly independent and flexible in responding to the changing development needs of the world of work, society as a whole and regions through high-quality education and research and development work. The funding model for polytechnics was reformed so that the Ministry of Education and Culture will grant basic funding for polytechnics for the implementation of their statutory tasks taking into account the quality, effectiveness and scope of their operations (see annex Polytechnics core funding from 2014). In the first phase of the reform of the legislation on polytechnics, which came into force at the start of 2014, a renewal of the operating licences of all polytechnics was carried out and regulations concerning the responsibility for education were amended. In the renewed system, the Ministry of Education and Culture no longer gives detailed degree programme decisions to the polytechnics. The Ministry of Education and Culture now issues operating licences that include decisions on broader educational responsibilities associated with the qualification titles. In this way, the autonomy of polytechnics was increased also with respect to educational solutions.

According to a second-phase legislative proposal currently being considered by the Parliament, polytechnics will be formed into independent legal entities operating as limited companies as of 1 January 2015. At the same time, the responsibility for their funding would be transferred fully to the government. At the moment, the funding for polytechnics is provided by both the central government and local governments.

Student financial aid will be reformed before the end of the year to support full-time studies and graduating in the target period. The level of support will increase at all levels of education. To provide encouragement for efficient studies, a new study loan compensation will be adopted for studies conducted in higher education institutions.

A structural and funding reform of liberal adult education will be implemented based on the Government's 2013 structural policy programme. The objective is to create sufficiently large institutions for liberal adult education in order to ensure the quality and effectiveness of the activities.

3b. Finland finds it positive that practices associated with the theme are being charted in the SGIB cooperation group. Peer learning and the sharing of good practices could be a useful and also sufficient way to enhance cooperation associated with these themes. In possible further development of the cooperation, the creation of cooperation models forming an unnecessary administrative burden to the member state should be avoided.

3c. Finland's PISA 2012 results indicate a decline in proficiency in all of the content areas of the survey: mathematics, reading and science. In mathematics, the average has fallen by 25 points compared to 2003. The decline corresponds to over six month's progress in school. Also the decline in reading (22 points since 2000) and science (18 points since 2000) was the one of the most significant in Finland out of all OECD countries. Particular causes for concern are an increase in the number of young people with poor skills in mathematics and a reduction in the number of top performers.

In Finland, the connection between the students' socio-economic background and maths performance still remains less prominent than in most OECD countries. Yet, the link between the students domestic background and PISA performance has strengthened notably since 2003. For the first time in Finland, it is possible to distinguish a group of schools that remain clearly below the national average. The difference between the schools with the best and the poorest results has increased. In Finland, the students' perception of themselves and motivation are highlighted as factors explaining the results. The motivation and attitude factors of the PISA 2012 evaluation explain proficiency in mathematics very effectively. They explain the variation in proficiency in mathematics much more effectively in Finland compared to the OECD countries on average.

In addition to the PISA evaluation, the decline in learning outcomes has also been noted in domestic evaluations. Because of the trend, the Ministry of Education and Culture has launched a development project addressing the future of comprehensive school for the purpose of renewing basic education. The project is described in more detail in Section 6.

In an international comparison, Finland's success in the international PIAAC study was extraordinary. Finland's results in all three of the evaluated areas were second best. Yet, Finland has a significant group of adults whose basic skills are not on the level required by full participation in contemporary society. As concerns literacy, the number of individuals with poor skills is approximately 11 per cent, whereas the corresponding figures for numeracy and problem solving in technology-rich environments are 13 and almost 20, respectively. The differences between age groups are significant in Finland. Yet, compared to the IALS study preceding PIAAC, the results were improved in all age groups, with the exception of the youngest, 16 to 24. The impact of socio-economic background on skills level is greater in Finland than in the OECD countries in general.

Finland participates in the PIAAC project supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers. The other participants to the project are Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Estonia. In connection with the project, a Nordic database has been created that in addition to the PIAAC data also includes information on individuals who participated in the research. The research has also been launched or is about to be launched in universities. Finland is considering participation in the PIAAC country analysis offered by OECD. The analyses are expected to provide more in-depth comparative information on countries relevant for Finland, more profound analysis based on age group, examination of issues pertaining to equality and analysis of the links between the structural changes taking place in the world of work and the competence of adults.

The Government will grant an additional appropriation of EUR 10 million for 2014 and 2015 to strengthen the competence base of adults. Moreover, a programme is suggested for the upcoming structural fund term to improve the competence of adults with poorer skills.

4. Equality, Social Cohesion and Active Citizenship

4. a

Equality in education

The current Government Programme outlines that the objective of the Finnish education policy is to guarantee all people – irrespective of their ethnic origin, background or wealth – equal opportunities and rights to culture, free quality education, and prerequisites for full citizenship. The government aims to

narrow the differences between the genders in learning outcomes, participation and completion of education and to reduce the intergenerational transmission of education.

Municipalities receive government funding for the organisation of general education. A reform of the system of central government transfers to local government is currently under way with the objective that in 2015 the funding to be provided to municipalities for the organisation of general education would increasingly be based on indicators describing the operating environment of general education, such as the proportion of immigrants in the population of the area, education level of adult population and employment level. The renewal of the funding system aims to guarantee equal opportunities for access to education in different areas and to reduce the impact of segregation.

Efforts to promote equality in education have also included two forms of special aid granted by the Ministry. From 2009 to 2013, the Ministry of Education and Culture has directed EUR 186 million towards the aim of reducing group sizes in pre-primary and basic education. The measures were intended to promote the quality of education and learning outcomes by ensuring sufficiently small group sizes. Measures performed by the ministry to reduce group sizes have succeeded in cutting down the average group size, and the proportion of large groups has been almost halved since 2008. The Ministry of Culture and Education has also allocated EUR 23 million worth of special discretionary government transfers for 2014 to 2015 for measures to improve equality in education. Corresponding funding was allocated for the first time in 2012. The discretionary government transfers are granted to support the operations and quality of education in schools whose starting points are weaker than others. In order to minimize the differences between schools, when making the decisions regarding the government transfers, special attention is paid to schools located in areas with poor education level or employment situation and a high share of immigrants in the population.

Finnish children and young people experience their opportunities to influence the operations of schools and educational institutions as narrow. The government has introduced changes to legislation on basic and upper secondary education and student welfare services. The objective of the reform is to support inclusion and to strengthen the sense of community among students, also hoping this way to reduce disruptive behavior in schools. With the new legislation, each school and educational institution is obliged to have a student association that needs to be heard prior to making decisions affecting the status of students. The education provider needs to promote the inclusion of all students for example by organising an opportunity to the pupils and students to participate in the preparation of the local curriculum and related planning and administration.

A downturn has taken place in the realisation of equality in education, visible in both national and international studies. Differences in proficiency between students have also increased. Proficiency varies based on factors such as geography, and the proficiency of boys in Northern and Eastern Finland is at a

lower level compared to other groups. The deepening of inequality manifests in a number of different ways in municipalities. The fact that the indicators of inequality and practices aiming at the prevention of inequality differ significantly between municipalities creates another challenge.

Inclusion and access to education

Inclusion is the main starting point for regulations regarding the preconditions for accepting someone as a student. Provisions on inclusion and admission criteria are laid down in the Vocational Education Act, under which a factor related to the applicant's health or functional ability may not present an obstacle for admission. Regulations on inclusion and admission criteria with corresponding content can also be found in the Polytechnics Act and the Universities Act.

Around the turn of the decade, various types of development have taken place in the accessibility of higher education institutions. One of the forces behind the development has been the Inclusive Higher Education (ESOK) project implemented between 2006 and 2011, and the Ministry of Education and Culture has monitored the progress made in promoting inclusion with separate reports produced at regular intervals.

Access to quality early childhood education and care

Since 1996, all parents of children under school age have the right to obtain a placement for their children in day-care services arranged by their municipality of residence; in other words, the children have the right to participate in early childhood education. The administration and direction of early childhood education and care was transferred from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health to the Ministry of Education and Culture on January 2013. With the transfer, early childhood education became an integral part of the educational system, strengthening the significance of early childhood education as the first step of lifelong learning. The Ministry of Education and Culture has been preparing a reform of legislation on early childhood education. According to the government's structural policy programme, pre-primary education organised for one year before the start of compulsory education will be made compulsory. At the moment, approximately 98 per cent of 6-year-olds take part in pre-primary education in its volunteer form.

Inclusive educational approaches

Special measures have been developed to support the immigrants' preparedness to study

Finland has fostered the education of migrants by introducing new forms of preparatory education to migrant population. Immigrant children of nursery or school age can receive pre-elementary instruction designed for all pupils from an immigrant background who are not proficient in the Finnish or Swedish language. Pupils aged between 6 and 10 years may receive 900 hours and older pupils 1 000 hours of preparatory instruction

over the school year. The objective of this measure is to support the pupil's balanced development and integration into Finnish society and to give them the necessary skills to enable them to attend general education. Pupils are offered instruction in general education subjects as outlined in the pupil's personal curriculum.

Finland has fostered the education of migrants also by introducing preparatory education for upper secondary education for migrants and foreign-languaged students. The education is voluntary for education providers to and will start in autumn 2014. The objective of the education is to improve the students' basic proficiency in the language of instruction (Finnish or Swedish) and other skills required for general upper secondary education and to help them integrate into Finnish society and culture. If possible the student can improve his/her marks in basic education and also study some courses in general upper secondary education. The scope of the education is a minimum of 25 courses and one year.

The objective of preparatory training organised in connection with VET is to enhance young people's preparedness to begin studies in vocational upper secondary education and training. Preparatory trainings have been provided for different target groups, such as immigrants, disabled students and those whose capabilities for starting studies in VET after basic education are lowered for some reason or who are finding it difficult to find a profession or qualification that is right for them. In these trainings, the threshold for the transfer to vocational upper secondary education is lowered, and the young people are motivated to continue their studies. They also even out the initial capabilities of individuals seeking VET by improving the preparedness of less well-positioned young people to complete the education. The goal is also to narrow the differences between regions and reduce the impact of social and ethnic background regarding participation in education after the completion of basic education.

However, the system of preparatory trainings has been experienced as somewhat complex and has in some cases been perceived to lead to overlaps in education and to slow down the transition to education leading to degree. In spring 2012, work to clarify the entity of preparatory trainings was launched with the aim of producing a flexible system of preparatory trainings for the transition to vocational or polytechnic education. In the future model, the student can also prepare to complete a vocational upper secondary qualification or parts of the qualification in the form of apprenticeship training. A government proposal on new preparatory trainings will be submitted to the Parliament in autumn 2014. The new trainings will be launched in autumn 2015.

Under the Polytechnics Act, polytechnics may provide free education for immigrants aiming to provide them with the language skills and other necessary capabilities required for higher education leading to a degree. Preparatory training for studies in a polytechnic targeted at immigrants will be covered by student financial grant as of 1 August 2014.

5. b Finland considers that immigrant related aims and targets should be included as future themes of the ET2020 cooperation. Finland believes that several Member States would have an interest in developing cooperation to promote peer learning and the exchange of good practices relating to the education level of immigrants, as well as supporting measures relating to the immigrant education.

5 Creativity and Innovation

5. a

The development of entrepreneurial education at the monitoring stage

In 2009, the Ministry of Education and Culture published guidelines for entrepreneurial education that describe the desired state of entrepreneurial education for 2015. In recent years, a number of measures have been taken at different education levels in the area of entrepreneurial education, including strengthening its role in curricula and in basic teacher education. New, tangible tools and programmes have been created to strengthen learning environments in the area of entrepreneurship, including Me & MyCity, JA Finland programmes, Indicators in Entrepreneurship Education, which concretises and assesses the activities of teachers as educators in the area of entrepreneurship and guides teaching and teaching arrangements.

All vocational upper secondary qualifications include a compulsory course preparing students for entrepreneurship, and the students also have the option to select more studies on entrepreneurship. Some vocational institutions also have business incubators where students can receive guidance and advice for setting up their own business. According to studies, more than 50 per cent of Finnish entrepreneurs have completed vocational education.

The research and development work carried out in polytechnics supports the knowledge triangle and teaching provided at the institutions and boosts the development of commerce and industry in the region. The basic task of universities is to engage in scientific research and provide the highest standard of education based on it. Universities function in interaction with society and promote the impact of research results on society. The higher education system consisting of universities and polytechnics is developed continuously as an entity with international competitiveness and the ability to respond to regional needs in a flexible manner.

New projects to support the digitalisation of education

The aim of the new EduCloud project is to produce a web based system, where most recent educational materials of high quality are accessible for the use of schools and teachers in an easy and effortless manner. The project also aims at developing new ways to support the production and dissemination of educational materials and resources created by the teachers themselves for the use of others. Aims is also to facilitate the entry of businesses into the market of learning materials. In this context, the term 'learning material' is understood in a very broad sense including text and video materials, games, user applications, group work tools and services related to learning. The EduCloud project is being built in bilateral cooperation with the Estonian Ministry of Education.

The Open Science and Research project launched by the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2014 opens up research publications, data materials and methods for broad use in society, e.g. in the area of education. The initiative has been piloted via the use of CERN nuclear research data in teaching at general upper secondary schools.

The ICT 2015 working group appointed by the Ministry of Education and Culture has explored the opportunities of open teaching resources and MOOCs especially in the provision of education in the ICT sector and as a tool for cooperation between higher education institutions. The working group will launch studies and pilots on the topic during 2014. Moreover, it has been noted that shared principles are needed for higher education institutions as concerns the copyright of teaching resources and the utilisation of the materials. To this end, workshops on the topic will be organised in 2014 between higher education institutions, employee organisations of higher education institutions and the Ministry of Education and Culture.

An online service for learners and an online study path for citizens to be created

A project to create an online service for learners has been launched in Finland (Oppijan verkkopalvelu www.opintopolku.fi). The goal of the Study Path service to be created in the project is to provide citizens with comprehensive services on studies, applying instruction, learning counselling and career planning services based upon the principle of lifelong learning. The aim is to create a customer-driven uniform and cost efficient on-line service package that would support the development of work and operating methods transcending sectoral boundaries and consist of both existing and new services under development and data systems supporting their production.

As a new service, the online service for learners provides the opportunity to apply for adult education and training via the same platform. The objective is for mature students to be able to locate the right study path

more easily than before; the service would also facilitate the job of the education provider. The option to apply for adult education and training is planned to be adopted at the end of 2014.

Advancing digital skills of teachers and learners

The *New National Core Curriculum* for basic education is currently under development. The first drafts published in April 2014 emphasise digital learning in all subjects in all grades. Also, computer programming will be incorporated in the curriculum starting with graphical tools in grades 3-6, followed by designing working programs in development environments in grades 7-9.

Digitalisation of the secondary high-school matriculation examination started in 2013. The new examination will be in use gradually from 2016. The examination is the only national high-stake test in Finland and therefore has a big impact on educational system as a whole including teacher training and professional development schooling.

Continuing Professional Development of Teachers e.g. Blended learning approach is used in all Government funded continuing professional development of Teachers, in order to ensure future skills needed. Also, more targeted Osaava Programme allows education providers and teachers to create communities of practice/learning networks to exchange training models and good practices in continuing professional development of teachers. ICTs are actively used and promoted in the processes.

In 2014, the Ministry of Education and Culture offers a new discretionary appropriation to increase teacher's preparedness to employ ICTs in their teaching. The objective is to provide teachers with better capabilities to use new teaching methods and tools in a diverse manner and to broaden cooperation between teachers. The aim is also to increase students' motivation through the use of new technology in teaching.

The position of English strong in language teaching

English is by far the most popular foreign language to study in Finland at the moment. Many efforts have taken place to enhance multilingualism in general education. In 1994 it became possible to offer an additional language starting in grade 5. We had in mind pupils who wished to study two different languages from early years (mainly German, French, Russian or Swedish). With the reform, they could choose both English plus another language as well.

The results were encouraging. At some point as many as 40 % of pupils in basic education studied two long courses of languages. Also problems were encountered, as the drop-out rate of one of the languages was quite high. This was quite common with the Swedish, that most pupils start in the 7th grade. In 2004 the

lesson allocation of basic education changed and the number of lessons for optional studies diminished. At the moment the number of pupils starting two long courses of languages is around 25%. Several projects have also been launched with the aim of diversifying language teaching, including Kielitivoli (2009–), and the experiences gained from them have been positive.

One of the objectives of the development of the qualifications system for VET currently under preparation is improving students' opportunities for studying languages. In connection with developing the structure of the qualifications system, the structure of the shared elements of vocational upper secondary qualifications is altered so that the current shared studies are grouped into four larger competence-based modules of the qualification and the opportunity to choose between different courses is increased inside these modules. The change enables interested students to incorporate more learning outcomes related to the second national language of Finland and/or foreign languages and cultures into their qualification thus strengthening their language skills and knowledge of foreign cultures.

The challenge in Finland is to increase students motivation for language learning in the long-term.

6.b. Finland does not have a specific suggestion for cooperation. We refer to our objectives concerning digital education in Chapter A.1.

B. SECTORAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE ET2020 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

6. School policy

The curricula for general education will be renewed. The National Board of Education is currently preparing the new national core curriculum for pre-primary and basic education (comprehensive school), to be adopted with the new distribution of lesson hours by latest in autumn 2016. The aim is to issue a government decree on the national objectives and distribution of lesson hours for general upper secondary education before summer, after which the Finnish National Board of Education will prepare the new national core curriculum to be adopted simultaneously with the new distribution of lesson hours in 2016.

The national and international evaluations of learning outcomes have indicated a decline in the learning outcomes of students finishing their basic education. The deterioration in the outcomes has been considered significant, and there has been active discussion on the reasons for the decline. The reasons for the decline in proficiency have been sought outside of the school, in social change as well as in the practices employed by schools. The social change is associated with a reduction in the significance of school in the lives of young people.

In 2014, the Ministry of Education and Culture launched the **Future of Comprehensive School development project**, aiming to achieve the following goals for the purpose of reforming basic education:

- to analyse the current status of basic education and reasons for the decline in learning outcomes
- to reduce the differences in learning results between boys and girls
- to find ways to improve school satisfaction and motivation among students.

The presentations are prepared so that they can be utilised in the work of curricula preparation in 2014 and in the preparation of the next government programme. The project is prepared by two working groups, one of which focuses on the significance of competence and learning in the development of society and the other on motivation for learning, school satisfaction, teaching arrangements and teaching methods. The work is coordinated by a broad-based steering group.

The Ministry of Education and Culture implements the Joy of Reading programme between 2012 and 2015. The objective of the programme is to create operating models to develop reading and writing proficiency in children and young people, to strengthen the awareness, competence and capabilities of teachers and educators and library professionals in media education and in supporting the joy of reading and a diverse reading and writing proficiency in children and young people. The programme also aims to strengthen the motivation and capacity of children and young people for diverse reading and writing, to enhance the use of

different texts and media contents by children and young people and to promote access to information and contents (data management and media literacy). The target group of the programme consists of children and young people aged 6 to 16, teachers, library professionals and parents.

The Ministry of Education and Culture is launching a national development programme on teaching in science and mathematics to be implemented between 2014 and 2019. The development programme seeks to find new, innovative approaches to the learning of a basic proficiency in science and mathematics and to boosting students' interest in these areas. The approaches are linked to teaching methods, work methods and learning environments used in teaching. The aim is to develop a programme of measures of a high international level that is based on scientific research and suitable for basic education. The programme will be established for use in all basic level educational institutions.

The KaMu (Kaikki Mukaan) project is intended to develop a national programme of measures to promote psychosocial well-being and skills in life management and to reduce bullying and its impacts in educational institutions of upper secondary level. The programme covers the upper secondary education as a whole and contains general measures aimed at everyone and special measures targeted at risk groups that aim to reduce the risk of exclusion among students and the loading of student healthcare.

Early school leaving

In international comparison the situation regarding young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) is relatively good in Finland. The situation has neither changed significantly since 2008, while the proportion of young NEETs has increased in most countries due to the economic crisis.

Prevention of drop-out from education and exclusion from society are policy priorities in Finland. Every individual who drops out from education and the labour market is seen as an individual tragedy and significant cost to society. The reasons behind drop-out are generally a sum of different factors. These might be the wrong choice of study field or because the student has an unrealistic image of the field and studies. Several initiatives are in place to prevent drop-out. More attention is being paid to student welfare services. The law on pupil and student welfare is being renewed and will be adopted in August 2014. The reform will obligate all VET institutions to offer students psychologist and student social worker services.

In order to respond to the changing requirements of working life, the flexibility of vocational qualifications has been increased. Flexibility is meant to allow students to create individual learning paths and to increase students' motivation for graduating in addition to reducing drop-out rates. In addition, students may receive

certificates for completion of individual modules. This makes it easier to continue studies after an interruption.

Further, the programme for raising completion rates aims at developing anticipatory and individualised procedures in guidance and counselling create practices supporting completion of studies as well as work-based approaches. The programme also seeks to identify practices to recognise prior learning more effectively.

Efforts have been made to facilitate the transition to further studies after completing basic education through developing a national system for student selection. Those completing basic education and not yet in possession of an upper secondary qualification are afforded a position of priority in the joint application system for upper secondary education. This aims at the continuing of educational paths immediately after basic education.

The structural programme approved by the government includes a decision to expand compulsory education until 17 years of age. The aim is to ensure that young people under the threat of discontinuing their studies remain within the school system and to make it easier for them to find a field of study that is right for them.

At the moment the key initiative is the youth guarantee programme. Each young person under 25 and recently graduated people under 30 will be offered a job, a traineeship, a study place or a period in a workshop or rehabilitation. In addition, everyone completing basic education will be guaranteed a place in education, and training or rehabilitation.

Finally, the whole education system supports continuing in education and training. The Finnish education system is flexible and permeable with no dead-ends. The modular structure of VET that facilitates re-entry into studies and the attention to individualisation has contributed to the relatively satisfactory situation. The support and counselling practices as well as development initiatives embedded into the system also diminish the need for separate structures and systems. In all, 5.5 per cent of students attending education leading to a qualification or degree discontinued their studies and did not resume them in any education leading to a qualification or degree during the 2011/2012 academic year. In upper secondary general education, the discontinuation percentage was 3.5, in vocational education aimed at young people it was 8.7, in polytechnic education 8.5 and in university education 6.4 per cent. Discontinuation decreased compared to the previous year in all sectors of education, most in upper secondary general and vocational education. These data derive from Statistics Finland's Education Statistics. These data are the latest national data available.

7. Vocational Education and Training

To support the youth guarantee, the number of students admitted to VET was increased in 2012 for example in growth centres. Access to education has been supported by giving priority to individuals who have recently completed basic education and those with no upper secondary qualification or study place. Electronic application services have been developed, and at this point over 99% of young people completing basic education apply for upper secondary education. An online education centre is currently being created in connection with the learner's online service at www.opintopolku.fi that would contain services for citizens and training organisers from registration to early childhood education to adult education and training.

Learning taking place in the workplace is supported through separate funding, the appropriation for 2014 being EUR 8 million. The objective is to diversify methods of implementing on-the-job learning and to develop its quality through cooperation between training providers and workplaces. In addition, the so-called 2+1 model, a combination of education provided in institutions and apprenticeship training, is being developed.

In 2013, 8.7% of students discontinued their studies in VET. Some of these early leavers re-commenced their studies in another programme, and 7.8 per cent of students permanently discontinued their studies in VET. The figure was 1% lower compared to the previous year.

As part of the youth guarantee, development measures regarding apprenticeship training as a form of education and training for young people and on-the-job learning have been launched since the beginning of 2014. The measures are intended to improve the opportunities of young people to participate in apprenticeship training and to enable flexible transitions from one form of education and training to another.

The measures are targeted at young people under the age of 25 without upper secondary qualifications and, as concerns the increased educational subsidy, for individuals having completed basic education or voluntary additional basic education the same year.

The development measures include:

- A try-out period for apprenticeship training where the student may, for a maximum of six months, test learning taking place in the workplace as a student not in an employment relationship.
- Elevated training compensation for employers if the apprenticeship training contract is concluded in the same year as the young person completes basic education or voluntary additional basic education. At the start of the relationship, the compensation will be as much as eight times the previous amount, and as the student's competence increases the amount of compensation declines.

- The completion of some elements of the qualification in the form of apprenticeship training is enhanced through increasing the funding paid to the training provider for qualification modules completed by the target group in central government transfers to local government. This lowers the threshold for entering apprenticeship training relationships by allowing for initial, more short-term contracts and enables the training provider to offer more extensive guidance and support for the young student in apprenticeship training.
- Developing opportunities for the flexible combining of apprenticeship training and studies in educational institutions; one possible model could consist be two years worth of studies in an educational institution and one year in apprenticeship training.
- Training for workplace instructors for developing the capabilities of workplace instructors and work communities in guiding the young person is developed. To further develop the application services for apprenticeship training, the Opintopolku portal will also contain an opportunity for employers to advertise vacancies in apprenticeship training and for students to announce their interest in finding a placement for apprenticeship training. The service is national and offers a meeting place for employers and students.

7b. Work-based learning, as a concept broader than apprenticeships, is an essential element of VET. There prevails a great diversity among the Member States in its organisation. Therefore, Finland considers it important that the discussion should not be limited to apprenticeship training only. Different models of work-based learning should be analysed and further cooperation should be developed with the means of peer-learning. Cedefop's ReferNet network produces national articles on the theme 'Apprenticeship-type schemes and structured work-based learning programmes'. These articles will describe on-the-job learning for young people learning a profession has been organised in different Member States.

The dissemination of good practices in the area of work-based learning and the analysis of different models for promoting a broad conception of VET as a producer of both professional competence and general knowledge could, in the future, occupy a more central position in European cooperation. A high level of immediate employment is the strength of traditional apprenticeship training. Potential problems include the learning of skills that are highly company-specific, which may function to limit the person's opportunities in the future.

8. Higher Education

The education level in Finland is relatively high. The government has set as its goal that in 2020 42 per cent of 30- to 34-year-olds will have completed a higher education degree. According to the Statistics Finland Register of Completed Education and Degrees, in 2012 the proportion of individuals with a higher education

degree was 41.4 per cent (43.6% in 2011). By 2020, the age group of 30- to 34-year-olds will increase in size, which, mathematically, should decrease the number of higher education graduates in the age group, but, on the other hand, improving educational processes and qualification structures are likely to improve the rate of completion in higher education institutions, which is likely to increase the number of graduates.

According to the Universities Act and the Polytechnics Act, higher education institutions are responsible for the quality and continuing development of the education and other activities they provide. In addition, higher education institutions must evaluate the education and other activities provided by them as well as their effectiveness. Higher education institutions are also requested to participate in the external evaluation of their activities and quality systems on a regular basis and to publish the results of such evaluation. An independent expert organ, the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (as of May 2014 the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre), assists higher education institutions and the Ministry of Education and Culture in the evaluations. Efforts have been made to improve the quality and effectiveness of education through the development of the funding models of higher education institutions (see Chapter 3). The development work is continuous.

The Strategy for the Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions in Finland was completed in 2009 and it will remain valid until 2015. Its implementation has been monitored as part of the steering of higher education institutions. The Ministry of Education and Culture is currently assessing the realisation of the internationalisation strategy and considering further measures to support internationalisation. Stakeholders and higher education institutions have participated in the implementation of the strategy in a number of different ways, and higher education institutions have reported to the ministry on their measures to promote internationalisation both as part of their performance reporting and separately. In higher education institutions, internationalisation has been identified as a strategic objective, the realisation of which is monitored in the internal processes of organisations. Higher education institutions have made strategic choices e.g. regarding partnerships. The Ministry of Education and Culture monitors the internationalisation of higher education institutions based on its own indicators and encourages internationalisation through steering by information via the funding model (see appendices).

	Share of foreigners of the teaching and research in HEI's	Share of foreigners of the teaching and research in polytechnics	Share of foreigners on Qualifications and Degrees (University level)	Share of foreigners on Qualifications and Degrees (Polytechnics)	University level mobility (over 3 months) arrivals	University level mobility (over 3 months) departures	Polytechnics mobility (over 3 months) arrivals	Polytechnics mobility (over 3 months) departures	Share of international co-publications of all scientific and professional publications
2009	-	-	7.3%	3,7%	5317	5010			
2010	11,0%	2,0%	6,1%	4,4%	5301	5143	4812	3578	
2011	13,0%	1.5%	9,4%	4,7 %	5301	4956	4835	3690	25,3%
2012	16,0%	1,6%	7,8%	5,6%	5660	5001	4851	3828	27,1%
2013	18,0%	1,6%	-	-	5667	5046	5014	3912	

The share of foreign nationals in the teaching and research staff of universities has been increasing in recent years, and in 2013 the share was almost 20 per cent. In polytechnics, the internationalisation development has been slower, and in 2012 the share was less than 2%. The share of foreign nationals in degrees obtained has also been on the increase. Out of all university degrees gained in 2012, 8% were completed by foreign nationals; in the polytechnics sector the corresponding figure was under 6%. Also student mobility, directed both to and from Finland has increased in recent years. Out of the scientific and professional publications of universities, more than one in four were international joint publications in 2012. According to a recent study, Finnish higher education institutions have a good understanding of their position in the changing international environment. They are interested in functioning in it and developing solutions in cooperation with the corporate world and civil society in order to meet the needs of the changing operating environment even more effectively. The international attractiveness of the higher education sector and transforming the Finns' positive attitude towards mobility (see Eurostudent Survey) into actual mobility will remain national-level challenges also in the future.

8b. Verifying and improving the effectiveness of the activities of higher education institutions could be a useful topic for discussions and exchange of good practices between the Member States in connection with the OMC. The means leading to the renewal of higher education institutions that have been discussed in connection with the EU objective of the modernisation of higher education institutions, are a tool for improving effectiveness. On the other hand, effectiveness is often measured in the potential for utilisation or commercialisation in research. Considering other possible means to assess effectiveness might also be worthwhile.

9. Adult learning

The skills programme for young adults is part of the youth guarantee. The skills programme is targeted to young adults who lack any upper secondary qualification and are aged 20 to 29. It offers preparatory training for a vocational qualification or a module of vocational qualification. In 2011, the number of persons fitting

this description was 121,000. The group includes individuals in different situations, but without a qualification, their status in the job market is weaker compared to others.

The training can be provided in an educational institution or in the form of apprenticeship training. In 2013 the funding was directed to preparatory trainings for a further vocational qualification and a specialist vocational qualification. Since 2014, the funding has also been used for training preparing young people for a vocational upper secondary qualification.

The aim is that during the programme period, a total of 16,000 young adults would begin their studies via training supported by this targeted special funding. In addition, existing vocational upper secondary education and training preparing for a competence-based qualification will be directed to this the target group. The resources directed to the skills programme will also be used to support the target group's efforts to seek education and training and their success in education. A total of EUR 2 million will be directed to these out-reach and support activities, bringing the total sum up to EUR 8 million in discretionary government transfers. In total, EUR 183 million worth of resources have been reserved for the programme for 2013 to 2016. The objective is that the programme could be used to ensure education and training for a significant part of the target group and that the good practices developed would remain in use also after the completion of the programme.

The first decision on the allocation of the resources was issued on 14 February 2013, and the first trainings were started in spring 2013. The decisions were made with the aim of ensuring the equal distribution of resources in all regions in proportion to the size of the target group. The marketing of the trainings to be provided in educational institutions to students started well, with 1,350 students having started a training by 20 September 2013, when the goal for the whole year was 2,500. However, the number of students beginning apprenticeship training was lower, just 261, when the goal here was 1,500. The main reason for this was the reluctance of workplaces to take on students for apprenticeship training.

According to information obtained from training providers, 20 per cent of the students starting in the trainings were employed (62% of the target group as a whole), whereas four in five were unemployed or outside of the workforce (NEETs). The programme has thus been very successful in reaching young adults in the weakest position.

Training providers have been supported in the implementation of the programme using Grundtvig project funding. In the project, both quantitative and qualitative information has been collected from the implementers of the programme, and this information has been processed further in work seminars in cooperation with the implementers and stakeholders. This has enabled the development and dissemination of practices and operating methods that can be applied also more broadly in adult education and training.

As part of the youth guarantee, in 2013 and 2014 a separate annual funding of EUR 2 million has been allocated to improving study capabilities and language skills of immigrant youth in liberal adult education. Out of this, EUR 1.1 million is granted to folk high schools and EUR 0.9 million to adult education centres. The funding will be allocated to the providers of educational institutions in the form of study vouchers. Education and training supported via study vouchers relates to general self-development, i.e. does not lead to a qualification. Educational institutions may use part of the aid on outreach or supportive activities. Young people who have recently completed comprehensive school are given priority in aid provided via study vouchers. This refers to young people under the age of 20 who have completed or are about to complete comprehensive school or voluntary additional basic education, persons who have passed the age of compulsory education and have no study place for continuing their studies in further education. Secondly it is also possible to admit immigrant youths aged 20 to 29 with no upper secondary education (target group for the skills programme for young adults). The study voucher allowance covers the entire cost of organising the training, so no tuition fees will be charged from the student. In 2013, the system was used to provide 600 students with the opportunity to significantly enhance their chances of taking part in post-basic education.

The study voucher allowance of liberal adult education has been in use since 2007. In 2014, the total amount granted was slightly over EUR 2 million plus the above-described separate funding. Its objective is to support the achievement of the objectives in adult education policy that were set for liberal adult education in the 2000s and the 2010s. In accordance with the objectives, educational institutions will direct their offering to population groups with a low level of participation in education, and the government will support the activities by granting aid to cover or subsidise the course and tuition fees of students taking part in the education. The Finnish National Board of Education will grant the training voucher allowance to the party maintaining the institutions and for students in the target group of the training voucher allowance for educational institutions. The target groups have remained practically the same since 2007: immigrants, the unemployed, senior citizens, individuals with a low level of basic education, individuals with learning difficulties, the ageing and young people who have finished comprehensive school but have no study place for continuing their studies.

The preparation of several renewals concerning and affecting adult education and training has been initiated during 2013 and 2014. The broadest and most significant of these are the reform of the funding system for VET, the development of a network for providers of upper secondary education, and the structural and funding reform of liberal adult education. Other developments currently under preparation include improving the opportunities of immigrants past the age of compulsory education to complete the syllabus of comprehensive school, development of the competence-based qualifications system and new specialisation programmes to be offered by higher education institutions.

According to the government programme, adult education is offered on an equal basis to the whole adult population. In Education and Research 2011–2016: A Development Plan, the aim is set at reducing the effect of social status and educational background on participation in adult education and training and raising the share of participation to 60 per cent by 2016. Yet, according to the first results of the 2012 adult education survey, the share of people aged 18 to 64 taking part in adult education within a year has remained at the level of the previous survey at approximately half of the population (52%) and the number of days spent in adult education and training per participant has decreased. The differences in participation between the groups seem to have increased rather than decreased. According to the PIAAC survey organised by OECD and assessing the basic skills of people aged 16 to 65, the link between socio-economic background and skills level is greater in Finland than in the OECD countries in general.

In the government's agreement on a budgetary framework for 2014 to 2018, EUR 10 million will be allocated to strengthen the competence base of adults in both 2014 and 2015.

C. ET2020 Governance and Europe 2020

10. a Education-related elements in other national policy areas and actions aiming to stimulate growth and jobs

In Finland, employment and education policies are prepared in close cooperation between different administrative branches, the activities in the area of anticipating the need for workforce and education as one example (Ministry of Employment and the Economy and the Ministry of Education and Culture). Examples of jointly implemented measures are numerous.

In line with the current Government Programme, the links between education and working life are enhanced. According to a government resolution on the development plan for education and research for 2011 and 2016, models for cooperation between general upper secondary schools and the workplace suited for general upper secondary school will be developed in the next structural fund period. In addition, the government's objective is to strengthen the utilisation of information and communication technology in education and training and to develop libraries to better respond to the challenges of the information society. Every child and young person will be guaranteed the prerequisites necessary for access to information society. Public sector digital data will be made available to citizens, businesses and communities, authorities research and education in an easy-to-utilise form.

According to the Government Programme, all means available will be employed to enhance the integration of immigrants into Finnish working life. Particular attention is paid to immigrant youths who arrive in

Finland near the end of or just over compulsory education age. The recognition of foreign qualifications and the entry of foreign nationals to further and continuing education should be made more fluent and the identification of existing knowledge, language skills and professional skills among immigrants developed. According to the Government Integration Programme 2012–2015, the opportunity of students over the compulsory education age to complete the comprehensive school syllabus are explored aiming at permanent instruments in terms of organisation and funding by 2015.

The government decided on a structural policy programme geared to boost growth and to reduce the sustainability gap of public economy. As part of the structural policy programme, the government has carried out several actions to support the functioning of the labour market and the supply of workforce. The government resolution for securing a well-functioning labour market and labour supply was given on 31 May 2012. According to the resolution, Finland's labour policy forms a structural policy entity, the objectives of which also cover actions and objectives in the field of education policy. According to the government resolution and the structural policy programme, lifelong learning is a central part of Finnish labour policy. The education policy measures contained in the structural policy programme focus primarily on education and training provided to young people. The maintenance and development of the competence of adults is an important aspect of the Finnish model of labour policy, to enable them to transition to new, even better jobs amidst the structural changes taking place in the labour market and the workplace. In line with these objectives, a legislative package on the implementation of an operating model on developing the professional competence of employees and a related tax incentive entered into force at the beginning of 2014. The model is based on a systematic charting of the competence needs of personnel, anticipating changes and providing training in anticipation of future needs via a cooperative procedure. In a government resolution on labour policy, the objective was set for 60 per cent of adult population participate in training each year.

Employment services were reformed as of January 2013. Employment services are intended to support growth and employment by developing the competence of labour force, supporting new entrepreneurial activities, strengthening the expertise and competitiveness of companies, promoting the functioning of the labour market and supporting the quick employment of job seekers. The competence of the job seeker, factors affecting the job search and goals and hopes concerning the job search are established at the beginning and during the client's period of using the services. Initial chartings and integration plans are prepared for immigrants. In a manner agreed upon with the employer, TE Offices seek and present to employers job seekers suitable to fill vacancies announced by them. Labour market training is used to improve the professional skills of adults, their opportunities to gain or maintain employment, and preparedness to act as entrepreneurs and to promote the availability of skilled workforce and the emergence of new business activities. Training providing professional competence and integration training are offered in the form of labour market training.

10 b Assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of the ET2020 governance, working methods and tools

Through the ET2020 cooperation, experts in Member States have been able to gain valuable contacts, peer support and peer learning. They have received opportunities to develop their competences and knowledge and share experiences in the framework of a very useful thematic cooperation. However, the benefits obtained from the process have remained largely on the expert level, and only a few direct links to development on the level of national policies have been obtained. The benefit of ET2020 cooperation themes for domestic development work has also varied and depended according to the different themes and national-level needs concerning education policy.

The objectives agreed upon in 2009 do not quite correspond to the education policy needs in 2014, as the economic crisis, structural change in the economy and the development of digital services have introduced new types of challenges for education policy in the Member States. Moreover, it must be stated that the ET2020 objectives did not necessarily contain cooperative themes that would have been entirely new to Finland's national policy priority areas.

The ET2020 activities have been based on voluntary cooperation between Member States. Participation to the activities has based on the assessment and decision made by the Member State itself on their cooperation needs. In the future, EU-level cooperation should continue to complement the Member States' own activities and to create opportunities for cooperation regarding the goal-oriented development of Member States from their own starting points. European education policy cooperation should continue to be developed in a broad manner, containing not only aims relating to support employment and growth, but also citizens' right to education, equality in education and lifelong learning. Finland is also open to the possibility of developing a closer cooperation between the Member States on a case-by-case basis, e.g. between those Member States with an interest in developing cooperation around a specific topic. This would enable a creating better focuses to the future work programme.

When clarifying the connection between the ET2020 and the EU2020 objectives, it is necessary to make sure that the goals of education policy and labour policy can be developed effectively side-by-side. In the future, the social task of education should continue to be viewed broadly also in the context of EU cooperation.

From the perspective of a small country, a systematic avoidance of the creation of new structures and programmes and overlaps in reporting is particularly important (Eurydice, ET2020, etc.). We would therefore urge the Commission to continue and to strengthen the coordination of matters and reports. The instruments and operating methods used should continue as voluntary to the Member States. A critical approach must be taken to the establishment of new working groups.

The necessity of meetings between the high level group could also be re-examined. Recently, the group has discussed technical issues pertaining to coordination that could also be processed within the regular meetings of the Committee on Education.

10.c Measures to promote partnerships with stakeholders, civil society, social partners and business

The system of national education and training committees maintained by the Finnish National Board of Education consists of 26 committees representing different sectors. The education and training committees act as the expert organs in qualitative anticipation. The task of the system of education and training committees is to promote interaction between education and the workplace in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Finnish National Board of Education. The committees can, for example, prepare initiatives for the Ministry of Education and Culture, the National Board of Education and other central parties regarding developing the content of VET and the resulting development of qualifications. They can also prepare initiatives for higher education institutions regarding ways to account for the competence needs of the world of work when developing the content of education,

Under a decree that came into force in 2009, the Council for Lifelong Learning is an expert organ operating under the Ministry of Education and Culture that addresses questions related to cooperation between education and commerce and industry as well as the prerequisites of lifelong learning and the development of adult education policy. The members of the council represent expertise in education, commerce and industry, and research. The council is appointed for three-years at a time. According to an action plan prepared by the council for 2012–2015, the objective of the work of the current council is, in particular, to perceive the big picture as concerns adult education and training and to present new openings and proposals on measures required. On the one hand, the council will observe how ongoing or planned renewals impact the resources of education and the realisation of the principle of lifelong learning, and on the other hand it will issue proposals on renewals that would be necessary in the future. The council exerts influence by issuing statements, organising seminars and meetings between policy makers and by taking part in various events, such as the campaign for lifelong learning and guidance.

The providers of VET and polytechnics have vocational advisory boards and similar organs for the purpose of developing cooperation between education and commerce and industry. The advisory boards are often sector-specific and their members represent the fields of education of the educational institutions and higher education institutions, central players in commerce and industry in the sector or expertise required in the development of education. The tasks of the advisory boards include monitoring the situation in the world of work and its development, developing the quality of on-the-job learning and the training provided and anticipating education needs.

10. d Assessment of the contribution of the 2007-2013 LLP and ESF to the ET2020 objectives in your country

Finland has good experiences from the development education carried out with the help of ESF funding. The activities are based on broad national-level development programmes aiming at developing education in accordance with the agreed-upon goals of education policy. The implementers of the projects are generally education providers for whom the project funding enables the development of new and innovative solutions. Finland has good examples of how operating methods that concern VET as a whole and have since been made permanent via legislation have been developed via ESF funding. These include the renewal of workplace learning and vocational skills demonstrations where the student's competence is assessed by representatives of the world of work in cooperation with teachers. On the national level, the objectives of the ESF programme are equivalent to those of ET2020. No real evaluations have been carried out from this perspective.

The LLP programme has had and the new Erasmus+ programme will have a significant role in the internationalisation of Finnish education and, in this way, in the development of the quality of education. As a small with somewhat peripheral geographical location, international cooperation and mobility are particularly significant for Finland. Activities implemented through the programmes have been perceived as highly important, and they have also been supported with additional national funding. Mobility levels have seen a significant increase: for example, Erasmus mobility increased 46% between 2007 and 2013. It can thus be stated that in the context of the LLP programme Finland has been highly successful in promoting strategic objective 1 as concerns mobility and strategic objective 2 as concerns the quality of education.

However the national evaluations of the LLP programme place particular emphasis on the significance of the programme for the realisation of strategic objective 3. For example, there are a lot of examples of the ways that Comenius projects have promoted the policy of cultural and linguistic diversity, combating racism, prejudice and xenophobia was promoted e.g. by the participation of immigrant pupils and pupils representing a minority in the society. Equality has been promoted when projects have chosen the same amount of boys and girls to the project despite of the theme, or pupils from different countries and varying ages acting together. The projects have supported the objective of combating all forms of discrimination, for example, by taking into more consideration the immigrant pupils, hiring immigrant assistant and organizing little acting groups for pupils.

The Erasmus programme experts' opinions were similar to the above. While they thought that the promotion of the cultural and linguistic diversity within Europe, as well as the combating of racism, prejudice and xenophobia, have been promoted well through the mobility actions, there is much room for improvement with the making of provisions for learners with special needs. The horizontal policies of equality and

combating discrimination are also promoted mainly through the mobility actions, although the gender equality is not seen in the mobility, as women dominate the mobility statistics.

Figure 1 Universities' core funding from 2013.

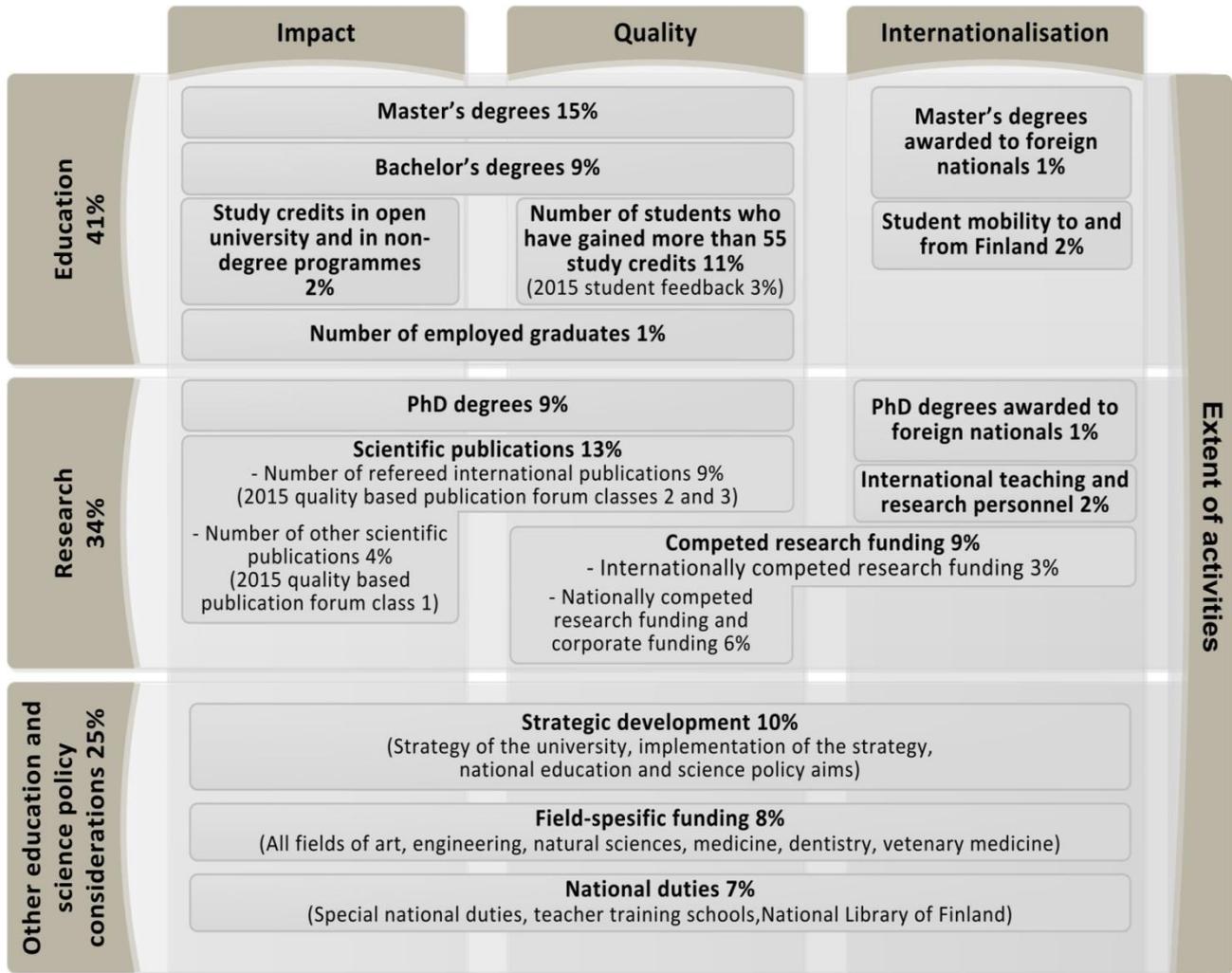


Figure 2 Polytechnics' core funding from 2014.

